POUSSIN'S ECHO OF OVID

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In Ovid's third book of *Metamorphoses*, the myth of Narcissus is told with a slight, if not significant, change from its original Greek telling. A recent discovery of ancient papyrus fragments found in Egypt attribute the story of Narcissus to a Greek poem written around 50 BCE by Parthenius of Nicaea. Parthenius, a Greek citizen, became Virgil's tutor after being taken prisoner by the Romans during a war in Anatolia in around 73 BCE[1], hence the path by which the Narcissus myth may have found its way to Ovid at the beginning of the first century. The Greek poem tells of all the male lovers who avidly, and unsuccessfully, pursue the arrogant Narcissus and how one of the rejected turns to the gods for help, seeking punishment for the pulchritudinous boy. Narcissus suffers the fate of falling desperately in love with his own reflection, and succumbs to suicide. The poem ends with his plummet into a bloodied pool, sullying his watered image forever.

The difference in Ovid's version is clear, as he eliminates the self-murder and has Narcissus waste away only to metamorphose into a flower. Yet, there is a greater distinction still. It is Ovid who introduces Echo into the woeful tale, and although easily overlooked, her role is worthy of note in Narcissus's transformation. An echoless version of the myth lacks a key element: its vocal reflexivity. Ezio Pellizer points to this distinction in Ovid's version when he writes that, "Echo's story seems indeed to be constructed successively … and apparently was inspired by a preceding tale about Narcissus in which there was no trace of vocal reflexivity, but in which appeared the optic reflexivity of the mirror."[2] The inclusion of Echo's vocal mirroring elicits a deeper look into the myth, one that may suggest it is more than a simple tale warning against vanity. The interplay between Echo and Narcissus prior to his discovery of the image in the pool, as well as her vocal consolation upon his death, intimates her role as his amphora. She is both the bearer and transporter of his spoken words, and the funereal signifier of his imminent dissolution.

Nowhere is this depicted more perspicuously than in Nicolas Poussin's painting, *The Empire of Flora*. This 1630 rendition of Flora and

her retinue is Poussin's second portrayal of the goddess; the first is *The Triumph of Flora*, painted two years earlier. A brief reference to this initial version is worthwhile to highlight the change in positioning of both Narcissus and Echo. In *The Triumph*, the two sit together in the left foreground of the canvas; their bodies recline as she leans back on him, and an empty amphora sits in her lap, tilted on its side. The two face the same direction, looking away from the viewer and at Flora propped up on her chariot. They appear at ease and enchanted by the procession as it passes.

Poussin's second painting is more sophisticated, with the goddess posed contrapposto in the centre of the canvas, surrounded by those who will metamorphose and bloom into members of her floral cortège. Aptly encircled, she is seemingly light of step as she sprinkles her petals about. The painting is, as Poussin calls it, "un giardino di fiori,"[3] and incorporates all the Ovidian characters that are transformed into flowers. The figures on the left of the canvas are Ajax, falling upon his sword, Narcissus and Echo, and Clytie, who, for her unrequited love of Apollo, is turned into a Heliotrope. On the right side of the canvas, standing in the middle ground, are Hyacinthus, the beloved of Apollo, and Adonis, who is seemingly gazing down at the wound on his left thigh; in the foreground, mirroring Narcissus and Echo, are the lovers Smilax and Crocus, who are changed into flowers before they can consummate their passions. Although, as Troy Thomas writes, "the picture is a poetic and evocative depiction of the unhappiness of love, of the closeness of love to death, and, in depicting humans turned to flowers, of the limited scope of human immortality in the ceaseless cycle of nature,"[4] it is the figures of Narcissus and Echo that incite curiosity and further exploration.

Changing their poses from his first painting, Poussin places these two characters with their bodies facing one another. Although Narcissus looks down and Echo off to the side, the viewer is able to see their expressions this time and witness the longing in both of their gazes: he for his own image, and she for him. Yet the greater significance of Poussin's positioning of these two is in Echo's task. She holds the reflective source for Narcissus, as her left hand is clearly placed on the side of the container. Becoming one with the vase, Echo wraps herself about it as if absorbing it into her body. She steadies the overflowing urn, keeping its surface as smooth as glass. Looking into the water, Narcissus is able to glean his reflection from the still pool because his admirer holds it with avid tranquility.

Dora Panofsky makes a similar observation about their poses:

> The figures of Narcissus and Echo are united into one closely knit, almost circular group. Narcissus, on his knees, stares at his image in a water-filled vase; this vase is proffered to him by none other than Echo … in proffering to him the vessel, she, his frustrated victim, proclaims herself, at the same time, an accessory to his destruction.[5]

Poussin's pictorial posy leads one to imagine Echo as Narcissus's helpmate; not only does she bear the weight of his reflective source, but she becomes his vocalizing vessel as well. As vocal reflexivity, Echo carries Narcissus's words within her. In Ovid's myth, her dialogue parrots his and, thus, she is "an acoustic mirror, so to speak,"[6] that can only return his spoken words back to him. Their encounter brings about an ambiguity in discourse that evinces Echo's dysfunctional speech and exhibits Narcissus's inability to identify his own words. That he does not recognize the mimicking words, his fragmented thoughts being returned to him as enigmatic expressions, may suggest that her vocal reflection is symbolic of the unconscious, that which one does not know one knows.

Ovid's inclusion of Ekho, the Greek Oread who fell in love with her own voice, is not the only time she appears in mythology. There is another Roman myth involving a singing nymph named Echo and the salacious satyr, Pan. Known for lusting after nymphs and for provoking their desperate attempts at escape through transformation, Pan has his loyal goat herders tear Echo apart and scatter her remains all about the land. When hearing of her fragmentation, Gaia absorbs her pieces into the earth and releases the bodiless echo to resound in the world. This retelling of Echo's fate leaves out one crucial element: unlike Ovid's version, it does not deal with Juno's punishment of her. In Ovid, Echo often distracts Juno with lengthy stories while Jupiter pursues the mountain nymphs he longs to ravish; when Juno discovers his infidelity, she punishes the loquacious nymph by taking away her ability to speak her own words, forcing her to repeat the voices of others. Echo's punishment is an important feature of her character as a fated player in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Paying close attention to the frame of the myth and Echo's anteriority, Gayatri Spivak revisits her importance as one who does not receive a reward as compensation for her punishment, unlike Tiresias who receives the gift of prophecy from Jupiter after his blinding by Juno:

> She too has served Jupiter. As he played with nymphs, she would engage Juno in prudent chat. It is this beguiling prudence that Juno takes from her: you can no longer speak for yourself. Talkative girl, you can only give back,

> you are the respondent as such. Jupiter does not give her anything in return.[7]

Is it possible, however, that her ability to reflect the words of another is a gift comparable to Tiresias's foresight? If the vocal reflection she expresses is representative of Narcissus's unconscious thought, then maybe she is bringing necessary insight and awareness to that which is lacking in his life. I would argue that hers is a gift of foresight in its own right.

Johann Gottfried von Herder designs a paramyth out of the Echo story called *Die Echo*, in which he posits that "the true story is that she was Harmonia, the daughter of Love, and helped to bring about the creation [of the world]."[8] As the daughter of Love, once her work is done, she asks Jupiter to let her voice remain on earth to resound the beating hearts of the children so that she may console her mother's heart. Herder implies that the echo is the organic connection between nature and the self, and is parallel to the relationship between a mother and her child. With this relationship in mind, and Echo's voice as the reverberation of the child's heart, it is not unwarranted to imagine Narcissus's desire for the image in the pool as his unconscious desire to return to his mother, the naiad Liriope.

Floyd Ballentine explores the specific provinces of nymphs in "Some Phases of the Cult of Nymphs,"[9] wherein he evidences their association with springs and rivers throughout Greek and Roman mythology. As water is significant to the myth of Narcissus, one cannot overlook it as the element from whence the boy sprang to life. Ovid makes this clear from the opening of Narcissus's tale:

> The first to make trial of [Tiresias's] truth and assured utterances was the nymph, Liriope, whom once the river-god, Cephisus, embraced in his winding stream and ravished, while imprisoned in his waters. When her time came the beauteous nymph brought forth a child, whom a nymph might love even as a child, and named him Narcissus.[10]

Even though Narcissus is born as a result of a forced union, a violent clashing of waters that may have resulted in nothing but an emptying out of sorts, his mother does not reject him. In fact, her adoration is so great that she turns to a seer about his fate so as to protect him from harm. Moreover, born from the union between water god and water nymph, Narcissus could easily believe the image reflected in the water to be a real being. He knows his mother—a naiad—is kin to water, and he might even be aware that his paternal lineage is from the river. Narcissus does not see the reflection in a looking glass or a mirrored object; it is by looking into the pool that he discovers the

unattainable object of his love. The image in the water is not just a mere reflection of him, but an authentic and physical imitation since, just like him, it derives from water. Claire Nouvet concludes that Narcissus's "puzzling liquefaction," in which "the self which turns into water is itself water turned into the image of a self," is partially due to his liquid ancestry:

> We should remember that Narcissus proceeds from a mother, Liriope, who, being a naiad, figures precisely that which is not figurable: the water which dissolves shapes and figures. This water gives birth to a child through a violent generation; Narcissus is the outcome of the rape of one water, Liriope, by another water, Cephisus.[11]

Ovid does not address liquefaction per se. He writes of Narcissus's wasting away from love and being "slowly consumed by its hidden fire."[12] Therefore, his turning into water can prove puzzling if it is as a result of desire's consuming flames. Perhaps Ovid's earlier analogy, however, is more in line with liquidness, as he compares that which happens to Narcissus with the "yellow wax [that] melts before a gentle heat, [and] hoar frost [that] melts before the warm morning sun."[13] These two references to the process of liquefaction by heat resolves the quandary of his return to the water by love's subjection to fire. Moreover, one cannot disregard the fact that Narcissus's body is never found. He simply evaporates into the environment, as water evaporates into the air, and reappears on earth as a flower in full bloom growing up from the soil. Nouvet also acknowledges the connection between water and air, writing that the epithet for Liriope, "caerula," meaning "blue azure," is representative of a colour that can describe either the sky or water.[14] Why not both? If we are to associate Liriope with the colour blue, she can be connected with both the sky and the water of the river, thus making Narcissus's transubstantiation from liquefaction to evaporation symbolic of his reconnection with his mother.

Yet Narcissus is not the only character that succumbs to a fate of evaporation. Echo also dissolves into thin air. Ovid writes: "Her sleepless cares waste away her wretched form; she becomes gaunt and wrinkled and all moisture fades from her body into the air."[15] As her natural environment engulfs her and eventually consumes her body into its stony structure, she is transformed from a living being into an object of nature, just as is Narcissus when he becomes the flower. It is here that Echo's participation in the myth reaches its pinnacle because her role as the verbalizer of his unconscious thought becomes even more apparent when she is only a voice in the air. Her metamorphosis occurs prior to his so that she can be with him in voice while the inner fires of burning love consume him and he, himself,

evaporates. Her voice reverberates every moan and sigh of his bodily anguish. At this point, the text reveals that her responses are distortionless and exact reflections of his words; therefore, they leave little room for misinterpretation. When Narcissus cries, "'Alas!'", she responds, "'Alas!'" When he laments, "'Alas, dear boy, vainly beloved!'", she "[gives] back his words," And when he calls to his image, "'Farewell!'", Echo calls the same.[16] This exact parroting is not consistent throughout Ovid's tale, as at some moments he simply recounts her response, rather than writing in her speech, and at other times he shows her as simply repeating the last few words of Narcissus's sentences. Yet this change in reflexive accuracy is partly due to her no longer living in the body; she is "voice alone"[17] after having wasted away at the spurning of love. Therefore, if Echo is the vocal reflection of Narcissus's unconscious thought, it follows that his final interaction with her is without distortion. By then, he has come to know the truth about himself, that he and his unattainable reflection are one and the same. At this point, he is conscious of what was once unconscious. Moreover, Echo's perfect reverberation is a sign of empathy; she knows the pain he suffers at his impending evaporation, as she too has undergone a similar fate. Her vocal presence (and bodily absence) at his moment prior to metamorphosis is in accordance with her role as his amphora: the funereal signifier of his imminent dissolution.

Echo's initial interaction with Narcissus, however, is quite different from her final, reverberant lament. When Narcissus calls out, "'Is anyone here?'", Echo replies, "'Here!'" Then when Narcissus asks her to "'Come,'" she echoes his call with "'Come!'" Seeing no one coming, he asks, "'Why do you run from me?' and hears in answer his own words again."[18] Then, "deceived by the answering voice," Narcissus says, "'Here let us meet'" and she elatedly replies, "'Let us meet!'" It is here that she shows herself, coming forward with arms wide to embrace the object of her desire. Narcissus flees from her caress, crying as he goes, "'Hands off! embrace me not! May I die before I give you power o'er me!'"[19] She, dejected and ashamed, resounds his final words before running off into the woods: "'I give you power o'er me!'"[20]

Echo's parrot of "'Here!'" and "'Come!'" are acceptable responses to his calls; however, her replies to his next three exclamations seem to foreshadow his upcoming interaction with the image in the water. All three of her imperatives can be interpreted in his words, as he begs his beloved image to stay. First, her repetition of his words, "why do you run from me" [*quid me fugis*], is

similar to his declaration to the watered figure that, "surely [his] form and age are not such that [it] should shun them"[21] [*certe nec forma nec aetas / est mea, quam fugias*]. The Latin is especially revealing here because the verb "to flee" [*fugere*] is used in both of Narcissus's laments; *fugis* is the second person singular of the present active indicative, while *fugias* is the second person singular of the present subjunctive.[22] Second, Echo's "let us meet," which can also mean let us come together, is resounded in his exclamation to the image: "'Whoever you are, come forth hither!'"[23] And third, Echo's pledge to give Narcissus power over her is similar to his relinquishing control to the image in the water. He tells it that they "two shall die together in one breath,"[24] signifying his desire for communion with his image while at the same time exhibiting the influence it holds over his existence. This interaction, along with the one that takes place just before his death, upholds the notion that Echo's vocal reflexivity is the speech of his unconscious thought.

This first conversation brings about an ambiguity that demonstrates Narcissus's inability to recognize Echo's words as his own. Her speech, a distortion of his, symbolizes his oblivion and the fact that he is unaware of his inner desires. Phenomenologically speaking, the echo is known for its auditory distortion. Although it imitates the spoken voice, it does so unrecognizably and with a certain amount of aberration. An echo manipulates the voice in its reverberation, making it difficult to understand the message it speaks. Since Echo repeats only the last few words of Narcissus's speech, her dialogue is fragmented and easily misunderstood. Moreover, since her words are mere pieces of his phrases, their initial conversation is not legitimate discourse. Narcissus responds to what Echo is saying, although they are not the things she actually longs to voice. Her inability to speak her own words, her punishment from Juno, denies her the ability to communicate authentically, denies her intentional speech.

Both Echo's lack of control over her words and her inability to voice her thoughts make her an apt figure for the unconscious. She symbolizes the part of the mind that is not comprehensible to the rest. The unconscious is comprised of those phenomena that escape the conscious mind, such as latent thoughts, hidden desires, and obscure dreams. When, and if, the unconscious transmits a message to the conscious part of the mind, it is often awry and in a dreamlike manner; information is often incognito and undecipherable. Just as the echoing voice is unrecognizable, so, too, is the unconscious message. And just as Narcissus

cannot fully understand Echo's discourse, neither can he comprehend the fragments of his own thoughts. Moreover, since Echo's vocal play precedes Narcissus's discovery of his image in the water, her reflexive language is Narcissus's unconscious desire for that which he will soon discover. Her final echo of "I give you power over me!" foreshadows Narcissus's desire to subjugate himself to the image in the water. Yet these words are not reflected in her actions. Her desire to subjugate herself to Narcissus is negated when she runs off and hides in shame. Although unable to speak her own words, she is still physically free to practice her own actions. Since she chooses to run away only after their encounter, the shame she feels must arise from something other than her inability to profess her love. If this were not the case, she would have run off at the first sound of her echoing anomaly. Yet, since she stays and attempts to communicate her passion, her mortification must derive from his overt rejection to her physical touch, his scorn at her attempt to embrace him. Despite his disdain, however, she remains long enough to return his last words. This final vocal reflection is only a partial mirroring of his speech. When he cries, "'Hands off! embrace me not! May I die before I give you power o'er me,'" she only repeats the declaration of subjugation, thus performing her role as the vessel of his unconscious. As Narcissus claims to never allow anyone to take him captive, Echo's utterance foresees his impending fate to succumb to his irrational desire for the image in the pool. As vocal soothsayer, it is only after she has satisfied this role that she runs off into the woods to undergo her own metamorphosis, a physical evaporation from which only her voice remains. Since Juno has not taken away her ability to act, and it is only her voice that is relinquished to repetition, it is Echo who chooses to stay until her function is complete.

Her role as amphora, vessel of the unconscious, speaker of his desires, can be equated with the Other of the symbolic order. For Jacques Lacan, the unconscious is the discourse of the Other; it is a matrix of signifying activities that come into being once the subject is inducted into the linguistic domain, or symbolic order. In his *Écrits*, Lacan writes:

> Man's desire is the *désir de l'Autre* (the desire of the Other) … that it is *qua* Other that he desires … That is why the question *of* the Other, which comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply in some such form as '*Che vuoi?*', 'What do you want?', is the one that best leads him to the path of his own desire.[25]

When referring to the Other, he is speaking of the symbolic order as a whole and is positing that man's desires are dictated by, and through, language. The Other is a formula for

transmission, whereby “human language constitutes a communication in which the emitter receives from the receiver his own message in an inverted form.”[26] Echo, as Other, returns Narcissus’s message to him with some form of inversion.

For the purposes of this essay, Lacan’s notion of the mirror stage is aptly suited. Lacan writes about the infant’s initial development of a beneficial self-image, one created by the union of the reflected image and the infant’s lack of mastery over such image. This imago development is a step towards maturation and independence. Inevitably, this newfound independence works towards severing the infant/mother bond and preparing the child for its induction into the symbolic order. It is the initiation into the symbolic order, “the determining order of the subject,”[27] and its relation to speech, language and signifiers that sets the child up for a lifelong deficiency—a deficiency that stems from its acquisition of comprehensive, verbal language that helps distinguish it as a separate entity from its mother. This deficiency is what Lacan calls lack, and it can never be satisfied. This lack stems from the impossibility of ever returning to the initial maternal bond. As compensation for that loss, the child attaches itself to other objects—what Lacan calls *objets petit autre*. In *The Subject of Semiotics*, Kaja Silverman elucidates this phenomenon:

> This rubric designates objects which are not clearly distinguished from the self and which are not fully grasped as other (*autre*). The object (a) … derives its value from its identification with some missing component of the subject’s self, whether that loss is seen as primordial, as the result of a bodily organization, or as consequence of some other division.[28]

The main example Silverman gives for this object is the mother’s breast, which for Lacan is “the most profound lost object.”[29] As the child attempts to make it a part of itself by inserting it into its mouth, it sees the mother’s breast as the thing that will satisfy that which is lacking. Other possibilities of *objets petit autre* are the mother’s gaze and voice, which the child may also attempt to incorporate as its own.

For Narcissus, the image in the pool becomes his *objet petit autre*; it is his object of desire, that which he longs to absorb into himself to satisfy the lack that he has come to know by its appearance. Narcissus’s experience is similar to that of the infant in the mirror stage, although instead of moving toward maturation Narcissus regresses to a liquefaction that brings about a metamorphosis and eventual rebirth. Echo’s interaction

with Narcissus is imperative for this regression because she, being an element of language, is the Other of Lacan's rubric. As Lacan writes, "man's desire is the desire of the Other,"[30] and if Echo is the Other, then her desire for Narcissus is his desire as well. Yet what does this mean exactly?

As stated earlier, since the image in the pool is made up of water and is, therefore, symbolic of the naiad whence Narcissus came, his desire to be united with it is representative of his desire to return to the mother. Echo initiates the process by which Narcissus comes to realize this unconscious desire. Her vocal aberration, the distortion within language, is what takes Narcissus out of the symbolic order and back into the mirror stage. As he regresses back to a preverbal mode of existence in which the image of the self is a fascination all its own, she, his helpmate as depicted in Poussin's painting, assists him in identifying that which he lacks. As Lacan notes, it is at the stage of verbal identification that the child begins to experience a sense of disconnection from the mother. As the disconnection increases, the child begins a lifelong search to fill the void. The void, however, is insatiable because the maternal bond can never be renewed while the individual is conscious of being a separate entity. For Narcissus, satiation will only come when he can attain that which is unattainable—a reunion with the image in the water.

It is shortly after his interaction with Echo that Narcissus reverts to what may be seen as an infantile stage of consciousness. When he first sees the watery image, he is unable to recognize it as his own reflection. It is no coincidence that Narcissus sees his reflection in the element from which he came into being. His soliloquy, before the moment of realization that the image is his own reflection, is reminiscent of a baby's words to its mother had it the power to speak:

> Some ground for hope you offer with your friendly looks, and when I have stretched out my arms to you, you stretch yours too. When I have smiled, you smile back; and I have often seen tears, when I weep, on your cheeks. My becks you answer with your nod; and, as I suspect from the movement of your sweet lips, you answer my words as well, but words which do not reach my ears.[31]

As he stares at his reflection, his *objet petit autre,* he stretches his arms out to it in unison with the reflection that mimics his motion and tries to incorporate its voiceless replies into communicable sounds so that he may make it an extension of himself. His desire to connect with the image in the water is representative of his need to return to his mother, and so the

reflexive play described in this passage is comparable to the bond between a mother and her child. An infant interacts with its mother in this mirroring fashion, receiving all that it needs from this one human bond, this extension of itself. A child reaches for its mother's hands when she reaches for it; a child's face expresses emotions of joy or sadness in reflection of its mother's emotions; and a child responds to its mother's musical utterances with coos and caws of its own. As the child tries to absorb the mother into itself, so, too, does Narcissus attempt to make the image in the pool his own. We "'two shall die together in one breath,'"[32] he cries, remaining separate from the image by the immense gap that is an impassable gulf.

In *How to Read Lacan*, Slavoj Žižek discusses the gap that arises between the subject's fantasy and reality. The space between is irreconcilable and necessary. If the gap were to be bridged, the subject would no longer be participating in the symbolic order. To identify oneself without the concealment of a signifier, to exit the symbolic order, is to fashion oneself as unthinkable and incommunicable. Žižek writes:

> There is a gap that for ever separates the phantasmatic kernel of the subject's being from the more superficial modes of his or her symbolic or imaginary identifications. It is never possible for me to fully assume (in the sense of symbolic integration) the phantasmatic kernel of my being: when I venture too close, what occurs is what Lacan calls the *aphanisis* (the self-obliteration) of the subject: the subject loses his/her symbolic consistency, it disintegrates.[33]

Aphanisis, for Lacan, is an alienation of the subject that is caused by its being eclipsed, and essentially destroyed, by its *objet petit autre*. The subject becomes destitute and eventually nonexistent. For Narcissus, self-obliteration comes when he realizes the truth about the image in the water. The epiphany comes about through an absence of language, significant in itself. Speaking to the image, Narcissus says, "'As I suspect from the movement of your sweet lips, you answer my words as well, but words which do not reach my ears.—Oh, I am he! I have felt it, I know now my own image.'"[34] The absence of sound, of voice, leads him to this conclusion. He is no longer marked by the signifier that was his image, but is eclipsed by it. The two have become the same, and as this realization hits him all at once, the gap between him and the being in the water closes, and yet an impassable gulf remains. He cries for separation from himself: "'Oh, that I might be parted from my own body! and, strange prayer for a lover, I would that what I love were absent from me! And now grief is sapping my strength; but a brief space of life remains to me and I am cut off in my life's prime.'"[35] It is the

acknowledgement of truth, the truth of himself, that ignites the extinguishing flame, the burning passion that leads to his liquefaction, as “the yellow wax melts before a gentle heat.”

Narcissus’s fated journey begins when Liriope questions the seer. Tiresias’s words, “‘If he ne’er know himself,’”[36] become a two-fold foretelling because they refer to the boy’s want of visual recognition of the self, as well as his not recognizing the voice of his unconscious. Yet, when Echo leads him to an identification of his repressed desire for the watery image and the maternal bond from which he has been severed, she helps him to the literal fulfilment of Tiresias’s words. Once Narcissus knows himself as the image in the water, as a child separated from the mother, as an alienated subject of language, as one who is eternally lacking, he succumbs to his fate.

Poussin’s visual portrayal of Narcissus and Echo in *The Empire of Flora* was painted long before Freud’s theories of narcissism or Lacan’s development of the mirror stage, and yet there is something initiatory about the pose in which he places these two figures. There is an insinuation that Echo plays a larger role in Narcissus’s fate than she may have been credited for over time. Her ability to return to the speaker that which he emits is a gift of reflection that mirrors the gift of prophecy; her vocal reflexivity, in all its aberration and inversion, is sure to elucidate those fragments most prevalent to the speaker’s speech. As Poussin suggests in his depiction of the mountain nymph, the role of Echo cannot be regarded as anything less in Ovid’s myth of *Narcissus and Echo*.

Notes

[1] David Keys, “The Ugly End of Narcissus,” *BBC History Magazine* 5.5 (2004): 9.
[2] Jan Bremmer, ed., *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London: Routledge, 1988), 114.
[3] Troy Thomas, “‘Un fior vano e fragile’: The Symbolism of Poussin’s *Realm of Flora*,” *The Art Bulletin* 68.2 (1986): 225-36.
[4] Ibid., 235.
[5] Dora Panovsky, “Narcissus and Echo: Notes on Poussin’s Birth of Bacchus in the Fogg Museum of Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 31.2 (1949): 115-6.
[6] Ibid.,116.
[7] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Echo,” *New Literary History* 24.1 (1993): 23.
[8] Louise Vinge, *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early 19th Century* (Lund: Gleerups, 1967), 299.
[9] Floyd G. Ballentine, “Some Phases of the Cult of the Nymphs,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 15 (1904): 77-119.
[10] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1971), 149.
[11] Claire Nouvet, “An Impossible Response: The Disaster of Narcissus,” *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991): 126.

[12] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 159.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Nouvet, "An Impossible Response," 127.
[15] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 153.
[16] Ibid., 159.
[17] Ibid., 153.
[18] Ibid., 151.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 153.
[21] Ibid., 157.
[22] *Fugias* is most certainly the present subjunctive of the verb *fugere*, which means to flee, whereas Miller's choice of shun as the English counterpart most certainly evokes the Latin verb *fugitãre*, which means to flee eagerly and in haste. Although a minor difference, it is worthy of a philological aside nonetheless.
[23] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 157.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 312.
[26] Ibid., 329.
[27] Ibid., ix.
[28] Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983), 156.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Lacan, *Écrits*, 312.
[31] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 157.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 55.
[34] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 157.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 149.