Tempus Edax: Time in Ovid's Tomitan Poems

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation treats the subject of temporality in Ovid's exile poetry. I argue that the post-exile texts feature a systematic distortion of time that cannot be conveyed by conventional chronometry. I read this phenomenon as a testament to the condition of the displaced person: the trauma of exile fosters a dissonance between interior (subjective) and exterior (objective) temporality, whereby time becomes stagnant, retrospective, or compulsively circular. The object of this thesis is to chart the evolution of this relationship between dual temporal *schemata*—and the schism in representations of time that occurs between Ovid's pre- and post-exilic works. The distinct temporal aesthetic that emerges is a constitutive element of a textual portrait of exilic consciousness.

This unique temporality, moreover, is consistently defined against the temporal prescriptions of the Augustan regime. The ordering of the Augustan subject's existence through temporal regulations—such as the Caesarian calendar and the myth-enshrined teleology of the Julian imperial line—codified imperial ideology. Although Ovid was, in one sense, a prime participant in this program as author of the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, much of Ovid's elegy ran afoul of Augustan moral codes due to its erotic content and celebration of an individualistic ethos, the emblems of which—such as inborn poetic *ingenium* and the private and subjective experience of the individual—feature so prominently in his poetry. In the context of Augustan-age incursions of public *mores* into private life, Ovid put himself at odds with the Augustan value system in his art and actions, which likely occasioned (or was a catalyst for) his exile. He thus had a vested

interest in (i) resisting the dominant teleology of the Augustan regime and the self-legitimating semiotic system of which it was a part and (ii) mounting opprobrium against the regime that ousted him. The poet's alternative vistas of temporality militate against the Augustan program by (a) reclaiming time as a subjective experience that cannot be delimited by the parameters of an official time scheme, and (b) evacuating Augustan time of its meaning within the fictional world of the poetry, thereby exposing it as a socially-constructed, rather than an absolute, reality.

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Tempus edax rerum, tuque, invidiosa vetustas,
omnia destruitis, vitiataque dentibus aevi
paulatim lenta consumitis omnia morte.

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.235-7

Preface

> No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*; if a *Clod* bee washed away by the *Sea*, *Europe* is the lesse, as well as if a *Promontorie* were, as well as if a *Mannor* of thy *friends* or of *thine owne* were; any mans *death* diminishes *me*, because I am involved in *Mankinde*; And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*.
>
> John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

Cultural critic Edward Saïd famously described the 20th century as an era of exile.[1] While he only lived to see the start of the new millennium, it must have dawned on him in his waning years that the phenomenon he observed was but the beginning of an exponentially increasing trend. The global refugee crisis has hit an unprecedented apex, with 70.8 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide.[2] Consider this data point for a moment: the number of people who are unable to lay claim to a homeland is greater than the population of France. This figure also represents a rate of increase exceeding that of the global population: it has nearly doubled since 2012.[3] The cause of this staggering proliferation is multifactorial: political conflict and gang violence, ethnic and religious persecution, sexual orientation and gender discrimination, as well as climate change and natural disaster are catalysts in worldwide displacement.[4] Indeed, a sector of the scientific

[1] "... the difference between earlier exiles and those of our own time is, it bears stressing, scale: our age—with its modern warfare, imperialism and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers—is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration." Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 174.

[2] According to the most recent available data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018), there are 41.3 million internally displaced persons, 25.9 million refugees, 3.5 million asylum seekers ("Figures at a Glance," UNHCR, accessed March 30, 2020, https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html).

[3] "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018", UNHCR, accessed March 30, 2020 https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2018/.

[4] *Id*.

community believes that we are well on our way to becoming exiles from earth, inspiring entrepreneurs like Elon Musk to embark on a mission to colonize Mars.

On the subject of natural disaster, the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant restrictions are currently taking an extraordinary toll on the global population, forcing the mass exodus of peoples who are unable to withstand the economic fallout. For instance, millions of migrant workers have been routed from India's urban centers due to the national lockdown. Already subsisting on daily wages, they are unable to make a living in this new climate of desolation. Theirs marks the greatest forced migration in the country's history since the diaspora during partition. Often these droves of laborers, after walking hundreds of miles for days on end, are turned away by their own villages, whose residents, fearing an influx of disease, build barricades to keep former friends and neighbors—now deemed "outsiders"—at bay.[5] What is more, refugee populations are more vulnerable to the illness by virtue of their status, since they disproportionately take up residence in developing nations without the resources to combat the pandemic and are often forced to seek shelter in precarious encampments.[6] Take the example of the internally displaced persons of Myanmar, where a genocidal military has systematically slaughtered Muslim Rohingya and burned their villages. The refugees in camps fare little better than their itinerant counterparts: their

[5] Hannah Ellis-Peterson and Manoj Chaurasia, "India racked by greatest exodus since partition due to coronavirus," *The Guardian*, March 30, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/30/india-wracked-by-greatest-exodus-since-partition-due-to-coronavirus

[6] "More than 80% of refugees and almost all internally displaced people have taken shelter in low- and middle-income countries. As the virus rages, many are struggling to meet the needs of their own citizens." "The world's refugee camps are a coronavirus disaster in waiting; No refuge." *The Economist*, April 6, 2020, https://www.economist.com/international/2020/04/06/the-worlds-refugee-camps-are-a-coronavirus-disaster-in-waiting

quarters, already sorely lacking in sanitation and health care, are dangerously over-crowded, making each one a veritable "tinderbox" for outbreak.[7]

This is to say nothing of the thousands of people around the world are suffering gravely and dying alone in clinical exile from their friends and family. In these desperate times, one is reminded of the plague of Athens in 430 B.C.E., witnessed firsthand and recorded by the historian Thucydides.[8] He describes the dilemma with which the citizens of Athens were faced: nursing those who were ill was the greatest cause of mortality, but those who succumbed to fear of others often died of mutual neglect (*Thuc.* 2.51.5). Despite his gruesome catalogue of symptoms, he claims that the most terrible feature of the disease was the impenetrable despair that overcame those who fell into its clutches (*Thuc.* 2.51.4). This climate of fear, isolation, and despondency speaks to the present moment. Even the luckiest among us settle into seclusion and observe a ceremony of social distancing, concealing our faces with masks and imposing a six foot radius between ourselves and any human being we incidentally encounter. We are bereft not only of the dead, but of the relational fundamentals—affectionate touch, intimate conversation, the language of facial expression—that sustain us in such times, ones we all too recently took for granted. As I put these words to paper, I am sequestered in the confines of my Manhattan apartment per state advisory. How ironic it is to find myself deprived of human contact and "distanced" from the city which my family has called home for twelve generations as I contemplate the vagaries of exile.

However, our era has also seen the advent of another kind of displacement, one that has

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[7] "Myanmar: Displacement Camps Are COVID-19 Tinderboxes," *Human Rights Watch*, March 30, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/30/myanmar-displacement-camps-are-covid-19-tinderboxes#

[8] C.f. the parallels drawn by the scholar Katherine Kelaidis, "What the Great Plague of Athens Can Teach Us Now," *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 23, 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/great-plague-athens-has-eerie-parallels-today/608545/.

little to do with political borders or the existential threats posed by a pandemic. It may have been literalized by the inverse exile of home confinement and erasure of our embodied selves at the grotesque mass-masquerade we now attend in every public forum, but the typology of exile endemic to the 21st century is largely figural, defined according to the invisible lines drawn around us by modernity.

We have watched this phenomenon play out on socio-economic and political frontiers in our own country. The last fifty years have seen a degree of financial inequality[9] [10] and economic stratification unrivaled since the Gilded Age.[11] [12] But one's status in this class structure is not just numeric, it is also self-defining: that is, an essential part of our collective identities. This disparity—and the Great Recession's exposure of the cultural hegemony[13] and false consciousness[14] that enabled it—stoked the class resentment embodied in the "Occupy Wall Street" movement of 2011. "We are the 99 percent", the *cri de cœur* coined by anarchist activist and scholar David Graeber, epitomizes this working and middle class self-identification and alienation from the elite that defines itself against the 1%.[15] One of the many factors that

[9] Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, "Wealth Inequality in the United States Since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, no. 2, (May 2016): 1-65.
[10] Jesse Bricker, Alice Henriques, Jacob Krimmel, and John Sabelhaus, "Measuring Income and Wealth at the Top Using Administrative and Survey Data," Federal Reserve Board, Finance and Economics Discussion Series (April 2016): 1-52.
[11] "Income Gains Widely Shared in Early Postwar Decades – But Not Since Then," *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, accessed December 21, 2020, https://www.cbpp.org/income-gains-widely-shared-in-early-postwar-decades-but-not-since-then-3
[12] Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, and Rakesh Kochnar, "Trends in income and wealth inequality," Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends, January 9, 2020, https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/#the-wealth-divide-among-upper-income-families-and-middle-and-lower-income-families-is-sharp-and-rising
[13] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (United States of America: International Publishers, 2010), 488.
[14] Friedrich Engels, "Letter to F. Mehring," in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Selected Works in Two Volumes*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1949), 451.
[15] Gore Vidal's already established term for the uppermost echelon of the wealthy.

precipitated this unrest is the increasing obsolescence and outsourcing of working class jobs. To put it in Marxist terms, the proletarian alienation from the product of its labor under the dominion of capitalism has culminated in its exclusion from the act of production altogether, and thus the ultimate state of *Entfremdung.*[16]

This export of industrial employment to developing nations, coupled with rising rates of immigration, has given rise to an American chauvinism that sets itself in opposition to globalism. This strain of exclusive nationalism is defined by a scapegoating of the foreign "other", against whom we must protect our interests by erecting a literal and symbolic wall. The 2016 election of Donald Trump was a bellwether of these mounting protectionist attitudes: his anti-immigration platform was critical to enticing the American electorate and securing his ascendency to commander-in-chief, despite his loss of the popular vote. This event also speaks to another national divide: the increase in political polarization and mutual antipathy between liberals and conservatives, and their iterations *in extremis*, the progressives and the alt-right.[17] As this schism widens and party allegiance becomes further mired in identity politics, two halves of our country operate as if in ideological exile from one another. Any semblance of *e pluribus unum* has given way to a prisoner's dilemma, or a zero-sum tribalism: the haves and have-nots, full-blooded Americans and expatriated aliens, men of different stripes, red and blue.

This national crisis of color is also a literal one: the alienations discussed above are all the more true for persons of color. These demographics are disproportionately affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 due to comorbidities, restricted access to healthcare, and economic status. Under

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[16] Karl Marx, "Alienation and Social Classes," in *The Marx-Engels Reader,* ed. Robert Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 133-35.
[17] Carroll Doherty, "7 things to know about polarization in America," Pew Research Center Fact Tank, June 12, 2014, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/12/7-things-to-know-about-polarization-in-america/

the best of circumstances, ours is, as Mario Cuomo once put it, a tale of two cities: the singular "shining city on a hill", as Reagan characterizes the nation at the time, is in point of fact a shimmering mirage.[18] The black community has separate and unequal access to education and the means for social mobility, healthcare and the raw materials of a healthy lifestyle, and economic opportunity, creating a deep rooted structural disadvantage. Meanwhile, racial profiling and mass incarceration—an exile unto itself—are disproportionately affecting African-Americans.[19] The legacy of antebellum slavery, Jim Crow, and crow-plucked fruit of the gallant South continue to haunt our nation.[20] Systemic racism in America has many frontiers, none more bleak than the spate of ostensibly racial violence against black persons by the very institutions that are meant to protect them. The current mass protest of George Floyd's murder at the hands of the police illustrates this other conflict of color: black and blue. A defining feature of the moment is the Black Lives Matter movement, a powerful social reckoning with this grave problem. It is an expression of profound alienation to feel compelled to assert the value of one's own life.

The peculiar estrangements of the 21st century also operate on the level of the individual vis-à-vis society. As former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy discusses in his recent book on loneliness, *Together*, the values that dominate modern culture elevate the narrative of the rugged individualist and pursuit of self-determination at the expense of social cohesion and inter-reliance.[21] This rubric of cultural valuation contributes to what he asserts is a public health crisis:

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[18] Mario Cuomo, "A Tale of Two Cities," Speech, Democratic National Convention, San Francisco, California, July 16, 1984.
[19] Ashley Nellis, "The Color Of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons," The Sentencing Project, June 14, 2016.
[20] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2012).
[21] Vivek Murthy, *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020), xvii.

the "undertow" of loneliness he witnessed in his tour of the United States, many of whose constituents felt "homeless even though they had a roof over their heads", as he puts it.[22] Individualism also places an undue burden of responsibility and a spurious shame on the individual for failures that may not be personal but systemic, coinciding with the myth of the American Dream, which is elusive to many through no fault of their own. When people do not see themselves contextualized within the fabric of society, they find themselves at loose ends.

Moreover, the ubiquity and now proven addictive properties of the internet have lured us into a Boolean abyss of ones and zeros.[23] The cheap thrill of a Reddit rabbit hole, the quotidian conveniences of Amazon Prime and particularly, if paradoxically, "social" media, have generated an increasingly siloed existence. The conceit of connectivity has in fact come at the expense of empathy and in-person social contact.[24] Accordingly, there is mounting evidence that this cybernetic exile, elective though it may be, correlates with higher rates of narcissism, anxiety, depression, and loneliness.[25] Recent studies have indicated that this correlation is likely causal: social media use contributes to a decrease in psychological well-being,[26] as well as mental

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[22] *Id*. xviii

[23] On the "addictive" properties of social media and Internet-use disorders, see: M. Brand et al., "Integrating psychological and neurobiological considerations regarding the development and maintenance of specific Internet-use disorders: An Interaction of Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model," *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 71 (2016): 252–266. C.S. Andreassen, "Online Social Network Site Addiction: A Comprehensive Review," *Curr Addict Rep* 2 (2015) 175–184.

[24] Shalini Misra, Lulu Cheng, Jamie Genevie, and Miao Yuan, "The iPhone Effect: The Quality of In-Person Social Interactions in the Presence of Mobile Devices," *Environment and Behavior* 48, no. 2 (2016): 275-98.

[25] Primack et al., "Social Media Use and Perceived Social Isolation Among Young Adults in the U.S," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 53, no. 1 (2017): 1-8.

[26] J.M. Twenge, G.N. Martin, and W.K. Campbell, "Decreases in psychological well-being among American adolescents after 2012 and links to screen time during the rise of smartphone technology," *Emotion* 18, no. 6 (2018) 765–780.

disorders and feelings of isolation.[27] It is no wonder, then, that current rates of substance abuse and mental illness are at epidemic levels with significant comorbidity.[28] Such a retreat from society and its ill effects on the psyche were prognosticated by another towering figure of the 20th century, one who also theorized the spatio-temporal relativism with which this thesis will be concerned:

> I have now reached the point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society ... his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from this process of deterioration. Unknowingly *prisoners* of their own egoism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naïve, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.[29]

As Einstein intuited in his *Essays on Humanism*, this mounting crisis of solipsism and self-imposed relegation from society has hit fever pitch. A siloed existence and the exteriorized ersatz self one projects, *e.g.*, on Instagram, has superseded a coherent sense of self, whose locus has historically been internal and interdependent. What greater epiphany of our egotistical drives could there be

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[27] Melissa G. Hunt, Rachel Marx, Courtney Lipson, and Jordyn Young, "No More FOMO: Limiting Social Media Decreases Loneliness and Depression," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 37, no. 10 (2018): 751-768.

[28] A. Weinberger et al., "Trends in depression prevalence in the USA from 2005 to 2015: Widening disparities in vulnerable groups," *Psychological Medicine* 48 no. 8 (2018): 1308-1315. 11.4 million adults had a serious mental illness in the past year, which corresponds to 4.6% of the population with 10.7 million instances of suicidality; 20.3 million Americans over age 12 (7.3% of the population) had a substance abuse disorder; In 2018, the percentages of adults who used illicit drugs in the past year were higher among those with serious mental illness (49.4 percent) and adults with any mental illness (36.7 percent) compared with those without any mental illness (15.7 percent). Statistics according to the latest available data from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Rachel N. Lipari and Eunice Park-Lee, *Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (Maryland: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019), accessed December 21, 2020, https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018.pdf

[29] Albert Einstein, "Why Socialism?" in *Essays on Humanism* (New York: Open Road Media, 2011), 1-7. (Emphasis mine.)

than staring into the infinity mirror of our smartphone screens, à la Narcissus, at curated cyber-versions of ourselves, reduced to recursive reflections?

But the great irony of our time is that the apotheosis of the ego has precipitated its annihilation. I am speaking here of the ultimate exile: deaths of despair. Suicide, drug overdose, and alcohol-related fatality have climbed steadily throughout the 21st century and continue to do so.[30] In their recent monograph, economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton point to a strong correlation between such deaths and falling rates of job security among the white working class, who are disproportionately affected—so much so, that the national life expectancy declined for three years in a row on account of this demographic.[31] This deflation of the American Dream and resultant despondency not only aligns with the discussion of socio-economic, geo-political, and interpersonal "exiles" above, but also speaks to the notion of *anomie*, a schism between personal and collective consciousness, which arises when individual expectations and desires fail to align with one's material and social circumstances. (And what better vehicle could there be for false expectations and feelings of inadequacy than social media?) But the fundamental issue at stake, as Émile Durkheim noted over a century ago in his seminal study in self-abnegation, is the resultant

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[30] According to the CDC, opioids (the primary cause of overdose among illicit substances) were involved in nearly 47,000 deaths in 2018, which is nearly six times the number of opioid-involved overdose deaths in 1999. (Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER). Atlanta: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, 2020, accessed April 6, 2020 http://wonder.cdc.gov). For 2000–2016, the age-adjusted suicide rate increased 30%, from 10.4 to 13.5 per 100,000 population, increasing on average by about 1% per year from 2000 through 2006 and by 2% per year from 2006 through 2016. (H. Hedegaard et al., "Suicide Rates in the United States Continue to Increase," NCHS Data Brief No. 309, June 2018, accessed April 6, 2020 https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db309.htm). Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death nationally (the second for persons aged 10-34, falling behind the rather broad category of "unintentional injury") "10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States – 2018," National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC, accessed April 6, 2020 https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/pdf/leading_causes_of_death_by_age_group_2018-508.pdf.

[31] Anne Case and Angus Deaton, *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). Cf. Atul Gawande, "Why Americans Are Dying from Despair," in *The New Yorker*, March 23, 2020, where he discusses how this crisis intersects with problems inherent in the national healthcare system.

sense of being socially unmoored, which gives rise to feelings of meaninglessness and melancholy. Such detachment he calls "excessive individuation". In his taxonomy of suicidal motivations, this type is termed *le suicide égoïste*.[32] Accordingly, the individual, to protect his ego from such onslaughts, is increasingly seeking refuge in an anodyne asylum or shuffling off the mortal coil in which he has become imprisoned.

If the 20th century was an era of literal exile and its literary instantiations,[33] the 21st is one of interiorized exile, an estrangement from the self that is at once its acme. The defining feature of our epoch is that each man *is* an island.

The exilic state of mind and its representation by a poet who lived two millennia ago is the subject of this dissertation. The chapters that follow will explore how the Roman poet Ovid, banished to the Black Sea by the emperor Augustus, creates a fictive world whose spatio-temporal vistas both react against the regime by which he was ousted ('state' in the political sense) and give expression to the trauma of his relegation ('state' in the ontological sense). Through the lens of Ovid's extraterritorial imagination, we stand to gain not only greater perspective on his own tribulations and their sublimation but also insights into the vagaries of our own time. Perhaps his sentiments resonate now more than ever.

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[32] Émile Durkheim, *Le Suicide: Étude de Sociologie* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1897): 149 ff.
[33] George Steiner, *Extraterritorial. Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution* (New York: Atheneum 1975), 11.

Introduction

> This is the most immediate fruit of exile, of uprooting: the prevalence of the unreal over the real. Everyone dreamed past and future dreams, of slavery and redemption, of improbable paradises, of equally mythical and improbable enemies; cosmic enemies, perverse and subtle, who pervade everything like the air.
>
> Primo Levi, *If This Be a Man*

In 8 A.D., the Latin poet Ovid was exiled to the Black Sea by the emperor Augustus. A fixture on the literary circuit at Rome, he was once hailed as the city's preeminent poet, one who immortalized the emperor in his (seemingly) Augustan programmatic verse. According to his own account, his exile was occasioned by a *carmen et error*, a poem and a mistake, likely referencing the *Ars Amatoria*, an irreverent, tongue-in-cheek handbook on seduction he had authored years before.[34] The baroque eroticism of the *Ars* allegedly flouted the strictures of Augustus' moral legislation, which sought to fortify the sanctity of marriage and tamp down on the elicit affairs portrayed in Ovid's cheeky vignettes. Like Icarus on the wing, the vauntings of literary success to which Ovid ascended ultimately redounded upon him, occasioning his exile and plunging him into the depths of despair. It is these depths that form the basis of his final poetic act in three volumes: the *Tristia*, tearful poems, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, letters from the Pontus, and the *Ibis*, a literary shrine to his odium for an unnamed adversary. The collection is a meditation on the undulating moods of his exile, one in which he conjures an improbable paradise from his nostalgia for the city and from his enmity for Augustus, a cosmic enemy who pervades everything like air.

[34] Arguments that the *Ars* was merely a proxy for some other imperial grievance will be discussed in a later chapter.

A construct that is critical to understanding Ovid's portrait of the exilic condition is his representation of time. The temporal arc that defined his pre-exile works, one that stretches from the dawn of the cosmos through the foundational *mythos* of Rome and finally toward Augustan apotheosis, is bent until it buckles and, finally, shatters. My central contention in what follows is that fragmented temporality, which sees time stop, reverse, and spiral in ever-tightening circles, is an organizing principle behind the *Tristia*, *Ex Ponto*, and *Ibis*, one that gives expression to Ovid's psychic condition as a displaced person through the privileging of the unreal over the real. In the following chapters, I hope to demonstrate this thesis in three readings of time in exile: time through the lens of nostalgia in *Tristia* 1.3 (Chapter 1), stalled seasonality in *Tristia* 3.10 (Chapter 2), and recursive temporal movement in Ovid's *Ibis* (Chapter 3).

Far-reaching concepts like "time" and "exile" have manifold meanings and an extensive philosophical history. Such terms therefore require further elaboration before we can turn to how they operate in the sphere of Ovid's poetics. This introduction will define the terms that frame the following discussion and analysis of the text. Let us begin with a taxonomy of our central subject: exile.

What is Exile? Toward a Typology of Displacement

For the purposes of this dissertation, I define exile as *the deprivation of one's sense of belonging*. This is a broad definition—deliberately so—that holds many typologies under its rubric. Exile so defined may of course manifest itself as traditionally understood in our collective consciousness: as *political exile*, the forcible removal of an individual from his native land under political duress or through overt expulsion by the prevailing hegemony. This could take the form of expatriation or domestic displacement, where one is exiled within one's own country.

Perhaps the most salient example of this type of exile in the Western imagination is the Nazi occupation of Poland, which was a watershed moment in its escalating response to The Jewish Question. In the early 1930s, the Third Reich coerced the Jewish population to emigrate indirectly using violence and economic pressure, which resulted in the exodus of 250,000 people from Germany. The occupation of Poland in 1939 was a turning point, in which Nazi policy shifted from "voluntary"[35] emigration to overt expulsion, as exemplified by Eichmann's Madagascar Plan, in which he posited establishing a police state on this newly acquired French colony and systematically containing the Jewish population there. The failure of this plan precipitated the Final Solution, the mass murder of the Jewish people through mobile killing units and the notorious extermination camps, whereby a third of European Jews and 90% of Jewish Poles were put to death. Nazi tactics thus shifted from the model of political exile by duress, to deportation, to consignment to the ultimate exile in concentration camps.

[35] "Voluntary exile", cases where an individual chooses to live abroad without compulsion, does not figure in this dissertation because I take it to be a contradiction in terms. A voluntary expatriate might without difficulty construct a coherent sense of home abroad, whereas a true exile will always harbor some sense of fragmentation on account of his home being remote or obliterated. On the one hand, a figure like Edward Snowden, who rose to fame as the in-house whistleblower of the National Security Agency, revealing the extent of their global surveillance efforts in 2013, is not "voluntary" in the true sense of the word, since he was compelled to flee the country under threat of prosecution. On the other hand, when the Rolling Stones took up residency in France in 1971 to evade the Labour Party's punishing 93% tax rate on the wealthy, theirs was not a true exile precisely because it was voluntary for personal gain. A more appropriate term for "voluntary exile" might be "voluntary expatriation"—or in the case of the Stones, "tax evasion vacation". The album they produced during this stint abroad was their tour de force *Exile on Main Street*. The title rhetorically figures the band as refugees, though the eponymous exile in fact refers to the French Riviera and their stay at the Villa Nellcôte, a former headquarters of the gestapo during WWII. Keith Richards, in addition to saying explicitly that its members "felt like exiles", plays into the band's mythology of displacement, describing the basement in which their recording sessions were held as a labyrinthic "Führerbunker", where the air was so dank they could not keep their guitars tuned: "Upstairs, it was fantastic. Like Versailles. But down there… it was Dante's *Inferno*" (Keith Richards, "Trying to Make a Record in the Führerbunker: Mick Jagger and Keith Richards on Exile on Main St," interviewed by Alex Pappademas, *GQ*, April 16, 2010; https://www.gq.com/story/trying-to-make-a-record-in-the-fhrerbunker-mick-jagger-and-keith-richards-on-exile-on-main-st). Given the conceit of exile and themes of vagrancy, it is interesting that the album is preoccupied with the concept of time.

This dark chapter in the annals of human history brings us to a subset of political exile: *penal exile*. This type is more specific than the above because it is framed as a punishment for an alleged crime against the state, rather than a measure of ethnic cleansing or an act of war, which lends it an air of structural legitimacy. Penal exile calls to mind the Sibyraks of the 19th century, dissenters to the Russian Empire who were exiled to Siberia after the November and January Uprisings of the 1830s and '60s, respectively.[36] Penology is also deeply embedded in the origins of the American colonies: in the 18th century, the British used North America, particularly the Chesapeake territory, as a penal colony through a system of indentured servitude: one quarter of British emigrants to the American colonies were convicts.[37] In fact, James Oglethorpe founded Georgia with the intention of making it a debtor's colony, an etiology that informs its mythos to this day.[38] A more timely example is what Michelle Alexander has recently termed "the new Jim Crow": mass incarceration. The systematic prosecution of persons of color in the United States, and the way in which their status as felons permanently brands them as second-class citizens consign them to a place of paradox: one that is simultaneously within and outside of society.[39] We might consider imprisonment itself to be a form of inverted exile: the prisoner is forced not beyond the borders of a country, but within the four corners of an extra-societal space within it. Here, the basic rights afforded to a citizen cease to apply, his mode of interacting with space, time, and the community around him is regulated by the state, and he is afforded none of the creaturely comforts that define a home. We often conceive of exile as a geopolitical phenomenon that is defined

[36] The Soviet invasion of Poland effected the ouster of thousands of Poles to Siberia, but this event is more consistent with *political exile* proper, as described above.
[37] A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound For America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718–1775* (Oxford University Press, 1987).
[38] James Davie Butler, "British Convicts Shipped to American Colonies", *American Historical Review* no. 2 (October 1896).
[39] Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*.

according to spatial movement or restriction. In the context of imprisonment, we conceive of exile as temporal: one is said to be "serving time".

This last point intersects with the second type of exile in our taxonomy: *social exile*. This type often overlaps with *political exile* in that the ruling power leans on existing cultural prejudices in order to scapegoat and expel a social group and in so doing enhance the optics of their own authority. A pressing example of this phenomenon is the ongoing refugee crisis in the Rakhine State. Muslim Rohingya are systematically persecuted by the Burmese majority Buddhist population, an effort in which the government and Tatmadaw, Myanmar's standing army, have been complicit. Successive regimes have denied the Rohingya citizenship for decades and refused to count them among the indigenous minorities in the national census, asserting that they are illicit Bengali invaders rather than an autochthonous people. According to a 2019 UN Report, the Tatmadaw has engaged in a systematic process of the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya, burning their villages, subjecting them to arbitrary arrest and detention, and waging a war of sexual violence against Rohingya women and children.[40]

So-called "comfortable exile", where a marginalized group's alienation is embedded in social hierarchy, whether formally codified or generated *sua sponte*, is also a form of social displacement. For example, the Indian caste system, which treats the Dalit as "untouchables", not only segregates society on the basis of this hierarchy but eschews their very touch, conferring on them a kind of sub-human status.[41] We have our own unspoken systems of caste in the United States, ones that impose a *de facto* exile on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, race,

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[40] Gert Rosenthal, "A Brief and Independent Inquiry into the Involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010-2018," *United Nations Official Report* May 29, 2019.
[41] Binesh Balan, "Making of Comfortable Exile through Sanskritization: Reflections on Imagination of Identity Notions in India," *Contemporary Voice of Dalit* 10 (2019).

or disability. For instance, rates of vagrancy amongst LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately high in large part because they are ejected from the home by their own parents with alarming frequency.[42] In the class of *social exile* one might also include the aforementioned exiles of economic stratification with its attendant social implications, and ideological partisanship. These are schisms within a community that do not literally force an individual or group from that community, but lead to a perceived mutual estrangement that entails a collective loss of a sense of belonging.

These forces of estrangement can also be internal, engendering a psychological feeling of not belonging. "Home" is in itself a mutable construct of the mind and, as discussed in the preface to this thesis, people find a sense of belonging—or absence thereof—in imaginary places, like social media forums, and even in secondary selves via internet avatars. Moreover, the specter of epidemic rates of drug addiction and mental illness in the West, themselves expressions of self-alienation, has cast a pall over a cultural moment that boasts the apex of "interconnectedness". We might call this phenomenon *internal exile*.

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[42] "LGBTQ youth comprise approximately 5% to 8% of the U.S. youth population but comprise at least 40% of the population of youth experiencing homelessness. Existing research identifies family conflict about the LGBTQ youth's gender or sexuality as a primary reason for experiencing homelessness. Seventy three percent of gay and lesbian youth and 26% of bisexual youth experiencing homelessness report parental disapproval of their sexual orientation as the main reason for their homelessness, and service providers who work with LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness indicate that 68% have experienced family rejection)" (383). Brandon Andrew Robinson, "Conditional Families and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth Homelessness: Gender, Sexuality, Family Instability, and Rejection," *Journal of Marriage & Family* 80.2 (2018): 383–96. Cf. N. Ray, *An epidemic of homelessness: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth.* Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, 2006. and L. E. Durso & G.J. Gates, "Serving our youth: Findings from a national survey of services providers working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless." Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, 2012; Binesh Balan, "Dalit", 10; M.H., Morton et al. Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2017.

It is precisely the nexus of internal and external types of exile that concerns the following chapters. The "exilic condition" is not only a set of circumstances but also a state of consciousness, one defined by cognitive dissonance.[43] In his article "Exile as a Dissociative State," psychologist Andrew Harlem describes this phenomenon from a clinical perspective. He argues that exile entails a degree of dissociation that forecloses the possibility of assimilation, rendering the subject unable to negotiate between "self-states" rooted in disparate times and places.[44] Moreover, many of the exiled memoirists of the 20th century whose work informs my reading of Ovid—Primo Levi, Jean Améry, Hannah Arendt—suggest that the psychological state that is inflicted by literal exile is in fact its crux.

Ovid's poetic persona, if not also the historical Ovid, was an exile of the literal, embodied, political type: as he discusses in the second book of the *Tristia*, his banishment beyond the borders of Rome to the Black Sea was a matter of unilateral imperial decree. Of the two classes of punitive exile under the Roman empire, his was a *relegatio*, one which left his family and estate intact. In some sense, this made his banishment all the more poignant, since all aspects of "home" were

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[43] "Cognitive dissonance" is a term coined by Leon Festinger in his 1957 monograph *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. The concept refers to the psychic trauma induced by subscribing to mutually inconsistent value systems or means of self-identification and/or having one's false sense of value or identity threatened by confrontation with a reality that contravenes it. Festinger argues that the individual strives to avoid this trauma by maintaining internal consistency and so is greatly motivated to avoid situations or information that cause this dissonance. This theory, as well as its constituent paradigms and applications, have been mainstays of research in modern psychology from the latter half of the 20th century to the present day. I posit that this is a helpful model for understanding Ovid's depiction of the exilic mindset. The identity of the exile is necessarily fissured along the lines of time and space: he is defined by past and present, 'here' and 'there'. Ovid's case is also made fraught by the fact that he was an essential cog in the Augustan rhetorical machine (i.e., touting the Augustan value system), which later rejects and ejects him. He must come to terms with this contradiction in exile. I explore this proposition further in the paragraphs to follow. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

[44] "I view exile as polysemantic, signifying not only, and perhaps not most crucially, specific migratory precipitants or constraints on geographic mobility. My thesis, rather, is that exile can usefully be understood as a state of mind—one that, by virtue of the dissociative processes by which it is characterized, presents or forecloses the psychic possibility of immigration" (Andrew Harlem, "Exile as a Dissociative State: When a self is 'lost in transit,'" *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 27 no. 4 (2010): 461.)

preserved as they were at Rome; it was he himself who was erased from the *tableau vivant* of his erstwhile urban life. The tension in this duality of "self-states", which are mapped onto his current and former locales, is expressed in his vacillation between past and present in *Tristia* 1.3. Ovid's exile was also likely to have been ideologically motivated. The conflict between the amorous tenor of the *Ars* and Augustan moral legislation was at least the ostensible reason for his ousting. So too, Ovid seems to have undergone some degree of social scapegoating, if his periodic tirades against his traitorous comrades at Rome in the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* are to be believed. His parody of Augustan propriety in *Tristia* 3.10, where he envisions Tomis as a veritable anti-city, and his onslaught against a concatenation of enemies in the *Ibis*, demonstrate his internalization of these forms of exile, as well. Ovid enacts this interiorized displacement throughout his poetry in the deconstruction of time.

Ovid's Temporal Consciousness in Exile

This dissertation treats the subject of subjective temporality in Ovid's exile poetry. I argue that the post-exilic texts feature a systematic distortion of time wherein the temporal consciousness of the poetic subject evades circumscription by established chronometry. I read this phenomenon as a testament to the condition of the displaced person: the trauma of exile fosters a dissonance between interior ("subjective") and exterior ("objective") temporality. Ovidian exile narrative is unique in its simultaneous theorization and dramatization of this temporal consciousness by poet and poetic persona. The distinct *temporal aesthetic* that emerges is a constitutive element of a textual portrait of the exilic mindset. This state of mind, moreover, is consistently defined against its native (Roman) counterpart. Ovid's alternative temporality is also an instantiation of the poetics of reaction and even subversion; that is, it is a reaction against the temporal prescriptions of the

Augustan regime. The object of this thesis will be to chart the evolution of this relationship between dual temporal *schemata*—and the radical schism in representations of time that occurs between Ovid's pre- and post-exilic works. Ovid, in a modality more in keeping with his Latin elegiac identity, enacts time's speciousness through the vagaries in temporal perception of his poetic persona. It is in and through this enactment that he seeks to assert, despite the Augustan shadow, a new autonomy of subjective experience.

The subjects of time and the unreal have each preoccupied scholars of antiquity, but rarely at the same moment. The study in the former that springs most readily to mind is Denis Feeney's landmark monograph, *Caesar's Calendar*. This project investigates the Rome's synchronism of temporality across time and space and the origins of the Roman cultural constructs of time, such as the Julian calendar, annual rhythm of consular governance, and annalistic historical framework. Feeney's lively and thorough delineation of imperial temporal protocols – and Ovid's engagement with them in the *Fasti* – has been instrumental in my discussion of Augustan time as a counterpoint to Ovid's exilic temporality. The parameters of his work have also left sufficient space for my own contribution to time in Roman literature: while Feeney gestures toward the dialectic of individual and collective temporal calculi and the vagaries of temporal consciousness, he states outright that these subjects are beyond the scope of his discussion.[45]

While Feeney's study addresses public time and its literary instantiations, Maurizio Bettini (on Roman temporal metaphors),[46] Michael Putnam (on (im)mortality in the fourth book of

[45] Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2007), 2-3.
[46] Maurizio Bettini, *Anthropology and Roman Culture: Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Horace' *Odes*)[47] and James Ker (forthcoming)[48] privilege the rhythms of private life at Rome and the individual's conceptualization of time. These texts inform my analysis of Ovid's temporality by illuminating a different facet of its counterpoint: that of the Roman subject, rather than the Roman establishment. However, these treatments focus primarily on the temporal rhythms of the private sphere and perception of *objective* time by the individual at Rome, in contradistinction to my project on the psychological and subversive distortion of time in exile.

Ovid's temporal polemics have been documented in the contemporary publications of Alessandro Barchiesi and Carole Newlands. Barchiesi's *Il poeta e il principe* argues that the *Fasti* has a dialectic relationship with Augustan discourse, which it challenges by subtly revising Augustan and Julian insertions into the calendar.[49] Carole Newlands' 1995 study, *Playing with Time*, shifts the emphasis further onto Ovid's literary machinations. Here, she argues that the *Fasti*, a seeming panegyric on the Augustan Golden Age, is actually constructed to reflect its subject's tensions through the manipulation of time *per se*.[50] Newlands' insight into Ovid's interrogation of the political ideology underlying the calendar through time play is invaluable to my project, because it shows that the phenomenon that I identify in the exile poetry was prefigured, on a more tentative and limited basis, in the *Fasti*—which, she argues, was left unfinished due to Ovid's discord with the emperor and the enforced silence that ensued. This aspect of her argument merges

[47] Michael Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity: Horace's Fourth Book of Odes*, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology Volume: 43 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press Pages, 1986): 352
[48] James Ker, *The Ordered Day: Quotidian Time and Forms of Life in Ancient Rome*, forthcoming.
[49] Alessandro Barchiesi, *Il poeta e il principe: Ovidio e il discorso augusteo*, in *Collezione storica* (Rome: Laterza, 1994). Wallace-Hadrill's article likewise argues for a politically subversive reading of the *Fasti*.
[50] Carole Newlands, *Playing with Time: Ovid and the* Fasti. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

seamlessly with mine: the nascent discontents with establishmentarian time in the *Fasti* come into full bloom in the exile poetry.[51]

On the subject of temporal deviance more generally, Hunter Gardner's treatment of gendered time in Augustan elegy has likewise proved influential for my thinking. In her monograph, she invokes a Kristevan model of gendered time whereby cyclicality, repetition, and transcendence of historical time are attributed to the female subject, whereas historicity and linearity are attributed to the male.[52] She argues that the erotic infatuation featured in the genre disrupts these masculine temporal protocols and arrests the Roman male's teleological progress on his *cursus vitae* (Part 1 of her monograph). Gardner's gendered time does a service to my project in two ways. First of all, she has broken critical ground on the topic of temporal subjectivity in the Augustan age, on which I intend to build. Her project focalizes an individual temporal sensibility and its deviance from a collective ordering of time. Furthermore, her book shows a sensitivity toward the shaping of this subjectivity by the Roman Principate, whose "interventions in the life cycles of [its] subjects prompted the concerns of time, aging, and immortality so evident in elegiac poetry".[53] These concerns are intrinsic to the nature of my project. Nonetheless, the parameters and aims of her argument differ considerably from my own: hers is a project on Roman elegists and she conceives of time strictly in a gendered binary, neither of which are within the scope my analysis of Ovidian exile poetry.

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[51] Matt McGowan's volume on poetic redress in the exile poetry also discusses the tensions between Augustanism and Ovid's poetry along similar lines, but only discusses time in the context of literary representations of myth vs. history. Matthew McGowan, *Ovid in Exile Power and Poetic Redress in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto*, Mnemosyne Supplements, vol. 309 (Boston: Brill, 2009), 25.
[52] Hunter Gardner, *Gendering Time in Augustan Love Elegy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.
[53] *Id*. 33.

Where in the scholarly tradition the exilic corpus *is* addressed, the subject of temporal consciousness in the poems rarely surfaces. Fraenkel's 1945 literary biography of Ovid, though attuned to something like a psychology of narrative persona, makes no mention of his distinctive time-scape.[54] Wilkinson[55] and Syme[56] adopt a more historicizing approach to the exile poems, treating them as source texts for the first century climate and culture of the Black Sea territory and the history of Ovid's life in concrete terms. Betty Nagle, whose 1980 monograph precipitated a renewed scholarly interest in Ovidian exile poetry for its literary merit, discusses moments of temporal confusion only superficially and never as a principal construct.[57] Evans' self-professed *prolegomenon* to Ovidian exile studies, *Publica Carmina* (1986), is a survey of the stylistic evolution of Ovid's post-exile works, which only discusses time incidentally in reference to the chronology of his works.[58]

The mid-1990s marked the birth of a new movement in Ovidian criticism that privileged the experiential over the historical. Within this context, glimmers of the thesis that I will develop begin to show. Gareth Williams' monographs *Banished Voices*[59] and *The Curse of Exile*[60] make the case for the literary prominence of the 'unreal' and assert Ovid's psychologizing narrative perspective in the exile poetry. Williams also points to the unreality of Ovid's temporal perception, mentioning briefly the slowed time of *Tr.* 4.7 and the timelessness of the *Ibis*' peculiar universe.

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[54] H. Fränkel, *Ovid; A Poet Between Two Worlds.* Sather Classical Lectures no. 18 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945).
[55] L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955).
[56] Ronald Syme, *History in Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).
[57] Betty Rose Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the* Tristia *and* Epistulae ex Ponto *of Ovid* (Brussels: Latomus revue d'études latines, 1980).
[58] Harry Evans, *Publica Carmina: Ovid's Books from Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).
[59] Gareth Williams, *Banished Voices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 116-20.
[60] Ibid, *The Curse of Exile: A Study of Ovid's Ibis*, The Cambridge Philological Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

The phenomenon of atemporality is also briefly raised in Claassen's monograph on displacement in antiquity, where she discusses how the "perception of outer reality [is] interpreted as inner reality" in her discussion of the 'perpetual now' of the poem.[61] Stephen Hinds has broadly treated the issue of "dislocated time" in Ovid's exile poetry, and his arguments have informed this dissertation's approach at large.[62] In his article "After Exile: Time and Teleology from *Metamorphoses* to *Ibis*," observes how *Ibis'* collapse of myth-time challenges the carefully measured temporal order that the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* not only venerate, but narratologically perform, through so-called "measureless time".[63] While these works anticipate the aesthetic of time that is the project of this thesis, it seems that no full-scale treatment of this construct exists. The current resurgence of scholarly interest in the exile poetry makes this thesis a timely addition to the critical chorus.

My argument, then, is perhaps a matter of degrees: Ovid's subversive murmurs in the pre-exile works are amplified to a dull roar in the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* and finally a shrill scream in the eccentric *Ibis*. While other scholars, such as Gareth Williams, Darcy Krasne,[64] and Stephen Hinds have noted Ovid's temporal discontents in the exile poetry, to my knowledge there has yet to be a monograph-scale study in this subject. This is a void this dissertation attempts to fill.

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[61] Jo-Marie Claassen, *Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (London: Duckworth, 1999): 185-90.

[62] Stephen Hinds, "Dislocations of Ovidian Time," in *La représentation du temps dans la poésie augustéenne / Zur Poetik der Zeit in augusteischer Dichtung*, ed. J.P. Schwindt (Heidelberg: Universitatsverlag, 2005), 203-30.

[63] Stephen Hinds, "After Exile: Time and Teleology from Metamorphoses to Ibis," in *Ovidian transformations: essays on the Metamorphoses and its reception*, ed. Philip Hardie, Alessandro Barchiesi, and Stephen Hinds (Cambridge : Cambridge Philological Society, 1999), 48–67.

[64] Darcy Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia: Nostos, Poetics, and the Structure of the *Ibis*," *TAPA* 146.1 (2016): 149–89; "The Pedant's Curse: Obscurity and Identity in Ovid's Ibis." *Dictynna* 9 (2012). http://dictynna.revues.org/912; "Starving the Slender Muse: Identity, Mythography, and Intertextuality in Ovid's Ibis," in *Writing Down the Myths* (Cursor Mundi 17), ed. Gregory Nagy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013): 67–85.

Chapter 1: Time in Counterpoint: A Reading of *Tristia* 1.3

> When one has lived a long time alone,
> among regrets so immense the past occupies
> nearly all the room there is in consciousness,
> one notices in the snake's eyes, which look back
> without paying less attention to the future,
> the first coating of the opaque milky-blue
> leucoma snakes to get when about to throw
> their skins and become new—meanwhile continuing,
> of course, to grow old—the exact *bleu passé*
> that discolors the corneas of the blue-eyed
> when they lie back at last and look for heaven,
> a blurring one can see means they will never find it,
> when one has lived a long time alone.
>
> Galway Kinnell, "When One Has Lived a Long Time Alone"

Introduction

Of the five hundred and four times the word *tempus* appears in the Ovidian corpus, just under a third occur in the exile poetry.[65] This disproportionate figure reflects the importance of time as a concept in the *Tristia*, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, and unruly *Ibis*. But it is not so much what Ovid says about time explicitly, but rather what one finds in reading between the lines, that makes these texts unique in their representation. Ovid's lived experience, as chronicled in his "autobiographical" poems, is fragmented by memories of Rome, which draw him, like a riptide, ever backward. This state of repeated regression through nostalgia is borne out in the textual convolutions of time in the *Tristia*. From the Gestalt of these episodes, the reader can construct a temporality unique to the exile poetry, one that speaks to the exilic condition. Poised between past and present, time in exile is always inherently dual: time in counterpoint.

[65] 154/504, to be exact. Ninety-three of these one hundred and fifty-four instances are in the *Tristia*, making it the most *tempus*-heavy text.

Tristia 1.3 is emblematic of the exile's temporal consciousness. In this poem, Ovid revisits his final night in Rome. Throughout the text, he vacillates between the present day in Tomis and various, non-linear points on the eve of his departure, leading the reader on a disjointed journey through a temporal maze. By studying this poem closely, I argue, we can glean a sense of the cognitive dissonance of exile and how this is reflected in Ovid's perception of the passage of time. Though he yearns for Rome, our poet is consigned to a claustrophobic existence in Tomis, living with and among regrets so immense that the past occupies all the room there is in his consciousness.

In order to demonstrate the foregoing claims, I first discuss the protocols of time under the Augustan empire. This system is a baseline against which Ovid's aberrant temporality will be measured. Imperial temporality was, I argue, a semiotic system defined by teleological linearity, one that permeated Roman art and architecture, Roman institutions like the Julian Calendar, and finally the Golden Age literature of which Ovid was a constituent part. In fact, Ovid was instrumental in constructing and disseminating these protocols of time in his pre-exilic literature, particularly the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*. I then turn to the *Tristia*, performing a close reading of poem 1.3 as a case study in Ovid's temporal schemes. Here, I argue, he complicates the linear thread of Augustan teleology. His retrospective reconstruction of his last night in Rome disrupts the seriality of imperial temporal order and the naturalistic time that reinforced its legitimacy; and the effect of that disruption is to effect a post-Augustan temporal register of unreality.

On the one hand, Ovid's unreal time is a manner of political posturing: he deconstructs the imperial ordering of time in order to interrogate its validity and that of the regime it bolstered, which was the regime that exiled him. On the other hand, this highly subjective temporal modality gives expression to the exilic condition: chronological confusion, penetrating nostalgia, and

intrusive memory speak to the trauma of displacement. This link is borne out in the scientific literature, but also in literary works of disparate eras that treat similar themes. In its totality, Ovidian temporality is a mechanism for the poet in exile to reclaim his identity, an endeavor that proves futile—or does it?

Augustan Temporality as Social Construct

George Steiner, in his influential monograph, characterized the literature of the 20th century as intrinsically "extraterritorial"—that is, not just written by exiles about exile, but qualitatively shaped by its sentiments:

> It seems proper that those who create art in a civilization of quasi-barbarism, which has made so many homeless, should themselves be poets unhoused and wanderers across language. Eccentric, aloof, nostalgic, *deliberately untimely* ...

Such deliberate untimeliness, I argue, is also a hallmark of Ovid's representation of the condition of exile. In the context of Augustan-age incursions of public *mores* into private life, Ovid put himself at odds with the Augustan value system in his art and/or actions, which likely occasioned his banishment. He thus had a vested interest in resisting the dominant trajectory of the Augustan regime and the self-legitimating semiotic system of which it was a part. As an *apologia* for his ill-fated *Ars*, I argue, and to stir opprobrium against the regime that ousted him he constructs what we shall see to be his own, disobedient temporality. The poet's alternate vistas of time militate against the Augustan program by (a) reclaiming time as a subjective experience that cannot be delimited by the perimeters of an official chronometry, and (b) evacuating Augustan time of its meaning within the fictional world of the poetry, thereby exposing it as a socially-constructed, rather than absolute, reality.

Here, I invoke the sociological premise advanced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality*. In this landmark study in social constructionism, the authors argue that the way in which we understand and experience reality, including time, is socially inculcated and inflected. In the Augustan age, the culturally-mediated construct of time functioned as a "symbolic universe"—a key concept within this sociological framework. According to Berger and Luckmann, the symbolic universe is a set of beliefs assumed by participants in a society, which legitimate an institutionalized ideology. The group of elites in whose interest this ideology operates "maintain" this universe in their efforts to preserve a value-system which in turn upholds their authority. Berger and Luckmann elaborate as follows:

> The function of legitimation is to make objectively available and subjectively plausible the "first-order" objectivations that have been institutionalized… Proverbs, moral maxims and wise sayings are common on this level… explicit theories… symbolic processes… a general theory of the cosmos and a general theory of man… The symbolic universe also orders history. It locates all collective events in a cohesive unity that includes past, present and future.[66]

Augustus' symbolic universe not only shaped history by enshrining him within a pre-existing mythic narrative of the genealogy of *Romanitas*, but it also capitalized on the currency of the very concept of time: the Augustan era was, according to the symbology it promulgated, an epoch unto itself.

This unique temporality was instantiated in the emperor's program of urban renewal. Consider, for example, an emblem of Augustus' *publica magnificentia*: the Horologium Augusti. Dedicated in 10 B.C.E., this colossal sundial was, at the time, the largest ever built.[67] An imposing,

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[66] Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966): 92-104.

[67] Though whether the obelisk acts as a sundial (Edmund Buchner, "Solarium Augusti und Ara Pacis," *Römische Mitteilungen* Band 83 (1976):319-365 and "Horologium Solarium Augusti," *Römische Mitteilungen* Band 85 (1980): 355-373) or a solar meridian (Michael Schütz, "Zur Sonnenuhr des Augustus

thirty meter obelisk served as the *gnomon*, casting its shadow on an array of bronze markings to act as both clock and calendar. The inscription referencing Augustus' array of political offices, his subjugation of Egypt (*aegypto in potestatem populi Romani redacta*), and the globe at the needle's apex signified Rome's dominion over the world—and Augustus' dominion over Rome. His eponymous epigraph, *Imp. Caesar divi f[ilius],* invokes his agnatic Julian lineage. To bring his *cursus vitae* full circle, triangulated with the Ara and Solarium was Augustus' mausoleum. This incarnation of Augustan time thus represented the arc of his life in terms of both his imperial status and ambitions, and also his persona as the bestower of the *Pax Romana*. But perhaps most importantly, Augustus, in commissioning this monument for the city of Rome and dedicating it as a *donum* to the sun, rhetorically figured himself as the architect of time, imposing order on its diurnal rhythm.

The Ara Pacis has also been interpreted as an expression of imperial temporal protocols.[68] Peter Holliday has argued in an influential paper that the imagery of the monument's friezes embodied the Golden Age, touting Roman regeneration and continuity while playing on social anxieties about the destiny of Rome. Contemporary models of historical thought, inherited from Heraclitean and Stoic precursors, promulgated the idea of the Great Year, the culmination of a cosmic cycle of twelve *saecula* in a fiery cataclysm. Likewise, a uniquely Roman myth of urban demise preordained by Romulus' auguries was pervasive in social thought. In counterpoint, the processional reliefs of the Ara, showing the triumphal return of Augustus, juxtaposed with archetypal foundation myths like the Lupercal and the sacrifice of the Lavinian sow, mixed history

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auf dem Marsfeld," *Gymnasium* 97 (1990): 432-457) is debated. However, most scholars acknowledge, at the very least, a conceptual topographical triangulation of the mausoleum, Ara Pacis, and Horologium. See also P. Heslin, "Augustus, Domitian and the So-Called Horologium Augusti," *JRS* 97 (2007): 1-20.

[68] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1990): 167-210; Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 93-100.

and myth interchangeably and represented Augustus' imperial feats as the fruition of Rome's legendary origins.[69] The iconography of the Ara thus celebrates a teleological arc of time, whereby the Augustan "Golden Age" is the apogee of Rome's founding. This concept of the *aurea aetas*, Holland submits, appealed to the Roman populace by representing time as eternal rather than cyclical, thus implying that the rule of Augustus would avert the inevitable "cataclysmic destruction" of the world at the end of a cosmic turn. The Ara Pacis, he argues, is "an intricate architectural and sculptural allegory, a metaphor for the nature of the transitory moment in relation to larger cycles of time."[70] The Ara thus illustrates how the Augustan program commandeered prevailing cultural understandings of time and reshaped them to suit its ideological agenda.

"Through visual imagery a new mythology of Rome and, for the emperor, a new ritual of power were created."[71] So Paul Zanker in his influential monograph, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, which upended the then-prevailing regard for visual art as purely aesthetic objects. Departing from rigid formalism and self-referential interpretations, he instead read art and architecture as "mirrors of a society", both reflecting the state of its values and furthering their advancement.[72] While other scholars, like Ronald Syme, asserted that Augustan imagery was a propaganda machine at work, Zanker argues instead that it was a program of greater subtlety involving the interaction between a people and the totality of images that comprised their urban landscape, not a unilateral, closed system of messaging. Rather than a monologic stream of propaganda that emanated from the seat of imperial power, it was part of a language of authorial legitimation, a semiotic system in which politicians and poets took part.

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[69] Peter J. Holliday, "Time, History, and Ritual on the Ara Pacis Augustae," *The Art Bulletin* 72.4 (December 1990): 550-51.
[70] *Id*. 554.
[71] Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 1988.
[72] *Id*. vi.

The concept of time inheres in Zanker's thesis: temporality was a critical part of this agenda of self-legitimation, an analogue to Augustan visual rhetoric that also wove through that rhetoric.[73] As briefly discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, time was not only encoded in the public works of the imperial landscape, like the *Horologium Augusti* and mythic narratives of the Ara Pacis. It was also deployed as an paradigm of seriality that forged societal conceptions of time in a crucible of Augustan ideology, structuring a day, a month, a year according to ceremonies of occasion that paid homage to Augustus' authority. Time, under the province of the emperor's regime, became an organizing principle of immense power, a semiotic system in which Ovid played a crucial role as Rome's pre-eminent poet.[74]

Imperial temporality was likewise reflected in the creation of the Julian calendar, which was adopted and reformed under the Augustan regime. Here, too, Augustus drew a line of continuity with figures of the founding era: the original Roman calendar, whose vestiges are present to this day in the numerical names of the months September through December, was attributed to Romulus. The original ten lunar months were expanded to twelve by Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome (Liv. I.19), but the necessity of intercalation to reconcile lunar months with the solar year prompted the newly-minted *dictator perpetuo* Julius Caesar to institute a reformed calendar based on the latter (Suet. *Julius Caesar* 40). Upon Caesar's assassination, Augustus (Octavian) re-named *Quinctilis Iulius* in honor of Caesar and recalibrated the calendar's intercalations. In the wake of this reform, *Sextilis* was changed to *Augustus* as an honorific

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[73] Wallace-Hadrill discusses how propaganda "coalesces unnoticed with the existing values of a society" (Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Time for Augustus: Ovid, Augustus and the Fasti," in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. M. Whitby et al. (Bristol, Bristol Classical Press,1987); Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*.).

[74] Though Hunter Gardner also makes a compelling case for a dialogue between Ovid's amorous poetry and the temporal protocols of Roman masculinity and the *cursus honorum*, an analysis of this subject is outside the scope of this thesis (Gardner, *Gendering Love Elegy*, 2013).

memorializing his first consulship, his subjugation of Egypt, and the end of the civil war (Macrobius I.12.35). The Julian calendar thus embodied not just a temporality of measure, but also a temporality of occasion. After Augustus' death, the Senate met to discuss his honorific funeral rites. One senator introduced a resolution to designate Augustus' lifetime as the *Saeculum Augustum* and enter it into the official calendar (Suet. *Augustus* 100). The calendrical reforms of the Augustan regime thus moved beyond the ostensibly pragmatic, ordering time according to Augustan *mores*. By authoring and authorizing reforms that invoked the mythic origins of Rome as well as the Julian line, including imperial anniversaries, and interpolating the emperor into the calendar, Augustus inextricably bound his political identity to the ordering of time.[75]

Most pertinent to our discussion is the way in which Augustan temporality was borne out in the literature of the period. Vergil's *Aeneid* explicitly presages Augustus' Golden Age through imperial expansion (6.792-97), linking the Augustan era with the aetiology of Rome. Horace's *Odes* venerate the seasonality and structure of the Roman male's *cursus vitae,* while his *Carmen Saeculare*, a ceremonial poem that introduced the *Ludi Saeculares* (a ritual that marked the end of one saeculum and the beginning of another) extolled the *Saeculum Augustum* and praised the emperor through the proxy of his divine surrogate, Apollo. While these pre-eminent Augustan poets marked Augustan time in their poetry, Ovid was the literary figure who most actively participated in its construction. The two texts that most clearly and consistently demonstrate this temporal fealty are the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*. While the *Fasti* privileges the Augustan programmatic time that the exile poetry confronts and challenges through its delineation of the

[75] For an exhaustive historical analysis of Roman time, see Jörg Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine: Time, History, and the Fasti,* trans. David M.B. Richardson (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Julian Calendar and associated festivals,[76] the *Met.* exemplifies a teleological narrative-time that positions Caesar Augustus at its terminus through his apotheosis in Book 15.[77]

Ovid's *Fasti* chronicles the origins of the Julian Calendar in six books, one for each of the first six months of the year. Written as one continuous elegiac poem, the *Fasti* draws on the conventions of Greco-Roman didactic poetry to construct an aetiology of Augustan time, as it were. The first-person *vates*, Ovid's poetic-prophetic persona, takes the reader on a tour of Roman deities, who explain the history of Roman festivals and associated customs. It is likely that the text was unfinished at the time that Ovid was exiled to Tomis, given that it treats only half the calendar year.[78]

The poem begins with the pregnant phrase *tempora cum causis*. As per the ancient convention, the opening words act as a second title:[79] the *Fasti* rhetorically positions itself as an authority on the subject of imperial time and its aetiology from the very start. The proemium unfolds as follows:

> Tempora cum causis Latium digesta per annum
> lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa canam.
> excipe pacato, Caesar Germanice, voltu
> hoc opus et timidae dirige navis iter;
> officioque, levem non aversatus honorem,
> en tibi devoto numine dexter ades.
> sacra recognosces annalibus eruta priscis,
> et quo sit merito quaeque notata dies.
> invenies illic et festa domestica vobis:
> saepe tibi pater est, saepe legendus avus;
> quaeque ferunt illi pictos signantia fastos,

[76] Wallace-Hadrill, "Time for Augustus."
[77] Philip Hardie, Alessandro Barchiesi, Stephen Hinds, *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and its Reception*. *Cambridge Philological Society* Suppl. 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1999).
[78] For an exhaustive treatment of institutionalized Augustan time, e.g., in the imperial innovations on the consular *fasti* and the Julian calendar, as well as the interactions of natural and civil time, cf. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 2007 Ch. 6.
[79] Katharina Volk, "Ovid's Fasti and the Poetics of Simultaneity," *TAPA* 127 (1997): 288; Barchiesi, *Il poeta,* 43, 49, 254, 270.

tu quoque cum Druso praemia fratre feres.
Caesaris arma canant alii: nos Caesaris aras,
et quoscumque sacris addidit ille dies. (1-14)

I sing of time ordered throughout the year, its origins, and the signs that set beneath the earth and rise again. Caesar Germanicus, receive this work with a serene expression and steer the passage of my timid boat. Don't be averse to this meagre honor, but attend this service and the homage paid to you favorably. You will recognize rites unearthed from ancient annals and discover how each day has its own mark. There you will find your household festivals you shall read of your father and grandfather. You too shall win rewards with your brother Drusus. Let others sing of Caesar's arms: I shall sing of his altars and whatever days he added to the sacred roll.

The caesural pause at the end of the phrase *tempora cum causis* reinforces its status as second title, while the modifier *digesta* refers to the ordering of the text and time simultaneously, as the two are coextensive. Ovid's textuality is melded with its central subject. The parallel invocation of the stars in parataxis with *tempora* identifies Augustan time with astronomical temporal cycles, like the rise and fall of the constellations. This subtle rhetoric implies the naturalness and the objectivity of imperial temporality Ovid weaves references to the *gens Julia* into the proem throughout, citing Caesar's domestic achievements and conquests abroad (13-14). He also points to Germanicus' ancestors along the Julian line, using deictic pronouns like *illic* as if they were emphatic presences in and on the page, another confusion of text and topic (and topography) (*invenies illic et festa domestica vobis* 9, *saepe tibi pater est, saepe legendus avus* 10). The dedication to Germanicus, the heir of the heir to Augustus, is an endorsement of the *gens Julia* and Augustus' agnatic line stretching into the future in continuity with the mythic and historical past. The appeal for Germanicus' mildness and assent (*pacato ... vultu* 3, *non aversatus* 5, *adnue* 15, *te placidum* 17), the epithet *Caesar*, and the fact of the dedication itself suggest that he is in fact a proxy for

Augustus. Augustan time is thus not simply the ordering of days in the form of a calendar or the structuring of the Roman male's *cursus vitae*; it is also an arc of time stretching forward eternally and back to time immemorial.[80]

The poem is also an homage to Augustan time structurally. Not only does the progression of the chapters mirror the progression of time in terms of Julian months, but there are also other, more subtle ways in which the text engages with its subject. As Katharina Volk has observed, a tripartite temporality is central to its aesthetic: the narrative of the poem, the creation of the poem by the poet, and the passing of the year all take place at once. The unfolding of these three processes in unison she terms *simultaneity*.[81] [82] Philip Hardie likewise asserts that, through the convergence of the time of the Roman year and the time of the poet's own narrating, says *carmen* and *annum* could in a sense be used interchangeably.[83] Further, his first-person, bystander perspective, his detailed description of festivals, and use of deictic and his temporal pronouns that convey immediacy portray the speaker as both *vates* and witness to the unfolding of the *tempora digesta*

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[80] See Wallace-Hadrill's nuanced argument of panegyric elements in Ovid's *Fasti*: "Looking back, then, we see Augustus successfully incorporated into three forms of Fasti, turning all Roman time into Augustan time. Historically he is the culmination of past magistrates and triumphs; cosmically, he is born on the equinox to bring peace to the world; and in the daily calendar he sits alongside the origins of Rome, when the gods were last close to Roman man." (Wallace-Hadrill, "Time for Augustus," 226 and foregoing analysis).

[81] Katharina Volk, "Simultaneity," 287.

[82] Volk further contends that the poem implies its eternal continuity: "it should be noted that the whole concept of simultaneity, so prominent throughout the poem, precludes the possibility of the narrator's simply stopping midcourse: to break off the poem would be to break off the year, something that is not possible without creating a major sense of disruption—which I would argue is exactly the effect of poem's sudden end at 6.812. Despite all the subtle signs of closure that one may or may not be able to find in Book 6, the main impression is that of dramatic lack of closure: the *Fasti* is an unfinished work, and this impression is even more powerful because the narrator, who set out to treat the entire year, has been moving so completely in unison with the time that is his subject matter. The sense that time will go on is in fact particularly strong at the end of Book 6, and nothing suggests that the narrator will stop moving simultaneously" (303-4). Newlands (233) and Barchiesi (272) disagree on this point.

[83] Philip Hardie, "The Janus Episode in Ovid's Fasti," *MD* 26 (1991): 47.

in loco.[84] This poetic strategy—conflating the narrative of the poem and the events it describes—is typical of epic and didactic, which operate under the pretext of objectivity, [85] as opposed to love elegy, which purports to represent the subjective experience of the speaker.[86] Ovid thus exploits an established *topos* to position Augustan time as an objective reality rather than socially-constructed, a conceit he will unravel in exile.[87]

The *Metamorphoses* likewise constructs a time scheme that, at least on one reading, legitimates imperial authority on a cosmological scale. The poet's *perpetuum carmen* evokes the eternity of the Augustan regime by representing the momentum of the universe, from the dawn of existence through the mythic past, as driving toward the emperor's triumph in Book 15 (*primaque ab origine mundi ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen. Met*. 1.3-4). On the one hand, the temporality of the *Metamorphoses* is periodic: the template of transformation is repeated over and over in a series of mythic vignettes that memorialize the antique fabular record. On the other, the overarching temporality of the work is teleological, representing the deification of the emperor as the culmination of all time. In this way, the text subsumes both the mythic catalogue and the socially-ingrained, traditional model of cyclical temporality endemic in Greco-Roman culture

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[84] "Phrases like this create a certain effect of breathlessness: the narrator, who is always present, always *hic et nunc*, is also continuously exposed to the passing of the year with its changes of festivals and constellations, as well as to the necessity of creating poetic speech about it" (Volk, "Simultaneity," 301).

[85] Though Richard Heinz asserts in "Ovidselegische Erzälung" that subjectivity of the narrator is actually quite pronounced, as in Ovid's amorous elegy (R. Heinze, "Ovids elegische Erzahlung," Berichte uber die Verhandlungen der sachsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse 71 (1919):7; cf. also J. Miller, "Ritual Directions in Ovid's Fasti: Dramatic Hymns and Didactic Poetry," *CJ* 75 (1979): 204-14, and Newlands, *Playing with Time*).

[86] *Id.* 289.

[87] Newlands and Fantham suggest that this process begins in the *Fasti*, perhaps following Ovid's estrangement from the emperor and/or exile. The "destabilization" of the narrative that Newlands observes she attributes to his "movement from optimism to disillusionment" with the Augustan regime (18). Fantham notes that the poem ceases right before July and August, the months that venerate the Julio-Claudian dynasty (210-15). Elaine Fantham, "Sexual Comedy in Ovid's Fasti: Sources and Motivation," HSCP 87 (1983): 185-216.

within a framework of Augustan time, not effacing but incorporating it, as per the *modus operandi* of the imperial program.

The passage that most vividly exemplifies this unique temporality is the coextensive triumph of Augustus and *apotheosis* of the poet in Book 15. Following the deification of Julius Caesar, Ovid extols Augustus as a more prolific imperialist than his forebear, on par with the divine ruler, Jupiter (15.858). Here, he portrays the emperor's achievements, which evoke the *aurea aetas*, as the culmination of the Julian line and the *telos* of the cosmic arc he has depicted in the *Metamorphoses*. Invoking a series of mythic heroes as his analogues, the poet then offers a final envoi to the emperor:

> quosque alios vati fas appellare piumque est:
> tarda sit illa dies et nostro serior aevo,
> qua caput Augustum, quem temperat, orbe relicto
> accedat caelo faveatque precantibus absens! (15.868-79)
>
> and those other [gods] to whom it is right and pious to make an appeal;
> far be that day—postponed beyond our time,
> when the leader Augustus shall forsake the earth which he now governs,
> and ascend to heaven, from that far height to hear his people's prayers!

This plea to the gods, which is itself a prospective apotheosis, projects Augustus' imperial ambitions into the distant future, extending the arc of Augustan time indefinitely. Following hard upon this divinization of Augustus, Ovid confers divine status upon himself:

> parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
> astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum,
> quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
> ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,
> siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam. (15.875-80)
>
> Nonetheless, in my better part I shall be borne immortal,
> far above lofty stars, and mine shall be a name indelible.
> Wherever Roman power extends her sway over the conquered lands,
> I shall be read by lips of men. If poets' prophecies have any truth,
> through all the future generations, I shall live in fame.

As in the *Fasti*, Ovid here constructs a temporal parallelism in which he is engaged: the evolution of the cosmos, the unfolding of Augustan imperialism, the eternal glory of the two Caesars, and his own poetic immortality all follow a coextensive teleological continuum. In the end, Ovid enfolds himself within the imperial mythos he has established in the course of the *Met.* as the premier Augustan poet,[88] but his assertion of an open-ended Ovidian temporality begins to replace that of the emperor.

The temporal conceits that buttress Ovid's Augustan poetry fall away in the *Tristia*. That Ovid's poetry moves to a different beat, as it were, has been studied in some detail by Stephen Hinds. He remarks:

> ... time itself is always a loaded term as the *Tristia* gets under way, a term which moves between Ovid's lived experience and his verse, negotiating a transition from the world-views of his Roman past to world-views which will inform his Pontic present and future. The poet puts life and art into dialogue not only to construct his exiled self (as recent work on the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* has so well shown), but to construct the temporal frames which that exiled self must inhabit.[89]

These "temporal frames" are the subject of this chapter. I argue that Ovid's *Tristia* disrupts Augustan teleology by turning the arc of imperial progress back on itself. Indeed, in the following chapters, I will go on to discuss how Ovid constructs a post-Augustan universe in which he effects the deracination of the Augustan genealogy, ushers in a Bronze Age anew, and creates his own untimely calendar. In the fourth line of the passage from the *Fasti* quoted above, Ovid compares his poetic activity to a timid skiff, prevailing upon Germanicus to guide its path like the *lapsa*

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[88] For additional treatments of time and teleology in the *Metamorphoses*, see: Volk Ovid, Feldherr Ovid, See Denis Feeney and Stephen Hinds articles in: Philip Hardie, Alessandro Barchiesi, Stephen Hinds, *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and its Reception.* Cambridge Philological Society Suppl. 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1999).

[89] Stephen Hinds, "After Exile: Time and Teleology from Metamorphoses to Ibis," in *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and its Reception.* Cambridge Philological Society Suppl. 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 1999).

signa he invokes; whatever smooth sailing he had hoped for under the Augustan regime, his *navis iter* ends in shipwreck at Tomis.

In exile, by contrast, the counterpart to the Augustan "symbolic universe" is void of its semantics. The *Tristia*, *Ibis*, and *Epistulae ex Ponto* speak to this experiential truth by systematically evacuating time of its Augustan exigencies. The politicized linearity of Caesarian time gives way to aseasonality (*Tr.* 3.10, 5.9), the recursive temporality of memory (*Tr.* 1.3), and the narratological negative feedback loop that structures the *Ibis*—all of which undergird the texts' political commentary. The project of Ovid's poetry is to re-order time with the subjectivity of the individual as its fulcrum.

A Case Study in Ovidian Temporality: Tristia 1.3

Tristia 1.3 is the conceptual, if not the literal, exordium to a collection that pays no heed to linear chronology. Through its unlikely placement, it echoes at the formal level its own content and epitomizes the pervasive motif of temporal confusion throughout the *Tristia*. It is in this poem that the newly exiled Ovid recalls the fraught night of his departure from Rome and the twilight of his tenure as Rome's greatest poet. This elegiac nocturne of despair is, in many ways, a case study in Ovid's manipulations of time. As such, it imbues the reader with a distinct impression of Ovid's temporal consciousness in exile.

Fittingly, the poem begins with Ovid's *supremum tempus*, final moment, at Rome. Already this phrasing is marked not just for its irony—*supremum* signifies both "fin*est*" and "fin*al*"—but also for its intersection with prior Ovidian texts. The forward-looking *tempora* of his *perpetuum carmen* and the aetiological *tempora cum causis* that open the *Fasti* here grind to a sudden halt. The linear thread of Augustan time, which extends from time immemorial to the emperor's

apotheosis and anticipates his lasting influence, is foreclosed from the very start: it is not only his, but *the supremum tempus in urbe*, as if Rome's last gasp before the greatest Roman departs. Likewise, the promise of Ovid's poetic immortality on which the *Metamorphoses* ends is exchanged for obscurity and perpetual mortality, which the allusion to *imagines*—ancestral images carried at funeral processions—evokes.

This *imago* is in fact a waking reverie that beleaguers Ovid at the supposed time of writing:

> Cum subit illius tristissima noctis imago,
> quod mihi supremum tempus in urbe fuit
> cum repeto noctem, qua tot mihi cara reliqui
> labitur ex oculis nunc quoque gutta meis (*Tr.* 1.3.1-4)
>
> When a most dismal apparition of that night,
> which was my final hour in the city, besets me,
> when I recall the night on which I left behind all that is dear to me,
> even now a tear slips from my eyes.

The language here is telling: he uses the term for a likeness or apparition, implying that the recollection of his flight from Rome is vivid in its resemblance to the actual event, like a haunting specter. Likewise, his use of the present tense (*subit, repeto*) interlocked with the perfect (*fuit, reliqui*) implies that past events with present consequences (stative aspect) continue to take their toll on the bedeviled writer; the emphasis on the present via the emphatic *quoque nunc* reinforces this effect. The double dependent *cum* clause (1, 3, as opposed to *cum* plus conjunction) followed by a single main clause (4) grammatically reflects what Ovid says explicitly in line three: *repeto noctem*. This phrase overtly means "recall the night", but it can also mean "repeat", prefiguring the iterative nature of the lines to follow. The overture to *Tristia* 1.3 thus establishes its premises, which the poem will go on to enact for the following hundred lines: Ovid's memory of the night of his departure is constantly relived in a vicious cycle, and is as vivid as if it were occurring at the moment of recollection.

Ovid describes his *imago* as *tristissima*—a superlative *sphragis* that invokes the title of the collection and stakes a claim to the primacy of the poem within it. This epithet is also marked because tearfulness is a recurring theme throughout the poem, contributing to its retrospective momentum. Repeated references to weeping are sprinkled throughout (*gutta* 4; *fluentem flens*, 17; *imbre cadente*, 18; *luctus gemitusque*, 21; *inque domo lacrimas angulus omnis habet*, 24; *singultu … impediente*, 42). This imagistic pattern is itself a form of temporal play: it recalls the literal beginning of the collection, *Tristia* 1.1, in which he describes how his book—a surrogate for the self—will be stained by his weeping, as well as the recalling the lovelorn missives of the *Heroides*, which are often blotted with their authors' tears, a nod to his literary feats at Rome. The image also aligns him with his epistolary heroines, who are said to have wept over their letters, figuring his departure from the city as the separation effected by an unrequited love or ill-starred coupling. In so doing, he manages to cast himself as a character of his own creation, and also to cultivate an elegy of despair that leverages the full emotional weight of his canon of amorous poetry to capture the feeling of being in exile. In a strange twist on the tradition of the topos of the παρακλαυσίθυρον, the *exclusus amator* takes on a whole new meaning.

These auto-referential allusions not only recall Ovid's former poetic prowess, but also create the additional effect of self-conscious pseudo-epistolarity (a genre he claims he invented). Like the *Heroides*, Ovid's love letter to Rome is a fiction, likely not intended as an actual missive but for publication. In this instance, however, the conceit has implications for the author's exilic consciousness. As Janet Altman observes in her monograph on the epistolary novel, letter-writing is both an instrument of *rapprochement* and an emblem of distance, one that can afford the intimacy of "interiorized communion" or highlight the spatial and spiritual separation of author

and addressee.[90] On the one hand, one is representing things as they are at the time of writing, a snapshot of the present one offers to a future recipient, but on the other, there is a lapse in time between writing and receipt that creates a temporal gulf between the two, one that precludes the intimacy of simultaneously shared experience. Because the recipient is an imaginary reader at Rome, an abstraction in comparison with the historical figures named in the *Ex Ponto*, the emphasis is less on person and more on place. The epistolary format thus exemplifies an essential spatio-temporal paradox that Ovid enacts in the exile poetry: being bodily at Tomis while at Rome in mind, a state that is defined by simultaneity and temporal disjunction. The poem's form—which is underscored by its invocation of literary letters—thus echoes broader sentiments about the exile's schismatic persona.

However, the intended recipient, though an internal construct, also plays a role in the letter's discursive aims. This invisible "character"—a nameless specter that mediates between us, the actual readers, and the poet—is simultaneously familiarizing and de-familiarizing. On the one hand, the letter conceit allows the poet to strike an intimate tone in conjuring the night of his banishment; the poem reads like a confession of one's most torturous traumas to a kindred confidant, lending it an air of authenticity. On the other hand, this mediating specter creates a sense of separation between ourselves and the poet, when we realize that we are not an intimate witness to an act of revelation, but a fly on the wall rather than a participant in this epistolary exchange. Likewise, we are only privy to one side of a supposed dialogue—and deliberately *exclusi* from the other. Ovid's letters are themselves *missives mi-vives*—just like their half-dead author.[91] These distancing elements of the pseudo-epistolary mode position the reader as an outsider vis-à-vis the

[90] Janet Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982): 15, 12-13.
[91] À la Michel Butor, *Illustrations III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

poem. It is we who are outsiders looking in on the imagined exchange between Ovid and his familiar—and the mirage of Rome he calls into being in the poem.

The epistolary format also allows Ovid to construct a secondary persona. Kafka, in his *Briefe an Milena* (letters to Milena Jesenská, his mistress and confidant), points to this second selfhood inherent in epistolary exchange:

> Es ist ja ein Verkehr mit Gespenstern und zwar nicht nur mit dem Gespenst des Adressaten, sondern auch mit dem eigenen Gespenst, das sich einem unter der Hand in dem Brief, den man schreibt, entwickelt oder gar in einer Folge von Briefen, wo ein Brief den andern erhärtet und sich auf ihn als Zeugen berufen kann. (Prag, Ende März 1922)
>
> It is in point of fact a correspondence with phantoms, and indeed not only with the phantom of the addressee, but also with one's own, which evolves under one's own hand in the letter one is writing or even in a series of letters, where one letter corroborates the others and can refer to it as a witness.

In *Tristia* 1.3, the addressee is quite literally a figment of Ovid's imagination, a stand-in for Rome. But there is also a sense in which he is conjuring a phantom self as a testament to the exilic experience. That is to say, we are not just concerned here with the relationship between poet and persona, an established dynamic of Augustan elegy, but with the concentric circles of poet, persona, and epistolary auto-icon. This is a critical distinction: the epistolary Ovid is a reconstruction of the self through the lens of traumatic memory by the primary persona (i.e., as opposed to the historical figure) from the vantage point of exile. This effigy illustrates exile's traumatic effects on one's self-conception and also the desire of the displaced person to reconstitute their identity in order to resolve the cognitive dissonance elicited by expatriation. We might also consider the exile poems at large a species of "testimony" which speaks to Ovid's obsession with accruing witnesses to corroborate the unreality of his condition (for instance, the vagaries of the impossible Tomitian climate), and perhaps, most of all, to convince himself of his continued connectedness with Rome. We thus have a play-within-a-play phenomenon, whereby an epistolary

phantom, which he summons into being by his own hand, betrays the unique self-consciousness of the exile.

The concept of the epistolary self is closely tied with that of episodic memory. Episodic memory is a type of metacognition, which was classified by Endel Tulving in the early 1970s. In his volume *The Organization of Memory*, he provides a heuristic taxonomy of his subject that divides it into two essential categories: semantic and episodic memory. While semantic memory is a store of cognitive reference points (such as: facts, terms, and concepts) that are universal truths,[92] episodic memory—a term he coins—is "personal experience remembered in its spatio-temporal relation to other such experiences".[93] The latter is a species of *chronesthesia*, otherwise referred to as "mental time travel", which is the subjective sense of time that allows one to retroject or project the self mentally into the past or future.[94] Its necessary correlate is *autonoetic consciousness*, which is "the kind of consciousness that mediates an individual's awareness of his or her existence and identity in subjective time extending from the personal past through the present to the personal future"—that is, the recollection of the self and phenomenal subjectivity in the mental (re-)enactment of events in the past or a hypothetical future.[95]

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[92] Endel Tulving and W. Donaldson (eds.), *The Organization of Memory* (New York: Academic, 1972), 383.

[93] *Id.* 387; cf. also 385-6: "Episodic memory receives and stores information about temporally dated episodes or events and temporal-spatial relations among these events. A perceptual event can be stored in the episodic system solely in terms of its perceptible properties or attributes, and it is always stored in terms of its autobiographical reference to the already existing contents of the episodic memory store."

[94] Tulving, "Chronesthesia: Conscious Awareness of Subjective Time," in *Principles of Frontal Lobe Function*, ed. D. T. Stuss and R. T. Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 311–325.

[95] First elaborated in Tulving, *Elements of episodic memory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). Tulving, "Memory and Consciousness," *Canadian Psychology* 26 (1985): 1–12. Tulving E (2002), 1. John M. Gardiner, "Episodic memory and autonoetic consciousness: a First-person approach," in *Episodic Memory: New Directions in Research*, ed. J.P. Aggleton and M.A. Conway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11-30.

However, Tulving contends that episodic memory is "a more or less faithful record of temporally organized perceptual episodes ... [whose] mnemonic organization mimics the initial perception of the events to be remembered."[96] That is, if one recalls an autobiographical sequence of events, one remembers them in the order in which they occurred. Under normative circumstances, his contention is generally accurate. However, since his pioneering research, further studies have been conducted on trauma and its effects on memory specifically. Contemporary cognitive science militates against the notion that episodic memory is a faithful rendition of the factual past, and indicates that it is actually quite liable to fragmentation and disordering. In fact, the experience of trauma can meaningfully alter critical regions of the brain (the hippocampus and amygdala), interfering with the ability to consolidate memory in general, let alone when it comes to a fraught past.[97] I argue that it is precisely these convolutions of time in memory, symptoms of the trauma of exile, that we encounter in Ovid's exile poems.

Let us now return to *Tristia* 1.3, at the juncture where the temporal and spatial markers in *iam prope* (5), which convey immediacy and urgency at the start of the line, meld the moment of composition with the nascent dawn it recalls (*aderat*). According to the temporality of the text, the morning of his departure is, in exile, always present and close at hand. This species of temporal unreality marks the beginning of Ovid's retrospective reverie and also illustrates one of its defining features: *enargeia*, that is, the ancient literary device of conjuring the phenomena of the past as if they were occurring before one's eyes. The vividness of these descriptions allows the poetic

[96] Tulving, *Organization of Memory*, 398.
[97] B.A. van der Kolk and R. Fisler, "Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and exploratory study," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* vol. 8 no. 4 (1995): 505–25. David C. Rubin, Adriel Boals, Dorthe Berntsen, "Memory in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Properties of voluntary and involuntary, traumatic and non-traumatic autobiographical memories in people with and without PTSD symptoms," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* vol. 137 no. 4 (2008): 591–614.

persona to enact the "mental time travel" of episodic memory for the reader's benefit, giving us insight into the exilic consciousness of the displaced person.

The ancient authority on the phenomenon of *enargeia* is Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In his treatise on Lysias' style, he provides its most comprehensive definition:

> ἔχει δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐνάργειαν πολλὴν ἡ Λυσίου λέξις. αὕτη δ᾽ ἐστὶ δύναμίς τις ὑπὸ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἄγουσα τὰ λεγόμενα, γίγνεται δ᾽ ἐκ τῆς τῶν παρακολουθούντων λήψεως. ὁ δὴ προσέχων τὴν διάνοιαν τοῖς Λυσίου λόγοις οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται σκαιὸς ἢ δυσάρεστος ἢ βραδὺς τὸν νοῦν, ὃς οὐχ ὑπολήψεται γινόμενα τὰ δηλούμενα ὁρᾶν. καὶ ὥσπερ παροῦσιν οἷς ἂν ὁ ῥήτωρ εἰσάγῃ προσώποις ὁμιλεῖν. ἐπιζητήσει τε οὐθέν, οἷον εἰκὸς τοὺς μὲν ἂν δρᾶσαι, τοὺς δὲ παθεῖν, τοὺς δὲ διανοηθῆναι, τοὺς δὲ εἰπεῖν. κράτιστος γὰρ δὴ πάντων ἐγένετο ῥητόρων φύσιν ἀνθρώπων κατοπτεῦσαι καὶ τὰ προσήκοντα ἑκάστοις ἀποδοῦναι πάθη τε καὶ ἤθη καὶ ἔργα. D.H. *Lys.* 7.1.14,17
>
> Lysias' style possesses great *enargeia*. This consists in a certain power of conveying what he describes down before the senses, and it arises from his ability to captivate those paying close attention. There is no one who, applying his mind to the words of Lysias, is so obtuse, or insensible, or slow on the uptake that he will not feel that he is an eye-witness to the events that transpire and meeting face-to-face with the characters the orator describes, as if himself present. And he will seek out no further evidence of action or suffering or thoughts or words. For he was the best of all orators at observing the nature of mankind and ascribing to each the appropriate feeling and character and action.

Here, Dionysius describes *enargeia* as an impression conjured by the author that is so vivid that his audience feels as if they were watching events within the narrative as they unfold. He underscores the visuality (ὑπολήψεται γινόμενα τὰ δηλούμενα ὁρᾶν) and the intimacy of the experience (οἷς ἂν ὁ ῥήτωρ εἰσάγῃ προσώποις ὁμιλεῖν) as well as the sensation of being transported into a fictional world (ὥσπερ παροῦσιν). This is a device that Ovid exploits through the expressiveness of his language, which is, in turn, a critical part of his manipulations of time.

In the exile poetry, vividness and involuntary memory—a term coined by Marcel Proust—are intimately connected. In the overture to his celebrated novel *Swann's Way,* Proust famously describes the incursion of a forgotten memory. One wintry day, the unnamed narrator is offered

tea and petites madeleines by his mother and upon the taste of these refreshments is suddenly struck by a recollection of his childhood. He shudders as a the "exquisite pleasure" of a memory detached from present experience invades his senses, and a lengthy ekphrasis on the village of Combray ensues. Not only do Ovid's own, spontaneous recollections strike him with all the evocative nostalgia of Proust's *petites madeleines*, but he also draws the reader out of the present moment of reading and into the past with him by conjuring—and then skewing—its contours. This relationship between visuality and time we might call a "temporal aesthetic".

We too thus experience Ovid's chronesthesia at second hand in the passage above, a vicarious subjectivity in which he invites us to participate through his diction like the hypothetical *quocumque aspiceres* (21), deploying the conceit that, if we were present, we would experience the "grief and lamentation" that abound. Likewise, his description of events through the lens of his own sensory experience imbues his description of the past with a vivid immediacy and stokes readerly sympathy (e.g., 28-34, the passage below). The pathos of the scene lies in the fact that his journey into exile is ultimately a counterfactual to our own experience; we diverge from his subtle process of identification.

Building on this observation, Jessica Seidman has pointed to a paradox in Ovid's use of what she terms "memorial transport": his constant reminders of absence, both physical and poetic, are a means of creating lasting memorial presence.[98] This process, she contends, is dyadic. Parts of Rome "come" to him in exile, the city itself being memorially transported in its absence to the far reaches of the empire. Ovid also deploys this strategy to construct a poetic memorial to himself through textual presence as he contemplates his absence from Rome, one in which readers

[98] Jessica Seidman, "*Loci Memoriae*: Place and Memory in Latin Literature," Ph.D. diss. (University of Chicago, 2013), 145.

participate: Ovid "absents himself from the space of the text in such a way that the audience cannot help but fill in the gap with his memory."[99] Ovid is thus, from afar, attempting to control the temporality of his audience's reading practices, urging us to conjure him into being in our minds from the details he has provided elsewhere in the text.

Not only does the text fuse the time of writing with that of his banishment, but Ovid likewise attests to a collapse of time on the night of his departure itself. His epistolary persona, in the throes of the trauma of his relegation, loses his grasp on a normative perception of time's progression. This distortion is evidenced by the description of his paralysis in the following line: *nec spatium nec mens fuerat satis apta parandi: / torpuerant dempta pectora nostra mora* ("There had been neither a sufficient period of time nor presence of mind for preparing / my heart grew numb due to delay denied me," 7-8). His stupefaction is echoed by the tautologous language of its description, which essentially represents twice his impression that time hurtles forward at breakneck speed, leaving him bereft of his faculties. His insensibility to the passage of time is further evinced by the phrase *non aliter stupui quam qui Iovis ignibus ictus / vivit et est vitae nescius ipse suae* ("I was transfixed in just the same way as one who was struck by Jove's fires, who lives and yet is unaware of his own life," 12). Here, Ovid attests to a subjective sense of the slowing of time's passage while the hours of the night speed past him. We are left with a temporal paradox wherein the soon-to-be exile is numb to external time, sensible only to a clock that operates according to his affective state.

Ovid's convolutions of time take on a new form in the following lines, which reverse the course of the night. Whereas line 5 describes the break of dawn, line 28 returns us to the dead of

[99] Seidman, "*Loci Memoriae*," 159.

night, when the moon is on high, guiding her nocturnal steeds, as if the author is trying to slow his inevitable departure:

> iamque quiescebant voces hominumque canumque,
> Lunaque nocturnos alta regebat equos.
> hanc ego suspiciens et ab hac Capitolia cernens,
> quae nostro frustra iuncta fuere Lari,
> 'numina vicinis habitantia sedibus,' inquam,
> 'iamque oculis numquam templa videnda meis,
> dique relinquendi, quos urbs habet alta Quirini,
> este salutati tempus in omne mihi.' (28-34)
>
> Now the voices of men and dogs grew hushed
> and the Moon guided her nocturnal steeds on high.
> I, gazing up at her, and beholding the capitol by her light,
> which was joined, in vain, to my domestic deity,
> "You gods who live near my home," I said,
> "and temples not to be seen by my eyes hereafter,
> and gods left behind, whom the high city of Quirinus holds,
> receive my salutations for all time."

This passage sustains the emphasis on visuality seen in lines 1-2; the repetition of the temporal particles *iamque ... iamque*, as well as the imperfective tense and repetition of present participles *suspiciens … cernens* in line 10, which imply ongoing action, invite us to witness the scene in moment-by-moment fashion, as if we had a window into the recesses of Ovid's memory. We too experience the scene in the moment, as if before our eyes. Here, the spurious light of the moon illuminates the capitol "adjoined in vain to his home" (29-30), emphasizing the illusory connection between the Roman capitol and his *Lares*, which is finally severed by his exile. The past self in the scene described has a chilling prescience when it comes to the future: Ovid would in fact not live to see or salute his native gods and temple again. The passage is remarkable for its temporal scope: Ovid reaches into the past relative to both the time of composition and his previous description of the night in question, dwells on the presence of the moment he describes, and imagines himself looking into the future from that vantage point.

In lines 47 and following, Ovid returns again to the daybreak before his departure. Here, his despair gives way to an overwhelming impression of obsessive paranoia. He accuses the night of denying him delay in its rush toward conclusion (47-8), he accosts passersby, alleging that they hasten his departure, he subjects them to an inquisition about their comings and goings (51-2), he compulsively touches his threshold three times (55), and he repeats his goodbyes over and over (57-60). The double exclamation of *a! quotiens* ('Ah! How many times …' 51, 53) underscores—and linguistically echoes—his frenetic behavioral iterations. His macro-cycling between the time of composition and the night of his exile and from dawn to dead of night and back again give way to smaller and smaller temporal cycles. These tightening compulsive gyrations reflect a frantic desire to assert control over a traumatic event over which he has none. For this reason, too, he seeks to name the hour of his departure; by locating his exile at a definite point on a temporal spectrum, he soothes his existential uncertainty (53-4).

Not only is the actual memory of a traumatic event unreliable in terms of the recalled sequence of events, but its mental repetition is often a coping mechanism, as observed in the 19th century by Freud in reference to repressed memories, which the subject repeats "as contemporary experience" reproducing them "not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it ... in the end we understand that this is his way of remembering".[100] In the reading to follow, I argue that Ovid's episodic memory confuses time in just this way. Ovid's epistolary representation of self might thus be read as a reification of episodic memory, one that illustrates the subjective temporality of Ovid in the throes of the acute trauma of his exile—and his attempts at self-soothing through its repeated renditions.

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[100] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 19. Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, Working through," in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, vol. xii (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 150.

At line 69, the poet declares that he will no longer delay the inevitable and will relinquish his words unfinished (*nec mora, sermonis verba inperfecta relinquo,* 69). These *inperfecta verba* at first glance appear to be his parting words to friends and loved ones, but they might also be read as the incomplete texts brought with him to languish in exile. The poet's literary death is followed hard upon by its bodily counterpart. The enactment of the poet's symbolic death at the end of the poem, complete with the semblance of ritual morning performed by his wife, disrupts the temporal structure of the poem once again by transporting us into the grim future without warning. Ovid's exilic chronesthetics, which vacillate wildly between looking forward and backward and ruminating on the present moment, demonstrate the cultural and psychological dislocation of the displaced person.

A helpful framework for understanding this experience is that offered by Edward Saïd. Borrowing from the register of music theory, he describes the worldview of the exile as "contrapuntal", that is, an original plurality of vision that derives from the simultaneous experience of native culture and new environs. "For an exile," he writes, "habits of life, expression or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together *contrapuntally*."[101] Saïd describes this metanastic perspective as an aesthetic vantage point from which one derives a peculiar form of pleasure. In Ovid's poetry, however, his promiscuity of perspective illustrates pain. The worldview of the exile is geographically decentered, temporally dysfunctional, and caught in the fissure between these old and new worlds. The exile is fundamentally alienated from his culturally integrated sense of self.

[101] Edward Saïd, "Reflections on Exile," in *Reflections on Exile and Other* Essays (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002): 186.

Post-Augustanism

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have made a case for reading Ovid's portrayal of time and memory in exile as a fundamental characteristic of the exilic condition. It remains to consider the ways in which Ovidian time interacts with Augustan time in the poem. In this section, I argue that Ovid's temporality destabilizes that of the Augustan regime by privileging a disordered, subjective time over a carefully wrought, ostensibly "objective" temporality. In particular, the exiled Ovid cuts short the duration of Augustan imperialism and retracts his divine status. In the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, Augustanism was portrayed as having global reach and lasting an eternity; there was no such thing as "after Augustus". In contrast to this conceit, the exile poetry features an Ovidian temporality that supplants imperial temporality: the Tomitian universe is in a particular sense provocatively post-Augustan.

Let us examine the references, explicit and oblique, to Augustus in poem 1.3. As he often does throughout the collection, Ovid refers to the emperor as *Caesar*. As I discuss elsewhere, this word has intimations of butchery ("caesar" means "cutter") thus implying the violent transection of Ovid from Rome. It also has the effect of halting the progress of the agnatic Julian line. So too does Ovid rewind the deification of Augustus, who is demoted to simply *caelestique viro* (*Tr.* 1.3.37). In Ovid's appeal to the gods, whom he addresses in the second person, he notably leaves Augustus to one side, until the prospect of his good-will in *placato ... deo* (40) transforms him—conditionally—back into a divinity. On this note, Augustus' famed clemency is also under siege in the passage: Ovid highlights his rage (*Caesaris ira,* 85) refers to him as the author of his punishment (*poenae ... auctor* 39), and refers to himself as struck by the lightning bolt of Jove (*qui Iovis ignibus ictus* 11), Augustus' cognate deity. Moreover, Ovid's wife converts fealty to the

emperor to fealty to her husband by declaring her marital *pietas* a new Caesar (*pietas haec mihi Caesaris erit* 86), thus implying, at least within Ovid's intimate circle, a changing of the guard.

We remember that in the *Met.* and the *Fasti*, Ovid solidified his identity as Augustan poet by representing the unfurling of his poetry as coextensive with the progression of the Augustan calendar and undergoing a twin apotheosis as Rome's eternal poet. Here, Ovid's self-representation also has implications for that of Augustus and the relationship between the poet and the prince. Ovid creates his own *mythos*, and this time it is terminal. For instance, he compares his plight to the sacking of Troy, thus appropriating from the myth of the founders on which Augustus drew to legitimate his authority aetiologically.[102] He also leans heavily on the metaphor of his departure of Rome as a literal funeral and the conceit of a living death. Given the context of his pre-exilic poetry, Ovid's bitter end might be read as the death knell of his role as Augustan poet (though paradoxically, we recall the discussion of textual memorialization above). Far from endorsing the Augustan regime in his verse, Ovid's subversive poetics, one might say, effect the un-mooring of Augustan *mores*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for a reading of the temporal and spatial scheme in the exile poetry as a facet of exilic subjectivity. Ovid constructs a fictional world whose topography and temporality are riven by a problematic form of dualism: his exilic persona must confront a "contrapuntal" existence in which he simultaneously experiences two dimensions—that of his native culture and that of his exilic environs. But this relationship to time and space is dynamic.

[102] Samuel Huskey, "Ovid and the Fall of Troy in *Tristia* 1.3," *Vergilius* 48 (2002): 88-104.

The dual complexity of the text gives way in the *Ibis* to a compression of scale and tempo that corresponds to his descent from despondency into mania. Ovid's plurality of sensibility is contagious: by controlling the practice of reading through his finely wrought poetics, he elicits a reader response that echoes the confusion of time and space endemic to exilic experience.

In the final movement of this chapter, I invite you to consider some implications of Ovid's altered vistas of time and space for the displaced person's sense of self. In his 1964 memoir "At the Mind's Limits," the German-born Jewish intellectual and post-holocaust essayist Jean Améry discusses the unique subjectivity of the displaced person, his struggle to come to terms with his newfound status, and its consequences for identity. Living in exile in Belgium after his imprisonment in Auschwitz, he delineates in great detail the vicissitudes of his own exilic consciousness and how it colors his sense of self. His third chapter is devoted to the concept of home, how to define it, where it is located, and how much of it a person needs. In his excursus on homesickness, he describes the plight of the political exile as follows:

> What was this homesickness of those who were expelled from the Third Reich both for their ideology and their pedigree? In this connection I reluctantly make use of the concept that only yesterday was the vogue, but there is probably not a more fitting one: my, our homesickness, was *an alienation from the self.* Suddenly, the past was buried and one no longer knew who one was. At that time I still did not bear the French-sounding pen name with which I sign my works today. My identity was bound to a plain German name and to the dialect of my more immediate place of origin. But since the day when an official decree forbade me to wear the folk costume that I had worn almost exclusively from early childhood on, I no longer permitted myself the dialect. Then the name by which my friends had always called me, with a dialect coloring, no longer made much sense either. It was just about good enough for entry into the register of undesirable aliens at the city hall of Antwerp, where Flemish officials pronounced it in such a strange way that I scarcely understood it. And my friends, too, with whom I had spoken in my native dialect, were obliterated. Only they? Oh no; everything that had filled my consciousness—from the history of my country, which was no longer mine, to the landscape images, whose memory I suppressed—had become intolerable to me since that morning of the 12th of March 1938, on which the blood-red cloth with the black spider on a white field had waved even from the windows of out-of-the-way

> farmsteads. I was a person who could no longer say "we" and who therefore said "I" merely out of habit, but not with the feeling of full possession of my self. Sometimes it happened that in a conversation with my more or less benevolent Antwerp hosts I casually interjected: With us at home that is different. "Bij ons"; to the people with whom I was speaking that sounded like the most natural thing in the world. I, however, blushed because I knew that it was a presumption. I was no longer an I and did not live within a We. I had no passport, and no past, and no money, and no history. There was only a line of ancestors, but it consisted of sad landless knights, stricken by an anathema. In addition, they had been subsequently deprived of their right of residence, and I had to take their ghosts along into exile.[103]

Here, Améry illustrates the cognitive dissonance of the displaced person, suspended in the liminal space between the novel world of the émigré and the familiar world of the native. This state of internal displacement, he claims, results from the estrangement from one's cultural touchstones. Like Ovid, he recounts the evacuation of the semiotics of native culture, whereby his own name rings hollow; a submerged personal and collective history, of which he is dispossessed; native landscape images that beset his consciousness, and the cold comfort of familiar ghosts. He too is preoccupied with the time and place of his native culture, which are experienced contrapuntally with the new. Améry defines these collective features of the phenomenological condition of the exile as *an alienation from the self.*

That the essential condition of the exile is self-estrangement is, I submit, Ovid's central premise in the exile poetry at large. As he demonstrates time and again from the purgatorial vantage point between two planes of existence, his confusion of time and space performs the loss of the culturally-inflected constituents of the self. It is only by textually enacting the complexities and contradictions of the exilic consciousness in his poetry that he is able to reconstruct some semblance of identity.

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[103] Jean Améry, *At the Minds Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*," (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1980), 43 (emphasis mine).

Chapter 2: Ovid's Mind of Winter: Climate and Interiority

> Retake the falling snow: each drifting flake
> Shapeless and slow, unsteady and opaque,
> A dull dark white against the day's pale white
> And abstract larches in the neutral light.
> And then the gradual and dual blue
> As night unites the viewer and the view.
>
> Nabokov, *Pale Fire*

Introduction

In the inaugural poem of Ovid's exilic *oeuvre*, he returns to Rome through the surrogate of his ragged book of poems. The book itself becomes an emblem for its author in exile: Ovid instructs the *liber* to cultivate an *incultus habitus* that befits his exilic environs, forewarns it of the aesthetic judgment and summary rejection it will face, much like that which occasioned his own banishment, and, aligning himself with the lachrymose epistolers of the *Heroides*, claims that the blots that mar the appearance of the *Tristia* will be read as the stains of his tears. From the so-called *ultimus orbis*, the "end of the earth", Ovid reunites with his *loca grata* through the proxy of this literary ersatz, setting a metrical foot, if not one of flesh and bone, on his native land. The poem is a reverie of repatriation wish fulfillment, a feat he can—quite literally—only accomplish through the circulation of his text abroad.[104] Indeed, this literary frontispiece prefigures Ovid's uncanny ability, though bodily in Tomis, to be at Rome in mind.[105]

[104] It is unclear whether Ovid's texts were sent to Rome and circulated during his lifetime. It may be the case that the poem is a fiction of return that was only realized after this death.
[105] See Hinds' careful study of this poem: "Booking the Return Trip: Ovid and *Tristia* 1." *Cambridge Classical Journal* 31 (1985): 13-32.

Ovid's exilic *opus* is beset by seismic shifts that efface or hyperbolize the distance between the site of his relegation and his adoptive homeland.[106] This contrived contraction and dilation of space is the subject of this chapter. Thus far, I have treated Ovid's manipulation of time as an expression of post-Augustanism and exilic trauma. Here I turn to the other dimension of the space-time continuum: his relationship to place. I argue that he advances his illustration of the cognitive dissonance of displacement and post-Augustan rhetoric through the construction of an imaginary locality, one that is defined in reference to Rome.

To the first point, Ovid's topographic dysmorphia is a grim projection of the exiled subject's addled interiority onto his place of exile, evincing the mindset of Ovid's carefully constructed poetic persona. The distinct exilic cartography that can be distilled from the collection (that is, the sustained execution of a spatial aesthetic whereby the locus and urban landscape of Rome is revised to suit Ovid's exilic consciousness) is peculiar to these works alone. Just as Nabokov's wintry nightfall unites the viewer and his view through his reflection in a pane of glass, so too does Ovid project his portrait of the self onto the imaginary vistas of his exile.

But there is also a second, political valence to this geographic confusion (or act of radicatl reorientation), illustrated by *Tristia* 1.1 and 3.1, the book's answer to Ovid's invitation to Rome in the first poem of the third book. Ovid's defiant posture towards the Augustan cityscape permeates the text, manifesting in his ubiquitous if sometimes circumspect invocations of Rome and his maudlin *Kunstdichtung* of the desolate Tomitian landscape. Such provocations, I argue, interrogate Augustan protocols of space, adding a dialectic dimension to Ovid's poetics.

[106] Ovid was in fact born at Sulmo in 42 B.C.E. and initially came to Rome to be schooled in rhetoric and oratory.

In the following discussion, I will demonstrate the foregoing claims by examining two facets of Ovid's exilic landscape: his revisionist cartography of Rome and the "unreal" climate of Tomis. Finally, I will bring this chapter to a close with some reflections on the elusive Ovidian *error* in light of my broader thesis.

i. Ovid the Cartographer

In *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid instructs his book of poems to act as his emissary to Rome, a place verboten to his person but ever-accessible through his imagination and *ingenium*:

> Parve—nec invideo—sine me, liber, ibis in urbem
> ei mihi quo domino non licet ire tuo!
> vade, sed incultus, qualem decet exulis esse;
> infelix habitum temporis huius habe. (1.1.1-4)
>
> Little book—and I do not begrudge it—you shall go without me to the city
> alas, where your master is not allowed to go!
> Go on, but unkempt—assume, ill-starred book, the sort of bearing
> that befits an exile, a bearing suited to this time.

This opening is an Ovidian epigraph: it evokes many of the themes to come, adorned with the author's signature style and wordplay. The tricolon of anaphora in the first line (*si**ne me li**b**er **ib**is **in** urb**em***) as well as that of the second (*e**i** mih**i** qu**o** domin**o***) give the proem a musicality that drives its momentum. He invokes the language of (im)permissibility in *non licet*, while *sine me* is perhaps a pun on *sine me*, the present imperative of *sinere* (to allow), simultaneously conveying his exclusion from Rome and pleas to the contrary. Ovid's own *dominus* will not permit his reinstatement, and much of the exile poetry is framed as an appeal: *sine me regredi in urbem*. *Ibis* itself not only conjures the thought of his future return to Rome, especially if read in reverse (*sibi*),

but invokes the third book of his exilic trifecta. In the last two lines, he foregrounds time as a structuring device for his experience of exile, claiming the book, qua the exiled Ovid's *alter ego*, must assume its peculiar *habitus* and that the defining feature of this bearing—emphasized by the adversative *sed*—is its cultivated lack of cultivation.[107] The book is not only a surrogate for the exiled poet in that it can traverse the distance between himself and Rome, it is also a surrogate for his émigré persona in the exile poems, or, indeed, an expression of the condition of being exiled: to be bereft of one's native culture.

Incultus, though it occurs only once in the entire corpus of Ovid's exile poetry (*Tr*. 1.1.3), is a term that prefigures its sentiments. The Tomitian wilds are uncultivated in both the literal and figurative senses: Ovid describes the locus of his exile as an inhospitable climate and terrain, peopled by uncivilized tribes. However, *incultus* also describes the mindset that Ovid possesses in exile, one that is emotionally raw and opposite to the cultural constructs that defined Augustan

[107] Ovid's project of de-cultivation through retrojection also takes place on a sartorial level. He makes a point of insisting that the *liber* refrain from sporting the trappings of Tyrian purple. This dye, derived from a rare shellfish, was a signifier of luxury and royalty in antiquity since the Homeric age; rulers in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, such as Odysseus and Agamemnon, frequently sport purple. However, the sartorial rhetoric of the *liber* also recalls another ancient ruler: the Persian king Cyrus. He claimed the white-striped purple tunic of royal regalia as an "exclusive royal symbol". This use of the white-striped purple tunic was co-opted by Alexander the Great, who appropriated Persia's court style after conquering its people. By the Hellenistic period, purple was fully codified as a regal symbol, and continued to be a signifier of elite status throughout the Republic. Caesar passed sumptuary laws that restricted the use and wear of purple dyed fabrics to senators and other elites, thus further codifying the color as a symbol of imperium. Under Augustus, however, purple became firmly linked to imperial status, as exemplified by Virgil's *Aeneid*, which consistently links the color to heroes and rulers, as well as Ovid's own *Metamorphoses*, which associates it with divinity and kingliness (e.g., the Perseus and Cadmus episodes). By Diocletian's era, "[R]oyal purple ... had come to be associated exclusively with the emperor. For anyone else to wear purple was tantamount to treason. Purple is thus the proper color for Augustan Rome, encoded as it is in its imperial symbology—and must be eschewed by the exile and his ersatz, the itinerant *liber*. The *liber* therefore does not embody the *habitus*—meant here in the Bourdieulian sense of outwardly appearance and bearing conveying political mythology—of Augustanism. But the specific evocation of purple textiles with white accents conjures its despotic origins in Cyrus the Great, thereby orientalizing Augustus and associating him with the trappings of monarchy from which he sought to distance himself. The *liber* that returns to Rome, though purportedly contrite, is decidedly post-Augustan. (Charlene Elliott, "Purple Pasts: Color Codification in the Ancient World," *Law & Social Inquiry* 33, no. 1 (2008): 173-94.)

Rome. He too has an interstitial status as *peregrinus* yet *nec ... ignotum* (59-60). His book is not only *incultus* insofar as it is proxy for Ovid himself; the term also describes Ovid's textuality. According to his conceit of poetic decline, his poetry is devoid of the adornments of his former *ingenium* (*ingeniique minor laude ferere mei Tr.* 1.1.36). *Incultus* might also refer to the altered subject matter, which is decidedly un-*Ars*. In the *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, a fragmentary handbook on cosmetics, he famously draws a comparison between the cultivation of the earth and the blandishments of the well-rouged woman. The opening lines of the treatise feature a tricolon of couplets describing the cultivation of the earth, each beginning with *cultus/-a* and culminating in the double-entendre "culta placent" (*Cultus humum sterilem Cerealia pendere iussit / Munera, mordaces interiere rubi. / Cultus et in pomis sucos emendat acerbos, / Fissaque adoptivas accipit arbor opes. /Culta placent.* 3-7). The *Tristia*, then, sets itself in opposition not only to cultivated Augustan literature but also to the didactic elegy on seduction which was anathema to Augustan moral legislation and precipitated his banishment (*ingenio sic fuga parta meo Tr.* 1.1.56; 67-8). Despite its singularity, *incultus* is something of a subversive watchword in the exile poetry. In keeping with the doublespeak that characterizes the exile poetry, through which Ovid conveys remorse and veneration on the surface level with subversion as its subtext, *incultus* must be read in another sense as well. Far from acting as an encomiast for the culture that defined the Augustan era, as (ostensibly) in his prior works, Ovid rewrites Rome to erase that culture. *Incultus* thus has the flavor of its subsidiary meaning, "irreverent" (L&S s.v. *cultus* II.B). Through the landscape of Ovid's textuality, Rome becomes, retroactively, devoid of its dominant cultural program—that is, *incultus* itself.

This project of de-cultivation through revisionist history is encoded in Ovid's exilic cartography. Scholars have previously treated how Augustan poets interacted with the

contemporary cityscape in their elegy. In particular, A.J. Boyle asserts in his 2003 monograph *Ovid and the Monuments* that, especially in the *Ars* and *Fasti*, one can detect an ambivalence toward Augustus' appropriation of the city for his own political and ideological agenda in Ovid's own representation of Rome.[108] However, Ovid's reimagining of Augustan Rome in exile is unique in its aesthetic and intent. Far from glorifying the architectural monuments and motifs that enshrined Augustus' authority in the urban landscape of Rome, or subtly problematizing them, he dismantles them without equivocation.

For instance, in *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid instructs his book: *cui licet, aspice Romam* (gaze upon Rome, you for whom it is allowed 57), but the Rome he conjures is a far cry from the "Rome" Augustus projects. He conjectures that the *liber* is likely expecting to be sent to Augustus' abode on the Palatine, ground zero for Augustus' ideologically inflected architectonics (*forsitan expectes an in alta Palatia missum / scandere te iubeam Caesareamque domum* 69-70). Accordingly, Ovid expresses trepidation at the thought of his book ascending to the *Domus*. In so doing, he invokes the mythology that Augustus exploited in constructing his symbology, but turns it on its head. He claims that the god who did him harm is distinct from the *mitissima numina*, merciful divinities, setting Augustus at odds with the *clementia* that defined his public persona (73-4). Ovid figures himself as a dove in the clutches of Augustus' hawkish talons, aligning the emperor with the savage king of Thrace who is transformed into this bird of prey in the *Metamorphoses* (75-6). Augustus famously assimilated himself to Romulus by constructing the *Domus Augusti* at the site of the former ruler's hut upon the Palatine. In this passage, the wolf is not a tender protectress at whose

[108] A.J. Boyle, *Ovid and the Monuments: A Poet's Rome*, Ramus Monographs 4 (Bendigo: Aureal, 2003). Cf. Catherine Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1996). Tara Welch, *The Elegiac Cityscape: Propertius and the Meaning of Roman Monuments* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005).

teat the prototypal king of Rome suckles, but a violent predator (77-8). Likewise, Ovid equates himself with Phaëthon, whose solar symbolism and aerial track across the Zodiac Augustus evoked in his *Solarium*. Barchiesi has observed that the Phaëthon episode in the *Metamorphoses* is itself in conversation with the Augustan cityscape: its "visual and ideological effects" are "substantiated and fueled by an implicit analogy with the urban panorama of the city of Rome".[109] But instead of drawing on Augustan architectural features of the Circus and Palatine in his rendering of the myth, as in the *Met.*, in the Tristian version, Phaethon eschews them. Ovid likewise figures himself as one of the Argives, who played an important role in Augustan ideology in its invocation of Hellenistic heroism, claiming that they would avoid the *locus* of his *imperium* (79-84). In warning his book against the dangers of the *Domus*, he appropriates and inverts the symbols that legitimated Augustan authority, including those in his prior textual models. His advisory poem might be read as cautioning the *liber* against being too much like the *Met.* (though his explicit condemnation is of the *Ars*, 65-7), and thus against being too "Augustan".

In *Tristia* 3.1, the companion poem to 1.1, we experience a return to Rome through the eyes of the *liber* itself. In this instance, the book-as-surrogate model is collapsed: Ovid's book becomes his *ego*. As the *liber-cum-poet* tours Augustan Rome as if through fresh eyes, he observes a series of landmarks along his route on the Sacra Via. But the description of Rome is, as it were, one dimensional: it is reduced to a "map of futility" (in the choice words of Christine Reitz), a map whose prosaic tone and barrenness of enumeration stand in stark contrast to the literary conceits of ekphrasis and enargeia, which Ovid priorly deployed in his pre-exilic urban depictions.[110]

[109] Barchiesi, *Il poeta*, 163.
[110] Christine Reitz, "Describing the Invisible – Ovid's Rome" *Hermes* 141 (2013): 283–293.

Ovid's map of Rome is also defined by selective omission.[111] The "misguided" tour of the *liber* excludes every one of the monuments erected by Julius Caesar or restored by Augustus, such as the Curia Julia, Senate House, the restored Basilica Aemilia, Basilica Julia, Rostra Julia, and Temple of Divine Juilius. Instead, Ovid emphasizes the Temple of Vesta and the Regia, which predated Augustus' rise to power. The order in which the monuments are viewed also implies a cityscape that predates 29 B.C.E, after which the Temple of Divine Julius and the Arch of Augustus—both "spectral presence[s]" in the text—would have obscured the view.

The poet's subversive attitude toward Augustus is writ large on the edifice of Ovid's revised Rome. By erasing Augustus' literal monuments to his own imperium—which often evoked the Julian line, its attendant mythology, and thus the teleological impetus behind Augustus' rise to power[112]—Ovid essentially beats Augustus at his own game. While the emperor appealed to neo-classicism to construct a city that bespoke a connection between its origins and his agnatic line, Ovid demonstrates his own ability to unmake that city at will, rewinding Rome to an era before Augustus. Pre-Augustan Rome is thus a constitutive part of Ovid's post-Augustan program. Zanker famously claimed of Augustan Rome that "the shape of a city presents a coherent system of visual communication that may affect its inhabitants even at the subconscious level by its constant presence."[113] By holding Rome up to a carnival mirror—a mirror that is, at once, a mirror of princes—Ovid distorts this visual rhetoric, parlaying it into one that serves his subversive ends. Textual space thus becomes a forum for subconsciously affecting the reader by effacing the

[111] Samuel J. Huskey, "Ovid's (mis)guided tour of Rome: Some purposeful omissions in Tr. 3.1," *The Classical Journal* vol. 102 no. 1 (2006): 17-39.
[112] Zanker, *The Power of Images*, 1988.
[113] Idem, 18.

vividness and dimensionality of the city, which is reduced to a list of pre-Augustan landmarks, and reconfiguring its carefully plotted topography.

Ovid's spatio-temporal play is also revealing when it comes to his exilic sensibilities.[114] An ubiquitous feature of the exilic corpus is its author's refusal to name his native city explicitly. Instead, he refers to Rome simply as *urbs*, The City. In fact, there are twenty-eight instances of *urbs* for Rome in the *Tristia*,[115] and only half as many instances of *Roma* itself, even if one counts generously (e.g., counting inclusive of *pars … Romana*, et al.).[116] The periphrastic alternative outnumbers the explicit mention two to one. This dictional reflex is but another testament to Ovid's verbal tics and apparent loss of fluency in fact being symptoms of his psychic bearing. As any native New Yorker will attest, to refer to a city as The City is to declare its primacy and stake a claim to belonging; it is aggrandizing and possessive. Ovid's insistent *urbe* is a signal of familiarity and a hallmark of identification. But it also suggests proximity, as does his frequent use of deictic pronouns to refer to the *urbs*, such as *istic*—"this place here".[117] Ovid's inflections of intimacy are another subtle instantiation of his contrapuntal aesthetic: in isolation at Tomis, he still envisions himself at Rome. In his exiled imaginings, Ovid is more Roman than he has ever been; he was, after all, born at Sulmo and was not in this sense natively Roman. The unspecified – but obvious

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[114] In contrast, see Philip Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 307 and M. Labate, "Elegia triste ed elegia lieta. Un caso di riconversione letteraria," *MD* 19 (1987): 166, who see this phenomenon play out in Ovid's description of monuments, attributing to him an enthusiasm and to the passage an enargeia that speaks to his nostalgia - "exact evocations of the sights and sounds of imperial Rome, eliminating as far as possible the spatial and temporal distance between the poet and the city".

[115] *Tr.* 1.1.1, 1.1.59, 1.3.2, 1.3.33, 1.7.36, 1.8.38 (2), 2.160, 2.175, 3.1.1, 3.1.20, 3.2.22, 3.4.14, 3.4b.57, 3.6.4, 3.10.2, 3.12.26, 3.13.10, 3.14.8, 3.14.12, 4.2.61, 4.6.45, 4.8.28, 4.10.4, 4.10.16, 4.10.59, 5.8.36, 5.10.49.

[116] *Tr.* 1.1.57, 1.3.62, 1.5.70, 1.8.33, 2.156 (*Romanum … nomen*), 2.197 (*pars … Romana*), 2.221 (*Romani nominis*), 2.321, 3.1.32, 3.2.21, 3.7.52, 4.1.106, 5.1.73, 5.4.3.

[117] *Tr.* 3.3.25, 3.10.1, 3.12.17, 4.9.10.

– identity of the *urbe* in the opening line and throughout the collection points to the centripetal force of Rome on Ovid's poetics. The cartography of the exilic elegies inevitably locates Rome at its very center.

But what of the negative presence of "Roma"? The striking absence of that city whose name is so rarely spoken could be variously interpreted. In exile, the signifier "Roma" is deflated: it ceases to have any meaningful signified to which it correlates. Perhaps a play on the Greek ῥώμη, "strength", "Rome" could be variously interpreted as a testament to the poet's own enervated state in exile or the word's loss of semantic vitality. To use the word might conjure its absence, hence the preference for the more familiarizing *urbe*. Alternatively, we might read Ovid's avoidance of the name and preference for verbal fillers in the context of the ancient custom of shrouding the inauspicious in a more seemly euphemism. *Roma* is, on the one hand, the familiar *urbs*, and on the other, the place that ejected him and consigned him to Tomitian *relegatio*. Ovid's rhetoric of silence surrounding his native land is at once familiarizing and defamiliarizing: it is the perfect expression for his contrapuntal subjectivity. Such familiarization and alienation enacts the cognitive dissonance we see embedded in Ovid's spatial poetics, through the centralization and distancing of Rome.

ii. Ovid's Nuclear Winter

One of the poet's chief complaints about his exilic environs, aside from the cultural wilderness to which he has been consigned, is the insufferable Pontic climate. In *Tristia* 3.10, Ovid embarks on an extended excursus, relating with blatant hyperbole and vivid embellishments the nature of the perpetual winter into which he is exiled. He describes a snow that defies melting for years on end (3.10.14-16), northern gales so powerful that they sweep away rooftops (3.10.18), a

freeze so piercing that even wine congeals (3.10.24), and Getic natives shrouded in furs revealing only their faces, their beards clotted with frost (3.10.19-22).

This fantastic description of Tomis as a glacial purgatory belies both internal and external evidence to the contrary: Constanța—at present, a popular resort town—is in fact the hottest region in Romania, with a subtropical climate and remarkably mild winter.[118] Moreover, Ovid's so-called 'Scythian winter' is a misnomer: Scythia Minor, the locus of his exile, is both geographically and climatologically distinct from Scythia proper, which is on the northern border of the Black Sea and could, in fact, host a more severe winter than its austral counterpart.

Given these departures from surmisable fact and the flagrantly fictive flourishes that he employs, scholars who have treated this poem have largely focused on the facticity of the wintry clime that Ovid evokes, following Syme in their historicizing readings of his account. Critics have compared his descriptions of the Black Sea with others, both ancient and modern,[119] or looked for internal confirmation or inconsistency in order to gauge the accuracy of Ovid's thermometrics.[120] Some have based the claim that Ovid never set foot in Tomis on his rhetorical inflations,[121] while

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[118] "AIR TEMPERATURE (monthly and yearly absolute maximum and absolute minimum)" (PDF). Romanian Statistical Yearbook: Geography, Meteorology, and Environment. Romanian National Statistic Institute. 2007. (Retrieved March 21, 2020).

[119] Budé edition of J. Andre, *Ovide: Tristes*, (Paris: Budé, 1968), XXIV; H. Fränkel, *Ovid; A Poet Between Two Worlds, Sather Classical Lectures* 18 (Berkeley 1945), 232, n. 3; L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge Unviersity Press, 1955) 334. C. M. Danoff, "Pontos Euxeinos," *RE* Supp. 9 (1962): 938-949. The latter offers a chronology of ancient descriptions of the northern winter (938-43).

[120] John Gahan asserts that the multitude of repetitions in the collection is evidence of the veracity or falsity of Ovid's claims (199). On this basis, he concludes that Pontic reality was the "sketch from which he drew us the picture in *Tr.* 3.10" (202). John Gahan, "Ovid: The Poet in Winter." *CJ* 73 no. 3 (1978): 198-202. But see Claassen: "It is important to realize that many of the physical details that the poet offers are not 'exaggerations' which merely need 'toning down' in order to be basically acceptable as geographical or ethnographic information. These details are purposely fantastic and have little if any relation to physical reality." Jo-Marie Claassen, "Ovid's Poetic Pontus," *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar 6* (1990): 65-66.

[121] Syme, *History in Ovid*, 1979. A. D. Fitton Brown, "The unreality of Ovid's Tomitan exile," *LCM*, vol. 10 no. 2 (1985): 18-22.

others treat them as a display of erudition through allusion to prior literary models, such as the Scythian digression in Vergil's *Georgics,* thus marginalizing the role of exilic experience.[122] In the following reading of the poem, I shift the emphasis from the external condition of Ovid's site of relegation to his internal condition as *poeta exclusus*.

Ovid's portrayal of the perennial winter at Tomis is part of his composite portrait of the exilic mindset. What is at stake is not so much the verisimilitude of the poet's description of his physical surroundings, but rather the ways in which this pathetic fallacy gives expression to the exilic state of mind of his poetic persona. That is, while Ovid's description of the Pontic climate may be far from factually true, his imagery bears witness to a psychological and experiential truth, which is at the heart of the author's literary project. Ovid's *tristis hiems* can only be understood as a *hiems mentis*—a mind of winter.

Let us first turn to how Ovid frames his description of the infinite winter at Tomis. The order of the poems in the collection—that is, inter-poetic temporality—also plays into the broader temporal scheme that he constructs, and is often telling. Notably, this poem follows hard upon *Tristia* 3.9, in which Ovid derives the name of the city Tomis from the derivative of *temnō*, an etymology spuriously drawn from the dismemberment of Absyrtus by his sister, Medea. He begins the poem by feigning incredulity that Greek colonists would set foot in a land of such "inhumane barbarity" (... *Graiae—quis crederet?—urbes / inter inhumanae nomina barbariae* 3.9.1). In his retelling of Medea's myth, he resolves the discordance between Greece, the cradle of culture, and the Grecian presence in this cultural wasteland through the following grisly aetiology:

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[122] R. Martin, "Virgile et la 'scythie'," *REL* 44 (1966): 286-304; S. Besslich, "Ovids Winter in Tomis," *Gymasium* 79 (1972) 177-191; H. B. Evans, "Winter and Warfare in Ovid's Tomis," *CJ* 70 (1975) 1-9; H. Froesch, "Ovid als Dichter des Exils," *Abhandlungen zur Kunst-, Musik-, und Literaturwissenschaft,* vol. 218 no. 197 (1978): 106-08. L.P. Wilkerson, *The Georgics of Virgil: A Critical Survey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 98. Williams, *Banished Voices*, 35.

sed vetus huic nomen, positaque antiquius urbe
constat ab Absyrti caede fuisse loco ... (5-6)
protinus ignari nec quicquam tale timentis
innocuum rigido perforat ense latus,
atque ita divellit divulsaque membra per agros
dissipat in multis invenienda locis ... (25-28)
inde Tomis dictus locus hic, quia fertur in illo
membra soror fratris consecuisse sui. (33-34)

But it is certain that the ancient name of this place,
which was older than the founding of the city,
was derived from the slaughter of Absyrtus ...
Straightaway, when there was no cause
for the unwitting man to be fearful,
she pierced his innocent side with a hard sword.
And so she tore him apart and scattered the severed limbs
throughout the fields to be discovered in many places.
Thus was this place called Tomis, since it is said that here
a sister "cut" her brother's body to pieces.

In this passage, Ovid contrasts *quis crederet* with *constat*: it is *certain*, he claims, that the origins of Tomis are grounded in an act of barbarous violence. The irony here is of course that the etymology is false; the quantum mechanics of Tomis dictate that whatever is *certum*—certain or fixed—is in fact never what it seems.[123] He also goes to great lengths to conjure the scene before our eyes, exploiting the ancient rhetorical technique of *enargeia*: Medea not only tears her own flesh and blood limb from limb, but scatters his remains throughout the land and puts his pallid hands and bloody head on display upon the crags for their father to see (29-30).[124] To compound his vivid language, he uses the polyptoton of *divellit divulsaque* and the subsequent echo of the prefix *di-* in the following line with *dissipat*, which emphasizes the separation and scattering of the limbs. The fictive origins of Tomis thus figure it as a kind of anti-Rome, the antithesis of

[123] Ovid's Player Queen-esque protestations will be a recurring theme in his discussion of climate, where he repeatedly invokes the authority of eye witnesses (4.7.9) and pseudo-science (10) to affirm his account.
[124] *Fugiens Medea* herself is a paradigmatic figure of exile in ancient myth—not a sympathetic one, but a fitting foil to the author, who perennially asserts the excess of his banishment, portraying himself as *ignarus* and *innocuus*, much like the victim of Medea's fratricide. This deserving exile is also described as *impia* (9), whose positive analogue *pius* will later be tied to unjustified exile in his description of Cadmus.

urbanity through and through, but also point to the bloody origins of Rome itself. This city too was forged in the crucible of conflict between siblings, a myth with which the founding of Roman line through Aeneas' son Iulus, the namesake of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and a story that shaped the cult of personality around Augustus himself, had to be reconciled.

Ovid also gives expression to his fragmented spatial consciousness through somatic metaphor: the theme of dismemberment is strikingly prevalent in the exile poetry. This imagistic pattern has garnered limited scholarly mention,[125] but has heretofore been given short shrift of analysis. However, it is freighted with symbolism that has significant implications for Ovid's depiction of exilic topography. The metaphor of broken bodies is a well-worn trope in Roman literature; it would see great proliferation in Silver Age Latin authors such as Seneca and especially Lucan. Shadi Bartsch, in her landmark monograph *Ideology in Cold Blood*, discusses how the fragmentation of bodies acts as a marker of the dissolved boundaries caused by civil war, underscoring the abomination against the natural order that such civic strife enacts through the lurid image.[126] In the exile poetry, fragmented bodies similarly stand in for Ovid's excision from the body politic. The force of this motif is rhetorical. Ovid girds his bid for recall in naturalizing language: the right hand man of the emperor ought to be at Rome and his estrangement amounts to a confounding of the natural order.

In typical Ovidian style, the configuration of the metaphor is transmuted according to his present purpose. In *Tr*. 1.3, the vehicle[127] of the device is Ovid's own *corpus*. Here he describes

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[125] Darcy Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse."
[126] Shadi Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 10-29.
[127] I follow Max Black's terminology for metaphor: the 'tenor' is the literal element of the device (**Juliet** is the sun) whereas the 'vehicle' is the symbolic element of the device to which it is being compared (Juliet is the **sun**). Max Black, "More about Metaphor," in *Metaphor & Thought*, ed. A. Ortony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Perss, 1979).

his night of departure as tantamount to the rending of his limbs in a vivid simile. Recalling his separation from his family and familiars (whom he refers to as the 'sweet *members* of his faithful home', *dulcia membra*, 64), he expounds as follows:

> dividor haud aliter, quam si mea membra relinquam,
> et pars abrumpi corpore visa suo est.
> sic doluit Mettus tunc cum in contraria versos
> ultores habuit proditionis equos. (*Tr*. 1.3.73-6)
>
> I was torn asunder just as if I were leaving my limbs behind,
> and a part seemed broken from the body to which it belonged.
> So too Mettus suffered at that time when he had steeds driven
> in opposite directions, avengers of his treachery.

This passage is infected with a lurid vividness that prefigures the grisly aesthetic of the Silver Age. The first two lines are remarkably emphatic and repetitive. He references his 'amputation' in three different ways: *dividor*, *membra relinquam*, and *pars abrumpi*. Moreover, the phrase *haud aliter quam* underscores the similarity between vehicle and tenor by effacing the semantic gap between them: *it was not at all otherwise*, he claims. The graphic image and insistence on its accuracy as representation concretizes Ovid's feeling of dislocation and longing for Rome, as previously expressed in his confusion of geography. As by a phantom limb, he is haunted by the searing absence of his native city. Just as Marsyas was flayed by Apollo for his hubristic strains, so too Ovid is stripped of his *Romanitas* by Augustus for his subversive verse.

In the next couplet Ovid re-routes his course, revising his symbolism in a second simile. In lines 75-6, he compares his plight to that of Mettus, who was drawn and quartered for his betrayal of the Romans under Tullus (cf. *Aen*. 8.642-45). The comparison of Ovid, author of the inscrutable *carmen et error*, to the treacherous figure seems hard to reconcile with his bid for reinstatement until one considers the fuller context. This Vergilian parable is itself a metaphor for the

catastrophic civic "dismemberment" enacted by the internecine conflict between Rome and Alba. Mettus is represented as a traitor, yes, but one who is also subjected to a punishment that Livy condemned as unRoman and cruel (1.28.11). So too, Ovid implies, is he the victim of a cruel and unusual punishment, one far disproportionate to the crime. Ever the clever rhetorician, he rallies the symbology of Augustan poetics to his cause.

Ovid also compares himself to Actaeon in Book 2, who likewise inadvertently commits an *error* and is unduly punished: according to the version in the *Metamorphoses*, which follows Callimachus, he is transformed into a stag and torn limb from limb by his own hounds. This grisly interlude is thus a fitting overture to the following poem, which thematizes the misery of his exile through spatial transference. The allusion both demonstrates the urbane Ovid's unsuitability for the barbarity he will soon bemoan and prefigures his own "amputation" from the body politic in the very first line of 3.10:

> siquis adhuc istic meminit Nasonis adempti,
> et superest sine me nomen in urbe meum. (*Tr*. 3.10.1-2)
>
> If anyone in that place still recalls Naso, who was torn away,
> and my name survives without me in the City …

Here, he wonders aloud if his memory or any echo of his name remains in "the city". Given the foregoing focalization of names, the protasis of this opening conditional carries special weight. Not only does the *nomen* act as a surrogate for the man himself, as his book does in *Tristia* 1.1, but it also asserts his lasting literary influence at Rome. But unlike Ovid, who refers to himself by his *cognomen*—a nomination that is both a symbol of the Roman *gens* and also recalls the symbology of dismemberment—the name of his beloved city is passed over in silence. Here we find an example of a rhetorical technique Ovid uses again and again: he assumes a posture of deference that, upon closer scrutiny, has undertones of subversion. While the situation he describes

is his own absence from the city, the situation he conjures textually is his presence and the absence of Rome. *Naso* and *nomen ... meum* supersede the name of the City, and assert the staying power of his legacy: if his words are read at all, the question he poses has been answered. Nonetheless, the deictic pronoun *istic* and the unspecified – but obvious – identity of the *urbe* (as in the opening line of the collection in *Tristia* 1.1) point to the magnetic force of Rome on Ovid's poetics.

Indeed, Ovid's imaginary geography betrays a nostalgia for his native city at every turn: its urban and cultural landscape inform his perception of his surroundings throughout the poem. In the following lines, he claims that the indigenous population of barbarian tribes is unworthy of his *ingenium,* a watchword of the Roman cultural elite: *Sauromatae cingunt, fera gens, Bessique Getaeque. / quam non ingenio nomina digna meo!* Sarmatians surround me, a wild people, as well as the Bessi and Getae. / How unworthy of my genius are their names! *Tr.* 3.10.5-6). This *fera gens*, "uncouth clan",—a contrastive pun on in*gen*ium in the preceding line—is a poor substitute for his intellectual circle at home. He elaborates on these endemic primitives as follows:

> pellibus et sutis arcent mala frigora bracis,
> oraque de toto corpore sola patent.
> saepe sonant moti glacie pendente capilli,
> et nitet inducto candida barba gelu;
> nudaque consistunt, formam servantia testae,
> vina, nec hausta meri, sed data frustra bibunt. (*Tr.* 3.10.19-24)
>
> With skins and stitched pants they keep out the wicked cold,
> and, of their entire bodies, their faces alone are visible.
> Often, their hair, clotted with hanging ice, makes a sound as it moves
> and their beards gleam white with a frosty mantle.
> Exposed wine congeals, taking the form of its vessel,
> and they drink the fragments they're served, not draughts of pure wine.

Here he describes the barbarians as swathed in skins up to their faces, their hair clinking with ice and their beards glistening white with rime, the Pontic answer to the hoary statuary and sartorial opulence of Augustan Rome. They, after all, consume their wine in icy fragments, a custom that

contravenes the conventions of the sympotic context that the image evokes, suggesting cultural stasis in contrast to convivial dynamism. In fact, Ovid claims elsewhere that speaking their barbarian language has caused his once pristine Latinity to decline. So too the natives are said to wear hides and pants (also 4.6.47) as opposed to the *gens togatus*, the toga being a signifier of Roman citizenship and gentility. Not only are the Getic natives contrasted with the Romans in habit and *habitus*, but they are also assimilated to the hibernal atmosphere they inhabit: their icy visages embody both the harsh climate and the *incultus* netherworld it represents. The construct of the Pontic barbarian is an incubus that haunts our poet, an incarnation of what it means to be subsumed by his exilic environs: to lose the cultural inflections by which he is defined.

This passage also exemplifies the remarkable emphasis on physiognomy in Ovid's fantastic rendering of Tomis. The face of the Pontic is set at variance with the *facies* of Rome, as described as follows in *Tristia* 4.6:

> urbis abest facies, absunt, mea cura, sodales,
> et, qua nulla mihi carior, uxor abest,
> vulgus adest Scythicum bracataque turba Getarum:
> sic me quae video non videoque movent.
> una tamen spes est quae me soletur in istis,
> haec fore morte mea non diuturna mala. (*Tr.* 4.6.45-50)
>
> The face of the city is absent, those close to my heart,
> my companions, are absent, and she who is
> more dear to me than anyone, my wife, is absent.
> A crowd of Scythians is at hand, and toga-less horde of Getics:
> thus what I see and what I do not see move me.
> There is one hope, however, that gives me solace in all this:
> these ills of mine will not outlast my death.

Here, Ovid laments the remoteness of his homeland, friends, and his beloved wife. The repetition of *abesse*, through its persistent presence, emphasizes their absence. Through its inclusion in this tricolon of familiars, Ovid personifies Rome as if it were central to *mea cura*. He also uses the term *facies*, which, though it can simply signify the appearance of a locale (as in *Tr.* 1.3.26 and

2.8.73), here emphasizes the familiarity and dearness of that city whose name need not even be mentioned.[128] In contrast, the *facies* of Tomis is anything but familiarizing; it acts as a synecdoche for the uninviting land. Above, he claims that the menacing faces of the natives are the only visible features of their physical aspect. He implies that their hair hangs long, crystallizing into icy stillicides that tinkle like windchimes in the wind. Their beards are unkempt and shaggy. They are, symbolically, the antithesis of the *habitus* that befits a Roman *civis*.

This portrait of Pontic primitives, I suggest, is a commentary on Augustan-era portraiture, which stood in stark contrast to the "veristic" representational style of the Republican period. The latter style reflects public officials' desire to project civic fealty and military prowess: they commissioned heroic busts that portrayed them sporting a stern aspect, expressed by furrowed brows and a taut mouth. This *verité* style also strove to conjure a precise likeness of the individual at the time of execution. For instance, the famous 1st C. bust of Republican statesman and general Marcus Licinius Crassus now on display in the Louvre features his characteristic aquiline nose, protruding ears, and pendulous jowls (see Appendix 1). That of Pompey Magnus, the adversary of Caesar in the Great Roman Civil War, features his bulbous nose, paunchy cheeks, and lined forehead (see Appendix 2). The emperors of the imperial period, however, were more exacting in their use of this medium to communicate ideology and legitimate authority. In contrast to the individualization and verisimilitude found in Republican sculpture, Augustus' official portrait type was standardized and disseminated throughout the empire, wrought in a "classicizing" style that emphasized youth, beauty, and benevolence with its serene expression and pristine features. This

[128] Though, as in Tac. H. 2, 54; id. A. 13, 28, *facies* can also mean façade, as in: external appearance or pretext vs. reality. The sense that Augustan Rome is not what it seems is a subtext that runs beneath the collection of exile poems.

style interwove innovation with traditionalism, creating a visual rhetoric all its own.[129]

If we read them as a dialectic with Augustan symbology, the bearded natives are at once subversive and regressive. We are given the impression of stern and rough-hewn creatures, militaristic in their aspect and bearing like the images of Republican politicians. They align in some ways with the "veristic" imagistic register, and certainly defy Augustan classicism. The Getic busts are thus a means by which Ovid not only dismantles the visual rhetoric that legitimates the emperor, but also turns back the clock on Augustan imperialism by hearkening back to Republican image and ideology. The grizzled natives also formally oppose the Augustan emphasis on ephebic appearance: the barbarians are, as it were, *barbati*. At Rome, beards were in fashion until c. 300 B.C.E., when barbers were imported from Sicily, and had a resurgence only during the reign of Hadrian, the first emperor to sport a beard à la the Greek philosophers.[130] However, the clean-shaven look was the dominant style during the early Principate, a symbol of *Romanitas* and practically compulsory for a Roman *civis*.[131] Indeed, shaving one's beard became linked to the ritual of assuming the *toga virilis* and thus, somewhat ironically, to the advent of manhood. The focalization of the natives' beardedness is thus marked in terms of temporality: it not only evokes the style of a different time in history, but also runs counter to the fossilized youth of Augustan portraiture, since they are frozen images of a different period in the male life-cycle.

Beardedness was also a cultural emblem of the *incultus habitus* to which Ovid refers in *Tr.*

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[129] James Breckenridge, *Likeness: A Conceptual History of Ancient Portraiture* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). Michael Grant, "Roman Coins as Propaganda," *Archaeology* 5 (Summer 1952): 79–85. Diana Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). John Pollini, *Roman Portraiture: Images of Character and Virtue*. Exhibition catalogue. Los Angeles: Fisher Gallery, University of Southern California, 1990. J. Toynbee, *Roman Historical Portraits* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[130] Varr. *R. R.* 2.11.10; Plin. 7 59, § 211.

[131] Boettig. Sabina, 2, p. 57 sq.

1.1. For instance, M. Livius, upon his restoration from exile, was described as follows: *sed erat veste obsoleta, capilloque et barba promissa*, "he was in worn clothes, and with his beard and hair hanging down".[132] The censors did not permit him to enter the senate until he had rectified his slovenly appearance by bathing and shaving.[133] The Getic get-up is in fact the proper attire for exile (though unfit for even entering the Curia, a forum that was not only political but a space of the patrician elite). Livy uses the same phrase to describe Alexandrian ambassadors who are sent by Ptolemy and Cleopatra to implore the Romans for military aid. They prostrate themselves before the Senate to extend a literal olive branch in the garb (*habitus*) of mourning; they are described as *sordidati, barba et capillo promisso*, their speech more piteous than their dress (*oratio quam habitus fuit miserabilior*).[134] We also know from Cassius Dio that Augustus himself grew a beard while mourning the death of Caesar.[135] The shaggy aspect of the barbarians is thus not only uncultivated and associated with the squalor of exile, but it is also part of the Roman ritual of bereavement and grief. The triangulation of exile, the death of culture, and Ovid's own living death is thus encapsulated in the bearded Getics.[136] If, as Zanker contends, the images of the Augustan

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[132] Liv. XXVII.34.

[133] M. Livius (then-consul in 219 B.C.E.) was exiled for appropriating excessive spoils in the war against the Illyrians (Frontinus IV. i. 45).

[134] sordidati, barba et capillo promisso, cum ramis oleae ingressi curiam procubuerunt, et oratio quam habitus fuit miserabilior. Liv. 44.19.7

[135] Dio Cass. xlviii. 34.

[136] Epictetus' attitude toward the philosopher's beard may also offer some insight into the passage. Though his tenure as an eminent Stoic post-dated Ovid by several decades, the concept of the philosopher's beard had been in circulation since c. 155 B.C.E., when Greek diplomats allied with the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic schools first arrived at Rome (John Sellars, *The art of living: the Stoics on the nature and function of philosophy* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1988). In Epictetus' *Discourses* (1.2.29), he treats his beard as an anti-authoritarian symbol, claiming that he would rather be beheaded than clean-shaven. If this connotation of subversion and the valuation of intellectual commitments before all else were at all present in the symbol of the beard during Ovid's time, this could add another layer to its symbolism in a post-Augustan context. The natives' beardedness, insofar as it acts as a mirror for the self, might reflect his own punishment for privileging his *ars* over the Augustan program. To Ovid, after all, exile is tantamount to a beheading: it is a living death, a truncation from the body politic, and an alienation from his intellectual circle at Rome.

program mirror the societal consciousness of his time, the counter-imagery that Ovid constructs reflects his own, post-Augustan, exilic consciousness.

A similar instance of projection rears its head in the following passage, where Ovid enters into conversation not only with Augustan images but also with his own, pre-exilic texts:

> at cum tristis hiems squalentia protulit ora,
> terraque marmoreo est candida facta gelu,
> dum prohibet Boreas et nix habitare sub Arcto,
> tum patet has gentes axe tremente premi. (*Tr*. 3.10.8-12)
>
> But when the grim winter extends its squalid visage
> and the earth grows white with marblesque ice,
> while Boreas and the snow prohibit shelter under the Bear,
> then it is clear that these tribes are oppressed by the tremulous pole.

Here he uses the curious phrase *marmoreo ... gelu*, "marbled ice", to refer to the frigid clime and even personifies the grim winter as a protruding bust with a "squalid face" amidst the snow-clad earth. In this instance of exilic *enargeia*—in stark contrast to the aforementioned portrait of Rome (*Tr.* 1.1 and 3.1)—the statuary friezes at Rome are mapped onto this statuesque freeze at Tomis. His diction conjures the smooth, youthful contours of marble only to sully them, as befits the countenance of exile. These phrases are especially marked, though, because they are autocitations: they occur in Ovid's pre-exilic texts in passages to which he wishes to draw our attention.

Marmoreo gelu likewise appears in *Fasti* 4.918 in the same metrical position. Here, Ovid describes the Roman *Robigalia*, a festival in honor of the deity[137] Robigo, mildew. The sacrifices made and rites celebrated were meant to curry favor with the goddess, so that she would not blight that year's crop. In this particular passage, he describes her formidable prowess:

> vis tua non levis est: quae tu frumenta notasti,

[137] A goddess in Ovid, though sometimes elsewhere the god Robigus.

maestus in amissis illa colonus habet.
nec venti tantum Cereri nocuere nec imbres,
nec sic *marmoreo* pallet adusta *gelu*,
quantum, si culmos Titan incalfacit udos.
tunc locus est irae, diva timenda, tuae. (*Fast.* 4.915-20)

Your power is not to be taken lightly:
the crop on which you have made your mark
the forlorn farmer regards as a lost cause.
Neither do the winds nor the rains do so much damage to Ceres,
nor when it turns pale, seared by marblesque ice,
as when Helios warms the wet stalks.
Then does your anger find its place, fearsome goddess.

In these lines, Ovid paints a grim picture of the destructive onslaught of crop rot. The realm of associations it conjures, however, relates to his exile. He uses the term *vis*, which has connotations of deliberate violence. The term *notare* can also mean "to censure" or refer to branding a criminal with infamy (*nota*). *Amissus* can mean "sent away" or "lost through no fault of one's own" (vs. *perdere*, which implies fault, and *omittere*, which implies negligence), thus carrying connotations similar to that of the Latin *errare*, which Ovid uses to describe the mistake that brought about his exile (and whose polysemic proliferations will be discussed in the following section). Just as the punishing mildew wreaks havoc on the crop, so too does Augustus' imposition of exile inflict a ruthless perdition on Ovid—and his poetics. The wasteland of the wintry landscape is not unlike the barrenness of a blighted field. One might even read the references to Ceres and *frumenta* as symbols of poetic production. Ovid seems to gesture at this himself in *Tr.* 5.12.21, when he indicates that his *ingenium* is enervated by prolonged *rubigo*. But in this passage, the phrase *marmoreo gelu* is subordinated in its destructive effects to its opposite: the heat of the Titan Helios, god of the sun. It is he who brings about the crop rot most effectively by shining his insidious rays upon damp stalks. It is worth noting that Augustus was, in many ways, aligned with the sun symbolically (via the imagery of apotheosis, the construction and centrality of the *Solarium Augusti*, etc.). There seems to be the subtle suggestion that the shadow of Augustus in exile is

worse for his state of mind (psychologically, poetically) than the state of exile itself. Re-reading this passage through the lens of its intertext in the *Tristia* adds a new, metaphorical dimension to the lines: Robigo's moldering decay becomes a symbol for the retributive force of Ovid's exile—and the plight of his blighted psyche.

To return to our discussion of physiognomy, *squalentia protulit ora* likewise has an intertextual analogue in *Metamorphoses* 4.656.[138] This triplicate, also in the same metrical position as its Tristian counterpart, here refers to the severed head of Medusa. In Book IV, Ovid describes how Perseus made his way to Atlas' country after slaying the petrifying Gorgon, only to be denied hospitality and a brief reprieve from his wanderings. This episode directly follows the story of Cadmus, founder of Thebes (and another famous exile), who is transformed into a serpent. Ovid goes into great detail about the arduousness of Perseus' journey: he flies over *totum orbem*, traversing the east and west, observing the *gelidas Arctos*, frigid bears (representing the freezing northern clime, also mentioned in the passage from the *Tristia* above), and *Cancri braccia*, crab's claws (representing the hot southern clime, 624-625). As Perseus flies on high, droplets of blood from the Gorgon's head fall to the earth below and turn into snakes. This is why, claims Ovid, Libya teems with the venomous creatures (617-20). Finally, he reaches Atlas' country, *ultima tellus ... et pontus,* the ends of the earth and sea (632-3), a land that features a golden tree with golden branches, leaves, and fruits (emphasized by the assonance of *arboreae ... auro ... ex auro ... ex auro*, 637-8). The hero beseeches the king for shelter and a brief reprieve from his sojourn, referring to Atlas as *hospes* and requesting *hospitium requiemque* (639-40). Atlas refuses, fearing the realization of an oracular prediction that a son of Jupiter would defoliate his golden tree. In an

[138] Thanks to Darcy Krasne for pointing me to this intertext.

act of vengeance, Perseus furnishes Medusa's *squalentia ora*, turning Atlas to a monstrous mountain—his beard and hair into trees, his bones to stone—at first sight (656).

The aetiology of Atlas' transformation has a number of symbolic intersections with Ovid's exile and with Augustan Rome. The proximity of Cadmus *qua* exile, the excursus on Perseus' epic journey to the ends of the earth (Tomis was in fact at the far reaches of the Roman empire), and the emphasis on climatological extremity all align Ovid with the epic hero. King Atlas is also aligned with Augustus, primarily through his *arbor ex auro*, golden tree, which acts as a cipher for Augustus' *aurea aetas*. Perseus' plaintive plea for shelter mirrors Ovid's appeal for restoration, but is presented in the language of hospitality. The custom of ξενία—guest-friendship, which included both hospitality and ritualized acts of reciprocity between guest and host—held a central, even sacral, role in Greek culture. None other than the king of the gods, Zeus Xenios was the patron god of this custom, and it is a centerpiece of Greek mythology, where demonstrations of virtue often consisted in hospitality shown toward a god disguised as a traveling stranger (*theoxenia*), and extreme acts of treachery, like Paris' abduction of Helen or Penelope's suitors, were cast as violations of this sacred practice. The intertext not only doubles down on Ovid's claims about the inhospitability of the Pontic climate, but it also impugns the emperor. The implication that Augustus' refusal to reinstate Ovid at Rome is somehow a violation of *hospitium* turns the tables on the emperor, suggesting that he is the one who is breaking a moral principle enshrined in their culture.

However, the paradigm shifts in lock step with the transformation. When Perseus shows Atlas the *squalentia ora*, it is now the latter who is victimized by the former. Likewise, it is Augustus who subjects Ovid to a hermetic existence in a literal and cultural wasteland, in which human characteristics—like the bearded visages of the Getic natives and the squalid face—blend

with the natural landscape. The power of the *squalentia ora* to transmogrify also speaks to Ovid's own concerns about the *locus* of his exile causing his own metamorphosis, that is, fossilizing his urbanity and *ingenium*. Thus, on the one hand, the *prosopopoeia* of the *tristis hiems*' grim *ora* cannot be taken at face value. On the other, this is the grim reality that Ovid cannot wish away through intertextual escapism and defiance.

Ovid's ersatz Rome speaks volumes about the psychological state of the exile. By projecting the vistas of the City onto the barren wasteland of Tomis—assimilating and dissimilating the two *loci* in alternation—Ovid's poetic persona is engaging in *apophenia*, a state of delusion in which one mistakenly perceives relationships between unrelated things. Though Swiss psychologist Peter Brugger introduced the concept into English,[139] this phenomenon was formally recognized as a clinical pathology by German psychiatrist Klaus Conrad in his 1958 study of the early stages of schizophrenia. He described *apophanie* as a self-referential over-interpretation of actual sensory perceptions that imbues them with undue significance.[140] This is the same impulse that, in the 1920s, Rorschach's famous inkblot test sought to measure psychometrically, treating such fabrications of the human mind as indicative of unconscious impulses, which was, in turn, preceded by less empirical intimations of this idea within the scientific community circa the turn of the century.[141] However, the notion that one's interpretation of "ambiguous designs" is an indicator of one's personality or mindset dates back to the likes of

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[139] Peter Brugger, "From Haunted Brain to Haunted Science: A Cognitive Neuroscience View of Paranormal and Pseudoscientific Thought," *Hauntings and Poltergeists: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. J. Houran and R. Lange (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2001).
[140] Klaus Conrad, Die beginnende Schizophrenie. Versuch einer Gestaltanalyse des Wahns (Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1958).
[141] Binet and Henri, "La mémoire des phrases," *L'Année Psychologique* 1 (1895): 24–59.

da Vinci and Botticelli, who link a propensity for *apophenia* with creativity and imagination.[142] As Shakespeare's Theseus contends in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both lunatics and poets possess "seething brains" and "shaping fantasies" that "apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends": "The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling, / Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; / And as imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen / Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name" (1832-1852).[143]

Ovid's *tristis hiems* is not just an example of personification, but of visual *apophenia* (*pareidolia*), the tendency to find specific images in random patterns, particularly faces. Popular examples of this phenomenon include the common perception of a man in the craterous topography of the moon or the famous case of Diana Duyser, who sold a 10-year-old grilled cheese sandwich for $28,000 USD at auction in 2004, claiming that its grill patterns spontaneously rendered a likeness of the Virgin Mary.[144] Recent studies have even shown that the fusiform face area activates in response to such perceptions as if they were of actual facial features, suggesting that sensory input that merely suggests a face will be automatically interpreted as one by our brains.[145] To a certain extent, such illusory perceptions are normal, a vestigial reflex of human cognition that offered evolutionary advantage to early hominids millennia ago. Patternicity—the term coined by

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[142] Gary Groth-Marnat, *Handbook of Psychological Assessment* 5th ed. (New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2009), 386.

[143] Indeed, *apophenia* (like schizophrenia) has also been linked to right hemisphere overactivation, the site which governs metaphorical or associative aspects of language. As Brugger has demonstrated, when one concept is recognized by this part of the brain, the false recognition of another loosely related concept may be triggered, producing a sense of meaningful connection. There is thus scientifically-validated merit to the connection with creativity and poetic imagination that Shakespeare conjectured. (L. Gianotti, P. Faber, D. Lehmann, "EEG source locations after guessed random events in believers and skeptics of paranormal phenomena," *International Congress Series* (2002): 439 – 441.)

[144] Linda Carroll, "Why some see the face of Jesus in their toast," *NBC News*, December 1, 2011, https://www.nbcnews.com/healthmain/why-some-see-face-jesus-their-toast-1C6436912.

[145] Jiangang Liu et al., "Seeing Jesus in toast: Neural and behavioral correlates of face pareidolia," *Cortex* 53 (2014): 60-77.

scholar Michael Shermer to refer to pattern recognition (actual and apophenic)[146]—allows the observer to recognize patterns that represent things to pursue (e.g., prey) or things to avoid (e.g., predators). In such a situation, defaulting to a type 1 error (false positive; seeing monsters in the trees) vs. type 2 error (false negative; failure to see the monster that is, in fact, amongst the trees) confers a greater survival advantage and is thus an adaptation with positive feedback in terms of natural selection.[147]

However, the assignation of symbolic meaning to these illusory perceptions—treating "delusion as revelation", as Brugger puts it—is a sign of pathology. Recent scientific evidence has confirmed Conrad's hypothesis that *apophenia* is a symptom of schizoid psychopathy.[148] A famous example is Nobel Prize winning mathematician John Nash, whose preoccupation with patterns led him both to revolutionary discoveries in geometry, like the Nash embedding theorem—and to be committed to a mental institution for the better part of a decade. The same impulse that propelled his genius also became disabling: he devolved into a state of paranoid schizophrenia in which he saw patterns that simply did not exist, insisting, for instance, that all men who wore red ties were mounting a communist conspiracy against him.[149]

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[146] More recently, Michael Shermer has demonstrated that such misperceptions in themselves are not symptoms of psychosis, but an integral feature of human nature, which he terms *patternicity*. The ability to discern patterns gives the human species an obvious evolutionary edge. The pathology of *apophenia* consists in its self-referentiality, attribution of almost mystical significance to connections that do not exist, and edge of paranoia. (Michael Shermer, *The Believing Brain: From Ghosts to Gods to Politics and Conspiracies – How We Construct Beliefs and Reinforce Them as Truths* (New York: Times Books, 2011.)

[147] Error Management Theory (Haselton and Buss, "Error management theory: A new perspective on biases in cross-sex mind reading," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* vol. 78 no. 1 (2000); M.G. Haselton and D.C. Funder, "The Evolution of Accuracy and Bias in Social Judgment," in *Evolution and social psychology*, ed. M. Schaller, J. A. Simpson, & D. T. Kenrick (Madison: Psychosocial Press, 2006), 15–37.

[148] *e.g*., C.A. Chun, P. Brugger, T.R. Kwapil, "Aberrant Salience Across Levels of Processing in Positive and Negative Schizotypy," *Front Psychol*. 10 (2019): 2073.

[149] Sylvia Nasar, "The Lost Years of a Nobel Laureate," *The New York Times*, November 3, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/11/13/business/the-lost-years-of-a-nobel-laureate.html.

The subject of Ovid's exilic symptomology has gained traction since Gareth Williams' 1994 monograph *Banished Voices*, which posits that the poet's textual persona shows signs of bipolarity. Along similar lines, I suggest that his apophenic tendencies betray a mind addled by post-traumatic stress. In his "biography" of this disorder, military correspondent and former Marine David Morris posits a connection between an apophenic worldview and living with the trauma of war. *The Evil Hours* describes how *apophenia* became an organizing principle for his experience in a warzone and for the text itself. Trauma, he claims, elicits this altered mode of perception because one can no longer make sense of the social and moral order. People in combat often display a heightened sense of superstition and compulsive devotion to ritual—both instances of pathological patternicity—as methods of coping with imminent mortality. The false sense of clairvoyance and control conferred by such compulsions offers some comfort in the context of living death. So too does Ovid, enduring his own living death in exile, demonstrate such paranoid and self-soothing tendencies when the gelid ice and brutish Sarmatians bring to mind the sculpture of Rome, or when the image of the Tomitian winter conjures a face. He goes far beyond normative patternicity endemic to the human brain: Ovid sees these phantoms as having a profound and personal significance, as carnival mirrors of Rome and reflections of the exiled self. They are symptoms of his post-traumatic poetic persona, and also of his imaginative prowess.[150]

But it is not only the landscape at Tomis that is overlain with that of Rome. Ovid's sense of seasonal time in the poem also betrays his exilic mindset. In lines 13-16, Ovid claims that the winter at Tomis lasts anywhere from two years to an eternity:

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[150] It is perhaps no accident that two paradigmatic literary examples of this phenomenon are Nabokov's "Signs and Symbols" and Borges' "Library of Babel"—two of the three authors that Steiner upholds as paragons of extraterritorial writers. Alexander Dolinin, "The Signs and Symbols in Nabokov's 'Signs and Symbols'", *Zembla* (2004). William Carrol Carroll, "Nabokov's 'Signs and Symbols'," in *A Book of Things About Vladimir Nabokov*, ed. Carl R. Proffer (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1974), 203–217.

iacet, et iactam ne sol pluviaeque resolvant,
  indurat Boreas perpetuamque facit.
ergo ubi delicuit nondum prior, altera venit,
  et solet in multis bima manere locis (*Tr.* 3.10.13-16)

The snow falls and, once it has been strewn,
neither sun nor rain dissolve it;
Boreas hardens it and renders it eternal.
Thus, when an earlier snowfall has not yet melted, another comes
and remains in many places for two years as a matter of course.

In this bleak description of the persistent winterscape, Ovid accentuates the length of the winter through repetitive diction and assonance: the snow falls (*iacet*) and is strewn (*iactam*). So too the tautology *Boreas indurat // perpetuamque facit*: Boreas causes the snow to harden (*indurat*) and makes it perpetual (*perpetuam*). Each line variously repeats the same point, thus prolonging the description to mirror its content. A labored ekphrasis on a never-ending winter seems an apt metaphor for melancholy, if a dubious description of reality; indeed, the winter of discontent would later make appearances in Shakespeare's famous line, Longfellow's 'Snow-Flakes' (the line *This is the secret of despair, / Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded*) and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*, where the snow-laden boughs rain tears. Apart from the emotional weight of the pathetic fallacy, I argue that there is something else at work here. Ovid's biennial winter, I suggest, is a point of entry for his dialectic with Augustan poetics and politics.

As Williams discusses in *Banished Voices*, Ovid's Tomitian winter appropriates and magnifies the established literary trope of Scythia as a geographic, climatological, and cultural antithesis to Rome—an "other" against which the inviting *urbanitas* of the Augustan Golden Age is defined. The clear model for the passage, Vergil's own Scythian digression in the *Georgics*, likewise contrasts Scythia's permanent winter with the city's temperate Mediterranean clime. By invoking this familiar paradigm, Ovid in one sense restores himself to his literary circle at Rome, assimilating the Tomitian latitude and climate to this established symbolic register. But as

Barchiesi and others have noted, the engagement of our *poeta exclusus* with the regime that ousted him can never be taken at face-value; it is neither wholly programmatic nor wholly subversive, but *dialogic*. The hoary bust that protrudes from the Tomitian winterscape is, upon closer inspection, Janus-faced.

Ovid's stalled winter is also set up in clear contrast both thematically and linguistically to the temporality of the Augustan poets. This temporality is exemplified by Horace's cyclical seasonality in *Ode* 1.4, where the *dissolution* of a bitter winter at Rome marks the rapid passage of time—it is a *momento mori* poem, where Tr. 3.10 is post-mortal, *te esse mortalem momento* poem, so to speak:

> Soluitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni
> trahuntque siccas machinae carinas,
> ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni
> nec prata canis albicant pruinis.
> Iam Cytherea choros ducit Venus imminente luna
> iunctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes
> alterno terram quatiunt pede, dum gravis Cyclopum
> Volcanus ardens visit officinas.
> Nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto
> aut flore, terrae quem ferunt solutae;
> nunc et in umbrosis Fauno decet immolare lucis,
> seu poscat agna sive malit haedo.
> Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
> regumque turris. O beate Sesti,
> vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam.
> Iam te premet nox fabulaeque Manes
> et domus exilis Plutonia, quo simul mearis,
> nec regna vini sortiere talis
> nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet iuventus
> nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt. (*Ode* 1.4)

> Bitter winter dissolves at the welcome turn to spring and Favonus
> and the tackles drag out dry hulls; now the herd takes no joy
> in its stables, nor does the ploughman in his fire,
> nor do fields turn white with pale frost.
> Now Cytherean Venus leads the dance, the moon
> suspended above, seemly Graces together with Nymphs
> beat the earth with their feet in turn, while blazing Vulcan
> surveys his heavy forges. Now it is fitting to wreathe
> one's brow with green myrtle or flowers, which the
> unfettered earth brings forth. Now too does Faunus

> rightly claim his sacrifice among the shaded groves
> whether he desires a lamb or prefers a kid.
> Pale Death, with an impartial foot, knocks at the houses
> of paupers and of kings. O blessed Sestius, the brief span
> of life forbids us from embarking on far-flung hope.
> Now the night oppresses you as do fabled ghosts
> and the wretched hall of Pluto, where you shall go,
> Neither will you obtain the reign of wine by lot,
> nor will you admire tender Lycidas, for whom all the
> youth is hot and to whom virgins will soon warm.

In contrast to Ovid's ever-present *tristis hiems*, that persistent pathetic fallacy for the exile's *tristia*, Horace describes the end of a bitter winter (*acris hiems* in the same metrical position) and the welcome turn of the seasons to spring, for which Favonus is a harbinger. He describes dry boats poised to be seaborne in contradistinction to Ovid's watery shipwreck, and—unlike the inhospitable clime of Tomis—herds and farmer alike are eager to be outdoors. The fields are decidedly unfrosty. He also describes a pratal scene of dancing nymphs and flower crowns, making sure to invoke Venus as the lead. Likewise, the presence of Faunus conjures the proto-Roman Latium through filiation. This bucolic idyll is suddenly interrupted by *Pallida Mors*, who reminds its addressee of the fleeting nature of life's pleasures, like wine and romance. Such *carpe diem* sentiments stand in stark opposition to Ovid's contention that he is already dead for want of such pleasures and the City that afforded them. The poem's textual momentum, unlike Ovid's frozen eternity, is propelled by repetition of the modifiers *nunc* and *iam*. *Tristia* 3.10 is thus written as an inversion of the climatological and temporal atmosphere of this poem, an epitome of "Augustan poetry", and as a challenge to its pro-Augustan undertones.[151]

Ovid's cognitive dissonance, however, drives him to lapse into the mode of Augustan poetry in poem 3.12. This imaginary sojourn back to the City takes place through time rather than

[151] Cf. also the companion poem to 1.4, *Ode* 4.7.

space. He begins the poem with a nod to *Ode* 1.4: as in Horace, the west winds diminish the cold (*frigora iam Zephyri minuunt Tr.* 3.12.1) and a few lines later, youths delight in a verdant meadow (5). His reference to the *vim* of a "winter longer than those of old" cues his reader to think that he is referencing the Tomitian winter of 3.10. But a few lines later, the signs of spring, like a budding vine or blooming trees, are said to be far from Tomis (*nam procul a Getico* 14, *nam procul a Geticis finibis* 16). He never invokes the name of the City, which he here defines through the negative. Such is Ovid's rhetorical silence when it comes to Rome. He does, however, deploy social, in addition to seasonal, markers of time. For instance, he refers to the constellation of the Ram, thus signifying the month of March in the Julian calendar (3), and he speaks of the activities of the forum giving way to festivals *ex ordine* (17-18), and the theaters of Republican figures in place of the fora Augusti, Romanum, and Iulium (23-4). At first glance, Ovid appears to be marking conventional time, structuring it according to the Augustan calendar and festivals. But upon closer inspection, he replaces landmarks of the Augustan urban landscape with their Republican precursors, thus carefully editing the history of Rome and engaging in a form of temporal subversion. He ends this imaginary sojourn with the couplet: *O quater et quotiens non est numerare beatum / non interdicta cui licet urbe frui!* (O four times happy—even countless times so—is he who may enjoy the unforbidden city 25-6). The use of the number four stands out, since even in Roman antiquity the tricolon was the rhetorical standard. Here too does keeping time have a sharp subtext: in Roman numerology, the number four (IV) represented the god Jupiter (**IV**PPITER) to whom Augustus (and therefore Ovid) often assimilated himself as part of his program of legitimation. The man-about-Rome is fourfold blessed, only to have this method of quantification invalidated in the same line (*non est numerare*). In the following line, Ovid returns to Tomis, claiming that his lot is rather to feel the chill of the melting snow.

The living death that Ovid describes in *Tristia* 3.10 through the metaphor of aseasonality marks a different tempo, which not only underscores his remoteness but positions his poetry as decidedly post-Augustan. Through his vivid hyperbole, where endless winter is the clear and present reality, Ovid toys with the concept of time as socially-constructed. Ovid himself, of course, participated actively in constructing this reality at Rome. In his Caesarian calendrical poem, he devotes thousands of lines to venerating the Roman cultural construct of time, a tome which was poignantly left unfinished when he was exiled. The *Fasti* not only rigorously delineates Roman time according to seasons and festivals, but it also ties the Roman calendar to the regime by which he was later expelled. The very conceit of the biennial winter deflates the official rhetoric of which markers of time are a part by highlighting its cultural relativity; Ovid's wintry eternity is an evacuation of Augustan-time, which ceases to exist in Tomis. Harry Evans favors a positivist interpretation of Ovid's winter in his reading of 3.10, arguing that the poem is a temporal touchstone by which we can reconstruct a timeline of Ovid's exile. Evans' literalism forecloses the more compelling reading that *Tristia* 3.10 was, in fact, written in any given August of the Augustan calendar. Through his annalistic disobedience, Ovid dismantles the protocols of official temporality.

In Ovid's rendering of the Pontic climate, a coherent picture of his exilic experience emerges. To further illuminate its muted hues, let us return to the cultural critic Edward Saïd. He describes the worldview of the exile as an original duality of vision that derives from the simultaneous experience of native culture and new environs. Saïd describes this metanastic perspective as an aesthetic vantage point from which one derives a peculiar form of pleasure. In Ovid's poetry, however, his subjective pluralism illustrates pain. The worldview of the exile is geographically decentered, temporally dysfunctional, and caught in the fissure between these old

and new worlds. The exile is fundamentally alienated from his culturally integrated sense of self. Saïd continues:

> Exile is never a state of being satisfied, placid, or secure. Exile, in the words of Wallace Stevens, is a "mind of winter" in which the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring are nearby but unobtainable. Perhaps this is another way of saying that a life of exile moves according to a different calendar and is less seasonable and settled than life at home. Exile is life outside the habitual order. It is nomadic, decentered, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew.[152]

One such novel "eruption" in Ovid's seemingly established relationship to climate is the sudden propensity for internal contradiction that we find in the *Ibis*, an invective poem written in exile to an antagonist he identifies only by this peculiar pseudonym. Here, Ovid depicts the Pontic climate as a curse, which he suffers and wishes to inflict on his adversary, but also –paradoxically — as a refuge. On the one hand, he consigns Ibis to a life of exile that bears an uncanny resemblance to his own in a barren, isolated, frozen wasteland (*Ibis* 107-113).[153] On the other hand, he suggests that the site of his exile, though characterized as the "frigid birthplace of the North wind", is a shelter, which Ibis prevents him from seeking (*Ille relegatum gelidos aquilonis ad ortus / non sinit exilio delituisse meo* That man forbids me, who am relegated to the birthplace of the frigid Aquilo, to seek refuge in my exile, *Ibis* 11-12). Fittingly, the verb he uses, *delitesco,* can have connotations of sinister lurking or of refuge seeking. (The poet uses the same term in *Amores*

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[152] Edward Saïd, "Reflections on Exile," In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 186.

[153]

Terra tibi fruges, amnis tibi deneget undas.	Would that the earth deny you her fruits and the river his waters,
Deneget afflatus ventus et aura suos.	may wind and breeze refuse you their breath.
Nec tibi sol calidus, nec sit tibi lucida Phoebe,	May the sun not be warm for you, nor brilliant Phoebe
Destituant oculos sidera clara tuos.	may the bright stars thwart your vision.
Nec se Vulcanus , nec se tibi praebeat aer,	May neither Vulcan nor the air lend you their aid,
Nec tibi det tellus nec tibi pontus iter.	nor earth nor sea afford you any path.
Exul, inops erres … (*Ibis* 107-113)	May you wander an exile and destitute …

3.1.56 to describe seeking shelter in the bosom of his maid-servant.) One might interpret this oddity to signify the extremity of Ibis' toxicity: by comparison, even Tomis seems like a sanctuary. But Tomis is also the one place where Ovid's exilic mindset is accurately reflected in his surroundings. His excommunication from the Roman socio-political elite, from Roman intellectual culture, and from his intimate circles rather than his geographical location is the essence of his exile. Then, wouldn't these losses, in a sense, be more keenly felt if he were at Rome, of which Ibis is a stark reminder? Ovid finds asylum in the cradle of the Aquilo precisely because this is where the *poeta exclusus* exists *in situ*, his coarse condition embodied in the roughness of the place.

This internal tension plays out in a second way, as well. Twice Ovid refers to the Pontic landscape as his confidant, another unexpected expression of intimacy with his surroundings. In lines 67-86, he invokes the natural landscape to attend his curse poem and fulfill its contents. Here, instead of being conspired against by the biennial winter at Tomis, Ovid conspires *with* the Pontic climate to condemn Ibis to a similar fate. Instead of invoking invisible spectators to confirm the truth of his testimony about the Tomitian climate, he calls upon the place itself to bear witness to his plaints. So too a few lines earlier, he explicitly beseeches the Pontic to hear his grievances and flattery of the emperor Augustus (*Ibis* 23-27).[154] The last two lines figure the Pontus not only as his confidant, but also as an intermediary between himself and the Augustan regime. Ovid thus poignantly figures his barren surroundings as the companionship, confidence, and advocacy that he lacks and craves in exile. Ovid finds but cold comfort, as it were, in the icy Pontic. Nonetheless,

[154] Di melius! quorum longe mihi maximus ille est, qui nostras inopes noluit esse vias.
Huic igitur meritas grates, ubicumque licebit, Pro tam mansueto pectore semper agam.
Audiat hoc Pontus faciet quoque forsitan idem terra sit ut proprior testificanda mihi (*Ibis* 23-27)
Gods forbid—of whom, to my mind, the greatest by far is that man who would not permit my travels go unaided.
To him, therefore, I shall always render due thanks, wherever possible, for such magnanimous goodwill.
Let the Pontus hear this that the same power might also make it that a nearer land act as my witness.

the objective of the plea remains that a nearer land – nearer, presumably, to the unstated Rome – bear witness to his tribulations, thus, at last, undermining his claims to Tomitian asylum.[155]

How does one explain this rapid vacillation between polarized depictions of Tomis? I suggest that what I shall call Ovid's *manic ambiguity* is yet another window into the exilic mindset. Here, I am deeply indebted to Gareth Williams' treatment of Ibian mania in *The Curse of Exile*. In the final chapter, he argues that "certain manic-depressive tendencies can be detected in Ovid's exilic persona" and, moreover, that "the general state of exilic melancholy gives way in the Ibis to a heightened state of mania". Williams examines this vacillation between emotional extremes largely on the level of Ovid's exilic *oeuvre,* reading the *Ibis* as a manic episode between the melancholic phases of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* and *Tristia*. I suggest, that this vacillation is also operative on a smaller scale in Ovid's treatment of climate. By shifting between melancholic resignation to a glacial hell from which he pines to be delivered and madly conscripting the Pontic in his efforts to thwart Ibis and reclaim the good graces of the emperor, he demonstrates a similar kind of mental lability. The hospitability of the climate turns not on the seasons but on the caprice of Ovid's circular madness.

Ovid's gelid *phantasia*, apart from the question of its historicity, can be mined to yield a greater understanding of his exilic persona. The function of climate in this poem intersects with Ovid's surreal manipulation of the temporal and spatial vistas in the exilic poetry at large. Through this manipulation, Ovid extends to his readers a privileged position from which to view his interior climate and experience his 'contrapuntal' exilic worldview. Through the prism of his poetry, we

[155] See Matthew McGowan on poetry of redress as poetry of refuge. McGowan, *Poetic Redress*, 1-15; 203-216.

are able to behold the inherent contradictions of his exilic persona; that is, in the words of Wallace Stevens, the *nothing that is not there -- and the nothing that is.*[156]

iii. *A Peripatetic Pecadillo*

Speaking of nothing, let us now turn to the much ado that Ovid makes about his so-called *error*. In his entreaty to Augustus for reinstatement in the second book of the *Tristia*, Ovid references a mysterious *carmen et error*, a poem and a peccadillo, that occasioned his banishment from Rome (*Tr.* 2.207). He makes explicit reference to his *ars* as the culprit, a turn of phrase that has been widely interpreted as an inculpation of the *Ars Amatoria*, his salacious handbook on seduction that ran afoul of Augustan moral codes (*turpi carmine* 'filthy poem', *Tr.* 2.111-12; *nullum crimen legisses in a/Arte mea*, "you would have read no crime in my craft/*Ars*", 140). His *error*, however, has proven more elusive. Interpretations have ranged from reading it as part of a hendyadic structure with *carmen* (that is, the *carmen* was the *error*)[157] or, on the basis of his later references to seeing something unseemly, that he either witnessed or participated in some scandal involving the Julian line.[158] The question of the actual referent of the *error* is outside the scope of this paper. But the poet's pregnant penological diction is, I argue, far more compelling than its

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[156] Wallace Stephens, "The Snow Man," in *Poetry: a magazine of verse*, vol. 19 (October 1921).

[157] J.C. Thibault, *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1964), 125 ff. for a chronological catalogue of hypotheses); P. Green, "Carmen et error: prophasis and aitia in the matter of Ovid's Exile," *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 1 (1982): 202-220. B.R. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto*, *Latomus* (Brussels, 1980) (though she interprets the *carmen* as the *Met.*).

[158] Frances Norwood, *The Riddle of Ovid's Relegatio* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); Jennifer Ingleheart, "What the Poet Saw: Ovid, the Error and the Theme of Sight in Tristia 2," *Materiali E Discussioni per L'analisi Dei Testi Classici*, no. 56 (2006): 63-86. The emperor's grandchildren, Julia the Younger and Agrippa Postumus were banished concurrently, and Lucius Aemilius Paullus was put to death for fomenting conspiracy against Augustus around the same time. The fact that the *Ars Amatoria* was published long before his exile (1 C.E. vs. 8 C.E.) further suggests that the *Ars* was a pretext on the part of the emperor for something more personal. The references could also be to his *ars* (miniscule), taking the corpus of his poetry in concatenation.

indeterminable content.

Of the terms for transgression available to him, Ovid selects his judiciously. Although he uses legal jargon—e.g., *crimen*, *scelus*, *offensa*, *delictum*, *facinus*—in reference to the cause of his relegation, it is always used to define his deed through the negative or to describe his 'crime' through the eyes of the emperor. The words he consistently deploys to describe his misstep are *culpa* and *error*, terms which are neutered of a sense of deliberateness or criminality. *Culpa* often connotes a decidedly unintentional error in judgement, an inherent fault or *faux pas*. In juridical Latin, it refers to being remiss or neglectful—that is, the *mens rea* of the actor is negligent rather than purposeful.[159] Ovid himself uses the term elsewhere to refer to concupiscence (e.g., *Met.* 2.37), which may here evoke its sublimations in the *Ars Amatoria* or his bearing witness to an act of sexual impropriety, as some scholars have suggested.[160] *Error*, taken in the moral sense, likewise refers to a lapse of judgment that stands in contradistinction to a crime. Indeed, a lemma search of the usage of *error* and its ilk in the Ovidian *oeuvre* indicates that he uses the term most frequently to refer an innocent or inconsequential mistake, an indiscretion rather than an act of criminality. The *duo crimina* for which he is exiled are thus promptly deflated by their appositive, *carmen et error*, a simple song and an innocent misstep. Ovid absolves himself rhetorically by avoiding legally-charged terminology or selectively invoking only the legal language that vindicates him.

Consider, for example, his use of these two terms in his portrayal of Actaeon in the *Metamorphoses*, a figure to whom he explicitly compares himself and his mistake in the *Tristia*.

[159] Albeit, our primary source for legal terminology is the emperor Justinian, who lived centuries later: *Dig.* 17, 2, 72; 18, 1, 68; 42, 5, 8, § 3.
[160] See footnote 2.

In book three of his epic *tour de force*, Ovid recalls how the Greek hero stumbled upon a bathing Diana and, in so doing, got himself into hot water:

> Dumque ibi perluitur solita Titania lympha,
> ecce nepos Cadmi dilata parte laborum
> per nemus ignotum non certis passibus *errans*
> pervenit in lucum: sic illum fata ferebant.
> Qui simul intravit rorantia fontibus antra,
> sicut erant, viso nudae sua pectora nymphae
> percussere viro, subitisque ululatibus omne
> implevere nemus circumfusaeque Dianam
> corporibus texere suis; tamen altior illis
> ipsa dea est colloque tenus supereminet omnes.
> Qui color infectis adversi solis ab ictu
> nubibus esse solet aut purpureae aurorae,
> is fuit in vultu visae sine veste Dianae. (3.173-185)
>
> And while they bathed the descendant of Titans there with the customary water,
> lo! The scion of Cadmus, the duty of his labors deferred,
> wandering through the unfamiliar woods with uncertain steps
> came to the sacred grove: so the fates directed him.
> Just as he entered the caves trickling with streams
> the naked nymphs beat their breasts at the sight of a man,
> such as they were, and filled the entire glade with sudden shrieks
> and covered Diana, cloaking her with their bodies.
> But the goddess herself was taller than they were,
> and she towered above them all, who came up to her neck.
> The very hue that clouds, tinged by the beating of the sun facing them,
> are wont to have, or purple daybreak,
> that was the color of Diana's face, when she was seen nude.

This episode repeatedly underscores that Actaeon is innocent of intent and portrays him as a hapless victim of circumstance. The hero himself is introduced by the deictic *ecce*, signaling to the reader *look!* as if he had just stumbled onto the scene unexpectedly. Ovid highlights the unfamiliarity of his surroundings with the words *ignotum*, *non certis*, and, tellingly, *errans* as the privileged final foot of the hexameter. His mistake and his woebegone wandering—both conveyed by *errare*—are coextensive, suggesting that the former consists merely in the latter. Furthermore, Actaeon's path is not planned on his part, but preordained by the *fata* of the fourth line.

Notably, all the active verbs and participles applied to Actaeon in this passage are simple verbs of motion: he wanders, he arrives, he enters—but he never sees. After this point, the nymphs take over as active agents, reacting to the *viso viro*, who is described as seen rather than seeing. The crux of the traditional mythic narrative, that is, Actaeon's beholding the nude goddess, is completely elided: it is merely said to have happened after the fact a few lines later. Likewise, in the final line, Ovid uses the passive voice to describe the act of seeing that has just transpired: ... *in vultu visae sine veste ... Dianae*, which is also how Diana later describes herself (... *me posito visam velamine* ... me seen with my garments laid aside, 3.192). The absence of an active verb or agent and the emphasis on the passive participles through alliteration elide, through style and syntax, the fulcrum on which the parable turns: Actaeon is the subject of his gaze. It is the apoplectic rage of the goddess that is portrayed in full flush, as well as the shock and horror of the nymphs, a reaction that is heralded by the use of *lympha* in the first line of the passage, which calls to mind *lymphata*, 'driven mad'. Instead of Actaeon, through the medium of his gaze, it is Diana and her coterie who are portrayed as the unilateral aggressors. His phallocentric gaze is castrated by the language of the passage.[161]

In addition to implicitly exculpating Actaeon and inverting the paradigm of power by reversing the directionality of the gaze, Ovid also conjures readerly sympathy by conscripting us in the act of supposed scopophilia. To return to line 174, the directive *ecce* reminds us that we too are bearing witness to Diana *visa sine veste* insofar as Actaeon is doing so. The *vir* is *visus* not only by the goddess and the nymphs, but also by us as he commits his ill-fated *error*: we survey

[161] Andrew Feldherr posits that the characters of the *Metamorphoses* are trapped in conflicting and collusive roles of agent and spectator, whereas here, Ovid turns this paradigm on its head, emphasizing Actaeon's passivity and de-emphasizing his gaze. This inversion further distinguishes the myth from the typical typology of transformation that occurs in the epic. Feldherr, *Playing Gods: Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Politics of Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

the scene, so to speak, through his eyes. The subtext is that, if Actaeon is guilty, by the end of the passage, so are we. The reader thus has an added incentive to find in his (Actaeon's, Ovid's) favor, if only to exonerate himself.

We must also read this vignette within its broader context in the *Metamorphoses*. Actaeon is the grandson of Cadmus, whose story initiates us into the third book and directly precedes his progeny's. Ovid even refers to Actaeon by the papponymic 'grandson of Cadmus' in the lines above. By proximity of blood and letters, Ovid's invocation of Actaeon would thus have prompted the reader to recall Cadmus, as well. The latter is sent by *his* father on a quest to retrieve his sister, Europa, with whom Jupiter is infatuated the guise of a bull. Like Ovid, Cadmus is consigned to *exilium, facto pius et sceleratus eodem*, pious and wicked due to the same deed (*Met.* 3.5). Such phrasing implies the caprice of the authority who exiles a man for a deed that might as well have made him virtuous, had better circumstances prevailed. As in the case of Cadmus' search for his sister (*facto ... eodem*), the success of Ovid's *carmen* in following Augustan protocols by, *e.g.*, apotheosizing the emperor, or its failure to do so, *e.g.*, the salacious *Ars*, is what determines his own status as *pius* or *sceleratus*. The story of the House of Cadmus thus evokes the moral ambiguity Ovid wishes to attach to his own narrative.

As a philological analysis of this passage demonstrates, Ovid's rhetoric reflects the lines with which he begins the episode: *At bene si quaeras,*[162] *fortunae crimen in illo, / non scelus invenies: quod enim scelus error habebat*? (But if you investigate the matter thoroughly, you will ascertain that it was fortune's malfeasance, not a crime on his part: for what crime does a mistake consist in? *Met.* 3.141-2). The semantics of a mere *error* versus *scelus* prefigures the distinction

[162] *quaerere* can mean 'to make a judicial inquiry', casting the line in the language of formal investigation and adjudication.

that Ovid will make between the two many times over in the exile poetry, invoking Actaeon's as an allegory for his own transgression. For of what *scelus* is the errant Actaeon guilty? And, by extension, what criminality does Ovid's infamous *error* possess? The implication is: none.

Given that the *Metamorphoses* was published around the time of Ovid's exile in 8 A.D., one might wonder whether the story of Actaeon was written (or revised) to be a cipher for its author's concurrent woes. Whether or not this is the case, Ovid invokes this myth in the *Tristia* in precisely this manner. Given his treatment of Actaeon in the *Met.*, the passage in question demands to be read intertextually, and thus calls to mind the prior iteration of the hero and his sire:

> cur aliquid vidi? cur noxia lumina feci?
> cur imprudenti cognita *culpa* mihi?
> inscius Actaeon vidit sine veste Dianam:
> praeda fuit canibus non minus ille suis.
> scilicet in superis etiam fortuna luenda est,
> nec veniam laeso numine casus habet. (*Tr.* 2.105-10)
>
> Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes guilty?
> Why did I unwittingly harbor knowledge of a fault?
> Actaeon, caught unawares, saw Diana in the nude:
> Nonetheless, he became prey to his own hounds.
> Clearly, when it comes to the gods, even a chance occurrence merits atonement.
> Nor does ill-fortune admit of forgiveness when a deity is wronged.

These lines epitomize Ovid's rhetorical posture toward his transgression. While the initial sequence of questions seems at first to effect an admission of guilt and convey remorse, upon closer examination, the diction and tone of the passage belie this sentiment. The reflexive inquisition amounts to rhetorical hypophora: Ovid raises the question of his guilt only to answer it—and exonerate himself—through allegory. He claims that he and his mythic double 'unwittingly' commit their crimes (*imprudenti, inscius*, respectively), a sentiment that echoes the unfamiliar terrain and uncertain steps of metamorphic Actaeon. To describe a mere *culpa* as *cognita*, 'becoming known to him' (taken here as an ingressive perfect) either as a spectator or a

bad actor, is also a remarkably euphemistic way to describe committing or witnessing a salacious deed (not unlike 'knowing' in the biblical sense). Likewise, the terms *fortuna* and *casus*, much like *fata* and *fortunae crimen* in the previous passage, imply a lack of agency or control on the part of the author of the so-called *error*. The idea that even chance happenings do not admit of forgiveness and atonement in the eyes of a deity, whether Diana or the deified emperor,[163] also suggests a certain amount of divine caprice—or lack of clemency, a watchword of the Augustan regime.

Like its antecedent in the *Metamorphoses*, which it often echoes through similar diction, the passage above places great weight on visuality.[164] Let us return to the first line: Ovid begins with a cryptic reference to seeing something unseemly. Perhaps this *aliquid* and the shame it elicits refers to a *mysterium* on which he intruded, an illicit act by or against one of the *Julii Caesares*, or perhaps it is simply the province of his erotic imagination. Regardless of what it signifies, the passage clearly relocates the blame that bears down on his shoulders in exile onto whatever he saw (recall the similar function of the passive participle *visae* used in the prior passage, where the act of seeing in which the crime consists is divorced from its agent). Since the act of seeing is itself so emphatic in each Actaeon passage, both the appearance of Actaeon in the wrong place at the wrong time (*viso ... viro*) and his catching sight of the unclad goddess (*visae sine veste*, *vidit sine veste*), one might reasonably read these passages in conjunction with ancient theories of vision. In fact, there is an antique precedent for this very reading in Ovid's predecessor, the 1st century B.C.E. scholar Varro.

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[163] The ambiguity of *superis* and *numine* allows for a conflation of puritanical Augustus and chaste Diana that calls to mind Augustan moral legislation on the sanctity of marriage, since Diana is an emblem of virginity.

[164] See also Jennifer Ingleheart's insightful study on the relationship between the act of seeing and Ovid's error (2006).

In his *De Lingua Latina*, a treatise on the origins of the Latin language, Varro derives the word *video* from *vis*, force. While the etymology is false, it is also telling: according to the ancient theory of emission, which competed with the theory of intromission for prominence throughout antiquity,[165] visual perception involves the emission of embodied beams from the eye that act upon its object—i.e., exert a physical force. Among the most influential visual emission theorists was Plato, who described a process by which fiery corpuscles emitted from the eyes react with daylight to produce a single, homogenous 'body' (ἓν σῶμα οἰκειωθὲν) that shoots out from the eyes and perceives its object by caressing its contours (ἀντερείδῃ 'grasp, press'). This invisible visual tentacle then transmits feedback from its stimulus to the soul (*Timaeus* 45b2-d3).[166] Emission theory (the Platonic version and its later iterations, like the Stoic and Galenic *pneuma*) thus conceived sight as a sense akin to touch. The ancients believed that so much as a dirty look could inflict corporal harm on someone, causing injury or illness (the so-called "evil eye").[167] The Romans were even known to wear apotropaic amulets called *fascina*[168] and adorn their hearths and

[165] Proponents of extramission include Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato (Timaeus 67c4-d2; 45b2-d3, though also intimations of intromission Phaedrus 251c), Theophrastus, and Galen; proponents of the theory of intromission include Aristotle (*De Anima* 419a7-15, *De Sensu*); but suggestions of extramission On the Soul 435a) and Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 4.). Epicureans and stoics

[166] τῶν δὲ ὀργάνων πρῶτον μὲν φωσφόρα συνετεκτήναντο ὄμματα, τοιᾶδε ἐνδήσαντες αἰτίᾳ. τοῦ πυρὸς ὅσον τὸ μὲν κάειν οὐκ ἔσχε, τὸ δὲ παρέχειν φῶς ἥμερον, οἰκεῖον ἑκάστης ἡμέρας, σῶμα ἐμηχανήσαντο γίγνεσθαι. τὸ γὰρ ἐντὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸν ὂν τούτου πῦρ εἰλικρινὲς ἐποίησαν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ῥεῖν λεῖον καὶ πυκνὸν ὅλον μέν, μάλιστα δὲ τὸ μέσον συμπιλήσαντες τῶν ὀμμάτων, ὥστε τὸ μὲν ἄλλο ὅσον παχύτερον στέγειν πᾶν, τὸ τοιοῦτον δὲ μόνον αὐτὸ καθαρὸν διηθεῖν. ὅταν οὖν μεθημερινὸν ᾖ φῶς περὶ τὸ τῆς ὄψεως ῥεῦμα, τότε ἐκπῖπτον ὅμοιον πρὸς ὅμοιον, συμπαγὲς γενόμενον, ἓν σῶμα οἰκειωθὲν συνέστη κατὰ τὴν τῶν ὀμμάτων εὐθυωρίαν, ὅπηπερ ἂν ἀντερείδῃ τὸ προσπῖπτον ἔνδοθεν πρὸς ὃ τῶν ἔξω συνέπεσεν. ὁμοιοπαθὲς δὴ δι' ὁμοιότητα πᾶν γενόμενον, ὅτου τε ἂν αὐτό ποτε ἐφάπτηται καὶ ὃ ἂν ἄλλο ἐκείνου, τούτων τὰς κινήσεις διαδιδὸν εἰς ἅπαν τὸ σῶμα μέχρι τῆς ψυχῆς αἴσθησιν παρέσχετο ταύτην ᾗ δὴ ὁρᾶν φαμεν.

[167] Cf. Alciphr. *Ep.* I.15; Heliod. *Aethiop.* III.7; Plin. *H. N.* VII.2; the chapter 'περὶ τῶν καταβασκαίνειν λεγομένων, καὶ βάσκανον ἔχειν ὀφθαλμόν' in Plutarch's *Symposium*.

[168] Varr. *De Ling. Lat.* VII.97.

gardens with *Satyrica signa*[169] to ward off the fascinations of the ill-intended and envious.[170] In both cases, the symbols were phallic.

This constellation of associations brings us to Varro and the following passage:

> video a visu <id a vi>: qui<n>que enim sensuum maximus in oculis: nam cum sensus nullus quod abest mille passus sentire possit, oculorum sensus vis usque pervenit ad stellas. Hinc:
>
> visenda vigilant, vigilium invident.
>
> Et Acci:
>
> Cum illud o<c>uli<s> violavit <is>, qui invidit
>
> invidendum.
>
> A quo etiam violavit virginem pro vit<i>avit dicebant; aeque eadem modestia potius cum muliere fuisse quam concubuisse dicebant.
>
> 'I see' from 'sight'—that is, from *vis*, 'force', since it is the most powerful of the five senses. For though none of the senses is able to perceive what is a thousand feet away, the force of ocular perception reaches right up to the stars. Thus:
>
> *They keep vigil over what must be watched, they regard the vigil with contempt.*
>
> And [the verse] of Accius:
>
> *When he [Actaeon] committed a violation*[171] *with his eyes, who beheld what must not be seen to ill effect.*[172]
>
> Accordingly, they also say 'he violated the virgin' rather than 'he ruined her' and likewise with the same discretion they say that someone 'was with his wife' rather than that 'he lay with her'. (Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 80)

Here, Varro first establishes a fundamental connection between physicality and visuality semantically, through its derivation from *vis*, and ontologically, through the attribution of embodied qualities to the sense of sight (*pervenit*, *violavit*). In his citation of the tragedian Accius, he goes one step farther, suggesting that Actaeon "violated" Diana *by casting a harmful eye* (*invidit*) on that which is verboten to look upon, namely, her naked body. In this rendering of the myth, Actaeon's agency and the violence of his act is strongly underscored by finite, active verbs that imply corporeal action: as he himself points out a line later, *violavit* is tantamount to rape (as

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[169] Plin. *H. N.* XIX.19 §1.
[170] n.b. *invidere* means both "to cast the evil eye" and "to envy."
[171] Taking *illud* as an internal accusative with *violavit*.
[172] Taking invidendum as non videndum here.

is *vis*), and as discussed above, *invidit* further conveys that he damaged her physically through his gaze. Since the antidote to the evil eye was a phallic talisman (the *fascinus*), this too might be read with intrinsically sexual connotations. Moreover, the use of the neuter demonstrative *illud* and the neuter passive participle shroud the object of his gaze in euphemistic language and convey a sense of *mysterium*,[173] as if Diana's nakedness were too shameful to put to words. The passive periphrastic sense of *invidendum* also conveys a transgression of propriety, what ought to be done, what is *fas*.

This passage is a useful point of reference for two reasons. First of all, it gives us an impression of the traditional myth, which was so profoundly associated with violent subjectivity through sight that it used to define the supposed relationship between *vis* and *video*. Actaeon's intentionality and culpability are not only made clear through Varro's diction and the placement of the quote, but they are even highlighted. Secondly, this reference to Actaeon points to the ways in which Ovid manipulates language to exonerate Actaeon in the *Metamorphoses* and *Tristia*, where the injurious eye is, on the one hand, diffused by the passive voice ("Diana was seen without clothes") or the modifier *inscius* and, on the other, effectively turned around on him (*viro viso*).

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[173] Cf. Nietzsche on shame and the act of seeing in *Human, All Too Human* (100): Shame exists wherever there is a "mysterium"; this is a religious concept that was widely prevalent in the older period of human culture. Everywhere there were circumscribed areas, to which divine right forbade entrance, except under certain conditions: at first these were spatial areas, in that certain places were not to be trodden upon by the foot of the unconsecrated, who would feel horror and fear in their vicinity. This feeling was frequently carried over to other relationships, to sexual relationships, for example, which were to be removed from the eyes of youth (for its own good), as a privilege and sacred mystery of the more mature. Many gods were thought to be active in protecting and furthering the observance of these relationships, watching over them as guardians in the nuptial chamber. (This is why this chamber is called Harem, "sanctuary," in Turkish, which is the same word commonly used for the vestibules of mosques.) Likewise kingship, as a center radiating power and splendor, is to the humble subject a mysterium full of secrecy and shame; it has many after effects, which can still be felt in peoples who are otherwise in no way ashamed. In the same way, that whole world of inner states, the so-called "soul," is still a mysterium to all non-philosophers since from time immemorial it was thought worthy of divine origin, divine intercourse: thus it is a sacred mystery and awakens shame. *Human, All Too Human,* trans. R.J. Hollingdale. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Sight is effectively decoupled from intentionality and culpability when it comes to Actaeon's subjectivity; it maintains its connotations of violence when he is the object of the gaze.

In addition to extramission, the theory of intromission is also pertinent to how we read the passage in the *Tristia*. Given that these two ways of conceptualizing sight competed for prominence throughout antiquity and beyond, it is not unreasonable to assume that an ancient reader could have had both in mind. Proponents of the latter, like the Epicureans (following Democritus and Aristotle, and later succeeded by Diogenes Laertius), maintained that sight was occasioned by a stream of εἴδωλα or *simulacra*, atom-like and lightning-fast corpuscles, that emanate from the surface of solid objects or form in mid-air and enter the eye, thus reversing the direction of the *vis*. Lucretius, a rough contemporary of Varro's, famously discusses this phenomenon in detail in fourth book of *De Rerum Natura* (4.26–215), demonstrating that the two theories were both in play as recently as the previous generation of Roman literature. Having received an aristocratic education in rhetoric and letters at Rome, Ovid would have been familiar with both of these authors and their respective theories of optics.

Ovid begins the passage with the line *cur aliquid vidi? cur noxia lumina feci?* Taken at face value, Ovid merely queries, "Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes blameworthy/harmful?", implying that the act of seeing *aliquid* has made his eyes complicit. Either he saw something accidentally and in so doing inadvertently committed malfeasance (emission theory) or the object of his sight tainted his eyes (intromission theory). The latter also aligns with the Actaeon allusion, since he is literally transformed by the act of sight into a buck. But closer examination of the word *noxia* reveals a hidden subtext. A *noxa* (or *noxia*, in its adjectival counterpart) is specific legal jargon which refers to a crime committed by someone *in potestate*, such as a son or a slave, for which the *paterfamilias*—not the individual in question—was held

accountable (OLD s.v. *noxa* II, *noxia, noxius*). There could be a subtle suggestion that the *pater patriae* is responsible for whatever transpired, or at the very least, that Ovid himself should not be punished. The word *noxia* in close proximity to *lumina* ('light' or 'eyes') could also be a pun on *nox*,[174] which can mean night not only literally, but also metaphorically: blindness. This wordplay is compounded by references to being unable to (fore)see in the following two lines (*imprudenti, inscius*). Scholars have pointed to Ovid's status as self-anointed *vates*[175] in the exile poetry, and blindness was in antiquity closely connected with foresight or *anagnorisis*, a moment of revelation (*e.g.*, Tiresias, Oedipus). Ironically, the implication that he, once *inscius*, is struck blind by the intromissive effects of the *aliquid* girds the proposition that he is rhetorically figuring himself as a vatic authority[176] who is able to discern what others are not, for instance, the merit of Augustus' grievance and his exile. And this brings us to the *verso* of Ovid's purported crime: the role of his accuser as a fallible *iudex*.[177]

Not only does Ovid exonerate himself through his diction, but there is also a condemnatory edge to his *error* vis-à-vis the emperor. One of the many ways in which Ovid takes issue with his relegation is the lack of due process: while traditionally inflicting this penalty would involve a trial before the senate, Augustus seems to have acted as judge, jury, and executioner, so to speak, condemning him to exile *in camera* (*Tr.* 2.131-4). Not only is Ovid's mistake made to pass for a crime, but the procedure by which he is convicted for his purported infraction is illegitimate. The

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[174] There is a similar pun on *nux*, in Ovid's (possibly spurious) poem about a nut-tree.
[175] McGowan, *Poetic Redress*, 133. Williams, *Banished Voices*, 65 ff.
[176] This argument intersects with Ovid's insistence of the authority of the visual over the auditory throughout the exile poetry (the ancient debate on the authority of the visual versus the auditory was in fact a hobbyhorse of ancient philosophers), as if to suggest that because he has seen something, his is the final word on whatever his colleagues back in Rome may have heard.
[177] See also Ingleheart's study of Augustus' own guilty *lumina*, as the spectator of salacious mime (2006, 81).

error conveys not only the former sentiment, but also the latter: it just so happens that *Error* (according to modern editorial convention, majuscule *E*, corresponding to the Greek Ἄτη) makes a cameo as the personification of judicial blindness in the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 12.59).

Directly after another anecdote about Diana's anger and its appeasement by the sacrifice of a buck (the Iphigenia episode, 12.35),[178] which cues the reader to remember the plight of Actaeon, Ovid describes the House of Fame:

> Orbe locus medio est inter terrasque fretumque
> caelestesque plagas, triplicis confinia mundi,
> unde quod est usquam, quamvis regionibus absit,
> inspicitur, penetratque cavas vox omnis ad aures. (12.39-42)
>
> There is a place in the middle of the world,
> between the land and sea and celestial planes,
> at the nexus of a tripartite world
> where whatever exists anywhere, even if far from these regions,
> is seen, and every voice enters open ears.

He goes on to elaborate that omniscient *Fama* presides over this universe in a panoptic tower of resounding brass, which echoes every voice and so repeats whatever it hears *ad infinitum* (12.43-52). He then proceeds as follows:

> Atria turba tenet: veniunt, leve vulgus, euntque
> mixtaque cum veris passim commenta vagantur
> milia rumorum confusaque verba volutant.
> E quibus hi vacuas inplent sermonibus aures,
> hi narrata ferunt alio; mensuraque ficti
> crescit, et auditis aliquid novus adicit auctor.
> Illic Credulitas, illic *temerarius Error*
> vanaque Laetitia est consternatique Timores
> Seditioque recens dubioque auctore Susurri. (12.53-61)
>
> A crowd occupies the atria: the fickle hordes, they come
> and they go, and myriad rumors roam—fictions mixed with truths—
> and confused words are cast around haphazardly.
> Some fill their empty ears with this talk,
> others spread elsewhere what is told to them,

[178] That is, the Iphigenia episode that begins the book (12.1-38).

> the scale of the fiction grows, and a new authority
> adds something to what he hears.
> Thus Belief, thus rash Mistake
> and empty Joy and alarming Fears
> and recent Sedition and Whispers
> come into being from a dubious source.

A *leve vulgus,* a frivolous or fickle horde, is always passing through this *domus aerea*, which evokes the Hesiodic Bronze Age, a lawless epoch in which men were the source of their own undoing through reckless violence and consigned to the "dank house" of Hades (*ex aere* in line 46 may also be a pun on *āēr,* since the tower is said to be suspended in the ether). This image sets itself in opposition to that of the Golden Age renaissance and restoration of the *mos maiorum* that the Augustan program aimed to project. The passage emphasizes repeatedly the inaccuracy of what one hears (*mixta cum veris commenta*, *vacuas aures*, *mensura ficti crescit*) as well as the unreliability of the authorial source (*auditis aliquid novus adicit auctor, dubio auctore*), who adds *aliquid*—like the "something" that Ovid sees—to what he has heard. Ovid again inserts himself subtly into the ancient debate on the authority of the auditory over the visual, suggesting that sight is the true vehicle for truth, whereas what one hears can all too often be misleading. Moreover, the fundamental flaw in *Fama* is not her inaccuracy, but her disingenuousness: she is all-seeing (again in 62-3), but still presides over a castle in the sky, resounding with lies. Here, there is another intertext with Book 2 of the *Tristia*, in which Ovid references Augustus' own all-seeing authority (*luminibusque tuis, totus quibus utitur orbis* 513).[179] Reacting to such deceits on the wing are Belief, Mistake, Revolt, and the attendants to *Fama,* Whispers, who, it is said, arise from a *dubio*

[179] Ingleheart makes an interesting point about "In [the exile poetry], it is used to set up a damning contrast between the poet and the princeps: Ovid has inadvertently seen something that led to his destruction, whereas Augustus has both failed to see everything that he should have done, despite his claims to oversee the whole world and also corrupted others with inappropriate sights" (2006, 83).

auctore. *Temerarius Error*, a faulty interpretation due to thoughtlessness, deserves particular consideration: it refers here not to an error of deed, but to one of perception, interpretation, and judgment. This semantic field suggests that the *error* for which Ovid was exiled is not his own, but that of the emperor.

So what, one might wonder, does this excursus on vision have to do with the topography of Tomis? Ovid makes this connection himself. For the unforeseen crime of seeing too much, and the emperor's purblind justice, he is punished with never again viewing the vistas of Rome: *urbis abest facies ... vulgus adest Scythium braccataque turba Getarum, sic me quae video non videoque nocent*, the façade of my city is absent ... a horde of Scythians attends, and a frenzied throng of Getics, thus what I have seen and what I do not see do me harm' (*Tr.* 4.6.45-8). Ultimately, in Ovid's *mundus inversus*, crime and punishment are rendered in the language of landscape, the experience of which is mediated through sight. And the intromissive vision of Tomitian topography that his punishment consists in does him a harm that rivals corporal punishment: it inflicts a living death. But enough of this textual meandering; let us get to the point, which is, ironically, Ovid's *praeteritio*.

Ovid gives pride of place to the one penological term available to him that has connotations of spatial movement. Much like the English 'transgression' and 'deviance', or to some extent its cognate, 'erratic', the Latin *error* has a dual meaning: it commonly refers both to straying from the good in the moral sense and to going astray in the spatial sense. Indeed, the Proto-Indo-European root from which it is derived, **ers*- "to be in motion, to roam around", gives primacy to

the latter meaning.[180] In what follows, I argue that this polysemy is critical to our understanding of the Ovidian *error*, Ovid's psychology of exile, and his recriminations of Augustus.

When it comes to the double meaning of *error*, one might raise the potential objections of the etymological fallacy[181] or dead metaphor[182], suggesting that it does not necessarily conjure the idea of "wandering" when it is used to refer to a mistake. The former can be rebutted fairly easily: *error* maintained both meanings throughout the Classical period and well into Ecclesiastical Latin, so the argument does not hinge on pre-Latinate historical linguistics. As for the latter—the argument advanced by Max Black that highly conventional figures of speech ought not be considered extant metaphors at all because the symbolism of vehicle[183] no longer registers consciously—it is inherently flawed. Linguistic philosopher I.A. Richards considered this theory a species of "proper meaning superstition", a kind of linguistic purism whereby the semantics of a word are divorced from its speaker and context. Noting that the terms *living* and *dead* metaphors are *themselves* a two-fold metaphor, he urged a re-examination of the distinction between them, which was popular at the time.[184] More recently, cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in their groundbreaking work, *Metaphors We Live By*, go one step further, arguing that fossilized metaphors exhibit an inextricable link between their vehicle and tenor which reveals

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[180] Latin *errare*: from Proto-Italic **ers-āje-* from Proto-Indo-European **h1ers-eh2-* "error," but originally "wandering." From **h1ers-* "to travel," "to flow." Possibly from an even older root **h1er-* "to arrive".
[181] e.g., Gregory Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33* (Boston: Brill, 1998).
[182] "[A] so-called dead metaphor is not a metaphor at all, but merely an expression that no longer has a pregnant metaphorical use." (Max Black, "More About Metaphor." *Metaphor and Thought, 2nd ed.*, ed. by Andrew Ortony (Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[183] Here I use the terminology of I.A. Richards, wherein *vehicle* is the symbol to which the *tenor* is being compared in order to be better understood. For instance, in the line *Juliet is the sun*, "Juliet" is the tenor and "the sun" is the vehicle through which her exalted beauty is more fully comprehended.
[184] A.I. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

deep-seated cultural attitudes toward the word or phrase in question.[185] Lakoff and his colleague Mark Turner put it nicely in their subsequent study of poetic device, where they refute the viability of dead metaphor theory on the basis that its premise is an inversion of actuality:

> The mistake derives from a basic confusion: it assumes that those things in our cognition that are most alive and most active are those that are conscious. On the contrary, those that are most alive and most deeply entrenched, efficient, and powerful are those that are so automatic as to be unconscious and effortless.[186]

Accordingly, the two meanings of *error* may very well have registered simultaneously to a native speaker without rising to a conscious level or needing to be parsed out. Its automaticity in fact affirms the significance of the intrinsic polysemy.

Perhaps most importantly, in the exile poetry, the semantic valence of "wandering" is alive and well and forms a Venn diagram with that of moral transgression. Ovid seems to be hyper-cognizant of the double meaning, bringing it to life by literalizing it, for example, when he claims to have been "led astray" by his injurious *error* (*illa nostra die, qua me malus abstulit error*, "on that very day of ours, on which a ruinous *error* led me astray," *Tr.* 2.109). This semantic self-consciousness is vividly present in Ovid's rhetoric of reflexive exoneration above, when he invokes the *errans* Actaeon, who commits a misstep by wandering into the wrong place, both connotations of which are conveyed by the single participle. As if to drive the point home, he also selectively complements his use of *error* with the verb *peccare* (likewise indicating a lesser malfeasance as distinct from a *delictum*, crime), which is derived from the Proto-Indo-European verbal root **ped-* ("to walk, fall, stumble") and cognate with the Latin *pēs*, "foot". This linguistic pun demands that the spatial and moral meanings be read simultaneously.

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[185] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "Cultural Coherence," in *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
[186] George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* provides a useful framework for understanding such semantic bivalency. Ovid's diction is a paradigmatic example of the "third type", which Empson characterizes as "when two ideas, which are connected only by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously ... often done by reference to derivation ... they are two pieces of information, two parts of the narrative; if ingenuity had not used an accident, they would have required two words."[187] He elaborates as follows:

> An ambiguity of the third type, then, as a matter concerning whole states of mind, occurs when what is said is valid in, refers to, several different topics, several universes of discourse, several modes of judgment or of feeling ... Now, there are two main ways of constructing such an ambiguity. It may make a single statement and imply various situations to which it is relevant; thus I should call it an ambiguity of this type when an allegory is felt to have many levels of interpretation; or it may describe two situations and leave the reader to infer various things which can be said about both of them; thus I should call it an ambiguity of this type when an ornamental comparison is not merely using one thing to illustrate another, but is interested in two things at once, and it making them illustrate one to another mutually. (111-2)

Though Ovid would never have referred to his own ingenuity as accidental (he in fact uses the term *delictum*, a deliberate crime for which one is liable, to refer to his infelicities of speech in the *Ex Ponto* 3.9.7, 13, thus implying that credit for his artistry or blame for lack thereof belongs solely to him), his genius exploits the *error*'s inherent ambiguity to conjure the "universes of discourse" and "states of mind" Empson refers to above in a single word. Empson refers to two subtypes: in the first case, deliberate ambiguity proffers a coherent allegory that is subject to multiple interpretations; in the second, the two discrete meanings of a word are to be read simultaneously and illustrate one another mutually, and elicit a variety of inferences on the part of the reader. As we shall see, Ovid most effectively engages the second type: "wandering" is not a mere allegory

[187] William Empson, *The Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1947), 102.

for a "mistake", though we do see this play out in the Actaeon narrative, but it is coextensive with his mistake and comes to define it.[188] The commonality underlying all the *error*'s many meanings is the complex constellation of possible interpretations—sometimes logically exclusive interpretations—which the reader is meant to hold in mind at the same time. Ovid's *error* is a kaleidoscope of *paranomasia*.[189]

Let us first consider how our author uses one concept to illustrate the other in his relentless use of such language and its vivification. Ovid creates a systematic metaphor correlating the conceptual gestalt of "erring" with the experiential gestalt of "wandering". This metaphor not only appeals to an unconscious association grounded in cultural and phenomenological context, but structures our process of hermeneutics. This generative aspect of metaphor is also something Lakoff and Johnson discuss,[190] claiming that, since our experience of reality is largely mediated by language, conceptual metaphors shape the way we think, highlighting and hiding certain aspects of the tenor through the implicit comparison with its vehicle.[191] The structural metaphor endemic

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[188] McGowan, *Poetic Redress*, 195.

[189] Notably, the late first century literary critic Quintilian uses "error" to refer to an infelicity of speech (Quint. 1.5.47). If this meaning was present in Golden Age Latin, it could also reflexively refer to its own ambiguity, thus playing into Ovid's conceit of linguistic decline in exile, which in fact belies his enduring penchant for wordplay, the very sort of which he is engaging in through his use of *error*.

[190] Cf. ... Metaphors ... may be highly conventional and effortlessly used, but this does not mean that they have lost their vigor in thought and that they are dead. On the contrary, they are 'alive' in the most important sense—they govern our thought—they are 'metaphors we live by.'" (Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), xi.

[191] Lakoff and Johnson, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," *The Journal of Philosophy* vol. 77 issue 8 (1980): 458. Discussed more fully in Lakoff and Johnson, *The Metaphors We Live By*: "... metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (3) and also: "Metaphors have entailments through which they highlight

to the *error*, which Ovid brings to the fore, is thus a method by which he portrays his mistake as a mere misstep ("highlighting") and discourages an attribution of intentionality or criminality to his mysterious *aliquid* ("hiding").

Lakoff and Johnson even go so far as to claim that metaphor is a form of *imaginative rationality* that structures our social reality.[192] Accordingly, his diction is also a means by which Ovid constructs a social reality in exile that is defiantly post-Augustan. The term, thus rendered, could also be read as looking forward to the penological answer to Ovid's transgression of imperial boundaries—either in word or in deed. He is consigned to "wander" the ends of the earth *ad infinitum* due to his accidental "wandering" into the wrong territory (literary or otherwise) at Rome. But the symbolic equivalence of the crime and punishment—an *error* for an *error*, so to speak—is a mere pretense of poetic justice: he has already established that his faux-pas is far from grounds for exile, and the post-exilic *error* he is forced to endure, as he reminds us often and with great hyperbole, is a fate tantamount to capital punishment. The term underscores the *pathos* of Ovid's predicament by emphasizing his geographic alienation and aimlessness, which are themselves symbols of their internal analogues.

Apart from his shrewd use of metaphor, Ovid's prolepsis also extends to the discursive practices that he constructs *around* the *error*. Recall that in the famous *carmen et error* passage, he promises Augustus that he will keep silent on the matter of his culpa so as not to renew old injuries:

> perdiderint cum me duo crimina, carmen et error
> alterius facti culpa silenda mihi
> nam non sum tanti, renovem ut tua vulnera, Caesar
> quem nimio plus est indoluisse semel.

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and make coherent certain aspects of our experience. A given metaphor may be the only way to highlight and coherently organize exactly those aspects of our experience" (156-7).

[192] Ibid. Cf. also pg. 193.

altera pars superest, qua turpi carmine facto
arguor obsceni doctor adulterii. (*Tr.* 2.207-212)

Although two "crimes" did me in, a poem and a peccadillo,
it behooves me to say silent about the faux pas inherent in the latter deed
for I am too worthless, Caesar, to renew your wounds,
you whom it is beyond the pale to have injured the once.
The former part remains, whereby I am accused of being
the teacher of obscene adultery by the composition of a filthy poem.

True to form, nowhere in his text does Ovid specify what this signifier signifies, though he broaches the cause of his banishment several times, thus engaging in a lexical "wandering" around the word's referent. The *error* is thus self-referential: its textual *modus operandi* is a form of *praeteritio*, circumlocution for rhetorical effect. It even evokes the spatial metaphor that underlies the very rhetorical device it enacts: *praeteritio* "going beyond, passing by", or the Greek *periphrasis*, "speaking around", which could itself be a secondary layer to this Ovidian wordplay.

However, as with the penological implications of the *error qua* metaphor above, Ovid merely plays lip service to the claim that he will be discrete about his transgression: he gestures at it continually throughout the collection. In refusing to explicate the referent of his *error*, Ovid cultivates a deliberate ambiguity around the cause of his relegation that is in fact quite titillating—perhaps more so than if he had spelled out precisely what it was. In her insightful article "What the Poet Saw: Ovid, the Error and the Theme of Sight in *Tristia* 2", Jennifer Ingleheart points to this phenomenon, describing it as a literary game of hide-and-seek,[193] goading the reader to decode the cypher of his *error*:

> Repeated references to a topic which Ovid claims would cause pain to Augustus seem both far from tactful toward the *princeps*, and also teasing towards Ovid's more general audience in Rome: by talking of his *error* but refusing to reveal exactly what it was that he saw, Ovid provokes his readers' curiosity, encouraging us to read on in order to discover just what his mistake might have been ... Given that Ovid consistently raises the expectation that he might reveal what the *error* was, only to defeat that expectation, the reader is

[193] Ingleheart, "What the Poet Saw," 65-66.

> encouraged to make the most of the hints that Ovid does give us about the *error*, and also to look for significance and hidden meanings in the things which Ovid says.[194]

Scholars like Ingleheart, who argue that the *error* cannot be distilled from the text and is intentionally obscure, treat the signified as if it is deliberately, even tauntingly, withheld. But perhaps the point is in fact that Ovid constructs a signifier devoid of a signified. The Ovidian *error* is not so much a black box as an empty one.

With regard to this last point, Lacanian semiotics is a useful framework for understanding Ovid's complex signification. Building on the structuralist linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of the sign, which asserts that the signifier and signified are two sides of the same coin, as it were, and have a one-to-one relation, Lacan posits the signifier's primacy, represented by the algorithm S/s. There is no stable or fixed relation between signifier and signified, he argues, but the signifier *determines* the signified. By this he means something very similar to what Lakoff and Johnson argue (namely, that words shape the way we understand things) but takes it to an extreme by claiming that we have no understanding of the thing without the word (which, in order to define it, requires more words—a "signifying chain"). Here, his excursus on signification intersects with his tripartite theory of psychical subjectivity: the Imaginary (conscious subjectivity), the Symbolic (socio-linguistic structures that determine the Imaginary), and the Real (something like the Kantian thing-in-itself).[195] At the intersection of the Real and the Symbolic is a so-called "pure signifier", which amounts to representation without substance: "Every real signifier is, as such, a signifier that signifies nothing. The more the signifier signifies nothing, the more indestructible it is."[196]

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[194] *Id*. 67.
[195] Lacanian psychoanalysis recognizes something akin to apophenia in the mistaking of the Real for the Symbolic.
[196] Jacques Lacan, *Seminars Book III: The Psychoses*, trans. Russell Grigg (London: Routledge, 1993): 1955-56.

Lacan famously associates language with the object of psychoanalysis, claiming that the S/s algorithm defines the "topography of the unconscious" and that "l'inconscient est structuré comme un langage [*i.e.*, syntax and semantics vs. the more diffuse *langue*]" (the unconscious is structured like a language).[197] The relationship between the conscious and unconscious, the signifier and the signified, amounts to "a phenomenon that structures every revelation of truth in the psychoanalytics dialogue." He continues:

> There is the fundamental difficulty that the subject encounters in what he has to say; the most common is the one that Freud demonstrated in repression, namely, the sort of discordance between the signified and the signifier that is brought on by all censorship of social origin. The truth can always, in this case, be communicated between the lines. That is, he who wishes to make the truth known can always adopt the technique indicated by the fact that truth is identical to the symbols that reveal it; in other words, he can always arrive at his ends by deliberately introducing into a text discordances that cryptographically correspond to those imposed by the censorship.

Read in this way, the empty Ovidian "error", qua majuscule *S*, is part of his project of poetic redress.[198] He redefines the truth of his condition by appropriating a signifier of Augustan authority (that is, his censuring—and censoring—Ovid's errant *carmina*) and reinterpreting it to suit this end. The unstable semantics of the *error* is a discordance that cryptographically corresponds to those imposed by Augustan censorship lurking between the lines. His poetic persona's use of the term, as self-consciously constructed by the author, thus betrays elements of his unconscious.

By this I do not mean to suggest that the *error* does not refer to an actual transgression (literally and literarily, as a construct in the poem), merely that, as a signifier, it takes on a life of its own as an aesthetic conceit and communicates its own hollowness more consistently than any

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[197] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton and Company, 1996), 163.
[198] McGowan, *Poetic Redress*, 2009.

of its concrete signifieds through Ovid's selective silence and its carousel of questionable referents. This interpretation coincides with Ovid's larger project of evacuating Augustan symbology. Here, it manifests as an evacuation of his penology: the *error* is deflated of any content, it is the "nothing that is", the "signifier that signifies nothing". The *error* is thus not only self-referential, it is *solely* self-referential: it signifies recursion, since any attempt to define it merely folds back in upon itself *ad infinitum*. This is the *error's* apotheosis: all aesthetics and no substance; but as Empson says, there is "pleasure in seeing the shell even when it is empty."[199]

And on that note, the *error* also describes our own *response* to these discursive practices: we are sent on our own unending *error* to discover the elusive meaning of Ovid's. We too experience a vicarious exile within the space of textuality, where we are consigned to wander and endure an existence unmoored from meaning. In this sense, we are subjected to a *carmine terror* of hermeneutics. Our compulsive poet, malgré lui, cannot resist one last poetic *paegnion,* goading his presumed readership—the *literati* back in The City—on a literary goose-chase. In the end, his recursive wanderings lead him back to Rome.

Conclusion: At the Limits of Textuality

If medieval reception is any indication, the complex polysemy of the *error* is indeed intact and salient. The works of Dante Alighieri, *Il Summo Poeta* of Italy, provide ample evidence of this critical posture. His magnum opus, *La Divina Commedia,* is particularly fertile ground because it was born of a similar context: Dante was likewise forced into political exile when he found himself on the wrong side of the schism of the Guelphs, which succeeded their triumph in the Guelph–

[199] Empson, *Ambiguity*, 132.

Ghibelline conflict (factions supporting the political authority of the Pope and Holy Roman Emperor, respectively). After the *Guelfi Neri*, who championed greater papal influence than their counterparts, the *Bianchi*, and their figurehead, Cante dei Gabrielli da Gubbio, a pretender to the position of *podestà*, rose to power in Florence, they accused Dante of corruption during his brief stint as city prior and consigned him to pay a fine and endure a two-year period of banishment. He defied the order and, though harbored by other Italian city-states, was unable to return to Florence under threat of capital punishment. He died at Ravenna, where his remains are interred to this day.

Like Ovid, he composed *La Comedìa* in exile, a text that harbors many of the same allegorical preoccupations as the *Tristia* et al.: figuring moral lapse as losing one's way (*smarrirsi*), an allegiance to the symbolic equivalency of poetic justice in the underworld (the concept of *il contrapasso*), and, as embodied in the figure of Beatrice, the resurgence, revelation, and reinvention of the past. Indeed, the entire conceit of the sinner's sylvan wanderings as an allegory for straying from the *diritta via* and the tour of heaven, hell, and purgatory as a path to redemption mirrors Ovid's own allegory of "wandering", retributive exile, and sublimated hopes for reinstatement by the deified Augustus.

Dante Alighieri was thus a man of similar circumstances and sentiments. But he was also a careful—even obsessional—reader of Ovid, to the point of incorporating Ovidian diction and devices into his own works, sometimes word-for-word.[200] Remarkably, one pervasive instance of this allusivity is his use of *errare*, in which we find an identical polysemy. While its nominal analogue (*errore*) had lost this double meaning in the medieval Tuscan vernacular in which Dante wrote, the verb *errare* still maintained the duality. Of the thirteen instances in *La Divina*

[200] These intertexts have been exhaustively catalogued by the Digital Dante Project: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/intertext/index.html.

Commedia, one refers to literal wandering (*Purg.* 7.59, the first in this book), while the rest refer to straying from the path of virtue. In virtually all of the latter citations, there is a connection between the moral lapse to which he refers and a context of spatial movement.[201] Notably, nine of the thirteen instances are in the *Purgatorio*, an embodied symbol of the moral liminality evoked by *error* and *errare* and the promise of expiation that both Dante and Ovid saw in their respective exiles (nine is a marked number in Dante: nine are the circles of hell, and multiples of three evoke the Holy Trinity). And in all cases, the overarching context is Dante's exilic wandering through the tripartite universe of the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, estranged from the "mondo errante", the wayward earth.

However, the most vivid polysemy of this nature one finds not in *La Comedìa*, but in one of Dante's *Rimes*. Exemplifying *lo stilnovismo*, the literary movement of 13th century Italian court poetry whose defining *topoi* were *amore*, *cortesia*, and *gentilezza* (love, chivalry, and nobility), Dante describes in the following sonnet his errant ardor for the *donna gentile*, who has distracted his affections from Beatrice (and to whom he will stray again in the following Rime). However, his romantic overtures (or remonstrations) are not merely expressions of earthly passion, but are intimately connected with Dante's theology: since Beatrice, as his one true beloved, is idealized as a conduit of beatific vision, the *donna gentile* becomes an emblem of false idolatry and straying from God. And thus:

LXXXIV

Parole mie che per lo mondo siete,
voi che nasceste poi ch' io cominciai
a dir per quella donna *in cui errai*
"Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete",
andatevene a lei, che la sapete,
chiamando sì ch' ell' oda i vostri guai;

[201] *Inf.* 2.6, 28.12, 34.10; *Purg.* 7.59; 9.127; 12.94; 17.95; 19.134; 20.67; 20.147; 25.63; 25.120; *Par.* 2.52.

ditele : “Noi siam vostre, ed unquemai
più che noi siamo non ci vederete”.
Con lei non state, che non v’ è Amore;
ma gite a torno in abito dolente
a guisa de le vostre antiche sore.
Quando trovate donna di valore,
gittatelevi a’ piedi umilemente,
dicendo: “A voi dovem noi fare onore”.

Words of mine, who exist throughout the world,
you, who were born since the time when I began
to compose, for that woman in whom I lost my way,
“you who move the third celestial sphere through contemplation”,
now go to her, since you know her,
crying out so she can hear your lamentations;
say to her: “We belong to you, and you will never
see us in greater numbers than we are now.”
Do not stay with her, because there is no Love,
but go about in mournful clothing –
in the manner of your ancient sisters.
When you find the woman who is worthy,
throw yourself humbly at her feet
saying, “You are the one we ought to honor.”

In these lines, Dante laments the perdition of unrequited adoration and misplaced devotion, exploiting the trope of the literary surrogate for the lovelorn poet.[202] The Rime is an undeniable nod to the *Tristia’s* trip to Rome in 1.1. Although sending a poem as a surrogate to one’s lover was a trope of *lo stilnovismo* poetry and its Sicilian antecedents, the diction is too similar to be dismissed as an accident of cultural inheritance. Aside from the structural parallels of the itinerant book sojourning at the poet’s behest, Dante makes explicit reference to the book as a vessel for his lamentations while Ovid says his book must be marked by his tears. He also demands that his words go about dressed *in ambito dolente*, dress marked by the pains of love, not unlike Ovid’s

[202] The Rime is popular amongst critics for its self-referentiality: *Voi che ‘ntendendo il terzo ciel movete*, Dante’s only double autocitation (it also occurs in the *Convivio* and *Rime* 79), refers to the Angels who move the third sphere of Heaven (the planet Venus and sphere of Lovers). *Guai*, expressions of the grief peculiar to unfulfilled love, recall the illicit liaison of Francesca and Paolo in the *Inferno*, where the same term is used.

luctibus ille color convenit (that color suited to grief, 1.1.6). The Rime suits our purposes here for its use of *errare*, which means "to make a mistake" and "to wander" (rendered above as "to lose one's way", which captures the semantics of both and the theological allegory for departing from the *diritta via*). This polysemy is so profoundly felt that the renowned Medievalist Teodolinda Barolini devotes almost a page to its exegesis:

> In one of the sonnets in which he temporarily renounces the *donna gentile*, Dante calls her "quella donna in cui errai." Although "errai" is variously translated as "I erred," "I suffered," "I was deceived," *errare* conserves its primary meaning of "to wander," hence "to stray." This use of *errare* with respect to a poetic mistake reinforces our sense of a textual *selva oscura*, a poetic wandering which only from the providential perspective of the Comedy could be retrospectively arranged as a *diritta via*. From this point of view, the strange shifts and turnabouts of the *donna gentile* poems begin to fall into place as signs of textual stress, external indicators of a profound uneasiness. Indeed, Dante's restlessness during this period is confirmed by his irresolution; the unfinished status of two major works from these middle years, the *Convivio* and the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, indicates his recognition of being textually on the wrong path. And, of course, from the perspective of the *Comedy*, the substitution of another for Beatrice would constitute an unparalleled failure; for the later Dante any lady who is not Beatrice is "quella donna in cui errai," as any poetic path not directed toward her is, by definition, a false one.[203]

The duality inherent to Dante's *errare* is thus suggestively comparable to Ovid's. The latter also speaks of his own mistake, that is, straying from the deified Augustus' codified morality through his Love (i.e., the *Ars Amatoria*), in the same terms. But reading Ovid's text through the lens of Dante's is also fruitful: the "textual stress" as a symptom of irresolution that Barolini identifies might very well be said of Ovid. He too exhibits "shifts and turnabouts" in the exile poetry, conjuring Rome before the eyes only to banish it, cursing Augustus' cruelty and pleading for his clemency in alternation, much as Dante will return to the *donna gentile* in the following poem. He too abandons the unfinished *Fasti* because he is—textually, calendrically, ideologically—forging a novel path, one that is not the *diritta via* of the Augustan program, but wandering to the limits of

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[203] Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 30.

textuality through a text that not only lacks coherence, but deconstructs itself. Dante's allusion to Ovid is not just an advertisement of erudition or literary homage; it constitutes a critical act of interpretation. We might read this Alighierian intertext as both a commentary on the Ovidian *error* and an affirmation of its bilateral meaning.[204]

This striking intertext, though it straddles some 1,200 years, illustrates one of Steiner's most compelling observations in *Extraterritorial:* the leitmotif of polysemy in the literature of exiles. In his chapter of same name, he discusses how this motif manifests not only in the multi-lingual nature of exilic texts (like Nabokov's Russian-inflected English) but in individual words' "manifold potentiality" and "unstable mode of vitality".[205] This characterization recalls the many proliferations of the Ovidian *error*'s signification and how the instability of its meaning "vivifies" the dead metaphor within. Polysemy is thus part of a distinct exilic idiom, one that is an invention of necessity: its plurality of meaning bespeaks the plurality of consciousness and cognitive dissonance that define the exile's subjective experience. The idiom is therefore a reflection of the psychological profile of the exile that Ovid constructs through his persona. As Steiner notes elsewhere, polysemy also characterizes the language of ideology. Meaning can be "dislocated in common speech so as to produce political confusion ... Competing ideologies rarely create new terminologies ... they pilfer and decompose the vulgate."[206] Ovid's political discontents are also expressed by his appropriation of language that seemingly aligns with Augustus' program but, in the end, collapses in upon itself (e.g., ostensibly acknowledging his purported "mistake" while

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[204] Much thanks to the Italian Medievalist Alessandro Zammataro and to my colleague Alessandra Migliara for offering their perspectives on this passage.
[205] George Steiner, *Extraterritorial. Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution* (New York: Atheneum 1975), 10.
[206] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 35.

subtly shifting its meaning to suggest it was no mistake at all). The *error* is thus the epitome of two defining features of the exile poetry and its ethos: extraterritoriality and extratextuality. He enacts the former through the latter, creating a book that traverses not only the bounds of Rome and Tomis, but also that of poetic convention. And so we end where we began: with Ovid's errant *liber*.

Chapter 3: Recursion and Reflexivity in Ovid's *Ibis*

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.
>
> Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Introduction

Fear and Desire (1953), Stanley Kubrick's debut feature, is virtually unknown for a reason: it is, by his own description, "a serious effort, ineptly done",[207] "boring and pretentious",[208] and a "presumptuous failure".[209] Although it opened to sympathetic, if ambivalent, reviews,[210] Kubrick himself disowned the film publicly after becoming a renowned auteur, making every effort to conceal its existence.[211] These efforts seem to have only piqued the interest of his acolytes, who trafficked in apocryphal stories about his attempts to destroy the negatives and take all release

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[207] Alexander Walker, Sybil Taylor, Ulrich Ruchti, *Stanley Kubrick, Director* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), 16.
[208] Quoted in Vincent LoBrutto, *Stanley Kubrick: A Biography* (New York: Donald I. Fine, 1997), 91.
[209] As quoted in Robert Brustein, "Out of This World," *The New York Review of Books*, no. 6 (February 1964), 12-14.
[210] e.g., the NYTimes review by A.W., who describes the film as "uneven and sometimes reveals an experimental rather than a polished exterior, its over-all effect is entirely worthy of the sincere effort put into it ... if the depiction of their mental trials and tribulations is less successful than their attempt to reach the safety of their own lines, it may be laid to a script that occasionally is turgid and overly poetic, and to Mr. Kubrick's direction, which now and then is far from inspired." "The Screen in Review: 'Fear and Desire,' Tale of War Fashioned by Young Film Newcomers, at Guild," *The New York Times* (April 1, 1953). Similar ambivalence is expressed in reviews by *Time, Newsweek, The New Yorker Variety, Theatre Arts, Commonweal, The Herald Tribune, Motion Picture Herald, The Saturday Review*, and *Modern Photography*.
[211] A positive print acquired from Burstyn was restored by and housed at the George Eastman House (Rochester, NY) though an original copy mysteriously surfaced in Puerto Rico in 2010.

prints out of circulation.[212] The film was re-released over his objections after entering the public domain, first at the Telluride Film Festival in 1991 and again at Film Forum in 1994. Kubrick tried to quash this publicity with a lawsuit and withering press release, denigrating the film as "a bumbling amateur film exercise".[213] The screenings were nonetheless met with some fanfare, but critics largely echoed Kubrick's indictment: in the wake of his virtuosic filmography, the film was widely panned.[214]

Although *Fear and Desire* was made during the Korean War, its anti-war sentiments are abstracted from any context, instead finding their expression in the interior focalization of the characters. The plot revolves around four soldiers stranded behind enemy lines after their plane is shot down. They plan to reach their battalion by fording an intervening river, but become waylaid when they discover an enemy command post. While wandering through the woods, they happen upon a shack housing two enemy officers, whom they kill, taking their food and arms. This grisly scene causes shock in one of the soldiers, Sidney, who begins to descend into delirium. As they make their way back through the woods, a native girl happens upon their troupe, and they take her captive, fearing that she will blow their cover. When Sidney is tasked with watching her while the others check on the raft, he descends into full-blown madness, sobbing on her shoulder and engaging in amorous petting, enacting scenes from *The Tempest* to entertain her, and believing that he has won her affections, releasing her—only to shoot her dead when she runs away. When his comrades return, he tells them that it was Shakespeare's Prospero who killed her. The film

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[212] Paolo Cherchi Usai, "Scacco al generate: analisi di Fear and Desire," *Segnocinema* vol. 10 no. 40 (November 1989): 12-24.
[213] Statement made in through a Warner Brothers' publicist, in an effort to discourage audiences from seeing the film. Janet Maslin, "Critic's Choice/Film; A Young and Promising Kubrick," *The New York Times* (January 14, 1994).
[214] Jason Sperb, "The Country of the Mind in Kubrick's *Fear and Desire*," *Film Criticism* vol. 29, no. 1 (Fall, 2004): 23-37.

replays the killing from different angles, a form of temporal fragmentation that echoes his mental lability.

At this point, the narrative shifts its focalization to the mental deterioration of another soldier, Mac. He develops a voyeuristic and ultimately lethal obsession with the enemy general, whose assassination he begins to see as his singular *raison d'être*. His own diegetic narration describes honing the myriad, explosive hatreds of war—which manifest as a "buzzing curse"[215]—into a singular enmity for one man. While he distracts the sentries by shooting at them from the raft, his two comrades ambush enemy headquarters, and the Lieutenant shoots the general at point-blank range, recognizing his own face in his enemy's as the man lies dead before him (the two roles are in fact played by the same actor).[216] Ultimately, the two remaining soldiers make it back to the battalion by stealing an enemy aircraft, while the corpse of Mac, the decoy soldier, and Sidney, the prating madman still reciting the lines of Prospero, float downriver, ultimately washing up on shore.

Amateurish though it may be, *Fear and Desire* is punctuated by paroxysms of brilliance, ones that presage the heights of Kubrick's cinematic genius. The opening overture is one such moment. As the camera pans across the forest, ultimately settling on the four stranded soldiers, non-diegetic narration by an omniscient, off-screen David Allen guides the plot like the hand of

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[215] "The curse buzzes out of your mouth with every word you say. And no one alive can tell ... what you mean."

[216] Paul Mazursky, one of the lead actors in the film and an accomplished director in his own right, writes in his book *Show Me the Magic* that one of Kubrick's avant-garde flourishes was the directionality of the gaze: "When they spy on the enemy through binoculars, we see that they themselves are the enemy." A similar reversal is effected by the scene when the Lieutenant and General come face-to-face. Paul Mazursky, *Show Me the Magic: My Adventures in Life and Hollywood* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999).

God, at times over-intellectualizing, at times betraying the fact that Kubrick was, before a cineaste, a poet.[217] The opening overture is one such moment:

> [Voice-over]: *There is a war in this forest. Not a war that has been fought, nor one that will be, but any war. And the enemies who struggle here do not exist unless we call them into being. This forest then, and all that happens now is outside history. Only the unchanging shapes of fear and doubt and death are from our world. These soldiers that you see keep our language and our time, but have no other country but the mind.*

Though flamboyantly philosophical, over-verbalizing, and overt about the preoccupations the director would explore with greater subtlety in later films,[218] this précis establishes the allegorical pretensions, contextual dislocation, and narrative authority that go on to define the film—features that likewise define Ovid's literary war of words, the *Ibis*, when he "takes up arms" (*sumere tela*) against an allegorical adversary.

Ovid, too, crafted a politically subversive poem that was widely dismissed as boring, pretentious, and ineptly done[219] before its rehabilitation by literary readings starting in the

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[217] Kubrick describes the film's conception as "poetic" and himself as a failed poet. It should be noted that, while Kubrick wrote many of his later films, *Fear and Desire* was written by his friend, the poet Howard Sackler. It is likely that Kubrick nonetheless had a hand in the screenplay either by uncredited collaboration or supervision, given his strong commitment to artistic control from the very beginning of his career.

[218] Paolo Cherchi Usai, in his excellent exegesis of the film, claims its explicitness is in fact its greatest sin: "... it is no surprise that Kubrick wanted to rid himself of such an explicit film, one that revealed far too much of his personal agenda. Kubrick tried to suppress and perhaps destroy it, as if to deny its existence, not just because Fear and Desire seemed to him nothing but a pretentious and amateurish effort, but because the film proclaims with uncalculated immediacy the major creative strategies of the director's oeuvre that would follow in coming years. Kubrick, the consummate chess player, had committed in his youth the most unforgivable mistake of the game: announcing his strategy for capturing the adversary's king (or general) with his opening move. Paolo Cherchi Usai, "Checkmating the General: Stanley Kubrick's *Fear and Desire*" *Scraps from the Loft* (October 2, 2016).

[219] Housman of the curse catalogue: "merely a display of erudition" ("Transpositions in the *Ibis* of Ovid," *JPh* vol. 34 (1918): 317-18; L.P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 356-7; E.J. Kenney, "Ovid," in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, ed. E.J. Kenney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 454; Sara Mack, *Ovid* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 42.

1990s.[220] Despite ostensible contextual dislocation, both react to their political context, Kubrick through Bohemian negativism, Ovid through abnegation of Augustanism. The *Ibis* is also defined by a Now that is a- (or even anti-) historical. He too is beleaguered by an invisible enemy, one he conjures into being in exile, an enemy "who, upon scrutiny, seems to be almost shaped from the same mold", as Kubrick said of his own device of uncanny doubling. Ovid, too, traverses the terrain of the exile's unconscious, which overwhelms any literal sense of place. Both exhibit a tightly controlled narrativity: whereas *Fear* is a film that performs its own exegesis as it unfolds, *Ibis* is a poem whose deliberate obscurity confounds its own meaning. But it is the concept of a fictional world whose time is outside history and whose *locus* is the country of the mind that concerns this chapter.

Thus far, I have made the case that Ovid's contrapuntal poetics enact the cognitive dissonance of the exile, who exists in a liminal state between past and present. I have further suggested that Ovid's conceptualization of place embraces a similar counter-logic; it is likewise "contrapuntal" in that he simultaneously occupies two different points on a map, at Tomis in body and Rome in mind. Here, in the *Ibis*, the Ovidian persona is overcome with an erratic fury that goads him to a dramatic shift in register, enacting an entirely different kind of temporal and spatial confusion. The poem's dimensions of time are made to collapse into a here and now that all but nullifies priority. This Ibian netherworld is abstracted from the literal site of his exile; it exists in an imaginary, neo-mythic space (a kind of secondary exile). Ovid's punishing verse therefore locates us in a distinctly *a*temporal, *dis*located environment, one that gives expression to the exile's anger and sets itself in opposition to the Augustan regime. These are marked contrasts from the

[220] Williams, *Banished Voices*; Williams, *The Curse of Exile*; Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse"; Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia".

Tristia and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, in which even the present moment is highly inflected according to the past and the site of his exile overlain with a projection of Roman topography.

In order to demonstrate this claim, I first consider how Ovid deploys a poetic conceit of the specious present that reflects the emotional volatility of his poetic persona. Secondly, I turn to the concept of recursion and how this structuring device performs "perpetual presence" narratologically and distorts the linearity of Augustan time. Finally, I consider how the theme of reflexivity when it comes to Ibis plays a role in both expressing the cognitive dissonance of the exile and also deconstructing Augustan semiotics. Ultimately, Ovid's circuitous poetics enact the futility of exile: his cursing is but full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.[221]

i. Tempus ad Hoc: the Specious Present in Ovid's Ibis

Ovid begins his 644 line curse poem by establishing its novel temporality from the very start:

> tempus ad hoc lustris bis iam mihi quinque peractis
> omne fuit Musae carmen inerme meae
> nullaque, quae possit, scriptis tot milibus, extat
> littera Nasonis sanguinolenta legi:
> nec quemquam nostri nisi me laesere libelli,
> artificis periit cum caput arte sua. (*Ib.* 1-6)
>
> At this time, when I have now brought my fiftieth year to a close,
> all the poetry of my Muse has been harmless
> nor does a letter of Naso, though so many thousands were written,
> exist to be read that is stained with blood:
> nor have my little books harmed anyone except for me,
> since the head of their maker was undone by his own art.

[221] While there have been compelling studies on the structure of Ovid's *Ibis* that make reference to the poet's narrative technique and its momentum (primarily Krasne 2012, 2013, 2016; to some degree Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, 101), to my knowledge, Stephen Hinds' 1999 article is the only extended treatment of the concept of structural and thematic time in the work.

Two things are remarkable about this opening in terms of time: the immediacy of the present and the declaration that conventions of marking time are a thing of the past.[222] Notably, he uses the culturally-inflected term *lustrum* instead of available alternatives. Ovid is referring here to the ritual purification performed on the Campus Martius after the five-year census. The tradition of the *lustrum* aligns temporally with the Augustan auto-narrative of historical continuity from the inception of Rome to his reign: it began in the time of the Roman monarchy under Servius (566 B.C.E.), and continued past his tenure as emperor, until the reign of Vespasian (74 C.E.). To claim, then, that the *lustra* are *peracta*, complete, implies the stasis of time according to this customary marker, the stalling of the Augustan historical narrative—and the advent of Ovidian time.[223] It also suggests that whatever expiation for the *error* he enacted in the *Tristia*, that is, his personal *lustratio* within a satellite empire of one, is now over, ushering in a new textual tonality and posture toward his adversary: one of unrelenting aggression.[224]

The proem defines Ovid's novel temporality not only against cultural practice, but also against programmatic textuality. The declaration that his *carmen* is *inerme*, *nulla ... sanguinolenta*,

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[222] Here I am anticipated by Gareth Williams: "In contrast to the careful demarcation of age and time in the first line of the poem, the catalogue is a dream-like fantasy in which all temporal distinctions cease to apply"; he likewise notes that the "horrors of the mythical past still exist in a timeless 'present'" (*The Curse of Exile*, 101). Cf. also Lindsay Watson, *Arae: the curse poetry of antiquity*, ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers, and Monographs, 26 (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1991), 87: Ovid's "cavalier attitude to chronology".

[223] Moreover, if we consider that the number four was associated with Jupiter, who in turn, acts as a cipher for Augustus in the exile poetry and at large, to frame the past in multiples of five (*lustris bis ... quinque* = five times twice five) echoes the sentiment that this is the dawn of a post-Augustan era.

[224] The *lustra* might be read as a pun on *lūstra*, a word that can refer to both a house of ill-repute or debauchery (read: the subject matter of his *Ars*, which he refers to in line 6) or the haunts of wild beasts, evoking the feral existence Ovid is forced to endure in exile, which chapters of his lived experience read as coextensive with the five books of the *Tristia*, four books of the *Ex Ponto*, and *Ibis* (that is, *bis quinque*). This tripartite pun echoes the refrain throughout the exile poetry that Ovid should be reinstated (i.e., that his *lūstrum*, sense 2, be *peractum*) on account of his contrition for his *lūstra* (sense 1), which had been consigned to the past even before his exile. *Perago* too can mean to pass or bring to completion, but also to endure. All time must be suffered in exile.

nec ... laesere, is notable for its intertextual pregnancy (and its intratextual irony, given that he will shortly thereafter "take up arms" [*sumere tela*, 10]). This is a stance he has taken before in the cheeky prelude to the *Amores*, where he claims that he would have written heroic verse had Amor not stolen his hexameter's foot, rendering his verse accidentally elegiac (*Am.* 1.1-4; to which he gives a wink and a nod at *Ib.* 46-7: *prima quidem coepto committam proelia versu / non soleant quamvis hoc pede bella geri*, as well as in his many "foot" puns[225]). But here, holding his verse (h)armless not only doubles down on asserting the innocuousness of his love poetry, effectively rebuffing the premise of his exile, but his anti-militaristic diction also sets his *oeuvre* in opposition to the heroic verse that celebrated the imperial program, namely, Vergil's *Aeneid* (*arma virumque cano*). Ovid thus positions his previous ostensibly programmatic poetry as "other"—that is to say, not of the same ilk as the prototypical "Augustan" text—through a revisionist literary history. These remarks also throw the following declaration of verbal warfare (*sumere tela*, 10) into high relief: it becomes an exilic answer to the *Aeneid* thematically and structurally. For the first time in his once-charmed career, he heeds the imperative to write martial verse (albeit, still in elegiac, not the conventional iambic or hexametric meter) and if Ibis is, at least in part, a cipher for Augustus (as I will go on to argue), this war of words does not implicitly glorify the emperor but explicitly denigrates him. Moreover, while the archetypal wars of the *Aeneid* lead to the founding of Rome, which is figured as the cradle of Augustus' Julian lineage and an aetiology of his succession to power, this siege of curses embodies a time that contradicts this aetiology: the here-and-now.

On this note, let us turn to second notable feature of this proemium, the focalization of the present by *tempus ad hoc*.[226] This phrasal overture, which might mean "up to this time" or "at this

[225] For a discussion of which cf. Krasne "Crippling Nostalgia," 163.
[226] However, Ovid locates us in a present that is unreal: Ovid's fiftieth year was not 11/12 CE, when this poem was likely composed, but the year 8, in which he was exiled. The opening of the *Ibis* returns us to

time" (L&S, s.v. "ad" B 2, 3) followed by *iam* and a definite temporal marker, situates the reader solidly in the moment. The summation of his work that follows is described with the present tense (*extat*) or present perfect (*fuit,* syncopated *laesere*), which compresses the textual output of his *curriculum carminis* into a non-progressive, complete state of affairs that obtains to the present (i.e., present perfect aspect and time).[227] Conventionally, the first words of a poem in antiquity functioned as a second title and thus set the stage for the rest of the work. Accordingly, we might compare this triplicate with the opening words of the *Fasti*: *tempora cum causis Latium digesta per annum / lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa canam*. The phrase before the caesural pause throws the metrically identical *tempus ad hoc lustris* of the *Ibis* into high relief, inviting comparison. On the one hand, the *Fasti* venerates the Julian calendar, announcing this intent from the first line: "I shall sing of time set in order throughout the year along with its causes, as well as the constellations that set beneath the earth and rise again." At least in the *Fasti,* Ovid eulogizes the ordering of social reality through Augustan temporal protocols and the natural ordering of the diurnal cycle through the lens of ephemera, implying that the Augustan sign system is as inevitable as the cycle of constellations by grouping them together. *Tempora cum causis* also evokes the aetiology of Augustus' *potentia,* traced back to the early days of Rome (underscored by the adjacent *Latium*) and through the Julio-Claudians' divine lineage, one that presented Augustan imperium as its *telos*. Likewise, in the *Metamorphoses*, the *perpetuum carmen* that spans from the inception of the world to *ad mea tempora*, present times (*Met.* 1.3-4), and ends in the apotheosis of the emperor sets itself up as poetically coextensive with the Augustan *tempora* as described in the *Fasti*. On the other

Tristia 1.3 and to Rome on the fateful night of his departure. Hinds notes Ovid's preoccupation with the "temporal crisis" at the moment of relegation ("After Exile," 62-3).

[227] Cf. Harm Pinkster, "Grammatical aspect and Aktionsart," *Oxford Latin Syntax* vol. 1. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 380-82.

hand, the titular phrase of the *Ibis* halts this progression of time and causes it to collapse into The Now, a literary construct that will go on to define the temporal aesthetic of the poem.[228]

Ovid constructs a *specious present* in the *Ibis*, an impression of hyper-nowness that is perpetuated both by explicit temporal markers and quirks of his poetics. I draw this term from the postulate first formulated by E. R. Clay and elaborated by William James,[229] namely, that the true present is inaccessible to human subjectivity, and that what we perceive as the present is actually a fiction: once it registers within one's consciousness, it is already consigned to the past. James contended that this phantom Now is in fact essential to both the intuition of time and our subjective experience more generally, claiming that it is "the prototype of all conceived times ... the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible".[230] The specious present is therefore objectively unreal, though essential to experiential truth. Ovid's poetics go beyond evoking this quotidian "present" that is a lens through which all perception occurs, instead building a poetic construct around this principle, one that is likewise defined by immediacy and incessance. Unlike Clay's specious present,[231] however, Ovid's draws attention to its own unreality. As we

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[228] Hinds also discusses the intersection of the *incipit* of the *Ibis* and the "chronological programmatics" established by the *Met.* and the *Fasti* ("After Exile," 61-7).

[229] William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1890), 631.

[230] Ibid.

[231] "The relation of experience to time has not been profoundly studied. Its objects are given as being of the present, but the part of time referred to by the datum is a very different thing from the conterminous of the past and future which philosophy denotes by the name Present. The present to which the datum refers is really a part of the past—a recent past—delusively given as being a time that intervenes between the past and the future. Let it be named the specious present, and let the past, that is given as being the past, be known as the obvious past. All the notes of a bar of a song seem to the listener to be contained in the present. All the changes of place of a meteor seem to the beholder to be contained in the present. At the instant of the termination of such series, no part of the time measured by them seems to be a past. Time, then, considered relatively to human apprehension, consists of four parts, viz., the obvious past, the specious present, the real present, and the future. Omitting the specious present, it consists of three ... nonentities—the past, which does not exist, the future, which does not exist, and their conterminous, the present; the faculty from which it proceeds lies to us in the fiction of the specious present." Anonymous (E. Robert Kelly/Clay), *The Alternative: A Study in Psychology* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882). Cf. also James, *The principles of psychology*, 609. A. Hodder, *The adversaries of the sceptic; or, The specious present, a*

have seen in the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*, the unreal reigns supreme in Ovid's textual universe in exile. In the *Ibis*, it reaches fever pitch: the sense of presence that Ovid conjures is to the fore and lasts for the duration of the poem. Ibian temporality is *sur*real: it embodies the paradox of the ever-present. Such perpetual immediacy is a prevailing oxymoron within the text. Ovid locates himself at one point in time, using conventional temporal markers, and then enters a fugue of rage that precludes any sense of time's passage.

Indeed, this quality of immediacy is borne out in the speaker's palpable emotionality and vividness of expression throughout the curse poem. For instance, in lines 11-22, he describes Ibis' various infractions—slandering Ovid in the forum (*iactat et in toto nomina nostra foro* 14), distressing his "widow" (*non patitur vivi funera flere viri*), and seeking to abscond with his property (*hic praedam medio raptor ab igne petit* 20)—in the present tense. At the same time, he describes how Ibis' treachery deprives him of what little refuge he is able to seek at the Aquilo's icy place of origin (11-13). He weaves in and out of his experience at Tomis and his adversary's onslaughts at Rome, representing them as simultaneous with each other and with the act of poetic composition. At the end of this tirade, he forces into a state of collapse not only time, but also space, claiming that his enemy is trying to wrest away the planks of his shipwreck from his embrace (18). This description gives the illusion that he is describing events as they occur moment-by-moment both in the *urbs* and in exile; his adversary's offenses, no matter when they occurred, are always at the fore of his mind.

If his anger is ever-present, its remedy is likewise wrought with a sense of immediacy. Inviting them to "be present", Ovid conscripts the gods in his cursing. At 67-88, he invokes the

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new inquiry into human knowledge. Chapter II, The Specious Present (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1901), 36 – 56.

numina of land and sea, the natural elements, the night sky, and ultimately all the gods from the chaos with which he begins the *Metamorphoses* to his own time.[232] The exhaustiveness of his list of divinities, which devolves into the final all-inclusive *cuncti*, and his allusive references to figures of myth by their particulars though not by their names prefigures the curse catalogue to follow, to which we shall shortly turn. He asks that they be present, *adeste*, to bear witness to his furious anger and *adnuite*, nod assent to his imprecations' fulfillment. While the following passage may, at first glance, seem consistent with the strictures of the aratic genre, Ovid adds his own flourish when it comes to temporality and emotion:

> in nostrum cuncti tempus, adeste, chao,
> carmina dum capiti male fido dira canentur.
> et peragent partes ira dolorque suas.
> adnuite optatis omnes ex ordine nostris
> et sit pars voti nulla caduca mei! (*Ib.* 84-8)
>
> All you gods, from Chaos to our time, be at hand
> while dreadful incantations are chanted over a faithless head
> and anger and woe play their parts.
> Nod assent, all in order, to my hopes
> and may no part of my desire be merely transitory.

The invocation of the urgent present through the imperative and request for the gods to appear at hand is a common feature of ancient curses, one which aligns with the aims of Ovid's specious present. However, Ovid compounds this effect by, once again, causing time to collapse. In an echo of *tempus ad hoc*, he invites all the gods from time immemorial up to *nostrum tempus* to be present.

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[232] The passage is reminiscent of his cosmogony in the *Metamorphoses*. His language—the invocation of the sea and earth, in particular—echoes that of the primordial age that he describes in *Met.*1.1-20, as if to signal that the *Ibis* too takes place in a maëlstrom of chaos. The cosmogony of the *Metamorphoses* takes up two hundred lines, where the Ibian counterpart takes up a mere twenty—here, we are stalled in a single geologic period. The description of the age of chaos as a "raw, confused mass" (*rudis indigestaque moles*) of "discordant particles" (*discordia semina rerum*) that are hostile, even to one another (*obstabatque aliis aliud*) is an uncannily apt analogy for Ovid's maëlstrom of self-contradictory invective. *Sic erat instabilis tellus*, he writes of the inception of the Metamorphic universe—so too the aratic universe of the *Ibis*.

This temporal phrase simultaneously conveys two things. On the one hand, Ovid refers to the present moment of his cursing. On the other, he hints at the fact that in the *Ibis*, Ovid's is a tempo unto itself. This metapoetic self-consciousness is precisely what distinguishes the poetic construct from the specious temporality of William James. Ovid's interior focalization of his aggrieved anger—*ira* and *dolor*—and his deep-seated desires (*optatis*, *voti*, and the optative subjunctive in the last line), which he figures as constitutive parts of his curse, lends a sense of immediacy and presence to his emotions. In keeping with his theme of perpetual presence, the wish he articulates in the final line for the complete fulfillment of his *votum* also underscores its longevity.

Another place where specious present figures prominently is in Ovid's explicit description of his emotional state. For instance, in lines 131-4, he claims that he will die sooner than remit his resentments against his adversary:

> Et prius hanc animam, nimium tibi saepe petitam,
> auferet illa dies, quae mihi sera venit,
> quam dolor hic umquam spatio evanescere possit,
> leniat aut odium tempus et hora meum. (131-4)
>
> And sooner shall that day, which comes too late,
> take away this life, which you have assailed relentlessly,
> than it ever be possible for this pain to be diminished by duration,
> or time and its hours lighten my hatred.

In Ovid's description of his eternally-present anger, he is hyperconscious of time. He envisions his death in terms of the prospective day on which it occurs (*illa dies*), which is already too long delayed (*sera*). Even this, he claims, will come sooner (*prius .. quam*) than time be able to obliterate his enmity and ill-feeling, the urgency of which is underscored by the demonstrative pronoun *hic*. He measures the magnitude of his odium in temporal units. Time here is expressed by a tricolon of temporal nouns: *spatio*, *tempus*, and *hora*, and lines 133-4 are themselves a bit repetitive. While the ostensible sentiment is that his anger will outlast his own mortality (one he echoes at 139: *nec*

mors mihi finiet iras), the circular syntax and tautologous diction formally convey being stuck on a feeling, simultaneously working to generate an impression of never-ending nowness. This is taken to a grotesque extreme in his following *phantasia* of haunting Ibis in the afterlife (140-160), clawing at his face—with icy fingers, no less—à la the spurned ghost of Propertius' Cynthia (*Prop*. 4.7).

In a similarly construed temporal construction, Ovid dwells on the cyclicality of time in his oath to be Ibis' eternal foe: *debitus hostis ero*. In a bizarre interlude, he vows that his present enmity will outlast even a climatological cataclysm:

> Desinet esse prius contrarius ignibus umor,
> Iunctaque cum luna lumina solis erunt;
> Parsque eadem caeli zephyros emittet et euros,
> Et tepidus gelido flabit ab axe notus;
> Et ver autumno, brumae miscebitur aestas,
> Atque eadem regio vesper et ortus erit:
> Et nova fraterno veniet concordia fumo,
> Quem vetus accensa separat ira pyra;
> Quam mihi sit tecum positis, quae sumpsimus, armis
> Gratia, commissis, improbe, rupta tuis . (*Ib.* 32-41)
>
> Moisture will cease to be opposed to fire
> and the light of the sun be joined with the moon
> the same part of the heavens will emit west winds and east winds
> and the warm south wind from the frigid pole
> and spring mingle with autumn and summer with winter
> and the same region shall be both dawn and dusk,
> and novel concord come to the fraternal plumes of smoke
> which ancient anger kept apart on the lit pyre
> sooner than, with the arms that we took up laid aside,
> there be the goodwill between us that was shattered
> by your deeds, you wretch.

In an extended adynaton, he claims that wet and dry seasons, the diurnal cycle, seasonal wind patterns, and the seasons themselves will blend before he sets aside his grievance. In other words, seasonal simultaneity—a collapse of the natural progress of time into an atemporal abyss—is more likely to occur than his rage cease. The proposition is set up to be read as a counterfactual in the

future—that is, said cataclysm is impossible, and so too is peace with Ibis, since even the former would be more likely than the latter. But as we recall from the imposition of a biennial winter upon two years of cyclical seasonality in *Tristia* 3.10, the stalling of seasonal time is a reality in Tomis. The counterfactual, as it were, has already been fulfilled and he still continues to curse. According to the physics of Ovid's temporal universe, then, the single impossibility is the end of his ire toward Ibis, which inspires a vortex of perpetual presence that outlasts not only his own lifetime, but also time itself.

Recent efforts in cognitive science have shown that our emotional state affects our sense of time. Traumatic experience, mood disorders, or even extreme affect can distort the subject's perception of how much time has elapsed in a given period. At the vanguard of this line of inquiry is the French scholar Sylvie Droit-Volet. In her influential 2009 article, she identifies what she terms the "time-emotion paradox": namely, that humans are able to accurately estimate time under normative conditions, but that this judgment can be confounded by one's internal environment. Emotional distress, whether inherent or referential, often leads to subjective temporal distortion.[233] Such research supports the broader contention that Ovid's temporality in the exile poetry is inflected by the trauma of displacement. Her work has further demonstrated that certain emotions associated with heightened arousal and negative affect—such as anger[234]—cause perceived time to slow down for the afflicted subject, creating the illusion of an extended present.[235] This is because such emotions accelerate the brain's internal clock mechanism, causing it to register time

[233] Sylvie Droit-Volet and Sandrine Gil, "The time–emotion paradox". *Philos. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B. Biol. Sci*. (2009): 1943–1953.
[234] Ibid, 491. Sandrine Gil, P.M. Niedenthal, and Sylvie Droit-Volet, "Anger and time perception in children," *Emotion*, 7 no. 1 (2007): 219–225.
[235] Sylvie Droit-Volet, "Time perception, emotions and mood disorders," in *Journal of Physiology-Paris* vol. 107, no. 4 (2013): 255–264.

as longer than its objectively measured value.[236] Droit-Volet posits that this experience of slowed time is evolutionarily adaptive; emotive arousal activates the autonomic system to engage a flight or fight response, triggering a hyper-awareness that stalls time and allows for a quicker response.[237] There is thus a scientific basis for Ovid's focalization of the here-and-now in his portrait of aratic rage, since the illusion of time dilation is a cerebral reflex of anger. It is fitting, then, that Ovid's ire, which inflicts upon him a never-ending *nunc*, is inimical to delay (*nulla mora est in me* ... 97, ... *votis mora tristibus absit* 105).

Thus far, we have discussed the temporality of Ovid's textual universe—that is, the diegetic temporality that the poetic persona experiences within his fictional world before we enter the *mise-en-abyme* of the curse itself. When he initiates his formal imprecations, however, the register of his temporality shifts. While the specter of perpetual presence presides for the duration of the poem, it is now perpetuated by the curse catalogue's poetic circuitousness; that is, it goes hand-in-hand with temporal (and textual) recursion. Ovid's specious present does not just take place in the intra-poetic realm of the cursing exile, however. It is also effectuated by the structure of his poetics and its narratology, thus enacting diegetic and non-diegetic synchrony simultaneously.[238]

ii. Recursion in the Curse Catalogue

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[236] Cf. also L.A. Campbell and R.A. Bryant, "How time flies: A study of novice skydivers," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* vol. 45 (2006): 1389–1392. W.J. Matthews and W.H. Meck, "Time perception: The bad news and the good," *WIREs Cognitive Science* vol. 5 (2014): 429–446. Sylvie Droit-Volet, S.L. Fayolle, and Sandrine Gil, "Emotion and time perception: Effects of film-induced mood," *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience* vol. 5 no. 33 (2011): 1-9. Cf. also P.U. Tse, J. Intriligator, J. Rivest, and P. Cavanaugh, "Attention and the subjective expansion of time," *Perception & Psychophysics* vol. 66 (2014): 1171–1189 for a quantitative analysis of TSE (time's subjective expansion).
[237] Droit Volet et al., "Emotion and Time Perception," 2.
[238] Cf. Volk, "Simultaneity in Ovid's Fasti."

Recursion is a process whose iterative principle is defined by self-referentiality. It has applications ranging from the algorithmic to the visual to spontaneous instantiations in the natural world. For instance, in computational theory, a recursive program is a function whose execution dictates its own repetition until a task is complete; that is, the overall solution to the problem that the program offers to solve (the base case) depends on like solutions to identical sub-problems (recursive cases).[239] A classic example of the recursive procedure is the Peano axiom, which defines the set of all natural numbers *ad infinitum* based on iterations of the same function, n+1.[240] In the arts, the Droste effect[241] illustrates recursion by featuring a copy of an image within itself in a way that suggests an infinitely recurring sequence. We find an example of recursion in this sense in Giotto's 1320 *Stefaneschi Triptych*, which shows Cardinal Stefaneschi holding the very triptych in which he is depicted; the Dutch artist M.C. Escher's *Prentententoonstelling* (*Print Gallery*), which features a man observing a print featuring an art gallery that is identical to the one in which the man is standing;[242] or the cover art for Pink Floyd's 1969 album, *Ummagumma*, in which the recursive wall art features the same *tableau vivant* with different members of the band rotating through the same poses in a series of seemingly endless replications. The author André Gide translated this construct into literary criticism, applying it to cases where a story features an inset

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[239] Thanks to the physicist Michael Hochberg for discussing with me the function of recursion in mathematics and computer coding.

[240] 0 is in the set of natural numbers{N}. Thus, if n is in {N}, n+1 is in {N}. Peano's axiom therefore demonstrates that 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. are natural numbers by applying the same principle to each case.

[241] Named after the 1904 Droste cocoa package, which featured a woman holding a tray bearing an identical Droste cocoa package.

[242] In this lithograph, Escher quite literally outdid himself. The print is drawn with an elliptical curve such that one of the buildings in the print is a print gallery and at the same time forms the outside of the gallery in which the boy is standing. Escher was unable to produce the point at which the print gallery and its recursive *alter* merge, and marked the place at which this ought to have occurred with his monogram and signature. In the early 21st century, mathematicians from Leiden University reconstructed the picture to include its intended effect, wherein the spectator observes an endless loop of the man looking at the print in which he sees himself looking at an identical print and so on (B. de Smit and H.W. Lenstra, "The Mathematical Structure of Escher's Print Gallery," *Notices of the AMS* vol. 50 no. 4 (2003): 446-451.

story that reflects the themes or message of the primary narrative, (i.e., *mise-en abyme*) for instance, the play-within-a-play in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.[243] We also find instances of recursion in nature, such as the double helix of DNA, frost crystals, or a head of Romanesco broccoli, which exhibit recursive visual self-similarity.[244]

The *Ibis*' governing structural principle is recursion: the curse poem in its totality is comprised of a series of subsidiary curses.[245] This construct is best represented by the catalogue of maledictions (251-638), in which Ovid levels a volley of vituperative distichs at his adversary. Nearly every couplet in the catalogue contains a novel curse, using as its vehicle a canonical myth of the Greco-Roman tradition, the likes of which both Ovid, qua poet laureate, and Augustus employed to elevate the emperor's status to one of mythic proportions. The architecture of Ovid's extended curse poem, then, syntactically, thematically, and narratologically enacts temporal recursion, causing our sense of time to collapse within in the poem. These successive time loops speak to the affective temporality of the poetic persona, since they give the impression of being caught in a perpetual present, thus offering continuity with the diegetic time discussed above. But the recursive DNA of the poem also generates an Ovidian counter-narrative to Augustan time. The compression of epic myth into hostile sound bites not only undercuts its majesty, but also

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[243] André Gide, *Journal 1885 - 1939 Bibliothèque de la Pléiade* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948). Popularized by Lucien Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire. Essai sur la mise en abyme* (Paris: Seuil, 1977). Cf. also Claude-Edmonde Magny, "La Mise-en abyme" in *Histoire du roman français depuis 1918.* (Paris: Seuil, 1950), 269–278. Jean Ricardou, *Problèmes du nouveau roman*, Collection "Tek Quel" (Paris: Seuil, 1967).

[244] For further discussion of recursion in nature, cf. Y. Kawaguchi, "A morphological study of the form of nature" *Computer Graphics* vol. 16 no. 3 (1982): 223-32; A.R. Smith, "Plants, Fractals and formal languages," *Computer Graphics* vol. 18 no. 3 (1984): 1-10.

[245] For other readings of the unique structure of the catalogue, cf. Housman, 317-18; André, viii-ix; Williams 1996, 90 ff., Hinds, "*Teleology*," 63-5; R. Guarino Ortega, *Los comentarios al Ibis de Ovidio : El largo recorrido de una exégesis Studien zur klassichen Philologie,* Bd. 115 (Frankfurt Am Main, 1999). Krasne "The Pedant's Curse," 27-32; M. Von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, 3rd ed. 2 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 672; Krasne, "Slender Muse"; Chiara Battistella, "Momenti intertestuali nell'Ibis," *SIFC* vol. 4 no. 8 (2010): 179–202. Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia."

decimates the diachrony on which Augustus' imperial rhetoric hinges, and so it renounces official time protocols. The *Ibis* thus effects a synchronization of myth-time, which is also a constituent part of its evacuation of Augustan semiotics.

The curse catalogue is a marvel of self-similarity (and constant self-difference), wherein the curse taken as a whole is constituted by a series of kindred sub-curses, often expressed, one or more, in a single couplet. This aratic *pièce de résistance* is girded by syntax that highlights Ovid's fractal poetics. Consider, for instance, the cluster of *ut* clauses at lines 365-407, where each couplet is introduced by this particle in primary position (or, in three cases, postpositively: 369, 383, 391).[246] Each subordinating conjunction sets off a different comparison that Ovid leverages to curse his adversary, claiming that Ibis should suffer a certain fate *just as did* a particular figure in mythic history. A number of smaller scale clusters, usually an echo of the first line of the preceding couplet, have a similar effect.[247] These cogs in Ovid's maledictory machine encourage us to see the micro-iterations of his *ara* as just that: miniatures that mirror the whole. Decoding Ovid's curse poem is thus similar in kind to unboxing a set of matryoshka dolls.[248]

Recursion also has implications for the perceived tempo of the catalogue. Darcy Krasne has observed that the *absence* of such syntactic signposts also serves a poetic purpose. The "disjunctive couplet", that is, a couplet that is untethered to the preceding lines by grammatical and thematic markers of continuity (e.g., conjunctions or correlatives) insists on the discrete nature

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[246] For a statistical analysis of such conjunctions, see U. Bernhardt, *Die Funktion der Kataloge in Ovids Exilpoesie* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1986), 333.

[247] E.g., qualis, qualis (263, 265); vel, vel (281, 279); aut ut, aut ut (293, 295); utque, utque (313, 315); aut ut, aut ut (317, 319); ut, ut (345, 347); qualis, qualis (415, 417); et, et (447, 449); aut ut, aut ut (461, 463); aut, aut (467, 469); ut triplicate (471, 473, 475); quam, quam (489, 491); ut, ut (495, 497); sive, si (similarity of sound, 507, 509); utque quadruplicate (521, 523, 525, 527); ut, ut (603, 605).

[248] Krasne likewise makes this analogy, which inspired by my fascination with the concept of temporal recursion as a poetic construct ("Russian nesting dolls" in "Crippling Nostalgia," 162).

of each curse and enforces continual pauses, thus fragmenting the process of reading.[249] As the momentum of Ovid's self-conscious poetic recursion pulls us forward, the disjunctions encourage a reading of each curse as a singular event, like the stills of a film. Rather than a continuous tapestry of myth à la the *Metamorphoses*, the catalogue of the *Ibis* registers as synchronic: each couplet takes place in a specious present, usurping the temporal "slot" of its predecessor. His prolific hatred is expressed through a fusillade of allusive imprecations (often one or more per couplet), where each mythic vignette revises the one it follows. This constant revision gives the illusion of the simultaneity of each curse.

We might also consider the consequences of the recursive rhythm inherent in the elegiac strain.[250] While Ovid's meter adheres to the conventions of elegy, his signature mode of prosody, the singular curses emphasize the couplet form, attuning the reader to their recursive unfurling. Indeed, he himself draws attention to this intrinsic quality by metaphorically referring to his chosen measure as *alternos ... recursus* (421), alternating waves, comparing the hexameter-pentameter pairing to the ebb and flow of the tide, but also underscoring its iterative cycles.[251] The poem is also self-conscious of its own meter in the sense that there is a tension between its elegiac mode and iambic manner, one the poet confronts when he makes his proleptic promise to Ibis to continue his curses in an iambic book, deploying verbal weapons "tinged in Lycambean blood" (*Ib.* 52-3). (Indeed, the Callimachean model on which Ovid's *Ibis* was based was likely in iambics.) He renews this vow in the final couplet of the poem, marking the semantic echo with *postmodo* as in line 52: *Postmodo plura leges et nomen habentia verum, / Et pede quo debent acria bella geri* (643-4). Likewise, Ovid makes recurring jokes about metrics in his continual references to feet

[249] Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia," 154-5.
[250] For the tension between iambic manner and elegiac mode, see *Id.* 169 ff.
[251] Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia," 159.

and suggestively iambic *exempla* in the midsection of the catalogue.[252] The poem thus exhibits a hyper-awareness of its own rhythmic structure, urging us to be conscious of this element of style as we read. The rhythm of his poetry, then—both formally and semantically—takes on a certain momentum that, paradoxically, also emphasizes the present moment.

To illustrate this observation, I turn again to the register of music theory and so-called "architectonic music." We find this phenomenon in a range of musical genres, from Classical canon to film score. The cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter, in his 1979 monograph on recursion in the arts, gives the example of Bach's "Canon per Tonos" from "Das Musikalische Opfer", also called the "endlessly rising canon." The piece modulates in such a way that it ascends a single tone with every repetition. The canon is in the C minor key but reaches its seeming conclusion in D minor—an ending which connects seamlessly with the beginning, repeating the sequence in D minor, E minor, et cetera, restoring the original key of C minor one octave higher after six modulations. At the end, the cycle begins again.[253] Likewise, as Maartje Schreuder has shown in her chapter on phonology and recursion, Jimi Hendrix' "The Wind Cries Mary" (1967) exhibits something called "tail recursion", where the movement towards the tonic F is repeated six times E flat - C/E – F, creating a similar effect at the end of the song.[254] While Ovid's meter in the *Ibis* is not remarkable as compared with his prior works, the way in which our attention is guided

[252] Darcy Krasne has also noted how puns on the physical and metrical foot in the invocation of Telephus (255) and Philoctetes (253) thematically draw attention to the poem's meter ("Crippling Nostalgia," 156). As well as his "suggestively elegiac" phrasing in 422 (*presso piedi* and *alternos recursus* in the preceding line *Id.* 160). So too his explicit references and subtle allusions to galliambic and iambic meters (*Id.* 171-2).

[253] Douglas Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 717–719.

[254] M.J. Schreuder, "Recursion and Phonology," in *On the boundaries of phonology and phonetics*, ed. D. G. Gilbers, M.J. Schreuder, and N. Knevel (Groningen: Department of Linguistics, 2004), 114.

is remarkable: we are encouraged to be hyperconscious of the cyclicality inherent in his elegiac measure by focalizing each discrete distych.

In a similar vein, the Shepard tone—an auditory illusion in which pitch circularity gives the impression of an ever-ascending (or descending) tone[255]—is exploited in Christopher Nolan's films to generate momentum in both mood and narrative in service of creating an "intimate epic". For instance, in his renowned film *Dunkirk* which portrays the battle of the same name, the composer Hans Zimmer uses a ticking clock Shepard tone to mount suspense and a feeling of urgency that is seemingly ceaseless. Nolan states in an interview that the soundtrack was built around the Shepard tone in order to elicit an impression of ever-increasing intensity.[256] (Indeed, the score made such a strong impression that the film won the 2018 Oscar for sound mixing and editing.) However, the director further states that it was not only the film's score but its screenplay that was structured according to this recursive modality:

> **Nolan**: The screenplay had been written according to musical principals [sic]. There's an audio illusion, if you will, in music called a "Shepard tone" and with my composer David Julyan on "The Prestige" we explored that and based a lot of the score around that. And it's an illusion where there's a continuing ascension of tone. It's a corkscrew effect. It's always going up and up and up but it never goes outside of its range. And I wrote the script according to that principle. I interwove the three timelines in such a way that there's a continual feeling of intensity. Increasing intensity. So I wanted to build the music on similar mathematical principals [sic]. Very early on I sent Hans a recording that I made of a watch that I own with a particularly insistent ticking and we started to build the track out of that sound and then working from that sound we built the music as we built the picture cut. So there's a fusion of music and sound effects and picture that we've never been able to achieve before.

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[255] This phenomenon is named after the cognitive scientist Roger Shepard, who first observed that several tones separated by an octave and layered on top of each other have this peculiar effect. While the lowest bass tone fades in, the highest treble tone fades out, and the sequence loops back again. The human brain hears the two simultaneously rising tones as a sound constantly ascending in pitch.

[256] Jason Guerrasio, "Christopher Nolan explains the 'audio illusion' that created the unique music in 'Dunkirk'" *Business Insider* (Jul 24, 2017); Guerrasio, "Christopher Nolan explains the biggest challenges in making his latest movie 'Dunkirk' into an 'intimate epic'" *Business Insider* (Jul. 11, 2017).

Thematic recursion plays a significant role in Nolan's other films, most prominently *Inception*, which is based upon a dream-within-a-dream concept. So too has he used auditory recursion in other movies, like *The Dark Knight*, in order to imply the continuous acceleration of the protagonist's vehicles. However, *Dunkirk* is remarkable in its fusion of narratological and atmospheric techniques and aims. Such sensitivity to the positive feedback loop of entrancement created by this symbiotic relationship is one of the many qualities that confers Nolan's status as one of cinema's modern auteurs.

Ovid, too, is concerned with creating something like an "intimate epic". His imprecations are, by their very nature, highly personal (in terms of their display of emotion and direction at a person or personified entity) but attain to a rarified grandeur through his sprawling yet tightly worked display of mythological erudition. While his syntax and meter contributes to an atmosphere that echoes his emotionality as a figure within the poem (that is to say, engenders a sense of urgency and focalization of the present), it also complements a recursive narrative structure that undermines the teleological time scheme of his programmatic works, like the *Metamorphoses*. We might, therefore, better characterize the *Ibis* as an intimate anti-epic or an introverted epic of self. As I shall go on to discuss, this agenda is advanced in part through recourse to recursion, both in style and content.

The *Ibis* is not only self-referentially iterative on the scale of syntax and metrics, but also on the macro-level of its narrativity, which deliberately positions itself as contrary to the linearity of epic narrative. Two compelling cases have been made to this effect by Stephen Hinds and Darcy Krasne. Hinds argues that lines 241-50 effectively "restart" the poem in a recasting of the

traditional medial proem as an "anterior or pre-textual preface".[257] These are the lines where Ovid recounts Ibis' ill-starred birth, which is presided over by the Furies, an "Ur-preface" that echoes the initial lines of the poem in its language and form. This second overture returns us, a third of the way through the poem, back to the beginning. In this sense, the episode functions as a metapoetic *mise en abyme*, an *Ibis Minor*. In fact, Darcy Krasne has noted how the re-invocation of the word *tempus* at the beginning of this episode has recursive properties: "With the repetition of *tempus*, Ovid creates a temporal hall of mirrors: the tempus of the Fury's speech, promising a future eternity of tears for the infant Ibis, doubles reflexively back to tempus as the opening word (and therefore the alternate title) of the much later (temporally speaking) poem-*Ibis*".[258]

In her exhaustive analyses of the structure of Ovid's *Ibis*, Krasne has also observed how the poem exhibits a spiraling structure.[259] For instance, she describes how a medial interlude, marked by the ring composition of *non leviora malis*, connects the middle of the catalogue with the beginning, revisiting its programmatic themes of *nostos*, exile, and meter.[260] So too, she argues that the "arrangement of exempla in this catalogue is meant to resemble, on the surface, a series of mythographic catalogues, particularly in his clustering of mythological figures who share a single fate or another pertinent feature".[261] For instance, in 519-600, the longest "umbrella-catalogue" in

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[257] Hinds, "Teleology," 64.
[258] Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse," 9.
[259] Other studies on the internal logic of the catalogues' structure include Ursula Bernhardt's *Die Funktion Der Kataloge*, in which she shows how the catalogue is thematically organized to include fifty-one mini-catalogues and thirty-five *Einzelexempla* (328-99). María Garcia Fuentes lays out a taxonomy of thematic categories into which most of the exempla fall ("Mitología y maldición en el *Ibis*, I" *Cuadernos de filología clásica*, n.s. 2 (1992): 122-53). Cf. also A. La Penna, *Publi Ovidi Nasonis Ibis* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1957), xlvi-xlix.
[260] Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia," 159-64
[261] Krasne, "Slender Muse," 70; "Crippling Nostalgia, 157-8; "Pedant's Curse," 1-13. For a schematized account, see Krasne "Crippling Nostalgia," fig. 2 pg. 154. Cf. also C.J. Gordon, "Poetry of Maledictions: A Commentary on the Ibis of Ovid," Ph.D. diss. (McMaster, 1992), 105-6.

the poem, Ovid assimilates his cursing to deal in *exempla* involving *techne*: the fates of artists, philosophers, and prophets.[262] What is more, this mini-catalogue is overlapped by yet another, dealing in artist-figures who have been punished by divine vengeance.[263] Krasne also notes that Ibian autotexts, such as *per alternos ... unda* of Leander's death by drowning (589) and the *alternos ... recursus* of 421-22, create a poetic circularity by recalling the language of prior passages.[264] These continual reprises at varying levels of the narrative—from the poem as a whole to a single phrase—create a poetic "Droste effect", where the principle of recursion is manifested in smaller and smaller iterations.

This disobedient narrativity, I argue, is a constitutive part of his post-Augustan project: the curse enacts its intended effect[265] by disrupting the temporal system aligned with the much-maligned emperor. Not only is the mythic grandeur of the *Metamorphoses* hyper-compressed into invective projectiles whose iteration creates the illusion of perpetual presence, like the Shepard tone, but the large-scale circularity and repetition of the narrative scheme also winds the linearity of Augustan myth-time into a tight coil. That is to say, what is at stake is not only the temporality that the Augustan and post-Augustan texts *represent*, but also that which they *enact*. On this subject, Stephen Hinds makes the following observations:

> … the Ibis catalogue can emerge as a kind of comprehensive renunciation of Ovidian narrative order. Here, as the text of Ibis' future opens, the poet opens the way up to 'measureless time' for his evil twin; more specifically, he thus distances the notoriously unwieldy catalogue of Ibis' future torments … from the great temporal schemes, which introduce and organize Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*.

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[262] Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia," 172.
[263] *Id.* 174.
[264] *Id*. 177-8.
[265] The status of cursing in antiquity as a performative speech act that accomplished its ends as it was spoken is discussed by Watson, *Arae*, 5. Cf. Plin. *NH* 28.10-21, Sen. *Ep.* 94.53, Plut. *Crassus* 16, who claims that the curses were so potent that their utterance could cause the speaker to fall ill by *contaminatio*, and authors therefore incorporated formulae for self-protection.

> Not for this life a forward progress through history culminating in the triumph of personal immortality; not for this life an ordered experience of life lived by the calendar, *tempora cum causis*, just a big plot (or unplot) of suffering, unstructured, open-ended and incalculable, *tempus in immensum*.[266]

As Hinds observes, the *Ibis'* collapse of myth-time into a temporal morass challenges the carefully measured temporal order that the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* not only venerate, but narratologically perform. While Augustan time justifies the present through a reconstruction of the past, aratic time is necessarily preoccupied with present resentments and their (however elusive) prospect of future vengeance. So too the narrative structure of the *Metamorphoses* in particular is diachronic and aetiological/teleological in nature, whereas the *Ibis* puts emphasis on a perpetual present. The self-positioning of Ovid's self-conscious temporal artifice as an alternative to Augustus' exposes the construct of Augustan temporality for what it is: a social construct.

The allusive Ibian overture looks forward not only to Augustus' apotheosis, but also to the "confident teleology" of Ovid's indelible name at the close of the *Met*.[267] The synchronization of mythic time also has implications for Ovid *qua* author: the *Ibis* recasts the poet's *telos* to better suit his exilic environs. Instead of his own name resounding throughout the Roman empire for time immemorial, it is Ovid himself who raises a cry of 'Ibis' to the vault of the Pontic heavens. It is not Ovid who is eulogized on the lips of men, but Ibis who is monumentalized by his eternal cursing. The perennial poet laureate of Rome has now become the maledictor of the Pontic *in perpetuum.* The *poeta exclusus* must edit his authorial persona to account for his exclusion from the Augustan mythos in which he once took part.

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[266] Hinds, "Teleology," 65.
[267] *Id.* 63.

Apart from its narratological implications, the *Ibis*' recursive modality also takes shape in the successive fictional worlds that his *arae* engender. That is to say, as narrator-demiurge, Ovid consigns Ibis to fates that are, in themselves, recursive. For example, in the prelude to the curse catalogue, he banishes his adversary to Tartarus. There he inflicts on him the archetypal punishments of Sisyphus, who must continually roll a stone up a hill, Ixion, who is eternally spun on a burning wheel, Tityus, whose regenerating liver is consumed nightly by birds, and the Danaïdes, whose curse is to forever carry water in hemorrhaging sieves:

> In loca ab Elysiis diversa vocabere campis,
> Quasque tenet sedes noxia turba, coles.
> Sisyphus est illic saxum volvensque petensque
> Quique agitur rapidae vinctus ab orbe rotae,
> Quaeque gerunt umeris perituras Belides undas,
> Exulis Aegypti, turba cruenta, nurus. (*Ib.* 173-178)
>
> You shall be summoned to places far from the Elysian fields,
> the places which the guilty lot call home, you shall abide.
> Sisyphus is there, rolling his stone and retrieving it,
> and he who is spun by the sphere of the flying wheel to which he is bound,
> And those daughters of Belus who bear on their shoulders water soon lost,
> daughters-in-law of exiled Aegyptus, a blood-stained clan.

The recursive futility of the tasks at hand, in addition to Ovid's curse as a whole, is emphasized by the structure of the passage: the parallelism of *volvensque petensque* in semantics, syntax, and mirroring meter, the emphasis on the swift circularity of the wheel (*rapidae ... orbe rotae*), and the double periphrasis of the Danaïdes, who are twice identified by reference to their recursive lineage. This method of periphrasis will go on to define many of the mythical identifications going forward, genealogies that are "only intelligible after some grueling mental calisthenics," as Krasne puts it.[268] Ovid then doubles down on the above curse, directly addressing its woebegone figures:

[268] Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia," 153.

Sisyphe, cui tradas revolubile pondus, habebis:
  Versabunt celeres nunc nova membra rotae:
Hic et erit, ramos frustra qui captet et undas:
  Hic inconsumpto viscere pascet aves.
Nec mortis poenas mors altera finiet huius,
  horaque erit tantis ultima nulla malis. (*Ib.* 191-196)

Sisyphus, you shall have one on whom to bestow your revolving weight;
now swift wheels shall turn new limbs;
this shall be the man who grasps in vain at branches and waves;
this shall be the man who feeds the birds with innards unconsumed.
Nor shall another death bring an end to the punishments of this one,
no hour shall be the last for such great ills.

This reprise of his prior curse, which is itself recursive, again underscores the repetitive nature of the punishments through diction: *revolubile*, *versabunt*, *frusta*, and a liver that, once consumed, is once again *inconsumpto*. Ovid's reference to successive deaths and the passing of each hour failing to bring an end to Ibis' prospective miseries underlines their iterative penology: the punishment consists primarily in its ever-lasting repetition. We find other instances of recursive curses in the catalogue, ones which are, notably, themselves repeated. For instance, Ovid twice condemns Ibis to the fate of Prometheus, whose liver (much like Tityus') is devoured by birds only to regenerate (291-2, 543-4). He also twice refers to the filial incest of Cinyras and Myrrha, father and daughter, which is taboo precisely for its recursive potential:[269] as if to drive this home, in the latter instance, he mentions their offspring, Adonis (360, 565-6). There are also a few examples of nominal recursion, like the doubling of Attis (455), juxtaposition of Ajax the Lesser and Greater (341-4), and a tricolon of Glaucuses (555-8),[270] which refer to different mythical figures by the same name.

[269] That is, productive parent-child incest produces for the parent another child and grandchild simultaneously.

[270] Cf. Krasne, "Slender Muse," 77 for a discussion of the coincidence of names in the text as part of Ovid's effort to exert control over identity through selective periphrasis and explicitness. She also asserts that the

It is not just that Ibis must suffer a fate that recurs indefinitely, he himself is cast and recast as various *dramatis personae* united by a common theme—as is Ovid, qua *carnifex*.[271] Such protean shape-shifting means that Ovid and Ibis are existentially defined by iterativity within the universe of the poem. The principle of recursion is thus a thematic, as well as structural, device—and informs his logic of retribution.

These two poetic processes—the non-diegetic narration and the diegetic experience of both Ovid qua intra-poetic persona and that envisioned for his adversary—unite at the end of the poem, where Ovid, as speaker and as poet, vows to continue his cursing in perpetuity (639-44). This *Ringkomposition* is a fitting end not only because it evokes the specious present, but also because it is recursive: it implies a time loop that brings us back to the beginning of the poem, like a poetic Möbius strip, and continues indefinitely. Accordingly, the macro-structure of the poem is annular: the poet concludes his cursing by vowing to begin his curse anew. The titular *avis* evokes this circular structure. Ancient sources attest that the ibis was, as Goold puts it, a "bird of intolerable habits,"[272] engaging in auto-enema with its curved beak.[273] This is in fact the only feature of the actual bird that Ovid mentions in the text, and one he uses to gird its periphrastic identification (450). The crude image of this act is a fitting symbol for a poem that is at once pejorative and circular.

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polyvalence of the name "Linus" provokes a collocation of mini-catalogues, an instance of a single name inspiring recursive narrative. Cf. also Krasne "The Pendant's Curse," 17 re: Pyrrhus.

[271] "a more flexible approach to the identity-question is to view him as a versatile *dramatis persona* is never without a literary mask. *quisquis id est* (9): whether or not Ibis existed as a real enemy outside the realms of Ovid's imagination, he exists within the poem only as whatever character he plays at any given moment. The poet's own poetic persona is equally unstable ..." (Williams, *The Curse of Exile*, 63).

[272] Ovid, *Ibis*, ed. G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), xi.

[273] Ael. *NA* 10.29, Strab. 823, Plut. *Is. et Osir* 381c, Isid. *Etym*. 12.7.33 "Ibis avis Nili fluminis, quae semetipsam purgat, rostro in anum aquam fundens", Pin. *NH* 8.97; D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (New York: Alpha Edition, 1895), 114.

The symbolism of the avian ibis is also significant to Ovid's polemic. Schiesaro argues convincingly that the ibis was associated with Augustus by divine syncretism and iconographic representation on the *Ara Pacis* and Roman coinage.[274] In Bridget Langley's 2016 dissertation, "Written on Running Water: Ovidian Poetics in the Roman Waterscape," she argues that Ovid harnesses aquatic imagery to figure his own poetic activity and its urban backdrop.[275] His "hydraulic poetics" shift registers depending on the era and genre of his work.[276] Water supply system was a constituent part of Augustus' program of public works, and such beneficence reinforced his status as *pater patriae*.[277] Accordingly, the *Fasti*'s hydraulic structures and natural waterways evoke early Rome and throughout the rest of his pre-exilic poetry, he celebrates the hydraulic program of the Agrippan-Augustan hydraulic infrastructure.[278] Langley argues convincingly that Rome's urban waterscape becomes a focal point of Ovid's nostalgia in exile in the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*; but, in keeping with Ovid's radical shift in register when it comes to the *Ibis*, the hydraulic metaphor takes on whole new meaning in this text. The symbol of the bird performing auto-enema has some rather pejorative implications for what has become of the Augustan hydraulic system in exile. It is not only a crude rendering of circular futility, as opposed to the architectonic symbol of cultural advancement Langley finds in pre-exilic Ovid's poetics, but also, insofar as water evokes the *locus amoenus* and font of poetic inspiration, a self-referential symbol of Ovid's conceit of poetic decline and actual textual insouciance.

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[274] Schiesaro, "*Ibis Redibis,*" 111ff.
[275] Bridget Langley, "Written on Running Water: Ovidian Poetics in the Roman Waterscape," PhD diss. (Washington University, 2016), 7.
[276] *Id.* 3.
[277] *Id.* 4.
[278] *Id.* 9.

Likewise, the ibis, known to the ancient Mediterranean through the Egyptian mythographic tradition, is associated with the god Thoth, who is depicted either as ibis-headed or as an ibis itself. Some scholars even posit that the Egyptian moniker for the god Thoth, ḏḥwty (Djehuti) is etymologically derived from an archaic word for the ibis, ḏḥw (djehu), plus the suffix signifying identity, –ty (-ti), which come together to mean, "He who is ibis-like." Our avian-headed deity, like the Greek god Hermes to which he is assimilated, mediates between two "others" and symbolizes liminality. For instance, he negotiates between the realms of living and dead, arbitrates divine disputes, and is the god of alchemy. This realm of associations suits the exilic corpus, in which Ovid enacts the liminality of being at once in Rome and at Tomis, a kind of spatio-temporal alchemy.

Toth is also the patron god of interpretive communication, text, and scribes—indeed, his syncretic counterpart, Hermes Trismegistus, would have the entire corpus of literature in addition to the written word itself attributed to him. Toth - and by extension, the ibis - is therefore also identified with textual authority, a facet of his depiction which is underscored by his marital and iconographic association with Ma'at, the goddess of truth.

Textual authority is a theme that figures prominently in Ovid's *Ibis.* Banished on the basis of a literary crime, Ovid struggles to legitimate his authorial voice in isolation of the culture and society that once defined it. In turn, the bureaucratic language and symbolism that gird Augustan political authority are exhaustively subjected to scrutiny and subversion. So, too, Ovid is eager to establish his own authorial validity in a register of post-Augustan symbolism, whilst simultaneously exploiting the poetic modes that lent him credence under the auspices of his regime. Indeed, even in invoking Ibis as his adversary, he allies himself with the Hellenistic

tradition and implicitly figures himself as a Roman Callimachus – a nod to an established corpus into which he inserts himself and a performance of his own erudition.

Nonetheless, Ovid's impotent threat of eternal cursing is an admission that his revisionist poetics are also a self-conscious exercise in self-abnegation. His sputtering invective is self-undermining for all of its indefatigable revisions; the continual resurgence of imprecations implies the failure of those that came before. Each dismal fate that he conceives precludes the realization of any other in this zero-sum game of invective—unless each prior fate fails to have it intended impact (a silent concession to the curse's futility). He lapses into a cycle of infinite regress, and this endless re-cursing is yet another antidote to the "confident teleology" of Augustan time.

Ovid's poetic commitment to the principle of recursion also has implications for his exilic consciousness. The infinite regress of his poetics not only enacts the futility of his existence in exile, but also betrays his affliction with the malady of the infinite: his desire to see Ibis destroyed is obsessional and insatiable.[279] As Gareth Williams suggests, this "unrestrained and violent cursing which provokes more of the same and is never gratified" evinces a "convincing portrayal of the (literally) maddening effects of *furor*".[280] In his monograph *The Curse of Exile*, he makes a compelling case for the *Ibis* representing a manic interlude between the depressive episodes of the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. He argues that the text "... plays a central role in creating the "wholeness" of the poetic persona featured so centrally in the exilic corpus; for in the broader context of an all-pervading melancholy, the curse takes on a special significance as the expression of a manic, desperate and inevitably futile frustration."[281] Ovid's salvo of curses, he posits, betrays

[279] Though Schiesaro sees the incommensurability of Ovid's poetics as a parodic symbol of imperial excess: "Ovid replaces the *imperium sine fine* emperor and Empire with a different kind of infinity, one deriving from the boundlessness of desire (*Id.* 137).
[280] Williams, *Curse of Exile*, 48.
[281] *Id*. 5.

this obsessional mania. I wish to expand on this assertion by suggesting that the recursive architecture of the poem is likewise critical to his representation of the exilic condition. Just as the leitmotif of the specious present projects the poetic persona's urgent anger, so too do his concentric circles of temporal loops—syntactic, self-consciously metrical, narratological, and thematic—illustrate his compulsive mindset, in terms of both persona-based performativity and poetic enactment. In his letters, Lawrence Olivier describes his then-wife Vivien Leigh's descent into mania as "... possession by that uncannily evil monster ... with its deadly ever-tightening spirals ..."[282] Here, the poet's own uncanny monster is expressed in the ever-tightening spirals of his textuality.

Ovid not only textually models his subjective experience of spurious presence and iterativity, but also *effectuates* it through a carefully curated reading experience. The ancients believed that their *arae* were performative speech acts that could realize their intended ends, and true to form, Ovid's curse poem inflicts on the reader the temporal confusion that it performs. While his rapid firestorm of curses creates a certain momentum, the laborious and oblique references to marginal myths and elaborate relational webs—a struggle of interpretation for even an erudite Roman—slow the assiduous reader down significantly as he tries to decode them. Ultimately, the continual revision of curses, relentless allusivity, and pervasive periphrasis halt the narrative, demanding a recursive reading that disrupts our "state of flow".[283] The endless cycle of arcane invective is both exhaustive and exhausting, because it requires such presence of mind.

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[282] Laurence Olivier, *Confessions of an Actor: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 174.
[283] Mihaly Csikszentmihályi. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).

In the act of reading, we too are forced to suffer a confusion of time—but also a confusion of meaning. The repetitions are ultimately self-undermining, for, our attention, as well as the impact of each curse itself, inevitably wane. The sheer relentlessness of the text amounts to something like a state of semantic satiation, a psychological phenomenon whereby repetition causes a word or phrase to lose meaning for the listener, who then perceives the speech as repeated but meaningless sounds. We are caught in a negative feedback loop of maledictions, whose content is, with each curse renewed, purged of its meaning. There is a sense in which this infliction of the exile's subjective experience onto the reader is the fulfillment of Ovid's desire, stated many times over, that his addressee suffer the same fate that he does (*Ib.* 113, 637-8).

Ovid's engagement with "aratic" time thus not only enriches his portrait of the exile's condition but also affects his readership's engagement with the text. By way of conclusion, I would like to consider some further implications of this reading for reception, using Roland Barthes' critical apparatus in his essay *S/Z* as a framework. Here, Barthes distinguishes between two different kinds of texts, the *texte lisible* or "readerly text" and the *texte scriptible* or "writerly text". While the former is transparent when it comes to its narrative events and characters, the latter destabilizes the conventions of realism and fictional norms. The readerly text is bound by strictly sequential elements and follows a timeline delimited by convention. The writerly text defies a predictable temporal and narratological structure, and thus lends itself to unrestricted interpretation. The readerly text treats the reader as a recipient of a pre-determined, "authorized" semiotic system and thus positions the text as a programmatic commodity and the reader as consumer. The writerly text, to the contrary, conscripts the reader in the construction of meaning, so that literature comes into being in an imaginative space created by both author and reader. Barthes further elaborates in *Le plaisir du texte* that the writerly text elicits a literary ecstasy

(*jouissance*) that allows the reader to break out of her subject position by destabilizing the conventional structures of signification through which she defines it.[284]

While Ovid's *Fasti* aligns well with the paradigm of the lisible for its programmatic register, Barthes classifies the scriptible according to a rubric that will seem familiar to us as careful readers of the *Ibis*. The potential for affinity is especially salient in the following passage:

> The writerly text is a *perpetual present*, upon which no consequent language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed; the writerly text is ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world … is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system … which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages.[285]

To my mind, Ovid's *Ibis* – preoccupied with the present and hostile to systemic discourse in precisely the way Barthes describes – is the quintessential *texte scriptible*. His inscrutable curse poem suspends conventions of realism and confounds established genre. It upends conventional notions of time and space and subverts the Augustan sign system. By inviting us to participate in the temporal and existential confusion of exile by constructing a mimetic reading experience, he demands that we too imbue the text with significance simply by engaging with it. And the pleasures of the text, moreover, alter our perspective as subjects, as we are conscripted in viewing the world through the eyes of the exile. Ultimately, Ovid's poetic recursion redounds upon the reader to complete its meaning; we are active participants in bringing yet another iteration of its annular structure full circle.

iii. Reflexivity and Ressentiment

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[284] Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970).
[285] Barthes, *S/Z*, 5.

On the subject of confounding the reader, much ink has been spilled on the identity of the eponymous Ibis. Some scholars contend that the answer to this question is irretrievable[286] or that there is no particular addressee intended.[287] Others have suggested that Ibis is one of Ovid's scurrilous contemporaries,[288] the infamous emperor,[289] or the poet's own *corpus*.[290] Indeed, the most elaborate statement he makes about Ibis' identity avows his desire to sow confusion and ambiguity: *et neque nomen in hoc nec dicam facta libello / teque brevi qui sis dissimilare sinam* ("And I shall speak neither your name nor your deeds in this little book / but let you keep your identity hidden in obscurity for a brief while[291] *Ib.* 51-2). This statement is soon followed by the following passage:

> utque ille historiis involvam carmina caecis
> non soleam quamvis hoc genus ipse sequi
> illius ambages imitatus in Ibide dicar
> oblitus moris iudiciique mei
> et quoniam qui sis nondum quaerentibus edo
> Ibidis interea tu quoque nomen habe
> utque mei versus aliquantum noctis habebunt
> sic vitae series tota sit atra tuae (57-62)
>
> Like that man [Callimachus], I shall furl my song
> in stories mired in obscurity,[292] though I myself am not
> accustomed to follow this mode,
> I shall be said to have imitated his evasive style in the ἶβις,
> forgetful of my typical manner and poetic perspicuity,

[286] La Penna, *Ibis*, xvi.
[287] A. Rostagni, *Ibis,* in *Contributi alla Scienza dell' Antichitá*, vol. 3 (Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1920), 7-54; Housman, "Transpositions," 316; A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 228, Williams, *Curse of Exile*, 7-23.
[288] André xvii-xxii, xxiv-vi; La Penna, vii-viii, xiii-xvi; Janssens, "Deux complexes d'acrostiches délateurs d' Ibis," *Colloque présence d'Ovide* (1982): 45-50.
[289] S. Casali, "Quaerenti plura legendum: on the Necessity of ť Reading More' in Ovid's Exile Poetry', *Ramus* vol. 26 (1997): 80-112. Schiesaro, "*Ibis Redibis.*"
[290] Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse" suggests that the "adversary" is Ovid's own poetry (93).
[291] The verb *dissimilare* is of some interest here: in prior Ovid, it often refers to assuming a different form (e.g., *Met.* 13, 163), like Ibis' alternating *dramatis personas*, or to concealing one's divinity (e.g., *H.* 4, 56; *F.* 5, 504, 6, 507), aligning with Ovid's continual references to Augustus' status as divine.
[292] *caecis* taken here to mean impervious to the mental perception of others, i.e., difficult to decode.

> and since I am not yet disclosing who you are to those who ask,
> in the meantime, take on the name Ibis in addition,
> and just as my versus have in them some degree of darkness,
> so too may the sequence of your life be black.

In these lines, Ovid proffers a poetic mission statement: he commits himself to the cultivation of deliberate ambiguity (though he leans on Callimachean precedent, the degree to which Ovid relies on that model is in doubt).[293] He repeatedly deploys metaphors of blindness and opacity to underscore the difficulty of decoding not just Ibis' identity, but also his own shadowy poetics (*caecis, oblitus,*[294] *noctis, atra*). However, the passage also establishes the poem's reliance on recursion. *Involvam* can mean "cover up" but also "roll up", implying that his *carmen* is tightly coiled with *historiis caecis*. *Ambages* can mean windings or circumlocution, in other words, a recursive mode of speaking—or, as Schiesaro suggests, the recursive fate he wishes on his enemy.[295] Accordingly, he also refers to the "series" (also meaning "chain" or "lineage", two inherently recursive entities) of Ibis' life, which he renders as a series of recursive narratives. Indeed, even the identity of his adversary is defined recursively: Ibis – *quis est*? See "Ibis".[296] So too, he presents the text of same name as a second iteration of the Hellenistic ἶβις, a title which, in turn, evokes its eponymous foul-mannered fowl. Here, recursion becomes an instrument of textual ambiguity.

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[293] See Watson, *Arae* for a case in favor of allegiance to the Callimachean model and Williams, *Curse of Exile*, 12 ff. for the argument that Ovid is posturing and in fact constructs an *Ibis* all his own in his typical innovative style.

[294] Etymologically related to *livor/livēre*, to go dark.

[295] Alessandro Schiesaro, "*Ibis Redibis*," *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* no. 67 (2011): 84.

[296] Formally, this is an instance of recursive humor. e.g., a dictionary entry of: Recursion (noun): see recursion.

In the final section of this chapter, I offer a possible answer to the question *qui sit*. Ibis is not a particular person, I argue, but not a "nobody". Ibis is not devoid of a referent, but this referent is not singular. Ibis is instead a construct, the reified object of the exile's *ressentiment*. Ovid is therefore not tilting at windmills so much as constructing a straw man, who acts as a vessel for his grievances and target for his vituperative rage. Like *Fear and Desire*'s Mac, he hones the various and sundry hatreds of the exilic condition into a singular "buzzing curse". But like the Lieutenant and his doppelgänger, the enemy is at once a reflection of the self.

The term *ressentiment* rose to prominence amongst 19th century moral philosophers, most prominently Friedrich Nietzsche. In his seminal text *On the Genealogy of Morality*, he asserts that the resentment of the aristocracy by the underclass acts as a catalyst for the rise of a value system that vilifies nobility as "evil", and defines "the good" through the negative. This "slave morality" acts as a defense mechanism that prevents the individual from confronting his own societal disenfranchisement and his attendant frustrations. Accordingly, the ego constructs an illusory "enemy" it can repudiate through recourse to this morality, in order to insulate itself from a sense of intrinsic failure by projecting blame onto an external scapegoat:

> The beginning of the slaves' revolt in morality occurs when *ressentiment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who, being denied the proper response of action, compensate for it only with imaginary revenge. Whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant saying 'yes' to itself, slave morality says 'no' on principle to everything that is 'outside', 'other', 'non-self': and *this* 'no' is its creative deed. This reversal of the evaluating glance – this *inevitable* orientation to the outside instead of back onto itself – is a feature of *ressentiment*: in order to come about, slave morality first has to have an opposing, external world, it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all, – its action is basically a reaction.[297]

[297] Friedrick Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality,* trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan Swensen (New York: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998), 21-2.

The subject of *ressentiment* thus conceives of "the evil man" as primary, according to which he defines himself secondarily as the good man, and uses "justice" as a pretext for legitimating emotional reaction and revenge.[298]

Ovid's aratic netherworld might well be described in Nietzsche's terms, though it is individualized and idiosyncratic. The *Ibis* is a "vibrating realm of subterranean revenge, inexhaustible and insatiable in its eruptions" against a culprit-construct.[299] In his 2011 paper "Ibis ridibis", Alessandro Schiesaro makes a strong case for the identification of this construct with Augustus on the basic of extrinsic context and internal allusion.[300] Building on this Ockham's razor interpretation, I suggest a shift in emphasis: the text is less a maniacal *ad hominem* attack against a pseudonymous Augustus, and more a poetic screed against Augustan*ism*. That is to say, "Augustus" qua Ibis represents, more than a man, a hegemonic ideology whose strictures resulted in Ovid's ousting from Rome. Another facet of the exilic persona, then, is this expression of *ressentiment,* one that also posits its own system of mythic justice and penology as a pretext for revenge, as expressed in Ovid's myriad curses. This more permissive reading of the Augustan Ibis helps to explain some of the ambiguities around his identity that would seem to preclude such an interpretation—and also Ovid's desire, as part of his poetic project, to deconstruct Augustan symbology, such as imperial protocols of time.

Another essential feature of this "imaginary revenge" is its circumspection. Nietzsche emphasizes that the noble scapegoat is often attacked "in effigy"[301]—like Ovid's *fictum nomen*[302]— and that the subversive mode of the weak—like Ovid's *ambages*—is a clever and

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[298] *Id.* 48.
[299] *Id.* 91.
[300] Schiesaro, "*Ibis Redibis*," 79-150.
[301] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 22.
[302] *Id.* 93

cultivated inscrutability: "His soul squints; his mind loves dark corners, secret paths and back-doors, everything secretive appeals to him as being *his* world, *his* security, *his* comfort; he knows all about keeping quiet, not forgetting, waiting, temporarily humbling and abasing himself."[303] Reveling in ambiguity, as Ovid proclaims he will and then proceeds to do, is thus a way of accruing power and the only recourse left to the exiled poet. Such gleeful riddling we have already observed in the *Tristia*, where Ovid drops hints when it comes to his elusive *error*, a trail that leads us nowhere. Here, his deliberate silence about Ibis, which departs from his programmatic obsession with names,[304] serves much the same purpose: to dangle the prospect of his outing like the sword of Damocles above his enemy's head (though upon consideration, this sword is awfully blunt) and to cue the curiosity of the reader, whom he gives the runaround yet again. As narrator-demiurge, he also constructs a fictive *mundus*—*his* world, *his* comfort—that operates according to his own moral legislation, mythographic riddling, and temporal conceits. The setting of the Ibian *arae* is the anti-urbs.

But Ibis is, as it were, Janus-faced. *Ressentiment* ultimately redounds upon its subject, revealing aspects of the unconscious of which he tries to rid himself. Ovid's portrait of the exilic persona betrays this repression by representing Ibis, an anadrome for *sibi*, self-referentially.[305] The work insists that the title be read bidirectionally for its essential subject to be understood. It is this aspect of the *Ibis* that I wish to explore more fully. Though critics have observed the uncanny doubling of Ibis and the author, in that the latter makes the former suffer his

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[303] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 23.
[304] Stephen Hinds, "Ovid Among the Conspiracy Theorists," in *Classical Constructions: Papers in Memory of Don Fowler, Classicist and Epicurean*, ed. S.J. Heyworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 198. Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse," 13-14.
[305] 'Sibi' could also be taken as an archaic locative: "to be beside/by oneself".

own fate,[306] reframing the *Ibis* in the terms of *ressentiment* helps to flesh out the meaning of this duality.

The most remarked on feature of the text that supports a reading of Ibis as Ovid's "evil twin" is the author's recurring curses condemning Ibis to the very miseries he suffers. How much more worthy, he declares, is Ibis to suffer his ills than himself in the proem to the curse (*heu quanto est nostris dignior ipse malis!* 22). He condemns him to exile and to haunt the thresholds of strangers, underscoring his liminal status qua Ibis and qua *exul* (*exul, inops erres, alienaque limina lustres* 112-13; and brief mention at 578, where he is compared to Hippolytus). Finally, at the close of the poem, he relegates Ibis to Tomis among the infamous Sarmatians and Getics (*denique Sarmaticus inter Geticasque sagittas / his precor ut vivas et moriare locis* 637-8).[307]

However, the leitmotif of Ibis as Ovid's doppelgänger is much more developed than prior scholarship has acknowledged.[308] Ovid treats Ibis as a second self in more subtle ways than one. For instance, he identifies Ibis with Actaeon, a figure to whom he compares himself and his plight in the *Tristia* (479). Like Callisthenes, Archilochus, and Hipponax, authors whose texts occasioned their undoing, he wishes on Ibis a death by *lingua proterva*, a harsh (or wanton) tongue, which precipitated Ovid's own pseudo-demise in exile (521-6). In this instance, there is also a mirroring effect: Ovid is, by his own admission, simultaneously engaging in invective in the wrong meter as he curses Ibis to a death by elegy. In this way, Ovid reinforces his identification with Ibis through triangulation with mythic characters who perform the content of his curses. In fact, thematic

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[306] Hinds: "... Ovid treats the pseudonymous Ibis as a kind of evil twin" ("Ovid Among the Conspiracy Theorists," 206). Echoed by Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse." Schiesaro: the text "casts Ibis as Ovid's double" ("*Ibis Redibis*," 93).

[307] The *Ibis* is thus a variation on the tradition of *Selbstverwünschung*: the curse that the author wishes upon Augustus will never come to fruition, and accordingly, the curse he wishes on himself, should that be the case, is already *fait accompli*.

[308] Though see Krasne, "Crippling Nostalgia," 175-7.

intersections with the *Ibis* in *Tristia* 1.1 prefigure this significance. In a stunning precursor to his *arae*, Ovid claims that his own fate in exile can be counted among those of the metamorphosed figures in his mythic *tour de force* (*Tr*. 1.1.19).

Ovid's invocation of Janus Kalends, in addition to Ibis' birthday, as the day of his curse poem's annual recital is also significant for this theme. In so doing, he figures the performance of his poem—and, as per the ancient theory of *arae* as performative speech acts, the realization of his curses—as a recurrent and ritualized event. In addition, Janus himself conjures the notion of duality: Ovid aligns Ibis with the god, whose depiction with two faces, one facing the past and future, gives the impression of a double identity. (Not insignificantly, Janus' image thus represents temporal liminality[309] between past and future, i.e., the precious present.) Janus is also the god who is said to have presided over the inception of the world, according to mythographic tradition (*me Chaos antiqui ... vocabant Fasti* 1.103, e.g.). This resonates with the theme of Ovid's creation of a new world out of a second chaos that is set up in opposition to the old, but also more hospitable to the poet-in-exile. The fact that Janus is the divinity most closely associated with the *Fasti* also merits analysis: his invocation of the god at the post-proemial beginning of this quintessential Augustan text (*ecce ... Janus* 63-4) not only symbolizes not only the transition from one year of the Julian Calendar to the next, but also signals that the uniquely Roman god is the foremost representative of Augustan temporality. In these lines, Ovid emphasizes the dual form of the god three times: *Iane biceps* (65), *Iane biformis* (89), *ancipiti ... imagine ... Iane / bina ... forma* (95-6). The first two mentions are in the privileged first and last positions of the line respectively, while the latter tautologously refers to his binate form twice as he manifests before the poet's eyes

[309] Ianus, the god of thresholds and transitions, is also the source of the word *ianua*, door, and related to the PIE *ieh$_2$nu "passage" and cognate with the Sanskrit "yāti," to go.

(*mirandus ... oculis* 95-6). Janus' inherent duality is thus is a critical feature of his pre-exilic portrayal, one that is implicitly present in the text's privileging of his sacred day.

While most scholars who read Ibis as a doppelgänger for Ovid see the correspondence as playing into the concept of *lex talionis*—that is, that his (probably Augustan) adversary's punishment should be of the same ilk as the crime he has perpetrated on Ovid—I suggest that the theme of duality and representation of Ibis as *anceps* illustrates another instance of the cognitive dissonance of the exile. Ibis not only becomes an incarnation of Ovid's discontents and a representation of the regime that ousted him, he also becomes a repository for self-blame. The author's contention at the beginning of the poem that his verse was harmless to all but him betrays a veiled admission that it was the catalyst of his exile, a claim he affirms over and over in the other two Pontic texts. Rather than face his own impotence in the face of Augustan imperium or the fact that he had a hand in his own undoing, he curses an effigy in whose shadow he subconsciously sees himself. Indeed, it is this irrational emotional reaction at being marginalized that drives *ressentiment* in the first place: "we find here the actual physiological causation of *ressentiment*, revenge and their ilk, in a yearning, then, to *anaesthetize pain through emotion* ... to anaesthetize a tormenting, secret pain which is becoming unbearable with a more violent emotion of any sort, and at least rid the consciousness of it for the moment".[310] The straw man is thus a rationalization to palliate the ego, shielding it from self-incrimination and regret. *Ressentiment* simultaneously emanates from denial and concomitant self-alienation, and is an attempt to reconstitute the self. If Ibis' follies overtly constitute a mirror of princes, Ibis is, covertly, a mirror of the self.

[310] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 99.

What, however, does this mean for *Ibis* qua text? "I would not go so far as to say that 'Ibis' actually designates the *Ibis* itself, in a recursive snarl of ultimately pointless metapoetic self-reference," says Darcy Krasne.[311] Since the *Ibis* is a masterpiece of recursive snarling whose seeming pointlessness is often, in fact, quite pointed, I would not put it past its author to engage in a little metapoetic self-reference. We have established that Ibis acts, among other things, as a cypher for the poet's *ressentiment* and thus as a mechanism for the "anesthetization" of pain. However, this takes place within a textual framework. There is therefore a sense in which the Ibis refers to its own textuality as a cathartic expression of its author's exilic trauma, with its Augustan *recto* and Ovidian *verso*. The poet's analeptic cursing is itself a traumatic reflex: via Ibis/*Ibis*, his persona relives his trauma through a second self to process his own experience. In fact, one might read *Tristia* 1.1 as hinting at such a connection in the first line: the conceit of the poem is that the *liber* is a surrogate for Ovid, a *liber* that is adjacent to the word *ibis*, creating a singular unit. *Liber ibis* displays another dimension of the exilic persona and acts as an analgesic for the exilic condition.

In a letter to distributor Joseph Burstyn, trying to sell him on the film, Kubrick described *Fear and Desire* as follows: "Its structure: allegorical. Its conception: poetic. A drama of a 'man' lost in a hostile world – deprived of material and spiritual foundations – seeking his way to an understanding of himself and of life around him."[312] Ovid's *Ibis* is a poetic allegory for his polemic against Augustanism, but also the drama of a man lost in a hostile world, bereft of the cultural inflections that once defined him, trying to come to terms with his identity in exile. Without hope

[311] Krasne, "The Pedant's Curse," 25.
[312] As quoted in Norman Kagan, *The Cinema of Stanley Kubrick* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), 9.

of reinstatement at Rome, his only refuge is his exilic imagination. Through the panacea of his poetry, Ovid retreats into this country of the mind, an ersatz for home, an empire of one.

Epilogue

> Art, in a sense, is a revolt against everything fleeting and unfinished in the world. Consequently, its only aim is to give another form to a reality that it is nevertheless forced to preserve as the source of its emotion. In this regard we are all realistic, and no one is.
>
> - Albert Camus

This dissertation has argued for reading the timescape of Ovid's exile poetry as an expression of the trauma of exile. *Tristia* 1.3 transports us back to the night of his banishment, enacting a temporal fragmentation and compulsive retrospection that is symptomatic of post-traumatic stress. *Tristia* 3.10 portrays a man marooned in the frigid clime of a stalled winter, an emblem of the slow internal freeze of his condition. Finally, the *Ibis* features a recursive fury that illustrates the futility and infinite regression of Ovid's anger at the sovereign who ousted him.

In the foregoing chapters, I have also argued for a socio-political reading of Ovid's exilic temporality. That is to say, he undertakes a coextensive project of deconstructing the social reality of carefully-contrived Augustan time by directly interrogating its protocols and asserting a manifestly subjective temporality that refuses to conform to official chronometry. This subversive post-Augustanism thus dovetails with his expression of exilic consciousness: he transmutes the social reality at Rome into *nova corpora* in exile, rewriting his own narrative in the process.

This reading of the exile poetry, like its subject, traverses time. On the one hand, it fleshes out a temporality that was already to some degree in play in the pre-exile works but defined itself against their broader contours. On the other hand, it points to a phenomenon whose iterations can be found in exile literature of later periods.

Consider Augustine's treatment of time in the *Confessions*. While Augustine was not a literal exile of the sort that Ovid was (or purported to be), he was a man caught between two

worlds. Though natively and ethnically Punic, he was more culturally and sentimentally Latin. His Punic vintage, though, made it such that he could never be considered truly Roman. He was thus suspended between cultural identities, never fully belonging to one or the other, a state that sociologist David Pollock refers to as a "third culture."[313] Likewise, his ultimate conversion to Christianity after an itinerant, Pagan life (in addition to his being reared in a hybrid Pagan-Christian household) speak to a sense of spiritual and existential exile that emerge in his writings.

Accordingly, Augustine's famous meditation on time in the 11th book of the *Confessions* is defined by a preoccupation with the phenomenology of temporality. Here, he observes that while the familiar tripartite structure of time as past, present, and future does not exist, time nevertheless has a lived reality for us as a simultaneous presence of memory, attention, and expectation. This state he calls a "distention of the soul" (11.33), which he distinguishes as a counterpoint from the "intention" of the soul toward God. He concludes this excursus on time with an exhortation to turn from the dispersion of temporal existence to the timeless eternity of divine providence, which alone offers truth and stability.

Augustine's theorization of time simultaneously draws on Greco-Roman sources, like Plato's tripartite soul and Plotinus' *Enneads*, and Judeo-Christian principles, situated as it is in the context of his exegesis of Genesis. It is therefore structurally poised between the worlds he inhabits as a quasi-exile. However, his fixation on temporal phenomenology per se also betrays the interior conflict he so often cites in his works between his experiential relationship with the pleasures of the Pagan life and his Christian convictions, as so memorably exemplified in his self-flagellating delight in Cicero. Time thus becomes a metaphor for the internal struggle he confronts as a spiritual

[313] David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken. *The Third Culture Kid Experience* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 1999), 19.

émigré, much as time functions as a symbol for Ovid's struggle between his disparate pre- and post-exile allegiances and identities.

Another voice from the annals of exile is Primo Levi, a German-Jew who was incarcerated in concentration camps during the Holocaust. In his memoir, *Se questo è un uomo*, he chronicles the atrocities he experienced at Auschwitz, in exile from the rest of the world. Levi recognizes the total control over time in the camps as a critical aspect of the dehumanization of the Jews by the Nazis, effectively depriving them of the temporal perspectives that are constitutive parts of human subjectivity. Accordingly, throughout his personal account, he deploys literary instantiations of temporality with sophistication and purpose: imposing linearity on the sequence of events he describes, oscillating between past and future, and emphasizing the present tense by collapsing chronological perspective. Levi thus seeks, on the one hand, to impose comprehensible order on a situation of incomprehensible cruelty and tragedy, and, on the other, to give expression to the disordered state of mind that issues from such extraordinary trauma. Giuseppe Stellardi has argued convincingly that these temporal maneuvers, taken as a whole, are a systematic effort at reconstituting the exiled self:

> The writing and publishing of *Se questo è un uomo* are a revolt against that mutilation, a claiming back of the control over time, a reinstatement of purpose, a reactivation of the dimensions of past and future in human life. But it is important to note that this does not simply consist in recovering something that was lost; there is also a very active side to it, because simultaneously with preserving the memory of the past, the book also creates 'new time' by inserting memories in a narrative fabric and in a context of purposeful action, neither of which was present before. In connecting the time of the camp (so reconstructed) to a past (both personal and cultural) and to a future (both Levi's and his readers'), a process of healing is set in motion, and new meaning (within newly instituted temporal co-ordinates) is created.[314]

[314] Giuseppe Stellardi, "The Point of Time: Structures of Temporality in Primo Levi's Se questo è un uomo," *The Modern Language Review* 114, no. 4 (October 2019): 703.

This “new meaning,” forged in the crucible of alienation and despair, that offers both a mode of expression for exilic trauma and an opportunity to reconstitute the self is reminiscent of Ovid’s own efforts at creating a novel temporality that captures his isolated existence while also reacting against the temporal protocols of an oppressive ideology.

These later instantiations of time in exile, when brought to bear on Ovid’s own, suggest that our poet was not just constructing a temporality to suit his own persona, but was tapping into something far more fundamental about the condition of displacement. The tension between old time and new, the disordered temporality of the trauma-addled brain, and the audacity of constructing a new timescape as a refuge are cross-temporally shared conceits of exile literature. Ovid may have been an island unto himself in Tomis. But if we traverse time and space, he is in good company.

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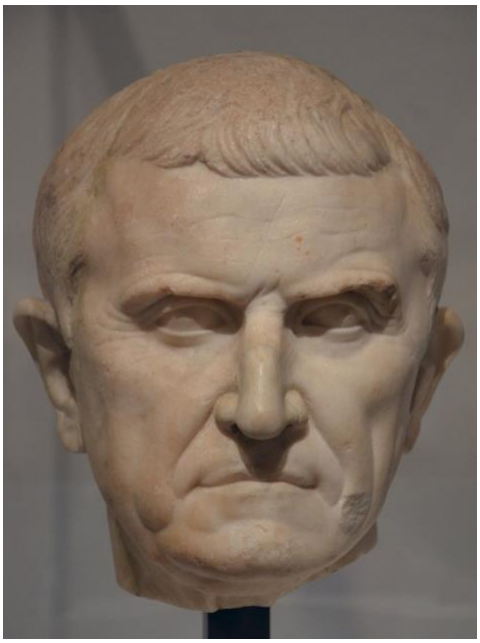
Appendix



1. Marcus Licinius Crassus, Paris, Musée du Louvre. (Inv. No. 1220)

2. Pompey the Great, Copenhagen, New Carlsberg Glyptotek (Inv. No. 733)