A Crisis of Interpretation:
Contradiction, Ambiguity, and the Reader of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*

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Abstract

This dissertation has two goals: to demonstrate how Lucan weaves ambiguity and contradiction into his *Bellum Civile* and to explore the effect these devices may have on his reader. I argue that their chief purpose is to provoke a state of anxiety and frustration about the events and protagonists of the civil war. Whereas other epics offer a coherent picture of the *cosmos* and man's place within it, the *Bellum Civile* thus undermines our expectations of the genre. My introduction shows that criticism of the *Bellum Civile* has been marked by unresolved debate, discusses a recent theory of lesser emotions as a means of explaining Lucan's dominant poetic tone, and surveys how Lucan's diction and syntax undermine the reader's ability to make sense of the poem at a verbal level. In the first chapter, I argue that Lucan's introduction consists of five movements that are self-contained and internally coherent, but that present contradictory approaches to the poem's theme of civil war. This prevents the audience from determining what sort of poem the *Bellum Civile* will be and anticipates the narrator's "fractured voice." My second chapter explores the operation of Lucan's universe. I posit that his physical world is more stable than his narrator would have us believe, that his metaphysical world is highly ambiguous, and that certain humans hold great power within this confusing *cosmos*. The third and fourth chapters use Cato to show how contradictions between narrative events and editorial judgments of them frustrate our ability to interpret Lucan's characters. My conclusion views Julius Caesar as a figure offering some hope of permanence; ultimately, however, contradictions and ambiguities in Lucan's portrait of him ensure that we are left in a state of frustration and anxiety when the *Bellum Civile* breaks off with a final glimpse of Caesar escaping from danger one last time.

genitoribus meis,
sine quibus studium antiquitatis
numquam suscepissem.

Acknowledgements

The ideas underlying this dissertation originated in a seminar on Lucan's *Bellum Civile* that was taught by Greg Hays in the spring of 2010. Although I entered that course with an interest in Lucan, our readings and discussions showed me that his poem is far more complex than I had previously imagined. The space afforded by a term paper proved insufficient to make sense of Lucan's mad and chaotic world, and I soon found myself devising a dissertation proposal that would allow me to confront it head-on. Writing began in earnest in May of 2012, and two years later I am happy to have brought this study of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* to an end. Although there were many times I worried my interpretations would fail to hold together, and many times I doubted my own ability to see this project through to the end, the help and support of friends, family, and colleagues allowed me to persevere. At the risk of enlarging what is already a lengthy volume, I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed most to the success of this project.

Over the past seven years, my studies have been supported by departmental and university grants. A Gildersleeve Fellowship from the faculty of the Department of Classics funded my first six years in Charlottesville and allowed me to focus exclusively on professional development. From 2008 to 2013, I was awarded annual teaching fellowships that gave me valuable classroom experience. I am especially grateful for the advice and feedback I received from the faculty mentors who oversaw me: Jane Crawford, Tony Woodman, John Dillery, Greg Hays, Sara Myers, and John Miller. The Department of Classics also supported my summer work with three Lazenby grants in 2008, 2011, and 2012, and with teaching fellowships in July of 2009 and August of 2010.

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I cannot begin to express my gratitude to the members of the Department of Classics at the University of Virginia, whose faculty, students, and staff have provided me with years of support and guidance. This dissertation is truly the culmination of my time in Charlottesville, and it has undoubtedly been influenced and improved by everybody I met there. Any of its strengths are a testament to the rigors of Virginia's program and the unparalleled caliber of its faculty; its weaknesses should be judged the result of my own failings.

Special thanks must be given to the members of my dissertation committee. I can never repay the debts I owe them, but hope my conscious attempts to imitate them in my own encounters with students and colleagues will serve both as a lasting testament to the respect I have for them and as a small recompense for what they have given me. To my advisor Greg Hays: Your timely advice has helped me move past countless roadblocks as my work has progressed from seminar paper to proposal to completed project. Your unparalleled knowledge of art and literature, both ancient and modern, has always stood as an awesome and intimidating model. Under your guidance, I have developed from an over-excitable student into a disciplined scholar. To Elizabeth Meyer: Thank you for

allowing me to serve as a grader in your course on the Fall of the Roman Republic. Without this experience, my knowledge of the historical period about which Lucan wrote would be markedly poorer, and my interpretations of his narrative would have suffered greatly. Your comments on my writing were always perceptive, and more than once clued me in to a subtle detail whose great significance I had overlooked. To John Miller: Your unparalleled knowledge of Latin poetry and sensitivity to the connections that can be drawn between disparate sources have been an inspiration throughout this project. Over the past seven years I have been privileged to witness your dedication to scholarship, your commitment to the department, and your generosity with you time. More than anybody else, you have shown me what it means to be a professional and a good colleague. To Tony Woodman: The repeated insistence that you know "absolutely nothing" about Lucan never prevented your near-instantaneous feedback from being immensely helpful. You have shrewdly identified weaknesses in my argument that required further attention and have always been able to direct me to scholarship that is eminently useful. I am assuredly a better editor of my own work today because of your fastidiousness in correcting even my smallest mistakes.

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My fascination with Lucan began at Georgetown University, where Charlie McNelis first introduced me to the *Bellum Civile.* Were it not for that experience, and for the formative impact Charlie had on my development as a young scholar, this dissertation would be a very different—if not wholly inferior—piece of literary criticism.

I was able to present early findings from my research on three occasions: at a Tuesday Luncheon at the University of Virginia in the fall of 2011; at the Ohio State University's graduate student conference "Chosen Chains" in the spring of 2012; and at the 2013 annual meeting of the American Philological Association in Seattle, WA. The feedback I received from the participants and audiences on each of these occasions improved my arguments in countless ways and encouraged me to forge ahead at times when the project's remaining hurdles seemed insurmountable.

Over the years, my uncle Darryl Caterine has been an immense source of guidance in matters personal and professional. Our nicotine-fueled conversations are always a source of great joy, and it was often amidst those discussions that I came to think about the wider implications of this research and its possible connections to other academic disciplines.

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Christopher L. Caterine
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Introduction:
Quot lectores, tot Lucani

The most basic goal of this dissertation is to demonstrate the specific ways in which Lucan weaves ambiguity and contradiction into his *Bellum Civile*. It will be my contention that this can be observed at virtually every level of the text: in the poet's language, his outlook, the operation of his poetic universe, and his treatment of individual characters. Indeed, I shall argue that these features are so pervasive that they are best understood as an intentional poetic device. My second goal is to explore the likely effect of ambiguity and contradiction on Lucan's reader. I argue that their chief purpose is to guide us into a state of anxiety and frustration about the events and protagonists of the civil war. In this way, Lucan prevents us from being certain about the causes and meaning of a conflict that set Rome's history and government on a radically new course. Whereas other epic poems presume to offer a coherent picture of the *cosmos* and man's place within it, the *Bellum Civile* systematically undermines this generic expectation.

A History of Dissent

The questions driving my investigation of the *Bellum Civile* derive from a fascination with the poem's tendency to provoke polarizing debate about its aims, outlook, and meaning. It will thus be helpful to begin with a survey of this phenomenon in order to understand the concerns that have divided scholars over the course of two millennia.[1]

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[1] Given Lucan's great popularity through the ages, it would be impossible to consider every scholar and author who has been interested in the *Bellum Civile*. What follows is therefore selective, and by necessity focuses on those periods with which I am most familiar (antiquity and criticism since the 19th c.) or for which I have been able to find accessible summaries of debate and/or scholarship (late antiquity, the middle ages, and early modern England). To my knowledge, the most diverse treatment of Lucan's

Lucan's poetry has been a source of debate from the moment it hit the market.[2] Martial thought that Lucan was both a worthy successor to Homer and Vergil (Mart. *Ep.* 7.21-3) and a popular author of dubious quality (Mart. *Ep.* 14.194).[3] Statius echoes the former sentiment (Stat. *Silv.* 2.7),[4] while Quintilian takes a more balanced position: "Lucan is fiery, vehement, unrivaled for his *sententiae*, and—if I may say what I think—to be imitated more by the orators than by the poets" (*Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus*, Quin. *Inst.* 10.90). Although the precise meaning of this quip has provoked much discussion, the general sense seems to be that Lucan may not be a Vergil or an Ovid, but that he still has his own virtues, albeit virtues better suited to the schools than to proper poetry.[5] If we are entitled to take these views at face value, we may conclude that opinions about Lucan's work were already divergent by the end of the first century AD, and thus that something about the poet's style has always invited disagreement.[6]

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reception is Walde (2009a), which covers late antiquity through the 19th c. Readers interested in Lucan's *Nachleben* would do well to begin with this volume, which includes an extensive bibliography of over 850 items.

[2] For a summary of the testimony, see Rostagni (1944) 149, on Suet. *Poet. Luc.* 35.

[3] Thus Ahl (1976) 74-5, noting that the verses Martial writes in Lucan's voice are scarcely more than a piling up of spondees, with dactyls only occurring where they are metically required: *Sūnt quīdām quī mē dīcūnt nōn ēssĕ pŏētam* | *sēd quī mē vēndīt bȳblĭŏpōlă pŭtat* (Mart. *Ep.* 14.194). It remains possible that Martial is merely alluding to the question of whether Lucan is a poet or a rhetorician/historian, but Ahl's interpretation is to my mind convincing.

[4] The encomia heaped on Lucan by Martial and Statius may be explained by the fact that Lucan's widow Polla Argentaria requested or commissioned these poems as part of her celebration of what would have been Lucan's fiftieth birthday.

[5] On Quintilian's quip, see most recently Ahl (2010).

[6] It cannot be known whether this criticism applied equally to Lucan's lesser poetic works; Stat. *Silv.* 2.7 includes a summary of Lucan's poetic *œuvre*, on which, see Newlands (2011).

More certain criticism of Lucan's epic may actually come from within his lifetime. Amid the pages of the *Satyricon*, Petronius has Eumolpus criticize certain unnamed authors for gross poetic failures. Chief among these are excessive use of *sententiae*, the belief that poetry is the mere versification of events, and the refusal to employ the divine apparatus in a narrative epic (Petr. *Sat.* 118); after delivering this impromptu lecture, he proceeds to offer an account of the Julio-Pompeian conflict that meets the stylistic criteria just established (Petr. *Sat.* 119-24).[7] In light of Quintilian's description of Lucan as a poet "unrivaled for his *sententiae*" and the fact that the *Bellum Civile* dispenses with the divine apparatus, many have interpreted this passage as invective against Lucan's narrative style. Although to my mind it remains possible that this criticism is intended ironically (Eumolpus may be a protagonist we are meant to laugh *at* rather than *with*), it seems clear that aspects of Lucan's epic venture were recognized as—and perhaps even designed to be—highly controversial.

Our evidence for late antique and medieval discussions of Lucan likewise reveals that basic aspects of the *Bellum Civile* were in dispute. Both Servius and the *Commenta Bernensia*, for example, accuse Lucan of being more historian than poet (*Comm. Bern.* at 1.1; Serv. *A.* 1.382).[8] This evaluation may reflect the glorification of Vergil that was typical of late antiquity,[9] but Lucan's status as a poet continued to be a concern

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[7] The events related are also found in the opening books of the *Bellum Civile*, perhaps supporting the claim that Nero's ban on recitations of Lucan's poetry was instituted after the release of Books 1-3. For an extended discussion of Lucan and Nero's ban, see Ahl (1976) 333-53; the most recent treatment of Lucan's "controversial life" is Fantham (2011).

[8] On the reception of Lucan in the 4th-5th cc. AD, see Vinchesi (1979).

[9] Esposito (2011) argues that the *Commenta Bernensia* likely goes back to the 5th or 6th c. AD.

throughout the medieval period.[10] This issue notwithstanding, later readers interpreted the *Bellum Civile* from a variety of angles ranging from the political to the religious to the scientific. Scholarship on these topics has been helpfully summarized by Edoardo D'Angelo,[11] and need not be rehearsed in detail here. I will only note that over the (admittedly diverse) millennium that constitutes late antiquity and the middle ages, there is further evidence for dispute about the fundamental outlook of the *Bellum Civile*: some—such as Boethius, Conrad of Hirsau, and John of Salisbury—considered it a text urging pacifism and retreat from worldly affairs, while others—such as Ennodius—used Lucan to glorify war as an acceptable means of achieving lasting peace.[12]

A recent flurry of work on the reception of Lucan in early modern England allows us to judge debates about the *Bellum Civile* during this period with a high degree of accuracy.[13] Most useful to our present purposes is Edward Paleit's *War, Liberty, and Caesar*. This monograph argues that AD 1580-1650 was a veritable "Age of Lucan," during which engagement with the *Bellum Civile* influenced some of the most pressing intellectual and political questions then facing the English people.[14] Paleit begins by demonstrating how Lucan's fortunes as a poet underwent frequent reversals in artistic and scholarly circles: he was for the most part ignored by Erasmus, harshly criticized by

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[10] D'Angelo (2011) 472, citing Von Moos (2005), and 474.
[11] D'Angelo (2011). See also the contributions by Walter, Nosarti, Murgatroyd, Ambühl, Bobeth, and Gropper in Walde (2009a). For Dante's use of Lucan in the *Commedia*, see most recently Marchesi (2011). Vinchesi (1979) 12 notes that Lucan's *sententiae* could even be invoked patriotically once excerpted from their original context of civil war.
[12] D'Angelo (2011); for work on Boethius and Conrad of Hirsau, see 475; on John of Salisbury, see 473, 476-7; on Ennodius, see 468.
[13] E.g. Cheney (2009); Sannicandro (2009); Hardie (2011).
[14] Paleit (2013). This work is generally quite good; for caution regarding specific interpretations, however, see Caterine (2014).

Scaliger, and yet emulated by Samuel Daniel and Thomas May.[15] Moreover, Paleit shows that monarchists and republicans alike invoked the *Bellum Civile* to defend their divergent views.[16] His treatment of the latter phenomenon is particularly relevant to my own work, for it reveals the extent to which interpretations of Lucan have often been shaped by—or perhaps themselves shaped—the political leanings of his readers. Indeed, he even shows that learned critics have endorsed "Caesarist" interpretations of the poem, and thus that such readings (despite their current unpopularity) are viable approaches to the text that should not necessarily be dismissed.[17]

It is similarly possible to reconstruct debates about the *Bellum Civile* in the nineteenth century. By this point the classical canon had become well established, and the preeminence of Vergil led to a general disparaging of Lucan's surviving poem.[18] This view is best reflected in the evaluation of Heitland (1887):

> Such is the incomplete epic of Lucan, rich in clever declamation, which now and then rises into tones so lofty that we forget how unreal are the motives, how artificial the sentiment. Dealing with events hardly more than a century behind, he ventures into the domain of history without being historical, and treats political questions under the influences of an age and a society in which practical politics had ceased to exist. Its flow is broken and its action hindered by tasteless and wearisome digressions. To judge it fairly is difficult indeed, for besides its defects in detail the mere fact of its incompleteness is a serious obstacle (§26, xxxiv).

What seems to hide behind this type of criticism is frustration with the ways in which Lucan failed to meet certain critics' expectations for epic poetry. Heitland expects a narrative that runs smoothly ("its flow is broken"); a unified theme that is well-defined

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[15] Paleit (2013) 31-90. The criticism of Scaliger (1579) is on factual grounds.
[16] Paleit (2013) 93-312.
[17] Walde (2009b) likewise argues that the Swiss poet C. F. Meyer interprets Lucan's Caesar favorably.
[18] See Quint (1993) 133-7 for a brief discussion of Lucan's anti-Vergilian aesthetic.

and to which the poet holds fast ("its action is hindered by… digressions"); a subject that is treated with *authenticity* ("we forget… how artificial the sentiment"); and indeed a text that enjoyed the luck of being created in an age that allowed such authenticity in the first place ("under the influences of an age… in which practical politics had ceased to exist"). To put it bluntly, Heitland and the critics who accepted his judgment thought that Lucan was born in a decadent time that was simply incapable of greatness. Although many scholars will have considered Lucan a bad poet, however, they did not refrain from writing about his epic; rather, they set about identifying the formal and structural failures that led them to this conclusion.[19] This type of research also led to a revival of concerns about Lucan's status as an historian, which was now addressed through *Quellen-forschung,* a mode of analysis first emerging at that time.[20]

These approaches did not allay critical anxieties about the *Bellum Civile* as a work of literature, but instead led to a number of studies that sought to explain how the poem might be understood to fit within the reader's expectations of the epic genre. The most prevalent concern was that of unity. Obsession with this feature derived from Aristotle's dictates about epic in the *Poetics*, and can already be seen in the criticism of Heitland discussed above. The chief obstacle to an appreciation of Lucan's unity, however, is the incompleteness of his work. Consequently, a large number of scholars set themselves to

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[19] Again, Heitland (1887) offers the best example. In the course of his introduction to Haskins' commentary on the *Bellum Civile*, he identifies both "touches of true poetry" (§42) and "four characteristic defects" (§46). The rise of formalist treatments of Lucan's poetry is perhaps best seen in the German dissertations that emerge during this period, e.g. Hundt (1886) on similes in Lucan; Millard (1891) on Lucan's *sententiae* about the gods and fate. For additional examples, see the monumental bibliographies of Lucan that have been compiled by Christine Walde and Paolo Esposito: http://www.klassphil.uni-mainz.de/181.php.

[20] E.g. G. Baier (1874); Giani (1888); Hosius (1893); Frère (1910). This strain of scholarship culminates in Pichon's *Les sources de Lucain* (1912).

finding evidence for where Lucan originally wished to end his poem.[21] The proposed solutions have ranged from claims that the poem is complete as we have it, ending in Alexandria (winter 48/7 BC), to assertions that Lucan would have continued all the way to Actium (31 BC). These positions have been helpfully summarized by Jamie Masters, who also demonstrates that arguments of this sort necessarily depend on assumptions either about events that are anticipated in the extant narrative or about the structure of the poem, which likewise must be inferred from what we have.[22] Crucially, Masters shows that all of these arguments are circular: those who believe Lucan favors Cato will have the poem end at Utica (46 BC), while those who favor Caesar suppose it would continue to the Ides of March (44 BC) or Actium (31 BC). This observation brings us to the other side of the unity question—namely, who or what might constitute the hero of the *Bellum Civile*. This topic was debated with equal fervor, and likewise produced a wide array of possibilities: Caesar, Cato, Pompey, the Senate, Freedom, even the Roman people.[23] The problem, of course, is that this question risks a type of circular logic identical to what Masters criticizes in arguments about the poem's ending, and indeed that often relies on those circular arguments in order to justify a given claim. What interests me in this complex of concerns, however, is not any specific solution that has been proposed, but rather the inconclusiveness of the debate: discussion of these topics only ended because

[21] This concern is anticipated by Thomas May's *Supplementum Lucani* and "Continuation" of Lucan; on these see Paleit (2013) *passim*, but esp. 255-312.
[22] Masters (1992) 234-47. More recently see Stover (2008), who proposes that Lucan would have ended with Cato's suicide at Utica.
[23] For a fuller summary of the scholarship on this topic, see pp. 175-6.

scholars exhausted all the possibilities, not because a particular interpretation gained wide acceptance.[24]

In the post-war period, the attention Lucan received was largely derogatory.[25] This began to change with Mark Morford's *The Poet Lucan* (1967), which set out to analyze the *Bellum Civile* according to the poetic standards of the Neronian age; the express goal of this study was to free Lucan from the sort of judgmental criticism that had defined studies of him in earlier periods. A Fondation Hardt volume on Lucan (1970) reveals that this was a transitional period: although its essays tend to approach Lucan according to traditional, formalist criteria, a few participants broke out of these confines by viewing Lucan as an interesting and forceful poet in his own right.[26] A watershed moment was the publication of Frederick Ahl's *Lucan: An Introduction* (1976), which serves as complete study of the poem that seeks to uncover "the meaning of the *Pharsalia* and, so far as can be determined, Lucan's purpose in writing the way he did" (7). With this, scholarly focus shifted from the strict formalist concerns seen thus far to wider-reaching investigations into the poet's politics, ethics, and philosophy.[27] Perhaps the best indication of this change in focus is the tendency of subsequent critics to use the terms

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[24] Thus Marti (1945) 353-4: "The suggestion that Lucan may not | have intended to build his poem around a central hero is undoubtedly correct since, if this had been his intention, his readers would have been aware of it and there would not be such a multiplicity of eligible candidates to choose from."

[25] The best example of this is Graves (1956), a "translation" of Lucan into prose that attempts to correct his characteristic defects.

[26] Due (1970) is the best example. This essay on *Lucain et la philosophie* remains one of the best pieces of scholarship on this topic. It is a superb starting point for anybody desiring a reasoned and nuanced treatment of Lucan's poetic engagement with Stoicism. This may be compared with Le Bonniec (1970) on *Lucain et la religion*, which takes a more conservative—and decidedly less profitable—approach.

[27] Such work was anticipated by others, e.g. Marti (1945) and Pecchiura (1965), but after Ahl these became the dominant approaches.

"Lucan," "the poem," and "the narrator" as virtual synonyms. The dominance of Ahl's approach was secured just three years later, when Emmanuele Narducci laid formalist interpretations to rest once and for all: his *Provvidenza crudele* (1979) argues that Lucan envisions his epic as an inversion or undoing of Vergil's *Aeneid*. The greatest contribution of this work is showing that the *Bellum Civile* defies many of our expectations of the epic genre specifically because it aims to describe the world in an "unvergilian" way. Comparisons of Lucan to a Vergilian ideal, in other words, completely miss the point of the Neronian poet's radical style.

At the start of the 1980s, then, the terms in which Lucan was read had changed quite drastically. Yet if it was thought that this new critical focus might prevent the sort of stalemate that had defined earlier criticism, this hope was quickly dashed—indeed, over the last thirty-five years, critics of the *Bellum Civile* have become more polarized than ever before. One faction, chiefly consisting of continental scholars, has maintained that Lucan is a Republican and Stoic poet, whose chief objective is to praise Cato the Younger as the last true opponent to Caesarian *regnum*.[28] This interpretation is based on three factors: (a) the conviction that Lucan, as the nephew of Seneca the Younger and student of L. Annaeus Cornutus, must have been a devout Stoic; (b) Lucan's involvement in the Pisonian Conspiracy; and (c) the narrator's consistent praise of Cato and criticism of Caesar throughout the poem. Adherents of this view tend to think of themselves as supporting a more "traditional" reading of the poem because their arguments usually rely on philological methods that are associated with a more conservative strain of scholarship. By way of contrast, the other faction, which mostly comprises Anglophone

[28] The most prominent holders of this view have been Narducci (2002) and Wick (2004).

scholars, has tended to employ post-structuralist theories in order to argue that the tone of the *Bellum Civile*—despite its narrator's emotional praise of Cato—is ultimately pessimistic or even nihilistic.[29] These scholars suggest that Lucan is not presenting any fixed ideological view, but rather questioning the existence of the gods and the validity of absolutism.[30] Neither of these factions has managed to win a large majority, and attempts to find middle ground between them have likewise garnered little acceptance.[31] We have thus reached a point where critics on both ends of the spectrum have dug in their heels, and the odds of a finding workable solution seem increasingly slim.[32]

The picture I have just painted may seem an unpropitious way to begin a dissertation. What it seems to reveal, however, is that scholarship on Lucan is consistently marked by unresolved debate. Indeed, whenever we can see contemporaries discussing the *Bellum Civile*, we find fundamental disagreements about the nature, outlook, and meaning of the epic. What I find most interesting about this tendency is that debates concerning Lucan never end in consensus; rather, they dry up once they reach a point of exhaustion, and scholars move on to other issues, leaving in their wake a trail of uncertainty and confusion.[33]

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[29] This approach was pioneered by Henderson (1987) and Johnson (1987). Their most important followers have been Feeney (1991); Masters (1992); Hershkowitz (1998); Sklenář (2003); Fratantuono (2012).

[30] Roller (1996) and (2001) 17-63 interpret the poem as a contest in which Caesar and Pompey consistently demonstrate opposing ethical conceptions of civil war.

[31] Bartsch (1997) argues that Lucan's world is nihilistic, but that the reader is encouraged to make meaning within it. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) wants the narrator to be a moral guide within a poetic world that often appears to be meaningless.

[32] Narducci (1999) is virtually a declaration of war against the school of Johnson and Henderson.

[33] There is some indication that the most recent schism has reached this point. Three recent monographs on Lucan now aim at aesthetic analysis of his text: Radicke (2004);

Literature and the Lesser Emotions

This project is driven by a simple concern: what is it about Lucan's text that allows intelligent readers to come to opposed and mutually exclusive evaluations of its content and meaning? As was shown above, this is something that has marked Lucan's reception from its very beginnings, and indeed that has occurred so consistently that it seems to defy—even accepting the proverbial triviality and factiousness of academics—both reason and probability. Clearly there is something about Lucan's poem that invites or even encourages this type of response.

To my mind, the best starting point for determining what this is lies in the old adage that Lucan was a rhetorical poet who lived in a rhetorical age. Although this view has fallen out of favor in recent years, largely in order to cast off the baggage that came with the term "rhetorical" as used by earlier critics,[34] it cannot be doubted that Lucan lived during a period in which writers were highly trained in the art of rhetoric. The chief preoccupation of this study was striving for *effect*: the speaker aimed to achieve close, if not total, control of his audience's response.[35] Our biographies of Lucan, for all their

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Dinter (2012); Day (2013). As will be clear from what follows, this project likewise seeks an alternative path forward on aesthetic grounds.

[34] This was the derogatory term chosen by formalist critics to describe the decadent literature of the "Silver Age."

[35] Cicero's words are illustrative in this regard: "For who does not know that an orator's greatest power exists in stirring up the minds of men to anger or hatred or sadness, or in calling them back from these very same emotions to gentleness and pity? For this reason, unless he is the sort who has perceived deeply the natures of men and all the power of humanity and the ways in which minds are either stirred up or turned back, he will not be able to bring about what he wishes through speaking" (*quis enim nescit maximam vim existere oratoris in hominum mentibus vel ad iram aut ad odium aut ad dolorem incitandis, vel ab hisce eisdem permotionibus ad lenitatem misericordiamque revocandis? Quare nisi qui naturas hominum vimque omnem humanitatis causasque eas quibus mentes aut incitantur aut reflectuntur penitus perspexerit, dicendo quod volet perficere non poterit*, Cic. *de Orat*. 1.53).

potential faults, assure us that he was a master in this field, and the sententious nature of the poem, together with Quintilian's judgment, serve as crucial confirmation of this evidence. We may consequently presume that Lucan, if nothing else, was eminently aware of how his text could—and indeed ideally how it *should*—affect its audience. This conclusion will also allow us to infer that Lucan will have been less interested in using his poetry as a platform to express his own views (whether political, philosophical, ethical, or otherwise) than in leading his audience to a particular emotional state. This assertion is to my mind neither radical nor implausible, yet it suggests that the most successful readings of the text are likely to be based on aesthetics and reader response, rather than inquiries into the poet's personal beliefs.[36]

My own approach, then, will be to offer a close reading of Lucan's poem that strives to be sensitive to the potential impact that the narrative and its manner of presentation might have upon the reader. What I have found, and what each of my chapters will demonstrate, is that Lucan weaves contradiction and ambiguity into his language, outlook, universe, and characters. For the purposes of this discussion, I shall take "contradiction" to mean a discrepancy between the events that the *Bellum Civile* relates and the way in which Lucan's narrator characterizes them; ambiguity, on the other hand, will refer to instances in which multiple interpretations of a single event are possible, whether through imprecision of vocabulary or because the poet has presented us with a number of mutually exclusive options that are not, or cannot be, reduced. It will be my contention that these literary devices are so common that they should be deemed a

[36] I.e. the type of analysis that has divided critics since Ahl (1976).

conscious and intentional poetic device.[37] This simple fact, however, poses a curious problem: why would Lucan compose a poem that intentionally undermines itself at every turn? What effects, in other words, are his ambiguities and contradictions meant to have on his reader?

Help in answering this question may come from some recent theoretical work on the intersection of art and emotion by Sianne Ngai.[38] Her research has structured much of my thinking on Lucan, but its highly abstract presentation may limit its appeal to those not fluent in the language of critical theory. Although I have consequently chosen not to make constant reference to Ngai's work in discussing individual passages of the *Bellum Civile*, I would like to pause for a few moments to explain Ngai's conception of minor emotions. This will allow me to clarify what I have found useful about this theory and to anticipate a few places in which I employ a definition of emotion that may seem peculiar to my readers.

Throughout her first monograph, Ngai explores a class of minor emotions—states such as envy, irritation, anxiety, and paranoia—that she terms *Ugly Feelings.* Although these feelings are familiar to almost everyone, they have received surprisingly little attention from artistic critics. Ngai defines these emotions as "explicitly *a*moral and *non*cathartic, offering no satisfactions of virtue, however oblique, nor any therapeutic or purifying release." Indeed, rather than being strong states that individuals might describe as carrying them away, lesser emotions tend to be expressed as the *absence* of feeling. Although relatively few artistic works tend to explore these states, Ngai notes that the

[37] O'Hara (2007) shows that inconsistency is common in Roman epic. On my reading, however, Lucan elevates a minor feature of his predecessors into a poetic principle.
[38] Ngai (2005).

ones that do cannot be structured around moments of climax because such an outpouring or release of emotion is antithetical to their nature. Rather, ugly feelings tend to be "defined by a flatness or ongoingness entirely opposed to the 'suddenness' on which Aristotle's aesthetics of fear depends"; consequently, literature in which such emotions feature must insinuate its tone in a way that is "perceived rather than felt," such that "[its] very *nonfeltness* is perceived." If Ngai's explanation seems somewhat vague, an analogy may be able to help. The type of emotion that she envisions operates in a manner that seems to me akin to a feedback loop—a noise or sensation that starts out almost imperceptibly, but that slowly builds on itself until it becomes unbearable. Although nobody can doubt that a feedback loop grows more intense with time, it is impossible to say at precisely which points it really gets stronger, and equally impossible to predict when any one individual will finally crack under its force. Ugly feelings are likewise amplified slowly, with the result that their sufferer may not realize when they first begin or when they finally become overwhelming.

Both the function and operation of such emotions map well onto what one finds in the *Bellum Civile.* One of Lucan's most common literary devices that I discuss in the course of this project is the development of contradictions between how the narrator evaluates a certain event or character and how it appears when judged independently of that editorial voice. In effect, the *Bellum Civile* encourages us to accept a view of its content that fails to accord with what we actually see. This sort of narrative dissonance naturally leads readers into a state of frustration: they are repeatedly urged to engage with the events depicted, but are powerless to determine which of the poem's competing cues ought to be privileged. Ambiguity functions in a similar way. At various points

throughout his poem, Lucan suggests that multiple interpretations of the same figure or phenomenon might be possible, but fails to privilege any one of them. His reader is thus placed in a state of ἀπορία, which in turn produces feelings of anxiety: when faced with an array of worldviews or meanings that do not easily coincide, we experience unease at not knowing how we should respond to or interpret the narrative before us.[39] Although no reader can be expected to notice every instance of contradiction or ambiguity that Lucan encodes within the *Bellum Civile*, the repetition and accumulation of these devices ensures that we feel their effect. Minor causes for interpretive concern, working virtually at the subliminal level, thus build imperceptibly as we proceed through the poem. Eventually—though the precise point will differ for each reader—frustration and anxiety become a dominant poetic tone that it is impossible to ignore.[40]

Another parallel between Ngai's minor emotions and what we find in the *Bellum Civile* concerns the tendency of literature driven by ugly feelings to repel the reader at a basic level.[41] Thus, in describing the tone of Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man*, Ngai writes:

> In many ways lacking a true protagonist, while buzzing with a multitude of barely differentiated "operators" and "operatees" who rotate in and out of the actantial positions that define what often seems like the same transaction, *The Confidence-Man* turns Bartleby into a narratological principle, diffusing the social minorness of the administered world's Sub-Sub [an extremely minor figure in a large,

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[39] These phenomena are related, and in some cases overlap. For the most complex instance of ambuigity that proves contradictory on close reading, see pp. 27-90.

[40] Hömke (2006), who argues that theories exploring the "fantastic" can be useful in evaluating the *Bellum Civile*, and identifies anxiety and depression as two of the emotions that Lucan is able to explore to a greater degree than his predecessors.

[41] One may compare Pritchett (1997), who writes that Saltykov-Shchedrin's "*The Golovlyov Family* has been described as the gloomiest of the Russian novels. Certainly the characters are all wretched or unpleasant, and the reader of novels who professes that strange but common English attitude to literature—'Would I like to meet these people'—must leave the book alone." My thanks to Greg Hays for directing me to this parallel.

> institutional structure] into what Alex Woloch would call the "character system" of the novel itself (50).

What Ngai wishes to suggest is this: the disjointed structure of the novel and its focus on minor characters and events prevents the reader from becoming engaged with or attached to the narrative in any significant way. Those familiar with Lucan know well that his epic has been criticized for being "episodic," and that his refusal to focus on a single protagonist has made the determination of the poem's hero one of the fiercely fought critical debates that I outlined above. If I may backtrack to my summary of scholarship for just a moment and interpret it in light of Ngai's theory, we may wish to view the drive to identify the hero of the *Bellum Civile* as a craving for narrative structure or catharsis that has been formed through familiarity with texts structured around dominant emotions. Indeed, Vergil's *Aeneid*—which explores feelings like loss, love, duty, and revenge—is just such a poem, and as we have seen serves as the chief ancient model against which Lucan has been compared.[42] When viewed from the other side, we might likewise say that the *failure* of scholars to reach any consensus about the hero of the *Bellum Civile* may indicate that its dominant tone is indeed one or more of Ngai's lesser emotions.

The final connection I wish to draw between *Ugly Feelings* and Lucan is to my mind one of the most interesting. Ngai observes that works of literature and film that explore the minor emotions tend to be denied canonical status. Indeed, she suggests that "something about the cultural canon itself seems to prefer higher passions and emotions—as if minor or ugly feelings were not only incapable of producing 'major' works, but somehow disabled the works they do drive from acquiring canonical

[42] Thus we find studies such as Farron (1993) on "Vergil's *Aeneid*: A Poem of Grief and Love;" Galinsky (1988) on "The Anger of Aeneas."

distinction."[43] Although at many points during the Middle Ages Lucan was deemed a good poet, this has decidedly not been the case during periods in which Vergil stands at the head of an established literary canon.[44] The intriguing possibility to be inferred from this is that critical interest in the dominant emotions, which is itself reinforced by the process of canonization, has been responsible for the *Bellum Civile* falling out of favor in certain historical periods. Ngai's theory thus effectively confirms the opinion of David Quint, that the *Bellum Civile*—together with *La Araucana* of Alonso de Ercilla and *Les Tragiques* of Agrippa d'Aubigné—fails to achieve canonical status because it is an ode to the vanquished: frustration at historical reality is inherent in this type of poetic project.[45] Indeed, lest the confluence of these events be deemed merely coincidental, we may further observe that the same phenomenon can help to account for many of the critical disputes that were outlined earlier: when there is an expectation that good Roman epic will look like the *Aeneid* (i.e. will culminate in a moment of catharsis: *condit*, Verg. *A.* 12.950; answering the phrase *dum conderet urbem*, 1.5), there are only two possible responses to poems that do not conform to that model: desperately try to explain how they do, or deny that they are poetry at all.

What I hope this discussion has shown is that there are good reasons to think that Lucan wished to have an emotional effect on his reader, and further that the emotions he wished to provoke might well be "ugly feelings" like frustration or anxiety. It will of

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[43] Ngai (2005) 11.
[44] On the former point, one need only consider Dante's decision to group Lucan with Homer, Horace, and Ovid (Dante *Inf*. 1.4.88-90). For criticism of Lucan during "canonical" periods, see my discussion on pp. 5-9.
[45] Quint (1993) 133-4, which further explains the non-canonical status of the *Bellum Civile* by reference to its episodicity, disorder, and excess—against a Vergilian or Homeric ideal of linear teleology.

course be my task throughout this dissertation to provide solid textual evidence that Lucan has done this, but I have felt it is important to establish this possibility in theoretical terms before entering into any specific arguments. At best Ngai's framework will lend credence to the interpretation I set forth; at worst my case will have to stand on the merits of my textual readings, which I am nevertheless confident can prove the point on their own.

The Word at War

Ambiguity at the linguistic and syntactical levels represents the most basic way in which Lucan creates anxiety in his reader. This assertion is neither controversial nor unprecedented: it has been discussed at length by John Henderson, Shadi Bartsch, and Martin Dinter, and has managed to escape criticism from those who normally object to the approaches of these scholars.[46] I would consequently like to offer a brief summary of their arguments here. On one level, this will serve as an introduction to the sort of readings I offer elsewhere; on another, however, it should be thought to form as a crucial part of my own thesis: Lucan's linguistic ambiguity reveals how even the most basic building block of the *Bellum Civile*—the words of which it is comprised—help to create a sense of interpretive uncertainty, and thus contribute to the reader's anxiety.

John Henderson has forcefully suggested that Lucan's poem is not merely about the Roman world at war, but actually about the Roman *word* at war.[47] In particular, he interprets the *Bellum Civile* as a profoundly ideological text that tries to impress upon its reader the ways in which Julius Caesar took control of the Latin language and the Latin

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[46] Narducci (1999), a virulent attack on Henderson, Masters, and Bartsch, makes no mention of this aspect of their arguments.
[47] Henderson (1987).

people simultaneously. As he often does, Henderson adopts the style that he thinks his subject employs. Thus we are meant to understand it is not John Henderson, but rather Lucan himself who displays a dizzying and frenetic mode of writing, rich in word-play and allusion, all packed into a structure that evokes the reasoned and logical thinking of a philosophical treatise.[48] A brief example may suffice, wherein Henderson discusses Lucan's tendency towards negative enumeration, i.e. recording what did *not* happen in a given circumstance:[49]

> The obsessive practice of 'negative enumeration,' 'Negationsantithesen,' where the text mentions epic material only to repudiate its adequacy to re-present *Bellum Civile*, allows you to retain the measure of Lucan's deformation of the tradition and wrests the narration away under the sign of negation to a world that *beggars description*… at the same time, the poem turns its *Pointentechnik* upon the power to name which is proper to mimetic representation, to create a world of disruption: for example, *propter ipsius loci opportunitatem*, at 4.16-23:
>
> *at proxima rupes*
> *signa tenet Magni, nec Caesar colle minore*
> *castra levat: medius dirimit tentoria gurges.*
> *explicat hinc tellus campos effusa patentis*
> *vix oculo prendente modum, camposque coerces,*
> *Cinga rapax, vetitus fluctus et litora cursu*
> *Oceani pepulisse tuo. nam gurgite mixto*
> *qui praestat terris aufert tibi nomen Hiberus.*
>
> Pompeians vs Caesar: armies encamped on hills across the river (Sicoris) valley which opens out onto the extensive plain bounded by R. Cinga, a minor tributary of the Ebro.
>
> **or:**

[48] To be sure, this is true of much of Henderson's work, but what we find in his writing on Lucan is markedly more extreme, say, than Henderson (1998b), a discussion of Vergil's third *Eclogue*, or Henderson (2003), a discussion of Pliny's villa letters. On Henderson's idiosyncratic style, see Zetzel (1998).
[49] Henderson (1987) §3.5 (= p. 137).

… Well, the adjoining crag [hill] /
received the standards [camp] of Pompey the Great :: Caesar
alighted *his* camp/
on a *greater*—or anyway *not* lower—hill. In between, maelstrom split
tent from tent [camps. /
From here a flood of terrain unfolds wide-open plains for battle /
—the eye hardly grabs their limit—and the plains for battle you hold
together in thrall, /
you robber Cinga, forbidden to beat waves and shores /
of Ocean with your onset—you see, the maelstrom merges /
so…
the one who grants it to the lands,
steals yours from you,
the name in both cases,
the *one* being Hiberus,
(Iberian river,
… Iberian Spain).

Henderson has his detractors, but many have found his manner of argumentation suggestive, as he impresses on his reader the potential for linguistic violence that is contained in the *Bellum Civile.* Unfortunately, his inimitable style defies easy summary, and what I have presented thus far will have to suffice.[50] What Henderson reveals even in this short sample, however, is that Lucan is interested in the way language works. More than this, he revels in exploring how individuals—especially Caesar—use and abuse language, effectively re-shaping it to suit their ideological purposes. In this, he helps to show that Lucan's diction and syntax may often confuse, but that they confuse by design.

We are on more stable ground when we come to the work of Shadi Bartsch. In the course of her monograph *Ideology in Cold Blood* (1997), she introduces the idea that Lucan is interested in paradox, doubling, and despair, and suggests that he is especially

[50] If one accepts that Henderson has successfully imitated Lucan's manner of writing, then I would suggest the anxiety that experience provokes is indirect confirmation of the thesis I offer here.

eager to explore the problem of language competing with itself.[51] She is clearly indebted to Henderson in her concern with these issues, and the greatest payoff of this discussion comes near the end of the book, where she discusses "Lucan's quirk of occasionally writing the opposite of what he means: more exactly, […] his odd use of "and" where we would read "and not."[52] Here we have a scholar eager to explain a phenomenon related to the 'negative enumeration' discussed by Henderson, but willing to do so in a manner that is more readily intelligible to her audience.

Bartsch discusses a number of passages where Lucan offers a long list, during which a negative word placed early on must be carried over, as it were, and applied to subsequent, non-negative conjunctions. This practice does not find parallel in other Latin authors, and Bartsch rightly suggests that it is designed to stand out—even to command the reader's attention. One result of this verbal peculiarity is that Lucan puts an unusually high degree of stress upon his reader: although it is possible to infer what his text *ought* to mean, this intuition or deduction is not always what Lucan's words most naturally suggest. As Bartsch puts it:

> The poet forces *us* to make the necessary adjustments in meaning, thus (a) playing with the reversibility of meaning and the identification of opposite terms that characterizes his antipolitical epic, and (b) making us show our complicity in picking one meaning over the other even when the two are confused, and thus one side over the other even when the two sides are confused. Can we read without intervening? We cannot (128).

I would agree with this interpretation up to a point. Lucan does indeed present us with a confusing text and does indeed invite us to make sense of what is there. To my mind, however, he does not *require* us to do so. Rather, his use of negative enumeration and

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[51] Bartsch (1997) 59 even refers to this as "stasis," perhaps subconsciously echoing the concerns of Henderson discussed above.

[52] Bartsch (1997) 123-7; the quoted passage comes from p. 124.

carried negatives reveals the extent to which any meaning imposed on the text comes not from the words on the page but from the audience itself. The *Bellum Civile*, in other words, admits a multiplicity of meanings, *all of which are the result of individual interpretation.* Indeed, since different readers are destined to view the text in different ways—and since Lucan quite forcefully makes us aware of this fact—one can never have absolute faith in the interpretation one decides to privilege. Although this does not necessarily prevent us from concluding, as Bartsch does, that one should choose a given meaning and stick to it, it assuredly complicates any such decision.[53]

The final work to consider is Martin Dinter's *Anatomizing Civil War* (2012). The first chapter of this book offers an extensive discussion of linguistic ambiguity in the *Bellum Civile* that builds on the two pieces of scholarship discussed above. Dinter is interested in how Lucan uses corporeal language to describe individuals, the state, the universe, and the text. He argues that Lucan's decision to apply the same vocabulary to objects from these disparate spheres allows him to insinuate that collapse in any one also entails collapse in the others. Lucan's obsessive focus on cosmic dissolution, normally interpreted as a manipulation of the Stoic idea of *ecpyrosis*, is thus shown to represent, prefigure, and reinforce the breakdown of the Roman state, its individual citizens, and even the very narrative of *Bellum Civile*.[54] Indeed, this effect is especially powerful

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[53] Bartsch (1997) 128-30. In effect, I disagree only with Bartsch's final assertion that Lucan's poem encourages ideological commitment. As she herself makes clear, any such decision derives *from the reader*. It seems—at least to me—far more interesting to explore this phenomenon than to justify Lucan's republicanism within a sea of ambiguity. Indeed, Bartsch's own work reveals that this latter option cannot be demonstrably better than the claims by Johnson (1987) and Masters (1992) that Lucan wishes to convince us to be pessimistic or nihilistic.

[54] On Lucan's use of Stoic vocabulary, see Lapidge (1979).

when language of cosmic dissolution is employed in an ambiguous context: unmoored from any definite signifier, it imparts a general sense of collapse and destruction.

The complex of images that Dinter explores essentially functions as a deeply layered metaphor that extends throughout the *Bellum Civile*. That corporeal vocabulary is used in the manner described is not in doubt. What one may question, however, is the impact this metaphor has on the reader and what it suggests about Lucan's universe. Since metaphors typically explain the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, many will view Lucan's corporeal language as an attempt to insinuate some fundamental fact about the inner workings of his poetic universe, to furnish a path, in other words, towards understanding the Roman civil wars and the constitutional change that followed them. Dinter, however, does not think that this is the case; rather, he sees this complex of images as a means of offering aesthetic coherence within a poem that offers no clear vision of either the *cosmos* or the Roman *imperium*.[55] He does not make his reasons for this conclusion explicit, but I would offer the following argument to support it: although Lucan's layered and multi-polar metaphor seems to invite the reader to make sense of one category in terms of another (e.g. the *ruina urbis* operates in a manner similar to the *ruina orbis*), the complexity of his linguistic web actually blurs the lines between the different categories so completely that the interpretive value of the metaphor disintegrates in our very hands.[56] Put another way, Lucan's application of corporeal vocabulary to so many different concepts makes it impossible to determine which way the metaphor runs: "The

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[55] Dinter (2012) 9-10, comparing Lucan's outlook to that found in Vergil's *Aeneid*. See also my comments on pp. 52-62 and 99-122, where I discuss these issues at length.

[56] On the conflation of *urbs* and *orbis*, see Gernentz (1918) 136 n. 1; Waszink (1933) on Tert. *Anim*. 1.6; Bömer (1958) on Ov. *Fast*. 2.684; Bréguet (1969) i 140-52; Dinter (2012) 34. As my colleague Harold Reeves reminds me, this pun is maintained in Papal blessings "*urbi et orbi*."

collapse of Rome is like the collapse of the universe. Or is it the other way around?" Ultimately, the reader cannot be sure: our ability to understand the *Bellum Civile* with any degree of certainty is undermined by the very languague with which Lucan has written it.

The Method behind the Madness

If the reader must struggle to understand the very words and sentences that Lucan has put on the page, and indeed if that struggle is—as Bartsch argues—meant to frustrate us by design, then it should come as little surprise to find the same phenomenon operating at other levels of the text. My goals throughout this dissertation will be to demonstrate that this is the case and, moreover, to explain how ambiguity and contradictions consistently lead the reader into states of anxiety and frustration.

In my first chapter, I argue that the poem's massive introduction consists of five movements that are self-contained and internally coherent, but that together present competing and contradictory approaches to Lucan's theme of civil war. This unprecedented beginning effectively prevents the audience from determining what sort of poem the *Bellum Civile* will be, and forces us to approach its narrative in a state of ἀπορία. I further suggest that this self-defeating preface prefigures the narrator's frequent changes of tone and interest throughout the work, and thus offers a more comprehensive account of his apparently "fractured voice" than has yet been suggested. My second chapter explores the operation of Lucan's universe in order to question Johnson's assertion that it is a "broken machine."[57] Although the narrator consistently tells the reader that the physical world is on the verge of literal collapse, references to

[57] Johnson (1987).

astral movements, similes drawn from the natural world, and cyclical actions seem to contradict this assertion. In a similar way, the nature of the poem's metaphysical world is deviously ambiguous: Lucan strongly suggests that supernatural forces operate within the *Bellum Civile*, but provides competing evidence about their disposition towards mankind, and even about whether their immortality ensures their permanence. This leaves the reader feeling anxious about the powers driving historical causation, especially when figures like Erictho and Caesar seem to exert more influence than the gods themselves.

My third and fourth chapters take one of Lucan's most debated figures head-on, using Cato as a case study for how contradiction complicates the reader's ability to interpret Lucan's characters. Chapter 3 discusses Cato's actions in Book 2, namely his debate with Brutus and his remarriage to his former wife Marcia, while Chapter 4 discusses his march across the Libyan desert in Book 9. Throughout this analysis, I argue that the reader's evaluation of Cato is frustrated by contradictions between how his actions are portrayed within the narrative and how the narrator characterizes them: despite continual editorial praise, Cato acts in ways that do not accord with his self-professed role as Stoic and Republican hero, consistently using specious logic and abusing other figures in order to bolster his own position. The result of this peculiar mode of depiction is that attempts to judge Cato with any certainty are philologically impossible: any interpretation of him or his actions depends on a reader's willingness to privilege one class of textual evidence at the expense of another. Lucan thus ensures that debate about this slippery figure can continue indefinitely.

In my conclusion, I consider Julius Caesar as the one figure who offers some hope of permanence within the chaotic world of the *Bellum Civile*. My focus lies on the

literary devices that Lucan employs to inflate the obstacles threatening Caesar's advance and to make his success appear more improbable. Although the narrator criticizes these victories constantly, historical necessity demands that Caesar always achieve them. The reader is consequently left with unanswered questions about how Caesar manages to be so successful even when faced with insurmountable odds. The contradictions and ambiguities in Lucan's portrait of the *imperator* thus ensure that we are left in a state of frustration and anxiety when his poem breaks off with a final glimpse of Caesar escaping from danger one last time.[58]

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[58] Many readers will note that Pompey has been excluded from this discussion. I would direct their attention to the brilliant interpretation offered by Bartsch (1997) 73-100, which seems to me correct in both its general sense and most of its particulars. Her main point is that the narrator's increasing valorization of Pompey runs counter to the actual presentation of him within the text, and thus that "it becomes difficult for readers to quite swallow his canonization" when Lucan finally describes his death (97). I ultimately disagree with Bartsch in her subsequent assertion that the reader is meant to favor Pompey despite the contradictions in the presentation of him. For Lucan's Pompey as a figure of sublimity, see Day (2013).

Chapter 1:
A Fractured Proem

The coherence of Lucan's poetic introduction has been questioned since antiquity. Early critics, for example, debated whether the first seven lines of the *Bellum Civile* were written by Lucan himself or by a posthumous editor.[1] Although the bases for this claim have now been dismantled and the lines are largely accepted as authentic,[2] other parts of the introduction continue to elicit scholarly concern or skepticism. Chief among these has been the so-called "Praise of Nero" (1.33-66), a fervently optimistic passage that seems to contradict the gloomy outlook one finds running throughout the rest of the poem.[3] Here, too, debate is rooted in ancient criticism, and although modern scholars have largely followed the scholiasts in reading these lines ironically, good arguments have been set forth that justify taking the poet's encomium of his *princeps* at face value.[4] Equally unclear have been the questions of how best to divide the prefatory material that introduces Lucan's narrative, and indeed of whether the 'proem' consists of this entire section or only some limited portion of it.[5] The reason for such dispute is not difficult to see: Lucan's introduction takes up 182 lines, a length unprecedented both in absolute

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[1] *Comm. Bern.* at 1.1; the *Vita* in MS Vossianus II. Both sources are discussed by Conte (1966 [= 2010]) n. 1.

[2] On this, see Malcovati (1951); Conte (1966 [=2010]); Schaaf (1975); and Romeo (2004).

[3] Roche (2009) at 1.33-66 offers a summary of the extensive scholarship on this topic.

[4] *Comm. Bern.* at 1.55-8 tells us certain phrases allude to Nero's weight and poor eyesight. Most scholars have readily accepted this irony as a way to explain the awkwardness between the apparent praise of Nero here and the criticism of the principate elsewhere in the proem, and indeed in the poem at large. Roche (2009) Introduction §1 (d) and at 1.33-66 provides extensive bibliography on the issue. Dewar (1992) is one of the few to argue that the encomium is not markedly different from other examples of imperial encomium, at least on first reading. See also Narducci (2002) 22-36; Thome (2002).

[5] For scholarly treatments of Lucan's introduction independent of the commentaries, see Schaaf (1975); Lebek (1976); Thome (2002); Romeo (2004); Ripoll (2010).

terms and as a percentage of an epic's opening book.[6] Although this structural debate has been waged less overtly than other interpretive campaigns, a cursory overview of the scholarly literature reveals that there is not even the semblance of consensus: the very terms used to identify Lucan's poetic opening vary from critic to critic, while schematizations of *Bellum Civile* 1.1-182 admit a plethora of interpretations.[7]

The most obvious cause of this scholarly disagreement is a series of perspectival changes that occurs throughout the introduction. Sometimes this appears innocuous, as when attention turns from cosmological explanations for the war (1.67-97) to the specific historical circumstances that led to its outbreak (1.98-182); elsewhere, however, one finds a more radical shift that seems to contradict something Lucan has already said. The clearest example of the latter phenomenon occurs with the "Praise of Nero", which was mentioned briefly above. In the twenty-four lines that precede it, the poet curses the civil war as an act of criminal madness that permanently turned the Italian peninsula into a

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[6] To Luc. 1.1-182 (26.2%), compare Hom. *Il*. 1.1-7 (1.1%); Hom. *Od*. 1.1-10 (2.3%); Ap. Rh. *Arg*. 1.1-4 (0.3%); Verg. *A*. 1.1-33 (4.4%); Ov. *Met*. 1.1-4 (0.5%); V. Fl. 1.1-21 (2.5%); Sil. 1.1-37 (5.3%); although philosophical epic tends to have more expansive openings, they still fall well short of Lucan's numbers: Lucr. 1.1-101 (9.0%); Man. *Astr*. 1-117 (12.6%). The only text whose introduction is of similar length to what we find in the *Bellum Civile* is Sal. *Cat*.; the similarities between Lucan and Sallust have been noted by Batstone (2010), but there is need for further comparative study of these authors.

[7] Masters (1992) 1 recognizes 1.1-182 as Lucan's introduction. Haskins (1887) 1 and Roche (2009) 10-1 identify seven distinct sections within the first 182 lines; Haskins calls the first seven lines the "subject of the poem," while Roche refers to them as the "proem." Dinter (2012) identifies five sections, of which he considers lines 1-7 the 'Proem.' Von Albrecht (1970) 285 identifies four sections (1-7; 8-32; 33-66; 67-182), but concludes that the first two work together and thus form a single "proem;" he is followed by Schaaf (1975) and Lebek (1976) 18-107, who offers an immensely detailed structural study of the introduction. Gagliardi (1989) likewise sees four sections (1-7, 8-32, 33-66, 67-120, 120-182), identifying the latter two as "first causes" and "objective causes." Getty (1940) takes no explicit position on the matter, but we may infer from his comments at 1.33-66 and 1.67-182 that he conceives of three movements (1-32; 33-66; 67-182), a division that is followed by Thome (2002). Lana (1971) 133 and Romeo (2004) speak of the proem as comprising lines 1.1-66. *Alii alia*.

barren wasteland. At verse 1.67, however, he performs a *volte-face* and claims that the horrors of war were an acceptable price to pay for Nero's principate—this despite the prior insistence that the war continued to exert a negative effect on the poet's Neronian present.[8]

To say that Lucan contradicts himself in these passages is nothing radical, and a demonstration of the claim requires little more proof than I have already provided. What interests me in this dilemma, however, is not the fact that contradictions arise, but rather the specific sorts of contradictions that Lucan strives to create during his introduction and the range of effects that they may have on a reader who is rather forcefully made aware of them. In order to explore these issues, it will be helpful to undertake a more systematic analysis of the introduction's constituent parts.

Although the structure of *Bellum Civile* 1.1-182 is much disputed, it is possible to identify five movements within it whose status as separate entities is guaranteed by their internal coherence. Each of these offers a certain outlook on the civil wars (factual, pessimistic, optimistic) and/or a means of explaining how or why the Roman state was made to suffer them (teleological, cosmological, historical). These differ widely from one another, but their respective styles and tones are constant. Moreover, four of them introduce a crucial metaphorical image that will recur throughout the poem, and all five independently prepare the reader for the narrative that begins at line 1.183.

Cast in these terms, the introduction may seem rather simple to unravel. The problem that has plagued readers of Lucan since antiquity, however, is that the views presented in these movements do not cohere with one another. It is a significant

[8] O'Hara (2007) 132-6 criticizes earlier approaches to this apparent inconsistency.

challenge for a reader to make sense of a poetic introduction that explicitly describes its attitude to its theme as both pessimistic (the war permanently scarred the Italian countryside) and optimistic (the war ultimately led to the Neronian golden age).[9] Similarly hard to resolve are Lucan's divergent reactions when he sets himself to the task of presenting the conflict's causes: in one movement he displays resignation at the apparent futility of the question, yet later he offers two cogent explanations that place the civil wars in a broader context of universal laws.[10] The confusion that is provoked by a poem presenting such a multitude of outlooks and explanations derives from our expectations of the epic genre. As Gian Biagio Conte has argued, an epic introduction is supposed to identify the poem's topic and, starting in the Hellenistic period, furnish its particular outlook: at the start of a work—or sometimes in the middle—one learns not only a poet's *quid* but also his *quale*.[11] One result of this generic practice is that it effectively conditions readers to expect a poet to furnish them with a guide to interpreting his work: encoded somewhere in a passage or passages self-reflexively marked as programmatic should be a set of keys that unlock the larger meaning of the text. The level of attention given to literary beginnings in classical scholarship attests to the consistency of this ancient practice, as well as to the interpretive productivity that can result from using it as a basis for one's analysis of a text.[12] The challenge presented by the *Bellum Civile*, however, is that the movements of its introduction seem to furnish the

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[9] On contemporary literary treatments of Nero's reign as a new golden age, see Gowing (2005), esp. 97-100.
[10] For a general discussion of these sections, see Gagliardi (1976), esp. 79-83.
[11] Conte (1992) 147-9. This view is echoed by Narducci (2002), esp. 18-22.
[12] A comprehensive list of scholarship in this regard would be impossible. For an introduction to the topic, see the volume edited by Dunn & Cole (1992) on *Beginnings in Classical Literature*.

poet's *quale* five times over, offering a series of competing proems that leave the reader unsure of how to engage with the subsequent narrative. Although scholars have long viewed Lucan's epic as one inspiring ἀπορία or presenting a nihilistic universe, the importance of Lucan's ambiguous introduction has not yet been explored in this context.[13]

This chapter, then, has two aims. First, I analyze the five movements of Lucan's introduction in order to show that they cohere individually even as they contradict one another in aggregate. This arrangement creates a dilemma for the reader. Although any one movement would furnish an adequate, logical, and plausible model for engaging with the *Bellum Civile*, the inclusion of multiple movements of this type—especially ones that contradict one another—makes it impossible to embrace any of them with absolute certainty.[14] To anticipate my argument for a moment, we might say that readers predisposed to view the world in cosmological terms will find much attractive in the introduction's fourth movement, and will likely be inclined to use this as a guide to interpreting the entire poem. When such readers confront four other movements that present four equally viable modes of analysis, however, their faith in a cosmological understanding of the world will be shaken and they will be left ignorant of what they can or should believe. Yet Lucan's real coup lies not in creating this ἀπορία, but in creating

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[13] On the reader's ἀπορία when confronting Lucan, see Feeney (1991) 285. For the poet's nihilism, see esp. Johnson (1987); Masters (1992); Sklenář (2003).

[14] Bartsch (1997) 61-6 argues on theoretical grounds that this sort of contradiction defines the world of the *Bellum Civile*. In order to avoid the conclusion that this indicates Lucan's personal nihilism, however, she privileges the voice of Republican opposition that occasionally emerges elsewhere in the poem. As the discussion below will reveal, I believe Bartsch strikes upon something profoundly true about Lucan's *Bellum Civile* in her formulation of the problem, but offers an untenable solution. My analysis of Lucan's introduction will show how the poet sets up the contradictions that so bothered Bartsch and will seek to resolve them in a more satisfactory way.

it through the presentation of seemingly viable approaches to the text. As each new movement dangles the prospect of interpretive clarity before the readers' eyes, their aggregation effectively undermines the possibility of that clarity's realization. The position of Lucan's audience is thus akin to that of Tantalus: we are always being tempted to reach for secure knowledge about Lucan's poetic world, but that knowledge inevitably withdraws the moment we try to grasp it firmly.

My second goal is to show briefly how the divergent movements of the introduction prefigure and account for one of the most discussed aspects of the *Bellum Civile*, the poet's "fractured voice."[15] Although it has long been recognized that the narrative vantage of the *Bellum Civile* is mutable and that the poet vacillates in his ideological and philosophical beliefs, scholars have not yet come to a satisfactory agreement about why this occurs, nor have they been able to determine what effect it has on our final evaluation of the epic.[16] Earlier investigations of these issues have to my mind proved unconvincing because they have assumed that the narrator's voice is authoritative—or at least normative—and that it consequently offers the best evidence for Lucan's chief concerns in the *Bellum Civile*.[17] Underlying this type of analysis is the idea that Lucan's epic does indeed express a single view of reality and that the narrator offers the best expression of it. As the first part of this chapter will show, however, Lucan systematically deconstructs these concepts in the course of his introduction. Using the

[15] The phrase was coined by Masters (1992) 87.
[16] On narrative vantage in Lucan see esp. Marti (1975); O'Higgins (1988); Feeney (1991) 269-301; Masters (1992), esp. 87-90, and (1994); Ormand (1994); Bartsch (1997) 75-100; Narducci (2002) 88-106; La Penna (2002); Radicke (2004) 511-9; Faber (2005); D'Alessandro Behr (2007); Plago (2009); Bureau (2011).
[17] One of the few critics to point explicitly to the problem of the narrator's reliability is Sklenář (1999) 284-5.

narrator as a guide to the text is thus likely to be a fool's errand. I argue instead that the narrator's apparent schizophrenia is best explained as the reemergence of different outlooks encapsulated in the introduction's five movements. Lucan's use of these interpretive tools is conditioned by their applicability to their given context or their potential for rhetorical force, a procedure that leads him to change tack rather frequently, even to the point of contradicting himself. It is my contention that the fissures in the narrative voice that result from this vacillation should not be understood as an expression of ideology, but as a part of a persistent and well-marked impulse to frustrate those who would make sense of the civil war in terms of a single, coherent system.

Lucan's Introduction

As mentioned above, the introduction to the *Bellum Civile* can be divided into five self-contained movements. These can be schematized as follows:

Movement	Lines	Outlook	Explanation
1	1.1-7	Factual	---
2	1.8-32	Pessimistic	---
3	1.33-66	Optimistic	Teleological
4	1.67-97	---	Universalizing
5	1.98-182	---	Historicizing

Throughout this section, I will demonstrate how each of these movements forms a coherent unit that can be understood as a self-contained approach to the theme of civil war. I will argue that the result of so many disparate movements resting side-by-side is a sort of proemic conflict that leaves readers in doubt about how the poet envisions his narrative world. This, in turn, undermines our ability to engage with the text in a straightforward manner, and so brings us into a state of interpretive anxiety.

Movement 1: Bellum Civile *1.1-7*

Lucan's first movement consists of lines 1.1-7. This section of text is most commonly identified as the proem of the *Bellum Civile*, and it is in many ways the most traditional aspect of the poem's introduction. Indeed, the authenticity of these lines—long disputed because of remarks in Lucan's biographies and scholia—was only accepted when they were shown to adapt the proems of Homer's *Iliad* and Vergil's *Aeneid*.[18] In this regard, we may note that all three poems open with a seven-line *exordium* and describe their respective themes in purely factual terms.[19] By this I mean that the poets are concerned to tell the reader what their narrative will entail without offering any overt statement of partisanship. Thus Homer is content to relate the (internal) conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon without reference to the Trojans, while Vergil refuses to name either of his protagonists when expanding on the topical *arma* with which his poem begins.[20] Although some admiration of these themes is implicit in the poets' decision to commemorate them in song, the reader is given little indication of whether certain characters will be praised or blamed for their actions. Indeed, Aristotle identified such impartiality as a hallmark of the epic genre, contending that the ideal narrator should be a

[18] On the issue of authenticity, see Malcovati (1951); Conte (1966 [=2010]); Romeo (2004). Casali (2011) 83-6 suggests that Lucan has constructed his proem in order to contrast with that of Vergil's *Aeneid*.

[19] Lucan's use of the verb *canimus* (1.2) similarly reworks Vergil's *cano* (*A*. 1.1). The change from first-person singular to first-person plural perhaps anticipates Lucan's famous assertion that his poem will serve as a corollary to Caesar's *Commentarii* and that the two will guarantee one another's eternal fame (9.982-6).

[20] Vergil states only Juno's name explicitly (1.4); he alludes to Lavinia (1.2) and Latinus (1.6). Aeneas and Turnus are not mentioned, though many—even most—readers will have inferred their importance from the paired references to *Troiae* (1.1) and *Romam* (1.7).

distant, third-person observer, who essentially fills in the gaps between direct speeches and actions by his characters (Arist. *Poet.* 24 [=1460a5-11]).

Bellum Civile 1.1-7 clearly fit within this tradition. Like Vergil, Lucan refuses to name his protagonists, instead expanding at length on the theme with which he opens: wars (*bella*, 1.1).[21] Although the language he adopts is not devoid of judgment—the civil wars are described as "legality bestowed upon crime" (*iusque datum sceleri*, 1.2) and are later called a "shared sacrilege" (*commune nefas*, 1.6)—he declares no preference for either faction in the conflict. Rather, his focus remains on the extent to which civil war is an act of state suicide, "a powerful people turned against its own guts with a conquering sword-hand" (*populumque potentem | in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra*, 1.2-3). This formulation, which recurs many times in the remainder of the poem, is followed by a series of statements that essentially recast the same idea in terms specific to the Roman state: "standards against cursed standards, matched eagles, and Roman javelins threatening Roman javelins" (*infestisque obvia signis | signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis*, 1.6-7).[22] Although it is obvious that the language Lucan employs here is critical of civil war, it should not be deemed exceptionally negative or pessimistic: civil war is universally considered something awful, even if the sides fighting it cast their actions as necessary for the preservation of the existing state.[23] Indeed, comparison with the preface to Appian's history of the Roman civil wars reveals the type of language that one might expect from a more disinterested party: he insists that "**kindred** slaughter"

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[21] Like Vergil (see p. 35 n. 20), Lucan may allude to the Julio-Pompeian wars through his reference to the "Emathian fields" on which the war was fought (1.1).
[22] Lucan elsewhere draws a distinction between the stereotypically Roman *pilum* and the Macedonian *sarissa* (e.g. 10.47-8).
[23] On the dynamics of morality in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, see the instructive studies of Roller (1996) and (2001) 17-63.

began with Tiberius Gracchus (φόνον **ἔμφυλον**, Pr. 2, cf. *in **sua**… **viscera***, Luc. 1.2-3) and that the calm after Sulla's dictatorship was "recompense **for evils**" (ἀντίδοσις **κακῶν**, Pr. 3, cf. ***nefas***, Luc. 1.6); by way of contrast with the later instances of open war, however, he calls the conflicts that led to the secessions of the plebs "disputes **within legality**" (ἔριδες **ἔννομοι**, Pr. 1, cf. ***ius**que datum sceleri*, Luc. 1.2). This brief comparison suggests that Lucan's language in the present movement falls into line with standard rhetorical treatments of civil war in the imperial period. Even if it appears critical of the events described, it is neither overtly partisan nor excessively pessimistic. Rather, all we can infer from the opening seven lines of the *Bellum Civile* is that Lucan intends to treat a dreadful theme in a traditional way, adopting the standard, neutral perspective maintained by his epic predecessors.

We may offer one final corollary to the observations already made. The neutral, descriptive impulse observed in this movement precludes any attempt to explain how or why the civil wars came about. Here there are no imputations of blame, nor any rationalizations of the conflict according to a broader conception of universal laws or human behavior.[24] On the contrary, it is content simply to describe what happened in largely objective terms. We may thus describe the first movement as one evincing a factual outlook devoid of any explanatory impulse.

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[24] In contrast, this will be done explicitly in Movements 3-5. The only place where causation could be inferred here is in the ablative absolute *rupto foedere regni* ("when/since the compact of kingship was shattered," 1.4); I am inclined to interpret this temporally because of the absence of causative expressions elsewhere in the movement.

Movement 2: Bellum Civile *1.8-32*

Lucan's first introductory pivot occurs with the direct question he posits in line 8: "What madness, o citizens, how great a lawlessness of steel?" (*Quis furor, o cives, quae tanta licentia ferri*, 1.8). Although this question initially seems to continue the imitation of Homer and Vergil described above,[25] it quickly moves in a radical direction as Lucan totally abandons epic objectivity and reveals a deep, personal investment in his narrative. The heightened emotional tone is best seen through the instances of apostrophe (evidenced by vocatives and second-person forms) and exclamation that pervade this movement.[26] These features, which are normally considered the most distinctive mark of Lucan's poetic voice, occur here for the first time, and nowhere else in Lucan's introduction are they found at so high a frequency.[27] These details warrant recognition

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[25] Conte (1966 [=2010]) compares Homer's "And who, then, of the gods set them to fight in a quarrel?" (τίς τ' ἄρ σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι, Hom. *Il*. 1.8) and Vergil's "Do heavenly spirits possess such great anger?" (*tantaene animis caelestibus irae*, Verg. *A*. 1.11). Baier (2010) 114 argues that *quis furor* is an echo of Laocoon's cry at Verg. *A*. 2.42.

[26] The vocatives are: *o cives* (1.8), *Roma* (1.21), *Pyrrhe* (1.30); second-person forms include: *tibi* (1.21), *miseris* (1.22), *te* (1.23), *verte* (1.23), *tibi* (1.23), *tu* (1.30); the sole exclamation is *heu* (1.12). Lucan's use of apostrophe has garnered much scholarly attention; on this, see Endt (1905); Zyroff (1971); Marti (1975); Mayer (1981), esp. 15-6; Ormand (1994); Narducci (2002), esp. 88-9; Radicke (2004), esp. 512; Faber (2005); D'Alessandro Behr (2007); Plago (2009).

[27] The ratios for each movement expressed as figures directly addressed per number of lines are as follows: 1) 0:7; 2) 3:25; 3) 2:34 or 3:34 (see below); 4) 2:31; 5) 4:85. As these numbers show, Movement 2 is rivaled only by Movement 3, where it is unclear if Lucan apostrophizes two or three distinct entities. The vocative *Caesar* (1.41) falls in a historical catalogue between references to Julius Caesar's last battle (Munda) and Octavianus' first engagement (Perugia); this makes it impossible to know which of them is addressed, and it may be preferable to read it as another address to Nero. Counting individual second-person forms instead of figures addressed results in a slightly higher frequency in Movement 3 than in Movement 2; this can be attributed to Nero receiving an extended apostrophe in this movement. In either case, the similar frequency of apostrophe in the two movements reveals that they both adopt an extremely invested outlook, the first pessimistic, the second optimistic; on this, see also pp. 46-52.

for two reasons. First, they allow us to see that the outlook of lines 1.8-32 is markedly different from what we find in lines 1.1-7, and thus offer crucial support for my suggestion that we should think of them as distinct movements within the introduction.[28] Second, the observation that apostrophe and exclamation are particularly associated with this movement—though admittedly not exclusive to it—encourages us to see the increased frequency of these features elsewhere in the poem as reflective of the outlook manifested here, and not as the defining characteristic of Lucan's entire narrative voice. Although the latter point is not of crucial importance now, it will prove central to my argument in the second part of this chapter.

Accepting that the second movement is distinct from the first and is marked by a palpable emotional investment in the events it describes, we may further observe that its outlook on those events is profoundly pessimistic. This disposition can be seen most clearly in the assertion that the events of the civil war continued to have a negative impact on Roman society in Lucan's own day, well over a century after the Julio-Pompeian war had ended.

> *at nunc semirutis* ***pendent*** *quod moenia tectis*
> *urbibus Italiae lapsisque ingentia muris* 25
> *saxa* ***iacent*** *nulloque domus custode* ***tenentur***
> *rarus et antiquis habitator in urbibus* ***errat,***
> *horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos*
> *Hesperia* ***est desunt****que manus poscentibus arvis—*
> *non tu, Pyrrhe ferox, nec tantis cladibus auctor* 30
> *Poenus erit* (1.24-31).
>
> But the fact that in the cities of Italy walls now **sag** under half-collapsed roofs, and huge rocks **are strewn** from fallen bulwarks, and homes **are held** by no guardian, and rare **is** the inhabitant **wandering** in ancient cities, the fact that the West **is** bristling with brambles and **has been**

[28] *Contra* Conte (1966 [=2010]) and Romeo (2004), who argue *BC* 1.1-32 operates as a single entity.

> unplowed for many years, and hands **fail** the fields that seek them—not you, defiant Pyrrhus, nor will the Carthaginian be the author of such great slaughter.

Throughout this passage, Lucan uses present-tense verbs to punctuate the different ways in which Rome is still affected by the conflict he sets out to describe. In quick succession we find the forms *pendent* (1.24), *iacent* (1.26), *tenentur* (1.26), *errat* (1.27), *est* (1.29),[29] and *desunt* (1.29), each of which renews the temporal specificity of the phrase *at nunc* ("but now") with which Lucan begins. This is a marked change from the earlier part of the movement, where Lucan used the past tense to describe how Rome preferred civil war to foreign conquest when the contest finally came to arms.[30] The immediacy implied by this passage suggests that Lucan does not consider the civil war to be merely an historical oddity to be studied, but an event so debilitating that its residual trauma was inherited by generations of successive Romans.[31] Moreover, Lucan's description of Italy in these lines offers no hope for restitution of the damage caused by the conflict between Caesar and Pompey. The Italian countryside simply is, and will presumably remain, pitifully desolate.[32] This outlook on the civil wars is clearly pessimistic—perhaps even apocalyptic—and allows Lucan to maintain, over a century after the decisive battle at

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[29] The verb *est* governs both the predicative adjective *horrida* and the participle *inarata*. With the latter it may more properly be said to function as a perfect passive verb; since in this instance it has present-completed force, however, it still applies to the poet's present day.

[30] Lucan's treatment of the verb *placuit* (1.12) as past-completed is guaranteed by his use of secondary sequence in subordinate clauses: *foret… solianda* (1.10), *erraret* (1.11).

[31] On Lucan's *Bellum Civile* as "Literature of Trauma," see Walde (2011). Narducci (2002) 34 compares Luc. 7.389-407.

[32] Roche (2009) at 1.24 observes that Lucan simultaneously achieves a shift "to the indicative, to reality, and to the devastating consequences of the civil war upon Italy." His comments on the other quoted lines set forth the Augustan precedents for imagining the future desolation caused by the civil war. Whereas the prospect of the Augustan renewal offered some hope that those prophecies might not come to pass, however, Lucan confirms their fears by speaking from amidst the future desolation they foretold.

Pharsalus, that "the wounds of a citizen's sword-hand sit deep" (*alta sedent civilis vulnera dextrae*, 1.32).[33]

Another technical feature of this movement is its adoption of a wide range of temporal perspectives in relation to the civil wars. Although at times Lucan looks back on the conflict from the vantage of the AD 60s—the perspective we should expect him to take—he is also capable of injecting himself into his narrative as a contemporary observer, and crucially as one without knowledge of how the war turns out. Lucan's use of this unparalleled technique has been explored at length by Berthe Marti, so it will suffice here to demonstrate how it operates within the introduction's second movement.[34] It was noted above that the verb *placuit* (1.12), used to describe Rome's preference for civil war instead of foreign conquest, can be securely identified as a simple past-tense form. When readers find the poet describing how Rome acted in this way, they may infer Lucan's vantage to be that of a person looking back on the wars from some period well after their conclusion. This is entirely normal, and is indeed the standard perspective of the epic poet.[35] Elsewhere in this movement, however, Lucan presents himself in times far removed from his Neronian present. Consider, for example, the following passage, which occurs after an extended criticism of Rome's decision to engage in civil war before groups like the Chinese and Egyptians had been conquered (1.13-20):

> *tum, si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi,*
> *totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem,* 20
> *in te verte manus: nondum tibi defuit hostis* (1.21-3).

[33] Thus Roche (2009) at 1.32.
[34] Marti (1975).
[35] Cf. Verg. *A*. 10.503-5, where the poet interjects to say that Turnus will regret stripping Pallas of his baldric. The exclamation reveals that the poet knows the outcome of the story.

> If your love of abominable war is so great, Rome, turn your hands against yourself at that time when you will have sent the entire world under Latin laws: not yet has an enemy failed you.

Here Lucan effects a two-step displacement. First, he seems to imagine himself at the moment of the war's outbreak. This is made clear by the contrast between the imagined future of the *cum*-clause (*miseris* = future perfect indicative) and the collocation of *nondum… defuit*, which in the present context is best interpreted as a present perfective form.[36] From this revived past, however, Lucan projects himself into a hypothetical future, urging Rome to resort to civil war (*in te verte manus*, 1.23) only after the rest of the world has been subdued. This command appears immediate, pressing, and one that might still have efficacy if only the poet's voice could be loud enough to reach its intended audience.

This sort of temporal disjunction is intricately tied to the pessimistic outlook that defines the second movement. Since the poet here views civil war as an unthinkable evil that continues to have a detrimental effect on his own day, his initial response in contemplating it is to wish that history had happened differently. Consequently, one finds a series of counterfactual statements, both explicit and implied, running throughout the second movement.[37] The best example of this tendency occurs in the central section,

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[36] This reading, at any rate, is encouraged by the present imperative *verte* (1.23). The commentators and translators offer the same interpretation. Haskins (1887): "not yet hast thou felt the want of a foe;" J. D. Duff (1928): "so far she has never lacked a foreign foe;" Luck (1985): "An Feinden hat es dir ja nie gefehlt;" Braund (1992): "not yet are you without an enemy;" Fox (2012): "You've not lacked yet for foes."

[37] A counterfactual wish is implicit in the references to Pyrrhus and Hannibal discussed above (1.24-32). Lucan's indignation that a Roman achieved what the Republican city's great enemies had failed to do suggests that Rome's overthrow would have been more acceptable, or at least more comprehensible, if it had occurred at the hands of a foreigner.

where Lucan ponders which enemies might have been conquered if Caesar and Pompey had not turned against one another:

> *sub iuga* <u>*iam*</u> *Seres,* <u>*iam*</u> *barbarus* ***isset*** *Araxes*
> *et gens si qua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo* (1.19-20).
>
> <u>Already</u> the Chinese **would have passed** under the yoke, <u>already</u> the barbarian Araxes and whatever race (if any exists) acquainted with the source of the Nile.

The repetition of *iam* in this expression of counterfactual history is particularly loaded. Ever since Crassus' failed expedition against Parthia, Roman expansion in the east had proved elusive. Julius Caesar was assassinated before he could undertake a campaign there, and Augustus either chose or was compelled to content himself with a diplomatic victory.[38] Tiberius and Claudius, meanwhile, focused on the north and west. "The familiar bogeys of Augustan propaganda" that Lucan here invokes were thus the same people who had existed on the eastern edges of Roman control for the better part of a century.[39] For all intents and purposes, they must have been considered permanently free.[40] Lucan's repeated insistence, then, that these people would *already* (*iam*) have passed under Roman control underscores the extent to which he thought Roman society had been irreparably altered—and indeed had seemed to stall out—as a result of the civil wars. Recognizing the injustice of this situation, the poet is inspired to speak in counterfactual form, expressing a futile wish that his present world were different from the one he actually inhabits.

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[38] Tac. *Ann*. 1.11.4; Cass. Dio, 56.33.5.
[39] Fratantuono (2012) 7.
[40] Indeed, after noting the Roman failure to subdue Indians, Dahae, Sarmatici, and Parthians, our poet laments that "Freedom has fled beyond the Tigris and the Rhine, never to return" (*redituraque numquam* | *Libertas ultra Tigrim Rhenumque recessit*, 7.432-3).

The final aspect of the second movement that warrants our attention is the fact that, like the first, it makes no attempt to explain the causes of the civil war. Indeed, the question with which it begins, and that seems to point us in this direction (*quis furor, o cives, quae tanta licentia ferri*, "What madness, o citizens, how great a license for steel?" 1.8), proves to be a red herring. Lucan's first response to this query is another question, this time more clearly rhetorical: "Did it please you to offer Latin blood to hated races and to wage wars that would have no triumphs, while haughty Babylon was yet to be despoiled of Ausonian trophies and Crassus was wandering with his shade unavenged?" (*gentibus invisis Latium praebere cruorem | cumque superba foret Babylon spolianda tropaeis | Ausoniis umbraque erraret Crassus inulta | bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos?* 1.9-12). Historical necessity notwithstanding, the answer to this question—at least for any *cives* worthy of the name—should obviously be "no;"[41] Lucan's outburst, despite its nice rhetorical effect, thus brings us no closer to answering the general inquiries with which he began.[42] Indeed, when we consider the other parts of this movement that have been discussed so far, it is clear that they likewise serve little purpose beyond lament, whether that be for the fact of civil war, its continued results, or the opportunities that were lost together with it. To my mind, this occurs because the

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[41] On disputes about the definition of *civitas* in the *Bellum Civile*, see Roller (2001) 17-63.

[42] Lucan's emphasis is on the verb *placuit*, which finally completes the thought and coincides with the main caesura of its line. His question is sarcastic: it is ludicrous to think that civil war was pleasing to the Romans, even though it did, in fact, occur.

emotional investment and pessimism that define this part of the introduction lead the narrator to virtual paralysis. Since his response to the narrative can be nothing but grief, the only answers he can provide to the questions that begin this movement are further ironic questions or pitiful exclamations of disbelief (*heu*, 1.13). From this we may be justified in describing the second movement as one offering a pessimistic outlook that is devoid of any impulse towards explanation.

Movement 3: Bellum Civile *1.33-66*

The phrase *quod si* ("but if," 1.33) takes us in a yet another direction, beginning a third movement that is commonly called the "Praise of Nero" (*Laus Neronis*). In different ways, this part of the introduction is disputed both most and least: least because every critic recognizes that it forms a distinct movement within the introduction, most because scholars since antiquity have debated whether we ought to interpret it ironically.[43] The former fact is useful for the present discussion because it supports my contention that these lines operate as a single unit, in some way divorced from what precedes and follows them. Indeed, as I will show throughout this section, the third movement utilizes a broad range of literary devices to bolster the argument that the civil wars were an acceptable

[43] Roche (2009) at 1.33-66 offers an extensive bibliography, which may be supplemented by Fratantuono (2012) p. 48 n. 25. Hinds (1987) suggests that both earnest and ironic interpretations are possible, and that Lucan's success in expressing the latter will have depended on the possibility of the former; despite his protestations to the contrary, this still privileges the ironic interpretation as the more learned. Ripoll (2010) likewise deserves mention, for his claim that the praise is both sincere and ironic must be deemed untenable. Apart from the fact that it depends on a simplistic analysis of Cato as the poem's hero (on which, see pp. 175-317), his definition of sincerity is so highly qualified that it essentially constitutes irony. The peculiarity of the third movement within the broader context of the poem has led some to suppose that it is an interpolation of the *Laudes Neronis* that Lucan delivered at the *Neronia* of AD 60 (Suet. *Poet. Luc.* = Rostagni (1944) 143; Vacca = Rostagni (1944) 183).

price to pay for Nero's reign. The consistency with which these devices are used to pursue the same goal guarantees the unity of the passage and lends further credence to the idea that the Praise of Nero is intended as sincere encomium.

This brings us to the latter fact, namely that many critics have interpreted this passage ironically. Although this view could be thought to challenge my assertion that the section is both independent and serious, it is less relevant than it might initially appear. Concern over the sincerity of this movement depends on two assumptions: first, that Lucan intended to use his epic to present a single, coherent view of the world, and second, that his introduction was meant to serve as a general guide to the rest of the text. Criticism of the Praise of Nero thus ultimately stems from an unwillingness to consider the possibility that Lucan encoded both pessimistic and optimistic views within the same epic poem.[44] As I argue at various points throughout this dissertation, however, Lucan's editorial comments are frequently undercut by the actual events that he relates, with Caesar, in particular, appearing much better than the narrator would have him be judged.[45] Since Lucan is not beyond open contradiction elsewhere in the *Bellum Civile*, it would be rash to dismiss the present passage as necessarily ironic, especially when it

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[44] For contradiction and anxiety as intelligible literary devices, see pp. 11-8. Schrempp (1970) maintains that this movement must have been genuine at its time of writing, but most of the arguments he sets forth defend Lucan as a staunch republican. Croisille (1982) suggests the praise is earnest, and that the criticism of Caesar throughout the poem is protreptic. Narducci (2002) 18-36 tries to justify an earnest reading of the passage on historical grounds; on his reading, contradictions in the introduction are the result of Lucan's attempt to encapsulate an optimism typical of literature from Nero's early principate with a pessimism inherent to his theme. This interpretation is *prima facie* reasonable, but fails to account for why Lucan would isolate these different strains to the extent he does; on this, see pp. 81-90.

[45] For this general phenomenon, see pp. 91-7; on Caesar, see pp. 323-44; on ambiguity in the depiction of Cato, see pp. 175-317.

accords with the standard expectations for encomium that existed in the imperial period.[46] Rather, as I will argue at greater length below, it seems more likely that Lucan is using his introduction to anticipate in a more overt way the type discrepancies that will subtly pervade his poem. The reader will consequently be justified in accepting the third movement as sincere praise of Nero— at least provisionally—until it can be shown how this movement fits within the broader context of Lucan's introduction and his narrative voice.

We may begin our analysis by outlining the features that help to define this section as a distinct movement. The most obvious of these consist of stark differences in tone and outlook from what we observed the preceding section. As noted above, the strong adversative *quod si* (1.33) first signals that the poet is changing tack, and we soon find that his disposition towards the civil wars has turned from hopeless pessimism to unbridled optimism:

> *quod si non aliam venturo fata Neroni*
> *invenere viam magnoque aeterna parantur*
> *regna deis caelumque suo servire Tonanti* 35
> *non nisi saevorum potuit post bella gigantum,*
> *iam nihil, o superi, querimur; scelera ipsa nefasque*
> *hac mercede placent* (1.33-8).

> But if the fates found no other path for Nero's future coming, and eternal kingdoms are purchased for the gods at a great price, and heaven was unable to serve its Thunderer except after wars of cruel giants, now, o gods, we offer no lament; even wickedness and sacrilege are pleasing when this is the reward.

[46] Thus Dewar (1994), whose conclusion has been strengthened by the work of Narducci (2002) 18-36; Thome (2002). Holmes (1999) suggests that the criticism of the Caesars throughout the poem may be meant to increase the praise of Nero by contrast: even somebody who hates the imperial government is compelled to love this particular *princeps*; on the other hand, he notes that certain criticisms of Nero cannot be denied, and concludes with the suggestion that readers are intended to work through these ambiguities on their own, with the critical view likely gaining credibility as the poem proceeds.

In order to understand the inner workings of this movement, and thus the reasons for the poet's present optimism, it will be helpful to unravel the logic that guides the quoted text. Lucan begins by suggesting that the advent of Nero was the end towards which the fates were aiming at the outbreak of civil war in 49 BC (1.33-4). That he casts the reign of the young *princeps* in wholly positive terms is made clear by the analogy he uses to describe it: just as the cosmos had to suffer Gigantomachy before Jupiter could establish lasting peace and stability, so too did Caesar and Pompey have to come to blows in order to pave the way for Nero (1.35-6).[47] The implication of this comparison is that Nero will similarly set order to the world and prevent any conflicts that might lead to its dissolution.[48] Again, because this is a preeminently good outcome, the poet is able to declare that the civil wars and the atrocities that accompanied them were an acceptable price to pay for this reward (*scelera ipsa nefasque* | <u>*hac mercede*</u> *placent*, 1.38). Indeed, he takes this image one step further somewhat later in the movement, when he proposes that the Roman state actually got the better deal in this imagined transaction: "Rome yet **owes** much to civil wars, because the affair was conducted for you [i.e. Nero]" (*multum Roma tamen* ***debet*** *civilibus armis,* | *quod tibi res acta est*, 1.44-5). Seeing the conflict in these terms, the poet is able to declare that he and the Roman people have no right to lament it (*iam nihil… querimur*, 1.37).[49] This outlook is completely opposed to the

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[47] See p. 44 n. 43.
[48] We are perhaps made to think of Ovid *Met*. 1.5-2.405, where the universe seems always at risk of slipping back into the chaos from which it emerged until Jupiter can establish a more lasting order over it.
[49] This assertion is almost certainly a direct response to the poet's previous lament (*heu*, 1.13) when confronting the horror of civil war. Note especially that these lines occur at nearly identical positions in their respective movements: 1.13 is the sixth line of Movement 2; 1.37 is the fifth line of Movement 3.

defeatist attitude observed in the second movement. Whereas earlier he asked whether it was pleasing to wage civil war (*placuit*, 1.12) and answered the rhetorical question with lament (*heu*, 1.13), here he declares that the civil wars *are* pleasing (*placent*, 1.38) and explains this emotion by reference to Nero's present reign (*venturo… Neroni*, 1.33).[50] Since I identified the poet's earlier disposition as pessimistic, we may correspondingly view his present, triumphalist vision as reflective of a marked optimism.

This optimistic disposition also manifests itself in more subtle ways. Consider, for example, how in the section immediately following the one quoted above the poet treats the specific battles that took place during the civil wars:

> *diros Pharsalia campos*
> ***impleat** et Poeni **saturentur** sanguine manes,*
> *ultima funesta **concurrant** proelia Munda;* 40
> *his, Caesar, Perusina fames Mutinaeque labores*
> ***accedant** fatis et quas premit aspera classes*
> *Leucas et ardenti servilia bella sub Aetna* (1.38-43).
>
> **Let** Pharsalia **fill** its dread fields and **let** the Carthaginian's shade **be appeased** with blood, **let** the final battles **come together** at deathly Munda; to these fates, Caesar, **let** the Perusine famine and the struggles of Mutina **be added**, and the fleets which harsh Leucas submerges and the slave wars at the base of burning Aetna.

As in the second movement, Lucan here imagines himself at the outset of the conflict and speaks of events to come—presumably the events he will recount in the course of the epic.[51] The treatment of these events, however, is now radically different. When Lucan adopted this temporal perspective in the earlier passage, he unleashed a string of

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[50] On Lucan's use of the present voice in this passage, see also Narducci (2002) 35-6.
[51] Debate over the intended end-point of the *Bellum Civile* has been vexed and interminable. Masters (1992) 216-59 systematically deconstructs all arguments that have been put forward, and I am inclined to see the question as unanswerable. All we can say for certain is that Lucan did manage to recount the first battle in this list. All else is necessarily speculative. See also my comments on pp. 5-8.

counterfactual statements describing an alternative history that would have or should have happened if the civil war had been averted (1.14-20). This, it was noted, was a result of that movement's pessimistic outlook on the war and fervent desire for the conflict to have unfolded differently. When we compare this with the passage just quoted, however, we find a striking change: Lucan now urges on the actual course of events with an extended sequence of jussive subjunctives.[52] The crucial point that cannot be overlooked is that the poet is actually reflecting on the same events! But how can we best account for this divergent treatment? To my mind, it is no coincidence that this change of rhetorical device is concomitant with the movement's shift from a pessimistic to an optimistic outlook. Since Lucan here views Nero's reign as an ineffable benefit that is worth any price, at least within the confines of this movement, he is now able to spur on the civil war, to embrace it as a fitting topic for poetic treatment. Indeed, his eagerness to describe the emperor's future apotheosis (1.45-62) and to adopt him as an inspirational divinity (1.64-6) should be understood as a reflex of this same outlook, and even as a way to reinforce it. The rather bold proposition "Nero > Civil War," if it is to be believed, demands that the *princeps* be inflated in accordance with the magnitude of the wars themselves.[53]

The eagerness with which Lucan undertakes this theme reflects an emotional investment similar to that discussed in the context of the second movement. Although

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[52] A verbal echo provides a further link between the two movements and encourages us to view them in explicit contrast to one another. In the passage under consideration here, Lucan urges the Carthaginians slaughtered in the Punic Wars to be expiated with Roman blood (***Poeni*** *saturentur sanguine manes*, 1.39); earlier, he expressed shock that a Carthaginian was not the author of such great slaughters (*nec tantis cladibus auctor* | ***Poenus*** *erit*, 1.30-1).

[53] On this, see pp. 159-64.

apostrophe is not quite as prevalent in the "Praise of Nero" as it was earlier, this rhetorical device occurs at a much higher frequency in this pair of movements than in the other parts of the introduction.[54] This similarity invites us to consider the two in tandem, and doing so brings into sharper contrast many of the differences discussed thus far: whereas in the second movement apostrophes are surrounded by sarcastic rhetorical questions, pitiful exclamations, and counterfactual declarations of how history should have happened differently, in the "Praise of Nero" they serve to highlight the poet's admiration for his emperor and his desire to get the narrative underway.[55] Thus we can see that the poet's emotional investment can manifest itself in two ways depending on the outlook he is adopting. In the second movement his pessimism leads it to be tinged with despair, whereas in the third his optimism causes him to embrace the civil wars as an empirical good. These movements can thus be seen to reflect two sides of the same dispositional coin. It is important to note, however, that Lucan's engagement with his topic does not operate as a simple dichotomy of positive or negative emotional investment in the events he relates: he also sets forth the factual outlook of the first movement, which employs a distant, third-person perspective traditional to the epic genre. With this we can see that Lucan's introduction effectively presents three dispositions that furnish a full range of possible responses to his narrative of civil war. How the reader might choose to negotiate this array will be treated later in this chapter.

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[54] See p. 37 n. 27.

[55] In Movement 2 he invokes his fellow citizens (1.2), Rome (1.21) and Pyrrhus (1.30), each time in an act of lament; in Movement 3 he invokes the gods (1.37), Nero (1.45ff.), and possibly Caesar or Augustus (1.41; see p. 37 n. 27) to underscore Nero's benefit to the Roman state.

Before leaving the "Praise of Nero" aside, there is another feature of it that demands our attention. Indeed, this is especially important since it is the chief way in which the optimistic outlook presents the reader with something that the pessimistic disposition of *Bellum Civile* 1.8-32 could not, and thus reveals that the third movement is far more than the positive twin of its predecessors.

We may begin with a simple observation: the poet's celebration of the civil wars in this movement depends on his awareness of Rome's imperial future and recognition that the world did not really come to an end with the fall of the Republic.[56] This statement, though bordering on the obvious, helps us to see that the optimistic viewpoint evinced in the "Praise of Nero" ultimately derives from a teleological explanation of the civil war.[57] In contrast with the first and second movements, which were marked respectively by factual description and futile frustration, Lucan can here celebrate his theme *specifically because* he knows about Nero's reign and considers the benefits conferred by it to be worth a great price. One consequence of this privileged vantage is that he can now cast the emperor's reign as something desired by the fates and the civil wars as a first cause in the *princeps*' ascension: "But if the **fates** found no other path for Nero's future coming… even wickedness and sacrilege are pleasing for this reward" (*quod si non aliam venturo **fata** Neroni | invenere viam… scelera ipsa nefasque | hac mercede placent*, 1.33-4, 37-8). Thus we can see that the third movement presents not

[56] For a discussion of Lucan's use of cataclysmic imagery, see pp. 99-122.
[57] Bartsch (1997) 62 makes a similar remark about the supposed irony of the "Praise of Nero," but unnecessarily ties it to a biographical interpretation of the text: "the proem, exactly like the figure of paradox, relies on the reader's choice of a temporal vantage point from which to understand its "meaning," even as the selection of any single such vantage point renders its meaning incorrect. This is true of both our position *in* the poem… and our position *outside* the poem, depending on which period in Lucan's life we believe generated these flattering/ironic lines" (emphasis in original).

only a third outlook on the civil wars, but also a distinct explanation for why they came about: Nero is the teleological end at which the wars were directed.[58] Although this view is not endorsed by the narrator elsewhere in the poem, repeated instances of prophecy and correct omens accurately predict the outcome of the war and thus can be thought to confirm the view presented here.[59] As I hope the above discussion has shown, however, this teleological explanation for the civil war and the narrator's optimism throughout the "Praise of Nero" are not separate features that Lucan has hastily joined together; rather, they function as mutually dependent attributes that effectively reinforce one another and bind the section together as a discrete and discernible movement within the broader scheme of Lucan's introduction.

Movement 4: Bellum Civile *1.67-97*

Unlike the three movements discussed thus far, which offer specific outlooks on the civil war, the fourth part of Lucan's introduction focuses exclusively on causation, and in particular on a pair of universal laws that can be thought to have led the Roman Republic to the point of collapse in 49 BC. This shift from the exploration of different outlooks to a focus on causation can be seen in the fact that this section tends to describe events factually, but occasionally has recourse to more invested engagement with the events

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[58] Such rationalization is typical of Roman thought, having been long used to justify the people's universal *imperium* and taking on special significance when Augustus conceived of his principate as a second Golden Age. Thus in the current movement Lucan adapts poetic tropes that had become prominent in the Augustan period, e.g. the description of Nero's future apotheosis (cf. Verg. *G*. 1.24-42; Hor. *Carm*. 1.2). Lucan's invocation of Nero as a source of poetic inspiration conflates two earlier tropes: the traditional invocation of a muse or creative god and the reference to powerful patrons common in Roman poetry. In all likelihood, this innovation was intended as a compliment to Nero's poetic talents.

[59] On prophecy in the *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 130-2, 271-6.

related (e.g. 1.84-8). The start of a new movement and the poet's new interest in explaining how or why the wars came about are signaled in its opening lines:

> ***Fert animus*** *causas tantarum expromere rerum,*
> *immensumque* aperitur opus*, quid in arma furentem*
> *impulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi* (1.67-9).
>
> **The spirit moves [me]** to bring forth the reasons for such great matters,
> and *a* massive *work is opening out*, what drove a raging people into arms,
> what shook off peace from the earth.

The most obvious hint that these verses mark a new beginning is the phrase *aperitur opus* ("a work is opening out," 1.68). Both its constituent words have a long history as metaphors for literary composition, and the verb *aperio* can refer specifically to the start of such endeavors.[60] Likewise, the poet's insistence that he intends "to disclose the reasons" for the civil war (*causas expromere… quid… quid*, 1.67-9) marks his new interest in causation and paves the way for the two specific causes he will offer throughout the rest of the movement. This new tone is underscored by the difference between the poet's procedure here and in the second movement: whereas earlier his questions about how the wars could have happened were an expression of grief that yielded no obvious answer, here he proceeds to offer actual explanations for the civil wars. Structural similarities, meanwhile, bind these causes together and help define verses 1.67-97 as a discrete unit within the introduction.[61]

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[60] *OLD aperio* 10; *OLD opus* 9c. Roche (2009) at 1.68 notes that architectural metaphors have a long literary pedigree going back to Pindar *Ol*. 6.1-3 and suggests that Lucan here competes with Vergil, who began the Iliadic half of his *Aeneid* with the phrase *maius opus moveo* ("I begin a greater work," Verg. *A*. 7.45). Lucan's adoption of the adjective *immensum* ("limitless, measureless" < *in* + *metior*) is surely meant to cap Vergil's *maius*.

[61] On the structure of the passage, see Roche (2009) at 1.67-97. A brief summary will suffice here. Lucan begins each of his explanations with a reference to jealous fate (***invida*** *fatorum series*, 1.70 ≈ ***invidiam*** *fortuna suam*, 1.84); repetitiously describes the cause he intends to expound through the rhetorical figure of *enumeratio* (1.70-2; 84-5);

Lucan also uses these lines to anticipate, albeit obliquely, the specific explanatory mode he is about to adopt. As some readers will have noticed, the opening of the fourth movement—in a manner that further marks this as a new beginning—reworks the start of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:[62]

> *in nova* ***fert animus*** *mutatas dicere formas*
> *corpora, di, coeptis—nam vos mutastis et illa!—*
> *adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi*
> *ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen* (Ov. *Met.* 1.1-4).
>
> **The spirit moves [me]** to speak forms changed into new bodies; inspire my beginnings, o gods—for you have changed these, too!—and draw down a continuous song from the origin of the world to my own times.

Scholars have long noted that Lucan's manipulation of Ovid appears to signal an explicit competition with his epic predecessor.[63] Just as the *Metamorphoses* describes the various changes that brought the world from its chaotic beginnings to Ovid's own day, so too

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further explains the operation of that cause by reference to an established cosmological theory (1.72-80; 89-91); and concludes with a sententious restatement of each principle that summarizes and condenses the preceding lines (1.81-2; 92-3). In order to avoid an overly rigid formula, the second explanation includes a brief appendix offering a specific historical occurrence of the theory that divided power leads to conflict (1.93-7). The relationship between *fata* and *fortuna* in the *Bellum Civile* has a long scholarly history. General consensus is now that they function as virtual synonyms. For the controversy, see Roche (2009) Introduction §5.

[62] On Lucan 1.67-9 as a new beginning, see esp. Tarrant (2002) and Wheeler (2002) 370, who summarizes scholarship on this topic at n. 27.

[63] For a detailed treatment of Lucan's manipulation of Ovid throughout this movement, see Roche (2009) Introduction §4 (d) and his specific comments at 1.67-97. To his observations I would like to add the following: 1) whereas Ovid takes four lines to state the topic and contents of his epic, Lucan manages to do this with only three; 2) Lucan normalizes Ovid's unusual prepositional opening (*in nova*) by moving the phrase *fert animus* to the front of the hexameter; 3) although Ovid briefly invoked certain unnamed gods (*di*, 1.2) to help him tell his tale, Lucan is here content to rely on his *animus* alone, a modification that may be intended to emphasize and outdo Ovid's general tendency to privilege his "own rational intelligence" over "passive inspiration from the muses" (Anderson (1997) 150); Ovid's (over)indulgence of his *ingenium* was first noted by Quintilian at *Inst*. 10.88. Hardie (1986) 381 suggests that Lucan's employment of natural-philosophical epic is chiefly indebted to Vergil.

does the *Bellum Civile* reveal how Rome's Republican past became the poet's Imperial present. Yet the immediate context of the passage to which Lucan alludes may also be relevant for our understanding of his introduction's fourth movement. After the proem quoted above, the narrative of the *Metamorphoses* begins in earnest with an extended description of how the universe was created (1.5-88). What begins as an "unrefined and unprocessed mass" of elements (*rudis indigestaque moles*, 1.7) is soon unraveled into its component parts, and eventually the universe becomes hospitable to gods and men. Of particular interest to the present study, however, is that this description of the world's beginning draws on established natural-philosophical theories to help explain the movements described and to lend credibility to Ovid's account.[64] In a similar way, Lucan refers to the Stoic theory of *ecpyrosis* (1.72-80)[65] and the tripartite division of the elements (1.89-93) in order to explain the two causes he proposes for the civil war during the course of the fourth movement.[66]

Lucan also signals his appeal to cosmological reasoning when he expresses his desire to "disclose the reasons for such great matters" (*causas tantarum expromere rerum*, 1.67). Although the context of this phrase makes it clear that *tantarum rerum*

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[64] K. S. Myers (1994), esp. 5-21.
[65] This cosmological theory posited that after a fixed period of time the universe would disintegrate back into chaos, destroying everything that we can know and perceive. Normally this was thought to be a palingenetic event, i.e. one that would lead to the creation of a new universe that was variously thought to be an identical copy of the one we know, which would enact a literal repetition of history, or else to have its own course of events. See esp. Lapidge (1979) and Roche (2005) 61-4 for a treatment of the sources.
[66] Thus Roche (2009) at 1.67. Although the collocation *fert animus* is not unique to these two passages, the obvious thematic and proemic connections between them encourage us to view Ov. *Met*. 1.1 as Lucan's primary intertext. Roche (loc. cit.) notes additional occurrences of the phrase.

must refer to the civil wars, Lucan's formulation is initially vague,[67] and his imprecision may be intended to bring to mind another sort of text concerned with disclosing the *causas rerum*. I am referring, of course to philosophical epic,[68] a recognized species of hexameter verse associated with inquiries into the natural world (*res*),[69] and in particular with such grand topics as the exploration of cosmic movements and the physical composition of the universe.[70] This sub-genre formed an important crosscurrent in the tide of Lucan's epic predecessors, and (not coincidentally) furnished the precedents for the cosmological beginning of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[71] Although at the start of this movement Lucan's apparent reference to such texts is achieved impressionistically,[72] it

[67] Indeed, when viewed in isolation, the lines with which this movement opens could refer to nearly any epic subject: *fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerurm* | *immensumque aperitur opus* ("The spirit moves me to disclose the reasons for such great matters, and a massive work is opening out," 1.67-8).
[68] Roche (2009) at 1.67 connects these verses to Verg. *A*. 1.8 (*Musa, mihi* ***causas*** *memora*, "Muse, recall for me **the reasons**…"), a line that is similarly followed by a series of indirect questions; after the strongly Ovidian opening of this movement, however, a reference to the *Aeneid* seems less pointed.
[69] *OLD res* 4. Though not unique to philosophical epic, this usage is especially common in authors like Lucretius (e.g. 1.21-7) and Manilius (e.g. 1.114-7). The comparison to these authors is made by Narducci (2002) 44.
[70] As distinct from moral or ethical philosophy, which tend to prefer the dialogue or treatise.
[71] Again, see Myers (1994), esp. 5-21.
[72] Thus Fratantuono (2012) 12, "Here we see a clear allusion both to the opening of the *Metamorphoses* and, more distantly, the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius." The words *causa* and *res* are so common in Latin that it is rather difficult to peg them as hallmarks of natural-philosophical epic; nevertheless, they seem to be particularly at home in this genre. Bailey (1947) at Lucr. 1.25 notes that *de* ***rerum*** *natura* is signaled as the title of the poem; cf. Verg. *G*. 2.490: *felix qui potuit* <u>*rerum*</u> *cognoscere* <u>*causas*</u> ("Blessed is he who has been able to understand the causes of things"), with Thomas (1988) and Mynors (1990) ad loc.

may nevertheless be thought to anticipate the natural-philosophical mode that defines his subsequent answers to the question, "what drove a raging people into arms" (1.68-9).[73]

Lucan furnishes two causes for the civil war during the course of his fourth movement, both of which are envisioned as timeless laws of society and the natural world: first, great things collapse upon themselves (1.70-82); second, power does not permit of colleagues (1.82-97).[74] The universality of these causes is suggested most clearly in Lucan's decision to invoke cosmological theories in order to explain their operation. In the middle of his first argument, for example, he uses the Stoic concept of cosmic *ecpyrosis*—the cyclical dissolution of the universe into its constituent parts—as the basis for an extended simile meant to explain how it is that "great things collapse upon themselves" (1.72-80). On one level this may be thought to suggest that the civil war was tantamount to the end of the world, and so to elevate Lucan's theme to cosmic proportions. This, at any rate, is how many scholars interpret this complex of images in light of their recurrence later in the *Bellum Civile.*[75] If we limit our attention to the immediate context of the fourth movement, however, a rather different sort of relationship emerges.

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[73] As noted above, Lucan's present ability to furnish a series of plausible and internally coherent causes for the war stands in stark contrast to his attitude in the second movement, where the only response he could muster to his fevered request for explanation (*Quis furor, o cives, quae tanta licentia ferri*, 1.8) was frustration and despair (*heu*, 1.13).

[74] Lucan's identification of just two causes is somewhat muddied by his decision to describe them through *enumeratio*, a rhetorical figure entailing the restatement of a single idea in different ways. Roche (2009) at 1.67-97 ("Structure") outlines the passage well; his individual comments ad locc., however, imply that the movement includes manifold explanations for the war. The former interpretation is to be preferred.

[75] For a summary of this theme in the scholarship on the *Bellum Civile*, see Roche (2005) and (2009) at 1.67-97 ("Lucan's first simile"), as well as specific comments ad locc.

Lucan's primary concern is not to describe the scale of the civil wars, but rather to explain the quality and operation of the mechanism that allowed them to occur:

> *sic, cum compage soluta*
> *saecula tot mundi suprema coëgerit hora*
> *antiquum repetens iterum chaos,* [*omnia mixtis*
> *sidera sideribus concurrent,*][76] *ignea pontum* 75
> *astra petent, tellus extendere litora nolet*
> *excutietque fretum, fratri contraria Phoebe*
> *ibit et obliquum bigas agitare per orbem*
> *indignata diem poscet sibi, totaque discors*
> *machina divulsi turbabit foedera mundi* (1.72-80).
>
> Just so, when the final hour will have drawn together so many ages of the world through the dissolution of its structure, seeking again the ancient chaos, [all the stars will rush together with the stars mixed in,] the fiery stars will seek the sea, the earth will refuse to stretch forth the shore and it will shake loose the sea, Phoebe will travel in her brother's path and, disdaining to drive her chariot throughout the slanted globe, will seek the day for herself, and the discordant machine will overturn all the compacts of the tattered world.

The progression of the simile reveals that Lucan's primary interest is not in the magnitude of *ecpyrosis*, but rather in the process governing it: we find emphasis placed on the arrival of the world's final hour (1.72-3), on the elements no longer respecting their established divisions (1.74-7), and on day being mixed with night (1.77-9). All of this is aimed at identifying the precise moment when a tipping point is reached and describing the first signs of systemic collapse. Indeed, although the size of the universe may be implicit throughout, Lucan's focus remains fixed on the progression of events. This interest should come as no surprise, however, since Lucan likewise signals it when he first introduces the law "great things collapse upon themselves" at the outset of the fourth movement:

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[76] All modern critics follow Bentley's deletion of *omnia… concurrent* (1.74-5).

… ***summis****que negatum*
stare ***diu nimio****que graves* ***sub pondere lapsus*** (1.70-1).

… and it being denied **to the greatest things** to stand **for long** and heavy **collapses** under excessive weight.

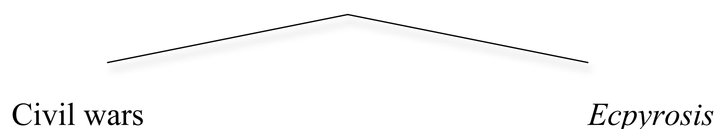
As in the simile, we can here see a marked emphasis on temporality (*diu*, 1.71) and collapse (*lapsus*, 1.71) that outlines the beginning of a larger process: once expansion reaches a tipping point, collapse inevitably follows. Absent, however, is any indication that the poet means to equate the *scale* of civil war and that of *ecpyrosis*.[77] On the contrary, the defining trait they share is great size (***summis***, 1.70; ***nimio*** *sub* ***pondere***, 1.71) *in their respective spheres*. This being the case, we must conclude that the chief purpose of the simile is not to emphasize the cosmic significance of the civil wars, but rather to furnish a well-established example of the general phenomenon Lucan has been at pains to describe: "great things collapse upon themselves" (*in se magna ruunt*, 1.81).

One implication of this argument is that the collapse of the Roman Republic and cosmic *ecpyrosis* are only incidentally related. By this I mean that Lucan does not imagine any direct link between them, but rather sees them as separate manifestations of the same general tendency. A schematization will make this clear. Lucan does not posit:

Civil wars ≈ *Ecpyrosis*

But rather:

"Great things collapse upon themselves"



Civil wars *Ecpyrosis*

While this conclusion may frustrate those seeking to use the *ecpyrosis* simile as evidence

[77] Scale might be implicit in the enormous size of the universe, but Lucan's failure to use quantitative words in the course of the simile militates against such an interpretation.

for Lucan's belief in Stoic doctrine,[78] it helps us come to an interesting observation: within the fourth movement, Lucan presents the civil wars as the workings of a mechanism that abides in both human and cosmic affairs. "Great things collapse upon themselves," in other words, is a proposition that applies to widely divergent spheres of reality and affects entities that differ greatly from one another in scale.[79] Indeed, based on the logic of this movement, there is no reason to think that the same rule would not apply to buildings, beehives, or any other entity, whether physical or conceptual in nature, that grows beyond the limits that nature has invisibly placed upon it. From this we may conclude that Lucan envisions *in se magna ruunt* as a universal law.[80]

A similar procedure is employed when Lucan explains his second cause, that "power is impatient of every colleague" (1.92-3).[81] In trying to express the fundamental nature of this idea, he suggests it is a timeless mechanism coeval with the division of the elements:

dum terra fretum terramque levabit
aër et longi volvent Titana labores 90

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[78] Lucan's Stoicism is yet another vexed topic, for a summary of which, see Roche (2009) at 1.67-97 ("Lucan's first simile"). The most thorough exposition of Lucan's Stoic vocabulary remains Lapidge (1979). Lucan's inclusion of the present simile can be thought to result either from his Stoic devotion or from the convenience of the theory to his present argument. For the divergence between the narrator's description of cosmic collapse and the textual reality, see pp. 99-122. Sklenář (2003) interprets Lucan's inconsistent Stoicism as a sign of his nihilistic worldview; for a discussion of *ecpyrosis*, see esp. 3-10, 282-4.

[79] Narducci (2002) 42-8 discusses parallels for expressions of this "universal law."

[80] This reading is supported both by Lucan's use of the gnomic present to describe it and by his decision to frame it as a readily excerptable—and therefore universally applicable—*sententia*. On the excerptability of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, see Dinter (2012) pp. 89-118. Johnson (1987) 90-3 speaks in general terms of a "natural law" that punishes Rome for her greatness; Sklenář (2003) 6-7 speaks of a "universal proposition."

[81] This cause functions in certain ways as a corollary to the first: the Republic fell because great things are destined to collapse, and the specific mechanism that led to Rome's collapse was the division of power between three people.

> *noxque diem caelo totidem per signa sequetur,*
> *nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas*
> *impatiens consortis erit* (1.89-93).
>
> So long as earth supports the sea and air the land, and long labors make the Titan turn, and in heaven night follows day through the same number of constellations, allies will have no loyalty concerning kingship, and power will be impatient of every consort.

Once again, Lucan's primary reason for invoking a cosmological theory is to emphasize the permanence of what he envisions as a universal law: until the world suffers *ecpyrosis* and normal laws of physics are undermined, it will always be the case that divided power leads to conflict.[82] Although the applicability of this second rule is more limited than the first, inasmuch as it would seem to abide only in human social interactions, it is nevertheless described in universal terms. Indeed, the implication of Lucan's *dum*-clause is that this social law exists on par with physical laws, and thus is similarly inherent in the makeup of reality.

When we contemplate the implications of its universalizing mode of analysis, a rather peculiar feature of the fourth movement emerges. If the fall of the Republic was a natural result of its great size, and moreover if its collapse was inevitable and irresistible in light of certain laws that are inherent in the world's physical structure—if these, in other words, are the chief causes of the conflict—then it stands to reason that the specific historical circumstances that led to its outbreak in 49 BC are only coincidental. This does not mean, of course, that it would be impossible to trace the specific events and figures that played a role in the state's war of self-destruction, but it does imply that the value of that exercise in trying to understand why the Republic collapsed is extremely circumscribed. Indeed, the fourth movement ultimately justifies the civil wars through

[82] Thus M. Y. Myers (2011) 406-7.

deductive reasoning, and so views the conflict as an understandable, even normal outcome in the grand scheme of universal events.

Movement 5: Bellum Civile *1.98-182*

With a patterned line marking the start of a new movement, Lucan next seeks to explain the outbreak of war with reference to the specific events, people, and circumstances that brought Caesar and Pompey into conflict: ***Temporis angusti*** mansit *concordia discors* ("The harmony **of a brief period** remained unharmonious," 1.98). In particular, he explores the breakdown of concord among the triumvirs (1.98-120), the personal characteristics of his chief actors (1.120-58), and the war's public causes (1.158-82). Scholarship treating these lines has tended to focus on Lucan's manipulation of the historiographical tradition, frequently reducing the issues to little more than a consideration of *Quellenforschung*. Debate about Lucan's poetics, on the other hand, has been surprisingly limited, often manifesting itself as arguments about whether these sections are freestanding entities or should be viewed together.[83] It will be my contention here that they do function together, and that they furnish the reader with an historicizing justification for the civil wars that stands explicitly in contrast with the teleological and cosmological explanations that have been explored thus far. Indeed, the movement's unity can be shown through several aspects of style and modes of argumentation that are unique to it and, moreover, are features commonly employed in historiographical accounts of the Julio-Pompeian wars.

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[83] Thus Roche (2009) Introduction §2 (p. 11) and notes at 1.92-120, 1.120-57, and 1.157-82. See also p. 28 n. 7.

One of the most basic ways in which this movement differs from the others is in its exposition of a logical chain of human causation for the human ills of civil war. Consequently, when Lucan seeks to explain how the conflict first arose, causative particles lead the way.[84] Throughout this movement, for example, he uses the word *nam* three times to justify—through an explication of historical background—a general statement about the circumstances that resulted in war:

> *temporis angusti mansit concordia discors*
> *paxque fuit non sponte ducum;* ***nam*** *sola futuri*
> *Crassus erat belli medius mora…* 100
>
> *dividitur ferro regnum, populique potentis,*
> *quae mare, quae terras, quae totum possidet orbem* 110
> *non cepit fortuna duos.* ***nam*** *pignora iuncti*
> *sanguinis et diro ferales omine taedas*
> *abstulit ad manes Parcarum Iulia saeva*
> *intercepta manu…*
>
> *suberant sed publica belli*
> *semina, quae populos semper mersere potentis*
> ***nam****que, ut opes nimias mundo fortuna subacto* 160
> *intulit et rebus mores cessere secundis*
> *praedaque et hostiles luxum suasere rapinae,*
> *non auro tectisve modus, mensasque priores*
> *aspernata fames…* (1.98-100, 109-14, 158-64).
>
> The harmony of a brief period remained unharmonious, and peace existed against the leaders' wills; **for** the only delay of the coming war was Crassus in between…
>
> The kingdom was partitioned by steel, and the fortune of a powerful people, which possesses sea, possesses lands, possesses the entire world—this did not endure two men. **For** Julia carried off the pledges of joined blood and the torches, beastly in their dread omen, when she was snatched to the shades by the cruel hand of the Fates…
>
> But the public seeds of war were latent, which always drown powerful people, **for** when fortune imported excessive wealth from a conquered

[84] Gould (1989) 64-5 similarly notes the frequency of inferential particles in Herodotus as a means of demonstrating his commitment to explaining the causes of the Persian Wars.

> world and customs gave way to favorable affairs and enemy plunder urged on booty and luxury, there was no limit to gold or roofs, and hunger spurned its former courses…

Although Lucan's use of *nam* may seem inconsequential, it is noteworthy that the quoted passages contain the first three instances of inferential terms in the entire *Bellum Civile*. Indeed, when one scans the other four movements, it is impossible to find any overt declarations of cause and effect. Looking forward to the narrative proper also invites us to attribute special meaning to the occurrences quoted above. Elsewhere in Book 1, *nam* either arises in direct speech (1.350, 1.660) or is used to explain the visible signs of horror that come across people witnessing omens of civil war (1.618; 1.674); nowhere else in the poem's opening act, in other words, does Lucan employ it to describe the reasons for the war. This analysis would seem to be confirmed by the statistics for the entire poem. The word *nam* occurs just 79 times, averaging one instance every 102 lines. In the passage quoted above, however, it arises three times in less than 80 lines, nearly four times the poem-wide average (≈15:4).

A similar pattern emerges when we expand our scope to include other words that can have an inferential force. *Enim* occurs only once in Book 1, and that in direct speech outside of the introduction that concerns us here (1.632); elsewhere, the word occurs infrequently.[85] More common are the adverbs *inde* and *hinc.*[86] Although these terms can have a range of senses—directional, temporal, or inferential—Lucan far prefers the first:

[85] There are just 21 total instances in the *BC*, averaging one every 403 lines.
[86] Lucan uses the correlatives to these words—*unde* and *illinc*—exclusively in a directional sense. The former occurs twice during the first four movements (1.15, 55).

of the 115 occurrences of *inde* and *hinc* in the *Bellum Civile*, 58 are clearly directional,[87] while an additional 20 may be interpreted as either directional or temporal. Only 6 have a clearly defined inferential force, while 8 others may be interpreted as either inferential or temporal. When we group these sets together, the resulting ratio is 39:7, a number that clearly reveals the rarity of *inde* and *hinc* as inferential adverbs in the *Bellum Civile.* It is interesting, then, to recognize that a sizeable percentage of this category—28.6% (4 out of 14)—occurs in Lucan's fifth movement:

> *non erat is populus quem pax tranquilla iuvaret,*
> *quem sua libertas immotis pasceret armis.*
> ***inde** irae faciles et, quod suasisset egestas,*
> *vile nefas, magnumque decus ferroque petendum*
> *plus patria potuisse sua, mensuraque iuris* 175
> *vis erat: **hinc** leges et plebis scita coactae*
> *et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni;*
> ***hinc** rapti fasces pretio sectorque favoris*
> *ipse sui populus letalisque ambitus urbi*
> *annua venali referens certamina Campo;* 180
> ***hinc** usura vorax avidumque in tempora fenus*
> *et concussa fides et multis utile bellum* (1.71-82).
>
> This was not the sort of people whom quiet peace might please, whose own freedom might nourish while their weapons were still. **Thence** came swift anger, and the cheap sort of sacrilege that poverty had encouraged, and a great honor to be sought with the sword (having more power over one's fatherland), and the measure of right being might; **from this** were laws and judgments of the people rammed through, and the tribunes disturbing courts in cahoots with the consuls; **from this** came high office grabbed for a fee, a people that was the courter of its own favor, and bribery—fatal to the city—returning the yearly contests to the Campus that sold its votes; **from this** came insatiable lending and interest eager for time, shattered credit and a war that was useful to many.

From the quoted lines it should be clear that Lucan does not use these terms in a merely deictic sense. He is not drawing distinctions between, on the one hand, those who lend

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[87] Two of these occur in the fifth movement: *tu sola furentem* | ***inde** virum poteras atque* ***hinc** retinere parentem* ("you alone [Julia] were able to keep your husband on one side and your father on the other," 1.115-6).

money and, on the other, those who buy office (*OLD hinc* 6); rather, he is suggesting that all these moral depravities occurred after or because of the peace that settled on Rome during the middle of the 2nd c. BC (*OLD hinc* 4, 8). This is a marked departure from Lucan's normal usage, and—together with the analysis of *nam* offered above—suggests that he is particularly concerned with temporal or logical sequence in the course of the fifth movement. Moreover, although it is difficult to draw a line between these alternative senses (does decadence begin merely after or because of peace?), I would suggest that Lucan's ambiguity is both poignant and intelligible: it arises because his explanations of the war throughout this movement employ the logical paradigm *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.[88] The use of inferential and combined inferential-temporal particles underscores this explanatory mode and subtly encourages the reader to understand the cause of the civil war as a chain of reactions that can best be perceived and elucidated through a survey of historical events.[89]

While statistical analysis can suggest that Lucan is offering a different type of explanation in the fifth movement than he does elsewhere, not all parts of it evince the anomalies observed above. In particular, the paired sketches of Pompey and Caesar (1.120-57) include neither inferential terms nor any explicit avowal that their opposed characters were a cause of the war. That Lucan viewed them in these terms, however, is implicit in the descriptions he provides. These biographical portraits establish a number

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[88] Arist. *Rh*. 2.24.8 (1401b) identifies this as an apparent (i.e. false) enthymeme, but his criticism is on strictly logical grounds. Indeed, that it could still be persuasive is shown by his reference to Demades' criticism of Demosthenes' policy towards Macedon.
[89] Lintott (1971) 496-7 observes that a similar procedure is adopted in describing the causes of civil war at Flor. 1.47.8-14 and Tac. *Ann*. 3.27. Although, as Lintott suggests, this might indicate Lucan's importance as a source in the historical tradition, it may also reflect his adoption of a historical mode throughout this movement.

of patently irreconcilable differences between the two generals, while the similes that he offers to characterize them suggest a conflict whose outcome is both obvious and dependent on the specific personalities of its chief actors. In the first case, we may consider the factors that Lucan posits as motivating both Pompey and Caesar:

> *stimulos dedit aemula virtus.* 120
> *tu, nova ne veteres obscurent acta triumphos*
> *et victis cedat piratica laurea Gallis,*
> *Magne, times; te iam series ususque laborum*
> *erigit impatiensque loci fortuna secundi* (1.120-4).
>
> Rivalrous prowess applied its goads. You, lest new deeds overshadow ancient triumphs and the crown of victory over the pirates give way to the conquest of Gauls, you, Magnus, are afraid; *you* [Caesar] a sequence and habit of labors already elevates, and a fortune impatient of second place.

Apart from the jarring, unmarked shift from Pompey to Caesar in the *te* following the semicolon, the meaning of these lines is entirely clear.[90] Pompey is motivated by fear (*times*, 1.123), and in particular fear that his early accomplishments will lose their luster with age. His primary reason for this concern is Caesar's war in Gaul (*victis… Gallis*, 1.122). This had been a resoundingly successful campaign that elevated Caesar to the status of military star (*erigit*, 1.124).[91] For his part, however, this victory was pursued

[90] I have reflected this change by italicizing the "you" that refers to Caesar. There is obviously no textual support for this emphasis, but it seems preferable to presenting a translation that is entirely opaque.

[91] Lucan's choice of words here is apt. When the (so-called) first triumvirate was formed in 60 BC, Caesar was only a minor player compared to Pompey and Crassus. Indeed, the decision to include him in the group was largely one of expediency: Pompey and Crassus were ineligible for the consulship, having held that office less than ten years before, but Caesar had just reached the minimum age required by law. With the elections fast approaching, however, an obstinate Cato the Younger made Caesar choose between entering the city to stand for office and waiting outside the *pomerium* for the senate to approve a triumph for his recent command in Spain. Against all expectations, Caesar gave up the triumph, apparently having been promised a proconsular command after his term in office that would be likely to furnish opportunities for another. That command was the *imperium* over Transalpine Gaul that Lucan mentions here.

because of an unflinching drive to become *princeps*, or first man in the state (*impatiensque loci fortuna secundi*, 1.124). Unlike Pompey, Caesar has few past glories to rely on, and must ever be ready to forge ahead if he wishes to realize his goal (*series ususque laborum*, 1.123).[92] The two men can thus be seen to have widely divergent desires and outlooks that help account for their eventual conflict.

Although this analysis paints a fair picture of Lucan's protagonists, pushing on the text a little further can help us tease out additional implications of a confrontation between two men such as Lucan describes. We may infer from the brief portrait of Caesar that the general wished to climb at least as high on the political ladder as Pompey (*impatiens loci fortuna* ***secundi***, 1.124). Military victory was of course the traditional basis of socio-political relevance, and so the Gallic campaign presented an ideal opportunity for advancement. Indeed, it proved to be a massive boon: for the better part of a decade, Caesar's military engagements met with virtually unlimited success. Although this was beneficial for Caesar's own reputation (*erigit*, 1.124), it posed serious problems for his partner. The recent campaign in Gaul threatened to overshadow Pompey's earlier triumphs (*ne… obscurent*, 1.121), and thus to diminish the basis for Pompey's own standing in Roman society. Recognizing this allows us to see how Caesar's victories over a foreign enemy can be a source of fear to Pompey (*times*, 1.123), even though the two were nominal allies and fellow Romans. Moreover, it helps to reveal that Pompey was in a serious bind during Caesar's second five-year command in Gaul: barring some other war of conquest in another part of the empire, the only way for

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[92] Pompey's impotence may even be suggested by the fact that Caesar's victories (*victis Gallis*) encroach on his half of this description; Caesar, on the other hand, is only concerned with his next move.

him to prevent the further erosion of his own position was to limit Caesar's forward progress.[93] Simply put, his success now depended on Caesar's failure, and vice versa.[94] This necessity is presumably what drove Pompey into the arms of the senatorial faction, and so accounts for his break from Caesar. The dissolution of their *amicitia*, however, did not alleviate the underlying problem. Indeed, Lucan's description of their motivations on the eve of war reveals that he saw in Caesar and Pompey a confrontation of ambition and fear that made for a dangerous compound. Thus in capping the lines quoted above he offers a pithy *sententia*: "and already Caesar is not able to endure any superior, nor Pompey any equal" (*nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem* | *Pompeiusve parem*, 1.125-6). The point to be inferred from this quip is that the conflict was directly attributable to a clash of personalities. Within the context of this movement, in other words, historical particulars offer the most convincing explanation for the civil wars.[95]

After this brief excursus, Lucan embarks on a longer description of his protagonists. Although in its details this section merely expands on the ideas just

[93] Pompey was technically serving as governor of Spain during this time, but he exercised this command from just outside the *pomerium* at Rome, trusting the actual administration of the province to his legates. Short of being granted a special command, an outcome that Caesar might already have been inclined to obstruct, Pompey had few prospects on this front. Rome was also still reeling from the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae in 53 BC, and in these circumstances another major campaign was unlikely to be entrusted to one of the triumvirs. On the historical causes of the war, see Gruen (1974), esp. 449-97.
[94] Cf. Sal. *Cat*. 17.7, who claims that Crassus participated in Catiline's conspiracy because he hated Pompey and wanted anybody's influence to increase in opposition to his rival's power (*cuiusvis opes voluisse contra illius* [i.e. *Magni*] *potentiam crescere*).
[95] Lintott (1971) traces the development of these issues within the historical sources (493-4), and later sketches Lucan's treatment of Caesar, Pompey, and Cato in order to show that Lucan's depiction of Pompey is relatively accurate (498-504).

discussed,[96] it is enlivened with similes that furnish the reader with more vivid images of each protagonist. In these celebrated passages, Pompey is described as a decrepit oak tree that is only revered because of its immense size and the antiquity of the offerings attached to it (1.136-43), while Caesar is presented as a lightning bolt that instills fear in those who see it and visits sudden destruction upon even the temple of its own divine figurehead (1.151-7). Other scholars have discussed these passages at length, and we need not be distracted by a full consideration of them here.[97] For our present purposes, it suffices to note that they reinforce the conclusion I drew above by highlighting the role of the generals' personalities as the most immediate cause of the civil wars: Caesar's unrelenting quest for power drives him to extremes of violence, even if that means acts of impiety,[98] while Pompey is markedly passive, relying on his reputation to garner respect from those around him. Essentially, the similes explain the underlying cause of the *impatiens*/*timens* dynamic that was discussed above. Also implicit in them, however, is an explanation of why Caesar was ultimately the war's victor. As Paul Roche rightly notes, the similes suggest that Pompey's chances of defeating Caesar were about as good

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[96] For Pompey, Lucan emphasizes the extent of time since his last military victories (1.129-31), his futile attempts to bolster his standing through the support of the *plebs* (1.131-4), and his excessive reliance on old accolades (1.134-5); for Caesar, he underscores the refusal to trust in his reputation (1.143-4), an obsessive pursuit of new victories (1.144-6), and the violence of his onslaught (1.147-50). Roche (2009) at 143-4 notes that "Caesar's characteristics are introduced by two negative statements which deny to Caesar the principal characteristics of Pompey: reliance upon *nomen* (144, cf. 135) and *fama* (144, cf. 134 f.)." This contrast reinforces my claim that the fifth movement envisions their personalities as responsible for the civil war.

[97] See, for example, Feeney (1986); Narducci (2002) 187-94; Roche (2009) at 1.136-43 and 1.151-7.

[98] This is implicit in the assertion that the lightning "rages against its own temples" (*in sua templa furit*, 1.155). This can not only be seen as an attack on Jupiter himself, but also as a sort of civil war in miniature: the word *sua* hints at the self-destruction and the impropriety of the lightning's particular target (cf. *populumque potentem* | ***in sua*** *victrici conversum* ***viscera*** *dextra* (1.2-3).

as those of an old oak withstanding the force of a lightning bolt.[99] Faced with the images that Lucan presents, therefore, the reader is invited to conclude that Pompey and his faction were doomed to failure from the start. Realizing this implication of the similes adds an important layer to our understanding of the logical processes that guide the fifth movement: just as this movement attributes the outbreak of the war to the unique personalities of Pompey and Caesar, so too does it envision them as responsible for the war's outcome. Character, in other words, drives both cause and effect. Although this idea is not expressed with inferential terms, it is nevertheless central to the analytical mode adopted throughout the fifth movement.

Further aspects of this tendency emerge as Lucan begins to address the societal causes of the war:

> *suberant sed publica belli*
> *semina, quae populos semper mersere potentis* (1.159-60).
>
> But latent amongst the commons were the seeds of war that have always drowned powerful peoples.

On first glance, the relative clause describing these *publica semina* looks similar to the sort of universal law discussed in the context of the fourth movement, and thus would appear to pose a major challenge to my thesis that these movements employ different modes of analysis. Consequently, it will be useful to discuss this passage at some length. Leaving aside the *namque* that begins line 1.161 and has already been shown to point to a type of analysis that is unique to this movement, I would instead like to consider the direction of Lucan's logic. It was noted earlier that the universalizing explanations of the war employ deductive reasoning, positing that the collapse of the Republic is best

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[99] Roche (2009) at 1.120-58.

understood as a particular occurrence of a law that theoretically applies in every case. Lucan's use of the present tense to express that idea underscores its generalizing force, while his sententious formulation of it encourages the reader to excerpt the law and apply it to other contexts outside the poem.[100] "Universality" is the entire point. Were we to schematize this logic he employs there, we would produce a proof like the following:

> "Great things **collapse** upon themselves."
> The Roman Republic was a great thing.
> Therefore, the Roman Republic collapsed upon itself.

In contrast to this, the assertion encountered in the fifth movement employs inductive reasoning. Our best indication of this is Lucan's insistence that the seeds of war—which we will soon learn was the importation of wealth—"have always drowned" powerful nations (*semper mersere*, 1.160). The combination of *semper* and a verb in the perfect tense reveals that this statement is based on a consideration of past events.[101] Indeed, Lucan does not insist that wealth always *leads* to civil war, but only that it always has done so in the past. According to this formulation, it remains possible for new scenarios to arise that would compel him to change his *semper* to a *saepe*. In either case, however, his argument is one of probability. The rule envisioned here is not a theoretical absolute, but a likelihood based on experience and observation of the past. Consequently, the proof Lucan employs looks entirely different from that above:

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[100] On this, see my discussion of Movement 4, pp. 52-61. On excerptability as a defining feature of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, see Dinter (2012) 89-118. As Roche (2009) at 1.92-3 notes, the *sententia* that punctuates Lucan's second universal law was "among the most popular of all the *sententiae* in *BC*, as evident in the high frequency with which they were quoted by Medieval Latin authors" (quoting Sanford (1933) 6 f.).

[101] Even if one wishes to call this a gnomic perfect, the distinction between Lucan's formulation here and his use of simple present tense verbs in the fourth movement, which were also said to have gnomic force, demands some explanation.

> The importation of wealth **preceded** the collapse of other powerful nations.
> The Roman Republic was a powerful nation.
> The Roman Republic imported much wealth.
> The Roman Republic collapsed.
> Therefore, the importation of wealth **has caused** powerful nations to collapse.

From this we may conclude two things. First, although Lucan's formulation is initially presented in absolute terms, the logic underlying this absolute is entirely different from that which he employs in the fourth movement. Second, this sort of inductive reasoning depends on the knowledge of past events, and thus can be understood as an attempt to comprehend the civil war in historical terms.

These observations lead us to an aspect of the analytical mode presented in the fifth movement that is absent from those employed in the third and fourth, namely that it is incapable of viewing the onset of the conflict as inevitable. Indeed, attempts to seek causation in past events invite the author and reader to contemplate times at which things could have gone in a different direction. The result of this, when such cogitations are incorporated within a text, is "counter-factual history," an exercise that seeks to identify watershed moments by speculating about what would have happened if specific events had seen a different outcome.[102] Implicit in this practice is the idea that human affairs are not predestined, but have resulted from real choices made by the people of the past in response to unique circumstances and events. Few interpretive modes are more indicative of a historical reflex. The high frequency of counter-factual speculation in the

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[102] Cf. Sal. *Cat*. 39.4; Liv. 9.17-9, with Morello (2002), which includes a helpful summary of scholarship on the passage, and the comments of Oakley (2005) ad loc. The device, of course, is not limited to historiography, but in other genres its primary function is the creation of pathos. For a detailed study of such *Beinahe-Episoden* in ancient epic, see Nesselrath (1992). For a discussion of the phenomenon in modern literature, see Ferguson (2000).

fifth movement thus provides some of the strongest support for my contention that Lucan here employs historicizing explanations for the civil wars.

The most obvious example of this phenomenon occurs when Lucan treats the death of Julia (1.109-20). Explicitly employing a counterfactual statement, he claims that Caesar and Pompey would never have come to blows if she had continued to stand between them:

> ***quod si tibi fata dedissent***
> *maiores in luce moras,* ***tu*** *sola furentem* 115
> *inde virum* ***poteras*** *atque hinc retinere parentem*
> *armatasque manus excusso iungere ferro* (1.114-7).
>
> **But if destiny had given you** [Julia] greater delays in the light, **you** alone **would have been able** to hold back your raging husband on one side and your father on the other and to join their armed hands after casting away their swords.

A similar idea arises in Lucan's treatment of Crassus. There he calls the third triumvir an impediment to the future war (*sola futuri | Crassus erat belli medius mora,* 1.99-100) and proceeds to compare him to the Corinthian Isthmus (1.100-2).[103] In the course of this simile, he employs a future less vivid conditional to describe what would happen if the Isthmus were suddenly removed: "if its land should recede, it would let the Ionian Sea crash into the Aegean" (*si terra recedat, | Ionium Aegaeo frangat mare*, 1.102-3).[104] The

[103] Lucan is somewhat inconsistent, as he also refers to Julia as "the only person able to separate her husband and her father" (***sola*** *inde virum poteras atque hinc retinere parentem*, 1.115-6). Although this discrepancy is obviously of interest to my larger project, it is irrelevant to the current discussion, which is concerned to show only that Lucan's *analytical mode* is uniform throughout the fifth movement.
[104] The terminology adopted by most grammars tends to obscure a simple point: the future less vivid, present counterfactual, and past counterfactual are all *unreal* conditionals (i.e. they express potentiality rather than fact, and so take a subjunctive). They ultimately differ from one another in tense, not sense. Lucan's use of the present subjunctive here is merely necessitated by the fact that the Isthmus has not, in fact, given way, whereas Crassus most certainly did.

real-world significance of this parallel is set forth in no uncertain terms: Crassus' death allowed Caesar and Pompey to come to blows:

> *… sic, ubi saeva*
> *arma ducum dirimens miserando funere Crassus*
> *Assyrias Latio maculavit sanguine Carrhas,* 105
> *Parthica Romanos solverunt damna furores* (1.103-6).

> … so too, when Crassus—the man holding the leaders' savage weapons back from their pitiful funeral—had stained Assyrian Carrhae with Latin blood, did Parthian defeats unleash Roman furies.

The implication of this final statement, of course, is that peace would have held at Rome if Crassus had not been killed at Carrhae. Indeed, the counterfactual idea inherent in this formulation permits Lucan to claim that the Parthians "bestowed civil war upon the Romans" (*bellum victis civile dedistis*, 1.108).

Let us consider one final instance of counterfactual history. Although this example is relayed more obliquely than the two instances already discussed, it reveals the full extent to which a historicizing reflex permeates Lucan's fifth introductory movement. When Lucan begins his discussion of the war's public causes, he first explains that the importation of wealth led to luxury and sloth at Rome (1.160-70).[105] After this, he turns to the character of the Romans themselves, observing that "this was not the sort of people whom **quiet peace** might placate, whose own freedom might nourish **while their weapons were still**" (*non erat is populus quem* ***pax tranquilla*** *iuvaret, | quem sua libertas* ***immotis*** *pasceret* ***armis***, 1.171-2). In both of these lines, we may observe that the poet's focus remains firmly fixed on the Romans' inability to tolerate peace (*pax tranquilla* ≈ *immotis armis*); indeed, he even suggests that this drove them to war at times when their political independence was already secure (*non quem sua libertas pasceret*,

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[105] For the development of these ideas in Roman historiography, see Lintott (1971) 495-7.

1.172). Within the larger context of the section, however, this exposition of the Romans' national character serves as a hinge that explains how the luxury with which Lucan begins (1.158-70) was able to mutate into vices more destructive to the fabric of Roman life. Indeed, these are presented in a lengthy catalogue immediately following the lines quoted above: "**Thence** came swift anger… **from this** were laws and judgments of the people rammed through… **from this** came high office grabbed for a fee… **from this** came insatiable lending… and a war that was useful to many" (***inde*** *irae faciles*…. ***hinc*** *leges et plebis scita coactae*… ***hinc*** *rapti fasces pretio*… ***hinc*** *usura vorax*… *et multis utile bellum*, 1.173-81).

What is the reader to make of this logical sequence? We may begin by simplifying and inverting Lucan's proposition as follows: civil war was the result of social depravity, which developed when the Romans' innate bellicosity persisted in a state of both peace and luxury. When considered in this form, it becomes quite clear that Lucan is not trying to argue that wealth alone was responsible for the civil wars. On the contrary, he suggests that wealth was essentially a catalyst that unleashed the negative potential in Rome's (already bellicose) society when it occurred in the presence of peace. The reaction envisioned is not simple ("wealth => vice"), but rather depends on three distinct components. Recognizing this, we may infer that moral depravity could have been avoided if Rome had continued to find foreign enemies against whom to unleash its furor. Indeed, this helps to explain why the subjugation of the world is so closely related to Rome's importation of wealth at the beginning of this passage (*mundo subacto*, 1.160): had some other foe existed as an outlet for the Romans' bellicosity during this time,

Roman morals would presumably have remained intact, and the civil war would not have occurred.[106]

The possibility of curbing moral decline, however faint it may have been, is further suggested through the invocation of *exempla* from the Roman past.[107] Lucan refers to three such figures during the fifth movement, and his express purpose in each instance is to demonstrate a type of behavior that would have prevented the civil wars from occurring.[108] The first of these arises in the course of his argument that Julia's death resulted in the dissolution of concord between Caesar and Pompey. At the end of the counterfactual statement discussed above, he asserts that Julia would have been able to reunite her father and husband, "just like the Sabine women, standing in between, joined fathers- to their sons-in-law" (*ut generos soceris mediae iunxere Sabinae*, 1.118). Lucan's invocation of this *exemplum* is clearly intended to highlight the role that elite Roman women traditionally played in binding important families to one another. The prospect of shared descendants—whether children or grandchildren—promised to serve as a perpetual bond between two men, a symbol of their mutual self-interest and a guarantee of their fair dealing with one another. Such ties were thus highly conducive to social order, and the Sabine Women represented an extreme and idealized instantiation of normative behavior in this field. Indeed, the historical Caesar's initial reaction to Julia's

[106] This echoes the concerns of the second movement, where the poet begs the Romans of the past to pursue further conquests before turning against themselves (1.13-23).
[107] The bibliography on *exempla* in Roman historiography is massive. See esp. Chaplin (2000); Kraus (2005); Roller (2009).
[108] In this the *exempla* of the fifth movement differ greatly from the reference to Romulus and Remus that arises at the end of the fourth movement (1.93-7). The latter emerges because the twins furnish a well-known instance of a time when "divided power led to conflict;" its chief purpose is thus to help prove the validity of the general law that Lucan posits to explain the breakdown of the triumvirate. That the bloodshed comes from Roman history and occurred between brothers seems to be of only secondary interest.

death demonstrates the continued importance of this practice into the period that Lucan treats: since she had not produced a viable child before she died, he offered to divorce his wife Calpurnia and marry Pompey's daughter in order to maintain a familial bond between them.[109] Lucan's invocation of the Sabine Women in this context can thus be thought to highlight the importance of elite marriage alliances as a force of social stability; indeed, it even suggests that the continued efficacy of family ties could have prevented the outbreak of civil war.

Another set of *exempla* is invoked when Lucan describes the importation of wealth into Roman society:

> *tum longos iungere fines*
> *agrorum, et quondam duro sulcata Camilli*
> *vomere et antiquos Curiorum passa ligones*
> *longa sub ignotis extendere rura colonis* (1.167-70).
>
> Then they joined the long borders of fields, and extended to great length under nameless tenants the plots that were once tilled by the hard ploughshare of Camillus and that felt the ancient mattocks of the Curii.

Although these lines border on indignation as they describe the property of famous Romans being tended by unknown *coloni*,[110] the chief lesson to be derived from the *exempla* Lucan cites is that wealthy Romans ought to have been ploughing their own

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[109] Pompey did not take him up on this offer. Roche (2009) at 1.98-120 ("The credibility of Lucan's causes"), drawing on Gruen (1974) 449-70, outlines the evidence for the relationship between Caesar and Pompey following Julia's death. In treating this issue, however, Roche erroneously claims that Caesar promised to divorce Cornelia. By 53 BC Cornelia had been dead for fifteen years; Caesar was married to Calpurnia Pisonis at this time (Suet. *Jul*. 21).

[110] The Romans attached special significance to country villas owned by famous men, e.g. Seneca the Younger's description of one owned by Scipio Africanus (Sen. *Ep*. *Mor*. 86). Roche (2009) at 1.68-9 notes that Camillus and the Curii are also paired at Hor. *Carm*. 1.12.41-4; they occur together again during the necromancy of Erictho at *BC* 6.768-7, a passage no doubt indebted to the Vergilian underworld, where Camillus is mentioned alone at *A*. 6.825.

fields. This suggestion touches on the familiar ideal of the farmer/statesman that rests at the core of how the Romans imagined themselves.[111] Central to the image's appeal was the notion that farming encouraged upright behavior and kept men in the vigorous shape necessary for the success of Rome's military machine.[112] Thus it was tending his field that the senators found Cincinnatus when they offered him the dictatorship, and it was back to that same field that he went after fulfilling his duties to the state (Liv. 3.26.1-29.7). Although other examples could be adduced, it suffices to observe that this concept was so deeply ingrained in the Roman imagination that it continued to endure even after it became impractical and obsolete.[113] In the present context, Lucan invokes two *exempla* as representatives of this old Roman way of life, and in particular of people who were emblematic of the moral fortitude that came with it: whereas the owners of large estates passed off farming labor to social inferiors, and so robbed themselves of the opportunity

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[111] For an extended discussion of this phenomenon, see Malamud (2009).

[112] Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) at Hor. *Car*. 1.12.42 cite a number of texts extolling the benefits of frugality, including the passage under consideration here. The most overt statement of this attitude comes from Cato Maior *Agr*. Pr. See also the discussion of Fitzgerald (1996) 391-4, which summarizes the ancient views and provides bibliographic references. One possible exception to the standard praise of farming occurs at Sal. *Cat*. 4.1 (*servilibus officiis intentum*); Delz (1985), however, has argued that this phrase must mean "occupied with the management of my slaves." In either event, Sallust's admiration of ancestral poverty is expressed unambiguously at *Cat*. 12.3-5.

[113] Laws requiring that a certain percentage of a senator's wealth be held in Italian land, whatever their original purpose, effectively codified this cultural ideal (Liv. 21.63.3-4). The rise of large estates—which benefited from economies of scale and tended to privilege cash crops over those, such as grain, whose price was kept artificially low by government subsidies—may be understood as an attempt to make the best of these legal stipulations during a period when trade provided greater returns on one's investment. The problems arising from this system were a major concern in the late Republic; for a general summary, see Scullard (1959). That the root cause was never addressed is evident from Domitian's edict limiting viticulture in order to bolster the production of grain. The subsequent cancellation of the edict (Philostr. *VS* 520) only shows that it was unpopular with wine producers. For the sources of the edict, see Coleman (1998) at Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.11; for an overview of the interpretive issues, see Griffin (2008) 79.

to cultivate the skills central to Roman identity, Camillus and the Curii served as ideal role models. That the Romans were unable to follow their example, and in consequence allowed their vices to worsen, is implicitly posited as a cause for the civil war. Despite the ready availability of such models, exemplarity failed to turn the tide of moral decline.

As I hope the preceding discussion has shown, the three parts of Lucan's fifth introductory movement are remarkably consistent in their style and logical mode. Although Lucan here posits a number of reasons why the civil wars broke out, each involves an appeal to historical particulars and employs devices that are typical of the historiographical genre. Indeed, the specific combination of factors that he chooses to highlight in this movement—watershed moments (the deaths of Crassus and Julia), the opposed characters of his protagonists (Pompey and Caesar), and a general state of depravity that fostered open conflict (the public causes of war)—is nearly identical to those that Sallust offers to account for the conspiracy of Catiline.[114] Yet these interests are not unique to two authors whose affinity is now well established.[115] One need not look far to find examples of these same features in other historians: watershed moments formed an important part of the narratives of, for example, Herodotus,[116] Thucydides,[117]

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[114] Within Sallust's *Catiline* we find watershed moments at 15.2-4 (the murder of Aurelia Orestilla's stepson), 23.1-6, 26.3 (Quintus Curius' loose lips), and 26.5 (Catiline's last failure to achieve the consulship); an extended character sketch at 5.1-5; and extensive discussion of how luxury and vice undermined traditional social morals at 5.8-14.1 and 37.3-39.5.

[115] Batstone (2010).

[116] Hdt. 1.1-5 offers various accounts of how the conflict between Europe and Asia first arose. In typical manner, he is hesitant to say which is authoritative. Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella (2007) at Hdt. 1.1.1-5 emphasize that Herodotus' rationalization and politicization of causes with divine agency (at least as it is portrayed in mythical accounts) is consistently muted.

and Asinius Pollio;[118] character sketches occur in both Livy[119] and Tacitus;[120] and the importance of moral decline as a factor in governmental collapse is noted by Livy,[121] Tacitus,[122] and Velleius Paterculus.[123] The last of these is particularly telling, since Velleius' willingness to attribute moral decay to excessive wealth and peace abroad reveals that this concept is not endorsed only by those, like Sallust and Livy, who adopt a

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[117] Thuc. 1.24.1-82.6, offers a lengthy account of how internal strife at Epidamnus led to open hostilities between Athens and Sparta. Thucydides' decision to open his narrative with this event implies that it was the trigger for the entire conflict.
[118] Hor. *Carm*. 2.1.1 is often cited as evidence that Pollio's history began with the conspiracy of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus in 60 BC; on this, see André (1949) 44-50; Pelling (1979) 76; Morgan (2000) 54. Woodman (2003), following Havas (1980), argues rather that Pollio may have included an extended treatment of earlier events, perhaps as far back as the Gracchi, that paved the way for the formation of the so-called first triumvirate. However this may be, all scholars are in agreement that Pollio did not begin with Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, but with a "watershed moment" after which the outbreak of civil war was inevitable. Thus Roche (2009) Introduction §6 (a), accepting the former proposition, claims that Pollio's "starting point asserts a *causative relationship* between the original pact of the dynasts and the commencement of civil war in 49" (emphasis added).
[119] E.g. Liv. 21.4.2-10, describing Hannibal at length.
[120] E.g. Tac. *Ann*. 4.1.2-3, on Sejanus. As is well known, this and the preceding passage both adapt Sallust's depiction of Catiline. On this, see Martin and Woodman (1989) at Tac. *Ann*. 4.1.3; Clauss (1997). For the effect of these imitations on the reader's experience of history, see O'Gorman (2009). Gibson (2010) 34-5, citing Feeney (1982) 47-9, notes that Silius Italicus' description of Hannibal invokes not only Livy's portrait, but also Lucan's depiction of Caesar; he further claims that this "should be seen as a key way in which Silius imitates historiographical practice" (35).
[121] E.g. Liv. Pr. 9; 1.11-2; 34.4.1-20.
[122] E.g. Tac. *Ann*. 3.27; 3.55.1-5. Although this ends with a suggestion that a) luxury was willingly restrained after it became dangerous to be perceived as wealthy or b) morality is cyclical, these propositions do not undermine the general concept that luxury and vice initially led to crisis. See Woodman and Martin (1996) at Tac. *Ann*. 3.55.1, 5.
[123] Vell. 2.1.1-2. To the authors just mentioned Roche (2009) Introduction §6 (a) adds Diodorus 37.2.1 (erroneously cited as 37.2.3, a passage that rather concerns changes of fortune in the Social War) and a number of second-century BC sources that provide the basis for this idea in the later historical tradition. The scholarship on the supposed decline of Roman morality is vast; see esp. the excellent discussion of Levick (1982).

pessimistic historical outlook.[124] On the contrary, this view is simply typical of the historiographical genre as Lucan received it.[125] When we take all of this into account, it is easy to see that the fifth movement adopts a historicizing mode throughout, employing the logical processes and expectations of that genre to account for the causes of the Roman civil wars.

Syncrisis

Having surveyed Lucan's introduction and demonstrated that it consists of five distinct movements, we are finally in a position to consider the larger effect of this structure on the reader who is made to encounter it. We may first conclude that these movements operate on some level as a series of proems: they all set out the topic of the poem (Conte's *quid*) and provide a unique outlook on that theme or an explanatory model for why the civil wars occurred (Conte's *quale*); moreover, each one introduces the reader to a theme or image that will recur later in the poem and adequately prepares the reader to make sense of the narrative that begins at verse 1.183. As was shown throughout the discussion above, however, these movements contradict one another in manifest ways, and indeed in ways even more violent than our initial survey led us to suspect. It is not only the case, for example, that the pessimistic view of the second movement stands in contrast to the optimistic outlook of the third; rather, its inability to devise any reason for the war places it into conflict with the entire suite of explanations that is furnished in the third, fourth, and fifth movements. The historicizing mode of analysis can likewise be

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[124] On style as a reflection of historical pessimism or optimism, see Woodman (1988) 117-90.

[125] Thus Gibson (2010) 43 observes that Lucan "is giving his work the conventions of historiography."

shown to preclude the logic on which Lucan's teleological and universalizing approaches depend: whereas the former assumes that the course of history could have been altered, and so permits certain individuals or events to be blamed for the civil wars, the latter two conceive of the conflict as a necessary event that rested outside the control of any individual. Indeed, the viewpoints offered throughout the introduction are not just contradictory—they are mutually exclusive.

The role of Lucan's genre on the reader's experience of this introduction demands some consideration in this context. The *Bellum Civile* is an historical epic, and this can rightly be thought to necessitate an engagement with the causal structures that traditionally operated in both historiographical and epic contexts. To some extent, therefore, we ought to expect Lucan to suggest historical causes for the war even as he invokes cosmological or teleological explanations: ignoring them completely would seem implausible and make for an unrecognizable narrative.[126] Indeed, a blending of analytical modes has even been identified as a distinctive feature of post-Augustan poetry, and on first glance Lucan's introduction seems to be engaged in an extended attempt to expand the possibilities of epic in a manner similar to Ovid.[127] To explain Lucan's introduction on only these grounds, however, would be to ignore the ways in which his procedure diverges radically from that of others. Whereas Ovid manages to weave together

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[126] Thus Feeney (1991) 250-301 argues that Lucan's abandonment of the divine apparatus does not necessarily create a rationalistic text, but rather helps to undermine his own vatic authority in telling the story of the civil wars. Feeney overstates the absence of divine figures in Lucan's introduction, however, dismissing the "Praise of Nero" almost entirely, e.g. at p. 276, n. 113, where he directs the reader to "Johnson's superb hits on Nero as Lucan's Muse" (citing Johnson (1987) 118, 121-3). As discussed above, there is no reason to take the third movement at anything but face value. For further discussion of Lucan's engagement with the historiographical tradition, see Roche (2009) Introduction §6 (d).

[127] Thus Gibson (2010), building on the work of K. S. Myers (1994).

cosmological and Callimachean *causae* within both his proem and the remainder of his epic,[128] Lucan divides the possible approaches to his poem into five different movements that quite obviously conflict with one another. Indeed, the extreme degree to which these divergent strands are isolated within Lucan's introduction argues strongly against the suggestion that their arrangement is merely sequential and aimed at creating narrative suspense. On the contrary, the effect of Lucan's introduction is not unity, but disunity. The reader must therefore conclude that the nature of Lucan's introduction is fundamentally different from that of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and that Lucan's exploration of different poetic *qualia* serves some other purpose.

This same rationale suggests that we are not merely dealing with an over-determined universe. Although modern readers often struggle to accept the attribution of a given event to both human and divine causes, believing that one of these must govern the other, ancient readers seem to have no such compunctions; indeed, variant explanations are often posited without any sense that they are mutually exclusive or might require some excuse or justification on the part of the speaker.[129] The procedure is perhaps most familiar from the writings of Herodotus, who frequently juxtaposes different explanations for the same event while suspending judgment about which is correct.[130] Thus in describing the Tempe valley in Thessaly, he does not deny the possibility that Poseidon formed the ravine because Poseidon is commonly accepted as the god of earthquakes and a tremor plainly formed the geological structure in question

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[128] Myers (1994), esp. 5-21. The phrase *perpetuum deducite carmen* ("Whittle down a continuous song," Ov. *Met*. 1.4) best reflects this dual interest, on which, see Kenney (1976).
[129] Hardie (2009) 231-57 traces this feature in ancient epic; this chapter is a revision of Hardie (2008).
[130] On multiple causation in Herodotus, see Gould (1989) 63-85, esp. 67-71.

(Hdt. 7.129.4). Divine causation not excluded outright, but neither is a natural-philosophical account touted as the only or best explanation: Herodotus effectively leaves the question open in a manner that encourages his reader to make the final determination about the first cause. Although the present example is rather innocuous, the same procedure is employed in relating potential omens that might indicate a greater or lesser degree of divine involvement in the events of the Persian Wars.[131] On first sight, this tendency might seem to undermine my argument that the *Bellum Civile*'s introductory movements are unique in how they furnish alternative approaches to the civil wars: if other ancient authors—and so presumably a large number of ancient readers—were comfortable with multiple causation, we should be able to excuse Lucan's practice on the same grounds. This train of thought would then lead us to conclude that Lucan's fractured introduction merely represents the formalization of an impulse that manifests itself more diffusely and on a smaller scale in earlier historical texts.[132]

My response to this challenge again hinges on the compositional structure of the introduction. As discussed earlier, each of Lucan's five movements is self-sufficient, furnishing coherent and satisfactory explanations for the civil wars that do not depend on the information provided in any of the others. Indeed, any one of them standing alone could serve as an adequate *entrée* to the narrative that begins at verse 1.183. Although on first reading some of these movements might seem as if they can coexist, a few quite obviously contradict one another, and still others—such as the fourth and fifth— appear mutually exclusive upon closer analysis. Yet the contradictions between them only

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[131] Haumbold (2007), esp. 236-40.
[132] Thus Hardie (2009) 231-57 suggests that Lucan's fondness for "whether… or" constructions is a natural extension of what we find in Lucretius, Vergil, and Ovid.

emerge so clearly because Lucan has taken care to isolate each potential approach to the war: since his movements can be thought to function as sustained attempts to prove the legitimacy of a single outlook or explanatory mode (to provide, in other words, Conte's poetic *quale*), each one ought to preclude the others by default. This marks a radical departure from the procedure of authors like Herodotus, as well as from Lucan's own practice elsewhere in the poem. The piling up of proemic units that we find at the start of the *Bellum Civile* is not simply an "either… or" proposition, nor even a case of causal ambiguity; rather, Lucan's decision to juxtapose a series of divergent proemic units forces the reader to confront both the potential appeal and the interpretive failings of each one.

The anxiety that this procedure has caused for Lucan's readers can be easily divined from the continual disputes about it: for nearly two millennia, countless scholars have tried—and failed—to present a convincing argument about how its component parts intelligibly work together to offer a single and coherent view of the poem's universe.[133] I would suggest that this debate would have unfolded quite differently if Lucan had chosen to merge the different outlooks and explanations discussed above into a single proemic unit. Indeed, this would have resulted in a situation in which we could not differentiate between any movements at all, and thus one in which Lucan's introduction would appear truly chaotic: optimistic and pessimistic would sit side-by-side, and cosmological explanations for the civil wars would more readily abut those inferred from the chain of historical events. If this were the case, scholars might rightly conclude that the beginning of the *Bellum Civile* is just another example of the obsession with multiple causation that

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[133] See pp. 27-33, esp. p. 28 n. 7.

is prominent in post-Lucretian epic.[134] But this, of course, is not how Lucan chose to begin his poem. Rather, he has structured his introduction into five self-contained movements and made these movements disagree with one another in various ways. In doing so, he effectively draws his reader's attention to the discrepancies between them, even as he suggests the internal validity of each.

These observations lead us to a paradoxical situation. In the course of his introduction, Lucan furnishes the reader with a range of approaches to the civil war. Some of them are dispositional, others explanatory, but each offers a response that is both coherent and intelligible in the terms that it sets forth. Moreover, readers confronted with this suite of seemingly viable explanations for the civil war are tacitly encouraged to try to make sense of the conflict: since all five options seem *prima facie* reasonable, our odds of finding meaning in the subsequent poem ought to be quite good. When we stop to compare these options with one another, however, it becomes clear that they are contradictory, and in some cases mutually exclusive. Although we may infer from this that at least one of them is incorrect or misleading, Lucan's mode of presentation does not allow us to identify which one it might be: since all are internally coherent, there are no obvious deficiencies that might enable us to dismiss an imposter with absolute certainty. Indeed, any such evaluations will necessarily depend on subjective criteria.[135] We are consequently left in a position where we feel we ought to be able to approach the *Bellum Civile* in a meaningful way—and indeed may even have the proper response at

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[134] On this, see Myers (1994); Hardie (2009) 231-57; Gibson (2010).
[135] Thus critics of the "Praise of Nero" normally seek to demonstrate that it is ironic or subversive. Again, see my discussion on pp. 44-52 for a fuller discussion.

our fingertips—but are nevertheless incapable of determining what it might be. Lucan has effectively given us too much information to account for the civil wars.

What are we to make of all this? In certain respects, Lucan's introduction looks like other epic beginnings. It contains common proemic tropes, alludes to other texts, and on first reading seems to prepare us adequately for the narrative that ensues. This familiarity is deceiving, however, since Lucan's introductory movements effectively cancel each other out. Despite making our way through 182 verses of hexameter, we are given no clear indication of how to engage profitably with the text at hand; instead, we are thrust into a state of exegetical uncertainty that offers no hope of resolution. Shadi Bartsch, whose study of the *Bellum Civile* proceeds on more theoretical grounds, has come to a similar conclusion about the poem at large:

> And since nothing can be done about any of the calamities driving Rome to destruction, Lucan's universe as we have seen it so far is neither understandable nor curable. If anything, the ways in which we normally understand human history, such as (scientifically) the positing of cause-and-effect relationships, or (religiously) a belief in the plans of God or providence, or (ideologically) the triumph of a people or a way of thinking, or (teleologically) the idea that things undergo a meaningful process, that there *is* a final cause—none of these seem to offer any explanatory escape for Lucan.[136]

When confronted with this dilemma, Lucan's readers have recourse to three possible interpretations. The first is to take Lucan's self-defeating introduction as representative of the poem's inherent nihilism. The introduction will then function as a learned joke that the poet has constructed in order to underscore the futility of reason in the universe he depicts. Such a reading essentially confirms the judgments of scholars like John Henderson, W. R. Johnson, and Jamie Masters, whose work arguing variously for

[136] Bartsch (1997) 63. Note especially how her explanatory principles mirror those I argue Lucan adopts in the course of his introduction.

Lucan's pessimism or nihilism remains highly esteemed.[137] The second interpretation, which has garnered some recent support, is to find a way to justify faith in one of these models in spite of the poem's contradictions. Such readings often rely on the narrator or even a specific character as a source of stability in an otherwise chaotic world.[138] For reasons that will be made clear below, this view is to my mind untenable. The final interpretation is related to the first, but nevertheless distinct from it: to accept Lucan's ambiguous introduction as a single proem that is programmatic for the text that follows. The difference here may seem small, but it is crucial. On this reading, our poet is not presenting a world from which reason is completely absent, but rather is constructing a text that consistently undermines the reader's ability to make sense of the world it describes with any certainty. The purpose of the *Bellum Civile*, therefore, is not to express the poet's personal views, but rather to guide the audience into a particular mental state and to provoke a particular emotional response from them.[139]

In light of the analysis presented above, this mental state can be nothing other than agnosticism, the inability or refusal to embrace a certain view of causation because any such commitment would depend on knowledge that is beyond the reach of mortals. Indeed, Lucan's proems, which present an array of worldviews that conflict with one another even as they cohere internally, essentially force the reader into a state of not

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[137] Henderson (1987); Johnson (1987); Masters (1992) and (1994).

[138] Thus Bartsch (1997); D'Alessandro Behr (2007). Those who would posit Cato as a source of stability largely deny the existence of narrative contradictions; on this, see pp. 175-317. As stated in the Introduction, one of the chief goals of this dissertation is to prove on strong philological grounds that narrative contradictions do, in fact, occur throughout the *Bellum Civile*.

[139] This is where my interpretation diverges most sharply from that of Bartsch (1997), who seeks to use overt statements in the narrator's voice as a means of identifying the poet's personal beliefs. Her equation of these two entities is best seen in the final clause of the passage cited on p. 88.

knowing. This makes the *Bellum Civile* radically different from earlier epics, which—as mentioned earlier—aim to present an intelligible picture of the *cosmos* and man's place within it. It is also true, however, that a poem driving its audience into a state of agnosticism is most likely intended to cause anxiety within them.[140] For those who read the *Bellum Civile* with a preexisting explanation or justification for the civil wars in mind, Lucan's conflicting introduction ensures that their commitment to that idea will be shaken; this, in turn, forces them to confront the events he relates with fresh eyes, and to experience them in all their horror.[141] For others, the ambiguity resulting from an inability to identify a dominant worldview within the *Bellum Civile* is itself a source of anxiety. In order to eliminate this intellectual discomfort, they may overlook or try to explain away certain worldviews presented in the poem, or alternately may follow Johnson and Masters in concluding that no interpretive system can be correct in a world that puts multiple, mutually-exclusive possibilities on equal footing. Either of these decisions, however, requires an affirmative choice on the part of the reader and so goes beyond the text that Lucan has constructed. Indeed, the identification of a single "correct" approach to the civil wars necessarily simplifies the suite of possible responses that Lucan proposes throughout his introduction, and effectively reshapes the contents and function of that passage into something unique to the individual reader. However much a decision of this sort might be prompted by the anxiety that the *Bellum Civile*

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[140] On anxiety as a "lesser emotion," see my discussion of Ngai (2005) on pp. 11-8.

[141] Thus Lucan suggests that future readers will experience his account as something that is happening, rather than as something that has happened: "Even among the late races and the peoples of our descendents, these things will stir hopes and fears and prayers about to perish when the *Wars* are read, and all will be thunderstruck as they read the fates not as things passed, but as things that are about to happen," (*haec et apud seras gentes populosque nepotum… cum bella legentur* | *spesque metusque simul perituraque vota movebunt,* | *attonitique omnes veluti venientia fata* | *non transmissa, legent*, 7.207-12).

provokes, the text itself does not require it. On the contrary, Lucan consistently refuses to privilege one particular worldview over another. Recognizing this allows us to account for the divergent attitudes and explanations presented throughout the introduction, and can help cast light on another vexed aspect of Lucan's disorienting epic.

Lucan's Narrator: A Reevaluation

Over the last twenty-five years, much work has been done to explore the nature of Lucan's narrator. The reasons for this interest are easy to uncover. Unlike other epic poets, Lucan frequently injects himself into his narrative, using apostrophes to characters and the reader to make judgments, lodge opinions, or express his own desires. In such situations, he employs a powerful vehemence that has long been considered a defining mark of the *Bellum Civile.*[142] Indeed, even the poem's detractors have been inclined to admire this particular device, and many have deemed it Lucan's greatest innovation within the epic genre.[143] More formal engagements with this voice were prompted by the rise of narratology and deconstructionist theory in the Classics. These methodologies provided a new critical vocabulary and framework for talking about Lucan's narrator, as well as a dose of skepticism that opened the door to pessimistic interpretations of his editorial voice that had not been expressed so clearly before. Adopting these tools, many scholars have come to see the narrator as a distinct character within the *Bellum Civile* and have tried to use statements in his voice to uncover the poem's (and its poet's) underlying

[142] Thus Stat. *Silv*. 2.7.66, has Calliope predict that Lucan "will thunder out" (*detonabis*) his *Bellum Civile*.
[143] E.g. Marti (1975) 83-4, 89; Feeney (1991) 287.

concerns.[144] Although these studies have revealed many interesting facets of Lucan's narrative voice, none has garnered widespread support. Instead, scholars have split into two opposing camps: those who believe the narrator generally serves as a reliable guide to the text, and those who view contradictions in his voice as indications of a deep-seated nihilism.[145] This sort of division, however, is not unique to debates about the narrator. On the contrary, the factions just outlined map almost perfectly onto a larger schism between those who view the *Bellum Civile* as an optimistic Republican manifesto and those who see it as a pessimistic criticism of belief in any higher good or in the rational structuring of the universe. This overlap would seem to suggest that the two debates are related, and to my mind indicates that investigations into Lucan's narrator are undertaken primarily in pursuit of this larger ideological dispute. Indeed, this accounts for why scholars on both sides tend to believe that the available interpretations are mutually exclusive: since Lucan cannot earnestly present a world that is simultaneously hopeful and defeatist, his narrator cannot be simultaneously reliable and contradictory.

But are these differences really as great as their proponents would have us believe? To be sure, those seeking a clear statement of Lucan's personal beliefs through the narrator of the *Bellum Civile* have been stymied. Masters has well demonstrated that

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[144] E.g. O'Higgins (1988); Masters (1992) 87-90; Bartsch (1997) 75-100; Leigh (1997) 39; Narducci (2002) 94; Faber (2005) 337. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) does not talk about the narrator as a character, but posits that the narrator's voice competes with characters in the narrative.

[145] In the first category are scholars like Narducci (2002); Radicke (2004) 511-9; D'Alessandro Behr (2007); Bureau (2011). In the second are those like Henderson (1987); Masters (1992) and (1994); Leigh (1997). Bartsch (1997) tries to forge a middle path, but her solution is more ingenious than convincing. Quint (1993) 156-7 suggests that Lucan often contradicts himself because his ideological position is "both republican *and* imperialist" (emphasis in original).

the narrator contradicts himself,[146] and attempts to rebut this scholar's assertions have depended on arguments that are patently untenable.[147] It is possible, however, to discern two problematic assumptions that have guided the debate to this point. The first of these is technical. Closer analysis of the arguments posited by Masters and his successors reveals that they adopt a rather limited view of what constitutes Lucan's narrator. In general, they focus on places where the narrator speaks *in propria persona*, completely ignoring those passages where he relays information in a neutral manner or embarks on lengthy digressions.[148] Indeed, this view is taken even though the latter class of narrative constitutes a much greater percentage of the poem than do the editorial outbursts. This narrowed focus has nevertheless become entrenched, and most Anglophone scholars now envision Lucan's narrator as consisting solely of Lucan's explicit editorial comments.[149] The second assumption is even more fundamental. Underlying the current debate about the narrator of the *Bellum Civile* is the idea that this voice serves as a puppet for the

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[146] Masters (1992) 43-90.

[147] Thus Narducci (2002) 94-100 argues that the figure of Cato is able to correct the reader's judgments when the narrator temporarily abandons a Republican stance. Apart from the *prima facie* ludicrousness of a human character being more reliable than an epic narrator, Narducci's trust in Cato does not stand up to close analysis. On this, see pp. 175-317.

[148] Marti (1975) identified three narrative perspectives in the *Bellum Civile*: an impersonal, omniscient narrator; a Neronian narrator invested in the events he relates; and a narrator contemporary with the events of the civil war, similarly invested in them, but ignorant of the conflict's outcome. Although a majority of continental scholars have continued to follow this model—e.g. Narducci (2002); Radicke (2004); Bureau (2011)—most Anglophone critics have followed Masters (1992) in limiting their focus to Marti's second and third perspectives—e.g. Bartsch (1997); D'Alessandro Behr (2007).

[149] As far as I can tell, Masters ignores the neutral passages because they complicate his argument that Lucan's narrator is reactive and unreliable. By focusing on instances of invested engagement, he can better argue that the narrator's contradictions are obvious, and so further his assertion that the poem is intended as an ironic literary joke demonstrating the extent to which the young *princeps* Nero would tolerate *libertas dicendi*. Even though scholars have generally rejected this larger conclusion, they have nevertheless adopted the limited definition of Lucan's narrator on which it rests.

personal views of the poet Lucan. There is no good reason, however, for us to accept this Romantic proposition. Lucan's narrator may be more prominent than those of other epic poets, but this can hardly mean that this voice is more authentic or "real" than theirs. Indeed, the narrator of the *Bellum Civile* presumably speaks for Lucan no more than the narrator of the *Aeneid* speaks for Vergil. Nor can this voice's rhetorical forcefulness be adduced as evidence of sincere philosophical or political convictions.[150] As Lucan's early critics rightly note, our poet lived in an exceptionally rhetorical age and was widely regarded as a master of that discipline.[151] We would do well to remember that he was capable of producing any emotional effect that he wished, and that what we find in the *Bellum Civile* ultimately depends on his affirmative choice. Indeed, it seems far more likely that Lucan has constructed his narrator for the benefit of the reader than as a personal outlet for his own fears, hopes, or anxieties.

Recognizing these issues and placing them in the context of my earlier discussion, we may make a few important observations. First is that the narrative voice Masters and others have been so eager to investigate—the speaker personally invested in the story he relates—is identical to the voice expressed in the second introductory movement. This, it will be recalled, employed frequent apostrophes, adopted radical shifts in temporal perspective, and routinely spoke in counterfactuals. Explicitly denying its ability to make sense of the civil wars, its only response was lament (*heu*, 1.13). Indeed, this outlook

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[150] Quint (1993) 149 seems to recognize that the mutability of Lucan's voice depends on the narrative context in which it is unleashed: "The narrator can adapt this despondent mood."

[151] Thus Quint. *Inst*. 10.1.90, "Lucan is to be imitated by rhetoricians more than poets" (*Lucanus…magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus*). Heitland (1887) xxxiv-v, lxiii-lxix similarly finds "touches of true poetry" within what he deems an otherwise rhetorical work. See also my discussion on pp. 11-3.

was fundamentally reactive, unleashing frenzied responses to any event with which it was confronted, typically in the most pessimistic way imaginable. Entirely absent, however, was any claim to rational or partisan consistency: this outlook simply despised civil war and criticized the entire Roman people for its onset.[152] All of these details fit quite well with Masters' analysis of Lucan's "fractured voice" and suggest that the editorial outbursts so interesting to him and his successors are essentially manifestations of the outlook expressed in Lucan's second introductory movement.[153] This close connection invites us to look for further points of contact between introduction and narrator. Doing so, we find that the scenes Masters failed to treat can easily be accommodated with reference to the other four movements. Sometimes events are presented in a straightforward manner that is emblematic of the first movement's factual outlook,[154] while at others they are explained by reference to teleological necessity,[155] natural

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[152] Cf. the addresses to "citizens" (*cives*, 1.8) and "Rome" (*Roma*, 1.21).

[153] "The fractured voice" is the section title Masters (1992) adopts when describing this phenomenon. Many of the observations made there remain valid, but must be understood as describing only one piece of a much larger puzzle. Masters errs in thinking that he has captured the essence of Lucan's narrator, and so his conclusions about that entity are not as well founded as he believes. I suspect this discrepancy accounts for why so many have endorsed his notion of the "fractured voice" even as they have rejected the idea that the *Bellum Civile* contains no earnest statement of Lucan's political views.

[154] For this a few representative examples will suffice; consider the narratives presented at 1.220-2; 7.506-24; 10.172-5.

[155] Although Nero's reign is not mentioned again explicitly, the narrator attributes many events to fate or fortune, and Caesar's actions universally meet with success despite overwhelming opposition. This may be seen most clearly in the following passages: 1.261-5, 1.392-5; 2.350-3; 3.298-303, 3.752-3; 4.143-7, 4.202-5, 4.231-5, 4.710-1; 5.1-3, 5.301-4, 5.468-71; 6.138-43 (beginning of the Scaeva episode), 6.413-6, 6.611-5 (if Erictho can be trusted); 7.45-7, 7.85-6, 7.151-2, 7.504-5, 7.599-602; 8.557-60, 8.568-76; 10.28-36, 10.338-46, 10.416-21, 10.485, 10.524-9, 10.535-46 (Scaeva's surprise reappearance at the end of the poem). Note that teleological explanations temporarily recede after Pharsalus, and are entirely absent from the Cato episode (where the narrator universally uses *fata* to mean death); their return in Book 10, however, would seem to

philosophy,[156] or historical cause-and-effect.[157] In short, Lucan's narrator continues the work begun in his introduction, adopting the range of outlooks and analytical modes first outlined there and presenting them at different times and in different configurations throughout the remainder of the poem. Although a fairly rigid manner of presentation in the introduction gives way to more fluid treatment later on, all the component parts remain identifiable.

This analysis is of profound importance to our understanding of the *Bellum Civile*. For one thing, it becomes clear that we should not use Lucan's more outlandish editorial outbursts as the basis for reconstructing the narrator as a distinct character within the poem. As manifestations of Lucan's second introductory movement, these must be understood as only one aspect of a five-fold entity. Recognizing this also helps us see that statements in this voice need not be taken as infallible guides to the surrounding narrative, nor do contradictions arising between them need to be considered expressions of Lucan's confusion or nihilism.[158] On the contrary, their occasional competition is better understood in the same way we viewed competition between the movements of the introduction: as a strategic literary device that strips us of our ability to make sense of civil war. Even if we want to believe in a rational explanation or meaningful response to

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suggest the reestablishment of a teleological outlook. For the inevitability of Caesar's advance throughout the poem, see pp. 321-48.

[156] Roche (2005) 60 offers a summary of its reemergence throughout the poem. See, for example, 2.227; 5.299, 5.634-6; 6.780 7.134-7. For boundary dissolution (i.e. "return to chaos") as a recurring theme in the *Bellum Civile*, see Bartsch (1997) 10-47.

[157] Thus we find watershed moments at 6.312-3; 10.1-6, 39-46; historical particulars governing the war's outcome at 4.661-5 (*forutna locorum* | *bella gerat*). *Exempla* are invoked by Lucan's characters at 2.68-233 (Mario-Sullan war); 2.544-6 (Pompey's speech to his army); 4.656-9 (local speaking to Curio); 5.27-9 (Lentulus addressing the Senate); 7.358-60 (Pompey addressing his army). On the tendency of Caesarians to forge new *exempla* in the *Bellum Civile*, see Roller (1996) and (2001) 17-63; Hömke (2010).

[158] *Contra* Johnson (1987); Masters (1992); D'Alessandro Behr (2007), *inter alios*.

the conflict, contradictions in the narrator's voice ensure that we will doubt every choice that is available to us.[159]

Conclusions

The purpose of an introduction and a narrator such as have been described in this chapter—at least to my mind—seems to be the creation of anxiety in the reader. Although Lucan initially offers us a series of promising maps to his narrative and presents us with a vocal and confident editorial voice, these guides compete with one another in such a way that the reader cannot rely on them with any certainty. The resources on which we normally rely to make sense of ancient epic thus appear worthless when reading the *Bellum Civile*, and we are left adrift in the sea of its narrative. Accepting this, we may nevertheless observe that the ambiguities and contradictions produced by Lucan's introduction and narrator are programmatic for the text that follows: even if there is a proper way to understand the civil wars, such knowledge is systematically denied to us, and we can never be overly confident in any approach we choose to adopt.[160] Lucan thus leaves us with only two choices in confronting the events of the *Bellum Civile*: fight unsuccessfully against their current or let them wash over us entirely.[161] This choice may be unsatisfying, but it is apparently unsatisfying by design.

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[159] *Contra* Bartsch (1997).

[160] Although the person Lucan clearly believed in something strongly enough to join the Pisonian conspiracy, the poet Lucan—to borrow a phrase from Morford (1967a)—insistently imposes anxiety upon his reader.

[161] The former option has of course been attractive to the vast majority of Lucan's readers. I would not deny that the poet encourages us to make sense of his world, but think that he produces his text in a way that invites disagreement and schism. This, at any rate, might account for the high frequency of polarizing debates in scholarship on the *Bellum Civile* and explain why few readings have garnered wide, long-term support. On this, see, see pp. 1-11.

Chapter 2: The Mechanics of Lucan's Universe

Ever since W. R. Johnson's seminal monograph, *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and his Heroes*, scholars have been fascinated—and in the Anglophone world largely convinced—by the idea that Lucan's poetic *cosmos* is a broken machine, a discordant device whose sole purpose is the fabrication of evil, misery, and destruction.[1] By Johnson's own admission, this work was undertaken as a reaction against Stoic interpretations of the poem, and the machine he describes as broken is specifically the rational universe of the Stoa.[2] On one level this is understandable: when Johnson composed the lectures that formed the basis of *Momentary Monsters*, the mechanics of the Stoic machine were well known, and it would have been unnecessary and tedious to embark on a technical discussion of the operations of Lucan's universe. The argument he constructs thus takes a great deal for granted, and his audience is only rarely told how specific events in the *Bellum Civile* undermine our expectation that the "machine" will function normally.[3] Most scholars building on this work have similarly ignored the mechanics of Lucan's *cosmos* in favor of more literary concerns: with few exceptions, the metaphorical and symbolic meanings of geography and astronomy have been privileged

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[1] Johnson (1987). He is followed, *inter alios*, by Masters (1992); Korenjak (1996); Hershkowitz (1998); and Fratantuono (2012).

[2] Johnson (1987) 9-10, culminating in the phrase, "It is the Stoic machine gone mad" (10).

[3] Johnson (1987) 10-1 denies that Lucan's universe is Epicurean or Stoic, claiming instead that it is of another sort entirely, the primary function of which is destruction. But this seems to confuse Lucan's poetic program—which may indeed be destructive of the Vergilian epic tradition—and the *cosmos* as it is depicted in the *Bellum Civile*. Building on Johnson's work and metaphor, Sklenář (2003) argues that Lucan deconstructs the Stoic universe "piece by piece" (3), thus merging the literal and theoretical/metaphorical applications of "deconstruction." The best summary of Stoic concepts and language in the *Bellum Civile* remains Lapidge (1979).

over their significance for the composition and operation of the poem's world.[4] Although much good work has come from this approach, the omission of more technical analyses is glaring, especially when one considers that the premise on which Johnson's arguments are based—that readers will pick up the *Bellum Civile* with the expectation that Lucan depicts a Stoic world—no longer holds. On the contrary, many scholars, at least those in the Anglophone world, now routinely deny that the poet has any fixed philosophical beliefs.[5] This recent trend in criticism has effectively undermined the last comprehensive treatment of the universe of the *Bellum Civile*, namely René Pichon's analysis of Lucan's philosophical sources, which identifies precedents for nearly all of Lucan's views in the writings of Seneca and thus concludes that his ideology is thoroughly Stoic.[6] Since the validity of this interpretation has been rightly questioned, but since nobody has yet undertaken to propose an alternative account of how Lucan's universe is supposed to function, how it does function, and whether it fails or ceases to function, now is a most appropriate time to reevaluate the evidence for the workings of Lucan's *cosmos*.

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[4] E.g. Masters (1992); O'Gorman (1995); Leigh (1997) and (2000); Rossi (2000) and (2001); Bexley (2009); M. Y. Myers (2011). The exceptions are Loupiac (1998); Narducci (2002) 42-50; Walde (2004); Raschle (2007); and T. Baier (2010), but their arguments have focused on limited aspects of Lucan's *cosmos*.

[5] A commitment to nihilism is, of course, as much a philosophical stance as devotion to Stoicism or Epicureanism, but the terms of the debate have largely been set by those trying to establish where Lucan's views fall within the two traditional branches of philosophy popular at Rome.

[6] Pichon (1912) 165-216. Due (1970) critiques this work, arguing that Lucan is not a committed Stoic even though he adapts certain Stoic ideas to his own political and poetic purposes. Lapidge (1979) surveys Stoic concepts and terminology in Lucan, but refrains from making any judgments about the poet's actual beliefs. Loupiac (1998) offers an account of the elements in the *Bellum Civile*; this is the fullest recent study of Lucan's physical world, but is sadly marred by a failure to engage with Anglophone scholarship, on which, see Hunink (2000).

The broad goal of this chapter is to explore aspects of Lucan's physical and metaphysical world in order to determine how it is structured, what forces are in play within it, and what the reader may plausibly conclude about it. Earlier scholars have tended to investigate these questions through a philosophical lens, seeking evidence for Lucan's Stoicism, Epicureanism, or nihilism in statements made by the poet/narrator himself.[7] This approach, however, has often proved self-fulfilling: Lucan's narrator expresses a range of contradictory positions, and one can find evidence to show that he believes almost anything.[8] In order to avoid this pitfall, I would like to eschew litmus tests that are traditionally bound up with questions of philosophical orthodoxy and instead focus on more subtle indicators.[9] My approach in this endeavor is influenced by the work of David Levene, whose study of religion in Livy's *Ab urbe condita* ignores the historian's contradictory remarks about the metaphysical forces that govern the world in order to focus on cycles and patterns—such as omen reports, implicit cause-and-effect, etc.—that influence the reader's understanding of how the divine played a role in Roman history. By looking for variations within these recurring patterns, Levene is able to discern the author's hand in shaping his narrative, and so better evaluate how he

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[7] For a summary of the issues and scholarship, see Roche (2009) Introduction §5, 33-4. To these we may add the recent argument of T. Baier (2010) that Lucan's world is fundamentally Epicurean.

[8] The issue is shrewdly identified by Hutchinson (1993) 254, who observes that Lucan's narrator frequently offers outbursts that are "palpably at odds with the poem's world," and thus that they should not be taken as a "key to the theology of the poem." Regrettably, Hutchinson's other observations are of little use, coming as they do in a chapter entitled "The Gods in Prose and Lucan" (!). Despite the obvious difficulties, attempts to find a definitive answer to this question have continued; see most recently Loupiac (1998) 25-44; Lévi (2006); T. Baier (2010). On contradictions in Lucan's narrative voice, see pp. 91-7.

[9] The most vexing of these has been Lucan's apparent conflation of *fortuna*, *fatum*, and *dei*, a habit normally held to be a Stoic reflex. For a summary of scholarship on this, see the passage from Roche (2009) cited in n. 7, above.

envisions metaphysical forces working to influence historical events.[10] As suggested above, editorial comments about philosophy in the *Bellum Civile* are similarly vexed, and attempts to argue that Lucan maintained any specific set of views have thus far been unconvincing.[11] In considering Lucan's *cosmos*, then, I will first explore how astral signs, rhythms of nature, and elemental divisions contribute to the reader's understanding of the physical world. Although these cosmological constants are occasionally disrupted, Lucan's universe normally bounces back into place quite quickly. The reader is thus invited to recognize a certain level of cosmic stability in spite of the narrator's repeated suggestions that the civil wars sparked a literal return to chaos.[12] The result of this is a type of narrative dissonance that forces Lucan's audience to decide whether they wish to trust more in their own perception of the events related or in the poem's editorializing descriptions of them. The second part of this chapter will explore evidence for the existence of a metaphysical world and indications of how that world operates within Lucan's poem. In the first case, I will consider the phenomena of responsive geography, correct omens, and answered prayers; in all three of these areas, Lucan suggests that there exists in the universe an invisible force that is responsive to man. In order to explore the nature of this force, I will then consider three further issues: the failure of Arruns' expiatory sacrifices in Book 1, the success of Erictho's necromancy in Book 6, and what Lucan suggests may happen to human beings after death. Here the views presented by

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[10] Levene (1993). This view is implicitly followed by Radicke (2004) 86-98, who argues that Lucan's conception of causation is identical to, and derives from, that of Livy; his assertion is in some regards correct, but is based on the faulty premise that the *Ab urbe condita* was Lucan's only historical source ("Der historische Stoff," 9-44). For a brief but damning criticism of this argument, see Augoustakis' *BMCR* review (2004).
[11] The best article on Lucan's use of philosophical theories remains Due (1970).
[12] On Lucan's use of chaos and Stoic *ecpyrosis* as a metaphor for the civil wars, see Roche (2005); my own discussion on pp. 52-62; and p. 116 n. 46.

the poet are less consistent, and Lucan's readers are left to decide for themselves—without any strong editorial support for any specific interpretation—both whether the metaphysical world is benevolent to mankind and how much influence mortals might be able to have over it.

One aspect of this methodological approach demands attention before any systematic analysis can be undertaken. Although my goal in the first part of the chapter will be to find evidence for the relative fixity of Lucan's physical world, scholars have long recognized that Lucan's scientific knowledge is not always perfect, and that this leads him into certain factual errors. This raises a troublesome question: are these passages merely errors committed by a young poet with imperfect knowledge of detailed scientific theories, or are they an intentional device adopted by the *Wunderkind* in order to tip his hand and indicate to the audience that the universe is, in fact, broken? The existence of the latter possibility poses a challenge to my approach, and even though its absolute validity cannot be determined, it nevertheless demands a certain level of caution moving forward. All one can do in such situations is try to mitigate the risk of error as much as possible and hope that this is sufficiently outweighed by the interpretive payoff of one's analysis. My general tendency, then, has been to assume that scientific errors are genuinely mistakes in places where Lucan seems to be manipulating the poetic tradition,[13] or where "getting the joke" would require an unreasonable amount of expert knowledge.[14] Although arcane references are a common feature of Latin poetry, and detailed scientific theories arise more frequently in the *Bellum Civile* than in other

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[13] Esposito (2007) discusses one of these in the Amyclas episode of Book 5.
[14] Raschle (2007) discusses one of these in the Siwa episode of Book 9. See also the extensive discussion of the these lines by Wick (2004) at 9.511-586 §2 ("Probleme der Astronomie (531-543)") and ad locc.

works,[15] ancient authors expected their writings to be heard or read by others. This was no less true for Lucan than it was for Vergil and Ovid,[16] and allows us to operate on the assumption that the nuanced manipulation of famous theories or literary passages could be intentional (since educated readers could be expected to perceive the reference and recognize any changes), while minor errors in passages demanding more specialized knowledge are less likely to be significant (since the poet could not have relied on the reader's familiarity with a concept to achieve his effect). Real knowledge in specific cases is of course impossible, but when these principles are combined with what we know about elite culture in the AD 60s, it seems possible to proceed tentatively according to the procedure outlined above. As will be shown below, this principle will be especially useful in trying to account for Lucan's problematic description of the Siwa oasis, as well as a number of places in which his account of astronomical phenomena appears to violate the normal laws of planetary movements.[17] In every instance, however, I have tried to signal clearly when I am making a leap of faith, and where potential objections to my approach might be raised.

Physics

Evidence for the physical operations of Lucan's world can be found at the cosmological, global, and elemental levels. The first of these, somewhat paradoxically, is the most easily overlooked. Throughout the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan marks time and space by reference to astronomical signs: a cursory tally reveals forty-three passages in which the

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[15] Beaujeu (1979).
[16] Nero's ban on recitations of Lucan's poetry need not have prevented his intimates from reading the work, and at the very least the poet may have expected his *Bellum Civile* to be distributed posthumously.
[17] On this, see pp. 107-9; 112-5.

sun, moon, or constellations are invoked to identify a time, season, or location.[18] Although this manner of marking time is a feature of epic from Homer onwards,[19] Lucan is unusually attached to the device, only rarely abandoning it in favor of other expressions. Critics consequently have little to say about it, often explaining any obscure astrological references, noting parallels, and moving on.[20] Yet it is striking, in light of Johnson's assertion that Lucan's *cosmos* is a broken machine, that Lucan refers so consistently to the regular and cyclical movements of the planets and constellations. Indeed, this habit is maintained throughout the entire poem, from the first book to the tenth, and would seem to indicate that the universe is operating throughout the Julio-Pompeian war and after Pharsalus according to the fixed laws with which Lucan's readers would have been familiar.[21]

A few representative examples will suffice to prove the point. When describing how Caesar ordered his men to sail for Greece despite unfavorable conditions, Lucan directs his reader's attention to the stars, sun, and moon:

> <u>*Sidera*</u> *prima* <u>*poli*</u> ***Phoebo labente*** *sub undas*
> *exierant et* luna *suas iam fecerat umbras,* 425
> *cum pariter solvere rates…* (5.424-6).

> The first <u>stars of the pole</u> had arisen **as Phoebus was slipping** under the waves, and the *moon* had already made her own shadows, when they loosed their ships side-by-side.

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[18] Time: 1.214; 1.216-9; 1.231-5; 2.237; 2.326; 2.577; 2.691-2; 2.719-25; 3.40-2; 3.521-2; 3.535-6; 3.521-2; 4.56-60; 4.154-5; 4.282; 4.521-7; 4.734-5; 5.3-4; 5.23-5; 5.424-5; 5.717-8; 6.329-30; 6.333-42; 6.570-2; 7.45; 8.159-61; 8.202; 8.467-9; 8.721-2; 9.417-22; 9.528-32; 9.1004-5; 10.199-218; 10.434-5. Location: 1.14; 3.239-31; 3.250-5; 4.61-70; 7.363-4; 8.165-84; 8.851-4; 9.528-32; 9.533-43.

[19] Thus Fantham (1992a) at 2.326.

[20] E.g. Roche (2009) at 1.214, 231-2; Fantham (1992a) at 2.236-7, 326.

[21] Lucan occasionally commits an error, on which, see Barrenechea (2004); Raschle (2007); and my comments below. For a general treatment of astronomical expressions of time in the *Bellum Civile*, see Demerson (1976).

Although it may be tempting to dismiss these references as formulaic, let us pause to consider what they tell us about the operations of Lucan's *cosmos*. The poet's ability to indicate a particular time by reference to the heavens implies a cyclical action: whenever the sun sets, the stars and moon rise. If this were not the case, Lucan's use of the construction would be unintelligible, and he would have to find another way to refer to the passing of time. However obvious it might seem to point out that day always gives way to night, what I want to suggest is that Lucan's use of this construction is not entirely neutral: he was free to talk about the coming of night in some other way, but he chose to emphasize—here and elsewhere—a type of celestial movement that is intricately linked with our assumptions about the normal operation of the heavens. As time is repeatedly marked by reference to astral movements, Lucan essentially conditions us to recognize that the world of his poem keeps humming along just as surely as the world with which we are all familiar.

This point may be further illustrated by another example, where Lucan describes the change of seasons with reference to astral movements:

> *urebant montana nives camposque iacentes*
> *non duraturae conspecto sole pruinae,*
> *atque omnis propior mergenti sidera caelo*
> *aruerat tellus hiberno dura sereno.* 55
> *sed postquam vernus calidum **Titana** recepit*
> *sidera respiciens delapsae portitor Helles,*
> *atque <u>iterum aequatis ad iustae pondera Librae</u>*
> *<u>temporibus</u> vicere dies, tum **sole relicto***
> Cynthia, quo primum cornu dubitanda refulsit, 60
> *exclusit Borean flammasque accepit in Euro* (4.52-61).

> Snow was searing the mountains, and frosts—not about to endure once the sun was seen—were searing the quiet fields, and all the earth closer to the star-sinking sky was dry and hard from winter's quiet. But after spring received the warm **Titan**, fallen Helle's conveyor gazing back at the stars,

and the days are victorious with their times balanced once again on the weights of just Libra, then *Cynthia*, **having left the sun behind**, closes out Boreas and receives the fires in the East *with that horn with which she first doubtfully glimmered.*

Much of what was said of the first example also holds here. Lucan associates the spring season with the location of the sun and the emergence of specific constellations, all of which are understood to be events that recur simultaneously at yearly intervals.[22] This latter point is highlighted by the adverb *iterum* (4.58), which emphasizes that the connection between the constellations Lucan has mentioned and the spring season meets our expectations for the stars' normal behavior.[23] As before, Lucan's invocation of astral signs subtly directs our attention to the mechanics of the universe, and suggests that everything within that system is working normally.

Moving from time to space, we may observe that Lucan often uses a similar device when he wishes to identify a specific geographical area. In attempting to convey to his readers that the Siwa Oasis sits on the equator, for instance, he uses the heavens as his chief point of reference:

hic quoque nil obstat ***Phoebo****, cum cardine summo*
stat librata dies; truncum vix protegit arbor,
tam brevis in medium radiis compellitur umbra. 530
deprensum est hunc esse locum qua circulus alti
solstitii medium signorum percutit orbem. 532
at ***tibi****, quaecumque es Libyco gens igne dirempta,* 538
in Noton umbra cadit, quae nobis exit in Arcton.
te segnis Cynosura subit, tu sicca profundo
mergi Plaustra putas, nullumque in vertice semper

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[22] Thus Fratantuono (2012) 134. Asso (2010) at 4.56-9 notes that the expression is essentially temporal, and that Lucan's description would place the episode in mid- to late June; the same view is expressed by Esposito (2009) at 4.50-5, citing Demerson (1976) 140.

[23] Thus Barrenechea (2004) 313; Esposito (2009) at 4.56-61 cites the *Suppl. Adn.* ad loc.: "*Iterum*, because it happens twice a year that there is a solstice; for there is a vernal and autumnal equinox, just as there is a summer and a winter solstice."

> *sidus habes immune mari; procul axis uterque est,*
> *et fuga signorum medio rapit omnia caelo*. 543
> *non obliqua meant, nec Tauro Scorpios exit*
> *rectior aut Aries donat sua tempora Librae*
> *aut Astraea iubet lentos descendere Pisces.*
> *par Geminis Chiron, et idem, quod Carcinos ardens,*
> *umidus Aegoceros nec plus Leo tollitur Urna* (9.528-43) 537

> Here, too, nothing obstructs **Phoebus**, when the day stands balanced at its highest pole; a tree scarcely covers its trunk, so short is the shadow that is cast into its middle by the rays. It is understood that this is the place where the orbit of the summer solstice strikes the middle sphere of the constellations. But, whichever race you are that is cut off from Libya, **the shadow that for us stretches towards the Bears [i.e. north], falls to the south for you**. The Dog's Tail enters you late, you think the dry Wain is submerged in the deep, and you possess no star that is ever in the sky, immune from the sea; each axis is far off, and the flight of the constellations snatches everything in the midst of the sky. They do not wander aslant, and Scorpio does not travel straighter than Taurus, nor does Aries give its own times to Libra, nor does Astraea order the gentle Pisces to fall. Chiron is level with Gemini, and the damp Aegoceros is the same as burning Cancer, and Leo is raised no higher than the Urn.

Here Lucan's use of astral signs is more clearly marked than in the passages discussed above, inasmuch as it is a less intuitive way to identify a geographical location than we might expect him to adopt. A brief comparison will prove the point. When Vergil tells us at the start of the *Aeneid* that Carthage lies "opposite Italy and the distant mouth of the Tiber" (*Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe* | *ostia*, Verg. *A.* 1.13-4), he uses relative geography to convey the information. Although some ambiguity may be inherent in his phrase (it might equally well refer to Sardinia), it requires minimal effort on the part of the audience, who can easily use the Italian peninsula as a point of reference against which to visualize the position of other locales. Lucan's practice in the quoted passage is entirely different. His point of reference is not Italy or Rome, but the sky itself, with the specific location of the Siwa Oasis being indicated by what the sun and constellations look like from its vantage. Although on one level this might be understood to

demonstrate the poet's skepticism about the importance of central geographical reference points,[24] one can also understand it as a reflection of cosmic stability: the fact that Lucan is able to speak with such specificity about how the sun and constellations will look from different places indicates that astral movements are regular and well understood. Indeed, Lucan seems to have no doubt about his ability to infer how sub-Saharan people would perceive the night sky, and this ability necessarily depends on the fixity and functionality of astral movements.[25]

Further evidence for the stability of Lucan's *cosmos* comes from the earth itself, as can be found in the existence of fixed geographical attributes or phenomena, the regular or predictable behavior of the weather, and the normalcy of certain events—especially those related to nature—that is assumed in similes. Once again, the number of passages that could be considered is extensive, and we only need to discuss a few of them here to illustrate the point.[26] We may first consider Lucan's geographical digressions.

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[24] On the confusion of center and periphery in Lucan, see M. Y. Myers (2011).

[25] Raschle (2007) 66-77 notes that Lucan's conception of astral movement is somewhat vexed here, since his description of constellations would seem to place Siwa on the equator rather than the Tropic of Cancer. He raises the possibility that Lucan has intentionally portrayed a malfunction in the *cosmos*, but admits that the ability to notice this fact, which depends on intimate knowledge of various competing theories about the world's shape and structure, would have been impossible for all but the most learned readers. It seems to me far more likely that his attempt to invoke a complicated theory has led him into error, and that his frequent references to astral movements are normally meant to indicate cosmological stability. For instances in which Lucan clearly manipulates astrology for a poetic purpose, see Barrenechea (2004) and my discussion below. For other discussions of the astronomical problem, see Housman (1926) 329-33; Wick (2004) at 9.511-586 §2 ("Probleme der Astronomie"), at 9.531-543, and ad locc.

[26] Geographical descriptions: 1.100-3; 2.392-438; 2.610-27; 4.48-143; 5.65-85; 5.461-9; 8.851-72; 9.36-44; 9.348-67; 9.374-7; 9.411-44; 9.511-43; 9.624-5; 10.193-331. Weather: 4.48-143; 5.3-6; 5.540-59; 5.560-8; 5.569-76; 6.333-412; 9.374-7; 10.193-331. A full list of Lucan's similes can be found in Heitland (1887) lxxxiv-vi (= Introduction §48: "Similes and Metaphors"). With the exception of those drawn from history and

Scholars have long struggled to understand why Lucan includes these passages at all,[27] and many recent studies have tried to find metaphorical connections between them and the narrative that surrounds them.[28] Whatever the relation of these descriptions to individual scenes, one element of their impact on the reader is to present geography as something fixed.[29] Thus, in an extended digression on the rivers of the Apennine range, Lucan furnishes a literary map of Italy that presents the landscape as largely constant (2.392-438).[30] This fact is emphasized by his use of present tense verbs with gnomic force throughout,[31] a practice he maintains in his descriptions of Brundisium (2.610-27), Ilerda (4.11-23); Delphi (5.71-4), the Genusus and Hapsus rivers (5.461-9), Libya (9.411-44), and the Siwa Oasis (9.511-43).[32] The impression given throughout these descriptions is of a stable landscape, one that the poet—even a century later—is able to describe accurately and whose descriptions can serve as a reasonable guide to future

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myth (just 14 out of 79), Lucan's similes continually reinforce the idea that the natural world functions in a number of ways that are not subject to change.

[27] Heitland (1887) includes these among his "Four characteristic defects" of Lucan's poetry. For a more neutral treatment, see Aygon (2010).

[28] E.g. Thomas (1982) 108-23; Fantham (1992a) at 2.392-438; O'Gorman (1995); Leigh (2000); Walde (2004); Spencer (2005); M. Y. Myers (2011); Hardie (2012) 178-96.

[29] On geographical ecphrases as a mark of fixity, see Leigh (1999), esp. 185-7.

[30] The sole exception is an allusion to Sicily having been broken off from the Italian peninsula. Yet even this is traditional, as Lucan is following the lead of earlier geographers and poets; on this, see Fantham (1992a) at 2.392-438. For aspects of physical flux in Lucan, see pp. 113-22.

[31] Unambiguous forms include: *erigit* (2.397); *porrigit* (2.399); *coërcent* (2.400); *concipit* (2.403); *spargit* (2.404); *devolvit* (2.309); *exhaurit* (2.410); *facit* (2.422); *delabitur* (2.422); *procurrit* (2.427); *surgit* (2.428); *videt* (2.429); *excipit* (2.429); *deserit* (2.432); *clauditur* (2.433). Many of the perfect forms in the digression have present perfective force, e.g. *intumuit* (2.398); *accessit* (2.398); *cecidere* (2.405)—an example proved by Lucan's use of the present tense *verberat* (2.407) in a subordinate clause dependent on it.

[32] Fantham (1992a) at 2.392-438 notes the similarity between this description and that of Brundisium. Wick (2004) at 9.411-444 and 9.511-586 §1 ("Topographie") focuses on Lucan's sources.

readers. From this we may infer that he does not envision the world as an entity on the brink of collapse, but rather recognizes that its major features are largely unchanging.[33]

Similes likewise indicate that certain aspects of nature are predictable, and thus that the physical world operates according to intelligible laws. During Caesar's assault on Ariminum, for instance, Lucan compares the silence of the cowed locals to that which falls when a winter frost causes either birds in a field or the middle of the sea to become quiet (1.259-61). Elsewhere, storms at sea form a favorite point of reference: the onset of war is compared to the violence caused by a storm on the Syrtes (1.498-504), the fickleness of the people is likened to winds blowing against one another (2.453-60), a battle at sea is compared to a storm in the same venue (3.549-52), the groan of the Pythia is assimilated to the murmur of the sea whipped up by Boreas (5.216-8).[34] Cato's battle with the snakes in the Libyan desert introduces another memorable string of *comparanda* that emphasize the horror of venomous death by comparing its various manifestations to familiar events.[35] In this context, Lucan mentions the speed with which snow melts in the warm wind of Auster and the bright sun (9.781-2), the way a heated cauldron boils over (9.798-9), and how the Corus wind fills a ship's sails (9.799-800). While other examples could be mentioned,[36] this list demonstrates quite well the range of nature similes that Lucan offers in his own voice. In each instance, he refers to a familiar occurrence of animal behavior or weather in a way that suggests those events can be

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[33] The conclusion is further supported by Amyclas' ability to anticipate bad weather when Caesar compels him to sail; his predictions are matched—and so confirmed—by the storm scene that follows (5.538-677). On this, see Hershkowitz (1998) 223-7; Esposito (2007); Matthews (2008) 114-8 and ad locc.
[34] For a full discussion of these scenes, see Saint-Denis (1935) 419-40.
[35] On this, see pp. 294-311.
[36] See p. 109 n. 26.

taken as normative: cold air always has and always will cause silence; snow always has and always will melt with the warmer air and longer days of spring. Although Lucan's adoption of nature similes may be a reflex of his chosen genre, his consistent utilization of this device imbues his poetic world with indications that the *orbis terrarum* is a stable entity whose operations are for the most part unchanging.

These observations may appear obvious and superficial, but it is important to recognize the extent to which they contribute to the reader's sense that the world is not actively collapsing. Lucan's astronomical references, geographical descriptions, and similes serve as crucial evidence for his conception of the universe, and would seem to refute stronger formulations of the argument that Lucan's world literally stopped working at the Battle of Pharsalus.[37] This is not to say that Lucan's view of the world is entirely stable—far from it. Yet it is important to remember that this base level of stability does exist when we consider the passages others have cited as evidence to the contrary, i.e. that Lucan's *cosmos* is a broken machine. As will be seen, such episodes are not infrequent, but the case for cosmic collapse that can be constructed from them is not as airtight as many have assumed.

Just as indications of physical stability can be found in Lucan's references to the stars, so can indications of physical flux. In particular, there are a number of passages in which Lucan reports phenomena that are astronomically impossible.[38] The question

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[37] This view is expounded *inter alia* by Feeney (1991) 278 n. 127; Leigh (1997) 45; Hershkowitz (1998) 201-2; Narducci (2002) 42-50; Tarrant (2002) 358-9; Wheeler (2002); Raschle (2007); it is implicit in the argument of M. Y. Myers (2011).

[38] Scaliger (1579) famously impugns Lucan's astronomical knowledge with rabid ferocity. Housman (1926) offers an appendix that tries to account for five passages he felt had not been satisfactorily defended by Iacobus Palmerius and that required more discussion than was afforded him in his critical apparatus.

germane to the present study, of course, is whether these furnish an indication that Lucan's world is literally collapsing. The most prominent and discussed passages of these types are the prophecy of Nigidius Figulus (1.639-70), wherein a series of constellations arise in an impossible array, and Pompey's departure from Brundisium (2.691-2), which seems to depict a temporal regression within a narrative that is otherwise linear.[39] Each of these scenes has prompted extensive commentary by literary scholars and astronomers, who have variously defended or criticized Lucan's description of astral signs.[40]

Despite these problems, Francisco Barrenechea has recently shown that Lucan's practice is these episodes is consistent, arguing that the apparent errors of the *Bellum Civile* are intelligible when viewed in astrological terms, and that Lucan is thus likely to have included them for some discernible literary purpose.[41] His argument builds on the observations of no less an expert than Johannes Kepler, who noted that the configuration of *signa* that Figulus reports is both astronomically impossible and astrologically accurate: the stars could never align as Lucan suggests, but such an alignment—viewed in terms of the constellations' significance—would indeed signify that a major, prolonged war was about to occur.[42] The symbolic meaning of Lucan's arrangement will be clear

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[39] On the astronomical oddity at 9.528-43, see p. 109 n. 25.
[40] See Domenicucci (2003) and Roche (2009) for commentaries on the Nigidius Figulus episode and summaries of earlier scholarship. Oddly, Roche (2009) does not cite the arguments of Barrenechea (2004), which are to my mind conclusive.
[41] Barrenechea (2004).
[42] Kepler's approval of Lucan's procedure, quoted by Barrenechea (2004) 314, bears repeating here: "And I do not fault him: he is playing the poet. I myself, in a certain wedding poem of this old sort, attributed a constellation to the wedding day, which neither has been, nor will be, nor is able to exist: only in order that this might serve my auspicious prognostications (*Nec reprehendo: poëtam agit. Ipse ego in epithalamio quodam olim eiusmodi constellationem tribui nuptiali diei, quae neque fuit neque erit,*

even to those without special expertise: when Figulus takes his reading, Mars occupies Scorpio in a manner that makes all the other signs powerless, while the sword of Orion shines brightly in an otherwise dim sky (1.658-65). After surveying evidence from elsewhere in the *Bellum Civile* that proves Lucan knew quite well when these stars actually rise and what their astrological significance is, Barrenechea extends the same line of reasoning to the description of Pompey's departure from Brundisium. He concedes that Lucan's depiction of the Chelae routing Virgo ought in strict terms to signify that Lucan has moved chronologically backwards from winter to autumn; yet the mythological and astrological significance of these signs suggest that they carry symbolic and poetic—rather than temporal—weight. Indeed, Lucan's decision to refer to the *Chelae* casts this constellation in a dark light, allowing it to be associated more with the bellicose *Cancer* than with the forces of balance and justice that are assumed in its alternative name *Libra.* Moreover, the *Virgo* that Lucan insists is routed by the *Chelae* is associated in certain myths with Justice herself. Thus Lucan can be shown to have made a series of lexical and mythical choices that allow him to portray a symbol of peace being routed the moment Pompey evacuates the peninsula. This is admittedly done at the expense of astronomical accuracy, and with some potential confusion concerning the date of the event in question, but these problems must be recognized as mere side effects of the larger and more interesting poetic point that Lucan has managed to make.

To my mind, Barrenechea's interpretation of these passages resolves the issue posed by Lucan's astronomical "errors" in two distinct ways. In the first case, it

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neque esse potest: tantum ut illa faustis meis ominationibus serviret). The quotation comes from Kepler's *Gesammelte Werke* (Munich, 1945) 15.295, which I have been unable to acquire. For an ancient parallel, see also p. 315 n. 209.

furnishes a plausible poetic reason for Lucan's astronomical anomalies. This suggests that they are not meant as a literal suggestion that the world is collapsing, but rather as a way of creating a foreboding mood that is rhetorically suitable to the early stages of the civil war about to ravage and reconfigure the Roman state. Secondly, it interprets these supposed errors as omens, and thus offers an explanation of them that fits within the confines of traditional Roman religion. Comparison with Livy is again helpful. Within the pages of the *Ab urbe condita*, it is easy to find countless examples of prodigies, i.e. abnormalities in the natural world that function as signs of divine displeasure (e.g. 22.1.8-13). Although similar events in Lucan have been posited as evidence that his *cosmos* is collapsing, it is impossible to think that they would be accepted as such in Livy; rather, they would be taken as normal events intelligible within the framework of Roman religion. However paradoxically, they thus serve as evidence of the proper function and stability of the universe that is envisioned by that system.[43] At least to my mind, there is no compelling reason why we should apply such different standards to an annalistic history and an historical epic, especially if Pichon is correct that Livy served as one of Lucan's primary historical sources.[44] So much, then, for the suggestion that Lucan's astral errors signify cosmic collapse.

Another aspect of the *Bellum Civile* in which physical dissolution might be suspected is a series of extreme weather phenomena that recur throughout the *Bellum Civile.* In many of these scenes, Lucan gives the reader the impression that the elemental

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[43] Levene (1993) 1-15.

[44] Pichon (1912), esp. 51-105, argues that Livy is Lucan's principal source. Although numerous scholars have demonstrated that this case is overstated, it seems impossible that Lucan did not depend at least in part on Livy for his historical material. See also Marti (1966); Rawson (1987); Masters (1992) 14-9, 79-81, 241, 246-7, and *passim*.

divisions of the world are breaking apart, and that the world is about to return to a state of primordial chaos.[45] Such episodes have offered fertile ground to those asserting that Lucan's cosmic machine is broken, serving as places where it is theoretically possible to see Lucan's metaphor of civil war as Stoic *ecpyrosis* achieving literal manifestation within the text.[46] Although I do not wish to question the importance of the *ecpyrosis* metaphor—together with the related theme of Gigantomachy—as a *Leitmotif* in the *Bellum Civile*, I would urge caution in taking such episodes as indications of actual collapse. However much Lucan's vivid descriptions might point readers in this direction, none of the threats to elemental stability that he records lasts beyond a single scene, and most expressly depict a return to the order that normally defines the world.

Let us take the flood at Ilerda (4.48-143) as a case study.[47] The episode opens with a description of the cold, snowy Pyrenees (4.48-55), then turns to an explanation of planetary rotations as a harbinger of spring's longer days and warmer winds (4.56-61). As this is happening, Lucan tells us, moisture from all the world is gathered together, and is eventually unleashed on the icy landscape at the western edge of the world (4.62-82). This rain melts the mountain snows, and the combined waters in turn cause the local rivers to overflow their banks (4.83-92). At this point Lucan's description becomes more

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[45] On the elements in Lucan, see Loupiac (1998), who argues that the physical world of the *Bellum Civile* is competing with itself, and that this may be reflective of the civil war occurring in the human world.
[46] Sklenář (1999) and (2003), esp. 1-12, 59-72; Leigh (1997) 45; Fantham (2003); Roche (2005); Roche (2009) Introduction §5, 30-6. Roche (2005) 59 n. 17 provides extensive bibliographical references. This phenomenon is essentially a revival of the cosmological explanation for the civil wars seen in the introduction's fourth movement; on this, see pp. 52-62.
[47] For a rhetorical study of storms in Lucan, including this episode, see Morford (1967a) 20-58.

fantastical, and he describes the subsequent flood in terms that suggest the dissolution of the world:[48]

> *iam tumuli collesque latent, iam flumina cuncta*
> *condidit una palus vastaque voragine mersit,*
> *absorpsit penitus rupes ac tecta ferarum* 100
> *detulit atque ipsas hausit, subitisque frementis*
> *verticibus contorsit aquas et reppulit aestus*
> *fortior Oceani. nec Phoebum surgere sentit*
> *nox subtexta polo: rerum discrimina miscet*
> *deformis caeli facies iunctaeque tenebrae.* 105
> …
> *sic, o summe parens mundi, sic, sorte secunda* 110
> *aequoreï rector, facias, Neptune tridentis,*
> *et tu perpetuis impendas aëra nimbis,*
> *tu remeare vetes quoscumque emiseris aestus.*
> *non habeant amnes declivem ad litora cursum*
> *sed pelagi referantur aquis, concussaque tellus* 115
> *laxet iter fluviis: hos campos Rhenus inundet,*
> *hos Rhodanus; vastos obliquent flumina fontes.*
> *Riphaeas huc solve nives, huc stagna lacusque*
> *et pigras, ubicumque iacent, effunde paludes*
> *et miseras bellis civilibus eripe terras* (4.98-105, 110-120).

> Now the mounds and hills lie hidden, now a single swamp has concealed all the rivers and submerged them in a deep whirlpool, has swallowed the cliffs deep within itself and has carried off the huts of the beasts and gulped down the creatures themselves, and has churned up the foaming waters with sudden eddies and driven back the tides of Ocean—for it was stronger. Nor does night, covered by the pole, perceive that Phoebus is rising: the deformed appearance of mingled sky and shadow mixes up the distinctions of things… Make it so, o highest parent of the world, make it so, o Neptune, lord of the ocean's trident won by second lot! *You* burden the air with continual rains, *you* forbid whatever tides you send forth to return. Let the rivers have no course declining to the shores, but let them be carried back by the waves of the sea, and let the shattered earth loosen a path for the floods: let the Rhine wash over these fields, let the Rhone wash over those; let the rivers turn aside the broad springs. Towards here unleash the Riphaean snows, towards here pour out the pools and lakes, and the laggard swamps—wherever they lie—and rescue the miserable lands from the clutch of civil wars.

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[48] Thus Asso (2010) at 4.98-105 compares the scene to Ovid's description of chaos and the beginning of creation; oddly, he fails to mention the flood at Ov. *Met*. 1.261-347. See also Loupiac (1998) 28-35 and Salemme (2002), esp. 21-31.

At the start of this passage, Lucan draws our attention to the universal confusion caused by the flood: first higher ground becomes submerged in water (*iam tumuli collesque latent*, 4.98), then the distinction between the elements becomes blurred by the onset of the storm's darkness (*rerum discrimina miscet*, 4.104).[49] This cataclysmic motif is continued in the second half of the quotation, where the poet actually prays for Jupiter and Neptune to oppress Spain with a second deluge, shattering the earth's independence and subjecting it to water once and for all (*concussaque tellus* | *laxet iter fluviis*, 4.115-6).[50] This request is no doubt meant to catch the reader off guard, but Lucan's reason for including it is not difficult to see: with it he intimates his opposition to civil war, and suggests that even universal destruction would be preferable to Romans fighting Romans.[51]

If the episode ended here, it would be easy to concede that Lucan envisions it as an instance of elemental flux. As things are, however, the poet's prayer goes unanswered. The clouds part, the rains subside, and "Fortune returns in full force,

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[49] Thus Lapidge (1979) 364-5 suggests that "a glimpse of the cataclysm is an appropriate prelude to the war's first civil encounter." Loupiac (1998) 101 notes that the entire description is designed by the poet to create a description that induces anxiety or distress (*angoisse*). See also Esposito (2009) and Asso (2010) ad loc.

[50] With this Lucan looks back to his Ovidian model, and brings to mind the cosmological concerns that are so persistent in the first book of *Metamorphoses*. On this, see Asso (2010) at 4.48-109, 4.98-105; Raschle (2007) 56-69. On Lucan's invocation of cosmological elements from *Metamorphoses* 1, see pp. 54-6. Specific parallels between the passages include: reference to both Jupiter and Neptune as participants in the flood (Ov. *Met*. 1.274-5, cf. Luc. 4.110-1); rain as condensed clouds (Ov. *Met*. 1.269, cf. Luc. 4.76-7); rainbows feeding storms (*nuntia Iunonis* ***vari****os induta* ***colore****s,* Ov. *Met*. 1.270-1, cf. *arcus vix ulla* ***vari****atus luce* ***colore****m,* Luc. 4.79-82); the eradication of the shore as a boundary (Ov. *Met*. 1.292-3, cf. Luc. 98-103). The verb *eripe* suggests, paradoxically, that the world might be saved (*OLD eripio* 5)—and perhaps restored—through an act destruction. On Lucan's tendency to avoid mention of universal *palingenesis* when invoking language of cataclysm, see Roche (2005).

[51] Thus Asso (2010) at 4.112-3.

content to have given her man [Caesar] a little scare" (*sed parvo Fortuna viri contenta pavore | plena redit*, 4.121-2). Indeed, we are even told explicitly that the elements revert to their proper order:

> *iam rarior aër,*
> *et par Phoebus aquis densas in vellera nubes*
> *sparserat, et noctes ventura luce rudebant,* 125
> *servatoque loco rerum discessit ab astris*
> *umor, et ima petit quidquid pendebat aquarum* (4.123-7).
>
> Now a thinner air, and Phoebus equal to the waters, had scattered the rains into fleecy clouds, and the nights were growing red as light was about to return, and moisture departed from the clouds now that the location of matter was preserved, and whatever water remained suspended sought the deep.

As Lee Fratantuono has noted, the breaking of this storm should not really take the reader by surprise: Lucan began his description of the flood with a scientific excursus that explained the rains in rational terms, and although the subsequent episode elevates the storm to near-cosmic proportions, this does not change the fact that the rains are ultimately a "temporary" and "predictable" affair.[52] This observation is factually correct, but fails to account for the rhetorical impact of Lucan's episode, which does indeed invite the reader to become caught up—however temporarily—in his earth-shattering portrayal. The reference to elemental restoration with which Lucan ends the passage effectively reinforces this interpretation, even as it denies that cataclysm was the outcome of the freakish weather. It is perhaps more accurate, then, to say that the effect of the scene hinges on the contrast between the observations of natural constancy serving as its frame and the insistence of elemental dissolution serving as its core. This being the case, we

[52] Fratantuono (2012) 136-7.

may conclude that Lucan's metaphor of cosmic collapse is adequately leveraged for emotional effect, but cannot be taken as a reliable indicator of elemental flux.

A similar analysis can be applied to other scenes of this type. Indeed, Lucan's adoption of language related to elemental dissolution in Caesar's storm at sea (5.597-677), Cato's attempt to sail on the Syrtes (9.319-47), and Cato's struggle with a sandstorm (9.444-97) are well documented in the commentaries, and it would be superfluous to undertake full discussions of these passages in the present study.[53] Let it suffice to note that in each instance Lucan gives the reader the impression that the elemental divisions of the world are breaking apart in a procedure mimicking the first stages of Stoic *ecpyrosis*, and that natural divisions are invariably restored by the time the scenes conclude.[54] Taken together, the reader may eventually come to infer that these repeated threats to the natural world are illusory, and that the meaning mapped onto them by the narrator's sermons—filled though they be with fire and brimstone—is ultimately incorrect.[55]

There remains one final point of consideration. Those who have lobbied most aggressively for a literal interpretation of cosmic collapse in the *Bellum Civile* have conceded that there are relatively few examples of the trope in the poem's later books.[56]

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[53] On Caesar's storm, see the Matthews (2008); for the Cato episodes see Wick (2004).
[54] The exception to this restorative tendency is the storm on the Syrtes, but this is probably excused by the fact that the region was by nature a mix of land and water. Even so, Lucan's episode exaggerates this innate ambiguity, and things can be thought to return to normal when Cato's ships are finally spat up on the Libyan shore. On this episode, see my discussion on pp. 278-81. On Lucan's imagery of cosmic collapse, see pp. 52-62.
[55] On contradictions in the narrator's voice, see pp. 91-7. For a lengthy treatment of discrepancies between the portrayal of Cato and the narrator's evaluation of him, see pp. 175-317.
[56] See p. 116 n. 46.

In fact, there appear to be no instances of it in Book 8 or 10, and only two in Book 9.[57] This progression has led many to conclude that the Battle of Pharsalus is a point of climax within the epic: as the narrator's references to Gigantomachy and Stoic *ecpyrosis* reach a fever pitch with Pompey's defeat, the reader may conclude that this moment marks the end of the Republic, the triumph of the Giant Caesar, the destruction of the Roman universe. Taken in isolation, this conclusion is extremely tempting. It accounts for a persistent—even obsessive—theme within the early part of the poem and even intimates that some order may be discerned within an incomplete narrative whose abrupt ending has confounded confident analysis.[58] When viewed together with the evidence surveyed above, however, it appears markedly less convincing. Despite their frequency, the threats to the physical world that Lucan delights in recounting never actually materialize. Moreover, even as those threats fall quiet after the seventh book, evidence for the world's stability continues unabated: the constellations continue to provide reliable guidance to the passage of time, geographical descriptions remain useful, and similes continue to underscore the constancy of the natural world. Consequently, although I would not deny that scholars such as Fantham, Roche, and Sklenář have rightly pointed to a complex of ideas that Lucan wants us to notice, I would question whether that complex of ideas accurately reflects the world that Lucan depicts. In the case of the world's physical stability, the narrator's pessimistic refrain is clearly at odds with the narrative, and could conceivably be deemed incorrect. Indeed, for all the

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[57] These are the Cato episodes mentioned above, which seem to have a rather distinct function within their respective contexts; on this, see my comments on pp. 290-4.
[58] If Book 7 is a climax, it may be inferred that Lucan intended to write either twelve or fifteen books. On the circularity of arguments for the intended conclusion of the *Bellum Civile*, see Masters (1992) 216-59.

language of collapse that pervades the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan's physical universe remains surprisingly constant. The reader's interpretation of this world and the events that transpire within it must consequently depend on a misleading voice or be made on some other grounds.

Metaphysics

A traditional view of the *Bellum Civile* holds that Lucan, as the nephew of Seneca and student of L. Annaeus Cornutus, fashioned the metaphysical world of his poem according to a Stoic model.[59] Although this position has often been asserted as an uncontested fact, those wishing to defend it on textual grounds point to three types of internal evidence: references to language or theories associated with the Stoics; statements in the narrator's voice, which occur frequently throughout the poem; and direct speeches by the character Cato, who is often assumed to be a spokesman for the author.[60] In recent years, however, this evidence has been questioned, and the view of Cato in particular has come under fire from those less sympathetic to Stoic interpretations of the epic.[61] Few would now maintain that Lucan presents an orthodox version of Stoic doctrine within his verse,[62] and one scholar has even suggested that Lucan's worldview is actually Epicurean.[63] Although this argument is scarcely more convincing than those it seeks to refute, its

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[59] The position is defended most fervently by Pichon (1912) and Lapidge (1979) and (1989). Even Due (1970), whose analysis of Lucan's philosophy is unusually perceptive, concedes at the start of his article that the young poet was probably influenced by these figures. On Lucan's Stoicism, see also George (1991).
[60] On the narrator's apparent contradictions in the poem, see pp. 91-7; on ambiguities in the depiction of Cato, see pp. 175-317.
[61] See p. 99 n. 1.
[62] Thus Narducci (2002) 42-8 suggests that Lucan's world appears Stoic in certain details, but that it is ultimately governed by *furor*.
[63] T. Baier (2010).

existence reveals the extent to which the pendulum of scholarly opinion has swung to a new and opposite extreme.

One of the most prevalent aspects of these discussions has been concern over Lucan's use of the words *fata, fortuna,* and *dei*.[64] Unlike earlier epic poets, Lucan uses these terms as virtual synonyms in a manner that appears to imitate Stoic practice. Despite this lexical tendency, however, the ways in which fate operates in the poem are open to question, and it has been rightly noted that Lucan's editorial criticism of a divine plan that included the civil wars, such as is littered throughout the poem, cannot be indicative of a Stoic outlook; alternative theories based on the same evidence, however, have likewise failed to convince.[65] Since the result of this line of inquiry has been little more than a confused array of critical positions, we may reasonably conclude that it is unlikely—regardless of how promising it was at the start—to help bring scholars any closer to reaching a consensus about Lucan's metaphysical outlook.[66]

Let me declare at the start that my goal in this section will not be to prove one of these views correct; rather, I hope to set forth a diverse array of evidence for the metaphysical operation of Lucan's *cosmos* in a manner that will allow us to judge it without interference from the assumptions of the preexisting debates. I shall thus eschew a detailed consideration of editorial statements that have been interpreted as overt indications of Lucan's philosophical commitments, and will further avoid discussing the terms *fata, fortuna,* and *dei* except when the general concept of fate is crucial to my reading. My reason for this is threefold: 1) Lucan's ambiguity on these fronts is well-

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[64] See p. 101 n. 7.
[65] On criticism of the Stoic deity expressed in the narrator's voice, see T. Baier (2010).
[66] *Pace* Lévi (2006).

established, and further discussion of it would be unnecessary, tedious, or both; 2) to judge from the poems of Vergil and Ovid, narrative epic is unlikely to be a place for dogmatic representations; 3) viewing Lucan primarily in terms of formal philosophy requires assumptions based on outside evidence, and this procedure may well contaminate our evaluation of the metaphysical system that he actually portrays. When judging the *Bellum Civile*, it seems far better to stay as close to the text as possible, unless there are compelling reasons to presume an intentional imitation or allusion is in play. This section will consequently analyze more neutral indications of metaphysical powers within the *Bellum Civile*, particularly those that reveal some interest in mankind or action on its behalf. Although there are many such features in the poem, most can be categorized according to three types: responsive geography, correct omens, and answered prayers. After offering a discussion of this evidence, I shall survey a series of episodes in which men try to influence the gods and consider what they might tell us about the nature of Lucan's metaphysical world. Lastly, I shall consider what happens to human beings when they die in the *Bellum Civile*. This brings together many of the issues investigated in this section, and anticipates a number of concerns that will be raised in subsequent chapters.

Paul Roche, following the lead of Elaine Fantham, has recently observed that "nature in *BC* may intermittently act with providential care for human safety."[67] His point is not that Lucan literally describes his landscape responding to human existence in the manner experienced by Vergil's Orpheus, but rather that readers of the *Bellum Civile* frequently encounter passages where similarities between the natural world and the

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[67] Roche (2009) at 1.217, citing Fantham (1992a) at 2.620.

events of the narrative produce the uncanny sense that the one is responding to the other. This feeling, if interpreted strongly, may be taken as an indication that some metaphysical presence is operative within Lucan's world. Indeed, if it were not, then we should not expect to find so many passages where the pathetic fallacy seems so real. A brief survey of the most prominent scenes will demonstrate the point, and serve as a useful *entrée* into a consideration of Lucan's more subtle indications of the metaphysical powers operative in his universe.

The first instance of responsive geography in the *Bellum Civile* comes amid a catalogue of the Gallic people Caesar left behind as he marched on Rome in 49 BC. Here Lucan recounts how "the gentle Atax and the Varus, the limit of Spain now that the border had been advanced, **rejoice** that they do not suffer Latin hulls" (*mitis Atax Latias* ***gaudet*** *non ferre carinas | finis et Hesperiae, promoto limite, Varus*, 1.403-4). Although the personification of these rivers is only slightly jarring and may even pass unnoticed by some readers,[68] the quoted lines anticipate later scenes where the responsiveness of the landscape to events in the civil war is more pointed. To push for a stronger interpretation, however, we may note that the passage underscores the burdensomeness of Caesar's presence to the land he occupies and suggests that it reacts—albeit in a limited way—to this perceived indignity.

Geography again seems to react to—or at least to reflect—the events of civil war when Caesar and Pompey set up camp by the Genusus and Hapsus rivers:

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[68] *OLD gaudeo* 2 notes that this verb is frequently applied to inanimate objects in poetry. Roche (2009) at 1.403 is content to cite Tib. 1.7.4 as a likely parallel for the personification of this specific river (a textual problem, however, makes certainty impossible).

> *prima duces iunctis vidit consistere castris*
> *tellus, quam* **volucer Genusus**, *quam* <u>*mollior Hapsus*</u>
> *circumeunt ripis.* <u>*Hapso*</u> *gestare carinas*
> *causa palus,* <u>*leni*</u> *quam fallens egerit* <u>*unda;*</u>
> *at* **Genusum** *nunc sole nives nunc imbre solutae* 465
> ***praecipitant***. *neuter longo se gurgite lassat,*
> *sed minimum terrae vicino litore novit.*
> *hoc* Fortuna *loco tantae duo nomina famae*
> *composuit* (5.461-9).
>
> The land that the **swift Genusus**, that the <u>gentler Apsus</u> surround with their banks first saw the generals halt with neighboring camps. The reason the <u>Apsus</u> ferries ships is a swamp, which the deceptive river draws off <u>with a slow current</u>; but snows loosed sometimes by the sun, sometimes by the rain **send the Genusus rushing headlong**. Neither tires itself out with a long course, but each knows very little land because the shore is near. In this place *Fortune* settled two names of such reputation.

It is tempting to interpret *fortuna* at the end of this passage as "chance," and so to conclude that Lucan merely uses it to identify the place where the opposing armies first happened to camp within sight of one another. When we consider the description of these rivers and how they relate to the protagonists, however, we may wish to attribute greater meaning to this first direct encounter. Lucan's descriptions of the rivers Genusus and Hapsus as respectively quick-aggressive and slow-gentle map quite closely onto the characterizations of Caesar and Pompey that he employs throughout the poem,[69] and the similarity appears to hold up on other grounds.[70] This being the case, we may wish to conclude that Lucan's reference to *Fortuna* is meant to carry more weight: what is actually fortuitous about this meeting is that the attributes of the landscape mimic those of the combatants. Although Lucan does not tell us whether this is an instance of the

[69] Schönberger (1960) 87; see also Masters (1992) 52, 169-72.
[70] The adjective *praeceps* is frequently applied to Caesar (e.g. 2.489, 2.653, 3.51, 5.301, 6.14, 9.47, 10.508; it is also used of the Caesarian army at 2.706, 7.336, 7.496). Pompey receives no single adjective so consistently, but his delay causes him to be called *trepidus* twice (2.392, then with *dubius* at 5.728). For Pompey's slowness as a reflection of his conviction that his enemies in the civil war are still *cives*, see Roller (2001) 17-63.

rivers responding to events or a mere coincidence (the ambiguity of *fortuna* is nice in this regard), the passage at least suggests that some unknown power may have guided Caesar and Pompey to this most appropriate location. Indeed, the reader who looks for similar connections in other passages will not be disappointed.[71]

Although the significance of the passages discussed thus far has been somewhat ambiguous, clearer examples of the world reacting to Rome's civil woes emerge before two of the major battles that Lucan recounts. The first comes outside Massilia, as the Greeks besieged by Caesar's army abandon their city and decide to try the contest on the sea:

> *ut matutinos spargens super aequora Phoebus*
> *fregit aquis radios et liber nubibus aether*
> *et posito Borea pacemque tenentibus Austris*
> ***servatum bello** iacuit **mare**, movit ab omni*
> *quisque suam statione ratem* (3.521-5).
>
> As Phoebus sprinkled his morning rays above the sea and broke them on the water, and the air was free of clouds and **the sea** lay **set aside for war** now that Boreas was quelled and Auster was keeping its peace, each side roused its fleet from every port.

One way to assess Lucan's conception of metaphysical forces in this passage is to consider how it might have been constructed in a more traditional epic. If Lucan had not chosen to eschew the divine apparatus, for example, we might have expected him to portray Neptune quelling the sea in anticipation of this battle. Instead, he focuses on weather phenomena, but in a way that suggests some force is paving the way for the events described, or that these events are somehow fated to happen. The strongest indication of this is the participle *servatum*, which in the present context most naturally

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[71] The most prominent of these is Lucan's *excursus* on Thessaly as the mother of all evils and thus as a fitting *locus* for the decisive battle of the civil war (6.333-412). For an extended discussion of this passage, see Masters (1992) 150-78.

means “set aside” or “preserved” (*OLD servo* 8). Although this gives perfectly good sense to the line, the use of this specific verb begs the question of who or what actually prevents foul weather: the sea cannot logically be “set aside” unless there is somebody or something taking an active role in the process.[72] From this we may infer that the favorable weather arises specifically so that the naval battle can take place.[73] This would seem to indicate that some force has causal agency over the weather, and that it uses this agency to usher along an event that—we may presume—is fated to occur. Indeed, if the latter point were incorrect, then there would be no reason for the weather to remain placid in the first place.

A second passage demonstrates many of the same tendencies, but does so in a more explicit manner. Additionally, it gains prominence from its position at the start of *Bellum Civile* 7, the book in which the Battle of Pharsalus is described. Regardless of where this event was meant to stand in Lucan’s original plan, it is clearly an important moment, and Lucan’s decision to include an instance of responsive geography at this point may indicate that he wanted to draw the phenomenon to the reader’s attention:

> ***Segnior*** *Oceano* ***quam lex aeterna vocabat***
> *luctificus Titan* ***numquam magis*** *aethera* ***contra***
> *egit equos cursumque polo rapiente retorsit,*
> *defectusque pati voluit raptaeque labores*
> *lucis, et attraxit nubes, non pabula flammis* 5
> *sed ne Thessalico purus luceret in orbe* (7.1-6).

> **Slower than eternal law was summoning** [him] from the Ocean, the baleful Titan drove his horses, though **never more** [did he strive] **against**

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[72] All the definitions in the *OLD* and *Lewis & Short* seem to demand or imply an agent.
[73] Hunink (1992) at 3.521 and 3.524 describes this more neutrally as an “ominous calm at sea” that creates “tension in preparation for events to come.” The reading *servatum* is defended by Lundquist (1907) 161, though the parallels cited either have an obvious agent (5.3; 5.813; 6.805; 9.140) or imply that some divine force is responsible for the event thus described (4.717; 8.661; 9.214; 10.431).

> the air, twist his course back as the pole was snatching him, and wish to suffer eclipses and the labors of stolen light, nor draw clouds around himself, not to feed his flames, but in order that he might not shine brightly on the Thessalian region.

Here we find a clear statement that Lucan's natural world is able to react to the events of war. Dreading the battle that will be set in motion once the day begins, the sun dallies below the horizon and manages to violate the "eternal law" that normally governs his rising (7.1). Once again, this would seem to imply that the battle is fated to occur: the sun would have no reason to hide his face from the Thessalian plain unless he knew what the day was about to bring.[74] In addition to this, however, the present passage suggests that metaphysical forces within the poem are able to alter normal physical laws and even to rebel against fate. Although their ability to do so may be limited (the sun does not stop its course entirely or suffer an eclipse, even though it wants to do so), this limitation does not negate their existence.[75]

Taken together, these two passages invite the reader to recognize that certain events are fated to happen within the world of the *Bellum Civile*, and moreover that metaphysical forces are capable of altering the physical world in response to those events. These explicit examples, in turn, make us more likely to interpret later episodes as

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[74] Thus Dilke (1960) at 7.1 suggests that "the sun was slow in obeying the call of destiny (εἱμαρμένη), the immutable chain of cause and effect which in the Stoic view governed the universe."

[75] Another possibility is that the opening lines of Book 7 respond to the closing lines of Book 6, where the witch Erictho delays dawn until she can escort Sextus Pompey back to his father's camp (6.828-30). Even if this interpretation is correct (and so undermines the one just proposed), it raises additional questions about man's ability to alter natural laws and indeed about the nature of those powers. On this, see my discussion of Erictho on pp. 142-54.

evidence of the same phenomena,[76] and to reassess less obvious cases with greater openness to the possibility that the geography has been responding to human events all along. They effectively encourage, in other words, a strong interpretation of the two passages discussed at the start of this section.

Omens and oracles can serve as another indication that metaphysical forces exist. If man can learn the anger of the gods through physical anomalies (prodigies) or achieve indications about the future through direct prophecy, it is reasonable to presume that there is some divine plan or fated path of events: if there were not, these types of knowledge would be impossible, and the procedures designed to discern the gods' will or mitigate their anger would not be efficacious. It is telling, then, that omens occur frequently in the *Bellum Civile* and often serve as the centerpiece of an extended episode.[77] Their prominence is first signaled at the end of Book 1, where Lucan offers a detailed description of prodigies, astronomical signs, and an instance of inspired prophecy that occurred at Rome after Caesar crossed the Rubicon (1.584-695). Oracles subsequently arise in a variety of forms: Appius consults the Pythia at Delphi (5.71-236), Sextus Pompey has the witch Erictho perform a necromancy on his behalf (6.614-830), and Cato visits—but refuses to consult—Jupiter Hammon in the Siwa Oasis (9.511-86). As

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[76] There are two chief examples: 8.721-3, where the moon is called sad (*maesta*) and casts only a pale light on Pompey's headless corpse; 9.463, where a sandstorm that is "more destructive than usual" (*solito violentior*) besets Cato's army as it encroaches on the Libyan desert, whose unsuitability to human life is emphasized in the Medusa excursus (9.619-733). For my own comments on this passage, see pp. 291-3.
[77] Korenjak (1996) 15-20 offers a general discussion of prophecy in Lucan, using it to argue that the Erictho episode holds a central place within the apparent structure of prophecy-scenes in the extant text. See also Dick (1963) and (1965); Schrempp (1964); Morford (1967a) 59-74.

discussed above, astronomical anomalies function as signs of the coming conflict;[78] in the present context, however, we may also note that they furnish accurate predictions of the future: the prodigies in Book 1 anticipate the (ultimately ineluctable) destruction of civil war; the Pythia foretells Appius' death with characteristic obscurity; and the corpse revivified by Erictho reveals that Caesar shall be victorious. Indeed, all of this remains true even as Lucan's narrator vehemently criticizes oracles for letting Romans know about devastating events in advance, and even though some of his characters fail to grasp the significance of the prophecies they receive.[79] Taking these episodes as a group, the reader may infer that the major events of the civil war—or at least its outcome—have been determined in advance, and that the metaphysical powers that govern those events are both able and willing to relay that information to human beings.[80]

Prayers and curses offer a final arena in which the reader can seek indirect evidence for metaphysical powers in the *Bellum Civile.* Although Lucan never says bluntly that a figure is cursed or that the gods answer the prayers of his characters, he occasionally constructs a scene in such a way that the reader's knowledge of the poem and awareness of the civil war's historical outcome can create a sense of dramatic irony. This procedure is virtually identical to what Alessandro Barchiesi has dubbed "future reflexivity," except that Lucan manipulates knowledge of historical events rather than

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[78] See my discussion of astral signs on pp. 113-6.
[79] *Pace* Ahl (1976) 262-8 and Feeney (1991) 289. Gordon (1987) 233 suggests that Erictho's necromancy is the only succesful form of divination in the poem. The efficacy of oracles throughout the *Bellum Civile* is correctly recognized by O'Higgins (1988) and Tommasi Moreschini (2005). For a discussion of oracles in the context of Cato's visit to the Siwa Oasis, pp. 266-75.
[80] Thus Erictho tells Sex. Pompey that it is easy to change "lesser fates" (*fata minora*), but that it is impossible to alter events on which the fate of all humanity hinges, i.e. those that were chosen at the beginning of time as part of the "chain of causation" (*causarum series*, 6.605-15). On this passage, see pp. 150-4.

knowledge of a literary tradition to achieve his effect.[81] Within the *Bellum Civile*, this device allows the poet to suggest to that some metaphysical power may be hearing and responding to the human entreaties contained in his verse. Although such episodes do not, of course, guarantee that any divine entity is at work, they clearly open the door to this possibility.

The first of these scenes occurs at the start of Book 2. After an emotional outburst from a group of Roman matrons, the men unleash "justified rebukes against the cruel gods" (*iustas in numina saeva querellas*, 2.44) in response to the news that Caesar is marching on the city. As part of this prayer, they beg that the gods wipe Rome off the face of the earth before they subject her to civil war:

> *vel, perdere nomen*
> *si placet Hesperium, superi,* ***conlatus*** *<u>in ignes</u>*
> *plurimus ad terram <u>per fulmina</u>* decidat ***aether****.*
> *saeve parens, utrasque simul partesque ducesque,*
> *dum nondum meruere, feri* (2.56-60).
>
> Or, if it pleases you to destroy the Hesperian name, o gods, let much **aether be gathered** <u>into fires</u> and fall to the earth <u>as lightning</u>. Savage father, strike down both the factions and leaders at the same time, while they have not yet deserved to be struck!

Within the context of the episode, one may easily agree with Fantham in evaluating this prayer as a simple preference "for physical destruction rather than moral ruin."[82] To be sure, this is what the men want, and what they believe they are requesting. It is difficult, however, for the reader familiar with *Bellum Civile* 1 not to be reminded of the description of Caesar that stands prominently in the final movement of the poem's

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[81] Barchiesi (1993).
[82] Fantham (1992a) at 2.56-7.

introduction. There, in what is perhaps Lucan's most famous simile, the general's speed and power are compared to a lightning bolt:

> *qualiter expressum ventis per nubila fulmen*
> ***aetheris impulsi*** *sonitu mundique fragore*
> *emicuit rupitque diem populosque paventes*
> *terruit obliqua praestringens lumina flamma:*
> *in sua templa furit, nullaque exire vetante* 155
> *materia magnamque* cadens *magnamque revertens*
> *dat stragem late sparsosque recolligit ignes* (1.143-57).
>
> Just as lightning leaps forth after being forced through the clouds by the wind, together with the sound of **compressed aether** and the crack of the heavens, and shatters the sky and terrifies the people who cower as it blinds their eyes with slanted fire: it rages against its own precincts, and—since no material forbids it to depart—far-and-wide it produces great destruction *as it falls*, great destruction as it turns back, and gathers up its scattered fires.

Although the linguistic parallels in these two passages are not overwhelming, they share a number of core terms (*fulmen, aether, ignis, decido/cado*) and refer to the scientific theory that lightning was caused by friction between clouds.[83] More important, however, is the fact that Caesar is associated with lightning throughout the narrative that divides these two sections. As Paul Roche has noted, the series of prodigies—including lightning strikes—that are interpreted by the Etruscan seer Arruns at the end of Book 1 function as allusions to the lightning simile that "effectively bookend the narrative of Caesar's invasion of Italy (and the reaction to this attack) with imagery associated with the general."[84] Lucan, in other words, has gone to great lengths to sustain his initial characterization of Caesar and ensure that it remains fresh in his reader's mind. Consequently, when the Roman men at the start of Book 2 pray for Jupiter to destroy both sides *with lightning* rather than subject the state to civil war, they (unwittingly)

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[83] On this theory, see Roche (2009) at 1.151 and 1.152.
[84] Roche (2009) at 1.151-7.

evoke Lucan's description of Caesar. In doing so, they may be thought to pray for the very opposite of what they intend: for Caesar to strike suddenly (*feri*, 2.60) and destroy the world of the Roman Republic.[85] The reader, who assuredly knows the outcome of this story, may well interpret Caesar's eventual victory as the ironic fulfillment of this plea.

The second prayer we may consider comes during Cato's march across Libya.[86] Already exhausted by their trek across the scorching region (Lucan suggests that they may even have crossed the equator) and having barely survived an epic battle with the venomous snakes that inhabit the desert sands, Cato's soldiers prove unable to endure their suffering any longer. Ready to have this end at any cost, they unleash a dreadful prayer:

> *'reddite di' clamant 'miseris quae fugimus arma,*
> *reddite Thessaliam!*

> "Give back to us wretched men, o gods," they cry, "the arms we fled, give back Thessaly!

This cry is no idle lament: the men are praying for a return of civil war, intimating that they would rather suffer again on the Thessalian plain than continue to experience the pains of the desert. Here, too, Lucan creates a type of dramatic irony by playing on the ignorance of his characters and the historical knowledge of his readers. As everybody knows, the Romans *did* experience a return to arms and *did* wage further civil wars in the north of Greece when the tyrannicides fought Caesar's successors at the Battle of Philippi

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[85] Caesar is likewise associated with the verb *ferio* at 5.363. For my own comments on this passage, see pp. 242-8.
[86] This episode is also treated on pp. 304-8; I will limit my discussion here to the details most relevant to Lucan's conception of metaphysical powers.

(42 BC).[87] Characteristically, Lucan does not tell us whether there is a causal relation between these events;[88] the irony created by his narrative, however, cannot be coincidental, and raises the possibility that some metaphysical power heard—and then granted—the prayer of Cato's men.

A related phenomenon can be found in the suggestion that Pompey's wife Cornelia is cursed.[89] Lucan intimates this at three points during the poem, basing the assertion on the fact that both of Cornelia's husbands died ignominious deaths at the hands of foreign enemies: first Crassus fell to the Parthians during his abortive campaign in the east (54 BC), then Pompey was assassinated on the orders of Ptolemy XIII after his defeat at Pharsalus (48 BC). As in the prayers discussed above, Lucan manipulates his reader's knowledge of the war to give the impression that this curse exerts its power as the narrative advances.

The first entity to suggest that Cornelia is cursed is the ghost of Julia, Pompey's former wife, who appears to him in a dream as he sails away from Italy (3.8-40). In a scathing speech that may be reminiscent of Propertius' Cynthia,[90] Julia lives up to her name and faults her husband—she insists he is *still* her husband—for abandoning his Caesarian alliance in favor of a less fortunate spouse.[91] Although Pompey dismisses this

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[87] The conflation of Emathia, Thessaly, Pharsalus, and Philippi is pervasive in Lucan; see Roche (2009) at 1.1 and esp. Wick (2004) at 9.271 for an overview of this tendency. The conception of Philippi as a repetition of Pharsalus is made explicit in the *matrona*'s speech at 1.677-94.
[88] For two final examples of this device, see pp. 326-35.
[89] For a general discussion of Cornelia, see Bruère (1951).
[90] This point is made variously by Hübner (1984); Sannicandro (2010); and Fratantuono (2012) 95; McCune (2014) accurately notes that there are no verbal links between the passages, but argues the point on detailed structural grounds.
[91] Cf. Caesar's words in response to a mutiny at 5.345-9: "Labienus was brave in Caesarian arms: now the cheap turncoat surveys lands and seas with the leader he

dream as meaningless, the reader is introduced to the idea that his marriage to Cornelia will ultimately bring about his defeat:

> ***coniuge me*** *laetos duxisti, Magne, triumphos:* 20
> ***fortuna est mutata toris****,* semper*que potentis*
> *detrahere in cladem* fato damnata *maritos*
> *innupsit tepido paelex Cornelia busto* (3.20-3).
>
> **While I was your wife**, Magnus, you led joyous triumphs: **your fortune has changed with your bed**, and that home-wrecker Cornelia, *condemned by fate ever* to drag her powerful husbands to slaughter, has wedded a warm tomb.

Here we may note a few pertinent details. First is Julia's assertion that Pompey's former successes actually depended on her, and that his new spouse will bring a change of fortune. This indicates that some invisible force actually links the wife to her husband's military performance, and Julia makes the nature of this force clear when she subsequently describes Cornelia as "condemned by fate" (*fato damnata*, 3.22). Moreover, Pompey is told that the bad luck that attaches to Cornelia and contaminates her husbands is always operative (*semper*, 3.21). Although this assertion is clearly premature within the narrative present of the *Bellum Civile*—by 49 BC only one of Cornelia's husbands has died—readers who know their history will recognize that Julia's words presage Pompey's imminent defeat and death.[92] This gives the reader the impression that the curse is real, and so perhaps furnishes additional evidence that the world of the *Bellum Civile* is governed by unseen powers.

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preferred. Nor is your loyalty to me any better, if you wage war without me as enemy or **me as general**" (*fortis in armis* | *Caesareis Labienus erat: nunc transfuga vilis* | *cum duce praelato terras atque aequora lustrat*. | *nec melior mihi vestra fides, si bella nec hoste* | *nec* ***duce me*** *geritis*).

[92] Although Fratantuono (2012) 95 and Braund (1992) n. ad loc. suggest that *tepido busto* refers to Cornelia's quick remarriage after Crassus' death, it seems possible the phrase is meant to refer to Pompey.

Although the curse motif lies dormant for many books, it reemerges after Pompey's defeat at Pharsalus. Indeed, when Pompey first arrives at Lesbos and informs Cornelia that Caesar was victorious, she immediately suggests that her marriage to Pompey explains the battle's outcome:

> '***o utinam in thalamos invisi Caesaris issem***
> ***infelix coniunx*** *et nulli* <u>*laeta*</u> *marito.*
> ***bis*** *nocui mundo: me pronuba duxit Erinys* 90
> ***Crassorum****que* ***umbrae, devotaque manibus illis***
> *Assyrios in castra tuli civilia casus,*
> *praecipitesque dedi populos* ***cunctosque fugavi***
> *a causa meliore* ***deos****. o maxime coniunx,*
> *o thalamis indigne meis, hoc iuris habebat* 95
> *in tantum Fortuna caput? cur impia* <u>*nupsi,*</u>
> *si miserum factura fui? nunc accipe poenas,*
> *sed quas sponte luam:* ***quo sit tibi mollius aequor,***
> ***certa fides regum totusque paratior orbis,***
> *sparga mari comitem. mallem felicibus armis* 100
> *dependisse caput: nunc clades denique lustra,*
> *Magne, tuas. ubicumque iaces civilibus armis*
> *nostros ulta toros, ades huc atque exige poenas,*
> <u>*Iulia*</u> *crudelis, placataque* <u>*paelice*</u> *caesa*
> *Magno* <u>*parce*</u> *tuo* (8.88-105).
>
> **O would that I, an unlucky wife** and <u>a source of joy</u> to no husband, **had entered the bed chambers of hated Caesar**. **Twice** have I harmed the world: an Erinys and **the shades of the Crassi** were the bridal attendants who wed me, and **pledged to those spirits** I brought Assyrian disasters into civil camps, and I threw peoples headlong and routed all the gods from the better cause. O greatest spouse, o you undeserving of my chambers, was Fortune maintaining this power against such a head? Why <u>did I</u> impiously <u>wed</u> you, if I was about to make you miserable? Now receive the penalty, but one I pay willingly: **in order that you may have a gentler sea, the certain faith of kings, and the entire world more ready for you,** cast your companion into the deep. I would prefer to have paid with my life for fortunate battles: now, Magnus, expiate your disasters at last. Wherever you lie, cruel <u>Julia</u>, avenge my bed with civil war, be present here and exact the penalty, and once appeased by the death of this <u>home-wrecker, spare</u> your Magnus.

Although markedly different in tone, the themes and language of this passage clearly look back to Julia's assertion that Cornelia is cursed. Indeed, this idea is first signaled in the

counterfactual wish that Cornelia had married Caesar and so, we may infer, caused his faction to fall at Pharsalus (8.88-9). Next, she connects this fresh disaster to the fact that she was Crassus' wife when he was killed at Carrhae (8.90-4): in Cornelia's mind, that event linked her inextricably with defeat (*devotaque manibus illis*, 8.91), caused the gods themselves to flee from Pompey's side (*cuctosque fugavi… deos*, 8.93-4), and so led to the second disaster. This being the case, the only appropriate response is for Pompey to kill her: by dissolving their marriage and preventing her from inflicting a similar fate on anyone else, Pompey may yet regain the upper hand (8.98-9).

In addition to these thematic links, a series of verbal echoes bring the reader's mind back to Pompey's dream in Book 3: whereas Cornelia calls herself "a source of joy to no husband" (*nulli laeta marito*, 8.89), Julia had insisted that she brought Pompey "joyous triumphs" (*laetos… triumphos*, 3.20); in referring to herself as a home-wrecker (*paelex*, 8.104), Cornelia echoes the very term that Caesar's daughter had employed (3.23);[93] and Cornelia similarly suggests that Pompey's change of fortune was concomitant with his marriage to her (*nupsi*, 8.96; cf. *innupsit*, 3.23). As if this were not enough, Cornelia mentions Julia by name (8.104) and suggests that her shade can stop Pompey's sufferings—even from beyond the grave—once her own claim on him has been relinquished (*parce*, 8.105). All of this gives the impression that Julia's foreboding assertions were all too real, and that the course of events has proved what Cornelia here insists: that a curse bound to her has led her husband to defeat. Indeed, in Cornelia's final appearance in the *Bellum Civile*, she harps on the same themes as she watches Pompey's pyre burn from the safety of her ship (9.64-73).

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[93] Mayer (1981) ad loc. notes the echo.

What can we conclude from our consideration of the divine in Lucan thus far? At a most basic level, it seems clear that certain events are fated to occur. Indeed, this can be inferred from the many instances of successful prophecy that occur throughout the poem, wherein men acquire at least a limited form of advance knowledge about the future. Moreover, we may conclude with a relatively high degree of probability that the *cosmos* of the *Bellum Civile* is inhabited by certain powers that can respond to human beings: thus we find geography that is sympathetic to the actions of Lucan's protagonists, prayers of desperate figures being answered, and a curse dragging Cornelia's husbands inevitably to destruction. This clearly indicates that Lucan's decision to dispense with the divine apparatus does not seriously undermine the notion that some sort of divinity is latent in—and seems to guide—the events that he narrates.[94] At the same time, the episodes discussed thus far suggest that the powers ruling the world of the *Bellum Civile* are malevolent.[95] Indeed, apparent instances of divine intervention always seem to work out dreadfully for humankind: prophecies and prodigies reveal ineluctable destruction; prayers are answered in a manner antithetical to the intentions of their speakers; and a curse attaches to Cornelia that serves no purpose but to wreak havoc on both the men to whom she is wedded and their nameless followers. What this evidence leaves ambiguous, however, is the relation of these powers to the pre-ordained sequence of events and the ability of men to influence them. In order to assess these issues more

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[94] The ambiguous nature of a divinity woven into the fabric of the universe has been considered by some to be a Stoic reflex; see esp. Lapidge (1979).

[95] Thus Lévi (2006); this point is rather muddled, however, by the subsequent argument that the failure of the gods to intervene kindly on behalf of men proves that they are inconsequential.

clearly, it will be helpful to consider two figures that try to supplicate or control these forces: the haruspex Arruns and the witch Erictho.[96]

Let us begin with Arruns. Lucan builds up to his arrival by listing twenty-eight prodigies that appeared on land, sea, and air as Caesar crossed the Rubicon (1.522-83). These signs terrify the Roman people, and they duly call in an Etruscan to determine the best means of expiation (1.584-5). Arruns is the most skilled man of his day, and after assessing the situation he recommends certain remedies: freakish offspring should be destroyed (1.589-91); the Roman *pontifices* should perform a *circumambulatio* in order to purify the city, accompanied by certain lesser priests (1.592-604); and Arruns himself should offer a dread prayer as he buries any earth or property destroyed by lightning (1.605-8). Once these rites have been completed, he sacrifices an ox so that he can read its entrails and divine the efficacy of his recommendations (1.608-13). The results are not good: every sign Lucan records is known from other sources to signify the failure of the sacrifice and to portend disaster (1.614-29).[97] Arruns recognizes that affairs are worse than anyone suspected: the episode ends with him exclaiming to Jupiter that it would be improper to reveal such evils and praying either that he has misinterpreted the omens or that the entire Etruscan art is a sham (1.630-8).

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[96] A third episode moves in this direction, but does not come to fruition. At the start of Book 8, Pompey suggests to the senate that they seek the aid of the Parthians against Caesar; his hope is that he can game the fates to Rome's benefit: adopting this course of action would force the gods to avenge either the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae or Pompey's own defeat at Pharsalus (8.256-327). This proposal—despite its brilliant, if twisted, logic—is promptly rejected by Lentulus (8.327-455). Mayer (1981) at 8.256-327 suggests that "Lucan deliberately weakens [this] argument by letting Pompey voice his own misgivings."

[97] The parallels are cited by Roche (2009) at 1.617-29 and ad locc.

From this extended episode the reader may infer a few things related to Lucan's metaphysics. First is that the Etruscan mode of divination—Arruns' prayer notwithstanding—is truly efficacious. The reader's knowledge of historical events makes it clear that the prodigies identified anticipate the civil war, and thus gives the impression that the ill omens revealed in Arruns' extispicy are valid.[98] Second, and more interesting to our present concern, is the fact that attempts to expiate the prodigies result in failure. This would seem to suggest that Arruns' expertise, itself proved by his accurate reading of the entrails, is insufficient to assuage the anger of the gods. Indeed, the note of despair on which the episode ends highlights Arruns' impotence and suggests that the Etruscan art—powerful though it might be in normal situations—is incapable of staving off the ills that we know are about to roil the Roman state.

The other figure who boasts the ability to alter a predetermined future is Erictho, the Thessalian witch whom W. R. Johnson calls the most alluring of his "Momentary Monsters." The scene in which she stars is extremely long,[99] and full of many disturbing events that scholars have treated as evidence for the true nature of Lucan's universe.[100] Unfair though it may be to deny this episode a full and extended treatment, I shall restrict my comments here to what Erictho can tell us about the nature of the divine in the *Bellum*

[98] Thus Roche (2009) at 1.635-7.
[99] A conservative tally will have it begin at 6.413, right before Sextus Pompey is first introduced, but it may also be thought to start with the lengthy geographical and mythological description of Thessaly on which Lucan embarks at 6.333. In either case, the episode consumes the rest of the book, down to line 6.830.
[100] The episode has consequently garnered much scholarly attention. Korenjak (1996) is a stand-alone commentary on the episode. Johnson (1987) and Masters (1992) each dedicate a chapter to Erictho; Ahl (1976) gives her half a chapter. For shorter studies, see esp. Paratore (1974); Gordon (1987); Danese (1992) and (1995); Hömke (1998) and (2006); Arweiler (2006). Her name can be found in the index to virtually every monograph on the *Bellum Civile*.

Civile. In particular, I shall focus on her ability to violate the laws of nature, to sway the gods, to learn the course of fate, and to alter events that are destined to occur.

The ability to manipulate the laws of nature is a stock attribute applied to witches throughout antiquity, and Lucan gleefully invokes it when he describes the reports that first enticed Sextus Pompey to seek the aid of the *Haemonides* (6.438-91).[101] In particular, we are told Thessalian witches can slow the normal alternation of night and day (6.461-5); produce rain and lightning without Jupiter's permission (6.465-9); stir the winds and so churn up the sea (6.469-72); change the course of rivers and even make them run backwards (6.472-6); control the sun and clouds so greatly as to manipulate the seasons (6.476-84); and cow nature's deadliest beasts into submission (6.485-91). As Nicola Hömke has argued, this passage invokes every tradition about witchcraft known from ancient sources. Lucan's purpose, however, is not merely displaying his knowledge of an arcane subject; rather, he uses this description of "normal" witchcraft as a point of reference against which to characterize his *Überhexe* Erictho, whose extraordinary and innovative knowledge of the dark arts relative to the other *Haemonides* makes her appear all the more horrific.[102]

Lucan's portrait of Erictho as a witch who stands far above the rest of her coven does not disappoint. Although at one point she deigns to perform the simple magical task of extending the night (6.624; 6.828-30), she focuses much of her power on controlling

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[101] The association of this toponym with the Greek word αἷμα ("blood") makes it one of Lucan's favorites throughout the *Bellum Civile*; thus Fratantuono (2012) 245, citing the note given in Matthew Fox's Penguin translation at 6.484.

[102] Hömke (1998) 122-30; see also Martindale (1980); Gordon (1987); Korenjak (1996), esp. 20-5, 30-7.

death.[103] Thus we are told that she can cut an individual's life short of its fated years (6.531-2) or even raise entire armies of the dead (6.632-6) through a ritual that involves a radical violation of nature: cutting a fetus from its mother's womb.[104] Her potency in this arena, however, is best illustrated in the climax of the episode. Here, in order to give Sextus Pompey advance knowledge of the civil war's outcome, she performs a necromancy (6.667-830). Although the ghost of the soldier she revivifies initially resists the call to enter his old "prison," Erictho manages to reassure him:

> *'dic,' inquit Thessala, 'magna,*
> *quod iubeo, mercede mihi; nam vera locutum*
> *immunem toto mundi* ***praestabimus*** *aevo*
> *artibus Haemoniis: tali tua membra sepulchro,* 765
> *talibus exuram Stygio cum carmine silvis,*
> *ut* ***nullos cantata magos exaudiat umbra****.*
> *sit tanti vixisse iterum: nec verba nec herbae*
> *audebunt longae somnum tibi solvere Lethes*
> ***a me morta data*** (6.762-70).
>
> "Tell me," the Thessalian said, "what I order, in return for a great reward; for **we shall guarantee** you will be unharmed by the Haemonian arts in every age of the world, provided you have spoken the truth: with so great a pyre, with so much wood shall I burn your limbs while singing my Stygian song that **your shade will hear no *magi* even if they summon you**. Let the price of having lived twice be this: neither words nor herbs will dare to free you from the sleep of long Lethe **once your death has been granted by me**.

The revivification of the corpse clearly demonstrates that Erictho is capable of violating the iron law of death. Yet her power is not limited to furnishing an individual with a second life; rather, she claims to be the only entity who can kill somebody once and for

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[103] For an extended discussion, see Danese (1992) 214-9.

[104] Lucan emphasizes this perversion: "Thus a fetus is drawn from a wound to the stomach, **not where nature intended to summon it**, in order that it might be placed upon hot altars" (*vulnere sic ventris,* ***non qua natura vocabat****,* | *extrahitur partus calidis ponendus in aris*, 6.558-9).

all (6.770).[105] Although the very concept of a "permanent death" would seem redundant under normal circumstances, the mechanics of necromancy envisioned here allow Lucan to build up Erictho into somebody who can control fate itself. Thus at the end of the episode, as she keeps her side of the bargain with the corpse, the narrator tells us that Erictho "has need of magic spells and herbs to let the fallen fall; even the fates are unable to return a spirit to themselves once their power has been exhausted once" (*carminibus magicis opus est herbisque, cadaver | ut cadat, et nequeunt animam sibi reddere fata | consumpto iam iure semel*, 6.822-4).[106] These lines reveal that the act of necromancy gives Erictho absolute control over the revivified body: just as it lives at her pleasure, so too will it die. From this the reader may well infer that Lucan's witch is elevated, at least in some capacity, to the same level as the fates.[107] Her control over death thus reveals that she is a particularly strong force within in the *Bellum Civile*.[108]

The extent of Erictho's power is further seen in her ability to sway the gods. Lucan first connects this faculty to the prodigious crop of harmful plants and herbs that are native to Thessaly, whose efficacy witches have strengthened through the use of spells:

> *Thessala quin etiam tellus herbasque nocentes*
> *rupibus ingenuit sensuraque saxa canentes*
> *arcanum ferale magos. ibi plurima surgunt* 440
> ***vim factura deis**, et terris hospita Colchis*
> *legit in Haemoniis quas non advexerat herbas.*
> *impia* ***tot populis, tot surdas gentibus aures***
> ***caelicolum** dirae **convertunt carmina** gentis* (6.438-44).

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[105] *Pace* Korenjak (1996) at 6.763-70, who thinks the assertion is sarcastic. Hömke (1998) 136 correctly recognizes its significance.
[106] Thus Hömke (1998) 135.
[107] Fratantuono (2012) 249 similarly notes that, when Erictho is selecting a body to revivify, "the fates of many of the dead hang in limbo, in the balance (6.632 *pendent*)."
[108] Here lies the basis of Johnson's fascination with Erictho.

> But the Thessalian earth has also sown on its cliffs harmful herbs and rocks that can perceive the *magi* when they chant their savage rite. Many things rise up there **that can do violence to the gods**, and it was as a guest in Haemonian lands that the Colchian plucked herbs she had not imported. The impious **spells** of that dread race **catch the ears of heaven-dwellers that are deaf to so many people**, **to so many races**.

This passage makes clear that magic differs from normal prayer in a few basic ways. We may note first that it is more effective at gaining the attention of divinities, which are said to be deaf to the vast majority of people (*surdas*, 6.443-4). This itself may be intended to surprise Lucan's readers, as it prompts us to ask how witches manage to secure divine favor with a higher rate of success than other mortals. The only indication Lucan gives us is in his description of Thessalian herbs, which are said to be capable of harming the gods (*vim factura deis*, 6.441). Although the mechanism by which this damage occurs is not made clear, the reader is given no reason to doubt that it is real. Barring any other candidates in the quoted passage, we are left to infer that witches use these herbs to threaten the gods with violence, and thus secure their grudging support.[109] Terror and compulsion, then, may be said to give the Thessalians an edge over those who seek favor through vows and offerings.

Between this passage and the introduction of Erictho comes a brief digression in which Lucan rhetorically asks why the gods permit witches to wield so much power (6.493-506). The central theological concern the poet raises is whether the gods must obey the commands issued by the *Haemonides* or whether it pleases them to do so

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[109] Korenjak (1996) at 6.441 notes later passages in which Lucan enumerates the arenas in which the *Haemonides* can force the unwilling gods (*invitum… numen*, 6.446) to do their bidding.

(*parere necesse est, | an iuvat?* 9.494-5).[110] As so often when Lucan raises questions about the nature of his universe, he fails to provide any definite answer: instead, he cites a number of mutually exclusive possibilities, poses further questions that could potentially resolve the issue, and then resumes his narrative.[111] If we ignore for the time being the anxiety this may cause for readers, we can observe that ἀπορία concerning the *how* of the witches' power does not in any way undermine the fact that it exists. On the contrary, Lucan's attempts to investigate the phenomenon of magic—however cursory and futile they might be—ultimately serve to reinforce the power and efficacy of the dark arts. The unanswered question, on the other hand, merely keeps active the reader's doubts about the nature of the gods and their relationship with human beings.

Just as Erictho proved herself superior to other witches in her control over nature, so too is she greater in her ability to sway the gods.[112] The Thessalians, it will be recalled, employed their herbs and spells to control the gods above (*caelicoli*, 6.444 = *superi*); Erictho, on the other hand, ignores this group with impunity and focuses on deities associated with the underworld.[113] This is emphasized at the start of her necromancy, where she delivers a speech seeking aid from a litany of infernal gods to help her recall a ghost from the dead. These include the Eumenides, the river Styx, the Punishments of the Guilty, Chaos, Hecate, Pluto, Cerberus, the Parcae, and Charon

[110] See Korenjak (1996) at 6.492-9 for parallels.
[111] This procedure is typical; see pp. 314-6.
[112] On Erictho as greater than other witches and as an *innovatrix* within her coven, see Hömke (1998), building esp. on Danese (1992).
[113] She apparently encounters the underworld directly. Lucan tells us that neither the Olympians nor life are able to prevent this (*non superi, non vita vetat*, 6.515). Later it is said explicitly that she does not beseech the gods of the upper-world (*nec superos orat*, 6.523). All of this makes Erictho an especially fitting witch for Sextus Pompey to consult, since he insists the *superi* have proved incapable of offering him the type of information about the future that he desires (6.430-7).

(6.695-706). Erictho's total dedication to deathly powers is perhaps best seen in how she addresses Persephone. Although this goddess is normally said to move between the Olympus and Hades at seasonal intervals, Erictho addresses her chiefly as a goddess of the underworld and insists that her forays into Hell are the result of a deep hatred for both heaven and her mother (*caelum matremque perosa*, | *Persephone*, 6.699-700).[114]

Erictho's devotion to these entities, as well as the proper respect she shows them, quickly has its desired effect:[115] no sooner does her speech come to a close than the former inhabitant of the corpse appears in the form of a ghost (6.720). Although the reader may initially interpret this event as evidence that the gods have obeyed Erictho willingly, the witch is not so sure. When the shade hesitates to enter its body, Erictho becomes irate and unleashes a string of threats against the same deities she has just been so careful to respect:[116] she insists she will call Tisiphone and Megaera by their proper names and chase them from pyres, reveal Hecate's true form to the other gods, explain the Eleusinian mysteries and the *real* reasons why Persephone must reside in the underworld, and make the sun shine on the kingdoms of Orcus (6.730-44). Still, it is her final warning that has drawn the most attention from Lucan's critics:

> *paretis, an ille*
> *compellandus erit, quo numquam terra vocato* 745
> *non concussa tremit, qui Gorgona cernit apertam*
> *verberibusque suis trepidam castigat Erinyn,*
> *indespecta tenet vobis qui Tartara, cuius*

[114] Korenjak (1996) at 6.669 f. notes that this portrayal of Persephone is anticipated by Verg. *G*. 1.38-9 and Colum. 10.272-3.
[115] Thus Korenjak (1996) at 6.695-718, who is expanded on by Hömke (1998) 130-3.
[116] Korenjak (1996) at 6.730-49 notes that ἐπάναγκος λόγος of this sort is frequently attested in the *PGM* (*Papyri Graecae Magicae*). Hömke (1998) 133-4 adds that an initial failure, such as witnessed here, is the typical result of literary prayers. See also Martindale (1980); Gordon (1987).

> *vos estis superi, Stygias qui perierat*[117] *undas?* (6.744-9).
>
> Do you all obey, or does *that* one need to be called to account? Once *he* has been summoned, earth that has never been shaken trembles: he who views the Gorgon face-to-face and whips a trembling Erinys with her own lashes; he who possesses a Tartarus on which you all look down; he whose "upper gods" you all are; he who swears falsely by the Styx.

The force of this threat, as Hömke has argued, lies in the indeterminacy of an unknown and yet immeasurably powerful deity: Erictho here insists that there is an additional depth of hell governed by an entity that has escaped the knowledge of all people except herself.[118] Awareness of this deity apparently gives her immense power over the gods of the underworld, since even the threat of invoking it is sufficient to cow them into submission.[119] Indeed, this would seem to be proved by the speed at which her threat achieves its desired effect: as soon as Erictho falls silent, the ghost instantly enters his body (*protinus*, 6.750) and the freakish act of *anempsychosis*—if I may coin the term—is described in all its eerie details (6.750-60). From this the reader may well infer that Erictho is able to control the infernal gods, and thus that she and the nameless power she invokes are two of the most powerful entities in the world of the poem.[120]

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[117] The orthography of this word is disputed. Housman (1926) and Korenjak (1996) print *perierat*, maintaining the derivation "*per-iuro*" more clearly; Shackleton Bailey (1997) prints *peierat*. The *OLD* lists *peiero* as the primary entry, but cites all the attested forms, noting that manuscripts are notoriously varied.

[118] Hömke (1998) 134. Korenjak (1996) at 6.744-9 summarizes attempts to identify the deity. Fratantuono (2012) 255 suggests that the god is *Furor*.

[119] Her manner of treating the infernal gods may be thought to parallel her treatment of the gods above: "the *superi* grant every crime at the first utterance of the one praying and they fear to hear a second spell" (*omne nefas superi prima iam voce precantis | concedunt carmenque timent audire secundum*, 6.527-8).

[120] This idea is suggested by Korenjak (1996) at 6.744-9, who further suggests that Erictho's power over the underworld is an analogue to Caesar's power over the earth. For my own response to this suggestion, see the pp. 154-72.

It may now be helpful to consider Erictho's relation to fate. Although fate is nominally an absolute force, it often admits a great deal of flexibility in Roman literature. Indeed, the ambiguous hierarchy of fate and Jupiter is one of the central questions of Vergil's *Aeneid*, and Stoic belief in fate as synonymous with divine λόγος made the dilemma of mortals' relationship with this force especially prominent during the early imperial period.[121] Given Lucan's proclivity for ambiguity, it may be surprising to find that he furnishes the reader with a reasonably clear indication of what Erictho knows about fate, which events she can control, and which ones are beyond her power to alter.

Erictho boasts that it is a simple task to learn the future (6.615-23), and the necromancy she performs seems to prove this correct: the corpse she enchants insists that its account of the underworld in turmoil "makes clear what the fates are preparing" (*quid fata pararent, | hi fecere palam*, 6.783-4), and the narrator confirms that the corpse has "described the fates" at the end of the episode (***fata peregit***, 6.820).[122] Even before this ceremony, however, Erictho has anticipated the importance of the coming events.[123] When Sextus Pompey first encounters her, a vague sense of foreboding has prompted her to devise a new spell that will ensure that the decisive battle occurs in Thessaly (6.577-

[121] For a general summary, see pp. 99-104.
[122] *Contra* Korenjak (1996) at 6.820, who insists that ambiguity in the meaning of *peragere* allows Lucan to avoid making a clear judgment about the prophecy.
[123] Admittedly she is not the only one with this premonition. At the opening of the episode, Lucan tells us that "When the leaders had placed their camps in this land condemned by the fates, a mind **anticipating the future war** disturbs every man" (*hac ubi damnata fatis tellure locarunt* | *castra duces, cunctos* ***belli praesaga futuri*** | *mens agitat*, 6.414-5). Still, Erictho and Sextus Pompey seem to be the only people who take action.

86).[124] Her knowledge of this event, however, is decidedly incomplete. We are told that her greatest desire is to snatch up Pompey's discarded body or some missing limb of Caesar's, presumably as a potent ingredient for one of her wicked spells (6.587-8). Lucan's readers know that the latter outcome is impossible, and may thus conclude that Erictho is still ignorant of the war's outcome at this point in time. Even so, we are told that her necromancy works as promised, and can infer that Erictho correctly understands the significance of the corpse's prophecy: if this were not the case, she would not be so quick to grant him the permanent death that she had promised in return for his cooperation.

Beyond the mere discernment of future events, we also find that witches are able to alter their destined course. Lucan thus tells us that any Thessalian can make a person fall in love against the plan of fate (*non fatis adductus amor*, 6.453), while Erictho is able to steal away entire years that had been allotted to the victims she buries alive (*fatis debentibus annos,* 6.530).[125] Her ability to communicate with the gods of the underworld—or perhaps even to visit their realm in person—further entails a sort of living death that Lucan says "does violence to the fates" (*vim faciat fatis*, 6.652).[126] In spite of this awesome power, Erictho corrects Sextus Pompey when he asserts that she has complete control over what is destined to occur (6.591):

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[124] O'Higgins (1988) and Masters (1992) 205-15 offer metapoetic readings of the episode. Korenjac (1996) at 6.575 suggests that Erictho sitting high on a mountain may be intended to evoke Zeus sitting atop Ida at Hom. *Il*. 11.182-3.

[125] Korenjak (1996) at 6.453 and 6.530 f. notes the emphasis on the witch's power to alter individual *fata*. Here we again see Erictho's drive to control death as a central obsession. For a different interpretation, see Gordon (1987) 238, who suggests that *fatis* at 6.453 means "nature," and that Lucan's point is that magic subverts the normal rules of sexual engagement.

[126] Korenjak (1996) 38-40 argues that the ambiguity concerning Erictho's visits to the underworld is a studied blend of the Homeric and Vergilian *catabaseis*.

'si ***fata minora*** *moveres,* 605
pronum erat, o iuvenis, quos velles' inquit 'in actus
invitos *praebere* ***deos****. conceditur arti,*
unam *cum radiis presserunt sidera* ***mortem****,*
inseruisse moras*; et, quamvis fecerit omnis*
stella senem, ***medios*** *herbis* ***abrumpimus annos****.* 610
at, simul a prima descendit origine mundi
causarum series, atque omnia fata laborant
si quidquam mutare velis, unoque sub ictu
stat genus humanum, tum, Thessala turba fatemur,
plus fortuna potest' (6.605-15).

"If you would disturb the **lesser fates**, o youth, it would be easy," she said, "to submit **the unwilling gods** to whatever deeds you wish. It is granted to our art, when the stars have pressed **a single death** with their rays, **to insert delays**; and although every star will have made a man old, we **snatch away his middle years** with herbs. But when a chain of causes has descended from the first origin of the world, and all the fates are working to accomplish something you wish to change, and the human race awaits a single event, then—our Thessalian throng confesses—fortune is more powerful."

Here we find in Erictho's own voice a clear expression of the very situation the narrator had earlier described: the black arts can nudge the path of fate and alter minor events, but are unable to sway the broad course of history that has been dictated for all time (*a prima… origine mundi*, 6.611).[127] Erictho's language here evokes the "cosmological" explanation of the civil war that Lucan presented in his fourth introductory movement, effectively suggesting that no confluence of historical events could have prevented the clash of Caesar and Pompey; rather, since the outcome of the war concerns all mankind, even Erictho is powerless to stop it (6.614-5).[128]

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[127] The ineluctability of fate, even against the wishes of the gods, is espoused in Apollo's words to Croesus (Hdt. 1.91). In Lucan, however, the mortal Erictho seems to be functioning in the same capacity as Herodotus' Apollo; on Erictho as a challenger to the gods, see below.

[128] We have, in other words, a clear demonstration of how a cosmological understanding of the civil wars might be incompatible with historical interpretations that are based on watershed moments. This would seem to confirm my argument that the fourth and fifth

This self-professed limitation is not an attempt at modesty. Indeed, Erictho's power is actually undermined in the course of the necromancy, when the revivified corpse refuses to tell Sextus Pompey about his own death. The reason—allegedly—is that the *Parcae* intend to let his father reveal this event at a later date (6.812-6).[129] Although Lucan does not say so explicitly, it stands to reason that these same *Parcae* have forbidden the cadaver to speak. Taking this event with what Erictho has said before about the limitations of her magic, we may readily infer that the strength of the fates in this situation must be greater than that of the Thessalian. Indeed, the ghost's silence on this matter even proves that one of Erictho's spells has been broken, for she had earlier cast one to guarantee that he could answer any questions that she might pose (*addidit et carmen, quo, quidquid consulit, umbram* | *scire dedit*, 6.775-6). From this it seems clear that witches may be able to interfere with lesser fates, but that the fates can likewise obstruct the witches' attempts to usurp their prerogative.[130]

Let us pause for a moment to summarize what we can learn from Arruns and Erictho. First, it would seem that human beings are capable of manipulating the powers that govern Lucan's universe (whatever these might be), but that the extent of this power is limited for even the most skilled practitioners. Arruns is a shrewd haruspex, but is incapable of expiating omens that foretell a civil war. The same can be said of Erictho.

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movements of Lucan's introduction represent fundamentally different ways of explaining the civil war. On this, see pp. 52-91.

[129] This assertion has caused much interpretive anxiety, with some scholars taking it as an indication that Erictho's power of prophecy is not as great as she claims; for a summary of the issues, see Korenjak (1996) ad loc.

[130] Thus Erictho interprets the ghost's delay in entering his body as the fates granting a delay to her own order (*miratur Erictho* | *has fatis licuisse moras*, 6.725-6). Whereas she knew that the revivification was a minor issue, however, here she seems to accept that she is outmatched.

Although she can steal a few fated years from a nameless victim, she cannot alter the *causarum series* or even reveal the future when the fates stand united against disclosing some event.[131] Yet her power over the divinities latent in Lucan's universe is much greater: she can force them to obey when she requires their help, and she can even control their prerogatives without permission (6.462-72).[132] This would seem to suggest that the gods of the *Bellum Civile* are not the unmoved beings envisioned by the philosophical schools; rather, they are sympathetic and responsive to the actions of men, sometimes by choice and at others by compulsion.

We may further note, however, that Erictho's ability to influence the gods derives from her awareness of a metaphysical world that is larger, richer, and admits greater negotiation than the traditional Roman conceptions of the *cosmos*. Indeed, this becomes most clear when she invokes an unnamed god, a meta-metaphysical power that allows her to terrify the infernal deities into submission.[133] Lucan's decision to have Erictho appeal to this power creates a rhetorically appropriate sense of horror, but also forces his readers to consider what entities really constitute the universe and how they relate to one another. Even if we accept that an ambiguous relationship between the gods and fate—and the occasional violation of fate's plans for a lesser mortal—are normal parts of the epic tradition,[134] Lucan innovates in depicting a power dynamic between the gods and mortals

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[131] Thus Hömke (1998) 135-6, *contra* Fauth (1975) and Rosner (1979), argues that Erictho is not lawless, but rather conforms her behavior to a different sort of law than that with which the audience is familiar.
[132] Thus Danese (1992) 204-11.
[133] See above, p. 148 n. 118 and p. 152 n. 130.
[134] On violations of fate in earlier epic, see Levene (1993) 15. His chief example is the death of Dido, which Vergil says transpired "before its time" (*nec fato merita nec morte peribat,* | *sed misera ante diem*, Verg. *A*. 4.696-7); further examples are cited at Levene (1993) p. 15 n. 78. Erictho decidedly causes such events more directly, frequently, and

that is not strongly tipped in the former's favor. Erictho thus raises the possibility that other humans might be able to prove themselves stronger than the gods, and so undermines one of the two traditional divisions between these groups. It remains to investigate the other, namely what power death has over man and whether this, too, is an area in which mortals can impinge on a prerogative of the divine.

If one excludes speculations made by characters,[135] evidence for the afterlife in the *Bellum Civile* is sparse and ambiguous.[136] It will nevertheless be useful to survey what Lucan does say on this matter in order to determine what possibilities exist, and so to consider what places man might hold within Lucan's *cosmos.* Indeed, this undertaking is crucial for a study of the *Bellum Civile* because the question is almost certainly one that Lucan expected his audience to ask: during the early principate, posthumous deification became increasingly entrenched as an aspect of imperial religion, and Lucan's protagonist Julius Caesar was the first Roman to be granted this honor.

Perhaps the *Bellum Civile*'s most memorable description of what happens to a person at death is the catasterism of Pompey. In this strange scene, Lucan tells us that the

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successfully than figures in earlier poems, but her ability to do so should not be deemed entirely radical or unprecedented.

[135] Lucan's characters are rhetorical creations that can scarcely have any certain knowledge about the world around them; to my mind, then, it is far better to limit a consideration to portrayals of the afterlife that are either offered or confirmed by the narrator.

[136] Heitland (1887) xlviii is content to list all references to death in the *Bellum Civile*, concluding that the tone is generally Stoic without revealing any true dedication to the "Porch." Le Bonniec (1970) 191-5 likewise includes speeches in the mouths of Lucan's characters, but dismisses the description of Tartarus out of hand as a "commonplace." Although I am somewhat sympathetic to Le Bonniec's final conclusion that the contradictions of the *Bellum Civile* are contradictions of life, it is impossible to accept this statement on the grounds that he presents.

Great's shade leaps up from its body's pitiful tomb at Pelusium and ascends to the vault of heaven:

> *At non in Pharia manes iacuere favilla*
> *nec cinis exiguus tantam compescuit umbram;*
> *prosiluit busto semustaque membra relinquens*
> *degeneremque rogum* ***sequitur convexa Tonantis****.*
> *qua niger astriferis conectitur axibus aër* 5
> *quodque patet terras inter lunaeque meatus,*
> ***semidei manes*** *habitant, quos* ***ignea virtus***
> ***innocuos*** *vita patientes aetheris imi*
> *fecit et aeternos animam collegit in orbes.*
> <u>*non illuc auro positi nec ture sepulti*</u> 10
> <u>*perveniunt*</u>*. illic postquam se lumine vero*
> *implevit, stellasque vagas miratus et astra*
> *fixa polis,* ***vidit quanta sub nocte iaceret***
> ***nostra dies risitque sui ludibria trunci****.*
> *hinc super Emathiae campos et signa cruenti* 15
> *Caesaris ac sparsas volitavit in aequore classes,*
> ***et scelerum vindex in sancto pectore Bruti***
> ***sedit et invicti posuit se mente Catonis*** (9.1-18).
>
> But his *manes* did not lie in the Egyptian ember, nor did the thin ash restrain so great a shade; he jumped forth from the tomb, and leaving behind his half-burnt limbs and the base pyre **he pursues the vault of the Thunderer**. **The semi-divine *manes*** dwell where the black air is bound to the star-bearing poles and inhabit the space that lies open between the lands and the wanderings of the moon, whom **fiery prowess** has granted to experience the highest ether because they were **innocent** in life and whose spirit it has gathered into the eternal orbs. <u>Those laid in gold or buried with incense do not come to this place</u>. After he filled himself with true light in that place, and wondered at the wandering planets and the stars fixed to the poles, **he saw under how much night our day was really resting and he laughed at the defiling of his corpse**. From here he flew above the fields of Emathia, the standards of bloodied Caesar, and the fleets scattered on the sea, **and as an avenger of crimes he settled in the sacred heart of Brutus and placed himself in the mind of unconquered Cato.**

Claudia Wick has noted that this description of the afterlife finds no parallel in ancient literature, and is probably a compilation of formal philosophical and popular elements; she further argues that it is meant to establish Pompey as a Fury who aids in the downfall

of the Ptolemaic dynasty.[137] Support for her reading can be found in two passages from Book 10: in the first, Pompey's *manes* protect Caesar (!) in order to ensure that Egypt does not usurp Rome's place as the chief power in the Mediterranean (10.6-8); in the second, Achillas' death is described as a tribute to Pompey's shade (*tuis iam victima mittitur umbris*, 10.524). Although Wick's analysis is somewhat complicated by the narrator's insistence that Pompey would not be avenged until Caesar's guts were pierced in the Senate (*dum patrii veniant in viscera Caesaris enses, | Magnus inultus erit*, 10.528-9), as well as by Pompey's apparent disregard for the desecration of his body (9.14), her general point holds:[138] throughout the rest of the poem, the reader is given the impression that Pompey continues to exist in some form, and even to exert an influence from beyond the grave. Rather than calling him a fury, then, it is perhaps better to categorize him as a "hero" in the sense traditional to Greek religion.[139]

As the quoted passage makes clear, however, only a select number of people are able to enjoy the type of afterlife that Pompey attains. We may infer that his privileged status after death is essentially a reward for three things: his greatness in life (*ignea virtus*, 9.7), his pursuit of that greatness according to some absolute standard of propriety (*innocuos*, 9.8), and the fact that his body was not given a proper burial (9.10-1).[140] By

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[137] Wick (2004) at 9.17*sq*. See also Le Bonniec (1970) 193-4; Long (2007) 190-2.
[138] It is not immediately clear to me how Pompey can simultaneously laugh at the insult to his corpse, protect Caesar as a means of harming Ptolemy, *and* await vengeance in the form of Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March, 44 BC.
[139] If this is correct, then Pompey should be envisioned as accepting the established metaphysical categories of the Greco-Roman world. In this he may be contrasted with other figures in the *Bellum Civile* who seem to refashion the metaphysical according to their own liking; on this, see pp. 159-72.
[140] Although we have no reason to believe that Lucan had any knowledge of Christianity, the vision of the afterlife presented here comes across as a peculiarly Roman interpretation of the idea that those who receive a reward on earth will be denied one in

meeting these criteria, Pompey manages to break free from death and thus is established as a tutelary force. The exclusivity of this position is emphasized by the insistence that those who are guilty of great crimes or received a princely tomb are prevented from becoming "semi-divine shades" (*semidei manes,* 9.7).[141] Although this explanation seems straightforward, it invites an obvious question: what happens to those who are not privileged to mount the Thunderer's vault? Lucan does not give us any explicit indication of this in the present scene, but an episode from earlier in the poem may shed light on the problem.

At the start of his description of Pharsalus, Lucan pauses to curse the man who threw the first spear and initiated the battle:

> *di tibi non mortem, quae cunctis poena paratur,* 470
> *sed* ***sensum post fata*** *tuae dent, Crastine, morti,*
> *cuius torta manu commisit lancea bellum*
> *primaque Thessaliam Romano sanguine tinxit* (7.470-3).
>
> May the gods grant not death to you, Crastinus (this punishment is prepared for all), but **feeling after death** to your corpse: a lance hurled by your hand began the war and first stained Thessaly with Roman blood.

Although the content of this prayer is obviously a wish that Crastinus should feel something after death, its rhetorical effect depends on the reader's recognition that the man is unlikely to enjoy any sort of posthumous sentience. The narrator's present outburst is a response to what he deems a great injustice: his conviction that death is

heaven; see, for example, Matt. 6:1-3, 19-21. Wick (2004) at 9.10 calls this an "almost Christian sounding passage," but fails to elaborate.

[141] Those seeking criticism of Caesar within the *Bellum Civile* have often pointed to the apparent denigration of princely burials that Lucan offers here. This interpretation is surely possible, but it is perhaps better to say only that the current passage denies that the Caesars can become *semidei manes*. As we shall see below, it remains possible for them to attain another sort of afterlife. Roche (2009) at 1.2 and 1.203 notes that determining guilt is a *Leitmotif* in the poem.

nothing more than oblivion means that Crastinus manages to escape any punishment for initiating the *nefas* of civil war when he dies on the Thessalian plain.[142] This being the result of death even for somebody who has committed such a crime, the reader may infer that the vast majority of the human race will likewise find the end of life to be simply the end of existence.

If we wish to read this description of death together with the catasterism of Pompey, it is not difficult to see how they might cohere with one another. We may infer that Crastinus is denied a privileged afterlife because he fails to meet any of the criteria that are set forth at the start of Book 9: he does not possess the *ignea virtus* of a Pompey (9.7), he is guilty of a great crime (9.8), and—as we learn from Appian—he receives a noble burial after falling in battle at Pharsalus (App. 2.11.82).[143] As a result of this, to judge from the apparent hopelessness of the narrator's prayer, Crastinus feels nothing after death.

Another form of afterlife is described during the controversial Praise of Nero that was discussed in the course of the last chapter.[144] Here, in the middle of the poem's introduction (1.33-66), the poet predicts the emperor's future deification:

te, cum statione peracta 45
astra petes *serus,* ***praelati regia caeli***
excipiet *gaudente polo: seu sceptra tenere*
seu te flammigeros Phoebi conscendere currus
telluremque nihil mutato sole timentem
igne vago lustrare iuvet, ***tibi numine ab omni*** 50
cedetur*, iurisque tui natura relinquet*

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[142] This is only known from other sources: Caes. *Civ*. 3.91-2; Flor. 2.4.46; App. 2.11.82; Plut. *Caes*. 44, *Pomp*. 71. Lucan seems to take knowledge of this outcome for granted.
[143] Lucan makes no mention of his burial; it is possible that it was common knowledge.
[144] For a discussion of this passage, together with bibliography relevant to the controversy, see pp. 44-52. My observations in what follows will be limited to Lucan's depiction of Nero's afterlife.

quis deus esse velis*, ubi regnum ponere mundi.*
sed neque in Arctoo sedem tibi legeris orbe
nec polus aversi calidus qua vergitur Austri,
unde tuam videas obliquo sidere Romam. 55
aetheris immensi partem si presseris unam,
sentiet axis onus. librati pondera caeli
orbe tene medio; pars aetheris illa sereni
tota vacet nullaeque obstent a Caesare nubes.
tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis 60
inque vicem gens omnis amet; pax missa per orbem
ferrea belligeri compescat limina Iani.
sed mihi iam numen; nec, si te pectore vates
accipio, Cirrhaea velim secreta moventem
sollicitare deum Bacchumque avertere Nysa: 65
tu satis ad vires Romana in carmina dandas (1.45-66).

When you have completed your duty and **seek the stars** late, the **palace of your preferred heaven will receive** you while the pole rejoices: whether it delights you to take the scepter or to mount the fiery courses of Phoebus and from that wandering fire to survey the earth that fears nothing even though its sun has changed, **every *numen* will make way for you** and nature will leave to your prerogative **whichever god you wish to be**, wherever in the world you wish to place your kingdom. But please do not choose your seat in the northern sphere, nor where the burning pole of the opposed south is turned, whence you would gaze upon your Rome from a slanted star. If you have weighted one part of the immense *aether*, the pole will feel the burden. Hold the mass of heaven balanced by the middle of its sphere; let that part of the clear *aether* be totally empty and let no clouds block us from Caesar. Then let the human race lay down arms and tend to itself, and let every race show love towards each other; let peace sent forth throughout the world close off the iron doors of war-like Janus. But you are already a *numen* for me; and if I as poet receive you in my breast, I would not wish to bother the god stirring up the Cirrhaean secrets nor turn Bacchus away from Nysa: you are enough for giving strength to Roman songs.

We may begin with a few basic observations on how Lucan envisions Nero's afterlife. After he euphemistically refers to the emperor's eventual death (*statione peracta… serus*, 1.45-6), Lucan imagines the emperor seeking the highest and purest part of the upper

world, amidst or even above the *aether* (1.56; 1.58).[145] This is the region of heaven inhabited by the gods (*numine ab omni*, 1.50), who are in charge of various cosmic functions—a point that can be inferred from the poet's insistence that the other divinities will gladly give way to Nero so that he can take on whatever task he desires (1.47-52). Although the poet, perhaps politely, avoids mentioning any specific actions that have earned Nero this privileged status,[146] the emperor's greatness is not in doubt; indeed, it is the backing of his *numen* that frees Lucan from having to disturb either Apollo or Dionysus, traditional patrons of literary artists, at the start of his literary endeavor (1.63-6).[147] This adds further credibility to the prediction that Nero will enjoy apotheosis in the future, while Lucan's insistence that the emperor will be a welcome addition to the roll of heaven-dwellers serves to allay any concerns that he might be forcing himself into a divine system whose denizens would prefer it remain closed.[148]

In certain ways, it is possible to see how this description might accord with the others that have already been discussed. The emperor's ability to exist after his body dies indicates that he is a greater figure than Crastinus—a fact that should come as little surprise in an encomiastic passage dedicated to a living *princeps*. The reader may well wonder, however, whether Nero meets the criteria for a continued existence after death that Lucan establishes in his description of Pompey's catasterism. Although such a comparison might seem warranted in light of the similarities that exist between that scene and Nero's apotheosis, closer analysis reveals that the emperor will find himself in an

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[145] Strangely, Lucan suggests that this will be Nero himself, rather than his shade or his *numen*, the divine spark that resided within an emperor's earthly body.
[146] This is instead framed in terms of the future protection Nero will afford Rome once he has assumed his rightful place in heaven (1.60-2).
[147] On this, see Narducci (2002) 26-8.
[148] Many have wished to find irony in these lines; on this, see pp. 44-52.

entirely different category than does the Great general. Indeed, whereas Nero ascends to heaven's greatest heights (*aether*, 1.56; 1.58) and is expected to remain there permanently (*regnum ponere*, 1.52), Pompey climbs only to the lower air (*aër*, 9.5) and subsequently settles in the heart of Brutus and the mind of Cato (9.17-8).[149] The differences, we may presume, result from the fact that Nero is to become a proper *deus* (1.52), while Pompey is only one of the *semidei manes* (9.7). The emperor's superior status after death is further suggested by the power he will have to manipulate the structure of the metaphysical world once he has direct access to that realm: Pompey, we are told, will simply achieve a continued existence with limited influence; Nero, on the other hand, will move the other gods aside and lay claim to powers they previously held by themselves (1.47-52).

Nero's apotheosis, then, offers a completely different outcome of death than the two episodes discussed earlier. Although we may infer that this should free him from needing to meet the standards that applied to the *semidei manes*, it is not immediately clear what attributes or actions justify his deification—a more significant event that one may presume requires correspondingly greater achievements. Indeed, as was mentioned earlier, Lucan does not refer to any of Nero's human actions at all.[150] Although some have wished to read this silence as subversive criticism of Nero's inactive principate, it also seems possible to view it through a more positive lens. The one thing that Lucan does mention at the start of the apotheosis is the fact that Nero will have completed his

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[149] On the distinction ancient authors made between *aether* and *aer*, see Wick (2004) at 9.5-9. Bravo Díaz (1995), however, argues that scientific authors rarely use these terms with precision.

[150] Roche (2009) at 1.45 notes that this is the only panegyric that commences with the death of the emperor instead of his *acta*.

duty as emperor (*statione peracta*, 1.45).[151] His choice of diction is marked. As Paul Roche has observed, parallels for the construction—from Vergil to Statius—uniformly employ a different verb: *statione relicta,* "once the emperor has quit his post."[152] Lucan's emphasis in the present passage, however, is on the completion of Nero's duty, perhaps with an implication of success (*OLD perago* 5a; otherwise *OLD perago* 10), a reading supported by the adjective *serus* ("late"). Although this word is normally interpreted as a way to reassure the young *princeps* that nobody wishes him dead, Lucan's emphasis on Nero's late departure from the earth may be intended to emphasize the success of his reign: Rome was no stranger to palace assassinations, and a long career might consequently be taken as evidence of a job well done. However this may be, the absence of any other justifications for Nero's apotheosis may invite the reader to draw a causal link between the two pieces of information that Lucan does choose to provide—that the deification of Nero, in other words, will be the direct result of completing his duty as emperor.[153] Given Nero's young age at the time of composition,[154] such a stance may have been preferable to a forecast of future events that might or might not come to

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[151] Getty (1940) ad loc. suggests that the use of *statio* to mean an emperor's responsibilities is an extension of *OLD statio* 5: "guard duty; a state or position of alert (in warfare, bodyguard, etc)." This is followed by Roche (2009) ad loc. This transferred use, however, is the base definition listed under *OLD statio* 7, where many examples cited clearly refer to the emperor's position (e.g. Vell. 2.124.2; Suet. *Cl*. 38.3).
[152] Roche (2009) at 1.45. The other passages are Ov. *Tr*. 2.219; Verg. *A*. 9.222; Luc. 7.235; Stat. *Theb*. 11.240.
[153] Reference to Nero's *numen* only comes later (1.63-6), prompted by its importance for Lucan's poetic inspiration rather, than as a precondition for the emperor's deification. Fratantuono (2012) 10 seems to allude to this idea in describing the "rather zombie-like existence of the post-historical Julio-Claudians, for whom there is no Apollo, no Bacchus, no divine power other than the god born at Actium, the *numen* of the *princeps* that is enough, Lucan says, to give strength to Roman song."
[154] Assuming that Lucan began writing no earlier than AD 60, Nero would have been in his early- to mid-twenties.

fruition—a point that gains further credence if one accepts that Lucan's prophecy of apotheosis is tied to Nero's proper or adequate completion of his weighty office (again, *OLD perago* 5a).[155] The truth of this cannot, of course, be known, but the interpretation I have offered would go a long way towards explaining how Lucan could have both mentioned Nero's death and omitted his achievements without causing grave and immediate offense.

It remains to make one final point about Nero's apotheosis. If the reading I have offered above is correct, then Lucan begins his poem with a radical assumption about the metaphysical world: namely, that the Caesars' privileged position on earth allows them continually to fashion themselves as new divinities, to displace established gods, and to take upon themselves whatever cosmic responsibilities they wish to control (1.47-52). Such power may only be granted to those who complete their tasks well, but it nevertheless exists, and exists primarily as a result of their princely *statio.* As Lucan's audience embarks on the rest of the narrative, then, it has already been given an indication that the powers of the Julian *gens* may extend beyond the mere control of the physical world and into the invisible structures that underlie it.

The reasonably coherent picture we have seen thus far is greatly complicated by the Erictho-scene. In the course of the witch's necromancy, the reader is given a view of the underworld that largely follows the model of earlier narrative epics such as Homer's

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[155] For such a "failed prophecy," cf. Ovid's imagined triumph over the Germans in *Tristia* 4.2. The implications of this passage were brought to my attention in a paper Nandini B. Pandey gave at the 144th meeting of the American Philological Association in Seattle, WA (2013).

Odyssey 11 and Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.[156] In particular, Lucan depicts an afterlife in which the shades of all human beings travel to a single destination (Hades), whereupon certain distinctions are made between them according to their deeds in life: those who committed great crimes are punished in Tartarus; those who did great things and lived admirably are admitted to the Elysian Fields, where they are said to be rewarded; and the vast majority wander elsewhere in the realm of the dead, maintaining a sort of quasi-existence.[157] Given the literary pedigree of this underworld, we may presume that Lucan expected his readers to recall certain details about it that are left unsaid in the *Bellum Civile*. Chief among these is the idea that the order of the underworld is permanent and stable: although new shades are always joining the mix—and in Vergil some are leaving to be reborn after a process of purification—the judgment passed on them is irresistible. In the underworld, at any rate, there is no escaping the broad, cosmic justice that separates all people into one of the three groups outlined above.[158] Crucially, Lucan insists that such judgment will be passed even on his protagonists: before the shade of the corpse Erictho revivifies was called back from the dead, it saw an especially cruel punishment being prepared for the victor (6.799-802), and a quiet corner being reserved for Magnus and his descendants (*in parte serena* | *Pompeis… locum*, 6.804-5).

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[156] On this, see Ahl (1976) 137; Danese (1992) 197-200. Korenjak (1996) 37-51, *Introduction* §4 "Die literarische Tradition," offers an extensive treatment of Lucan's literary antecedents. The summary offered here is admittedly simplified.

[157] This view of the underworld is perhaps anticipated in Pompey's dream of Julia (3.8-35), discussed on pp. 135-7.

[158] Thus Korenjak (1996) at 6.798 f. observes that those punished in the Vergilian Tartarus are hopeless. The competing versions of the afterlife in *Aeneid* 6 are themselves not easy to unravel (why are some souls undifferentiated, while others are rewarded or punished? why does only a select group enjoy transmigration?); nevertheless, Vergil at least presents us with a poetically satisfying—if not wholly coherent—depiction of Hades in a way that Lucan does not.

The view of death given in this episode, then, is radically different from what Lucan suggests in the three passages discussed earlier. Whereas in Book 6 immortality is granted to none, with every shade being forced to submit to the determination made about its actions in life, elsewhere in the poem death is envisioned as something akin to a fork in the road: the moment it happens, an individual's shade either fades away into oblivion, becomes a tutelary force as one of the *semidei manes*, or else—in the case of the Caesars—is transformed into a *deus.* Eternal punishment is simply not considered, or, in the case of the Crastinus passage, rejected out of hand. Death thus allows a few individuals to attain a sublime form of immortality, and furnishes the rest with an easy way to cheat justice.[159] Although these two visions of the afterlife obviously cannot coexist, the most patent discrepancy between them is the dual fate attributed to Pompey: according to the corpse that Erictho revivifies he is to receive a quiet place in the underworld, whereas after his death we are told he experiences catasterism. Lucan, it would seem, has presented his reader with two competing versions of the afterlife, but has done little to help us decide which of them is more likely to reflect reality.[160]

Our interpretation of this episode is further complicated by two instances in which Lucan breaks from traditional descriptions of the underworld. First is Erictho's ability to call a soul back from the dead. Not only does this action go against the human

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[159] On the concept of the sublime in Lucan, see Day (2013).

[160] Some discount the description in Book 6 because it depends on the necromancy of a witch, and is thus potentially unreliable; for this view, see esp. Fratantuono (2012) 254, 263, who argues that the corpse has lied to Sextus Pompey. I am less inclined to dismiss Lucan's portrayal of the underworld here, though admittedly this is a matter of choice. Masters (1992) notes that Lucan repeatedly emphasizes the corpse's trustworthiness (196-9), but goes on argue—I think erroneously—that its prophecy does not deliver what it promised (199-216). On the truth of the prophecy, see Korenjak (1996) at 6.802-5, and my discussion on pp. 130-2.

experience of death being final, but it also undermines the traditional epic assertion that no entity—no matter how powerful—can bring somebody back from the underworld.[161] Lucan's innovation in this matter, as discussed above, would seem to indicate that death's hold is not absolute, and indeed that somebody of sufficient skill or power may be capable of overturning the metaphysical laws that govern it. The other complication arises from what is happening in the underworld on the eve of the Battle of Phrasalus. Whereas earlier poets had described Hades as a place of permanence and stability, the corpse enchanted by Erictho reports that a revolt was threatening to disturb the established order:

> *'tristia non equidem Parcarum stamina' dixit*
> *'aspexi tacitae revocatus ab aggere ripae;*
> *quod tamen e cunctis mihi noscere contigit umbris,*
> *effera Romanos agitat* ***discordia*** *manes* 780
> *impiaque infernam* ***ruperunt arma quietem****;*
> *Elysias Latii sedes ac Tartara maesta*
> *diversi* <u>*liquere*</u> *duces. quid fata pararent,*
> *hi fecere palam. tristis felicibus umbris*
> *vultus erat…* 785
>
> *aeternis chalybis nodis et carcere Ditis* 797
> *constrictae plausere manus,* ***camposque piorum***
> ***poscit turba nocens*** (6.777-85, 6.797-9).
>
> "I did not, for my part, see the sad threads of the Parcae," he said, "before I was summoned back from the bank of the silent shore; but nevertheless I happened to learn from all the shades that savage **discord** stirs up the Roman ghosts and impious **wars have shattered the deathly silence**; opposing Latin leaders <u>left</u> the Elysian region and dread Tartarus. These made clear what the fates were preparing. The blessed shades wore a sad

[161] Cf. Jupiter's words to Hercules: "Each man's day is fixed for him, the time of life is short and irreparable for all… Under the high walls of Troy so many sons of gods fell—indeed, even my offspring Sarpedon died with them; Turnus' own fates summon him too, and he is come to the end of the life that is granted him" (*stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreperabile tempus* | *omnibus est vitae… tot gnati cecidere deum, quin occidit una* | *Sarpedon, mea progenies; etiam sua Turnum* | *fata vocant metasque dati pervenit ad aevi*, Verg. *A*. 10.467-9); likewise the narrator of the *Aeneid* declares that it is impossible (*fas obstat*, 6.438) for suicides to regain the days they threw away.

> face… Although restrained by the endless knots of bronze and the prison of Dis, the hands [of the punished] applauded and **the guilty crowd seeks the fields of the pious**.

By means of this dreadful report, the reader is informed that the confines of Tartarus are no longer strong enough to restrain their prisoners, and that villains like Catiline, Marius, and the Gracchi are preparing to storm the fields of the blest (6.798-9). Strictly speaking, such an event ought to be impossible: the infernal punishment of figures in earlier epics offered no chance of escape—at least without divine intervention.[162] Since Lucan is plainly innovating on this point, it is worth considering the implications of his assertion.

Lucan does not explain how this revolt has happened, so the audience must read between the lines. We may begin by noting that the *discordia* in the underworld is depicted as an analogue to the *discordia* on earth: the battle lines are drawn between the great *popularis* leaders and those with senatorial leanings, and the latter faction makes no attempt to hide its lament for the imminent defeat and death of Caesar's core opponents (*deplorat Libycis perituram Scipio terris | infaustam subolem; maior Carthaginis hostis | non servituri maeret Cato fata nepotis*, 6.788-90).[163] Consequently, although the loyalty of the faction comprising Catiline, Marius, and the Drusi is never stated explicitly, the reader may infer that they are supporters of the Julian clan. We may further note that the dead react to events that have not yet taken place within the epic's narrative present. This can be seen both in the sadness of Scipio and Cato at the thought of their descendants'

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[162] Many critics of Lucan seem unwilling to take this statement at face value. Ahl (1976) 139 insists the passage gives one "the uncomfortable feeling that Lucan is speaking with tongue in cheek;" Korenjak (1996) at 6.798 f. asserts that the entire scenario is "grotesquely comic." It is not immediately clear to me why the reader must laugh at what Lucan describes instead of shudder. An exception is Johnson (1987) 30, who claims that "Even in eternity, as it mirrors the shifts of current events, the brutal, useless contest [between freedom and slavery; *libertas et Caesar*] repeats itself endlessly."

[163] Thus Ahl (1976) 138); Korenjak (1996) at 6.776-802.

defeat and in the insistence that Pluto was making special preparations for Caesar and Pompey (6.799-805).[164] Since the shades know what is about to happen on earth, however, it is tempting to interpret the revolt in the underworld not as an analogue to the conflict between Lucan's protagonists, but actually as a reaction to it.

Let us pause for a moment to think through the implications of Lucan's assertion that there is a war in hell. It was mentioned above that the region each shade inhabits is determined by some unnamed force of cosmic justice that metes out punishment to the guilty and rewards to the great. This determination is traditionally said to be absolute, and so an exchange of places ought to be impossible: once a shade goes to Tartarus, it is supposed to stay there.[165] Lucan, however, tells us that certain of these people have broken free from their chains (*abruptis… fractisque catenis*, 6.793) and are attempting to claim the Elysian Fields for themselves (*camposque piorum* | *poscit turba nocens*, 6.798-9). To my mind, this situation is only comprehensible if the guilty shades believe that the constitutional revolution that they know is about to occur on earth will also impact the structure of the underworld—and will do so to their benefit. The logical sequence I envision governing the episode proceeds as follows: (1) Caesar's victory at Pharsalus is about to prove that he is morally guilty for the civil war,[166] but (2) that same victory will

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[164] The sadness of Scipio and Cato is strictly speaking premature: their descendents would not perish until 46 BC.
[165] See p. 164 n. 158.
[166] As the narrator assures Pompey: "it was worse to win" (*vincere peius erat*, 7.706), an apparent allusion to Sen. *Ep*. 14.12-3: "A master is being chosen: what does it matter to you which one wins? The better man can conquer, but he who has conquered cannot but be worse" (*Dominus eligitur: quid tua, uter vincat? potest melior vincere, non potest non peior esse qui vicerit*).

absolve him of any political guilt;[167] consequently (3) the shades of Rome's great *popularis* criminals—in whose footsteps Caesar now walks—think that his victory will vindicate their actions in life, and thus that (4) their punishments in the underworld are about to come to an end.

Although this interpretation admittedly reads much between the lines of the text that Lucan has composed, it seems to be the only coherent way to account for the innovative and paradoxical description of a revolt in the underworld that he relates during the necromancy.[168] Indeed, if this reading is rejected, it becomes difficult to explain how the conflict in the underworld can be described as a war (*arma*, 6.781) and how the *populares* are able to act in the manner that they do. On the other hand, accepting what I have proposed will also necessitate a reinterpretation of the power Caesar wields over the metaphysical world. If the shades in Tartarus are able to escape their confines as a result of the victory that Caesar is about to achieve, then Caesar's triumph must also be said to alter and to overturn the cosmic justice that led these shades to Tartarus in the first place.[169] Caesar's actions, in other words, cause the definition of right and wrong to be

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[167] Thus the narrator insists: "If only because of this one crime of civil war, you [Caesar] will be the leader of the better faction" (*hoc siquidem solo civilis crimine belli | dux causae melioris eris*, 4.258-9). Later, Caesar argues to his troops: "this battle is about to make the vanquished guilty" (*haec acies victum factura nocentem est*, 7.260); cf. Curio's words to Caesar's men at the start of the war: "your victory shall make us citizens" (*tua nos faciet victoria cives*, 1.279).

[168] It is of course possible that Lucan does not intend any such coherence; still, it seems profitable to entertain the implications of his claim.

[169] Here the guilty seem to know something that the gods of the underworld do not: as they break free from their confines and establish a new order, preparations are still being made for Caesar's punishment—an outcome that he will presumably escape through deification. Korenjak (1996) at 6.802-5 notes only that the promise of a peaceful abode is severely undercut by the revolution that has just been mentioned.

altered not only among those who live to see his dictatorship, but also among the dead.[170] Lucan's protagonist, we may conclude, effectively reshapes the underworld according to his own vision.[171] It is little wonder, then, that he and his descendants might also be able to inscribe themselves among the number of the gods.

Taking the above discussions together, we may now venture a few generalizations about the metaphysics of Lucan's poetic world. First, the presence of accurate omens and answered prayers indicate that there is some divine power that responds to the actions and concerns of men.[172] Although recognition of this fact decidedly shows that Lucan's gods are not those of the Epicurean school, it does not mean he envisions a world governed by benevolent Stoic λόγος.[173] On the contrary, when the prayers of men are answered, the result is further death and destruction; the potential benefit of knowing the future, meanwhile, is cast as an ambiguous gift or even as a curse that only strips men of hope.[174] Viewed in this light, the metaphysical powers of Lucan's world appear malevolent to the vast majority of mankind. Elaine Fantham has thus argued that the only evidence of real divine favor in the poem is the favorable outcome of events: *victrix causa deis placuit* 1.128).[175] Although the neutral theological position encapsulated by this reading seems to me quite attractive, it still leaves unanswered the question of whether the divine

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[170] For a passage in which Caesar seems to define political affiliations in the *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 181-2.
[171] Hömke (1998) 137 suggests that Caesar acts like Erictho in his manipulation of the gods. My interpretation takes this one step further: whereas Erictho can make the invisible world work to her advantage, Caesar actual fashions the invisible world in his own image. Fratantuono (2012) 252-3 expresses this same idea in vague terms.
[172] Thus Braund (1992) Introduction §7 ("The supernatural"), esp. xxix.
[173] Lévi (2006) argues this point persuasively, but then proposes—to my mind unconvincingly—that Lucan wishes to replace morality based on faith in the gods with morality based on faith in the greatness of a remarkable human being (Cato).
[174] See pp. 130-9 and 173 n. 182.
[175] Fantham (2003).

machine of Lucan's poem is somehow broken, whether the gods' support for the victorious side is normal or represents a cosmic malfunction. Indeed, all that Fantham's conclusion allows us to say is that the gods favored a side that the narrator does not. This observation, however, is essentially meaningless because the narrator has indicated from the start that he would have favored the loser of the civil war regardless of who that was.[176] The conflict between poet and Caesar, and thus between poet and gods, is little more than a rhetorical construct.

Our second generalization concerns the stability of this metaphysical world. Although the Erictho episode suggests that a human being might be able to compel the gods to do her bidding, and thus to break Lucan's cosmic machine, we have seen that the witch's power over fate is strictly limited.[177] Even the act of necromancy, which depicts a radical subversion of an eternal law of human nature, must be judged a short-lived affair with minimal impact on the course of history and Lucan's narrative. Rather than shattering the laws of the universe, then, Erictho merely manipulates or repurposes them in a momentary display of power.[178] Indeed, just as the Roman conception of prodigies manages paradoxically to embrace violations of physical laws as a normal part of a stable

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[176] Ahl (1976) 67-75 argues that this occurs for political reasons. Lucan's innate preference for the loser can be inferred from the narrator's refusal to pick sides in his introduction (*quis iustius induit arma* | *scire nefas*, 1.126-7; from the numerous characters who insist that Caesar and Pompey are both aiming at *regnum* (e.g. 2.259-63; 2.234-325); and from the address to Pompey assuring him that "to win was worse" (*vincere peius erat*, 7.706). The logical implication of all this is that the guilt of civil war falls entirely on the victor. I consequently suspect that the apparent crescendo of anti-Caesarian outbursts that some scholars have noted in the books leading up to Pharsalus are less a reflex of Lucan's own opposition to the principate than a reaction against the accelerating indications that the war will be decided in Caesar's favor.

[177] Thus Fratantuono (2012) 247-8 insists that Erictho is not as powerful as Lucan has made her out to be. This seems to me an overstatement.

[178] The emphasis on the momentary nature of power in Lucan's universe that is proposed by Johnson (1987) thus seems at least partially correct.

cosmos, so too are Erictho's powers rationalized by slotting her into the established category of "witch." But the same cannot be said for Nero's apotheosis and Caesar's upending of cosmic justice. If my readings of these passages have been correct, then Lucan attributes to the Caesars—and the Caesars alone—the ability to make a permanent change to the fabric of a metaphysical world that favors them at the expense of humanity.[179] The reader's willingness to accept this view of reality, however, depends on a personal judgment of an ambiguous text: the speech of the corpse that Erictho revivifies may be dismissed as a parlor trick, the Praise of Nero as an ironic jab at a deluded *princeps*. Indeed, however forcefully I have attempted to explain that such readings are not necessary, the fact remains that they are always possible. The problem is that Lucan refuses to give his reader any basis from which to make an adequate determination; instead, he presents an array of options and leaves us with the impossible task of finding a coherent resolution.

Conclusions

Throughout the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan presents his reader with a universe that repeatedly looks like it is on the verge of collapse, but that always finds a way to right itself; one in which there is a metaphysical world responsive to mankind, but whose benevolence and permanence cannot be ascertained. This *cosmos* does not appear to be a broken machine, but rather a machine whose operations can only be partially understood. Sometimes it acts normally, sometimes it appears to malfunction, and sometimes it is repurposed. In certain circumstances it may be refashioned entirely. Although it is easy to understand how some critics might assume that this state of affairs represents a nihilistic universe,

[179] This view is hinted at by Fratantuono (2012) 241-2.

this conclusion is not the only one that is conceivable. As I hope to have shown in the course of this chapter, Lucan suggests a number of different forces that might be at work in his world. Just because we cannot determine with absolute certainty that one of them is predominant does not mean that none of them actually is.

Here it may be helpful to return to where we began, and to draw another connection to Livy. As David Levene has demonstrated, the metaphysical outlook of the *Ab urbe condita* is consistently ambiguous: sometimes the historian depicts fate clearly guiding the Roman state, while at others humans appear to have free will.[180] The purpose of this authorial decision is supposedly to allow individual readers to judge whether Livy's subjects deserve all the glory for their actions or if the events of Roman history are better attributed to divine favor. In Lucan, I would suggest, the situation is similar, except that Livian optimism has been replaced with (the potential for) pessimism.[181] When the gods respond to prayers or send prodigies to men in the *Bellum Civile*, their motivation would seem to be malevolent—in every example outlined above, their goal can only be to punish or terrify.[182] Yet even though it seems clear that these divinities exist, Lucan also gives us indications that they are not absolutely in control of the *cosmos*; rather, we find instances in which they are cowed and overpowered by human beings, and perhaps even replaced by a few men whose mortal influence is so great that they are able to mount the vault of heaven. This final comment seems to explain how

[180] Levene (1993).
[181] See p. 102 n. 10. For the likelihood that Livy's later books abandoned the pessimism of his preface, see Woodman (1988) 128-39.
[182] Thus Dick (1963) 49: "Unlike the prophecies in the *Aeneid*, those in the *De bello civili* are all concerned with death and underscore the poet's thesis that knowledge of the future annihilates hope. Prodigies burden mankind, magically induced prophecies portend death, and dreams presage annihilation for the dreamer."

some readers have been attracted to Caesar: as a figure who is able to shape the world as he sees fit, he offers a possibility for change and stability in a world that otherwise risks being given over to chaos and thus offers some hope of alleviating the reader's anxiety about the ambiguity of Lucan's universe.[183] The questions that Lucan leaves open, however, are whether Caesar's power is real or illusory, and whether it is possible for some other entity to counteract the influence that he potentially wields over the universe.[184] My next two chapters, therefore, will offer a detailed consideration of one of the most disputed figures in the *Bellum Civile*, whose attempts to forge a path of *virtus* have variously delighted, inspired, frustrated, and disgusted Lucan's countless critics.

[183] The implications of this are considered at greater length in on pp. 323-44.
[184] Conte (1985) 77-108 argues that this ambiguity arises because of Lucan's attempt to adapt dramatic (tragic) concerns to narrative (epic) poetry. This idea is developed by Danese (1992), who even declares that Lucan's poetic mode—at least in the Erictho episode—is one that "affirms the impossibilitiy of communicating certainties" (243).

Chapter 3: *Nomina vana, Catones* (I)

Lucan's depiction of Cato the Younger has been an interpretive crux in the scholarly literature on the *Bellum Civile* for well over a century.[1] The questions surrounding Cato have been concerned with the poem's intended ending, the identification of its "hero," and, more recently, its apparently ambiguous and contradictory tone.[2] Scholars have returned to these issues perennially because they seem central to our understanding of the poem's broader themes and concerns. Thus far, however, there has been little real consensus, and attempts to sweep away moribund controversies by identifying the failures of earlier approaches have done little to change the focus of subsequent scholars.[3]

As in the case of Lucan's universe, the most recent schism concerning Cato has arisen in the wake of W. R. Johnson's *Momentary Monsters*.[4] A central claim of this work is that the *Bellum Civile* lacks any single hero or unifying theme, but instead presents a series of figures who temporarily lay claim to power before receding or being

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[1] Marti (1945) 352-4 could already summarize and dismiss the various and competing claims about the hero of the poem that had been made up to that date [N.B. the pages cited by Marti are often incorrect; they have been corrected here]: Heitland (1887) liii-lxiii, Teuffel (1910) ii 261, and Butler (1909) 80-1 propose Caesar; Pichon (1898) 567 and Friedrich (1938), esp. 419-20, argue for Cato; Nutting (1932) 41-52 insists it is Freedom; Merivale (1863-5) vi 237 lobbies for the Senate; Plessis (1909) 560 claims that the hero shifts from Caesar in Books 1-3 to Pompey in Book 4-8 to the Roman People throughout the rest; Summers (1920) 41-2 pushes for Pompey, Caesar, and Lucan himself; J. W. Duff (1927) 329 insists it is Caesar, Pompey, and Cato; Sanford (1933) 121-7 shrewdly argues that the poem has a central theme, the civil war, rather than a central hero. Despite Marti's best attempts to change the focus of the conversation, her philosophical interpretation of Lucan's Pompey as a Stoic *proficiens* did little more than to propose him as the hero of the poem on slightly different terms than her predecessors had used. The debate has continued, on which, see below.

[2] On this, see pp. 8-10.

[3] E.g. Marti (1945); Ormsby (1970); Masters (1992) 216-59; Seo (2011) n. 1. Rutz (1985) is a detailed summary of scholarship.

[4] Johnson (1987).

crushed.[5] To Johnson, Cato is best interpreted as a bumbling fool who fails to understand the true nature of Lucan's universe. Although this view was accepted by many Anglophone scholars through the end of the twentieth century, it was never fully dominant; crucially, it failed to gain real traction in Continental circles, where an older view of Cato as the poem's Stoic hero still remains deeply entrenched.[6] The debate has been complicated in recent years by new understandings of Roman Stoicism and its reception in later periods; indeed, the readings that have emerged from this movement have largely been favorable to Cato and have led to the strongest criticism yet of Johnson and his successors.[7] As things stand, one group of readers interprets Lucan's epic as an affirmation of the poet's faith in Stoic and Republican values, apparently supported by his participation in the Pisonian Conspiracy of AD 65, whereas another group interprets both Cato's actions and the *Bellum Civile* in its entirety with a more cynical eye.[8]

Consensus has not been reached in this, as in so many discussions of Lucan, because the poem does not allow such questions to be answered definitively.[9] The narrator consistently takes an optimistic view of Cato and describes him in

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[5] Although the argument for a thematic unity of the work had already been made by Sanford (1933), Johnson (1987) treats this issue at length in order to demonstrate the apparent nihilism of the poem. For my own criticism of the assumptions underlying Johnson's thesis, see pp. 99-174.

[6] *Contra* Seo (2011) 199, who argues that critics since Johnson (1987) have been largely skeptical of Lucan's Cato; favorable interpretations are offered, among others, by Wünsch (1949); Shoaf (1978); George (1985) and (1991); Brouwers (1989); Biffi (2000); Rachle (2001); Manzano Ventura (2004); Wick (2004); and Wussow (2004). Emanuele Narducci has been a most vehement opponent of the anti-Catonian school; see Narducci (1999), (2001a), (2001b), and (2002). Of recent scholars, Green (1991) to my knowledge stands alone in positing Caesar as the poem's hero.

[7] E.g. Gorman (2001); D'Alessandro Behr (2007); Stover (2008); Bexley (2010).

[8] Attempts to find some middle ground have been equally vexed. The best example of this position is Bartsch (1997). On this issue, see pp. 9-10.

[9] Thus Rudich (1997) 108, speaking of Lucan generally.

complimentary terms, while contradictions and illogicalities in the poem's dialogues and narrative progression frequently undercut the narrator's positive evaluations.[10] This creates a situation in which the reader must be exceptionally generous in evaluating Cato's words and actions in order to make them accord with the view of him that is recommended at the surface level of the poem.[11] Indeed, although it has now been argued that inconsistencies are a fundamental part of the epic genre at Rome,[12] what we find in Lucan goes beyond the careful cultivation of a few key discrepancies: the depiction of Cato is virtually at war with itself.

This situation makes Cato an ideal case study for a consideration of how Lucan's characters contribute to feelings of frustration that are provoked by the *Bellum Civile*. The present chapter and the one following it will consequently explore the literary devices that Lucan employs to frustrate our ability to come to a secure judgment of Cato the Younger and his actions in the Julio-Pompeian war. In particular, I shall argue that narrative dissonance between the editor's positive evaluation of Cato and the actions that are attributed to him in Books 1, 2, and 9 prevent Lucan's reader from simply endorsing Cato's opposition to Caesar or dismissing him as a suicidal egomaniac.[13] Indeed, Lucan effectively makes any determination on this matter philologically impossible. As the

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[10] Batinski (1992) argues this point in the limited context of Cato's encounter with Libya's snakes in *Bellum Civile* 9. The narrative dissonance envisioned here is akin to what we have seen in Lucan's depiction of the universe: repeated assertions that the world is collapsing simply do not jibe with Lucan's description of physical phenomena; on this, see pp. 99-122.
[11] Johnson (1987) suggests various points of tension, but rarely treats them in any detail; many of my arguments here flesh out impressions or intuitions that he relates obliquely.
[12] O'Hara (2007).
[13] Thus we find Bartsch (1997) arguing that Lucan chose to support Republican ideals in willful opposition to his deep pessimism about their efficacy. On the tyrannical aspects of Cato's character, see Maes (2009). On competing voices in Lucan, see Masters (1992), esp. 87-90.

poem proceeds, therefore, contradictions in the characterization of Cato build on themselves, creating a feedback loop that leaves the reader increasingly unsure of how to evaluate one of the civil war's most famous—and most admired—participants.

First Impressions

Cato is first mentioned during the poem's introduction. Amidst a description of the historical events that led to the outbreak of war, the narrator names three figures that, one may infer, promise to stand at the center of the action:[14]

> *stimulos dedit aemula virtus.* 120
> *tu nova ne veteres obscurent acta triumphos*
> *et victis cedat piratica laurea Gallis,*
> *Magne, times; te iam series ususque laborum*
> *erigit impatiensque loci fortuna secundi;*
> *nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem* 125
> *Pompeiusve parem. quis iustius induit arma?*
> *scire nefas: magno se iudice quisque tuetur:*
> ***victrix causa deis placuit sed victa Catoni.***
> *nec coiere pares*… (1.120-9).
>
> Rivalrous prowess applied its goads. You, lest new deeds overshadow ancient triumphs and the crown of victory over the pirates give way to the conquest of Gauls, you, Magnus, are afraid; *you* [Caesar] a sequence and habit of labors already elevates, and a fortune impatient of second place; already Caesar is able to endure no superior, or Pompey any equal. Who donned arms more justly? Sacrilege to know: each defends himself with a great judge. **The conquering side pleased the gods, but the conquered Cato.** They did not meet matched…

Scholars have pointed to this passage as proof that Lucan intended Pompey, Caesar, and Cato to be his main protagonists, and even cited the single line about Cato as evidence that he would have played a more prominent role in the second half of the poem if

[14] For an extended discussion of this passage, see pp. 62-82.

Lucan's untimely death had not halted composition.[15] However that might be, Lucan's decision to mention Cato here is surely significant. The pithy *sententia* with which Cato is described indicates that he functions as a moral barometer or as a figure on par with the gods,[16] while his placement together with Caesar and Pompey suggests that he will play a major role in the poem. Indeed, Lucan encourages this latter interpretation when he embarks on a lengthy programmatic digression characterizing Pompey (1.129-43) and Caesar (1.143-57) and establishing the images and vocabulary that describe them throughout the work.[17] At the end of this passage, however, Cato is not mentioned; instead, the poet transitions out of this section by identifying Caesar and Pompey as the heads of the two primary factions: *hae ducibus causae* (1.158).[18]

Cato's limited treatment is surely meant to come as a surprise. During the reign of Nero, Cato enjoyed a great reputation—at least in more conservative, senatorial circles—as Rome's last Republican hero. Indeed, Seneca viewed him as an ideal Stoic and used his death as a model for demonstrating the reasonable limits of political involvement, an acceptable circumstance for suicide, and the appropriate dedication to philosophical convictions.[19] Yet Cato's reputation was not wholly positive. During his

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[15] Stover (2008) is the most recent to argue this position; he summarizes earlier arguments in n. 2. Masters (1992) 216-59 demonstrates conclusively that arguments made about the proposed end-point of the poem will inevitably (*pace* Stover) be fallacious or circular.

[16] Narducci (2001a) 171 argues the latter point, but goes on to defend Cato's position as the gods' rival.

[17] See Pecchiura (1965) 75-6; Feeney (1986); Roche (2009) at 1.120-57.

[18] Ahl (1976) 231-2 argues—to my mind unconvincingly—that this brief mention is meant to introduce Cato without linking "him too closely with the origins and causes of war" (232).

[19] Seo (2011) argues that Lucan's readers would have begun reading the *Bellum Civile* with these views of Cato in mind and that "The degree to which Cato fulfills or contradicts the expectations of his mytho-historical *persona* illuminate how we read

lifetime he had been considered an especially rigorous adherent of Zeno's philosophical ideals (Cic. *Pro Mur.* 60-6, cf. Hor. *Odes* 2.1.24), and his unwavering commitment to the Republican constitution—at least as he conceived it—could be faulted first for driving together Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar in 60 BC, then for putting Caesar's back against a wall at the end of his Gallic command in 50 BC. Indeed, this latter move is probably a chief reason that Caesar felt compelled to cross the Rubicon.[20] Soon after Cato's death, there was a flurry of pamphlets, variously entitled either *Cato* or *Anti-Cato*, which portrayed his political actions—especially the suicide—in competing lights.[21] But discussion of Cato did not end there. He soon became entrenched as an *exemplum* in the rhetorical schools,[22] and so, much like Alexander the Great, remained culturally relevant through the continual reevaluation of his actions and the witty fantasy of counterfactual history. In short, Cato's central role in the fall of the Republic was undisputed historical fact, and ancient readers of the *Bellum Civile* would consequently have expected Lucan to treat him at some length once he has been introduced.

If Cato was such a crucial figure, then we must ask why he merits so little attention here. One answer might be that Lucan introduces this narrative possibility

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Lucan's enigmatic protagonist in a Neronian context" (200). On Cato's reputation generally, see Pecchiura (1965); Goar (1987).

[20] *Pace* Ahl (1976) 231-2. On the historical causes of the war and Cato's role as a leader of the conservative faction, see Gruen (1974), esp. 449-97. The conception of the war as an ideological conflict between Caesar and Cato—rather than Caesar and Pompey—seems implicit in Sallust's *Catiline*, a work most likely released in the wake of Caesar's assassination. Caesar himself has choice words for Cato at Caes. *Civ*. 1.4.1.

[21] On Cicero's use of Cato as an *exemplum* and the debate over his memory that arose immediately after his death, see Van der Blom (2010) 122 n. 164; 247, esp. n. 253; 335-6.

[22] On this, see esp. Pecchiura (1965) 37-58. Fantham (1992a) at 2.234-325 overstates her case in claiming that Cato's decision to enter the war was a common rhetorical theme. This seems to be an inference from Lucan alone; Seneca the Elder and other writers, as shown by Pecchiura, invoke Cato primarily as moral exemplar for his decision to commit suicide rather than live under Caesar.

precisely to undercut his reader's expectations.[23] The strong *sententia* attached to Cato at verse 1.128 suggests that he will play an important, if paradoxical role in the poem, and seems to invite a fuller portrait like those that Lucan grants to Caesar and Pompey.[24] The poet's subsequent failure to provide such a portrait effectively leaves the reader off-balance; more than this, however, it raises serious questions about Cato's centrality, and may even be thought to anticipate the limited impact he will have on narrative events later the poem.[25] This latter interpretation would seem to be supported by what the notice, for all its brevity, actually does tell us about Lucan's Cato. Rather than having any independent motives, he is chiefly defined against Caesar and Pompey as somebody who prefers the "losing side" (*causa victa*, 1.128). Indeed, since his involvement with either faction is contingent on its defeat,[26] the reader may well conclude that Cato is not one of the war's primary competitors at all; on the contrary, he is a reactive figure whose position in the war and the text that narrates it is principally defined by others.

This passivity is reinforced later in the first book. When Caesar rhetorically challenges his (absent) civilian enemies to face him as he marches on Rome, he groups together Pompey, Marcellus, and "those empty names, the Catos" (*nomina vana Catones*, 1.313). Here again Cato is depicted as somebody without any significant agency. The insult *nomina vana* implies that he is not an actor at all, but an impotent political

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[23] On deceptive or misleading beginnings in ancient poetry, see Cairns (1979) 166-91.
[24] See Roche (2009) at 1.128.
[25] On this, cf. my argument on pp. 225-6.
[26] It is unclear whether Lucan intends to say that Cato merely favored the side that was fated to lose or that he backed the Pompeian army because (i.e. after) it was defeated by Caesar at Pharsalus. The former heightens the apparent paradox of Cato and the gods being on opposite sides of the conflict; the latter suggests that Cato is committed to defeat itself. The tension between these possibilities is realized in Book 9. On this, see pp. 275-87.

figurehead who can exert little force now that matters are to be decided by arms.[27] The generalizing plural *Catones* reinforces this idea, as it suggests that Cato's importance was contingent on the reputation of his great-grandfather, Cato the Censor.[28] Although one might dismiss Caesar's words as the bravado of a general trying to rouse his troops, the reader may hear more in these lines than Caesar intends. By describing Cato as "empty names," Caesar evokes the narrator's quip that, at the onset of war, Pompey was nothing but "the shadow of the name 'Great'" (*Magni nominis umbra*, 1.135).[29] Thus at the same time as Caesar asserts that Pompey and Cato form a single political faction, his echo of the narrator's words links the two men more closely in the mind of the reader. To the extent that Cato's allegiance was initially left ambiguous, therefore, Caesar's words can be seen as an attempt to decide the matter by placing him squarely in the camp of Pompey. This suggests, once again, that Cato is not an active agent in this war, but one whose role is defined by others. Indeed, even if one wishes to question Caesar's right or power to group Cato with the Pompeian faction, the progression of the narrative, as so often, implies that Caesar's will may have causative force: the next time Cato is mentioned, we find him choosing to join Pompey's side against the strong objections of his nephew Brutus (2.234-325), thus bringing to fruition the assertion that Caesar made to his troops.[30]

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[27] Cato will himself demonstrate an interest in pursuing *inania* later in the poem; on this, see pp. 184-224.
[28] Thus Roche (2009) at 1.313.
[29] Roche (2009) at 1.313; see also Feeney (1986).
[30] Ahl (1976) 252 notes the connection between 1.135 and 1.313, but argues rather that it demonstrates Caesar's inability to "grasp the importance of the ideal and the abstract as Cato does." Roche (2009) at 1.128 notes that "the theme of the gods' support of Caesar's victory… finds ample support throughout the epic." For my own discussion, see pp. 184-211. This episode may also serve as an example of prayer fulfillment in the *Bellum*

But let us return to the first reference to Cato and consider other ways in which he might be characterized by Lucan's *sententia*: "The conquering side pleased the gods, but the conquered Cato" (*victrix causa deis placuit sed victa Catoni*, 1.128). The force of this line relies on the pointed grammatical balance of its elements and the apparent paradox that it creates. Just as Caesar and Pompey represent the heads of two different factions in the civil war, so too do the gods and Cato. This opposition implies that Cato and the gods actually exist at the same level, and thus may be thought to raise Cato above his two (potential) mortal opponents: whereas Caesar and Pompey compete for control of the Roman world, Cato fights on a higher plane. This reading seems to gain support as the poem unfolds: with each passing verse, it becomes clearer to Lucan's reader that the poet has dispensed entirely with epic's traditional divine machinery.[31] The realization that the gods will be absent from the *Bellum Civile* may thus be thought to set the alternative role of Cato in relief, and perhaps to invite the reader to see the Roman as a surrogate for the poem's missing divinities.[32]

Cato's importance may also be suggested through the rhetorical effect of the quoted line. *Sententiae* such as this work because they create an unexpected or witty contrast between their various elements.[33] In the present case, the poet suggests that the opposition between the gods and Cato is paradoxical, that these two entities, in other words, ought to have been on the same side of the conflict. On one level, this seems to presuppose that readers are inclined to view Cato favorably, and perhaps nudges them in

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Civile; on this motif and Caesar's special relationship with the divine powers that govern Lucan's universe, see pp. 132-8.

[31] On this, see esp. Feeney (1991) 250-68.

[32] Thus Pecchiura (1965) 75 suggests that, in supporting the losing side, Cato "appears even superior to the gods."

[33] On Lucan's *sententiae*, see most recently Dinter (2012) 89-118.

this direction.[34] More generally, however, it draws our attention to an issue that was serious for admirers of Cato, namely that of theodicy: if Cato's opposition to Caesar and support of the Republican government was truly just, why did the gods allow his side to lose?[35] Supporters of Cato in the early principate must have grappled with this question, and it is striking that Lucan chooses to focus on just this point when he introduces Cato for the first time. Although Lucan's failure to elaborate on this point necessarily prevents his reader from resolving the issue, it effectively draws our attention to a point of controversy and encourages us to keep it in mind when we encounter Cato later in the poem.

The Great Debate

Cato enters the narrative only in the middle of Book 2, when his nephew Brutus arrives at his door to ask about the appropriate response to the civil war that has just broken out (2.234-325). After the references to Cato in Book 1 and the questions they raised about his function in the poem, this scene promises to clarify his role; indeed, now he is allowed to state his plans and motivations in his own voice. This occurs in dramatic fashion: Brutus' initial request for advice quickly turns into an extended speech urging Cato to remain aloof from the contest. When he has finished, Cato answers his nephew

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[34] Seo (2011) argues that readers would have come to the table with an established prejudgment of Cato.

[35] The opening of the next line is deceptive. The phrase, "they did not meet matched" (*nec coiere pares*, 1.129), may initially be read as suggesting that Cato and the gods are not equal. As the verse continues, however, it becomes clear that the *pares* are not Cato and the gods, but Caesar and Pompey (*alter urguentibus annis,* i.e. Pompey, 1.129; *sed non in Caesare tantum* | *nomen erat*, 1.143-4). On this, see Roche (2009) ad loc.

point-by-point, rejecting the arguments that he had made and insisting that the best course of action is to join the war on the side of Pompey.[36]

Throughout this scene, the narrator invites us to evaluate Cato favorably. Cato's modest house (*atria… non ampla*, 2.238) evokes the frugality that the Romans idealized and for which the *Catones*, in particular, were famous.[37] Moreover, we soon learn that Brutus finds his uncle awake, pondering the ills that have befallen the state and anxious about the future of the city and its citizens, all while unconcerned about himself (*invenit insomni volventem publica cura | fata virum casusque urbis cunctisque timentem | securumque sui*, 2.239-41). This picture of a man thinking only of others is no doubt meant to evoke a sympathetic response from a Roman audience: at a time when the city had become a pawn in the larger conflict between Caesar and Pompey, the presence of a man willing to put the good of Rome ahead of his personal ambition appears a veritable godsend.[38] Indeed, the narrator characterizes Cato's speech in terms typically applied to an oracle or prophet: "But from his <u>innermost</u> heart Cato <u>returned</u> to him [i.e. Brutus] <u>sacred</u> voices" (*at illi | <u>arcano</u> <u>sacras</u> <u>reddit</u> Cato pectore voces*, 2.284-5).[39] This suggests that Cato's proclamation is god-like or inspired by a god, and so invites the reader to accept the arguments that Cato offers against his nephew as valid, even divinely sanctioned.

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[36] Although this narrative sequence could be invited by the fact that Brutus comes to Cato's door, it might also further Lucan's portrayal of Cato as a reactive figure.
[37] On this, see Fantham (1992a) at 2.238.
[38] We may also be invited to recall earlier Romans who risked death or sacrificed themselves for the benefit of the community, e.g. C. Mucius Scaevola, L. Aemilius Paullus, or even Aeneas; Cato himself mentions P. Decius Mus (2.308). Thus Ahl (1976) 244-5; Fantham (1992a) at 2.234-325. See also Narducci (2002) 395-404.
[39] On the oracular language, see Fantham (1992a) at 2.285. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 116-23 argues that Cato and the narrator both adopt oracular tones, even as they reject oracles.

Although the narrator's evaluation is overwhelmingly positive, closer consideration of the arguments employed by Brutus and Cato may give us pause.[40] In her introduction to this scene, Elaine Fantham suggests that the question of whether Cato should fight in the civil war was a common *topos* in rhetorical school exercises.[41] Discussions of Lucan's rhetoric have a long history in the scholarship on the *Bellum Civile*, and I do not intend to revive debate about the extent to which Lucan is influenced by his rhetorical training and whether this makes him any less of a poet.[42] Yet if we accept that Lucan, like virtually all members of the upper class at Rome, would have received formal training in the art of persuasion, we should expect him to be quite attentive to the strengths and weaknesses of his characters' arguments.[43] Indeed, we might even say that the evaluation of such arguments is one of the reactions that Lucan could have expected his immediate audience to have when reading or listening to his poem. Our interpretation of this exchange, therefore, may be greatly enhanced by focusing not only on what the narrator and Brutus say about Cato, but on the logical soundness of their plans and the implications—logical, moral, and philosophical—of their competing courses of action.

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[40] *Contra* Narducci (2002) 383-8. For Brutus and Cato as reflections of Lucan and Seneca, see Croisille (1982); for a discussion of the passage and its relation to the concept of "moral luck," see Long (2007).
[41] Fantham (1992a) at 2.234-325, but see p. 180 n. 22.
[42] Use of the term "rhetorical" with a negative connotation in regards to Lucan's poetry derives from Quintilian's evaluation that Lucan is "to be imitated by orators more than by poets" (10.1.90). Ahl (2010) summarizes these arguments and argues that we need not read Quintilian's evaluation as negative.
[43] Rudich (1997) 1-16 argues, on the contrary, that the "rhetoricized mentality" of the imperial period led writers and orators to privilege manner (style, novelty) over matter (content). However prevalent the desire for effect may have been, it seems entirely unlikely that Lucan could have composed a speech for Cato the Younger without regard for his famed constancy and reputation as a Stoic *sapiens*, on which, see Seo (2011).

As the arguments that Brutus levels are central to our interpretation of his speech, it will be helpful to quote the text in full as a point of reference:

> ‘*omnibus expulsae terris olimque fugatae*
> *virtutis iam sola fides, quam turbine nullo*
> *excutiet fortuna tibi, tu mente labantem*
> *derige me, dubium certo tu robore firma.* 245
> *namque alii Magnum vel Caesaris arma sequantur,*
> *dux Bruto Cato solus erit. pacemne tueris*
> *inconcussa tenens dubio vestigia mundo*
> *an placuit ducibus scelerum populique furentis*
> *cladibus immixtum civile absolvere bellum?* 250
> *quemque suae rapiunt scelerata in proelia causae:*
> *hos polluta domus legesque in pace timendae,*
> *hos ferro fugienda fames mundique ruinae*
> *permiscenda fides. nullum furor egit in arma;*
> *castra petunt magna victi mercede: tibi uni* 255
> *per se bella placent? quid tot durare per annos*
> *profuit immunem corrupti moribus aevi?*
> *hoc solum longae pretium virtutis habebis:*
> *accipient alios, facient te bella nocentem.*
> *ne tantum, o superi, liceat feralibus armis,* 260
> *has etiam movisse manus. nec pila lacertis*
> *missa tuis caeca telorum in nube ferentur:*
> *ne tanta in cassum virtus eat, ingeret omnis*
> *se belli fortuna tibi. quis nolet in isto*
> *ense mori, quamvis alieno vulnere labens,* 265
> *et scelus esse tuum? melius tranquilla sine armis*
> *otia solus ages, sicut caelestia semper*
> *inconcussa suo volvuntur sidera lapsu.*
> *fulminibus propior terrae succenditur aër,*
> *imaque telluris ventos tractusque coruscos* 270
> *flammarum accipiunt; nubes excedit Olympus.*
> *lege deum minimas rerum discordia turbat,*
> *pacem magna tenent. quam laetae Caesaris aures*
> *accipient tantum venisse in proelia civem!*
> *nam praelata suis numquam diversa dolebit* 275
> *castra ducis Magni. nimium placet ipse Catoni,*
> *si bellum civile placet. pars magna senatus*
> *et duce privato gesturus proelia consul*
> *sollicitant proceresque alii; quibus adde Catonem*
> *sub iuga Pompeï, toto iam liber in orbe* 280
> *solus Caesar erit. quod si pro legibus arma*
> *ferre iuvat patriis libertatemque tueri*
> *nunc neque Pompeï Brutum neque Caesaris hostem,*

> *post bellum victoris habes*.' (2.242-84).
>
> You, now the only source of faith in a virtue long ago driven from all lands and routed, which Fortune will not strip from you with any maelstrom—strengthen me as my wits are failing, secure me in my doubt with certain strength. Let others follow Magnus or Caesar's arms, Cato will be Brutus' only leader. Do you guard peace, keeping your steps unshaken although the world is on the edge, or has it pleased you to acquit civil war by joining in with the leaders of wickedness and the disasters of a raging people? Each man's motives snatch him into the wicked battles: some a polluted house and the laws that must be feared in peace, others hunger to be escaped through steel and credit to be disturbed by the world's ruin. Madness has led no man into arms: conquered by great profit they seek the camp. To you alone is war pleasing for its own sake? What has it helped to stand firm through so many years, safe from the customs of a corrupted age? You will have this as the sole reward of enduring virtue: war will take others already guilty, you it will make guilty. Only, o gods, do not permit funereal arms to have yet moved these hands! Do not let javelins launched blind from your arms be born in a cloud of missiles: do not let such great virtue go to waste, every chance of war bear itself against you! Who would not desire to perish on that sword, although collapsing from another's wound, and that the wickedness be yours? Better that you alone keep quiet leisure without arms, just as the heavenly stars, ever unshaken, are turned by their own falling. The air nearer to land is scorched with lightning bolts, and depths and expanses of the earth receive the winds and wavering flames; Olympus rises above the clouds. By the law of the gods discord disturbs the smallest of things; great ones keep their peace. How happily will Caesar's ears hear that such a citizen has come into battle! For he will never mourn that the opposing camps of the Great leader were preferred to his own: Cato likes Caesar too much, if he likes civil war at all. A great part of the Senate, a consul about to wage war with an unelected general, and the other leaders are a cause for concern: add Cato to those under the yoke of Pompey—Caesar will now be the only free man in the whole world! But if it pleases you to bear arms on behalf of your ancestral laws and to guard freedom, you now have Brutus as an enemy of neither Pompey nor of Caesar, but of the victor after the war.

Brutus' speech sets out a course of action that would allow Cato to maintain both his standing as a man of virtue (*longae… virtutis*, 2.258-9) and his commitment to Rome's traditional constitution (*legibus… patriis,* 2.281-2). The basis of this advice is neutrality in the present conflict. He points out that Cato would be a prime target in the battle line

either because others would seek the honor of being killed by so great a man or because they would be eager to implicate him in wickedness as quickly as possible (*quis nolet in isto | ense mori, quamvis alieno vulnere labens, | et scelus esse tuum,* 2.264-6). Cato would naturally need to defend himself in such situations, so a decision to join in the civil war would force him to stain his hands with the blood of fellow citizens. This guilt would taint his long-sought reputation for virtue and undermine the moral superiority in Roman politics that he had maintained until this point (*hoc solum longae pretium virtutis habebis: | accipient alios, facient te bella nocentem*, 2.258-9). Support for Pompey's side, moreover, would be doubly negative. First, it would be a tacit admission that Rome was inclined towards one-man rule. Although the Great general had been coopted by the senatorial party, he had been a member of the triumvirate for much longer; indeed, it seemed quite likely that he was only using the former group's support to cement his position as *princeps*.[44] Secondly, Cato's involvement would be a boon for Caesar, who was eager to paint Cato as driven by personal enmity.[45] Indeed, if that enmity drove him to raise his hand against other Romans, then Cato's (self-professed) moral superiority would be proved a sham, and Caesar's position would be strengthened (*nimium placet ipse Catoni, | si bellum civile placet*, 2.276-7). Cato's best course of action, therefore, is to remain aloof, high above the present conflict and untouched by its madness (2.266-73).

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[44] Thus Brutus warns Cato that backing Pompey would effectively mean going under his yoke (*sub iuga Pompei*, 2.280); see Fantham (1992a) ad loc. Cato recognizes that Pompey fights for himself (2.319-23), and he will reiterate this view upon hearing of the Great general's death (9.265-6).

[45] Cf. Caesar's words to his troops at 1.311-3: "Let them come into war with their swift army—a leader dissolute from long peace, a toga-clad faction, long-winded Marcellus, and those empty names, the Catos" (*veniat longa dux pace solutus | milite cum subito partesque in bella togatae | Marcellusque loquax et nomina vana Catones*). Cato's enmity is also furnished as a reason for the civil war at Caes. *Civ*. 1.4.1.

Although Brutus' advice is primarily moral and philosophical, it also has a military end: by waiting to see whether Caesar or Pompey will prevail, Cato can preserve his strength until the time is right to attack the victor. Only then will it be possible to mount a genuine defense of Roman laws (2.281-4).

By all accounts this appears to be sound advice. The linchpin of Brutus' argument is that Cato needs to form a third party dedicated to freedom in order to differentiate himself from the other generals. This position presupposes that Caesar and Pompey are both fighting to attain absolute power, whereas Cato's objective is the preservation of the Republican government. To state this another way, we might say that Caesar and Pompey, although the nominal opponents in the war, are actually on the same side of an ideological contest over the form of the Roman constitution: Cato is not opposed to them as individuals, but rather to their shared objective. The civil war, therefore, is really a fight between kingship and republicanism.

This conception of the civil war as an ideological contest between Cato and Caesar finds parallels in other imperial literature, and may thus be presumed to have been a common way of construing the war in Lucan's day.[46] Seneca the Younger, for example, insists that "while some men were inclining towards Caesar, and others towards Pompey, Cato alone formed another faction, one of the Republic."[47] Tacitus likewise has Cossutianus Capito recall hearing Thrasea Paetus compare his dispute with Nero to that

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[46] See Griffin (1968) for an analysis of Seneca's treatment of Cato's political participation.

[47] Sen. *Ep*. 104.30: "When some were inclining towards Caesar, others towards Pompey, Cato alone forged another faction—one of the Republic" (*cum alii ad Caesarem inclinarent, alii ad Pompeium, solus Cato fecit aliquas et rei publicae partes*).

between Caesar and Cato.[48] A similar idea is raised in Seneca the Elder's sixth *Suasoria*: here, in considering whether Cicero should beg pardon from M. Antonius, two speakers invoke Cato in order to illustrate what they view as the proper course of action. One of them indicates that death is necessary and proper when living would force one to jeopardize one's freedom and *dignitas*, while further insisting that Cato provides an example of how to act when one must choose between life and slavery.[49] The implication of this claim is that Cato's suicide was an act of ideological defiance undertaken in direct response to Caesar's victory: since living under Caesar would effectively mean being a slave to him (*servire*, 6.10), Cato's only acceptable course of action was to kill himself. Another of Seneca the Elder's speakers maintains that Cato preferred to die than to seek pardon from a man much better than M. Antonius, while adding that he did so before his hands were stained by a fellow citizen's blood (6.2).[50] Here the point is much the same as before, with the further idea that Cato's involvement in the war was justified by the fact that he never personally killed a fellow citizen. This argument may consequently be

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[48] Tac. *Ann*. 16.22.2: "Just as a society eager for discord once spoke of C. Caesar and M. Cato, so now it speaks of you, Nero, and Thrasea [Paetus]" (*ut quondam C. Caesarem… et M. Catonem, ita nunc te, Nero, et Thraseam avida discordiarum civitas loquitur*).

[49] Sen. *Suas*. 6.10: "'It is useful, it is proper, it is necessary for you to die, in order that you may pass your life free and without harm to your *dignitas*.' At this point he spoke the famous bold *mot*: 'in order that you might be numbered with Cato, who was unable to be a slave to Antonius even when was not yet a master" (*mori tibi utile est, honestum est, necesse est, ut liber et illibatae dignitatis consumes vitam. Hic illam sententiam dixit audacem: ut numereris cum Catone, qui servire Antonio quidem nondum domino potuit*). The final clause is vexed, on which see Feddern (2013) at Sen. *Suas*. 6.10.

[50] Sen. *Suas*. 6.2: "M. Cato, alone our greatest *exemplum* of living and dying, prefered to die than to ask for pardon (and he was not about to ask Antonius), and armed against his most sacred breast those hands that had been clean of citizen's blood down to their last day" (*M. Cato, solus maximum vivendi moriendique exemplum, mori maluit quam rogare (nec erat Antonium rogaturus), et illas usque ad ultimum diem puras a civili sanguine manus in pectus sacerrimum armavit*). For the language adopted here, cf. Sen. *Ep*. 67.13; *Prov*. 2.9-12.

thought to mark out Cato as fundamentally different from the other actors in the conflict, and so to indicate that he constituted a third party, a countervailing moral axis, as it were, in an otherwise criminal war. This, at any rate, is the point at which the Younger Seneca aims when he invokes the same image.[51] Although these sources are admittedly few and disparate, all point to a common, favorable interpretation of Cato based on the idea that he was the ideological opponent of the other combatants in the civil war.[52]

Turning back to the speech of Brutus, we may now recognize that the course of action he recommends actually paves the way for Cato to live up to the reputation that he held in Lucan's day.[53] By refraining from any act that might jeopardize his claims to philosophical uprightness and refusing to endorse either Caesar or Pompey, Cato will

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[51] Sen. *Ep*. 24.7: "And after drawing the sword that he had kept pure from all slaughter up to that day, he said, 'You have accomplished nothing, Fortune, by standing in the way of all my undertakings. I did not fight this long for my own freedom, but for my fatherland's, and I was not conducting myself with such steadfastness to live as a free man, but to live among free people'" (*et stricto gladio quem usque in illum diem ab omni caede purum servaverat, 'nihil' inquit 'egisti, Fortuna, omnibus conatibus meis obstando. non pro mea adhuc sed pro patriae libertate pugnavi, nec agebam tanta pertinacia ut liber sed ut inter liberos viverem'*).

[52] Pecchiura (1965) 47-51 argues that Cato could be praised as a philosophical hero because his act of defiance was passive; imitating him, in other words, would not mean open revolt or conspiracy against the emperor. It seems to me quite probable that this line of reasoning developed from the debates following Cato's suicide. Presenting the civil war as a conflict between Cato and all would-be *principes* makes it possible to praise Cato's constancy without necessarily impugning Caesar: the two men merely had different visions of what Rome had to become. Although Caesar was ultimately successful, Cato could nevertheless be admired for clinging to the *mos maiorum*. I suspect, though it cannot be proved, that Lucan found these ideas in the pamphlets that were released after Cato's death: Cicero and Brutus both wrote a *Cato* extolling their subject; Hirtius, Caesar, and later Octavian each replied with an *Anticato*. That Cato's supporters were successful in promulgating their favorable views can be seen in the high regard in which Manilius (1.797, 4.86) and even Velleius Paterculus (2.35, 45), both proponents of the principate, held Cato just a generation or two after the civil war was over. See also Tschiedel (1977) on Cato's drunkenness and Caesar's *Anticato*.

[53] Thus Sklenář (1999) 287-8 persuasively argues that "Brutus effectively constructs in Cato's own presence a characterization of Cato as a Stoic saint." This view is repeated almost *verbatim* at Sklenář (2003) 66.

prove that he actually fights for *Libertas*. Moreover, by keeping his hands clean of blood, he will ensure that he remains guiltless, and therefore become a figure worthy of admiration in the future. He will become, in other words, the philosophical and political *exemplum* that many in Lucan's milieu assumed him to be. After such powerful arguments, Lucan's readers are held in suspense as they wait to see whether Cato will follow Brutus' advice and conform to this favorable interpretation of his future actions.

Contrary to our expectations, Cato rejects Brutus' position and claims that entering the conflict in support of Pompey is his best course of action.[54] Here it will be helpful, once again, to quote the entire speech before discussing its particulars:

> *'summum, Brute, nefas civilia bella fatemur,*
> *sed quo fata trahunt virtus secura sequetur.*
> *crimen erit superis et me fecisse nocentem.*
> *sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem*
> *expers ipse metus? quis, cum ruat arduus aether,* 290
> *terra labet mixto coëuntis pondere mundi,*
> *compressas tenuisse manus? gentesne furorem*
> *Hesperium ignotae Romanaque bella sequentur*
> *diductique fretis alio sub sidere reges,*
> *otia solus agam? procul hunc arcete furorem,* 295
> *o superi, motura Dahas ut clade Getasque*
> *securo me Roma cadat. ceu morte parentem*
> *natorum orbatum longum producere funus*
> *ad tumulos iubet ipse dolor, iuvat ignibus atris*
> *inseruisse manus constructoque aggere busti* 300
> *ipsum atras tenuisse faces, non ante revellar*
> *exanimem quam te complectar, Roma; tuumque*
> *nomen, Libertas, et inanem persequar umbram.*
> *sic eat: immites Romana piacula divi*
> *plena ferant, nullo fraudemus sanguine bellum.* 305

[54] Thus Ahl (1976) 245: "the power of Cato's response to Brutus is such that it can easily obscure the abrupt and somewhat surprising decision Cato makes." Adatte (1965), which is concerned primarily with Lucan's conception of "the man of action," offers a nuanced close reading of the episode. Wussow (2004) 237-51 argues that Cato's speech is mimetic of the historical Cato's changing ideas about the war, and that Lucan presents Cato's stream of consciousness so that the reader can more easily understand his decision to back Pompey.

o utinam caelique deis Erebique liceret
hoc caput in cunctas damnatum exponere poenas!
devotum hostiles Decium pressere catervae:
me geminae figant acies, me barbara telis
Rheni turba petat, cunctis ego pervius hastis 310
excipiam medius totius vulnera belli.
hic redimat sanguis populos, hac caede luatur
quidquid Romani meruerunt pendere mores.
ad iuga cur faciles populi, cur saeva volentes
regna pati pereunt? me solum invadite ferro, 315
me frustra leges et inania iura tuentem.
hic dabit hic pacem iugulus finemque malorum
gentibus Hesperiis: post me regnare volenti
non opus est bello. quin publica signa ducemque
Pompeium sequimur? nec, si fortuna favebit, 320
hunc quoque totius sibi ius promittere mundi
non bene compertum est: ideo me milite vincat
ne sibi se vicisse putet.' sic fatur et acris
irarum movit stimulos iuvenisque calorem
excitat in nimios belli civilis amores (2.286-325).

"I confess, Brutus, that civil war is the utmost sacrilege, but disinterested *virtus* will follow where the fates drag it. It will be a crime for the gods to have made me guilty. Who would wish to watch the stars and the earth collapsing, while he is himself ignorant of fear? Who, when the high *aether* falls, when the earth gives way amidst the chaotic weight of the crashing world, would wish to have kept his hands at his sides? Unknown races will follow western rage and Roman wars, kings separated by oceans under an unknown star—am I alone to keep leisure? Keep this madness far off, o gods, that Rome, although about to disturb the Dahae and the Getae with disaster, should fall while I am safe! Just as grief itself orders a father, bereft by the death of his sons, to lead the long procession to their tombs, just as it helps to have thrust one's hands into the funereal fires and to have held for oneself the funereal torches after the heap of the pyre has been built up, so I shall not be torn away before embracing you, Rome, dead though you be, and following your name, Freedom, and your empty shadow. So be it: let the cruel gods have their fill of Roman expiations; let us not cheat the war of any blood. Would that it were permitted for the gods of the sky and Erebus to condemn this head and abandon it to all the penalties! Enemy hordes hemmed in Decius, consecrated to death: let the twin battle lines pierce *me*, let the barbarian mob of the Rhine seek *me* with their javelins, let *me,* standing before all the spears, conspicuously accept the wounds of the entire war! Let *this* blood redeem the people, by *this* disaster let whatever Roman customs deserve to suffer be paid off! Why do people ready for the yoke, why do those willing to suffer kingship perish? Pierce *me alone* with steel, *me* guarding laws and empty legalities

> in vain. This, *this* throat will grant the western races peace and an end of evils: after me, somebody wishing to be a king has no need of war. Why not follow the people's armies and their leader Pompey? It has not been badly understood that he, too, if Fortune will favor him, promises himself authority over the entire world; on that account, let him conquer while I am his soldier, lest he think that he has conquered for himself!" Thus he speaks, and he stirs the fierce goads of anger and incites the youth's impulse for excessive love of civil war.

Cato's speech answers Brutus' nearly point for point. He begins by conceding that civil war is the greatest possible sacrilege (*summum nefas*, 2.286), but insists that *virtus* must nevertheless follow where the fates drag it (*quo fata trahunt virtus secura sequetur*, 2.287). The gods, he says, will themselves be tainted with crime for making Cato participate in the war (*crimen erit superis*, 2.288). Moreover, although it is normal to feel fear when the entire world is coming to an end, action is far preferable to inaction: he would be ashamed to remain aloof (*securo*, 2.297) while Rome falls, and must rather play a part in the city's death, just as an unfortunate father must play a role in his son's funeral (2.288-301). Cato thus chooses to embrace Rome and follow both it and Freedom (*Libertas*) even after they have perished (2.301-3). This thought leads him to a prayer-like cry in which he declares his wish to perform a *devotio* on the city's behalf, and so divert the evils of the war onto his head alone (2.304-15). He laments that he is the sole guardian of laws, while others rush to suffer enslavement at the hand of kings (2.315-9), and concludes that it may be acceptable to follow the armies loyal to the people and their leader Pompey (2.319-20), though his hope in doing so is that his presence will convince Pompey that the defeat of Caesar will not be a personal victory, but one for all Romans (2.320-3).

Many scholars have attempted to cast Cato's speech in a positive light, and it is indeed tempting to do so after the narrator introduces it with language appropriate to an

oracular utterance.[55] There are, however, many good reasons to find fault with Cato's logic, and in their analyses optimistic readers have been too willing to gloss over these difficulties.[56] First, Cato's decision to support Pompey risks subverting the known course of history. As discussed above, Cato was famous during the time in which Lucan wrote for being the leader of a third party in the civil war; Lucan's assertion that Cato was a Pompeian, however, undermines the basis of this reputation.[57] Moreover, numerous aspects of Cato's argument seem to break with Stoic thinking.[58] Cato was largely regarded as a Stoic *sapiens* in the early imperial period, and this reputation was reinforced by the use of him as an *exemplum* of constancy and philosophical virtue in the rhetorical schools.[59] Although J. Mira Seo has recently argued that Lucan's initial

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[55] These arguments are summarized by Stok (2007) 150-5; although he accepts that Cato's rejection of Brutus' position is odd, he goes on to argue that it is in accordance with Stoic norms. See esp. Nehrkorn (1960); Brisset (1964) 148-57; Pavan (1970); Narducci (1979) 130-44; Martindale (1984); George (1991) 246-54; Fantham (1992a) at 2.285; Narducci (2002) 383-5.

[56] The willingness of these scholars to read against the grain of the text suggests that their criticisms do not derive from the poem itself, but rather from the assumption that Lucan intended to depict Cato favorably. A few examples will suffice. Fantham (1992a) at 234-325 admits "that Lucan's [sic] arguments are not entirely consistent and the language is both more indefinite and more overloaded than in his best episodes." Her assimilation of the character Cato to the poet himself is telling. Stover (2008) 572 writes, "For Lucan as for others, the desire for *libertas* exemplified by the figure of Cato knows no limit, is ultimately never-ending. Lucan—in his own Catonian fashion—longs for freedom, refuses to be reconciled to the political situation produced by civil war and offers open-ended resistance to the suffocating despotism of the Caesars." George (1991) takes a similar position.

[57] On the question of whether Cato was a Pompeian, see pp. 228-32.

[58] Bartsch (1997) 117-23 offers a brief overview of Cato's "unStoic" actions throughout the *Bellum Civile*. What follows attempts to flesh these issues out in more detail. See also Sklenář (1999) and (2003) 59-72, who treats the exchange between Brutus and Cato at length, arguing that Cato's conception of the conflict undermines Brutus' Stoic presuppositions, and so results in the contradictory decision to uphold Stoic values in a world that is not governed by Stoic λόγος.

[59] George (1991) posits that Cato's reputation was ambiguous, and that Lucan was radical in rehabilitating him as a model of political, in addition to philosophical, action.

readers would have been quite familiar with Cato in this guise, we may also justify our attention to this aspect of his character from the text itself.[60] Brutus identifies the loss of Cato's reputation for virtue as a serious risk in the war and even urges him to imitate an unmoved deity by refraining from the contest entirely. These textual emphases activate the audience's sensitivity to Cato's position as a philosophical exemplar and invite us to judge him on these terms.

The opening lines of Cato's speech to Brutus furnish our first example of Stoic heterodoxy, and have consequently been a point of perennial tension in scholarly criticism. Cato begins: "I confess, Brutus, that civil war is the greatest sacrilege, but disinterested *virtus* will follow where the fates drag it" (*summum, Brute, nefas civilia bella fatemur, | sed quo fata trahunt virtus secura sequetur*, 2.286-7). Much has been made of the word *trahunt*, which seems to contradict a passage from Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*.[61] There, Seneca translates a passage of Cleanthes in order to argue that the *sapiens* should be eager to follow where the fates lead:

> ***Duc****, o parens celsique dominator poli,*
> *quocumque placuit: nulla parendi mora est;*
> *adsum impiger. Fac* ***nolle****, comitabor gemens*
> *malusque patiar facere quod licuit bono.*
> ***Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*** (*Ep. Mor.* 107.11).
>
> **Lead**, o father and master of heaven's pole, wherever it pleases you: there is no delay in obeying; I am present without sloth. Suppose **I refuse**—I will attend you groaning and I will suffer to do as a bad man what it was permitted to me to do as a good man. **The fates lead the willing, they drag the unwilling.**

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[60] Seo (2011) 201-4.

[61] Ahl (1976) 239-40; Narducci (1979) 138, (1985) 1556-8, (2001a) 176-8, and (2002) 385-6; Fantham (1992a) at 2.285; Bartsch (1997) 119-23. Bartsch (1997) 119 n. 54 summarizes earlier arguments. For a critique of Bartsch, see Narducci (2002) 383-8. Sklenář (1999) 289 and (2003) 67 faults Cato on other grounds.

This is a strong statement of how Seneca expects an ideal Stoic to act, and it seems that he is here utilizing the verbs *duco* and *traho* in a technical sense specific to Stoic discourse. He argues that one is supposed to follow willingly (*volens*) where the fates lead (*ducere*), but if one refuses to do so (*nolens*), one will nevertheless be dragged to the necessary outcome (*trahi*). Although the exact mechanism by which the wise man is supposed to discern the intentions of the fates remains unclear,[62] Seneca emphasizes throughout his corpus the importance of following them willingly. Indeed, he expands on these ideas at length in his other philosophical works, where we also find the verb *sequi* used as an active equivalent for *ducere volentem fata* (*De prov.* 5.4; *De vit. beat.* 15.6).[63] That Seneca wished to use these words in a technical sense may also be inferred from his construction of the final line quoted above. The phrase is very well balanced (V-Acc.-Nom.-Acc.-V), and the punchy force of the *sententia* may have been intended as an aid to help its reader remember the most important *dictum* of the entire precept. It seems unlikely that Seneca would have strayed from standard usage when composing such a line, and this point gains force if we accept that Seneca did not find this tag in Cleanthes, but actually composed it himself.[64] In light of all these things, we may posit that Seneca's use of the verbs *duco* and *traho* in a sense specific to Stoic discourse was standard, and further that his reader would have been expected to understand them in the technical sense required. Indeed, they may even have been the *voces propriae* for

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[62] Seneca repeats with admiration the prayer of a certain Demetrius for knowledge of the fates' intentions (*De prov*. 5.5).

[63] The parallels are cited by Narducci (1979) 138, who dismisses the contradiction by citing Verg. *A*. 5.709: *nate dea, quo fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur*.

[64] The line is not included when Arrian has Epictetus quote the verse at Epict. *Ench*. 53. See Hense (1914) at 107.11 and Reynolds (1965) at 107.11.

describing people of these two dispositions during the early imperial period.[65] When we find Lucan's Cato insisting that his virtue will follow where the fates drag it, therefore, readers may well be confused, for he seems to have mixed two ideas that were strictly separate in the philosophical thinking of Lucan's day: his decision to follow the fates is positive (*fata sequi = fata volentem ducere*), but the insistence that they drag him along (*trahere*) invites comparison with the unphilosophical men whom Seneca criticizes. Cato's words essentially make it unclear whether he is *nolens* or *volens*.

Also unnerving is the bold claim that the gods will be tainted with crime for making Cato guilty of committing civil war (*crimen erit superis et me fecisse nocentem*, 2.288). At a formal level this line answers Brutus' insistence that Cato would incur guilt by entering the war (*facient te bella nocentem*, 2.259), and we may therefore read it as an attempt to undermine the arguments leveled there. Cato seems to be suggesting that his virtue is so perfect that any damage to it could not possibly be his fault, and that he is absolved of guilt since the fates have given him no choice but to fight. This, at any rate, is Fantham's view.[66] Yet before we accept this claim at face value, it is worth noting that Stoic metaphysical beliefs ought to prevent Cato from making this sort of argument. The Stoic divinity exists at the outermost edge of the *cosmos*, far removed from the lower

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[65] Before embarking on this translation, Seneca excuses his decision not to quote Cleanthes' Greek directly, citing the example of Cicero: "If these verses please you, enjoy them; if not, know that in this I have followed Cicero's example" (*si placuerint, boni consules; si displicuerint, scies me in hoc secutum Ciceronis exemplum*, Sen. *Ep*. 107.10). Elsewhere Seneca does not feel compelled to make such excuses when he translates Greek, so he seems to be up to something different here. Given Cicero's reputation for establishing native Latin equivalents for Greek philosophical terms, however, it seems possible that Seneca is flagging an attempt to coin technical usages of *duci* and *trahi* to express these important Stoic concepts.

[66] Fantham (1992a) ad loc., "coercion by the fates determines Cato's actions and thus exonerates him."

layers that men inhabit.[67] Its superior vantage allows it to recognize that even the greatest human affairs are insignificant, and it consequently remains unmoved by them. Indeed, Brutus had alluded to this conception of divinity when he urged Cato to remain undisturbed and above the conflict: in effect, this was an invitation for Cato to exceed normal human limitations by acting as much like a god as possible.[68] Cato's rejection of this advice seems to put him at odds with Stoic belief.

Cato justifies these views by arguing that Rome's fall is inevitable. He compares the impending war to the end of the universe and implies that this will be sufficient justification for rejecting the Stoic call to ἀπάθεια:[69]

> *sidera quis mundumque velit spectare cadentem* 290
> *expers ipse metus? quis, cum ruat arduus aether,*
> *terra labet mixto coëuntis pondere mundi,*
> *compressas tenuisse manus?*
>
> Who would wish to watch the stars and the earth collapsing, while he is himself ignorant of fear? Who, when the high *aether* falls, when the earth gives way amidst the chaotic weight of the crashing world, would wish to have kept his hands at his sides? (2.290-3).

Boldly insisting that fear is an appropriate and desired response to cataclysmic disaster, Cato claims that the end of the world absolves him of the responsibility to remain unmoved by mortal affairs and consequently frees him to ignore Brutus' more cautious

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[67] Fantham (1992a) at 2.267-8 furnishes parallels, noting that this cosmological view predominated in Hellenistic philosophies. See also Hershkowitz (1998) 234-6.

[68] One my compare the depiction of Cato as a rival to the gods at 1.128. This view is maintained by D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 143, citing Sen. *Ep*. 16.4-5, 107.2-3; *Prov*. 2.9, 6.6. Ahl (1976) 237 suggests that Brutus' arguments recall Lucr. 5.146-55, and that allusion to an Epicurean theory "weakens the case for disinvolvement even before Cato's rebuttal." George (1991) 249-51 argues that Brutus' position is Senecan, and therefore represents a version of Stoicism that Lucan and his Cato reject throughout the *Bellum Civile*.

[69] For a defense of Cato's decision, see Narducci (2002) 395-401; Stok (2007).

advice.[70] The indulgence of emotion in this instance surely runs counter to Stoic belief: if the end of the world is fated to be, then the sage ought to look upon it with equanimity (Sen. *Nat. Quaest.* 6.32.4; *Ep. Mor.* 9.16). Instead, Cato uses this fear as an excuse to take an active role in restoring the state, a commitment flagged by his emphatic refusal to keep his hands within his toga (*compressas tenuisse manus*, 2.293). Although the decision to let patriotic duty outweigh philosophical scruples might be excused as something likely to have sat well with a Roman audience, the way in which Cato envisions the conflict and the response that he deems appropriate to it are not what we might expect of a Stoic *sapiens*.[71]

Having rejected Brutus' call to ἀπάθεια, Cato ought to propose a new course of action, practical steps to neutralize the threat that Pompey and Caesar pose to the state. Brutus, after all, had insisted that Cato would be his only leader (*dux Bruto Cato solus erit,* 2.247), and Cato was commonly thought of as the leader of a third faction in Lucan's own day. Lucan's Cato, however, completely ignores practical matters. He mentions neither Caesar nor Pompey for most of his speech, and instead argues that the entire contest is actually about himself.[72] Thus he expresses the wish to perform a *devotio* to

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[70] For a favorable interpretation of these lines, see D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 141-3.

[71] Ahl (1976) 274-9 sees Cato as the manifestation of *pietas*, but a *pietas* derived from Stoic *virtus* rather than blind loyalty to his fatherland. This necessitates a rather lengthy *apologia* for Lucan's refusal to use the words *pius* or *pietas* in reference to Cato. While I do not wholly agree with Ahl's conclusion and find his argumentation problematic, his impulse to interpret Cato's positions favorably is no doubt representative of the sorts of emotions that Lucan expect this speech, at least in part, to provoke.

[72] Fantham (1992a) at 2.309 expresses mild surprise that Cato wishes to be attacked by both Caesar's and Pompey's battle lines (*me geminae figant acies*). I would suggest that his use of *geminae* here is part of a larger rhetorical strategy wherein he avoids naming Caesar and Pompey directly in order to emphasize his own importance. Pompey is only mentioned when Cato finally decides to fight on his side (3.319-20). Caesar is never

avert the coming evils (2.306-7), thinks that serving as a soldier in Pompey's army will somehow prevent Pompey from acting like a king (2.322-3), and imagines himself as a father who must perform the last rites for his dead child (2.297-303).[73] Although each of these assertions can be read as ennobling statements of self-sacrifice, the privileging of these concerns over Stoic values, military objectives, and even saving the Republic reveals that Cato is primarily interested in casting himself as a tragic figure in the story of Rome's fall.[74] Indeed, he even argues that his own death is the τέλος towards which the entire conflict is heading: once he is gone, there will be an end to both the civil war and the Republic (*post me regnare volenti | non opus est bello*, 2.318-9).[75] So much, then, for the sound, practical advice that Brutus had offered for preserving both Cato's reputation and the *patriae leges*.

Cato's emphasis on his own importance at the expense of philosophical and military goals can also be seen at the technical levels of his speech. Whereas Brutus repeatedly describes civil war as "wickedness" (*scelerum*, 2.249; *scelerata in proelia*, 2.251; *scelus*, 2.266), Cato calls it a sacrilege (*nefas*, 2.286). The decision to eschew a generic term for "wickedness" or "crime" in favor of one with a more religious flair

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named explicitly. Schrijvers (1989) insists that Cato's focus on himself is altruistic, not egoistic.

[73] Henderson (1987) has shown the extent to which Lucan is sensitive to ideologically charged terms. It may be intentionally ironic that Cato adopts for himself the image of the *pater patriae*, a phrase that seems to have been bestowed first on Cicero, but that had strong associations with Caesar and the Julio-Claudians emperors; on this, see Weinstock (1971) 200-5. If an allusion to Caesar is intended, Lucan may be inviting comparison between him and Cato. On this, see Maes (2009) and my discussion on pp. 243-76, 288-311.

[74] See Hershkowitz (1998) 238-42. Maes (2009) 673 notes that Cato is frequently obsessed with himself in Book 9; ibid. n. 41 cites relevant bibliography. Also see my own arguments below.

[75] Stover (2008) instead uses this passage as internal evidence that Lucan intended to end the *Bellum Civile* with Cato's death at Utica.

anticipates Cato's invocation of the gods a few lines later, but in a manner that only serves to heighten his apparent hubris:[76]

> *summum, Brute, **nefas** civilia bella fatemur,*
> *sed quo fata trahunt virtus secura sequetur.*
> ***crimen erit superis** et <u>me</u> **fecisse** <u>nocentem</u>* (2.286-8).
>
> I confess, Brutus, that civil war is the utmost **sacrilege**, but disinterested *virtus* will follow where the fates drag it. **It will be a crime for the gods to have made** <u>me guilty</u>.

Although these lines plainly reveal that Cato envisions the conflict as a serious offense, they do so in a manner that greatly inflates his status. Indeed, Cato asserts that the guilt attached to him for participation in the civil war—despite the enormity of the sacrilege—is not actually his fault; rather, it was brought upon him by necessity and by the plan of the fates.[77] On one level this claim can be thought to counter Brutus' assertion that the wars themselves bring about guilt (*facient te **bella** <u>nocentem</u>*, 2.259). In the mouth of Cato, however, it makes little sense: in Stoic terms the gods are to be equated with perfect reason, while *virtus* is loosely defined as making one's behavior comport with that reason; it is thus an impossibility and even a contradiction in terms to say that the Stoic divinity might make a Stoic *sapiens* act without virtue.[78] Cato seems to imply, in other words, that divine λόγος has acted illogically, even as he has continued to act in accordance with reason![79] Indeed, this is the basis for his belief that the present situation

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[76] *OLD nefas* 1. The attribution of a religious sense to *scelus* is dubious (and in any event limited to Plautus and Terence), whereas it normally describes base human action; thus *OLD scelus* 1, 2.
[77] The very admission that he will incur guilt challenges the conception—common in Lucan's day—that Cato remained untainted by civil bloodshed until his suicide at Utica; on this, see p. 190-2.
[78] See p. 279 n. 114.
[79] But see my discussion of *trahere* and *sequi* as technical terms on pp. 197-9.

furnishes him with a cause for bringing suit against the gods.[80] This would seem to indicate that Cato thinks of himself in a position to prosecute their misdeeds, and thus that he is not only their rival (as was suggested at 1.128), but actually their superior.

Equally problematic is Cato's characterization of the laws and government on whose behalf he intends to fight. In urging Cato to remain aloof from the conflict, Brutus repeatedly had recourse to discussion of *leges*: these are what the wicked participants in civil war fear (*legesque in pace timendae*, 2.252), it is a law of the gods that allows great things to remain unshaken by affairs that disrupt smaller ones completely (*lege deum*, 2.272), and it is only in defense of ancestral laws that the war can justifiably be fought (*legibus… patriis*, 2.281-2). Although Cato is at one point concerned with laws (*leges*, 2.316), he also focuses on *iura* (2.316, 321), a more general term that can refer to rights, privileges, legal principles—laws or legalities writ large. On one level this verbal shift may be an attempt to reflect Brutus' reputation for punctiliousness in dealing with matters of law and Cato's concern for propriety defined loosely by Roman tradition.[81] Seen within the context of the speech, however, it can also be said to let Cato take a broader view of the war and the issues at stake within it: Cato is not only fighting to prevent individuals from breaking specific laws, but to protect his understanding of how Roman society is supposed to function.[82]

So far this analysis would seem to go a long way towards justifying Cato's decision to side with Pompey—at least on moral and legal grounds. The problem is that

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[80] *OLD crimen* 1.
[81] On Brutus, see Plut. *Brut*. 10.1, 12.7, 46.3; on Cato see Cic. *Att*. 2.1.8 (21.8); Sal. *Cat*. 54.1-6, and the passages cited at p. 284 n 130.
[82] Thus at 2.320-2 Cato claims that he is fighting to convince Pompey that a victory over Caesar is not to give him *totius ius mundi* ("authority over the entire world"); the reader must infer that that authority belongs to the Roman people at large (*publica signa*, 2.319).

Cato thinks the *iura* he is fighting for, and indeed *Libertas* itself, are already lost. Thus he insists first that he will follow "your name, Freedom, and your **empty shade**" (*tuumque nomen, Libertas, et* ***inanem*** *persequare* ***umbram***, 2.302-3), then later that he is "guarding **in vain** the laws and **empty legalties**" (***frustra*** *leges et* ***inania iura*** *tuentem*, 2.316). When faced with these words, the reader may well wonder why Cato is fighting at all. Indeed, it would seem that he is not only abandoning philosophical propriety by choosing to side with Pompey, but is actually risking the sacrilege of civil war without any hope of restoring the Roman way of life that he purports to defend. Faced with this strange situation, the reader's attention will rightly fall to the moment when Cato finally commits to Pompey's faction in order to elucidate his justification for embracing *nefas.*

As noted above, much of Cato's speech is comprised of laments about the injustice of the situation with which he is faced and counterfactual wishes that things might happen differently. After complaining that people are too quick to accept a king and insisting—for reasons that will be discussed below—that his own death will be the end of war, Cato exclaims, "Why not follow the people's armies and their leader, Pompey?" (*quin publica signa ducemque* | *Pompeium sequimur*, 2.319-20). In this final declaration of Cato's decision to support Pompey, we might expect the full force of reason to break down Brutus' arguments for quietism.[83] This, at any rate, would be a sensible conclusion for the oration of a Stoic sage. Yet this is not what Lucan has Cato do. At this point in the argument, we find no *quare,* no *igitur*, no strong logical connector to mark Cato's decision as a necessary and proper conclusion to the preceding speech. Instead it culminates in the particle *quin,* "why not," a word that suggests an

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[83] The exchange is, after all, a poetic treatment of a rhetorical *controversia*. See Fantham (1992a) at 2.234-325.

unexpected change of course, a logical afterthought, or a defeated response to a hopeless situation.[84] However well this may fit with Cato's characterization of the conflict up until this point,[85] it cannot be said to represent the calculated, rational decision of a Stoic wise man.[86] Rather, Cato's *quin* serves as evidence of the rhetorical sleight of hand he must employ in order to paper over the illogicality of his decision to fight for Pompey.

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[84] Although *quin* can be used to strengthen a command (*OLD quin* 1), it more often marks a logical break from what preceded. There are numerous examples of such rash conclusions in epic before Lucan. Lucretius, for instance, sometimes employs *quin* to mark the culmination of arguments that he rejects (e.g. 1.731, 916; 2.826; 3.487); the implication in these cases seems to be that the conclusion is hasty and based on insufficient evidence. In Vergil's *Aeneid*, one finds *quin* used by Juno (4.99) and Dido (4.309, 547), each time in reaching a decision that is only loosely based on what preceded. The association of these figures with *furor* throughout the poem, and the senseless destruction that results from their decisions, may invite this verbal cue. Iris likewise uses the expression *quin agite* (*OLD quin* 1b) when rousing the Trojan women to burn the ships (5.635). Her final command, while admittedly strengthened, is quite obviously a fallacious conclusion from the preceding argument. Moreover, the first echo of this Vergilian phrase in Latin literature comes from *Bellum Civile* 9, when Cato concludes a speech to his mutinying army with a command that they kill him if they are ready to accept Caesar as their king (*quin agite,* 9.282). The association of Cato with a Junonian character is striking, and may suggest that Cato's arguments are driven by *furor*. Although the use of *quin* in the present text is not so strong as this, it nevertheless points to the unexpectedness, and indeed the irrationality, of Cato's final conclusion.
[85] We may perhaps associate Cato's mode of argumentation with that observed in the poem's second introductory movement. If this suggestion is correct, it may explain why some scholars have been so willing to conflate the views of Lucan's emotional narrator and his character Cato; on this, see pp. 37-44, 82-91.
[86] D'Alessandro Behr (2007): 131-3 tries to argue that Cato's decision to enter the war is justified since his own life is a "preferred indifferent" outweighed by the benefits that Rome will reap from his military action. Life is indeed a "preferred indifferent" in Stoic ideology, but it is a state to be preferred to death only as long as it does not threaten the individual's virtue. Once virtue is threatened, life is no longer an indifferent, or at least not a preferred one. Thus the Stoics were able to justify the taking of one's own life in extreme circumstances: the physical death of the body was a reasonable price to pay for the preservation of the more important, metaphysical constancy of one's virtue. The logical arguments that I have raised against Cato's action and his own admission that engaging in civil war is an act that produces guilt (*crimen erit superis et me fecisse nocentem*, 2.288) undermine this most basic premise of D'Alessandro Behr's arguments.

The editorial evaluation of the speech that brings this episode to a close underscores the problems inherent in Cato's argument and manner of reasoning: the speech, the narrator tells us, "applied the sharp goads of anger and stokes in the youth [Brutus] a fire for excessive love of civil war" (*acris* | *irarum movit stimulos iuvenisque calorem* | *excitat in nimios belli civilis amores*, 2.233-5).[87] The rejection of the emotions as impediments to rational thought is a core aspect of Stoic philosophy, and it is reasonable to assume that Lucan would have been familiar with it. After all, his uncle Seneca wrote an entire treatise *On Anger*, wherein he explicitly rejects the idea that anger is acceptable even if it compels an unresolved person to act with the resolution characteristic of a wise man; in doing so, as Fantham argues, he claims that anger is neither acceptable in response to wickedness nor characteristic of free people.[88] From this it seems reasonable to conclude that Lucan would have avoided having Cato employ anger and the other emotions to goad Brutus to action if he had really intended to present Cato as a Stoic *sapiens*. This, however, is not what he has done. Instead, Lucan seems to flaunt the number of emotional terms that he can fit into the two lines that he uses to

[87] Stok (2007), after a fascinating discussion of *furor* in the *Bellum Civile*, argues unconvincingly that Cato's *furor* is justifiable within a Stoic framework and, moreover, that he is not directly responsible for the inappropriate *amor belli* that affects Brutus.

[88] Fantham (1992a) at 2.323-5, citing Sen. *Ira* 2.6, 15. Although it would be a mistake to think that Seneca's position on any Stoic doctrine, let alone a controversial one, was universally accepted at Rome, it is not unreasonable to assume that his theories were known and respected by many in his milieu. Indeed, his nephew may even have received a fuller explanation of these ideas than we find in Seneca's written works. This is not to say that Lucan necessarily adhered to Seneca's beliefs—my own position is that he probably did not—but rather to point out that Lucan would have been familiar with the terms of these debates, and consequently could have presented Cato unambiguously as a positive figure if he had wanted to do so.

characterize Cato's speech.[89] In addition to the obvious *ira* (anger) and *amor* (love), we also find *calor*,[90] *stimulus*,[91] and *excito*,[92] all of which are commonly used describe emotions, particularly those that drive the person afflicted by them to some decision or action. Attempts to explain away the attribution of these emotional words to Cato by citing literary parallels or denying that they contradict Seneca's comments in the *On Anger* have been patently unsuccessful.[93] Indeed, the sheer density of these terms suggests that they are meant to be understood in their usual senses and that Lucan is trying to draw his reader's attention to them.[94] The contradiction between this emotional Cato and the Stoic hero that the narrator led us to expect at the beginning of the speech causes a crisis of interpretation: this is not someone who "practices ideology… in cold

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[89] Sklenář (2003) 71-2 notes *calor* and *amores* in this context, but otherwise understates the extent of emotional language in the concluding tag.

[90] The base meaning "fire" (*OLD calor* 1) is often used as a vivid synonym for "eagerness" (*OLD calor* 5) or "love" (*OLD calor* 6).

[91] The primary definition "goad" is applied metaphorically to things that cause mental unrest or anxiety (*OLD stimulus* 2) and passionate rage (*OLD stimulus* 3).

[92] *OLD excito* 5.

[93] Fantham (1992a) at 2.323-5 is particularly egregious in this regard. She suggests that "The imagery of fire and goads in 324 maintains the conventions of epic" and claims that the scene is meant to be "an inversion of *A*. 7.419-62, where the disguised Allecto goads Turnus to war…." Rather than admitting that a reader should be shocked and terrified to recognize verbal echoes between Allecto and Cato, however, she sidesteps the issue: "Here [Lucan's] supreme *sapiens* finds a higher necessity that justifies war, even makes it a duty, despite the stoically motivated doubts of the near *sapiens* Brutus." On the issue of Cato's emotional appeal to Brutus, she writes: "By stressing the defensive aspect of Cato's decision L. avoids open conflict with the Stoic tradition and his uncle's teachings in *De ira*." The preponderance of emotional language in the lines in question surely outweigh "the defensive aspect of Cato's decision." As we have seen, Cato's decision is not defensive, but irrational.

[94] Hershkowitz (1998) 234-7 argues this point on other grounds. Ahl (1976) 246 wishes to fault Brutus for allowing this excess of emotion to arise within him, rather than Cato for stirring them up in the first place. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 138-9 dismisses the apparent contradiction.

blood," but a person overly dedicated to man's less noble instincts.[95] Thus we may also be justified in reinterpreting the emotional words with which Cato had described his reaction to the civil war (*metus*, 2.290; *dolor*, 2.299; *te complectar Roma*, 2.302) not as emphatic, but rather as signs that Cato's rational thinking has been impaired all along. Our frustration in facing this dilemma is amplified when we read that Cato's speech has not merely influenced his own decision to join the war, but has kindled in Brutus, too, a "love of civil war" (2.325). Particularly damning is the comment that this love is not "just" (*iustus*) or "permissible" (*licitus*), but "excessive" (*nimius*), an adjective that unmistakably marks the word it modifies as immoderate or detrimental.[96] Cato, it would seem, has fallen a long way from Stoic rationality.

Thus far I have attempted to show that Cato's arguments for entering the war on Pompey's side are inferior to Brutus' arguments for him to remain neutral, and my criticisms have focused in large part on apparent contradictions between known Stoic doctrine and Cato's speech. I have not taken this stance solely to criticize those who take an optimistic reading of Cato, but because Lucan's Brutus frames the decision facing Cato as a conflict between the impulse to participate in the political turmoil of the civil war and adherence to Stoic values. Like a tragic poet activating certain versions of a myth by mentioning details peculiar to it, Lucan has here used Brutus' speech to prepare the reader for a Cato who fits the paradigm of Stoic *sapiens*. This expectation is then cemented by the narrator's premature description of Cato's speech in terms normally

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[95] The phrase is that of Bartsch (1997) 122-3.

[96] *OLD nimius* 1-3. Before Lucan, the neutral use of the term, "much, greatly," listed as *OLD nimius* 4 seems to occur only in Plautus. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 139 n. 75 tries to excuse this fact, without success; she misrepresents the sense of *nimium* at Cic. *Att*. 9.7.6, on which, see Shackleton Bailey (1999) ad loc.

applied to an oracular utterance. When Cato's response reveals that he intends to move in a different direction, however, it appears that the known path of historical events and the reputation that Cato held in Lucan's own day are themselves at risk,[97] and the contradictions are compounded by the insistance that Cato's rhetoric wins Brutus over.

This leaves the reader with a number of difficult questions. Is it possible for Cato to be both a Republican and a Stoic hero? Or are these two notions, normally so closely linked in imperial characterizations of Cato, mutually exclusive? How can readers justify a positive response to Cato's patriotic willingness to die for his fatherland and the awareness that his reasoning is not only faulty, but that the action to which it leads is ultimately futile? Our hesitation about these issues is directly challenged by the unambiguous expressions of praise with which the narrator punctuates his depictions of Cato. We are told he is a man unleashing sacred words from his prophetic breast (2.285), one more concerned with public evils than private misfortunes (2.239-41). These exclamations invite us to pass over possible contradictions in the characterization of Cato, always to give him, as it were, the benefit of the doubt. Yet even these statements cannot fully outweigh the problems that one finds in Cato's argumentation. The text itself is telling us to evaluate Cato positively, but its studied contradictions challenge our ability to go along with the narrator's rosy optimism. We are essentially left with a character that cannot be pinned down, that challenges our judgment regardless of what our preconceptions of him might be. In this way, the consistent inconsistency of Lucan's narrative brings the reader into a state of frustration about one of its principal actors. As

[97] The situation I envision here is akin to what one finds before the *deus ex machina* at the end of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*: the narrative has reached a point at which the known course of history is about to be subverted. Whereas Sophocles piously sets things right, however, Lucan allows Cato's unphilosophical decision to stand.

we shall see, depictions of Cato throughout the rest of the poem are fraught with similar difficulties.

The Empty Name of Marriage

The so-called anti-marriage of Cato and Marcia that immediately follows the above episode demonstrates many tensions similar to those I have just outlined, and I shall therefore limit myself to a few key observations.[98] First, however, it will be helpful to provide a summary of and some background to the episode. The scene opens with Cato's former wife, Marcia, asking him to renew their marriage after the death of her second husband. We know from Plutarch (*Cat. Min.* 25, 52) that their first marriage had been broken off so that Cato could give Marcia to his friend Hortensius, who was getting on in years and was still in need of an heir. When Hortensius later died, Cato took Marcia back. This was an unusual turn of events that was criticized by contemporaries.[99] Lucan briefly summarizes this history (2.326-37), then gives Marcia a short speech in which she cites her marriage to Hortensius as evidence of her fidelity to Cato, asks him to grant her the title of marriage without its accompanying duties (*da tantum nomen inane* | *conubii*, 2.341-2), and expresses a desire to prove to all that she has always been worthy of being Cato's wife (2.343-6). She concludes by saying that she wants to be for Cato what Cornelia is for Pompey (*cur tuta in pace relinquar* | *et sit civili propior Cornelia bello?* 2.348-9). Cato offers no response, but accedes to the request. Thirty lines then follow in

[98] For general treatments of this episode, see Bruère (1951); Ahl (1976) 247-52; Johnson (1987) 42-4; George (1988) 339-40; Harich (1990); Bartsch (1997) 125-6; Sklenář (2003) 72-9.
[99] Fantham (1992a) at 2.326-80 summarizes the historical issues and points out the liberties that Lucan has taken in order to create a more compelling scene. Plut. *Cato Min*. 52 records criticism that Caesar heaped on Cato for this move; this presumably reappeared in Caesar's *Anticato*.

which the narrator describes the traditional wedding elements that did *not* constitute part of the remarriage (2.350-80, the anti-marriage proper);[100] this, in turn, leads to an eleven-line encomium of Cato's habits and disposition.

The most fundamental question concerning this passage is why Lucan has chosen to include it at all. First is an issue of chronology. Although the date of Cato's second marriage to Marcia is not known, it is certain that Hortensius was dead in 50 BC and thus that Marcia could not have come fresh from his pyre, as Lucan insists (*relicto… busto,* 2.327-8), in 49 BC.[101] This implies a temporal compression or manipulation of events that can only be explained on literary grounds. Second is an issue of propriety. As noted above, Caesar had openly criticized Cato for taking Marcia back into his household, arguing that Cato had only done so to take control of the inheritance she received from Hortensius. This was a strong indictment of Cato's supposed moral uprightness, and the accusations apparently stuck: later writers favorable to Cato felt the need to defend this episode in his life, but in doing so were compelled to rely more on his reputation as a moral exemplar than on any positive evidence of his good intentions (Plut. *Cato Min.* 52.4-5). Although we cannot know how invested Lucan was in this debate, it is curious that he has chosen to relate an episode from Cato's life that we know opened him to moral criticism. We will therefore be justified in paying careful attention to how this scene influences Lucan's characterization of Cato, and in particular how it complements or contradicts the depiction of him during his exchange with Brutus. Indeed, through these two scenes Lucan is able to show two sides of Cato: the debate demonstrates his

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[100] On negative enumeration in Lucan, see pp. 18-22.
[101] Fantham (1992a) at 2.326-80.

approach to an issue of public concern, whereas the anti-marriage shows what forces motivate his private actions.

Were we to sketch these two episodes in brief, we might say that in the first Cato defends his decision to fight on Pompey's side against Brutus' conservative objections, while in the second he agrees to enter into a second marriage with a former wife that is defined by its unorthodox ceremony. Framing matters in this way, the most obvious question to ask is why Cato submits to the concerns of a former lover during a political revolution that he has just described as a cosmological cataclysm (2.289-92).[102] Indeed, in the former scene Cato was given a lengthy speech with which to defend himself, but here he does not say a single word. All we are told is that Marcia's speech won him over (*hae flexere virum voces*, 2.350). Although it might be tempting to attribute this to Cato's sympathy for a woman widowed on the eve of civil war, the arguments that Marcia employs are sufficiently petty to warrant closer consideration:

> *sic maesta profatur:*
> *'dum sanguis inerat, dum vis materna, peregi*
> *iussa, Cato, et geminos excepi feta maritos:*
> *visceribus lassis partuque exhausta revertor* 340
> *iam nulli tradenda viro. da foedera prisci*
> *illibata tori, da tantum nomen inane*
> *conubii; liceat tumulo scripsisse "Catonis*
> *Marcia," nec dubium longo quaeratur in aevo,*
> *mutarim primas expulsa an tradita taedas.* 345
> *non me laetorum sociam rebusque secundis*
> *accipis: in curas venio partemque laborum.*
> *da mihi castra sequi: cur tuta in pace relinquar*
> *et sit civili propior Cornelia bello?'* (2.337-49).

> The wretched woman spoke thus: "While blood, while maternal strength remained in me, I completed your orders, Cato, and accepted twin husbands in my fertility; I return to you with a tired womb and drained by

[102] Thus Sklenář (2003) 74 comments, "Marcia succeeds where Brutus has failed." On the civil war as cataclysm, see also pp. 52-62, 104-22, 200-1.

> childbearing, to be handed over now to no husband. Grant the undiminished compact of our former bed, grant only the empty name of marriage; let it be permitted to write "Cato's Marcia" on my tomb, and let it not be doubtfully asked in a distant age whether I gave up my first marriage after being divorced or after being handed over. You do not receive me as a companion of joys and amidst favorable affairs: I enter into your concerns and a share of the labors. Grant it to me to follow your camp: why should I remain safe in peace, and Cornelia be closer to civil war?"

Here Marcia's initial platitudes about loyalty to Cato quickly give way to other concerns: she fears criticism for being divorced by Cato (2.344-5), dreads the long-term harm to her reputation that might result from remaining a widow (*longo… in aevo*, 2.344), and anticipates that others might draw an unfavorable comparison between herself and Pompey's wife, Cornelia (*cur tuta in pace relinquar, | et sit civili proprior Cornelia bello?* 2.348-9). Although we may account for the first of these on historical grounds—demanding divorce over moral or social infractions was not unknown in the late republic,[103] and Cato had divorced his first wife for just this reason (Plut. *Cato Min.* 24.3)—Marcia's repeated and increasing focus on issues related to her personal repute seems ill-suited to the broader context. Her speech does nothing to explain why marriage is an acceptable concern for a man who has just committed to a civil war, nor to demonstrate how Cato might benefit from this unorthodox arrangement. The narrator even points to the former fact as he begins to describe the unceremonious ceremony in which they participate (*et **tempora** quamquam | sint **aliena toris***, 2.350-1). Virtually all of Marcia's concerns are, moreover, *topoi* of the elegiac genre that would be better suited to the poetry of Ovid than to an epic about "wars more than civil" (*bella… plus quam*

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[103] Cf. Caesar's famous quip when asked why he had divorced his wife, despite her innocence, after the Bona Dea scandal: "Caesar's wife must be beyond suspicion" (Plut. *Caes*. 10.9; Cass. Dio, 45.2).

civilia, 1.1).[104] After the serious conversation that Brutus and Cato have just undertaken, Marcia's speech falls noticeably short of the elevated tone that we might expect to be sustained.

Cato's failure to reject these pleas goes against Lucan's depiction of him fervently debating his nephew, and if we cannot justify his acquiescence by pointing to the strength of Marcia's arguments, then we must seek an explanation from other quarters. One way to address the issue is to treat the barren union as a symbolic parallel to Cato's commitment to the moribund state.[105] To be sure, Marcia seems well suited to Cato. Just as she comes to Cato's house straight from the tomb of Hortensius, still marred by her ritual laments (*effusas laniata comas contusaque pectus* | *verberibus crebris cineresque ingesta sepulchri*, 2.335-6), so too does Cato maintain signs of mourning when they undertake the wedding ceremony (*ille nec horrificam sancto dimovit ab ore* | *caesariem duroque admissit gaudia vultu*, 2.372-3). Indeed, the poet tells us that she could not have been pleasing to him in any other way (*non aliter placitura viro*, 2.337). The marriage that they eventually celebrate is, moreover, defined by the absence of traditional wedding elements: there are no festive garlands, no crowd of witnesses, not even sexual intercourse to seal their compact (2.350-80). In fact, Marcia does not seek a real union at all, only the empty name of one (*da tantum **nomen inane*** | *conubii*, 2.342-3).[106] All of

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[104] On elegiac themes in the *Bellum Civile*, see esp. Matthews (2008); McCune (2014). A woman's reputation is a recurring theme in Ovid's *Heroides*, esp. the Paris-Helen exchange (Ov. *Her*. 16-7); on these see Belfiore (1980-1); Patti (2001); Roussel (2004); Michalopoulos (2006).

[105] This is the position of Ahl (1976) 247-52. Sklenář (2003) 74-6 considers it a caricature of Stoic ideals intended to reveal the perversity of Cato's Stoicism.

[106] This comment is particularly troublesome. Although on one level it sugests that Marcia is an appropriate match for Cato, who had professed a desire to follow Rome's "empty shadow" (*inanem… umbram*, 2.303) and to guard her "empty laws" (*inania iura*,

this is fitting for a man who is convinced that Rome is on the brink of collapse, that the city and her laws are empty (***inanem umbram***, 2.303; ***inania iura***, 2.316), and that his own role must be that of a father tending to the funeral of a son (2.297-303). Our inclination to interpret the marriage symbolically is reinforced when the narrator turns to praise Cato after the anti-marriage. There he attributes to Cato a number of family roles that conflate both the metaphor Cato used when speaking to Brutus and his renewed position as Marcia's husband: "He is a father to the city, a husband to the city" (*urbi pater est, urbique maritus*, 2.388). From this we may infer that Marcia is meant to stand in for Rome herself, and that Cato's sexless commitment to her is more a statement of his ideology than his personal affection.

Tempting though this explanation might be, it does not account for everything. If Lucan had wanted to show Cato committing himself to a personification of Roma, he surely could have done so. Caesar, after all, had encountered the embodiment of *Patria* in the previous book (1.183-212),[107] and Cato—if the narrator's words are to be trusted—is far more deserving of such an epiphany. Moreover, if Marcia is intended to serve as a symbolic equivalent for Rome, and their marriage is meant to underscore Cato's honorable commitment to a dying *res publica*, it remains odd that Lucan has her sway Cato with laments and concerns typical of elegiac *puellae*. This drastically deflates the

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2.316), Marcia's words also evoke the description of Pompey in book 1 as the "shadow of a Great name" (*magni nominis umbra,* 1.135). The latter description, as mentioned earlier, was programmatic: it sets out the imagery and vocabulary that will mark Pompey throughout the poem, and in particular highlights his excessive dependence on past achievements and inability to renew them with fresh successes. When Marcia echoes these terms in reference to her marriage to Cato, she joins a network of individuals trying to live in a past that no longer exists. By accepting her pleas, Cato risks being implicated in the same web.

[107] On this episode, see pp. 321-2.

tone of the exchange and presents Cato's decision to welcome Marcia back as frivolous. A further effect of this is the creation of a messy philosophical problem. Base desires such as a good reputation are, in Stoic terminology, indifferents, i.e. they are states of being that are not supposed to have any impact on a wise man's decisions or actions. He should rather be content with maintaining his virtue and trust that other good men will esteem him for his constancy in this regard. Lucan's Cato, however, does not lodge these objections or attempt to correct Marcia's philosophical error; instead, he is bent by her arguments and silently submits to the renewed marriage.[108] This implies that Cato accepts the validity of her concerns, and consequently impugns his own philosophical constancy.

Despite these interpretive challenges, the narrator ends his description of the anti-marriage with a lengthy encomium of Cato and his morals:

> *hi mores, haec duri immota Catonis* 380
> *secta fuit, servare modum finemque tenere*
> *naturamque sequi patriaeque impendere vitam*
> *nec sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo.*
> *huic epulae vicisse famem, magnique penates*
> *summovisse hiemem tecto, pretiosaque vestis* 385
> *hirtam membra super Romani more Quiritis*
> *induxisse togam, Venerisque hic maximus*[109] *usus,*
> *progenies: urbi pater est urbique maritus,*
> *iustitiae cultor, rigidi servator honesti,*
> *in commune bonus; nullosque Catonis in actus* 390
> *subrepsit partemque tulit sibi nata voluptas* (2.380-91).

> This was the character, this the unmoved philosophy of hard Cato: preserving the mean and upholding the end, following nature and devoting his life to his country, and not believing that he was born for himself, but

[108] Lucan's use of *flexere* at 2.350 is perhaps significant. Sen. *Brev. Vit.* 10.5 says that secure and peaceful minds are able to control themselves, whereas "the minds of active men, as if they are enslaved, are unable to bend themselves and to practice self-reflection" (*occupatorum animi, velut sub iugo sint, flectere se ac respicere non possunt*).
[109] *Maximus* MSS: *unicus* Bentley, followed by Housman. See Fantham (1992a) ad loc.

> for the entire world; to him "feasts" were conquering hunger, "great houses" were warding off winter with a roof, and "precious clothing" was drawing a coarse toga over his limbs in the manner of a Roman civilian. And this was the greatest use of sex: procreation. He is a father to the city and a husband to the city, an attendant of justice, a protector of stern uprightness, good for a common purpose—and into none of Cato's deeds did self-serving pleasure creep and take a share.

This elevated passage invites the reader to overlook the difficulties outlined above and to view Cato in positive terms. Cato's character, we are promised, is that of an ideal Roman, whose philosophical convictions (*secta*, 2.381) protect him from the destructive influence of pleasure (*voluptas,* 2.391) and guarantee that he prefers the welfare of the entire world to his own advantage (*nec sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo*, 2.383; *in commune bonus,* 2.390). Thus his involvement in the war and remarriage to Marcia are presented as manifestations of a deeply rooted sympathy for his fellow man that compels him to take extraordinary action in a time of national crisis.

The narrator's positive characterization of Cato's decisions to fight with Pompey and to welcome Marcia back into his house is plainly appealing to supporters of Cato,[110] but there is a sharp logical disconnect when we consider the grounds for this praise in light of the narrative description that precedes it. The basis of the narrator's admiration is Cato's philosophical rectitude, his superiority to his contemporaries, and his dedication to civic virtue and the community at large.[111] In particular, Cato is said to "preserve the mean" and "follow nature" (*servare modum… naturamque sequi*, 2.381-2). But how can the decision to abandon neutrality be considered moderate, how can a sexless marriage be

[110] Thus Fantham (1992a) at 2.380-91 describes this as "The poet's eulogy of his hero."
[111] Fantham (1992a) at 2.380-91.

considered natural?[112] Indeed, the very way in which Lucan relates the anti-marriage mocks both normalcy and propriety. Cato and Marcia ignore the traditional elements of a wedding and participate in a rite that cannot even be called a ceremony:

> *et, tempora quamquam* 350
> *sint aliena toris iam fato in bella vocante,*
> *foedera sola tamen vanaque carentia pompa*
> *iura placent sacrisque deos admittere testes.*
> *festa coronato non pendent limine serta,*
> *infulaque in geminos discurrit candida postes,* 355
> ***legitimae****que faces, gradibusque adclinis eburnis*
> *stat torus et picto vestes discriminat auro,*
> *turritaque premens frontem matrona corona*
> *translata vitat contingere limina planta;*
> *non timidum nuptae leviter tectura pudorem* 360
> *lutea demissos velarunt flammea vultus,*
> *balteus aut fluxos gemmis astrinxit amictus,*
> *colla monile decens umerisque haerentia primis*
> *suppara nudatos cingunt angusta lacertos.*
> *sicut erat, maesti servat lugubria cultus* 365
> ***quoque modo natos hoc est amplexa maritum****.*
> *obsita funerea celatur purpura lana,*
> *non soliti lusere sales, nec more Sabino*
> *excepit tristis convicia festa maritus.*
> ***pignora nulla domus****, nulli coïere propinqui:* 370
> ***iunguntur taciti*** *contentique auspice Bruto.*
> *ille nec horrificam sancto dimovit ab ore*
> *caesariem duroque admisit gaudia vultu*
> *(ut primum tolli feralia viderat arma,*
> *intonsos rigidam in frontem descendere canos* 375
> *passus erat maestamque genis increscere barbam:*
> *uni quippe vacat studiis odiisque carenti*
> *humanum lugere genus), nec foedera prisci*
> *sunt temptata tori:* ***iusto*** *quoque robur* ***amori***
> ***restitit*** (2.350-80).

> And, although the times were inappropriate for marriage now that fate was calling them to war, they delight in one-of-a-kind compacts and rights

[112] Treggiari (1991) makes no mention of sexless marriage as a concept familiar to the Romans in her discussion of sexual relations within Roman marriage; on the contrary, Romans are chiefly preoccupied with female adultery (262-319). Sklenář (2003) 76-9 argues that the praise of Cato sits so uncomfortably with what precedes that it must be considered ironic.

> lacking in idle circumstance and admitting the gods as witnesses to the rites. No woven garlands hang from a crowned threshold, nor does a white fillet run across the twin doorposts, nor are there the **proper** torches, nor does a high couch stand pressed by ebony steps, nor are its coverings marked with inlaid gold, nor does a matron, weighing her brow with a turreted crown, forbid their foot to touch the threshold as it crosses; no saffron veil, about to cover gently the fearful modesty of the bride, covered her downcast face, nor did a girdle bind her flowing folds with gems, nor did a dignifying necklace cover her chest, nor a narrow scarf her bared arms. Just as she was, she maintains the mourning of her sad adornment, and **she embraced her husband in the same way as her children**. His purple stripe is hidden, covered by dark wool, the customary witty jokes are not made, nor in Sabine custom did the sad husband endure the ribald abuse. **There are no pledges of the house**, no neighbors come together. **The two are joined in silence**, satisfied with Brutus taking the auspices. He did not remove the shaggy hair from his sacred face, nor did he admit smiles on his hard visage (as soon as he had seen that funereal arms were borne, he had allowed his unshorn greys to fall across his rigid brow and a beard of mourning to grow from his cheeks: indeed to him alone, without either favor or hatred, there was time to mourn the human race), nor was the compact of their former bed attempted: his strength **resisted** even **legitimate sex**.

Although the poet tells us that Cato and Marcia are joined as husband and wife, the reader may well wonder on what grounds this is so. The negative description of traditional marriage elements suggests that Cato and Marcia have not entered into any real agreement at all, and in various details the poet even points to the legal force of traditions that were overlooked (*legitimae*, 2.356; *iusto*, 2.379). Furthermore, the two do not treat one another as husband and wife: Marcia embraces Cato in the same way she hugs her children (2.366), and Cato fails to consummate the union (2.379-80). An appeal to legal minutiae cannot excuse these facts. Although Roman marriage was defined primarily by *affectio maritalis* between two parties,[113] Lucan's depiction of the anti-

[113] Treggiari (1991) 49-52. So long as two people intended to treat each other as husband and wife and there were no legal restrictions preventing their union, they were married in the eyes of the law; specific marriage rights such as the bearing of legitimate children and legal protection of inheritances, however, could only be enjoyed by those who had

marriage has given Cato no opportunity to offer an affirmative statement of such affection. He did not respond verbally to Marcia's initial proposition (*hae flexere virum voces*, 2. 350), and during the ceremony proper the two are joined in silence (*iunguntur taciti*, 2.371). In short, there has been neither speech act nor ritual act that can be thought to unite Cato and Marcia.

Even by literary standards the anti-marriage is strange. Other depictions of tragic unions rhetorically claim that the Furies attended the ceremony and thus brought ill-fated results for the bride and groom.[114] Given Cato's interest in maintaining funereal attire throughout the ceremony,[115] we might have expected Lucan to avail himself of this trope. He does not do this, however, and Cato is instead content to have the gods bear witness to the rites that he does not undergo (*sacrisque deos admittere testes,* 2.353). Another class of literary weddings is those describing the union of two unsuitable partners, where the punctilious observation of ritual is intended to obfuscate the problems inherent in violating a social taboo. Thus when Messalina enters into a bigamous marriage with Silius, we hear of officials, witnesses, sacrifices, a public reception, and finally the enjoyment of the marital bed (Tac. *Ann.* 11.27; Juv. 10.330-45; Suet. *Claud*. 26, 29). Nero, too, is careful to observe ritual propriety when he plays the bride in his marriage to Pythagoras: the *princeps* dons the bridal veil, a marriage bed is prepared, torches are lit, and officials are summoned to oversee the unorthodox rite (Tac. *Ann.* 15.37.4). Similarly, we find Vergil attributing language typical of a wedding to natural phenomena

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undertaken *matrimonium iustum*, a fuller ceremony that demanded a contractual agreement, an officiant (*auspex*), and witnesses.

[114] On this, see Ferri (2003) at [Sen.] *Oct*. 23 and my discussion on pp. 135-8.

[115] Thomas (1982) 109-15 connects Cato's appearance to descriptions of primitive people, particularly Scythians, who are idealized in philosophical contexts as exemplars of a simple and rustic lifestyle.

in order to create ambiguity about whether Dido and Aeneas are actually joined as husband and wife: "First Earth and Juno, the matron of honor, gave the signal; fires and the *aether* gleamed upon witnessing the marriage, and the Nymphs shrieked from heaven's height" (*prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno | dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius aether | conubiis summoque ulularunt vertice Nymphae*, 4.166-8). Each of these episodes portrays wedding rituals in careful detail, and the proper observation of them is presumed to have a causative effect: the successful union of the participants is wholly dependent on their proper observation of ritual correctness. The assertion that Cato and Marcia failed to observe any traditional wedding elements, therefore, undermines the idea that they successfully remarry.[116] Indeed, the belief that it is efficacious depends entirely on the narrator's rather bold assertion that this is so.

How, then, can one account for this strangest of episodes? Although we cannot be certain of Lucan's reasons for including the anti-marriage, we may be able to posit a more compelling explanation for Cato's decision to take Marcia back. It was noted earlier that the majority of Marcia's plea is concerned with her personal reputation: she wishes to be known as "Cato's Marcia" (2.343-4), to escape criticism for their earlier separation (2.344-5), and to be compared favorably with Cornelia (2.348-9). Although

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[116] Fantham (1992a) 2.354-71 suggests that Lucan may construct the anti-marriage "in satirical reaction against the bigamous wedding of Messalina or the homosexual wedding of Nero and Pythagoras," but this does not resolve the larger issues at place. In each case Fantham cites, the absurdity of the event lies in the dissonance between its illicit goals and its ritual correctness. The anti-marriage achieves its effect through precisely the opposite device, viz. creating a clear tension between its non-existent ritual and its purportedly successful result. The lunacy of the anti-marriage is further highlighted by the insistence that it is devoid of the marital affection by which a marital union is supposed to be defined (see p. 220 n. 113). Although the remarriage of Cato and Marcia may be less transgressive than Nero's decision to play the bride, it can hardly be called moderate or natural: it is equally open to ridicule as a preposterous act.

these arguments are profoundly weak, ill-suited to the broader poetic context, and philosophically problematic, they are actually not so far from Cato's own preoccupations during his debate with Brutus. There, it will be recalled, Cato had gone to great lengths to insist that the civil war was really a contest about himself. He did not mention either Caesar or Pompey by name until the final lines of his speech, claimed that he was the last true Roman (2.314-6), compared himself to P. Decius Mus in order to suggest that he was important enough to constitute an acceptable sacrifice (*devotio*) to avert the evils of the war (2.306-13, 315-6), and claimed that his own death would be the end of the civil conflict (2.317-9).[117] Despite the high rhetoric of this speech, the other events that Lucan has narrated have given the reader no reason to believe that any of this might be true: indeed, Cato has been absent until this point. Moreover, even when Cato invokes philosophy, he does so primarily to highlight his own uniqueness and importance in a war—and a poem—that had all but ignored him until that point. Viewed in these terms, we can see that the similarities between Marcia and Cato run deeper than their shared funerary attire and morbid outlook. They are indeed well suited to one another because they are each obsessed with themselves.[118] Neither one wishes to be a footnote in history, neither one to be faulted for the results of their past actions.[119] This craving to be seen as important and unique can be found in the very appeal that an unusual marriage

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[117] Stover (2008) takes the last of these as an indication that Lucan intended to end the *Bellum Civile* with Cato's suicide.

[118] Johnson (1987) 43-4 claims that Cato is moved by Marcia's "Stoically seductive reasons for their reunion" and insists that he is prepared "to make easy renunciations of what he doesn't value—and to rage against those who cannot or will not follow his dubious and ostentatious examples." He thus correctly notes that Cato is obsessed with his reputation, even though he fails to notice that Marcia is motivated by similar concerns.

[119] One wonders whether Cato's fervent assertion of his own views is responding, as it were, to the passivity the narrator assigns to him in Book 1.

has for Cato: a one-of-a-kind individual deserves a one-of-a-kind compact (*foedera* ***sola****… placent*, 2.352-3; cf. *OLD solus* 6). As will be seen in the next chapter, a keen focus on his own reputation is also characteristic of Cato during Book 9.[120] For now, however, it will be sufficient to note that this is an attribute he shares with Marcia.

A great deal of tension inevitably remains latent in these episodes when they come to an end, allowing the Cato of the *Bellum Civile* to be defined by contradiction. Although he is dedicated to philosophical uprightness and is praised for his constancy in this regard, his decision-making seems neither to adhere to the Stoic norms nor to privilege the maintenance of virtue above all else. This is not to say merely that the text subverts itself. Although the internal logic of these episodes does challenge the narrator's rosy outlook, it is impossible to say that the editorial praise of Cato is wholly unjustified. However much we may be dissatisfied with the grounds on which he makes his decisions, Cato's willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of the Republic and his decision to support Marcia in a time of uncertainty are surely noble. The problem for the reader, then, is that Lucan presents two competing voices that are equally loud and equally compelling. While it is clear that the poet does not intend to offer a simple depiction of Cato as a Stoic hero or a bumbling fool, we must remain uncertain about him until we can witness his actions as a participant in the civil war.

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[120] See pp. 242-75.

Chapter 4:
Nomina vana, Catones (II)

After fading from view at the end of the anti-marriage, Cato is surprisingly absent from Lucan's narrative.[1] He never rouses Pompey to action, never fights as a loyal soldier in the ranks he vowed to sanctify; on the contrary, he is mentioned only twice before the Battle of Pharsalus, each time in passing.[2] As each new episode arises, however, the reader must surely expect Cato's reemergence to be imminent: the debate with Brutus paved the way for Cato to play a major role in the poem before the Battle of Pharsalus, and his failure to do so would mean that he has effectively followed the course of action that Brutus recommended at the start. This latter outcome would be profoundly strange, since the chief purpose of the debate was to allow Cato to voice his opposition to remaining independent in the civil war and to declare his intent to support Pompey. Despite the problems that this narrative sequence poses for Lucan's depiction of Cato, this is precisely how the *Bellum Civile* unfolds: the decisive moment comes and goes, and Lucan's readers are left waiting for Rome's self-professed savior.

Cato only reclaims the spotlight at the beginning of Book 9. By this point the murder of Pompey has left Caesar undisputed victor in the civil war, while the survivors of Pharsalus are struggling to regroup in northern Africa. Cato's presence in the narrative—however late it might be—now raises the possibility of a new beginning, of a Republican Party of the sort that Brutus had advised him to form all along.[3]

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[1] For a historical explanation, see Wussow (2004) 252-8.
[2] They occur at 6.311; 6.789-90; on the latter, see p. 168.
[3] This situation complicates the reader's attempts to make sense Cato in Book 2: if one rejected his earlier arguments and feared that he was erring from the path of virtue, his *de facto* adherence to Brutus' advice may renew one's hope that he will be a Stoic *sapiens*; if, on the other hand, one was won over by Cato's arguments and was prepared to accept

Whereas the depiction of Cato in Book 2 raised questions about Cato's role as a Stoic sage and whether this was compatible with active involvement in the civil war, the narrative progression of Book 9 invites the reader to consider Cato in his guise as a leader of a Republican faction. Once again, we find that the depiction of Cato is fraught with contradictions. Various statements, both in the narrator's voice and those of his characters, offer competing visions of who should lead the surviving Pompeians, what goals that general ought to pursue, and how he should conduct himself. From these studied contradictions, the reader can infer a series of questions that lie at the heart of Lucan's depiction of Cato and the proper means of evaluating him. Although these questions are woven together throughout the narrative, there is a steady progression from general concerns about the nature of the command Cato assumes to specific issues like his relationship with his troops and his reasons for leading them across the Libyan desert. Each section in this chapter will identify one of these implied questions, discuss how Lucan explores it within the text, and explore ways in which contradictions between the narrator's positive evaluation of Cato and the narrative events themselves complicate our understanding of the would-be Stoic sage. What follows is thus an extended reading of Cato in Book 9 of the *Bellum Civile*, followed by a brief consideration of how Lucan's treatment of him fits with the issues discussed elsewhere in this dissertation.

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civil war as something compatible with *virtus*, one must wonder why Cato did not see his conclusions through before Pharsalus.

***Iam pectore toto | Pompeianus erat*?**

Bellum Civile 9 begins with an account Pompey's catasterism, at the end of which the Great general's spirit is said to settle in Brutus' heart and Cato's mind (9.1-18).[4] Following as it does on Lucan's account of Pompey's death at the end of Book 8, this passage effectively serves as a torch-passing ceremony wherein Brutus and Cato are introduced as new champions of the anti-Caesarian faction.[5] Moreover, Lucan's language implies that the Great general may serve as a model for the men who follow him: the phrase *posuit se mente* (9.19) is constructed on analogy with *venire/esse in mentem*, an expression commonly used to describe things on which somebody is focused (*OLD mens* 1b). This suggests that Pompey will be continually present, as it were, to Brutus and Cato, and thus that the Great general will somehow serve as a model of behavior for them.[6] This idea is left vague in its initial formulation, but Lucan soon gives us a clearer indication of what he means: after explaining that Cato had despised Pompey while he lived because of his involvement with the triumvirate, the narrator insists that, after the general's death in Egypt, Cato "was now a Pompeian in all his heart" (*iam pectore toto | Pompeianus erat*, 9.23-4).[7] Although this new attitude towards Pompey is plainly meant to contrast with Cato's earlier hatred, it is not immediately obvious what

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[4] For a discussion of the philosophical and poetic oddities of the final two lines, see Wick (2004) at 9.17*sq*. For a discussion of the catasterism and its relation to other depictions of the afterlife in the *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 154-63.

[5] Morford (1967b) identifies Cato's elevation to the position formerly held by Pompey as a central theme of the Book; on this, see also Ahl (1976) 252-4. For arguments against the claim that this indicates Cato and Brutus will be protagonists for the remainder of the poem, see Masters (1992) 216-59.

[6] Thus Wick (2004) at 9.17*sq*. says that Lucan here presents Brutus and Cato as Pompey's "spiritual heirs;" see also Narducci (2001b) 81-5.

[7] Brutus is left out of consideration, and never reappears as an active character in the *Bellum Civile*.

the adjective *Pompeianus* is supposed to mean: indeed, some have argued that it is a synonym for "Republican," while others have taken it more literally as "follower of Pompey."[8] To my mind, deciding between these choices would be a grave mistake. Lucan has used a word that is ambiguous, and with good point: by leaving the reader wondering in precisely what way Cato will be "Pompeian," he effectively focuses our attention on Cato's subsequent words and actions. As will be shown throughout this chapter, these words and actions are rather more complicated than they initially appear, and demand careful consideration.

After offering us these initial indications that Cato may take Pompey as a model for his actions, it is surprising that Cato demonstrates little favor—even in death—towards the Great general. The first words that Cato delivers in Book 9 are actually a eulogy for Pompey given in the presence of his army, his sons, and his widow. One might expect this audience to have some bearing on the oration he delivers; instead, Cato speaks with pessimism and backhanded compliments that do little to cast Pompey in a good light:[9]

> '*civis obit,' inquit, 'multum maioribus impar* 190
> *nosse modum iuris, sed in hoc tamen utilis aevo,*
> *cui non ulla fuit iusti reverentia…*
>
> *immodicas possedit opes, sed plura retentis*
> *intulit. invasit ferrum, sed ponere norat.*
> *praetulit arma togae, sed pacem armatus amavit* (9.190-3, 9.197-9).
>
> "A citizen has died," he said, "much the inferior of our elders at knowing the limit of legality, but nevertheless useful in this respect to an age that has no reverence for lawfulness… He possessed unmeasured wealth, but contributed [to the treasury] more than he retained. He grasped at steel,

[8] See esp. Wick (2004) at 9.24; Narducci (2001b).
[9] Thus Wick (2004) at 9.190-214. For a more positive interpretation of the passage, see esp. Morford (1967a) 5-7.

> but knew how to lay it aside. He preferred arms to the toga, but loved peace while armed.

Even if Cato does make some concessions to Pompey's better attributes, this is hardly a resounding endorsement.[10] The repeated antitheses compare Pompey to an imagined ideal and demonstrate the extent to which he failed to act appropriately in his public and private conduct. In this Cato tries to temper Pompey's reputation, to show that he was fine, but not "Great." Yet it also has the effect of putting distance between Pompey and Cato: the ability to point out the deceased general's faults implies that Cato is free from them himself.

This attitude of superiority is not limited to the eulogy. When Pompey's troops decide to give up fighting and prepare to abandon Cato on the shore of Africa, Cato accuses them of being a "Pompeian" army: "Then have you, youth, also waged the war on behalf of masters with an equal prayer, and were you a **Pompeian** band, not a Roman one?" (*ergo pari voto gessisti bella, iuventus, | tu quoque pro dominis, et **Pompeiana** fuisti, | non Romana manus?* 9.257-8).[11] Cato's criticism here is clearly meant to impugn the troops for supporting Pompey as a strongman, rather than as the general representing the interests of the Senate and People of Rome.[12] His use of the adjective *Pompeianus* in this way blends the two most natural senses of the word, the political meaning "supporter of Pompey" (*OLD Pompeianus*[2] 1a) and the possessive denominative meaning

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[10] Narducci (2002) 352-3, esp. n. 238, rightly faults those who invert the order of these antitheses in order to make Cato sound more critical than he actually is; still, Narducci's insistence that Cato is offering simple praise of Pompey is unconvincing.
[11] Thus Wick (2004) at 9.257*sq*.; see also Wick (2004) at 9.24 and my discussion on pp. 242-75.
[12] On Pompey's awkward relationship with the senate, see pp. 246-8.

"belonging to Pompey."[13] It matters little which of these is felt more strongly: both cast the army formerly known as Pompey's in a negative light, suggest that Cato is fundamentally more Republican than either them or their general, and thus distance Cato from the legacy that Pompey has left behind.

Faced with this this speech, the reader may well wonder how these sentiments can be uttered by a man in whose mind Pompey's spirit allegedly rests and who is supposed to be a "Pompeian in his whole heart" (9.23-4).[14] Indeed, Lucan's narrative presents us with a serious dilemma: editorial comments have led us to believe that Cato will fashion himself a "Pompeian," while Cato has himself rejects this very possibility. One way to resolve this issue would be to suppose that the narrator's initial judgment of Cato was incorrect, and that Cato's rejection of Pompey's legacy should be understood as both final and appropriate. Alternatively, one may favor the narrator's evaluation and choose to explain Cato's rejection of Pompey on some other grounds. Although scholars have defended both these positions, none has done so with great success.[15] Indeed, the crux of the problem is that there is nothing further in Lucan's text that allows us to resolve the issue directly. Instead, Lucan's decision to focus on whether Cato is a "Pompeian" only raises further questions: if the character Cato rejects the model of leadership that Pompey furnished, how will he act when he takes control of the anti-Caesarian faction? Will he

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[13] On the heritability of Pompey's troops, see pp. 231-41.

[14] The problem is much discussed: Ahl (1976) 158-9; Kierdorf (1979); Johnson (1987) 71-2; Bartsch (1997) 84; Leigh (1997) 145-8; Rudich (1997) 161; Narducci (2002) 349-53; Sklenář (2003) 84-5.

[15] *Contra* Wick (2004) at 9.190-214 §4 ("Inhalt und Struktur"), who cites the narrator's favorable characterization of Cato's speech as sufficient proof that the ironic reading is impossible. See above, n. 14 for other work on this topic.

turn out to be "Pompeian" after all, as the narrator had insisted, or will he fashion himself into something else entirely?[16]

Pompey's successors

Immediately after his description of Pompey's catasterism, Lucan offers an extended eulogy in which he praises Cato as a guardian of a fatherland that was left without a leader after the nefarious assassination of Pompey in Egypt:

> ***patriam*** *tutore carentem*
> *excepit, populi trepidantia membra refovit,* 25
> *ignavis manibus proiectos reddidit enses,*
> ***nec regnum cupiens*** *gessit civilia bella*
> *nec servire timens.* ***nil causa*** *fecit in armis*
> *ille* ***sua****:* ***totae*** *post Magni funera* ***partes***
> ***libertatis erant*** (9.24-30).
>
> He took up **his fatherland** when it was lacking a guardian, he nourished the trembling limbs of the people, he returned discarded swords to cowardly hands, and he did **not** wage civil war **from a desire for kingship**, nor because he feared to be a slave. That man did **nothing** in arms **for his own sake**: after the death of the Great, **the entire faction was one of Freedom**.

Throughout this passage, the poet employs terms that emphasize Cato's paternal role after Pharsalus.[17] The expression *patriam tutore carentem* (9.24) casts the fatherland as an orphan, either a child that has lost its father or a woman whose husband has died. According to Roman law, both these classes of people qualified as minors and needed a legal (male) guardian to protect their interests and represent them in legal disputes.[18] Lucan's choice of vocabulary indicates that the *patria* is similarly bereft after the death of

[16] Maes (2009) argues that Lucan has Cato explore a number of potential models, including Pompey, Caesar, and Alexander the Great.
[17] For Cato as a lover of Rome, see Ahl (1976) 173-83; Wick (2004) at 9.24.
[18] Berger, Nicholas, & Treggiari, "Guardianship, Roman," *OCD*[3].

Pompey, and suggests that Cato steps in to fill his place.[19] The verb *excipere* underscores this idea. Paired with the phrase *tutore carentem*, it most naturally assumes the meaning, "to take under one's care or protection" (*OLD excipio* 7). Indeed, once Cato is established as guardian for the surviving forces, the defeated men are no longer helpless: they can now set aside their fears and take up arms again (9.26).

The cause for which these men are fighting, however, is said to be different than it was before: they are no longer to be a faction of Pompey, but rather one of Freedom (***totae*** *post Magni funera* ***partes*** | ***libertatis***, 9.29-30).[20] This point has already been anticipated at the start of the passage, where Cato's initial distrust of Pompey is explained at some length: "When the outcomes were hanging in the balance and it remained doubtful whom civil wars would make master of the world, that man [i.e. Cato] also hated the Great" (*Ille, ubi pendebant casus dubiumque manebat* | *quem dominum mundi facerent civilia bella,* | *oderat et Magnum*, 9.19-21). Here Lucan clearly wishes to draw a distinction between Cato as a supporter of Freedom and Pompey as a would-be master (*dominum*, 9.21). The desired effect is no doubt to elevate Cato. Yet in doing this, Lucan also invites questions about the precise way in which Cato is going to be a successor to the anti-Caesarian faction: the torch-passing ceremony at the start of the book would seem to imply that Cato is the rightful successor to Pompey, while the assertion that they fought for radically different goals undermines this supposition.[21]

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[19] Wick (2004) at 9.24 notes that Cato had earlier described himself as Rome's father (2.297-303) and that the narrator had called him both father and husband to the city (2.388).

[20] On this, see pp. 275-87.

[21] This issue may also be suggested by a secondary sense of the verb *excipere*: "to take over (from a predecessor)" (*OLD excipio* 15).

Despite this minor ambiguity, one might expect the matter of Pompey's succession to be settled after the narrator insists that Cato will be the new figurehead of the *partes libertatis* (9.29-30). Instead, Lucan soon makes this an open question by having Cornelia relate her husband's (previously unmentioned) last will and testament (*mandata*, 9.85):

> *me cum fatalis leto damnaverit hora,*
> ***excipite**, **o nati**, <u>bellum civile</u> nec umquam,*
> *dum terris **aliquis nostra de stirpe** manebit,*
> ***Caesaribus** regnare vacet. vel sceptra vel urbes* 90
> *libertate sua validas impellite fama*
> *nominis: <u>has **vobis** partes, haec arma</u> **relinquo**.*
> *inveniet classes **quisquis Pompeius** in undas*
> *venerit, et **noster** nullis non gentibus **heres***
> *<u>bella</u> dabit: tantum indomitos memoresque paterni* 95
> *iuris habete animos* (9.87-96).
>
> When the fatal hour has condemned me to death, **my sons**, **take up** <u>the civil war</u>, and never, while **anyone of our stock** remains on earth, let there be room for **Caesars** to rule. Stir up either kings or cities strong in their own freedom with the reputation of our name: **I bequeath** <u>this faction, these arms</u> **to you**. He will find fleets, **whatever Pompey** will have gone onto the seas, and **our heir** will give <u>wars</u> to many races: only keep your spirit unconquered and mindful of your paternal right.

Throughout these verses, Pompey expresses an interest in establishing his sons as inheritors of his faction and indeed as the next generation of a dynasty that defines itself in opposition to Caesar. He thus makes clear at the start that he wants Gnaeus and Sextus to be his chief heirs and executors, directing them to assume control of the civil war now that he has died (***excipite**, **o nati**, <u>bellum civile</u>*, 9.89). Although a father's desire for vengeance is entirely intelligible within a Roman context, the boldness of Pompey's assertion should not be overlooked: it suggests that he envisions the war as a heritable

good that he can bequeath to whomever he likes.[22] It is not only the war, however, but also his faction that he desires to pass on to his descendants (<u>*has*</u> ***vobis*** <u>*partes, haec arma*</u> ***relinquo***, 9.92; ***noster*** *nullis non gentibus* ***heres*** | <u>*bella*</u> ***dabit***, 9.94-5). This decidedly takes things to a new level, and indicates that Pompey envisions himself as the founder of a line that will maintain the loyalty of individuals in a manner akin to personal property.[23] Indeed, Pompey's obsession with ensuring the continuation of his name, his faction, and his war can be seen in his desire for the conflict between Pompeys and Caesars to continue until one of the lines is wiped out (**Caesaribus**, 9.90; ***aliquis nostra de stirpe*** *manebit*, 9.89; ***quisquis Pompeius***, 9.93; ***noster heres***, 9.94).[24] The irony latent in Pompey's use of the phrase *quisquis Pompeius* is perhaps meant to clue us in to his dynastic aspirations: Pompey seems to want his own name to become a virtual title that will have the power to rouse men to its holder's side; as Lucan's readers will have known, however, it was not "Pompey," but "Caesar" that was to become the name synonymous with absolute rule.[25] In a similar way, Cornelia's use of the word *mandata* to describe these last commands hints at an imperial mentality: although this term can

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[22] OLD *excipere* 15. Pompey's use of the word in this valence here may invite us to reconsider its force at the start of the chapter, where it was said that Cato "took up the fatherland when it was lacking a guardian" (*patriam tutore carentem* | ***excepit***, 9.24-5); see also p. 232 n. 21.

[23] This would no doubt have suggested the position of the Caesars to an imperial audience.

[24] The reference to Pompey's sons succeeding their father has special point, as each one did, in fact, fight against Caesar or his descendant Octavian. Gnaeus led a force after the defeat at Thapsus in 46 BC; he was executed after the Battle of Munda in 45 BC. Sextus escaped both Thapsus and Munda, eventually setting up camp in Sicily. He remained a thorn in the side of Octavian and Antonius until his fleet was put down in 36 BC; although he escaped yet again, he was executed in Asia Minor in 35 BC. The ambiguity of the present passage is supported by Lucan's earlier allusion to Sextus' assumption of command during his consultation with the witch-cum-necromancer Erictho (6.813-6). See also Wick (2004) at 9.51-116.

[25] On this, see Henderson (1987), esp. §4.1-2 (= p. 141-2); Rudich (1997) 168.

properly refer to a last will and testament (*OLD mandatum* 2), it is also the *vox propria* for an emperor's mandates (*OLD mandatum* 1b).[26] The language that Lucan attributes to Pompey thus contributes to the sense that he is trying to establish a monarchical dynasty, and so complicates the question of who will lead the survivors of Pharsalus: by raising the possibility that the faction now gathered in Africa is something that can be bequeathed to Pompey's successor, Cato's status as long-term guardian of that army—the position the narrator had attributed to him at the start of the book—is implicitly challenged.

Cornelia's report of this last will and testament ends, somewhat abruptly, with permission for Gnaeus and Sextus to obey Cato in the event that he forms a faction dedicated to freedom: "It will be proper to obey **Cato alone**, if he will form a faction on behalf of Freedom" (***uni*** *parere decebit, | si faciet partes pro libertate,* ***Catoni***, 9.96-7). On one level this seems to resolve the tension I have just described: these final words apparently preclude any real dispute about the leader of the Pompeian survivors, and the point is strengthened by a verbal echo between the *mandata* and the narrator's description of Cato's army as a "faction of Freedom" (*totae post Magni funera partes | libertatis erant*, 9.29-30 ~ *partes pro libertate*, 9.67).[27] There are nevertheless a number of reasons to question such a straightforward reading. First, we may note that this speech raises the possibility that Pompey's sons have a legitimate claim to assume leadership of the anti-Caesarian faction, even though the narrator has given us the impression—at least until this point—that Cato is the only figure suitable for this role. The *mandata* thus introduce

[26] Wick (2004) at 9.86 notes *mandata* is rare outside of wills, testaments, and juridical contexts.
[27] Thus Wick (2004) at 9.51-116.

a question of succession where one did not previously exist, and so can be thought to complicate or even undermine Cato's position. Secondly, Gnaeus and Sextus are described throughout Pompey's directive as the primary heirs and the individuals whom Pompey expects to continue fighting:[28] they are named first, receive most of Pompey's attention, and are directly addressed with a series of second-person forms (*excipite, o nati*, 9.88; *impellite*, 9.91; *vobis*, 9.92; *habete*, 9.96). Cato, on the other hand, seems to be an after-thought. He receives one-and-a-half lines to the younger Pompeys' nine-and-a-half, his role as general is stated in conditional terms, and he is referred to in the third person. Even if we admit that the final lines of a speech are stressed, and thus that the reference to Cato is stronger than it looks in isolation, this does not account for the poet's decision to cast the orders to Gnaeus and Sextus in such powerful terms.

The subsequent narrative proves that the claim of Pompey's sons to this command is quite strong, and so further challenges Cato's status as leader of the anti-Caesarian faction. Immediately following Cornelia's speech, Lucan depicts the reunion of Sextus and Gnaeus Pompey on the shores of Africa. After Sextus offers his brother an account of Pompey's death (9.126-45), Gnaeus unleashes an impassioned response, ordering the ships to be made ready for war and calling on the remaining leaders to avenge his father (9.148-52). It is not just the blood of Ptolemy XIII that he seeks, however, but the complete overthrow of Alexandria, the defiling of Alexander's corpse, and the desecration of the Egyptian gods (9.152-64). This zeal fits well with the *furor* demanded by Pompey's injunction and gives the reader the impression that this second *Pompeius* may well inherit his father's former position. Indeed, the narrator's closing description of

[28] This is perhaps an allusion to Cato's surprising absence throughout most of the poem; on this, see pp. 225-6.

the speech echoes Pompey's call for his sons to inherit his war (*dixerat, et* ***classem*** *saevus rapiebat* ***in undas,*** 9.165 ~ *inveniet* **classes** *quisquis Pompeius* ***in undas*** | *venerit,* 9.93-4).[29] Certain verbal cues also give the reader the impression that a dynasty is being established: apart from the repeated concern with inheritance and succession already discussed, the poet avoids using *praenomina*; instead, he applies the names *Pompeius, Magnus,* and *Felix* to Pompey and Gnaeus alike.[30] This effectively elides the difference between father and son, raising the possibility that the latter will indeed take over where the former left off. As argued above, this is precisely the end at which Pompey's *mandata* aimed, and the reader may well believe that Pompey's faction has actually been bequeathed when Gnaeus—despite not being present to hear Cornelia's account of this directive—is initially successful in taking control of it. Indeed, he is already dragging the ships towards the shore when Cato manages to restrain his anger and prevent the fleet from sailing (*dixerat, et classem saevus* ***rapiebat*** *in undas; sed Cato laudatam iuvenis compescuit iram*, 9.165-6).[31]

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[29] Note that the key words fall in the same metrical *sedes*, strengthening the force of the echo.

[30] Thus we find the narrator use *Magnus* of Gnaeus twice (9.121, 145), while it is more normally used of Pompey himself (9.21, 29, 58, 75, 80, 98, 104, 124, 152, 157, 167, 175, et al.). Sextus calls his brother *felix* once (9.126), though the word is elsewhere associated with his father (e.g. 8.126, 706; 9.80). Pompey's testament includes a reference to *quisquis Pompeius* (9.93), which may suggest that he wants his name to be used, like *Caesar*, as a virtual title; see p. 234 n. 25. *Felix* is of course also the agnomen of Sulla; for Lucan's use of this word, see Fantham (1992a) at 2.221-2.

[31] The continuous aspect of the imperfect tense, especially coupled here with the pluperfect *dixerat* and the perfect *compescuit*, emphasizes that the action of the verb *rapiebat* is already in progress. On the problem of Cato praising Gnaeus' anger, see Sklenář (2003) 81.

Although Cato's influence over Gnaeus Pompey is not explained,[32] his success in preventing from the young man from taking control of the anti-Caesarian faction initiates a period in which Cato's leadership goes unchallenged. Looking back on the events that have led to this point, we see a clear chiastic arrangement: (A) the book begins with the narrator's assertion that Cato is the undisputed leader of the Republican faction; (B) Cornelia's report of Pompey's final testament challenges the narrator and offers two possibilities for the succession: first Pompey's sons, then Cato; (B') Gnaeus tries to assert his right to inherit Pompey's position, thus fulfilling (albeit in ignorance) his father's last wishes; (A') Cato quells Gnaeus' anger and takes control of the Pompeian faction. Although Claudia Wick insists that Pompey's testament is a necessary digression that allows the poet to account for Cato's assumption of the Republican mantle,[33] this interpretation does not account for why the issue is broached at all. Indeed, it is peculiar to have the narrator call the succession a closed matter at the start of the book, only to have it opened and reclosed in fewer than 170 lines. Surely there existed simpler ways to construct the narrative if the goal were merely to present Cato in a positive light as head of the Republican faction. Recognizing this tension allows us to infer that the poet wishes to draw our attention to the issue of succession and to challenge the reflexive assumption that Cato was the only possible leader of the Republican opposition to Caesar.

The reason the poet has made his reader sensitive to this issue becomes clear as the narrative progresses. Although Cato remains in control of Pompey's faction long

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[32] Note, however, that Cato praises the boy's anger before restraining it. As with Brutus in Book 2, Cato seems eager to stoke the emotions of others in order to bring them round to his side. On this, see pp. 207-9.

[33] Wick (2004) at 9.51-116.

enough to perform an empty-coffin funeral for the general and to offer him a lukewarm eulogy (9.167-214), his position as the leader of Pompey's army is soon challenged once again. Under the advice of the Cilician king Tarcondimotus, the troops decide to give up the fight and seek peace. Cato's initial attempt to restrain the men by insulting this new, would-be leader is patently unsuccessful (9.222-5), and only a single Roman feels compelled to explain their decision to surrender.[34] This passage is extremely important to Lucan's presentation of Cato, and will be discussed in more detail later; for now, however, we shall limit our focus to how it treats the issue of succession to Pompey's command.

The nameless soldier initiates a dialogue with Cato in which each of them presents their arguments for or against renewing the fight against Caesar. He begins his case by arguing that civil war must end at some point, and that Pharsalus or Pompey's death is a logical limit for the bloodshed (9.232-3). Moreover, the troops were personally loyal to Pompey, and, with him dead, they intend to follow the fates and accept his conqueror as the absolute victor:

> *quisquis Magno vivente secundus,*
> *hic mihi primus erit…* 240
>
> ***dominum**, <u>quem clades cogit</u>, habebo,*
> *nullum, Magne, **ducem**: <u>te solum</u> in bella <u>secutus</u>*
> *<u>post te fata sequar</u>…*
>
> *fortuna cuncta tenentur*
> *Caesaris, Emathium sparsit victoria ferrum* (9.239-40, 241-3, 244-5).
>
> Whoever was second while Magnus was alive, this one will be first as far as I'm concerned… I will have a **master**, as the slaughter compels me to do, but I will have no **leader**, Magnus; <u>you alone I followed</u> into war, <u>after</u>

[34] On the identification of this figure, see Wick (2004) at 9.217-293 §2 ("Identität des anonymen Sprechers").

> you I shall follow the fates… Everything is bound by Caesar's fortune, victory has scattered the Thessalian steel.

Whereas the *mandata* of Pompey and Gnaeus' attempt to take control of his father's faction had raised questions about the heritability of the armies that fought at Pharsalus, the present speech refocuses this issue in terms of willingness and compulsion. Although the soldier accepts that he will be forced to accept Caesar as a master (*dominum*, 9.241), he insists that he will not have any real leader after Pompey (*ducem*, 9.242).[35] The distinction made is that between a general whom he follows willingly (*secutus*, 9.242) and an overlord that events have foisted upon him (*quem clades cogit*, 9.241).[36] More than this, the speech also seems to contain criticism of Cato's justification for entering the war in Book 2. By arguing that the fates have demonstrated their support for Caesar, the soldier justifies surrender as a decision to follow where they lead (*fata sequar*, 9.243). The difference between following the fates and being dragged by them, as discussed in the previous chapter, is an important aspect of Stoic dispositional discourse,[37] and the force of the comment here is to suggest that Cato is acting inappropriately (in Stoic terms) by resisting what is fated to occur. Lucan's narrative, once again, thus risks subverting the portrayal of Cato as the new leader of the *partes libertatis* that was presented at the start of the book. The fundamental question in this episode, therefore, is

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[35] *Dominus*, "master," is the normal title of a slave-owner (*OLD dominus* 1a). It could be applied by extension to all social situations where supposedly inferior men must address one with power over them (*OLD dominus* 3a, 4a); thus Domitian would later demand that others address him as *Dominus et deus*, "master and god." To members of the traditional Roman elite, the former was as offensive as the latter.

[36] In suggesting that Caesar was second while Pompey lived, the soldier challenges Caesar's own assertion that "Rome has seen Magnus second to me" (*vidit Magnum mihi Roma secundum,* 5.662); on this, see Conclusion, "*Caesar Invictus*."

[37] See pp. 197-9, esp. p. 197 n. 61, and also Wick (2004) at 9.243.

whether Cato will be successful in convincing these men to accept him as a *dux*, or rather if he will fashion himself a sort of *dominus*.

Cato's response to the soldier is an insulting dismissal of the concerns just raised. He accuses the soldiers of fighting on behalf of masters all along (*pro* ***dominis***, 9.257) and says that they were acting as a possession of Pompey, rather than of Rome (***Pompeiana*** *fuisti | non Romana manus*, 9.257-8). Indeed, he goes so far as to characterize the men as servile drones: "You base slaves, after the death of your former **master** you are passing to his **heir**!" (*o famuli turpes,* ***domini*** *post fata prioris | itis ad* ***heredem***, 9.274-5). This latter accusation raises the very issue of heritability that was first broached by Pompey's *mandata*: according to Cato, the faction that had fought on behalf of Pompey is allowing itself to be bequeathed like chattel, albeit to Caesar instead of Gnaeus.[38] This critique is further underscored by Cato's use of the indicative mood, which suggests that the transfer is actually happening at the very moment he is speaking (*itis*, 9.275). Consequently, although this *vituperatio* plainly reveals that Cato wants the survivors of the anti-Caesarian faction to act as individuals, and so implicitly to choose him willingly as a *dux*, it also opens the posssibility that they are incapable of such an action. In order to assess this concern, however, we must consider more carefully the relationship between Cato and his men.

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[38] The word *heres* is only used three other times in the *Bellum Civile*. Both of the instances that occur before the current passage apply it to Pompey's genealogical successor (Sextus uses it of himself at 6.595; Pompey uses it of both his sons at 9.94). The final instance occurs later, when the poet describes the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death (*nulloque herede relicto*, 10.44).

***Dux* or *Dominus*?**

Although the episode just discussed cannot properly be called a mutiny because Cato is not yet general of the troops, it shares certain structural and linguistic attributes with two attempted mutinies earlier in the poem: an uprising against Caesar's troops at Placentia (5.237-373) and a challenge to Pompey that leads to the battle of Pharsalus (7.45-150). In each of these scenes, the poet draws a distinction between the general and his troops, describing the latter as a "horde" (*audax* | ***turba***, 5.259-60 ~ ***turba***, 7.45 ~ ***vulgi***, 9.217), whose stifled discontent eventually gives way to open complaint (*non pavidum iam murmur erat nec pectore tecto* | *ira latens,* 5.255-6 ~ *miseri pars maxima vulgi… queritur magnoque accensa tumultu,* 7.47-9 ~ *fremit interea discordia vulgi*, 9.217). The narrator furthermore characterizes each of these uprisings as "madness" or "discord" (*discordia*, 5.299 ~ *dira… rabies,* 7.51 ~ *discordia*, 9.217), and the disturbance leads to an exchange of speeches between a representative of the troops and their general. Although scholars have long viewed these episodes in pairs, none has yet considered systematically how they operate as a triptych.[39] Given the clear structural and linguistic parallels that unite them, however, it seems probable that Lucan wants us to read them together, or at least to think of them in terms of one another. Indeed, these three scenes offer readers a common narrative element with which to judge how Caesar, Pompey, and

[39] Ahl (1976) 161 briefly invites the three-way connection, but does not offer an extended discussion. See also Ahl (1976) 203, 254-7; Fantham (1985); Masters (1992) 100, which uses the senate's meeting at Epirus as a parallel; Wick (2004) at 9.217-293, which includes discussion of the dispute between Domitius and his troops in Book 4 (§4, "Parellelen in Buch vier und fünf"), as well as the mutinies faced by Alexander, and similar episodes from Livy, Tacitus, and Appian (§5, "Meutereien: Historie und Literatur"); Maes (2009).

Cato interact with their men; understanding them together is thus necessary to our task of evaluating Lucan's characterization of Cato.

Caesar and Pompey respond to their mutinies in opposing ways. When Caesar's men request discharge for the older veterans and a clear statement of their general's objectives, Caesar uses the rebellion as an opportunity to test his own strength. Although he recognizes that his position is threatened, he actually manages to solidify it by questioning his men's bravery (5.322-3), proposing that they are replaceable agents of his own fortune (5.325-7), and insisting that history's smaller players exist only for the benefit of the great men at whose leisure they serve (*humanum paucis vivit genus*, 5.343). He cites the example of Labienus to demonstrate that individuals are only as great as their leader (5.345-7), dismisses those who still wish to leave (5.357-60), and demands that the raw recruits bring forward the ringleaders of the revolt for execution (5.360-3). This shaming technique is effective: the men quickly fall into line (5.364-73).

Throughout this exchange, one finds Caesar redefining the terms on which his men follow him. The legions that revolt are those he enlisted for his Gallic campaigns, a legally sanctioned army serving him as a properly appointed general. Indeed, even when they followed him across the Rubicon, their primary objectives were the restoration of the tribunes and the eradication of an oppressive faction within the city (cf. 1.311-7, 351). There was, of course, no doubt they were committing civil war after that point, but such justifications could cover their actions with a veneer of legitimacy.[40] When these troops question the continued conduct of the war and decide to mutiny, however, Caesar does not point to any of his earlier goals; instead, he says that the men should be personally

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[40] Caesar himself makes this argument at Caes. *Civ*. 1.5.

loyal to him because their success is dependent on his good fortune, because his eventual victory is unquestionable, and because his soldiers alone will reap the profits of war against other Romans:

> *nobis victoria turbam*
> *non dabit, impulsi tantum quae praemia belli* 330
> *auferat et vestri rapta mercede laboris*
> *lauriferos nullo comitetur vulnere currus?*
> *vos despecta senes exhaustaque sanguine turba*
> *cernetis nostros iam plebs Romana triumphos…*
>
> *fortis in armis* 345
> *Caesareis Labienus erat: nunc transfuga vilis*
> *cum duce praelato terras atque aequora lustrat* (5.329-34; 345-7).
>
> Will victory not furnish us with a crowd, which will merely carry off the prizes of a finished war and, after snatching away the reward for *your* labor, will attend my victorious chariot with nary a wound? You old men, a crowd scorned and drained of blood, now the Roman plebs, you will *watch* our triumphs… Labienus was brave in Caesarian arms; now the cheap turncoat surveys lands and seas together with the leader he preferred…

This change in focus marks a radical break from what the reader has seen of Caesar until this point, and is in fact the first time he explicitly claims to be a cause unto himself.[41] Central to Caesar's argument is the insistence that individual soldiers are inconsequential to his broader success. Indeed, he sees them as pawns in the basest sense of the term: nameless, replaceable entities whose sole purpose is to live and die fighting for their leader's objectives. Yet far from trying to conceal this outlook, Caesar declares it openly:

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[41] At 1.299-351 Caesar refers to his troops as "comrades in war" (*bellorum o socii*, 1.299), admits that they had achieved his victories (*vincitis*, 1.300), and uses inclusive, first person plural forms to create a sense of affinity between himself and them (*temptamur*, 1.311; *noster veteranus*, 1.345; *fecimus*, 1.348; *detrahimus*, 1.351). Here the adjective "Caesarian" (*Caesareis*, 5.349) is to be compared with the negative treatment of *Pompeianus* elsewhere in Book 9, on which, see pp. 227-31. On Caesar as both man and cause, see Ahl (1976) 200-4. On the relationship between Caesar's two speeches, see Fantham (1985).

an vos momenta putatis
ulla dedisse mhi? numquam sic cura deorum 340
se premet, ut vestrae morti vestraeque saluti
fata vacent: procerum motus haec cuncta secuntur;
humanum paucis vivit genus… (5.339-43).

Or do you think that you have disturbed me in the slightest? The concern of the gods never burdens itself such that the fates have time for your death or your safety; all these things follow the movements of the leaders; the human race exists for the benefit of a few…

This powerful rhetoric completely cows the rebellious soldiers, and the poet does not wait long to show that they accept the new role that Caesar has written for them.[42] During the epilogue to this episode, the narrator employs the language of legal contracts to suggest that the men seal their personal commitment to Caesar in the blood of their comrades and reenlist to serve him, as it were, according to a new agreement:

tremuit saeva sub voce minantis
vulgus iners, unumque caput tam magna iuventus 365
privatum factura timet, velut ensibus ipsis
imperet invito moturus milite ferrum.
ipse pavet ne tela sibi dextraeque negentur
ad scelus hoc Caesar: vicit patientia saevi
spem ducis, et ***iugulos, non tantum praestitit ensis****.* 370
nil magis adsuetas sceleri quam perdere mentis
atque perire tenet. ***tam diri foederis ictu***
parta quies, poenaque redit placata iuventus (5.364-73).

The crowd trembled unmoving at the dread voice of the one threatening them, and although so great a troop had been about to make him a private citizen, it now fears him, as if he commands the swords themselves and could move the steel against the soldiers' will. Caesar himself fears that spears and sword-hands will be denied him for this crime: patience outstripped the expectation of the terrifying leader, and **the troop offered their throats, not just their swords**. Nothing keeps minds more accustomed to crime than destroying and dying. **At the striking of so dread a compact** peace was restored, and the troop, appeased by the punishment, returns to duty.

[42] Johnson (1987) 114 argues unconvincingly that Caesar's men want to be persuaded.

At the stroke of the ax, the leaders of the mutiny are put down, and a new deal is struck for the surviving soldiers, who offer Caesar not only their martial efforts, but their very lives (***et iugulos, non tantum*** *praestitit* ***ensis***, 5.370). Lucan neatly uses the word *ictus* ("blow," "stroke") to blur these two actions. The literal blow is of course the one that executes the ringleaders of the mutiny, while the subsequent slaughter of them initiates the new agreement (*OLD ictus* 6; *icio* 3).[43] The validity and efficacy of this new agreement are borne out by the narrative itself: throughout the rest of the poem, the Caesarian faction proves itself willing to fight and die blindly for their general's benefit; never again do they challenge Caesar's position as their absolute master.[44]

Unlike Caesar, Pompey fails to take advantage of the situation when his troops rebel. Although he is on the verge of starving the main Caesarian contingent into submission and achieving a bloodless victory, his men are eager to decide the contest by force of arms. They consequently enlist the help of Cicero to persuade Pompey to fight a pitched battle on the plain of Pharsalus.[45] Although we might expect the great orator to offer a convincing speech that justifies the prudence of swift military action, Cicero argues the case on weaker ideological grounds. Indeed, the main thrust of his argument is that Pompey is afraid to entrust the Senate's cause to the gods (7.76-7) and that the

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[43] The blurring of literal and metaphorical usage was first noted by Riley (1853) at 5.372. For the striking of a sacrificial victim (usually a pig) marking in the striking of an agreement or treaty, see Liv. 1.24.3-9.

[44] On Lucan's conflation of two historical mutinies in this episode, see Fantham (1985).

[45] The exchange is fabricated, as Cicero's own writings show he was not present at Pharsalus (Cic. *Att*. 11.5.3; *Div*. 1.68); on this point the historical tradition is unanimous (Plut. *Cic*. 39.1, *Cato Min*. 55.2; Livy *Periocha* 111, confirmed by the *Comm. Bern*. at Luc. 7.62). For a discussion of these issues, see Holliday (1969), esp. 65-9; Ahl (1976) 159-64; Narducci (2003). It is not immediately clear why Lucan has depicted Cicero in such a negative light.

Great general, if he is really the leader of a *Republican* army, has an obligation to do what the Senate and People of Rome demand of him:

> *si duce te iusso, si nobis bella geruntur,*
> *sit iuris, quocumque velint, concurrere campo…* 80
>
> *scire senatus avet, miles te, Magne, sequatur*
> *an comes* (7.79-80, 84-5).
>
> If the war is waged under you as ordered leader, if it is waged for our benefit, let it be legitimate for them to engage on whatever plain they wish… The senate wants to know, Magnus, whether it follows you as a soldier or as a comrade.

In response to this argument, one might expect Pompey to point out that the Senate—at least in Lucan's version of events—had made him supreme commander of the Republican faction (5.1-49) and that it was his prerogative to seek the swiftest, most effective end to the conflict. Indeed, even if the senate was entitled to advise him in military concerns, the *imperium* Pompey held by virtue of his command ought to have made his decisions in the field final. It may therefore come as a surprise when Pompey responds with a long, rambling speech that does nothing of the sort. Instead, he merely calls the gods to witness that he is not responsible for the coming disaster (7.85-123), and gives the signal for for the fatal battle without offering any defense of his preferred strategy or military authority (7.123-7).

The image of generalship we find in the two mutiny scenes discussed thus far is entirely opposed: whereas Caesar had asserted his dominance, eradicated the threat to his position, and turned a precipitous situation into an opportunity to secure the deeper loyalty of his troops, Pompey gives in unnecessarily to the foolish demands of his subordinates. Although he apparently does this because he thinks the fates are against him (*nil ultra fata morabor*, 9.88), his decision to abandon a successful strategy must

ultimately be judged a failure in his duties as general. Ironically, then, it is Pompey's willingness to submit to the skewed Republican ideals espoused by Cicero that ultimately leads to the destruction of the Republican army.[46]

We are finally in a position to return to the shores of Africa and judge how Cato responds to a mutiny of troops. Much to the reader's surprise, Cato's behavior does not mimic Pompey at all, but rather mirrors Caesar.[47] Indeed, the similarities between these men can be shown to occur at both the philological and the ethical level. In addition to the structural similarities mentioned above, one also finds explicit verbal echoes between the speeches delivered in Books 5 and 9.[48] We may first note that the troops make nearly identical complaints in each instance, lamenting excessively long terms of service, questioning when the war will end, and challenging their general's right to hold the command that he seeks to retain:

iam respice canos *invalidasque manus et inanis cerne lacertos.* ***usus abit vitae**, bellis consumpsimus aevum:* *ad mortem dimitte senes* (5.274-6).	***perierunt tempora vitae**,* *mors eat in tutum; iustas tibi nostra senectus* *prospiciat flammas: bellum civile sepulchra* *vix ducibus praestare potest* (9.233-6).
Now consider our white hairs, look at our feeble hands and useless muscles. **Use of life has gone**, we have spent our age in wars: dismiss us old men for death.	**Our time of life has perished**, let death come upon us in safety; let our old age look forward to the flames that are proper to it: civil war can scarcely offer tombs to its leaders.
***finis quis quaeritur** armis?* (5.273).	*nam **quis erit finis**, si nec Pharsalia pugnae* *nec Pompeius erit?* (9.232-3).
What end is sought for arms?	For **what end will the fighting** have, if it is neither Pharsalia nor Pompey?

[46] On Pompey's weakness in this regard, see Roller (2001) 17-63.

[47] For general discussions of the similarities between these figures, see Syndikus (1958) 98-101; Hershkowitz (1998), esp. 231-46; Maes (2009); Costa (2011). The similarity is denied by Ahl (1976) 254-7.

[48] See also the comments of those scholars cited on p. 242 n. 39.

nec fas nec vincula iuris
hoc audere vetant: Rheni mihi Caesar in undis
dux erat, hic socius; facinus quos inquinat
aequat (5.288-90).

Neither propriety nor the bonds of legality forbid this daring: on the waters of the Rhine Caesar was my leader, here he is my comrade; crime makes equal those whom it defiles.

si publica iura,
si semper sequeris patriam Cato *signa petamus*
Romanus quae consul habet (9.249-51).

If you will follow public legalities, if you will always follow the Fatherland, Cato, let us seek the standards that a Roman consul holds.

In responding to these complaints, neither Caesar nor Cato pays his soldiers any heed. Instead, each of them responds with insulting language (***inbelles*** *animas,* 5.322; *an vos* ***momenta putatis*** | *ulla dedisse mihi*, 5.339-40; ***ignavi****… Quirites*, 5.358 ~ ***quaerisque iugum*** *cervice vacanti*, 9.261; *o* ***degeneres***, 9.268; *o famuli* ***turpes***, 9.274) and recommends that those unwilling to accept their position within the army simply depart (*fuge,* 5.321; *vadite*, 5.325; *discedite castris*, 5.357 ~ *ite* 9.268; *vadite*, 9.272). As in the case of Caesar, Cato is successful in using these tactics to secure the loyalty of the rebellious troops.[49] Whereas the narrator had earlier made an explicit claim about Caesar striking a new agreement with his men (*foederis ictu*, 5.372), however, the submission of Cato's men is related obliquely through a simile that compares them to bees returning to work after their keeper clashes a Phrygian cymbal (9.283-93).

Although these general similarities may invite the reader to compare the two scenes in question, they do not of themselves provide sufficient cause to question the narrator's positive evaluation of Cato. Indeed, an optimistic reader might propose that these echoes anticipate a reversal wherein Cato shows himself to be the leader of a Republican faction that is defined explicitly against the actions and attitudes of Caesar.

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[49] By way of contrast, Pompey speaks only of himself and fortune (7.87-123); his subsequent failure is discussed above. Wick (2004) at 9.217-93, §4 ("Parellelen in Buch vier und fünf") notes the similarity, but denies—to my mind incorrectly—that Caesar's speech is overly insulting.

A careful analysis of Cato's arguments, however, reveals that they fail to defend against the more damning charges to his legal standing that are made by the anonymous *miles*, and even do so in a manner that echoes the reaction of Caesar's troops to their general. This is indeed problematic, for it suggests that Cato has not only refused to follow the model of the nominally Republican Pompey, but that he has actually imitated the overtly autocratic Caesar.

Of all the arguments offered to Cato for the Pompeian army's decision to abandon the war effort, the most convincing concerns the illegality of Cato's attempt to become the new head of the faction. Although we know Cato held the imperial office of praetor (54 BC), he was more recently defeated in his quest for the consulship (52 BC), and was only given a propraetorian command over Sicily at the outbreak of the war (49 BC).[50] This will have meant that he had no legal authority to assume command of troops in Africa, except perhaps in an *ad hoc* capacity until a replacement could arrive.

It is interesting, then, that Lucan has his anonymous *miles* point to just this fact when he explains to Cato why the army has decided to abandon him on the shores of Africa: "If you will follow public legalities, if you will always follow the fatherland, Cato, let us seek the standards that a Roman consul holds" (*si publica iura, | si semper sequeris patriam, Cato, signa petamus | Romanus quae consel habet*, 9.249-51). According to this soldier, who is clearly speaking as a Roman,[51] Cato of all people ought to recognize the delicacy of the legal situation that Pharsalus has brought about. The loyalty of Roman soldiers, if they are indeed to be Roman and not dedicated to a specific leader, must always be given to Rome's legally appointed generals. Even though the

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[50] *MRR* ii 263.
[51] See p. 239 n. 34.

soldier admits that he had previously been a personal supporter of Pompey, he suggests that the time for such partisanship has now passed: "Now that Pompey has perished, civil war is a crime, even though it was an act of loyalty while he lived" (*Pompeio scelus est bellum civile perempto, | quo fuerat vivente fides*, 9.248-9). Indeed, with the leader of the Pompeian faction now dead and gone, it is only fitting that his troops should give way to the legal authority of those imbued with *imperium*. Consequently, since Caesar had been elected consul when he marched on Rome in 49 BC, the Pompeian army should now pass to him.

The soldier's logic here is constitutionally sound, and we might expect it to have its desired effect: as noted in the last chapter, Cato had a reputation for punctiliousness with regards to legal procedure in Lucan's day.[52] More than this, however, Cato was famous for having given up command of the African campaign to his social rival Metellus Scipio, who had served as consul in 52 BC and whose political and military authority was thus greater than Cato's own. This was a great statement of Cato's loyalty to Republican principles even in a situation that potentially placed both him and the cause he led in grave danger. When the *miles* addressing Cato claims that that legal procedure requires him to be faithful to the consul, therefore, it is almost as if he knows in advance that Cato is predisposed to respond to this type of argument. The reader may consequently expect Cato to accept this rationale, or else to address the legal challenge to his assumption of the anti-Caesarian armies. Indeed, his failure to do so would suggest that he is not the champion of the *patriae leges* that he purports to be (cf. 2.281-2).

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[52] See p. 204 n. 81 and p. 284 n. 130.

Although Cato admittedly challenges Caesar's consular authority by calling him a *dominus* and a would-be king (9.256-66), he never addresses the ambiguity of his own position or the legal problems inherent in his decision to take charge of Pompey's army.[53] Rather, after mocking the troops in the manner discussed above, he tries to convince them that they should accept his authority as a *dux* in order to pursue hardship for its own sake. The significance of this objective will be discussed at length later in this chapter;[54] for now, however, it is sufficient to note that Cato is successful. Even so, the effect that his speech has on the men and the manner in which they are said to fall in line are described in terms that are potentially problematic:

> *dixit, et omnes*
> *haud aliter medio revocavit ab aequore puppes*
> *quam, simul effetas linquunt examina ceras* 285
> *atque oblita favi non miscent nexibus alas*
> *sed sibi quaeque volat nec iam degustat amarum*
> *desidiosa thymum—**Phrygii sonus increpat aeris**,*
> ***attonitae posuere fugam** studiumque laboris*
> *floriferi repetunt et sparsi mellis amorem:* 290
> *gaudet in Hyblaeo **securus** gramine pastor*
> *divitias servasse casae. sic voce Catonis*
> *inculcata viris iusti patientia Martis* (9.283-93).

> He spoke, and he called back all the ships from the middle of the sea no differently than when the swarms leave the pregnant wax and, forgetful of the hive, do not join their wings together, but each one flies for himself and no longer idly tastes the bitter thyme—the sound of Phrygian bronze crashes, dumbstruck they give up their flight and seek again their zeal for the work of flower gathering and love of sprinkled honey: their shepherd, at ease on the Hyblaean grass, rejoices in having saved the riches of his home. Thus through Cato's voice was the endurance of legal war instilled in the men.

[53] Syndikus (1958) 100 says that this is virtually a forced takeover of the supreme command.
[54] See pp. 275-87.

Although we might initially gloss over this comparison as an adaptation of Vergil's reference to bees as *Quirites* in *Georgics* 4 (Verg. *G.* 4.201), closer consideration reveals that the relationship it assumes between Cato and his men is less than flattering to the general.[55] To treat this passage in formal terms, we may note that Cato is equated with the *pastor* and the men with the bees. His livelihood apparently depends on their work, and when they slack from their duty he is quick to bring them into line. If we pause to recall Lucan's literary model, however, we may remember that the bees' labor is serious business when seen from their perspective: it is full of life and death struggles, clashes of competing peoples, and kings being crowned or overthrown (Verg. *G.* 4.67-85). Indeed, the keeper's enjoyment of the bees' honey depends on his blindness or insensitivity to the difficulties of their life: what he views as an inconvenience to be put down with a fistful of dust is to them a violent war (Verg. *G.* 4.86-7). So, too, the keeper of Lucan's simile clashes a Phrygian cymbal to prevent his bees from dallying. This sound is to be equated with the very speech that Cato has just unleashed, and the reader may consequently infer that Cato's words are meant to bring the men around to acting in accordance with their (Roman) nature by fighting against a tyrant.

No doubt the interpretation just outlined would be wholly positive. At the same time, however, the simile may also suggest that the task to which Cato calls the men will not be undertaken for their benefit; rather, Cato is to be the chief beneficiary of their labor. Indeed, his freedom to rest easy (*securus*, 9.291) will depend on his ability to keep them focused on the task at hand. Cato's own status as principled opponent to Caesar, in other words, requires him to have these men under his control. To take the

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[55] On Lucan's manipulation of Vergil in these lines, see Wick (2004) at 9.285-93; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 144-7.

correspondeneces of the simile and a negative reading of it to an extreme, we could even posit that Cato has no qualms enlisting these men in the pursuit of his personal objectives because he does not understand the toll of the labors they are about to undertake.[56]

Although this darker interpretation of Cato's *securitas* may run counter to the initial response of some readers,[57] one finds that such aloofness is marked as a Caesarian attribute later in the poem. After Cato's march comes to an end, the poet reports an (unhistorical) tale of Caesar visiting the ruins of Troy. As he happily stumbles across the remains, the poet tells us that he proceeded "at ease in the high grass" (***securus*** *in alto* | *gramine*, 9.975-6).[58] This clearly echoes the description of the bees' *pastor* that we have just discussed (*in Hyblaeo* ***securus*** *gramine*, 9.291), and consequently invites the reader to consider the similarities between the two protagonists. In the later passage, one finds that Caesar is blissfully unaware of what surrounds him and is eager to "reconstruct" the site in ways that accord with his own, flawed interpretation of history and the civil wars.[59] His *securitas*, in other words, is cast as a confidence-in-ignorance that allows him to operate on the belief that his ends will justify whatever means he might deem necessary. Although this later passage obviously cannot be present in the reader's mind when Cato's actions in Africa are related, it may invite us to reconsider and reassess the bee simile in hindsight. Indeed, this will be an especially tempting reflex after Cato

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[56] On this, see pp. 275-311.
[57] Wick (2004) at 9.285-93 suggests the simile simply punctuates Cato's suppression of the "desertion." Again, at 9.293, she points to the phrase *iusti… Martis* to support the idea that Cato is acting appropriately, even metamorphosing the *Pompeiana manus* into the *partes Libertatis*.
[58] See Maes (2009) on Lucan's use of Alexander as a *tertium comparationis* for Cato and Caesar elsewhere in *BC* 9.
[59] On Caesar at Troy, see esp. Ahl (1976) 209-22; Rossi (2001); Eigler (2005); Tesoriero (2005); Maes (2009).

proves himself to be unaffected by the sufferings that afflict his men during their grueling march: as will be shown, he—like Caesar—is willing to subject them to any toil in the pursuit of his own, self-serving objectives.[60]

So much for Cato. What of his troops? One of the most striking aspects of Lucan's simile is the speed and suddenness with which the bees return to work on hearing the Phrygian cymbal. This detail could easily be overlooked, but it is important to remember that Lucan has equated these insects with the Pompeian soldiers that now fall under Cato's sway. When viewed in these terms, one can see that the men react in a manner that is wholly instinctual (***attonitae** posuere fugam*, 9.289). Yet this is the only way in which Lucan could have had them respond: contrary to our expectations of a Stoic *sapiens* enlisting men to his cause, Cato offers no rational proofs to justify the fight for Freedom and the Republican constitution; on the contrary, his brusque and biting criticism seems to win the men over magically, to instill in them a mindless fury and desire to follow their new leader. This response makes a great deal of sense in light of how Cato characterized the men during his address: "O base slaves, after the death of your former master you pass to his heir!" (*o famuli turpes, domini post fata prioris | itis ad heredem*, 9.274-5). Although on first reading this is naturally interpreted as a sarcastic jab intended to shame the men into fighting for themselves, the simile with which the episode ends suggests that Cato's assessment of the situation was wholly accurate: the men do indeed pass to Pompey's successor without thinking, in effect revealing that their

[60] See pp. 275-311.

default instinct is servile loyalty to a powerful leader.[61] Although this is perhaps not the outcome that Cato expected, it places him in a rather awkward position: he has now found himself the leader of a nominally Republican faction that is loyal to him as if to a master.

One further echo will suffice to show that Lucan casts the relationship between Cato and his troops in terms that are characteristic of the relationship between Caesar and his men. It will be recalled that after the mutiny of Caesar's army in Book 5, the general mocked his troops, declared their support irrelevant to his success, and asserted bluntly that the human race exists for the benefit of a few. Although this gambit puts Caesar in a precarious position, the poet tells us that "patience outstripped the dread leader's hope, and the troop offered **their throats**, **not just their swords**" (*vicit patientia saevi | spem ducis, et* ***iugulos, non tantum*** *praestitit* ***enses***, 5.369-70). These lines make clear that the men accept their general's view of the world—including their own insignificance—and Lucan concludes the scene with language that confirms they enter into a new compact on these terms.[62] Cato, on the other hand, proves himself even bolder than his nemesis. Whereas Caesar was surprised that his men committed to him to the extent that they did, Cato demands expressly the loyalty that Caesar's troops had given only after being cowed by their general: "Do you refuse your fatherland your **throats and swords**, now that Freedom is close at hand? (*nunc patriae* ***iugulos ensesque*** *negatis, | cum prope libertas?* 9.264-5). Ignoring for a moment the question of the generals' divergent

[61] On Cato as Pompey's successor, see pp. 231-41. We may perhaps conclude from this that Cato is ignorant of his position as Pompey's virtual heir and blind to the potentially negative implications of this status.
[62] See pp. 242-8.

objectives, this verbal echo makes it clear that Cato expects his subordinates to be just as committed to him as Caesar's troops are to their own leader.[63]

The similarity between Cato and Caesar that I have just demonstrated on philological grounds is confirmed when Cato's actions are analyzed through the theoretical lens that Matthew Roller has applied to the *Bellum Civile*. Roller tries to predict how characters will employ terms like *virtus, fides,* and *pietas* by determining whether they take an "assimilating" or "alienating" view of the civil conflict.[64] The former means that a figure thinks of his opponents as fellow citizens, whereas the latter means he will identify them as *hostes,* i.e. foreign enemies against whom the use of military prowess is both justified and praiseworthy. Roller claims that Caesar takes an alienating view, accounting for his lightning speed, severity, and success, whereas Pompey takes an assimilating view that leads him to spare his opponents and lose numerous opportunities to strike a final blow (as, for example, when facing the mutiny before Pharsalus). Roller does not treat Cato at length,[65] but if we apply his theoretical categories to the depiction of Cato in Book 9, we find that Cato, like Caesar, takes an alienating view.

The seeds of this position are evident in Cato's initial address to his troops, where he presupposes an irresolvable dispute between the factions of *Libertas* and Caesar, and

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[63] Thus Ahl (1976) 268, "Absolutism of one kind produces, as a backlash, absolutism of another kind." But it is not really so different. Johnson (1987) 53-63 argues for the similarity between Caesar and Cato, but his arguments are rather more dependent on his impression of the poem's general tone than many would care for. This is not to say that he is incorrect, only that his claims deserve more detailed corroboration. On the similarities between Caesar and Cato, see also Maes (2009).
[64] Roller (1996) and (2001) 17-63.
[65] Roller (2001) 53-4 argues that Cato offers an Stoic alternative to the dichotomy just outlined, but fails to consider the evidence in detail. As will be argued below, Cato seems to fit rather neatly with the alienating view that Roller attributes to Caesar.

urges his men to risk everything to stay Caesar's onslaught: "Do you refuse your fatherland your throats and swords, now that Freedom is close at hand?" (*nunc patriae iugulos ensesque negatis | cum prope libertas? unum fortuna reliquit | iam tribus e dominis*, 9.264-6). Elsewhere in Book 9, Cato explicitly refers to Caesar as a *hostis* (9.213), and his men adopt this view of the Caesarians during their march across the Libyan desert (9.879). Although the extant narrative does not allow us to see how Cato would have acted when joining battle with the Caesar's army, Roller's model and Cato's own framing of the conflict suggest that he would have waged a brutal, no-holds-barred campaign to stop the *hostis* Caesar from doing harm to the Roman state. This, of course, cannot be proved, but Roller's theory nevertheless lends credence to the idea that Lucan portrays Cato's actions and attitudes as analogous to those of Caesar.

Further consideration of Cato's speeches reveals another way in which he seems to lead his men as a *dominus*, rather than a *dux*. Just as Cato was shown to be extremely self-centered in his exchange with Brutus in Book 2, soo too do his orations in Book 9 turn invariably from their nominal topic to Cato's own person and reputation. This would seem to suggest that Cato is far more concerned with managing how others perceive him than he is with achieving a meaningful victory in the fight against Caesar. Indeed, this apparent selfishness is an important aspect of how Lucan chooses to characterize him,[66] as the contradiction between it and the narrator's positive evaluation of Cato puts a strain on the reader's attempts to make sense of Lucan's protagonist—attempts which are further complicated by the strong similarities between Cato and Caesar.

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[66] Thus Shoaf (1978) 149-50; Hershkowitz (1998) 238-42; *contra* Schrijvers (1989) 73-5; Rudich (1997).

At the end of Cato's eulogy for Pompey, he professes his own willingness to face defeat, provided his enemies kill him before he is delivered to his conqueror:

> *et mihi, si fatis aliena in iura venimus,*
> *fac talem, Fortuna, Iubam; non deprecor hosti*
> *servari, dum me servet cervice recisa* (9.212-4).
>
> And make Juba such a man for me, Fortune, if by the fates we come into another's power; I do not seek to avoid being preserved for the enemy, provided that he preserves me with my neck cut back.

Through these words, what was supposed to be a valediction for Pompey delivered in the presence of his family and army becomes a testament to Cato's own willingness to die for his beliefs. Although the narrator quickly invites a positive response to this assertion by insisting that Cato's speech brought more honor to Pompey than praise in the Roman Forum ever had (9.215-7), the reader attentive to the contents of Cato's speech must admit that his tack is unorthodox, as Cato undertakes his "praise" in a way that effectively robs Pompey of any glory for the unique sacrifice he had made on the shores of Egypt.[67] To this end, we find that the death Cato claims for himself is specifically the one that had just been inflicted upon Pompey: decapitation. By declaring his own willingness to suffer this fate, Cato tries to accrue all the respect that one might receive for making such a sacrifice without actually making it. Indeed, the cheapness of this rhetorical ploy does not seem to be lost on Cato's internal audience: their immediate reaction to the eulogy is to abandon the war effort (9.217-93).

Cato's self-promotion can also be seen at the end of his speech in response to the mutiny, where he tells his troops that the only base crime is desertion, and if they have really decided to give up the fight, they should kill him themselves and seek the reward

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[67] Consider also his enumeration of Pompey's virtues in a way that undercut their absolute value (9.190-203), and see pp. 228-9.

for his head (9.279-83). This is a strange assertion to make, for the nameless *miles* who had explained the army's decision to leave had not made any threat against Cato; on the contrary, he declared that Pompey's troops were eager to prevent further bloodshed now that their general had perished (*nam quis erit finis si nec Pharsalia pugnae | nec Pompeius erit*, 9.232-3). Cato's melodramatic assertion seems to emerge from nowhere, and there is no obvious structural or logical basis for its inclusion in the present context.[68] It is nevertheless possible to understand this rhetorical reflex by acknowledging that it is part of a larger pattern of self-promotion. Beyond the examples already cited, one may also recall that Cato had vigorously insisted that he was one of the central figures of the civil war during his interaction with Brutus in Book 2.[69] Here again we find him emphasizing his own importance in the conflict, this time through the assumption that the Pompeian soldiers would wish to kill him as a peace offering for Caesar.

As Cato's position as leader of a new faction becomes more entrenched, his focus on himself becomes more pronounced. When urging his troops to undertake a march across the Libyan desert, he declares, "Let those men be my comrades, whom the dangers themselves lead, who think it beautiful and Roman to suffer even what is most dreadful **while I am bearing witness**" (*hi mihi sint comites, quos ipsa pericula ducent, | qui* ***me teste*** *pati vel quae tristissima pulchrum | Romanumque putant*, 9.390-2). Cato here

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[68] He ends this speech, as he did his speech to Brutus in Book 2, with the particle *quin*: "Whoever will bear my head, too, to the hated tyrant will hand it over for no small price: let that youth know by the reward for my head that it has done well to follow my standards. **Why not go on** and prepare your reward together with great slaughter: flight is the only base crime" (*nostra quoque inviso quisquis feret ora tyranno | non parva mercede dabit: sciat ista iuventus | cervicis pretio bene se mea signa secutam. |* ***quin agite*** *et magna meritum cum caede parate: | ignavum scelus est tantum fuga*, 9.279-93). See also pp. 205-6 with p. 206 n. 84.
[69] See pp. 222-4.

imagines himself as a spectator of the contests his men are about undertake, indeed as the best possible spectator, whose observation of toil is deemed a *desideratum*, and whose evaluative judgments—implicit in the act of viewing—allow these sufferings to be both beautiful and Roman (*pulchrum* | *Romanumque*, 9.291-2).[70] The direction of Cato's gaze is important, for although we are told that he participates equally in the toil of his men, his ability to look upon it and to judge it from a state of tranquility suggests that he is actually unaffected by it. He observes, in other words, from outside the fray while his troops struggle to demonstrate the peculiar type of *virtus* that Cato has endorsed.[71] Yet the adoption of this position relative to his men casts Cato in a problematic light. Matthew Leigh has argued persuasively that *Bellum Civile* 9 is full of references to gladiatorial combat that invite us to equate the march across the desert sand (*harena*) with the blood sport waged on the sand-covered floor of the arena.[72] Cato's belief that he is the primary witness to this combat places him in the emperor's box, as it were, and again invites us to see him as another iteration of his rival. Just like Caesar, Cato lays claim to the ultimate power of judgment and defines as Roman the act of suffering and dying in the manner he deems best. Indeed, the reader may well conclude that the universe as seen through Cato's eyes is one in which his own judgments are final, his own person is central.

The adoption of this position can help to explain some of Cato's more radical actions later in the poem. When a soldier offers him a helmet full of water during the

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[70] Even granting that it was normal for soldiers to strive to perform great deeds in the sight of their general, Cato harps on this theme to an unusual degree; on spectatorship and the gaze in Lucan, see esp. Bartsch (1997); Leigh (1997).
[71] On this, see pp. 275-87.
[72] Leigh (1997) 234-91, esp. 273-82.

march across the desert, Cato interprets the act as an insult to his *virtus*.[73] He promptly criticizes the man, then pours out the water in sight of the entire army. The narrator then reports that the wasted water sufficed for all (9.498-510). This episode is not reported in other sources for Cato's march, and it seems probable that Lucan has included it in order to characterize Cato in a way that would have been impossible using the *materia* of history alone. The story is not unparalleled, however, as numerous variants of it are reported in the histories of Alexander the Great.[74] Plutarch and Quintus Curtius Rufus, for example, tell how some soldiers offered Alexander a drink of water they had fetched for their sons when they saw him struggling in the midday heat. Realizing that it might look bad to drink while others went thirsty, however, Alexander returned the water and sent them on their way.[75] Even more striking is an account in Arrian's *Anabasis* that is nearly identical to what we find in Lucan. Here a soldier scavenges for water in a time of scarcity and gives his find to Alexander. The general thanks the man for his thoughtfulness, then pours out the water in a display meant to show solidarity with the troops. Arrian says the effect of this action on the army was the same as if all had drunk what Alexander refused (Arr. *An.* 6.26.1-3).

The story in Arrian is so similar to Lucan's in its structure and language that both authors have probably drawn from a single source, whether directly or indirectly.[76]

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[73] Sklenář (2003) 89-90 interprets this as a manifestation of Cato's (negative) *duritia*.
[74] On Lucan's manipulation of Alexander history, see esp. Rutz (1970b); Cavajoni (1999); Maes (2009).
[75] Plut. *Alex*. 42.3-6; Curt. 7.5.9-12.
[76] Rutz (1970b) argues that this material derived from catalogues of *exempla*. Fantham (1985), who is followed by Maes (2009), emphasizes the importance of rhetorical exercises. Arrian states explicitly at the beginning of his *Anabasis* that he used the histories of Ptolemy I and Aristobulus as his primary sources (1.Pr.); it nevertheless seems certain that he relied on other authors.

Although we cannot expect a Roman poet and a Greek historian to construct their stories identically, it is nevertheless useful to place these episodes side-by-side, for by doing so we can judge the relative tone of Lucan's account with a greater degree of objectivity than we might achieve by treating it in isolation.[77] Indeed, the places where the two accounts differ are all the more illustrative because of the remarkable similarities that they otherwise share (note: in the passages quoted below, similarities between the texts have been underlined, differences bolded):[78]

> *utque calor solvit quem torserat aëra ventus,*
> *incensusque dies, manant sudoribus artus,*
> *arent ora siti. conspecta est parva maligna* 500
> *unda* ***procul*** *vena, quam* ***uix e pulvere*** *miles*
> ***corripiens*** *patulum galeae confudit in orbem*
> *porrexitque duci. squalebant pulvere fauces*
> *cunctorum, minimumque tenens dux ipse liquoris*
> *invidiosus erat. 'mene,' inquit, '****degener****, unum,* 505
> ***miles****, in hac turba vacuum virtute putasti?*
> *usque adeo mollis primisque caloribus inpar*
> *sum visus? quanto poena tu dignior ista es,*
> *qui populo sitiente bibas!'* ***sic concitus ira***
> *excussit galeam, suffecitque omnibus unda* (9.498-510).

> And when the heat had loosed the air that the wind had churned up, and the day was ablaze, their limbs drip with sweat, their mouths are parched with thirst. A little water was espied **far off** in a foul stream, which a soldier **snatched from the dust with difficulty**, poured into the hollow basin of his helmet, and offered to his leader. Everyone's throats were chapped with dust, and the leader, when he took the droplet of water, was irate. "Have you," he said, "**base soldier**, supposed that I alone in this crowd am bereft of prowess? Have I seemed soft this whole time and no match for the first blasts of heat? How much worthier *you* are of that

[77] Maes (2009) 661 is overly hasty in claiming, "The most remarkable difference is that the stoic general reacts with anger without first thanking his soldier for his friendly offer."

[78] Since Arrian wrote in the 2nd c. AD, it is also possible that his depiction of Alexander was influenced by Lucan's depiction of Cato. This scenario is nevertheless unlikely, and the commentaries on Arrian do not even address it as a possibility. Moreover, any argument that Lucan was one of Arrian's sources is necessarily circular: since Aristotle and Ptolemy are no longer extant, one must reconstruct them from Arrian.

punishment, who would drink while the many are thirsty!" **Thus moved by anger** he overturned the helmet, and the water sufficed for all.

ἰέναι μὲν τὴν στρατιὰν διὰ ψάμμου τε καὶ τοῦ καύματος ἤδη ἐπιφλέγοντος, ὅτι πρὸς ὕδωρ ἐχρῆν ἐξανύσαι· τὸ δὲ ἦν πρόσθεν τῆς ὁδοῦ· καὶ αὐτόν τε Ἀλέξανδρον δίψει κατεχόμενον μόλις μὲν καὶ χαλεπῶς, πεζὸν δὲ ὅμως ἡγεῖσθαι· ὣς δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους στρατιώτας, οἷάπερ φιλεῖ ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε, κουφοτέρως φέρειν τοὺς πόνους ἐν ἰσότητι τῆς ταλαιπωρήσεως. ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τῶν ψιλῶν τινας κατὰ ζήτησιν ὕδατος ἀποτραπέντας ἀπὸ τῆς στρατιᾶς εὑρεῖν ὕδωρ συλλελεγμένον ἔν τινι χαράδρᾳ οὐ βαθείᾳ, ὀλίγην καὶ φαύλην πίδακα· **καὶ τοῦτο οὐ χαλεπῶς συλλέξαντας σπουδῇ ἰέναι παρ' Ἀλέξανδρον, ὡς μέγα δή τι ἀγαθὸν φέροντας**· ὡς δὲ ἐπέλαζον ἤδη, ἐμβαλόντας ἐς κράνος τὸ ὕδωρ προσενεγκεῖν τῷ βασιλεῖ. τὸν δὲ λαβεῖν μὲν καὶ **ἐπαινέσαι τοὺς κομίσαντας**, λαβόντα δὲ ἐν ὄψει πάντων ἐκχέαι· καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε τῷ ἔργῳ ἐς τοσόνδε ἐπιρρωσθῆναι τὴν στρατιὰν ξύμπασαν ὥστε εἰκάσαι ἄν τινα πότον γενέσθαι πᾶσιν ἐκεῖνο τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ πρὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐκχυθέν. **τοῦτο ἐγώ, εἴπερ τι ἄλλο, τὸ ἔργον εἰς καρτερίαν τε καὶ ἅμα στρατηγίαν ἐπαινῶ Ἀλεξάνδρου** (Arr. *An.* 6.26.1-3).

The army was marching through sand and the already scorching heat, since they were obliged to get to water at the end of the march, and this was some distance ahead. Alexander himself was in the grip of thirst, and it was with much difficulty that he persisted in leading the way on foot, so that the rest of the troops should (as usually happens in such a case) bear their sufferings more easily, with all sharing the distress equally. At this moment some light-armed troops left the army to look for water, and found some, collected in a shallow torrent-bed, a poor and wretched water-hole; **they easily collected it and hurried to Alexander, feeling that they were bringing something of great value**, and, when they came near, poured the water into a helmet and offered it to the king. He took it and **commended those who brought it**, but then poured it out in sight of everyone; and at this action the entire army was so much heartened that you would have supposed that the water poured out by Alexander was a drink for everyone. **This deed of Alexander's I especially commend as proof of his endurance and also of his generalship.** (tr. adapted from Brunt).

When comparing these two scenes, we might expect to find that Lucan treats Cato more favorably than Arrian treats Alexander. After all, Lucan's narrator criticizes Alexander (e.g. 10.14-52), and his adoption of an episode from Alexander-history might logically

have been undertaken at the Macedonian's expense.[79] Careful reading, however, reveals quite the opposite effect. In numerous ways, Lucan's narrative invites sympathy with the nameless soldier while highlighting the rashness and aggression of Cato. Whereas Arrian insists that gathering water was no hard task (οὐ χαλεπῶς, 6.26.2), for instance, Lucan draws special attention to the difficulty that Cato's soldier had in performing the same act: the detail of water being far off, *procul* (9.501), is moved from the introductory material to the description of the soldier gathering it; the adverb "scarcely" (*vix*, 9.501) is coupled with the frantic action of the participle *corripiens* (9.502); and Lucan heightens the pathos by claiming that the soldier struggled to gather this liquid as it seeped into the surrounding dust (*e pulvere*, 9.501). After a soldier demonstrates such concern in trying to lighten his general's suffering, we might expect the sort of reaction that we find in Arrian: thanks for the man's gesture and a symbolic refusal that demonstrates a desire to endure the same sufferings as one's troops. Arrian, who was himself a successful general under Hadrian, recognizes the impact of this action and praises it accordingly. Lucan's Cato, on the other hand, responds to the situation with indignation. He interprets the gift as a challenge to his *virtus* and returns the perceived slight by calling the soldier who offered it "base" (*degener*, 9.505). The narrator then characterizes this response as one motivated by anger (*ira*, 9.509).[80] Compared to Alexander, then, we may conclude that

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[79] Ahl (1976) 270-4 improbably argues that allusions to Alexander in *Bellum Civile* 9 are intended to evoke the conqueror's nobler qualities without recalling his more bestial attributes.

[80] See Maes (2009) n. 11 for a summary of the scholarly controversy surrounding this word. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 133-4 unconvincingly argues that Cato's anger is meant to cast him as an imitable *exemplum*, rather than an "impassive Stoic sage;" for a similar line of reasoning, see also Brouwers (1989); Cavajoni (1999). The explanation of Stoic emotions in Graver (2007) 96-9 makes it clear that Cato is suffering from a true emotion. The attribution of *ira* to Cato is not unique to this episode; he also praises

Cato is inept at negotiating the situation.[81] He neither shows sympathy for the plight of his men nor encourages them to endure the scarcity of water with fortitude; rather, he uses the gift of water as an opportunity to shift the focus away from them and onto himself. Indeed, his primary concern in the exchange is how the incident might tarnish his own reputation (***me**ne*… ***unum***… *in hac turba* ***vacuum virtute*** *putasti*, 9.505-6).

Cato acts similarly in the episode that follows. When the army stumbles upon the Siwa Oasis, Cato's deputy Labienus urges him to consult the oracle of Jupiter Hammon: this would be an opportunity to learn the dangers of the path ahead, the outcome of the civil war, and even how the gods define *virtus* (9.550-63). Cato's response is again marked by indignation and the conviction that his perception of the world is infallible.[82] He opens with a sarcastic list of questions that he might ask the god (9.566-71), insists that he already knows anything the oracle might be able to tell him (9.572), and gives a brief summary of his fundamental philosophical views interspersed with mocking criticism of Jupiter Hammon's oracle (9.573-82). He then ends with the conviction that death is life's only guarantee (*pavido fortique cadendum est*, 9.583) and the enigmatic insistence, "This is enough for Jupiter to have spoken" (*hoc satis est dixisse Iovem* (9.584).

Gnaeus Pompey's anger at 9.166. Sklenář (2003) 90 rightly calls *concitus* "the literal antonym of *ataraxia*" in using this scene to impugn Cato's supposed Stoic virtue.

[81] *Contra* Ahl (1976) 273, "Alexander rejects the water so that his men will become devoted minions."

[82] Saylor (2002) connects this rejection of the oracle to Cato's unhealthy attitude towards death. In particular, he sees a contrast between the life-giving water that Jupiter Hammon provides in the Siwa Oasis and the dangerous water infested by snakes that Cato later encounters (9.607-17). On Cato's actions at the font, see also Malamud (2003) and my discussion on pp. 294-5.

This lofty-sounding passage has been praised as the highpoint of Book 9, and even as Lucan's strongest statement of Cato's Stoic deification.[83] There are very good reasons to take this position. Although the narrator praises Cato throughout Book 9, this episode in particular is followed by a lengthy passage—the so-called *laudes Catonis*—that glorify Cato's desert march in terms evocative of a full military triumph. Moreover, the invitation to consult a foreign oracle is a perfect opportunity for Lucan to have Cato declare his own worldview in no uncertain terms: here the sage can reject superstitious religion in favor of the philosophical ideas that underlie his commitment to *virtus* and the Republic. Taken together, these things invite us to view Cato with a reverence that might normally be reserved for a divinity: through his rejection of the oracle, he challenges the gods themselves and shows himself to be their equal.[84]

If we consider this in light of Cato's other speeches, however, it becomes clear that his present proclamation fits into a different pattern. Once again, Cato uses some external event to demonstrate his superiority to others and his own centrality to the civil war, this time using philosophical convictions to trump the knowledge offered by Jupiter Hammon. Although it is tempting to be won over by the powerful rhetoric he displays, it is perhaps more profitable and interesting to ask whether his reaction to the oracle is

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[83] Unsurprisingly, judgment of the scene largely determines—or is determined by—a reader's evaluation of Cato. The positions are summarized by Wick (2004) at 9.544-586 §1 ("Der Stoiker und das Orakel"). Sklenář (2003) 91-5 outlines the optimistic reading, only to posit that this view must strike the reader as foolish because it goes against everything that we know about the "nihilistic cosmology" of Lucan's poetic world. Narducci (1999) fairly criticizes the pessimistic scholars who rhetorically cast their own interpretations as intelligent or learned in order to imply that those of the optimists are naïve or simplistic.

[84] Cf. 1.128, *victrix causa deis placuit sed victa Catoni*, and see my discussion on pp. 178-84.

intelligible in Stoic terms.[85] Indeed, since the central thrust of his argument is that his Stoic worldview is superior to implied alternatives, Cato may be thought to raise this question himself.

It may come as a surprise to find that Cato's complete rejection of oracles does not fit neatly with what we know of Stoic views from other sources.[86] As Claudia Wick notes, various leaders of Stoic thought do endorse the consultation of oracles provided that the person seeking the gods' advice does so with the proper disposition.[87] It would be wrong, for example, to ask a seer whether one was fated to die while supporting a friend if one intended to abandon that friend should the response prophesy disaster. This would be preferring worldly security to the security of one's *virtus*, and thus be an improper use of divination. On the other hand, it was deemed wholly acceptable to learn the outcome of some major event in order to determine how best to conform one's actions to what was fated to occur (Epict. *Ench.* 32.3). For a man in Cato's position, then, the issue is not whether he should consult the oracle, but what sorts of questions he can legitimately bring before the god.

If we look at the inquiries that Labienus recommends to Cato, we find that they are mixed in terms of their Stoic appropriateness. Epictetus explicitly criticizes questions like "what is virtue" that seek a simple statement of philosophical truth; for this sort of

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[85] Feeney (1991) 291 finds the certainty of Cato's pronouncement unlikely, given the criticism of other supposedly certain authorities elsewhere in the poem, but feels that reluctant assent to Cato's words may seem justified to the cautious reader.

[86] On the issue of prophecy in the *Bellum Civile*, see Schrempp (1964); Dick (1963) and (1965); Morford (1967a), esp. 59-74.

[87] Wick (2004) at 9.544-586 §1 ("Der Stoiker und das Orakel"), citing Cic. *Div*. 1.82-4, 2.20-5, 105; *Nat. Deor*. 3.14; Sen. *Tranq*. 11.12, Epict. *Dial*. 2.7; *Ench*. 32. Her argument that the complexities arising from oracular consultation forbid the practice altogether are unconvincing in light of the *testimonia* that she cites. Cicero's criticism, however compelling in an absolute sense, has little bearing on the debate.

knowledge, the wise man ought to rely on his innate reason.[88] Questions about the outcome of a war, on the other hand, are fully acceptable: in these situations, one is essentially trying to learn how best to follow the fates in order to prevent oneself from having to be dragged along by them (Epict. *Ench*. 32.3).[89] One may thus conclude that Cato's unwillingness to consult Jupiter Hammon about the inevitability of Caesar's success is somewhat odd when considered from the vantage of normal Stoic thought.

Barring such an external explanation for Cato's rejection of the oracle, we may turn to a closer analysis of the text itself. Cato's overt criticism throughout the speech suggests that he trusts his own knowledge far more than the god's. He sarcastically denounces the Siwa Oasis as an unlikely site for divine revelation (9.576-7) and in like manner denies the need for oracles at all (9.579). According to Cato, there is only one thing that he knows and apparently needs to know: that death is certain (*me non oracula certum* | *sed* ***mors certa*** *facit*, 9.582-3).[90] This type of conviction—virtually total self-reliance—is one of the distinguishing marks of Cato's character, and it is decidedly the attribute that most shapes his actions throughout Book 9. Indeed, Cato consistently flaunts this aspect of his personality, apparently determined to ensure that all who view him—his men, his Stoic god, and the readers of Lucan's poem—are equally aware that he stands apart and alone.

Before leaving the Siwa Oasis behind, it may be helpful to ask one further question in order to understand Cato's radical self-reliance more fully: is he justified in

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[88] Epict. *Disc*. 2.7.3: οὐκ ἔχω τὸν μάντιν ἔσω τὸν εἰρηκότα μοι τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ, τὸν ἐξηγημένον τὰ σημεῖα ἀμφοτέρων; cf. Cato's words at Luc. 9.574-6: *nec vocibus ullis* | *numen eget, dixitque semel nascentibus auctor* | *quidquid scire licet*.

[89] On this issue in Cato's decision to enter the war, see pp. 197-9.

[90] For a succinct discussion of this passage, see Sklenář (1999), esp. 290-4.

rejecting the oracle? This inquiry cuts to the core of Cato's efficacy as a leader and speaks to whether his rejection of the oracle is aimed at benefiting his men or bolstering his own position. We may first test this by considering other forms of divination in the *Bellum Civile*. Although Lucan's narrator routinely criticizes all such practices,[91] attempts to ask the gods for information about the future are normally successful within the poem. Indeed, the gods' responses regularly conform to what the reader knows is happening or will happen, even if they do not always deliver all the information that the inquirer had sought.[92] Thus at the end of Book 1, the Etruscan Arruns (1.584-638), the astronomer Figulus (1.639-72), and an inspired (drunken?) Roman matron (1.673-95) all foretell the cataclysmic destruction that the civil war is about to bring. Similarly, when Appius consults the Pythia (5.71-236), he is told that he will escape the threats of war and enjoy peace in Euboea (5.194-6). We need not be overly concerned that this alludes to the Roman's death, rather than a real escape from dangers: the Delphic oracle was famous for its ambiguous responses, and Appius simply hears the message that he wants to hear in spite of Apollo's warning.[93] What is important is that Appius' death is

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[91] E.g. 5.104-6: "In that place [Delphi] men take up no evil prayers with a silent whisper, for singing things that are fixed and able to be changed by none [the power] forbids mortals to hope" (*haud illic tacito mala vota susurro* | *concipiunt, nam fixa canens mutandaque nulli* | *mortales optare vetat*).

[92] Thus Tommasi Moreschini (2005) 136-41, esp. 138 "But his narrative… demonstrates that portents do, indeed, portend disasters." For my own discussion of oracles and omens in the *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 130-2.

[93] This is a fact of which Lucan's narrator reminds the reader: "Do not let the nearness of death frighten you, Appius, deceived though you are by the ambiguous lots" (*nec te vicinia leti* | *territat ambiguis frustratum sortibus, Appi*, 5.224-5). Feeney (1991) 289 declares the oracle a failure, yet this is to mistake the ignorance of the inquirer for the inefficacy of the oracle. O'Higgins (1988) 211-7 considers the problems of vatic speech in a poem where the narrator identifies himself clearly as a *vates*.

accurately foretold.[94] The same may be said for Sextus Pompey, who enlists the Thessalian witch Erictho to raise a corpse in order to reveal the future (6.614-830). From this he learns that the underworld is in disarray—the prisoners of Tartarus have broken out and routed the other souls in hell (6.777-802)—but that a quiet place yet remains for Pompey the Great and his descendants (6.803-5). Whether this vision was true or false cannot, of course, be determined, but we may infer from these comments that the death of Sextus' father is soon at hand (6.805-11, 814-20) and that Sextus himself will survive at least until such a time as he reaches Sicily: "Do not ask about your fate: the Parcae will allow you to know, even though I am silent; a more certain prophet, your father Pompey, will himself sing everything to you on the fields of Sicily" (*tu fatum ne quaere tuum: cognoscere Parcae | me reticente dabunt; tibi certior omnia vates | ipse canet Siculis genitor Pompeius in arvis*, 6.811-3). All of this information is historically accurate, as Lucan's readers would have known, and suggests that oracles are not inherently unreliable even in the chaotic world of the *Bellum Civile*.[95]

The efficacy of Jupiter Hammon's oracle is further bolstered by the description that Lucan uses to introduce it. After some brief ethnographical details, we find the following:

> *non illic Libycae posuerunt ditia gentes* 515
> *templa, nec Eois splendent donaria gemmis:*
> *quamvis Aethiopum populis Arabumque beatis*
> *gentibus atque Indis unus sit Iuppiter Hammon,*

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[94] And this despite repeated insistence that the oracle is no longer efficacious (5.120-1, 5.131-2; and see n. 95, below).

[95] Ahl (1976) 262-8 argues that the oracle of Jupiter Hammon is the *only* efficacious oracle in the poem, and that Lucan makes it so in order to magnify the apparent force of Cato's "oracular" proclamation at the end of the episode. O'Higgins (1988) 219 rightly comments that Erictho's "prophecy… is far-reaching and informative." See also pp. 130-2, 149-50.

> *pauper adhuc deus est, nullis violata per aevum*
> *divitiis delubra tenens, morumque priorum* 520
> *numen Romano templum defendit ab auro* (9.515-21).
>
> The Libyan races have built no lavish temples there, nor do offertories glimmer with eastern gems: although Hammon is the only Jupiter that the peoples of Ethiopia, the blessed races of Arabs, and the Indians have, he is still a poor god, clinging to temples undefiled by riches throughout the age, and the godhead of a pristine character protects the temple from Roman gold.

Until the final line, this entire passage fits well with standard Roman moral discourse. Romans were by nature a conservative people, and they always endorsed rustic poverty over "eastern" elegance, even after the city was flooded with unprecedented wealth during the reign of Augustus. The emphasis on the god's destitution should thus be interpreted as a positive sign of its traditional character.[96] Such an evaluation is encouraged by the insistence that wealth had not defiled (*violata*, 9.519) the oracle despite its long and famous existence. The connotations of the verb *violo* are universally negative (*OLD violo*), and so we are invited to see the oracle's long defense against wealth (*divitiis*, 9.520) as a positive attribute. Indeed, Lucan's focus on the intactness of the oracle at Siwa is particularly interesting when we recall that he had described the Pythian oracle at Delphi as a large, presumably lavish site (*antri… capacis*, 5.153; *per inania templi*, 5.171) that had long been defunct (*tempore longo | immotos tripodas*, 5.120-1; *muto Parnasos hiatu | conticuit pressitque deum* [Pythia speaking], 5.131-2).[97] There are no indications that the oracle of Jupiter Hammon likewise fell into disuse, and Lucan's silence on this matter may give us reason to imagine that it was continually

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[96] Wick (2004) at 9.519: cites Tib. 1.10.19-20; Prop. 4.1.21, 4.2.60. To these may be addded Sal. *Cat*. 1.2.4; Liv. 3.57.7.

[97] In typical fashion, multiple explanations are given for the oracle's decline (*seu… seu… seu… seu*, 5.132-40). Lucan seems to be the only evidence that the Pythia was inactive in the late 1st c. BC, so this detail may be a poetic invention.

active. Moreover, special attention is given to the site's "pristine character" (*morum priorum*). Romans' deep-seated social deference and a common (poetical) acceptance of the "decline of ages" meant that they were predisposed to favor "old" things over "new" ones, particularly in the realms of government and morality. Indeed, Lucan's words may be intended to evoke the *mos maiorum* that was praised so often by Roman writers and that encapsulated conservative Roman commitment to their forefathers' (supposed) ideals.[98] Viewed in these terms, the oracle of Jupiter Hammon ought to be a respectable and praiseworthy site to those, such as Cato, of a conservative persuasion.[99]

One objection to this line of reasoning is that Jupiter Hammon is a foreign god and therefore deserves little respect from a good Roman.[100] This possibility, however, is undercut by the final line of the passage just quoted, where the foreign god is said to have remained safe from *Roman* gold. This turn is unexpected. Moralizers usually fretted that Roman society was being threatened by *eastern* wealth; here, however, Lucan suggests that the traditional bastion of virtue is already long corrupt. Cast in these terms, the Siwa Oasis appears to be one of the last places on earth that retains its traditional rusticity, a

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[98] It matters little that this idealized past probably never existed; Roman obsession with the "good old days" led to great distrust of anything that seemed to break from traditional norms. This is seen most clearly in the phrase *res novae* meaning "revolution." Romans would presumably have adopted some other term if they were inclined to judge "new things" favorably.

[99] Thus Feeney (1991) 290; Raschle (2007) 66-7; Maes (2009) 667; see also Sklenář (1999).

[100] Another problem with the oracle, of course, is that it was where Alexander was allegedly told that he was the son of Zeus, an event that helped to justify his posthumous deification (Arr. 3.3.1-2, Plut. *Alex*. 27.3-5, Curt. 4.7.25-8). On this, see esp. Maes (2009), whose argument is to my mind most convincing. Other studies of this issue include Zwierlein (1986); Rossi (2001); Schrijvers (2002); Wick (2004) at 9.533-86 §2 ("Probleme der Astronomie (531-543)"); Tesoriero (2005).

haven for those committed to piety rather than temporal extravagance.[101] Indeed, earlier in the *Bellum Civile* the Libyan people were described as delightfully ignorant of luxury goods and their corrupting influence: they smelt no bronze or gold (9.424-5), leaving the earth free from the "charge" of mining (*nullo glaebarum* ***crimine*** *pura* | *et penitus terra est*, 9.425-6), and they think that citron trees are good only for the shade that they provide, and not as a source of aromatic wood for furniture (9.426-8). Once again, this is a place that ought strongly to appeal to Cato.[102]

Given that there are no philosophical reasons for Cato to reject the consultation of oracles, that divination elsewhere in Lucan tends to be efficacious, and that the Siwa Oasis—perhaps uniquely in the *Bellum Civile*—is described in positive terms that ought to appeal to the frugal general, we must conclude Cato's decision to depart without consulting Jupiter Hammon is deeply problematic. Indeed, it would seem that in doing so he gives up a prime opportunity to make his own actions accord with what is fated to occur and to seek practical advice for the journey that he intends to make across the waterless expanses of the Libyan desert.[103] In light of the many troubling aspects of Cato's character that have been surveyed in this section, it would be a grave error to dismiss his rejection of the oracle merely as Lucan's attempt to avoid an "artistically unsatisfactory situation."[104] Indeed, for this to be the case, Lucan would need to have included this scene out of a dedication to historical fact. The visit to the oracle, however,

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[101] Shackleton Bailey (app. crit. ad 9.521) attempts to bypass this difficulty by glossing *Romano* as "*ad Romanum Iovem pertinente*." This is also the interpretation of Ehlers (1973), who is followed by Wick (2004).
[102] Cf. 2.238: [*Brutus*] ***atra*** *cognati pulsat* ***non ampla*** *Catonis*, and see Fantham (1992a) ad loc.
[103] Thus Ahl (1976) 263.
[104] Thus Wick (2004) at 9.544-586 §1 ("Der Stoiker und das Orakel"). For another defense of the episodes oddities, see Ahl (1976) 262-8, esp. 263.

like the episode with the helmet of water that preceded it, finds no parallel in other sources for the march; rather, it is adapted from the life of Alexander the Great and attributed unhistorically to Lucan's protagonist.[105] From this it seems clear that the poet has chosen to include this episode for poetic reasons, and perhaps does so to suggest that there is something not only of Caesar, but even of Alexander—the deified king *par excellence*—lurking within his Cato.[106] This impression, of course, is only given indirectly, and individual readers must make of it what they will. Nevertheless, by raising this possibility, Lucan invites us to consider other aspects of Cato's character in order to determine whether his *dominus*-like behavior is undertaken out of a rabid—albeit genuine—commitment to Republican ideals, or rather is the result of cold, calculating self-aggrandizement.

***Partes libertatis* or *Causa pericli*?**

Asking what drives Cato is a useful way to begin our inquiry into what sort of a leader Lucan makes him out to be. We have already had occasion to discuss the conflict inherent in the narrator's portrayal of Cato as both a Pompeian and as the leader of a "faction of Freedom" (*partes libertatis,* 9.29-30), but it will now be helpful to return to the former assertion as a basis for our consideration of Cato's ultimate aims. The narrator's praise of Cato at the start of the book prepares us to identify Cato as a champion of Freedom, someone who attempts to restore Rome's Republican government,

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[105] On the similarities between Cato and Alexander, see p. 262 n. 74. Earlier critics also faulted the episode on geographical grounds: after winning over Pompey's troops during the mutiny scene, Cato was trying to march west, towards Leptis; the trip to Siwa, however, has taken him far to the east, an unlikely detour that Lucan does not bother to explain. For a treatment of this (supposed) issue, see Aumont (1968).
[106] Thus Maes (2009).

rather than elevate himself to the position of king. When Cato first tries to take control of Pompey's faction, the narrative seems to confirm this suggestion. In speaking to Pompey's troops and criticizing their decision to abandon the conflict, Cato exclaims, "Do you now refuse to offer your throats and swords to your fatherland, when freedom is close at hand? Fortune has left but one of the three masters!" (*nunc patriae iugulos ensesque negatis, | cum prope libertas? unum fortuna reliquit | iam tribus e dominis*, 9.264-6). By casting the triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus as an act of domination and contrasting their rule with *Libertas,* Cato frames the issue of the civil war in binary terms: men can either support the old, republican government (*Libertas*) or cede power to those who would take it by force. It is clear that Cato makes the former choice: he implies that the triumvirs treat those below them as slaves and equates the fatherland (*patria*) with freedom and the rule of law.[107] As he sees the conflict, Caesar and Rome are mutually exclusive; indeed, the one must be destroyed for the other to remain.[108]

Although such strong statements in Cato's own voice prepare the reader to view the restoration of the Republic as one of Cato's primary objectives, this goal fades from view as the narrative progresses. During the speech just mentioned, Cato describes the men he aims to lead as a faction of danger, a political party that all real men ought to join (*nunc* ***causa pericli*** | *digna viris*, 9.262-3). The exact meaning of *causa pericli* is not made explicit, but the strangeness of this declaration is somewhat smoothed over by its initial pairing with the expected, Republican objective of eradicating the last of the

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[107] Thus he chastises Pompey's troops by sarcastically suggesting that Ptolemy and the Parthians have contributed more to Roman laws than they: *plus regia Nili* | *contulit in leges et Parthi militis arcus* (9.267-8), with Wick (2004) ad loc.
[108] In this he tries to reframe the soldier's argument that Pompey was a *dux*, whereas Caesar will be a *dominus*; for a discussion of this passage, see pp. 231-40.

triumvirs (i.e. in the lines discussed above). This invites us to interpret the “dangers” that Cato plans to undertake as part of his larger goal of preserving the Republic. Such an interpretation, at any rate, allows the words to accord with the narrator’s characterization of Cato as the leader of the *partes libertatis* at the beginning of the book and with Cato’s own words elsewhere in his speech to the troops. Throughout the rest of Cato’s adventures in *Bellum Civile* 9, however, the pursuit of *pericula* for their own sake comes to stand alone, replacing the political and military objectives on which his command was predicated.[109]

Cato’s interest in feats of daring can first be seen when he attempts a sea voyage along the northern coast of Africa. Before describing these events in detail, the narrator characterizes the expedition as a contest between nature and Cato’s *virtus*: “But nature was forbidding the route through the middle of the Syrtes: his daring prowess hoped it would yield to him” (*sed iter mediis natura vetabat | Syrtibus: hanc audax sperat sibi cedere virtus*, 9.301-2). Now the tactical reason for Cato’s move westward was to join with the senatorial general Metellus Scipio so they could set up a shared winter camp and regroup after the Republican loss at Pharsalus. Editorial comments both immediately preceding the above notice and at the end of the Cato material in *Bellum Civile* 9 reveal that Lucan was aware of this fact, but the detail is given scant attention during the narrative proper.[110] Instead, the poet casts the expedition as a conflict between Cato’s

[109] Sklenář (2003) 82-4 notes that Cato’s belief that *libertas* is dead (e.g. 9.204-5) undermines the narrator’s assertion that he fights for Freedom, and likewise reveals that his initial justification for taking command was disingenuous.

[110] “From there it pleased him to seek Libyan Juba’s kingdom, neighboring the Moors” (*inde peti placuit Libyci contermina Mauris | regna Iubae*, 9.300-1); “Leptis was very close, in whose peaceful harbor they spent a winter without rain or heat” (*proxima Leptis erat, cuius statione quieta | exegere hiemem nimbis flammisque carentem,* 9.948-9).

"bold virtue" (*audax virtus*, 9.302) and nature itself (*natura vetabat*, 9.301). This juxtaposition creates a neat rhetorical effect, but it also serves to obfuscate the military objectives that motivated the historical Cato in favor of a more poetic, binary conflict between Cato's "manliness" and the abstracted forces of the world itself. Lucan's development of this theme will be treated shortly, but it will first be helpful to explain how a simple voyage can justifiably be described in such grandiose terms.

The Syrtes were a set of shoals along the northern coast of Africa that were famous in antiquity for the risk they posed to ships.[111] Lucan is obsessed with this geographical feature, mentioning the Syrtes no fewer than eighteen times in the *Bellum Civile*, two of which spawn lengthy digressions. Of particular interest seems to have been the fact that the Syrtes were neither land nor sea; they thus represented a violation of, or exception to, the tripartite division of sea, earth, sky that was typical of ancient cosmologies.[112] In practical terms, of course, this also made them dangerous for ships, which could easily be wrecked or swamped if they attempted to navigate the ambiguous region. Thus we find the assertion that "nature forbade Cato's path" (9.301-2).

Despite the dangers posed by this region, Lucan's Cato hopes they will give way to his "bold prowess" (*audax virtus*, 9.302). Such emphasis on Cato's *virtus* should come as no surprise: among Republican-minded members of the elite in the early imperial period, Cato and (Stoic) *virtus* were nearly synonymous.[113] Yet the idea that *virtus* might oppose nature is something quite radical. The broadest goal of most ancient

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[111] See Wick (2004) at 9.303-347.
[112] The Syrtes are one of the only consistently unstable geographical entities in the poem. The poet's interest in them may derive from a desire to give the reader the impression that the universe is collapsing. For a discussion of this issue, see pp. 104-22.
[113] See p. 179 n. 19.

philosophies, but especially of Stoicism, was to live in accordance with nature, with *virtus* being defined as the skill of consciously striving towards such a state.[114] In the present passage, however, we are told that Cato's *virtus* hoped to make nature yield to its own desire. This act of hubris is presented as Cato's main purpose in sailing the Syrtes, and his *virtus* is consequently called "bold" (*audax*, 9.302), a term that normally has the negative connotation of "overreach" (*OLD audax* 2).[115] Cato's action is thus potentially problematic, and this fact is underscored by Lucan's tendency to associate *audacia* with the excesses of Caesar's followers elsewhere in the *Bellum Civile*.[116] Lest the reader think that Cato is actually capable of outwitting and overpowering nature, however, the foolishness of his attempt to cross the Syrtes is soon revealed: when the fleet sets out to sea, a storm arises, swamps a number of ships, and drives the remainder back to shore (9.319-47).

Even after this setback, Cato's opposition to nature remains deep set. He soon decides to march around the shoals by crossing Libya on foot:

> *at impatiens virtus haerere Catonis*
> *audet in ignotas agmen committere gentes*
> *armorum fidens et terra cingere Syrtim* (9.371-3).

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[114] Annas, "Stoicism," *OCD*[3].
[115] *Contra* Wick (2004) at 9.301. Admittedly, the term is the *vox propria* for acts of daring in relation to nature; thus Lucan calls the jetty of Alexandria's harbor *audax* at 10.487. Still, one may also be invited to think of figures like Xerxes whose violation of nature was decidedly negative.
[116] E.g. 1.269; 1.382; 1.467; 1.474; 3.586; 4.175 (of men daring to seek a truce!); 4.583; 5.259; 5.478. It describes Caesar himself at 5.497; 5.509; 7.246; 8.766 and 10.449. *Audax* and its cognates are used of the Parthians at 8.301; Ptolemy at 8.402; 8.530; 8.552; the Ptolemaic court at 9.1108; Achillas at 10.397; and the Roman *plebs* at 9.187. Opponents of Caesar are called "bold" only at 3.144 (Metellus); 3.500 (Massilians); and 10.344 (Ptolemy). We also find it describing birds acting as a bad omen at 1.560; Erictho's herbs at 6.769; and natural elements at 3.233; and 4.141. This list is only partial (the most frequent omissions are instances in which *audax* or *audeo* is negated).

> But Cato's virtue, unable to endure standing still, trusting in arms, dares to send his ranks against unknown races and to circumvent the Syrtes by land.

Although this passage reinforces the former description of Cato's *virtus* as "bold" (*audet* 9.372 ~ *audax* 9.302), it also complicates our understanding of what that descriptor entails. For one thing, we find that Cato is incapable of staying in one place (*impatiens haerere*, 9.371), that he is incapable, in other words, of withstanding an emotional impulse that is goading him to action.[117] The suggestion that Cato is no longer in control of himself is highly problematic, for it implies that he is indulging his baser instincts at the expense of pure rationality. This is surely not how a Stoic leader ought to act, and so these lines pose a direct challenge to the image of Cato as a Stoic sage.[118] At the same time, the speed with which he responds to a grave setback casts him in terms that Lucan's reader has grown accustomed to see used of Caesar, who was famous for the rapidity of his military advances and was compared to a lightning bolt earlier in the *Bellum Civile* (1.143-57).[119] Where Cato differs from his nemesis, however, is in the explicit statement that his desire to avoid delay precludes careful planning or rational strategy.[120] Indeed,

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[117] *Contra* Wick (2004) at 9.371 (cf. 9.302, 9.444*sq*.), it is irrelevant that Cato's *virtus*, rather than the man himself, is the grammatical subject of the clause. The construction may invite further comparison between Cato and Alexander the Great, whose πόθος is frequently the grammatical subject in Arrian's *Anabasis* (e.g. 1.3.5; 2.3.1; 3.1.5; 4.28.4; 5.2.5; 7.1.1; 7.2.2; 7.16.2). On this, cf. Manoloraki (2013) 80-1, esp. n. 1, discussing *cupido* as an Alexandrian trope. See also Ahl (1976) 259; Thomas (1982) 117, who implausibly suggests that *impatiens haerere* is equivalent to *patiens*; Hershkowitz (1998) 238-42; Maes (2009).

[118] Optimistic critics tend to avoid the issue of Cato's *audax virtus*; e.g. Narducci (2002) 405-6; D'Alessandro Behr (2007).

[119] Wick (2004) i 1, 29-32 summarizes earlier approaches to this problem.

[120] Thus Hershkowitz (1998) 238-42. Syndikus (1958) 99 dismisses this concern. Cf. Caesar's careful plans to cross the Rubicon: "First the cavalry is placed against the perpendicular river in order to absorb the waters; then the remaining crowd breaks the gentle waves of the already shattered flow with an easy fording" (*primus in obliquum*

the march through Libya is ordered despite Cato's ignorance of what his men will face there (*in **ignotas** agmen committere **gentes***, 9.372). Although this detail might be used to emphasize "an atmosphere of daring achievement," it is peculiar that Lucan employs it to highlight Cato's eagerness to forge onward so soon after his initial failure to navigate the Syrtes.[121] To my mind, then, the term may rather indicate that Cato now deems the confrontation of difficulties and the challenge to nature that he has undertaken more important than any conceivable risk: he does not need to know about what the path ahead might hold because he is eager to confront even the greatest threats.[122] This does not necessarily negate the bravery of these feats,[123] but it does demonstrate that any concern for the preservation of his men or the ultimate goal of destroying Caesar is now absent from Cato's thinking.

When Cato addresses his men and announces his intention to cross the desert, he makes it clear that his primary interest as a commander is leading a faction dedicated to danger itself.[124] Although the narrator cites the onset of winter as a reason to hope that the march might be less hazardous than in other seasons (9.374-7), Cato ignores these mitigating factors and instead focuses on the immensity of what the army is about to undertake. Indeed, he even glorifies these risks as their *raison d'être*. This is a surprising tack. We have just learned that the soldiers are terrified by this hazardous

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sonipes opponitur amnem | excepturus aquas; molli tum cetera rumpit | turba vado faciles iam fracti fluminis undas, 1.120-2).

[121] Thus Woodman (1977) at Vell. 2.106.1.

[122] On *virtus* as a potentially negative force driving Cato's actions, see pp. 288-311.

[123] Thus Narducci (2002) 405-7, drawing on the work of La Penna (1968), cites Sallust's split sense of Roman *virtus* (e.g. Sal. *Cat*. 53-4) and the Livian parallel of Mucius Scaevola (Livy 2.12.10) to argue that Cato correctly recognizes suffering as "the only remaining chance to attempt a truly 'Roman' greatness" (406).

[124] For a favorable interpretation of this passage and its bearing on Cato's character, see Wick (2004) i 27-9 and at 9.379-406.

endeavor (*metuentibus*, 9.375), and we might expect Cato to assuage their fears by describing the preparations he has made for the march or pointing to the safety that the changing season would likely offer.[125] His speech, however, demonstrates little concern for the worries of his men, and he repeatedly stresses the greatness and severity of the dangers that await them in the sands of Libya:

> *o quibus una salus placuit mea castra secutis*
> *indomita cervice mori, componite mentes* 380
> *ad* ***magnum*** *virtutis* ***opus summos****que* ***labores****…*
>
> *hi mihi sint comites, quos* ***ipsa pericula*** *ducent,* 390
> *qui me teste* ***pati vel quae tristissima*** *pulchrum*
> *Romanumque putant…*
>
> ***serpens, sitis, ardor harenae***
> *dulcia virtuti; gaudet patientia* ***duris****;*
> *laetius est, quotiens magno sibi constat, honestum.*
> *sola potest Libye* ***turba*** *praestare* ***malorum*** 405
> *ut deceat fugisse viros* (9.379-81; 390-2, 402-6).
>
> O you, to whom a single salvation was pleasing in following *my* camp, to die with neck unconquered, commit your minds to the **great task** of virtue and the **most distinguished labors**… Let those men be my comrades, whom the **dangers themselves** lead on, who think that it is beautiful and Roman **to suffer even the most dreadful things** with me as witness… **Snake, thirst, heat of the sand**—sweet to virtue; endurance rejoices in **difficulties**; uprightness is happier the more it accords with its great self. Libya alone with its **horde of ills** is able to show that it is honorable for men to flee.

Cato's litany includes nearly every term one could muster to describe unpleasant circumstances (*labores, pericula, vel quae tristissima, dura, mala*), and even specifies some that are unique to Libya (*serpens, sitis, ardor*). The very expansiveness of Cato's vocabulary may suggest that *dura pati* is something of an area of expertise, his specificity

[125] Plutarch (*Cat. Min.* 56.3) notes both the precautions that Cato took before the march and the relief that winter provided. On this discrepancy, see Rutz (1970b).

that he is a connoisseur of physical discomfort.[126] In the context of the proposed march across Libya, this makes clear that Cato is committed to undergoing difficulties in any form,[127] and that he does not wish to preclude any challenge through accidental omission.[128] Yet Cato's speech goes beyond a simple enumeration of the dangers that Libya poses: he also identifies the endurance of them as the defining characteristic of his army. This objective is first indicated through his opening words, where Cato's vocative address to his troops is immediately followed by a call for them to prepare for "the great task of prowess and the most distinguished labors" (*componite mentes | ad magnum virtutis opus summosque labores*, 9.380-1). Although these lines read like the opening of any hortatory speech in a military context, it is interesting that the labors Cato enumerates are not directed towards any specific goal. Rather, he eventually makes clear that the endurance of hardship is to be the chief objective of his faction: "Let those men be my comrades, whom **the dangers themselves** lead on" (*hi mihi sint comites, quos **ipsa pericula** ducent*, 9.390).

[126] For a positive interpretation of Cato's *duritia*, see Sannicandro (2006).
[127] Cato's apologists have tried to excuse his obsession with toil by arguing that he leads by example. Wick (2004) at 9.587-604 and 9.587*sq*. associates this behavior with the typical "good general;" see also Bartsch (1997) 114-23; Narducci (2002) 415-22; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 113-160. Henderson (1987); Johnson (1987) 35-66; and Leigh (1997) 265-82 take a more cynical position. As will be made clear below, my own view is that Cato's model behavior is undermined by his obsessive focus on his own reputation and the effects of his decisions on the men he leads.
[128] I have in mind here the Roman tendency to be exact and exhausting in enumerating possibilities in formal lists and prayers; e.g. *ab Iove Optimo Maximo ceterisque **dis deabusque** immortalibus* (Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 5), where *dis* ought—strictly speaking—to include both gods and goddesses.

Two other aspects of Cato's speech warrant our attention in conjunction with the change of focus just described. The first regards the definition of *virtus.*[129] When Cato calls his men towards "the great task of virtue and the utmost labors" (9.381), he virtually equates the two elements of the line, *magnum virtutis opus* and *summos labores*. This should not be overlooked. Here the reader can see Cato intentionally and explicitly redefining *virtus* according to his own standards: no longer is this word to mean "valor in war," "prowess," or even "the application of philosophical wisdom;" within Cato's ranks, *virtus* is to be defined solely as "the endurance of hardships." Indeed, this point is reiterated in no uncertain terms later in the speech: "Snake, thirst, heat of the sand—sweet **to prowess**" (*serpens sitis ardor harenae* | *dulcia* ***virtuti*** 9.402-3).[130]

Cato's attempts to manipulate the Latin language do not stop here. He even goes so far as to define *being Roman* as demonstrating his particular brand of *virtus*: "Let these men be **my** comrades… who think that it is beautiful and **Roman** to suffer even the most dreadful things with me as a witness" (*hi mihi sint comites… qui me teste pati vel quae tristissima pulchrum* | ***Romanum****que putant*, 9.391-2).[131] Although we might be able to excuse Cato's redefinition of *virtus* by pointing to his reputation as an exemplar of that

[129] On *virtus* in the *Bellum Civile*, see esp. Sklenář (2003), who argues that Lucan inverts traditional, epic conceptions of *virtus* (manliness) and presents Stoic *virtus* (virtue) as meaningless because the world is not governed by Stoic λόγος.

[130] Cato's *virtus* was proverbial within his lifetime, and it remained so during the early imperial period through its frequent use as an *exemplum* in the rhetorical schools. Yet the *virtus* for which Cato was most famous was not his endurance of difficulties, but his moral probity and exactness in matters of legality; see, for example, Cic. *Mur*. 54, *Phil*. 13.30; Sal. *Cat*. 54; Sen. *Contr*. 7.6.17, 9.6.7, 10.1.8. Seneca the Younger almost always invokes Cato to make a point about suicide. Plutarch attributes to Cato endurance of the sort found in Lucan (Plut. *Cato Min*. 5.3), but his description may be influenced by rhetorical *topoi*, his own description of the educational system that Cato the Elder developed for his son (Plut. *Cato Mai*. 20.4), or even Lucan himself.

[131] Sklenář (2003) 86-7 discusses this passage in Stoic terms.

attribute, things become more complicated when the term *Romanus* is introduced.[132] Civil war is always a contest over national identity, and the attempt to redefine *Romanitas* on his own terms reveals that Cato is not only participating in this conflict as a protector of the earlier constitution;[133] rather, he has made himself the leader of a new *ideological* faction, one dedicated to a *virtus* defined by suffering for its own sake. Although the absence of explicit military or political objectives may differentiate Cato from the other generals, he is nevertheless now operating on the same plane as Caesar, who had similarly compelled his army to adopt his own definition of "Romanness"[134] and justified the use of force against his personal enemies as a legitimate display of *virtus*.[135] Indeed, just as Pompey and Caesar clearly saw themselves as the leaders of their respective factions, so too does Cato view himself—and not the Republican constitution—as his army's figurehead: his comrades are to be those who wish to endure difficulties *while he watches* (*hi* ***mihi*** *sint comites, qui ipsa pericula ducent,* | *qui* ***me teste***

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[132] Narducci (2001a), drawing on La Penna (1980), argues that Cato's conception of *Romanum* here is normal, citing as a parallel Livy 2.12.10: *et facere et pati fortia Romanum est*. This interpretation, however, overlooks the crucial differences between the passages that are outlined in the present discussion.

[133] On the civil war as a contest of competing definitions of "Romanness," see Roller (1999) and (2001) 17-63. Henderson (1987) suggests, in his own way, similar ideas. Cato's desire to direct violence against himself makes literal the poet's metaphorical description of the civil war as "a powerful people, having turned its conquering sword-hand against its own entrails" (*populumque potentem* | *in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra*, 1.2-3).

[134] The view is anticipated in Book 1. Caesar tells *Patria*, "that man, *that* man will be guilty, who makes me an enemy to you" (*ille erit ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerit hostem*, 1.203); likewise, Curio insists to Caesar and his troops that "your victory will make us citizens" (*tua nos faciet victoria cives*, 1.279). The men give themselves over to Caesar entirely during the mutiny scene in Book 5; on this, see my discussion on pp. 242-8.

[135] Thus Roller (2001) 36-43.

pati vel quae tristissima pulchrum | Romanumque putent, 9.390-2). Cato, it would seem, is to have absolute power to evaluate the valor of his men in their coming struggles.[136]

If we recognize that Cato is participating in an ideological conflict in the same way as his rivals, we are again invited to ask *why* he is fighting—to what end, in other words, he expects his men to demonstrate *virtus* of the sort that he defines throughout this speech. Although one might expect Cato to lobby for the restoration of the *patriae leges* or even the acquisition of philosophical *sapientia,* he instead declares that the ultimate objective of the difficulties to which he will subject his men his death and death alone. Thus when he addresses the army, he hails them as those committed to dying under his command (*o quibus una salus placuit* ***mea castra secutis****…* ***mori***, 9.379-80). Here there is no restoration of the Republic, no destruction of Caesar, not even the promise that the army will succeed or die trying. Rather, Cato offers them only an unspecified death after a period of suffering in his service. In this the poet may be punning on an alternative meaning of the expression *summos labores*, which Cato used at the beginning of his speech (9.381). Although I earlier translated the adjective as "most distinguished," it can also be used to refer to a "critical" or "final" moment (*OLD summus* 6 and 5, respectively). Coupled with the insistence that Cato's troops have joined him in order to

[136] On the "gaze" in Lucan, see Leigh (1997). Although it was normal for a soldier to want to display prowess in front of his general, the legal principle "one witness is no witness" (*CTh* 11.39.3.1 = *CJ* 4.20.9) surely complicates Cato's desire to be the sole individual watching his men; indeed, Cato himself was proverbially raised as an example of how even an ideal witness could not overcome this legal stipulation (Plut. *Cato Min*. 19.3-5). See also my discussion on pp. 260-1.

die, this word may suggest that Cato intends his crossing of the desert to be a death march that is an objective unto itself.[137]

This interpretation of Cato's motives is confirmed throughout the actual description of the desert march. As noted earlier, when one of his men offers him a drink of water to quench his thirst, he unleashes a powerful tirade in which he criticizes the man for presuming that his *patientia* was incapable of enduring the desert's heat (*'mene' inquit 'deneger unum | miles in hac turba vacuum virtute putasti*? 9.505-6).[138] Similarly, he insists that he is fighting a losing battle (*durum iter ad leges* ***patriaeque ruentis*** *amorem,* 9.385) and that death is the only human certainty (*pavido fortique cadendum est*, 9.583). Indeed, nearly every passage of direct speech shows Cato harping on the importance of *virtus, labor,* and *patientia.* Caesar, however, is conspicuously absent from the narrative of the desrt march. Although he is mentioned three times by members of Cato's army, neither Cato nor the narrator ever utters his name.[139] Their focus remains firmly fixed on the dangers of the Libyan desert and death in Cato's service. This being the case, the reader's own attention must likewise turn to the trials of the march in order to judge the efficacy of the *causa pericli* and its questionable leader Cato.

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[137] This idea links Cato to the views espoused by the Caesarian Scaeva: "Your love of Pompey and the Senate's faction is less than my love of death!" (*Pompeï vobis minor est causaeque senatus | quam mihi mortis amor*, 6.245-6). On Caesarian aspects of Cato's character, see pp. 241-75.

[138] For my comments on this episode, see pp. 261-6.

[139] Labienus asks Cato to consult Jupiter Hammon about the "fates of cursed Caesar" (*inquire in fata nefandi | Caesaris*, 9.558-9); Cato's men lament that the Libyan snakes fight on Caesar's side (***pro Caesare*** *pugnant | dipsades et peragunt civilia bella cerastae*, 9.850-1) and pray that Caesar may suffer the same unbearable evils in his pursuit of them (***veniant*** *hostes, Caesarque* **sequatur** | *qua fugimus*, 9.879-80). This hope is not fulfilled: the reader soon learns that Caesar is more interested in visiting Troy and Alexandria than in pursuing the *partes Catonis* (9.950-1108); for answered prayers in the *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 131-5.

The triumph in the Desert

Lucan begins his description of the desert march with an editorial digression that has been called "the praise of Cato" (9.587-604). In it, the poem's narrator glorifies the difficulties that Cato and his men are about to endure, describing their expedition as a "triumphal procession" (*hunc… triumphum*, 9.598) and Cato himself as an ideal general and the "true parent of his fatherland" (*ecce parens verus patriae*, 9.601).[140] These bold assertions paint Cato as the very epitome of a Roman statesman and stand to shape our interpretation of the narrative events that they preface. Indeed, the "Praise of Cato" predisposes us to interpret Cato's exploits in Libya favorably and to recognize them as the basis for the positive evaluation that the narrator offers. Optimistic readers have unsurprisingly pointed to these lines as some of their strongest support for viewing Cato as a Republican and Stoic hero, while their opponents have been hard-pressed to find evidence that effectively refutes a voice as strong as the narrator's.[141]

If we consider the narrator's praise in more detail, we can see that it does not forestall careful analysis of the poem's episodes so much as invite the reader to pay attention to Cato's actions as general.[142] As the passage slips from description to encomium, the narrator cries out, "**I myself** would rather lead **this triumph** through the Syrtes and the limits of Libya than climb the Capitoline three times on Pompey's chariot,

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[140] On Cato's problematic assumption of this image in Book 2, see p. 202 n. 73.
[141] Thus Pecchiura (1965) 84-6. D'Alessandro Behr (2007) and Roller (2001) 17-63 take it for granted that the narrator's voice is authoritative. Maes (2009) thinks that the praise is undermined by the call for Cato to receive altars of his own (*dignissimus aris*, 9.601), as this effectively puts him on an equal plane with Caesar and Alexander. Moretti (1999) 250 argues that the "entirely spiritual and civil apotheosis" of Cato is markedly different from the divinization of other figures, viz. Hercules, Alexander, the Caesars.
[142] Thus Wussow (2004) 258, who goes on to argue that Cato is an ideal Stoic and Republican general during the desert march. As will be seen, my own view is quite different.

than break the neck of Jugurtha" (***hunc ego*** *per Syrtes Libyaeque extrema* ***triumphum*** | *ducere* ***maluerim****, quam ter Capitolia curru | scandere Pompeï, quam frangere colla Iugurthae*, 9.598-600). We should not allow the unusually powerful intrusion of the first-person editorial voice to blind us to the most radical aspect of this assertion:[143] the narrator here expresses an avowed preference for overcoming the natural challenges of Libya to victory over a foreign foe, for a desert march to the inimitable return of a victorious general cloaked in the robes of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. Indeed, this point is underscored by Lucan's reference to specific, historical triumphs rather than to the generic accoutrement of the ceremony: first Pompey's three victories, then Marius' celebration over the Numidian king Jugurtha. Although the narrator's preference for the desert march is clearly meant to be surprising,[144] he does not explain the reasons for his counter-cultural view. Our confusion on this point is further compounded when we think outside the immediate context of the poem: the direct comparison of the Libyan march to a formal triumph is nothing short of a paradox, for it equates Cato's journey to his place of suicide—normally an act of desperation and defeat—with the greatest height of Roman military achievement.[145] Therefore, even though the reader is urged to identify with the narrative "I" and to accept its evaluation of the desert march, the fundamental

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[143] On Lucan's narrator, see pp. 91-7.

[144] If this were an obvious preference the poet would have no need to express this sentiment at all. Note also the delay of the emphatic *triumphum* after the direct object is flagged by *hunc* at the opening of 9.598.

[145] This perhaps foreshadows reference to Cato as *Uticensis*, "the Victor of Utica." The agnomen is technically an adjectival place-name of a type given to generals triumphant over a large region (cf. *Africanus, Germanicus*); as such, it may be thought to cast Cato's suicide following the defeat of Republican forces at Thapsus as an act of triumph over Caesar. The name is unattested before Pliny the Elder (*NH* 7.62), and thus fits with a larger pattern of idealizing Cato in the early imperial period. On Cato's reputation during this time, see pp. 190-2, 195-7.

dissimilarity of the events it compares invites us to view the march with a more critical eye: we are encouraged, in other words, to ask precisely how Cato's exploits in the desert are greater than a triumph.

In undertaking this investigation, it will also be helpful to consider the range of responses that a reader might have to individual scenes and individual contexts. The evaluation of Cato's actions as general has been one of the most hotly contested areas of scholarship on Lucan, and readers have come to widely divergent conclusions while considering the same evidence.[146] To my mind this rift is itself an indication that Lucan's text contradicts itself, but the goal of this section will be to consider the desert march with fresh eyes, sensitive to the possibility that the narrative undermines the narrator's positive evaluation of Cato, while still willing to recognize the authority of that editorial voice. As we proceed over well-worn ground, our readings will have to be receptive, to the greatest extent possible, to the constellation of reactions that Lucan's text may allow. From this vantage we may fully appreciate the contradictions of the narrative, and so identify the particular exegetical difficulties towards which the poet directs us.

Our investigation into Cato's actions as general may commence with a consideration of how he decides to undertake the expedition across Libya in the first place. In this regard, the narrative is quite emphatic: as discussed in the last section, *virtus* drives Cato on at every turn, often compelling him to challenge natural hazards without regard for the risk involved. The reader is first introduced to this impulse when Cato's *audax virtus* drives him to sail along the Syrtes (9.302). When that voyage fails and his men are driven back to their point of origin, it is again Cato's *virtus*, now

[146] See pp. 175-7.

incapable of tolerating the "delay" caused by his previous imprudence, that compels him to attempt an over-land route (*at* ***impatiens virtus haerere*** *Catonis*, 9.371).

One might expect, if Lucan were trying to depict Cato as a Stoic sage, that he would have presented such dedication to *virtus* in an unambiguous light. Woven into the above movement, however, is a series of failures that can be attributed directly to Cato's rashness, and in particular his unwillingness to check the impulses of his *virtus*. When Cato begins his voyage on the Syrtes, a massive storm immediately besets the fleet. It quickly swamps the ships, drowns many of the men, and drives the survivors back to their port of departure (9.319-67). Although this disaster comes on suddenly, the reader is given numerous reasons to think that Cato should have been able to avoid it. Before embarking on his vivid depiction of the storm, the poet had described the Syrtes as a dangerous, indistinct region, which even science could not explain with absolute certainty (9.303-18).[147] Whether or not Cato is privy to this information, it casts his desire to use the waterway in a negative light: he demonstrates a complete disregard for the dangers that it might present, driven on by the need to challenge nature itself (*hanc* [*naturam*] ***audax*** *sperat sibi cedere virtus*, 9.302).[148] The subsequent destruction of his fleet thus appears to be of his own making. Indeed, even a modicum of reconnaissance or foresight could have prevented the setback.

A similar progression occurs after the army is driven back to shore. *Virtus* again goads Cato to premature action, and he decides to set off into the Libyan desert without

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[147] On this, see pp. 311-7.
[148] Moretti (1999) uses this line as grounds for treating the entire Libya episode as an allegory for the Stoic path to virtue. Leigh (1997) 265-81 views the episode as an ironic inversion of that allegory, wherein virtue is defeated. See also my own comments on pp. 275-87.

first scouting the path ahead (*audet in* ***ignotas*** *agmen committere* ***gentes*** | *armorum fidens et terra cingere Syrtim*, 9.372-3). The poet once more builds suspense through a series of digressions, the first a passage of direct speech in which Cato tries to rouse his men for the coming challenge (9.379-410), the second a geographical and ethnographical treatment of Libya itself (9.411-44). The driving force of Cato's *virtus* is then repeated as a tag that draws us back to the narrative (***hac*** *ire Catonem* | *dura iubet virtus*, 9.444-5).[149] At this point, however, danger immediately besets the army: as soon as the march begins, a sandstorm brings the dangers of a storm at sea to bear on men who think they are marching on solid ground (*illic* ***secura iuventus*** | ***ventorum nullasque timens tellure procellas*** | *aequoreos est passa metus*, 9.445-7). The poet describes this event in horrifying detail. First, a strong *sirocco* undoes the distinction between land and air, casting sand into the sky and carrying off the huts of the local Nasamones (9.453-60). This storm, however, is unusually powerful (*solito violentior*, 9.463), and it soon overwhelms the Roman troops: they cannot find secure footing (9.464-71), their weapons and armor are ripped from their bodies (9.471-80), and they struggle to protect themselves from the wind-tossed sand (9.481-6). Worse still, their attempts to seek cover quickly backfire and the sand begins to bury them alive (9.486-9). Here it is easy to see how the poet connects Cato's *virtus* to the sufferings of his men: the former is mentioned twice during this episode, and the absence of any delay between the decision to march and the onset of ills invites us to conclude that the two are causally linked.[150] Indeed, the

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[149] On another possible interpretation of *virtus* as the driving force of Cato's actions, see p. 280 n. 117.

[150] *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* is of course a logical fallacy, but the inference is especially tempting in a poetical narrative whose details are entirely determined by the author.

storm might even be envisioned as an active attempt by the natural world to prevent Cato from encroaching on forbidden territory.[151]

The unexpectedness of the challenges in the desert also demands comment, as it is another manifestation of how Cato's rashness and failure to plan ahead leads to disaster for his troops. When Cato first rouses the men to face the dangers ahead, he insists that he will keep them apprised of the threats they might encounter: "For I have no intention to deceive anyone, nor to lead the crowd by concealing a source of fear" (*neque enim mihi fallere quemquam | est animus tectoque metu perducere vulgus*, 9.398-9). Although this declaration prompts the reader to view Cato as a good general and to recognize his attempts to lead from the front as a positive attribute of his generalship, his conduct soon shows this promise to have been made in vain.[152] As the men enter the desert, for instance, they are said to be unconcerned about winds and squalls (9.445-6), but are immediately confronted with a violent sandstorm that threatens to bury them alive.[153] Similarly, when the army is assaulted by Libya's snakes, the deaths they suffer are described as unusual because such small bites were able to cause nearly total destruction

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Moreover, the repeated pattern, "submission to impulses of *virtus*" => "lethal threat to army," suggests that the connection is not coincidental.

[151] On responsive geography in the *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 125-30. For unusual events having potentially divine causation, cf. the sleep that comes upon Scipio before his dream in Cicero's *Republic* (***artior quam solebat*** *somnus complexus est*, Cic. *Rep*. 6.10); the dust storm that distracts the guards set to watch over Polynices' body in Sophocoles' *Antigone* (Soph. *Ant*. 417-22).

[152] On Cato as an ideal general, see p. 283 n. 127.

[153] Some have wished to dismiss this notice as a rhetorical attempt to heighten the paradox of suffering nautical fears on land (*aequoreos est passa metus*, 9.447). On this, see Wick (2004) at 9.444-497, who notes that Lucan adopts the tropes of sea storms and applies them to the sandstorm. Although not unparalleled, the extent of Lucan's treatment is unique, and it is probably intended as a novel rendition of a hackneyed theme; on this, see Wick (2004) at 9.319-47. The paradoxical storm can thus be thought to heighten the terror one feels in reading of the army's predicament; on this, see pp. 299-304.

(***insolitas****que videns parvo cum vulnere* ***mortes***, 9.736). This statement is focalized through Cato, with whom the participle *videns* agrees, and so underscores the extent to which the general was unaware of the risks ahead. The impact that this has on his troops, on the other hand, is quickly revealed through the poet's grotesque description of man-on-snake combat that forms the climax of the desert march. This episode presents the results of Cato's ignorant and arrogant leadership, inviting the reader to pity those who have been enrolled in Cato's ranks and to consider how their leader's ideological commitments have resulted in their unimaginable suffering.

Lucan's account of the Libyan snakes is extremely long—nearly three hundred and fifty lines (9.604-949)—and reveals the extent to which Cato is willing to let his men suffer as he pursues a reputation for tough endurance (*gaudet patientia duris*, 9.403).[154] The army first comes across these snakes after abandoning the Siwa Oasis. As the desert heat intensifies and water becomes scarcer, the only spring the army can find is infested with a horde of poisonous snakes (9.609-10).[155] Although Cato assures his men that the water is harmless and attempts to prove this conviction by drinking it before the others, Lucan says the draught is "of dubious toxicity" (*dubiumque venenum,* 9.616). This contradiction ought to give the reader pause, since it forces us to ask whether we trust more in Cato's confidence or the narrator's skepticism. Although Cato's rashness and disregard for dangers on the march may make us incline towards the latter, it is wise to check his assertion about the safety of the water against other sources. Doing so, we find that Cato's position runs counter to the *communis opinio*: nearly all the extant sources

[154] See Graver (2007) 175-8 on the importance of the Stoic "obligation to consider the interests of others in determining how to act" (175).
[155] For independent treatments of this episode, see esp. Fantham (1992b); Saylor (2002); Malamud (2003). Saylor and Malamud independently come to similar conclusions.

discussing poisonous snakes maintain that a serpent's venom could indeed contaminate the water it inhabited.[156] Even more damning, however, is that this view is repeated in the *Bellum Civile* itself, when the poet describes a particular species of snake as the "corruptor of water" (*natrix violator aquae*, 9.720). From this we may infer that Cato's self-assurance is badly misplaced, and that he has led his men into very real danger out of willful ignorance.[157] Although the men do not, in the event, come to any harm after drinking from the infested spring, the reader may well judge this a stroke of good luck, rather than proof that Cato is an effective leader.

After the episode at the spring, Lucan's account of Cato's march is delayed by a series of digressions. Although some critics have faulted the poet for the length and irrelevance of these passages,[158] it seems clear that they are intended to build tension before a decisive moment in the narrative and to increase the readers' sense of wonder at the events that the poet is about to portray. The first of these tells of Medusa's death as the origin of Libya's snakes (9.619-99),[159] and is intended to link the dangers that Cato is about to face to one of mythology's deadliest villains. Lucan revels in his description of

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[156] For the relevant passages see Wick (2004) at 9.616.

[157] As often, Lucan offers optimistic readers a way to spin the episode to their liking. The narrator says during the preface to the episode that the men would have died if they had gone further without drinking (9.612). This may allow us to interpret Cato's resolve as a selfless act in which he uses himself as a guinea pig, his speech a means of encouraging men who are on the verge of losing hope. Even such a steadfast confrontation of death, however, would still violate his promise to keep the army apprised of Libya's dangers (9.389).

[158] E.g. Heitland (1887) lxxiv-lxxvii; Syndikus (1958) 15; J. W. Duff (1927) 324; Viarre (1977). Rutz (1989) 49 argues that Book 9 is unedited and that the digressions would have been greatly curtailed if Lucan had been able to produce a final version of his poem. See also Landolfi (2007) on scientific material as part of the Neronian literary aesthetic.

[159] Wick (2004) at 9.619-699 and 9.619-623 discusses other sources for the Medusa myth. See also Vögler (1968); Kebric (1976); Fantham (1992b); Eldred (2000); Saylor (2002); Malamud (2003); Papaioannou (2005); Bexley (2010); and Lowe (2010).

Medusa; the type of death she brought about; and the fear she sparked in beasts, men, and gods (9.629-58). Effective as this might be as a set piece, however, the horrifying story is really intended to explain Medusa's offspring, the Libyan snakes themselves.[160] The reader, it would seem, is invited to conclude that they will prove to be challenging and deadly foes even if they are but pale reflections of their ancestral mother.[161] Lucan balances this mythological treatment with another digression, this one a herpetological catalogue that adopts a clinical, academic tone (9.700-33).[162] In it, he furnishes brief descriptions of the snakes that inhabit Libya and calques their Greek names into Latin.[163] Whereas the mythological digression connected the snakes to the gorgon Medusa without enumerating them in detail, however, this scientific excursus furnishes each species with a name and attributes. We learn of the "cenchris ('crabby'), ever about to slip from a straight path" (9.712), "the hammodytes ('sand-clad'), camouflaged and indistinguishable from the burnt sands" (9.715-6), and thirteen other terrors that lie in wait for Cato's army.

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[160] Moretti (1999) 244-5 suggests that this episode proves Cato's superiority to the ancient heroes; the point is anticipated by Fantham (1992b) 103. A secondary effect, however, is to suggest that Cato is violating the established order of the world. In the course of the myth, we are told that Pallas Athena ordered Perseus to fly over Libya specifically so that the drops of blood that fell from Medusa's head would land—and spawn snakes—in areas devoid of human populations (9.685-8). Cato chooses to disregard this divine favor by willfully entering Libya's toxic ground. Thus just as his crossing of the Syrtes had demonstrated a desire to overcome nature (9.301-2), so, too, does the Perseus digression underscore Cato's defiant violation of regions from which humanity was supposed to be protected.

[161] Thus Raschle (2001) 79, who is followed by Wick (2004) at 9.619-699 §3 ("Perseus und Cato"), argues that the poet wishes the reader to equate Athena and Cato.

[162] Nicander's *Theriaca* is the most likely source of this information. Lucan sometimes diverges from Nicander, however, and it has been posited that he may have been relying on Aemilius Macer's Latin translation. On the issue of the snake catalogue, see Cazzaniga (1957); Morford (1967b); Lausberg (1990); Leigh (2000), which also surveys the other literary sources that influenced Lucan's treatment of the snakes; Raschle (2001) 60-8; and Wick (2004) ad locc.

[163] On this, see Eldred (2000).

This treatment effectively takes a threat that had earlier been left open to the reader's imagination and makes it specific. By adopting the language of science, therefore, Lucan presents the "descendants of Medusa" as real, living threats to Cato and his men.

When the account of the march finally resumes, the narrator describes an extended battle in which individual members of Cato's army are pitted against the various species of snakes. Here the reader is brought face-to-face with the extremes of suffering to which Cato is willing to subject his men in the pursuit of his objectives. The account is nothing short of grotesque.[164] The first man to fall victim to the serpents is a standard-bearer named Aulus (9.737-60). He fails to notice when a *dipsas* bites his foot, and the venom soon causes him to develop an insatiable thirst.[165] Although he is ignorant of its cause, this thirst robs him of all self-control: bereft of fresh water, he tries to drink salt water to ease his pain; when this fails, he opens his veins and dies trying to slake his thirst on his own blood (9.756-60). It is particularly apt that the first death should be one driven by thirst: in this the reader sees the extent to which Cato's earlier displays of *virtus* regarding water—both in refusing a helmet full of liquid to combat his thirst and in

[164] See Maes (2008) for an explication of this term, and a convincing justification for its application to Neronian literature. Especially important for my purposes is the observation that grotesque literature causes the audience to "see what they hear" (317). Also influential for the development of this idea are Fuhrmann (1968), esp. 50-7 on Lucan; Martindale (1976) on "literal hyperbole" as an attempt to revivify tired epic clichés; Batinski (1992) on why the snake battle should be experienced as a chilling and horrific display; Most (1992) on the "rhetoric of dismemberment" in Neronian literature; Leigh (1997) 265-82 on Cato as *spectator*; and Varner (2000) on grotesque literary imagery in the wider context of Neronian art. These scholars are often arguing against those who dismiss the scene as either intentionally humorous or a poetic failure, e.g. Heitland (1887) lxxiv-lxxix; J. W. Duff (1927) 325; Graves (1956) 22-4; Ahl (1976) 72-5; Johnson (1987) *passim*, e.g. 49-51, 55, 57; Bartsch (1997) 29-35.

[165] It may be noted in this case, as well as those of the snakes' other victims, that Lucan attributes to each venom effects that correspond to the name of the serpent involved; thus δίψα is Greek for "thirst." The nomenclature no doubt derives from studies of the effects of various serpents' venom.

drinking from an infested spring—can do little to control or protect his men from the onslaughts of the Libyan desert.[166]

The other deaths are even more gruesome. When the *seps* bites the leg of Sebellus, the man begins to disintegrate before the eyes of the entire army (9.762-88). His skin melts off the bones and uncovers a pool of blood and gore that floods his internal organs. The cursed nature of this venom, the narrator declares, literally revealed what man is made of (*quidquid homo est, aperit pestis natura profana*, 9.779). The *prester* is the next to strike, Nasidius its unlucky victim (9.789-804). The latter's body begins to swell uncontrollably, and does not stop even after the man is forced to remove his breastplate. He quickly becomes a shapeless blob (*informis globus*, 9.801) that even the beasts and birds of prey will not touch (9.803-4).[167] Cato and the army leave him for dead (*nondum stante modo crescens fugere cadaver*, 9.804). Tullus is the next to suffer (9.805-14). Bit by the *haemorrhois*, blood quickly seeps from his mucus membranes until his entire body becomes a single wound (*totum est pro vulnere corpus*, 9.814). Laevus does not even know that death is coming: the Niliac serpent's bite brings instant death (9.815-9). Next the *iaculus* shoots itself so powerfully from a tree that it passes straight through the head of Paulus (9.822-5). Murrus only saves his life by severing his own arm before the poison of the *basilicus* can spread to his torso (9.828-33).

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[166] Thus Leigh (2000) 100-101. Morford (1967b) 128 unconvincingly posits that Aulus "dies in the end with the courage of a Stoic, opening his veins to drink his own blood."
[167] These lines are a brilliant inversion of the traditional epic threat that one's opponent will become a feast for dogs and birds; see Wick (2004) at 9.802*sq*. for parallels.

The horror of what these men suffer is repeatedly emphasized in the description of their ailments as fates worse than death.[168] The poet first acknowledges this idea at the beginning of the episode, when he draws the readers attention to both the quantitative and qualitative uniqueness of the deaths that are about to be related: "Amidst these plagues Cato measures the dry path with his hardy troops while gazing upon **so many sad fates** of his men and **deaths unaccustomed** to accompany a small wound" (*has inter pestes duro Cato milite siccum | emetitur iter,* ***tot tristia fata*** *suorum |* ***insolitas****que videns parvo cum vulnere* ***mortes***, 9.734-6).[169] As suggested above, the poet's treatment of this theme does not disappoint. In addition to the clinically precise description of symptoms already mentioned, we may also observe that the poet adapts the epic simile to help cast the deaths of Cato's men as events somehow worse than the mere extinction of life. Indeed, whereas earlier hexameter poets often compared the (martial) events they related to the natural or civic world in relatively equal terms,[170] Lucan repeatedly claims that the power of the snakes' venom outstrips his supposed *comparanda*:[171] Sabellus liquefies *faster* (*ocius*) than ice warmed by the south-wind in spring (9.781-2); as for the swollen Nasidius, sails catching the wind do not fill *so much* (*nec tantos*), nor does the foam created when molten bronze is cooled expand *anything like* (*non sic*) what occurs to the

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[168] Batinski (1992) explains the horror provoked by this episode as a reaction to the discrepancy between the epic tropes that Lucan invokes and the unheroic, gruesome deaths that the men suffer. My arguments here build on her treatment of this episode.
[169] The base meaning of *insolitus* is "unfamiliar" or "unusual," (*OLD insolitus* 1). It is not easy to render this sense of the adjective, which is fully felt in Latin, together with the prepositional phrase *parvo cum vulnere*. Braund's "unfamiliar deaths with tiny wound" does not adequately capture the grammatical thrust of the line. The translation, "deaths unaccustomed to accompany a small wound," seems a good deal better on this count, though the less explicit rendering of *insolitus* is regrettable.
[170] Almost every parallel that Wick (2004) ad locc. cites for the following similes is stated without a comparative; the exception is Call. *Hymn Dem*. 91-3.
[171] Thus Raschle (2001) 101.

hapless Roman's body (9.798-800); the *iaculus* teaches all how slow (*quam lenta*) is a slinger's rock, how sluggish (*quam segnis*) a Scythian's arrow (9.826-7).[172] Although these similes may help the reader to imagine what Cato's men are suffering, they self-consciously point to the poet's inability to find adequate words to describe the venoms' effects: each comparative adjective or adverb represents the poet's failure to identify a proper point of comparison, to depict the full horror of the deaths caused by the serpents' venom. Indeed, the pace of the episode underscores his inadequacy in this regard: each death is relayed slightly faster than the last until Murrus is able to extend his life—and the narrative—by severing his own arm.[173] One is given the impression that the poet can scarcely keep up with what he is reporting, and the audience, in turn, is left dizzied and disgusted in the knowledge that these *insolitae mortes*—although on one level the product of Lucan's vivid imagination—actually fall *short* of proper realism.

The grotesqueness of this episode is not contained solely in its formal features: Lucan also utilizes hyperbolic language to portray the fates that Cato's men suffer as wholly dehumanizing affairs.[174] We have already noted, for instance, how Nasidius swells to obscene proportions after the *prester* strikes him (9.789-804). This description places special emphasis on how the venom completely eradicates the Roman's human

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[172] Cf. 9.819-21, where a native Italian poison is said to bring a slower death (*non tam veloci… leto*) than the venom of the Niliac serpent. In a counterfactual expression that also acts something like a simile, it is said that Aulus' thirst *would have* driven him to drink dry the Tanais, Rhone, Po, and Nile if he had had access to those rivers (9.751-2). The only equal comparison (*utque solet*) is between Tullus bleeding out and a statue oozed in saffron (9.808-10). Raschle (2001) 99-105 treats Lucan's similes at length, but is primarily concerned with exploring those with Homeric and Vergilian antecedents.
[173] Aulus (29 lines), Sabellus (27 lines) Nasidius (16 lines), Tullus (10 lines), Laevus (7 lines), Paulus (6 lines), Murrus (11 lines). Leigh (1997) 279-82 emphasizes how Murrus is both victim and spectator to the basilicus' venom.
[174] On this, see esp. Most (1992) 400-8; Bartsch (1997) 30; Saylor (2002); Papaioannou (2005).

attributes. As his body expands ever further, “the shapeless mass and the torso, in a confused heap, no longer contain the swollen limbs” (*tumidos iam non capit artus | informis globus et confuso pondere truncus*, 9.800-1). Lucan’s vivid description brings to mind a very real image, one of a man who becomes so disfigured that he can no longer be recognized as a man at all. Thus Lucan calls him a “shapeless blob” (*informis globus*), his body a “confused mass” (*confuso pondere*). His individual parts cease to be distinct, and he becomes nothing more than a heap of biological matter. This perhaps explains why his erstwhile comrades do not hesitate to leave him behind, forgoing even some show of a funeral (*non ausi tradere busto | nondum stante modo crescens fugere cadaver*, 9.804): as far as they are concerned, the *cadaver* is not the “Nasidius” they used to know, but only a swelling mass of putrid flesh. The same may be said for Tullus (9.805-14), who becomes nothing but “a single wound” after severe hemorrhaging obscures his human form in a pool of blood (*totum est pro vulnere corpus*, 9.814). Special attention, however, is given to the *seps*. This turns Sebellus into a virtual vivisection of the human body: skin, muscles, organs, and bones each liquefy in turn as the venom courses through his veins; eventually, there is nothing left but a pool of gore (9.767-83). At this point the narrator interjects to underscore the effects of this destruction:

> *hoc et flamma potest; sed quis rogus abstulit ossa?* 785
> *haec quoque discedunt, putrisque secuta medullas*
> *nulla manere sinunt rapidi vestigia fati.*
> *Cinyphias inter pestes tibi palma nocendi est:*
> *eripiunt omnes animam, tu sola cadaver* (9.785-8).
>
> Flame, too, is capable of this; but what pyre takes away the bones? These also disappear, following the rotten marrow, and allow no vestiges of the swift death to remain. Among the Cinyphian venoms the prize for destruction is yours: although all snatch away lives, you alone snatch away the body.

Although this lament contains an admission that the dissolution of the body is a natural result of death, the narrator seems surprised that the *seps* can eradicate the physical remains of its victim so completely. Indeed, the comparison to a pyre's flame that Lucan uses to emphasize the destructiveness of this venom helps to remind the reader that there is nothing left of Sabellus that his comrades could even gather for a funeral. Even the physical traces of his existence are obliterated. When compared with the deaths of traditional epic *aristeiai*, the ones Lucan relates must be deemed devoid of *virtus* and *gloria*.[175]

Although some may wish to dismiss such descriptions as excessive, unconvincing, or as failed attempts at poetic novelty,[176] the field of cognitive psychology suggests that something else may be at work. Each of the deaths just surveyed focuses on how a snake's venom turns a human being into something eerily non-human: a balloon of flesh and pus, an open wound, liquefied gore. We may also note that these descriptions are marked by their vividness: they do not merely tell readers what happened, but literally bring to their minds images of people ceasing to be people in any meaningful sense of the term.[177] This visual range of bodies or body parts that appear vaguely human, but that fall short of our expectations for normal, healthy people, has been identified by Masahiro Mori as one especially prone to induce horror or revulsion in those who see it.[178] Mori works in robotics, and has postulated that people react more positively to identifiably

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[175] But see also p. 333 n. 42.
[176] E.g. Heitland (1887) lxxiivii-lxxviii; Martindale (1976); Johnson (1987) 57; Bartsch (1997) 21.
[177] On the vividness of Lucan's narrative, see Leigh (1997) 234-91, esp. 276; Maes (2008).
[178] Mori (1970). Figure 1 has been borrowed, with permission, from MacDorman and Kageki's translation of Mori's original article (2012).

mechanical entities than they do, for example, to a prosthetic limb that aspires to human verisimilitude, but falls short of perfection. He schematizes these reactions on a graph that plots a human observer's familiarity with a given entity against that entity's likeness to a real human:

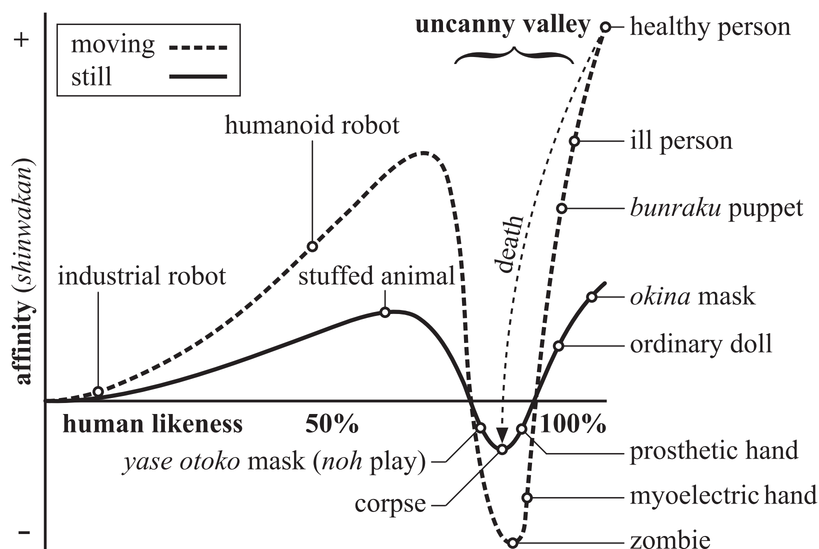

Fig. 1: Mori's "uncanny valley."

The precipitous drop in an individual's level of comfort with entities that are identifiably humanoid—but do not reach full verisimilitude—is what Mori calls the "uncanny valley." Although this phenomenon occurs with still entities that do not aspire to the likeness of real living things,[179] the emotional response that Mori postulates is noticeably heightened in the case of moving images, for which the minutest divergence from "natural" movement can cause the viewer to become deeply unsettled or revolted.[180]

The concept of the uncanny valley has had practical applications in the development of prosthetic limbs, where a streamlined, mechanical appearance is now preferred to "realistic" form that may scare those unfamiliar with the wearer, and has also been usefully invoked in the study of digital animation, where it can help account for

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[179] E.g. normal stuffed animals vs. creepy stuffed animals with over-sized eyes.
[180] E.g. a zombie or serial killer walking with a pronounced, abnormal gait.

images that an audience finds either too disturbing (e.g. in the case of a children's film) or insufficiently terrifying (e.g. in the case of a horror film).[181] It has even been reported that military roboticists are applying this concept to drones intended for armed conflict: their hope is to create humanoid robots that can strike enemies with a visceral fear and forestall, or at least make psychologically challenging, continued resistance.[182] Although Lucan is admittedly not a visual artist, the very power of his verse often produces a distinctly visual effect in the reader's mind;[183] the "uncanny valley" is therefore a useful concept in considering Lucan's descriptions of dehumanizing death. Indeed, based on the above discussion of the snake episode, it seems quite probable that Lucan uses it to evoke powerful feelings of uneasiness or revulsion by conjuring images of men in the process of transitioning from human to non-human. The deaths that Cato's men suffer, in other words, may be meant to terrify us to our very cores.

The narrative itself provides confirmation of this analysis and invites us to consider—to return to the question with which this section began—whether Cato's desert march is really the triumph that the narrator had suggested it would be. Lucan's description of the snake battle breaks off when the troops cry out to the gods for help. They cannot endure the sufferings they have undergone any longer and seek respite at any cost:

> *'reddite di,' clamant, 'miseris quae fugimus arma,*
> *reddite Thessaliam. patimur cur segnia fata*
> *in gladios iurata manus? pro Caesare pugnant* 850
> *dipsades et peragunt civilia bella cerastae…*

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[181] Thus Dargis (2004) criticizes the animation in *The Polar Express*: "The largest intractable problem with 'The Polar Express' is that the motion-capture technology used to create the human figures has resulted in a film filled with creepily unlifelike beings."
[182] Kindynis (2012).
[183] Fuhrmann (1968); Raschle (2001) 89-93; Maes (2008).

in loca serpentum nos venimus: accipe poenas
tu, quisquis superum commercia nostra perosus 860
hinc torrente plaga, dubiis hinc Syrtibus orbem
abrumpens medio posuisti limite mortes.
per secreta tui bellum civile recessus
vadit, et arcani miles tibi conscius orbis
claustra ferit mundi… 865

… solacia fati
haec petimus: veniant hostes, Caesarque sequatur 880
qua fugimus' (9.848-51, 859-65, 878-80).

> "Give back to us wretched men, o gods," they cry, "the arms we fled, give back Thessaly! Why do we—a band sworn to the sword—suffer delayed deaths? The *dipsades* fight for Caesar and the *cerastae* finish off the civil war… We have come into a land of snakes! *You* accept the punishment, whoever of the gods you are, who, despising our enterprises, snatching away the earth on one side with a scorching blow, on the other with the ambiguous Syrtes, have placed deaths in the space between. The civil war advances through the recesses of your retreat, and a soldier aware of your hidden realm rattles the bolts of the world… We seek this solace in death: let the enemy come, and let Caesar follow where we flee.

In a poem that so routinely condemns civil war, a prayer for the return of Pharsalus—for this is surely what is meant by *Thessaliam*—ought to be anathema, and all the more so since these words are uttered by the vanquished.[184] Cato's soldiers now prefer renewed crimes and a second defeat to the "triumph" of the desert march. We may reasonably conclude that their general's calls for *dura patientia* and *virtus* have failed:[185] his men are at their wits' end, convinced that they will perish in the desert, and their only recourse is

[184] On the narrator condemning civil war, cf. 1.1-7; 4.156-253; 7.385-459, esp. 7.398-9 (*crimen civile videmus* | *tot vacuas urbes*), 7.407-8 (*Pharsalia tanti* | *causa mali*). The conflation of Emathia, Thessaly, Pharsalus, Philippi, and Actium is pervasive in Lucan; see Roche (2009) at 1.1 and esp. Wick (2004) at 9.271 for an overview of this tendency.
[185] Leigh (1997) 267-73 argues that the desert march is an "allegory for the impotence of philosophy;" Leigh (2000) 100 is less explicit, suggesting rather that the efficacy of Cato's leadership is a question underlying the narrative of Book 9.

praying that their enemy suffer the same fate as he pursues them.[186] Whatever sympathy this may elicit, however, is decidedly overshadowed by the dramatic irony that it produces. As any reader familiar with Roman history knows well, the Romans did indeed take up arms again and did indeed fight further battles in Greece when the tyrannicides were defeated by Caesar's successors at Philippi (42 BC). The words of Cato's soldiers clearly foreshadow this event,[187] and our revulsion upon hearing them can be thought to result from the disjunction between our privileged historical vantage and the army's ignorance of the fact that things can indeed get worse than they already are within Lucan's narrative present: contrary to their expectation, the snakes will not complete the civil war (***peragunt***, 9.851; with *OLD perago* 5), but the more dreadful part of their prayer will be fulfilled.[188] The effect of this dramatic irony, then, is to give the soldier's outburst the appearance of causality, to make it seem as if they are responsible for the renewed wars that Rome would face over the next two decades. This in turn may bring us to a dreadful realization: the men only entered the desert because Cato compelled them to support his cause, they only suffered as they did because Cato preferred this to making a stand against Caesar, and they only proceeded defenseless against the snakes because Cato refused to plan adequately for the dangers ahead. If Cato had not led his army into the predicament that caused them to unleash this outburst, in other words, then Rome's later civil wars might never have happened.

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[186] I reject the assertion of Maes (2009) 659 that this is "the overwrought result of tense nerves." The subsequent arrival of the Psylli and the help that they furnish to Cato's army does not dull the images of death that the poet has just conjured; on this, see pp. 309-11.

[187] We may reasonably presume that Lucan's conflation of Greek geographical locales over the preceding eight books had been building to this climactic moment; see p. 305 n. 184 and my discussion of answered prayers on pp. 131-5.

[188] Wick (2004) at 9.846-89 and 9.848 cites poetic and rhetorical parallels.

The narrator, as so often, immediately complicates this interpretation. In summarizing the soldiers' prayer, he characterizes it in positive terms before focusing on the relief that Cato offered them in their moment of crisis:

> *sic dura suos patientia questus* 880
> *exonerat. cogit tantos tolerare labores*
> *summa ducis virtus, qui nuda fusus harena*
> *excubat atque omni fortunam provocat hora.*
> *omnibus unus adest fatis; quocumque vocatus*
> *advolat atque ingens meritum maiusque salute* 885
> *contulit, in letum vires; puduitque gementem*
> *illo teste mori. quod ius habuisset in ipsum*
> *ulla lues? casus alieno in pectore vincit*
> *spectatorque docet magnos nil posse dolores* (9.880-9).
>
> Thus their hardy patience unburdened their laments. Endurance of such great hardships is compelled by the utmost *virtus* of their leader, who sleeps lying on uncovered sand and tempts Fortune at all hours. He alone is present at the deaths of all; he hastens wherever he is called and offers an immense service greater than health: strength in the face of death; and with him as witness it caused shame to die while groaning. What power could any disease have had over him? He conquers misfortune in another's breast and as a spectator teaches that great pains have no power.

This evaluation attempts to cast the preceding narrative as one of victory over death and hardship. The soldiers' "hardy endurance" (*dura patientia*, 9.880) may need to vent its frustration in the face of severe physical challenges, but it nevertheless overcomes those challenges through the guidance of the Stoic Cato. Indeed, these lines echo Cato's own insistence that "endurance rejoices in difficulties" (*gaudet patientia duris*, 9.403), and thus can be thought, at a formal level, to confirm a declaration that had earlier been made in the narrator's voice. Claudia Wick supports this view, noting that *durus* and *patiens* are normally positive terms used to describe heroes and soldiers elsewhere in Latin

literature.[189] All of this contradicts the negative tone of the preceding episodes, and invites us to see the desert march as a triumph after all.

There is, of course, one problem. How can the narrator characterize the army's cries as an act of "hardy endurance"? Their own words make clear that they think death is imminent (*solacia fati,* 9.878) and that their situation is utterly hopeless. After being tossed at sea, whipped by sand, tortured with thirst, and plagued by snakes, they even welcome the return of civil war as a lesser evil than their current state. Their only remaining recourse is prayer to the very gods whose existence Cato had denied at the Siwa Oasis.

This disjunction between the narrative that Lucan presents and his narrator's evaluation of it can also be seen in Cato's moral support of the dying.[190] On first reading, his acts sound wholly admirable.[191] Like a Stoic nurse he sees to the sick and brings them the Good News that bravery in the face of death is a much greater gift than health. The men are consequently ashamed to groan in Cato's presence (*illo teste*, 9.887), and fade from life in silence. Cato thereby conquers—or so the narrator tells us—"the suffering in another's breast" (*casus alieno in pectore*, 8.888) and teaches them that "great pains have no power" (*magnos nil posse dolores*, 9.889). This brief evaluation, however, does not accord with the extended narrative that the poet has just related.[192]

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[189] Wick (2004) at 9.880.
[190] Batinski (1992) writes on this "dissonance" at some length. Once again, the arguments furnished here in many ways complement her work and flesh out ideas that she treats only briefly.
[191] Wick (2004) at 9.880-889 claims that these lines portray Cato as an ideal general. This is surely true, but Lucan's editorial assertions are undermined by the negative description of the narrative events that they nominally characterize.
[192] Leigh (1997) 234-91 raises this point for a different end; where he sees the contrast between Cato's Stoic virtues and the realities of the narrative as "a radically subversive

The snakes' power to extinguish human life was very real, and Lucan relished in describing it in unimaginably grotesque detail. At least to my mind, it is not easy to dismiss the visceral response that this may be intended to elicit from the reader. Moreover, it is possible to recognize a clear contradiction between how the narrator describes Cato and how he acted earlier in the march. Although the general is said to tend to all the dying, we have just seen him quick to abandon Tullus, Nasidius, and all the others when their ailments proved too great for him to control.[193] Indeed, Cato's *lack* of control through either threats or personal example is repeated during the episode: Aulus' thirst grows so great that "neither the glory of Cato's command nor the stern man's authority" can restrain him (***non decus imperii, non*** *maesti* ***iura Catonis*** | *ardentem* ***tenuere*** *virum*, 9.747-8), and Tullus succumbs to his wounds despite being a "heroic admirer of Cato" (***magnanimo*** *iuveni* ***miratori****que* ***Catonis***, 9.806). Although the narrator may wonder whether any disease could have had power over Cato (9.887-8), it is clear that the rank and file were highly vulnerable.

Cato's inefficacy in these regards is highlighted by the conclusion to the Cato *excursus*. Immediately after the passage just discussed, Fortune furnishes the miserable army with unexpected aid: the Psylli arrive on the scene to ease the Romans' suffering.[194]

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manipulation of the nostra" of the Stoics (267), I wish to argue that Lucan challenges and indeed frustrates his reader's attempts to make sense of the world and the characters he is depicting.

[193] Again, see Leigh (1997) 234-91.

[194] "Fortune, tired out by so much danger, barely provided late aid **to the wretched men**" (*vix* ***miseris*** *serum tanto lassata periclo* | *auxilium fortuna dedit*, 9.890-1). Note especially how the use of *miseris* echoes the soldiers' own description of themselves during their hopeless prayer (*reddite, di…* ***miseris*** *quae fugimus arma*, 9.848). Sklenář (2003) 98-9 suggests that the reference to *fortuna* here undermines the praise of Cato that the narrator offers at 9.593-6: *si veris magna paratur* | *fama bonis et si successu nuda*

This tribe was famous in antiquity for its immunity to venom and ability to cure snakebites in others, and its members proceed to suck the poison from the army's wounds and use their spells to establish a safe perimeter around the Roman camp.[195] As a result, Cato's men can enjoy their first night in safety since setting off into the desert (*sic nox tuta viris*, 9.922). Although—at least according to Lucan—Cato had led them across Africa for two full months, the Psylli quickly guide them to their final destination (9.940-9).[196]

Read as the culmination of everything that preceded, the immediate physical aid of the Psylli casts Cato's leadership into relief and invites us to ask whether his moral support for his troops is really as beneficial as the narrator suggests.[197] We have seen that Cato had no legal right to lead an army, but nevertheless induced Pompey's faction to follow him. His purported reason for enlisting these men was not stable, however, and seemed to change over the course of his command: what began as a just war to exterminate the last triumvir and restore Republican rule at Rome became a quest to prove that his *virtus* and *patientia* were able to endure any physical challenge. Yet it was not enough for only Cato and his Stoic god to be aware of this fact. Throughout his hardships, Cato repeatedly demonstrates that he is chiefly interested in maintaining a

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remoto | inspicitur virtus, quidquid laudamus in ullo | maiorum, Fortuna fuit. On this, see pp. 316-7.

[195] For other ancient references to the Psylli, see Leigh (2000) n. 11. Batinski (1992) concludes that Cato fails because his Stoic disposition is of a type unsuited to the world that Lucan describes.

[196] Plut. *Cato Min*. 57.3-4 tells us that the weather was mild, that the journey took only seven days, that Cato packed an adequate supply of water, and that he employed the Psylli from the start. The events presented in *Bellum Civile* 9 are thus likely to be the poet's invention, and the effect of his narrative—as the above discussion has shown—can be nothing other than drawing the reader's attention to the horrors of the march.

[197] Cf. Hershkowitz (1998) 242-4.

reputation for Stoic resolve. This becomes a dangerous situation for Cato's men as he repeatedly subjects them to dangers that he does not fully appreciate. Indeed, he treats them as pawns to be sacrificed in the pursuit of his own, personal goals, and leads them to such a point of desperation that they pray for a continuation of civil war that the reader knows will come about.

The Will to Believe

It has been my hope thus far to demonstrate that the depiction of Cato in the *Bellum Civile* is a Gordian knot of self-contradiction.[198] Although the narrator invites us to view him in positive terms by praising every one of his actions, the narrative itself seems to contradict this view and to raise serious questions about Cato's status as a leader of the Republican faction. It is also true, however, that such narrative undercurrents seem to offer insufficient grounds to justify an entirely negative evaluation of Cato. This analysis is confirmed by two simple observations: first, if Lucan had really wished to denigrate his Cato entirely, he would have done so in a way that would be more obvious to his readers; second, if Lucan wanted to portray Cato in a wholly positive light, he could have avoided making him look inept, ineffective, and arrogant.[199] Although scholars have not always overlooked this paradoxical situation,[200] recent work on the *Bellum Civile* has started to fall back into old patterns of thinking,[201] and it has become necessary once again to argue

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[198] Thus Masters (1992) 87-90 argues that the multiplicity of opinions in the poem imitates the "many potential authorities each vying for supremacy" in a civil war (90).
[199] Thus Marti (1945) 353-4, "The suggestion that Lucan may not have intended to build his poem around a central hero is undoubtedly correct since, if this had been his intention, his readers would have been aware of it and there would not be such a multiplicity of eligible candidates to choose from."
[200] Bartsch (1997) and Leigh (1997) both confront this problem head-on.
[201] See esp. D'Alessandro Behr (2007); Stover (2008).

against simplistic interpretations of Lucan's Cato. The preceding analysis has consequently tried to be thorough in highlighting the ways in which Lucan's text argues against itself. To my mind this is the most fundamental challenge of reading Lucan's poem, and it is a reality that must be admitted before the conversation can proceed in more profitable directions.

Accepting, then, that Lucan frustrates our attempts to evaluate Cato in any definitive way, we may observe that the text draws our attention to the difficulty of making such evaluations: just as the narrator's overt praise invites us to view Cato in simplistic terms, so the poem's negative undercurrents prevent us from doing so with any certainty. Although this issue is related indirectly with regards to Cato, the difficulty of judging between ambiguous reports is raised explicitly during the mythological and scientific digressions that disrupt Lucan's account of the desert march. Here we find the poet exploring the complex interplay between fact and fiction, between history and myth, between belief and disbelief in terms that may be usefully applied to his ambiguous portrait of Cato.[202]

We may first consider Lucan's treatment of *fama* and *fabula* in these episodes.[203] When reporting the myth of how Lake of Triton got its name, Lucan uses the phrase *ut fama* twice in brief succession (9.348, 9.356). This repetition emphasizes the story's

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[202] Lowe (2010) offers a series of observations on this issue with which I largely agree and which I have closely followed. Whereas he believes the exploration of ambiguity in the digressions is conditioned by the Libyan landscape, however, I see them as a result of Lucan's desire to reflect on the ambiguous portrait of Cato that he crafts throughout Book 9. For the sake of fullness and clarity, I have repeated some of Lowe's observations at length. My own use of this evidence diverges from his on p. 314. See also Ahl (1976) 259-62; Leigh (2000); Malamud (2003); Papaioannou (2005). Feeney (1991) 250-312 and its discussion of historical epic remains an invaluable resource.
[203] On *fama* in Lucan, see esp. Hardie (2012) 178-96, who nevertheless fails to treat the episodes discussed here.

fantastical qualities and casts a shadow of disbelief over the entire tale.[204] Furthermore, an editorial comment that follows close on the two examples just cited makes clear that Lucan's interest in *fama* goes beyond the simple adoption of the Alexandrian footnote: "it is a jealous man who interrogates a **story** of great age, who calls poets to the truth" (*invidus, annoso qui* ***famam*** *derogat aevo, | qui vates ad vera vocat*, 9.359-60). This is the third use of *fama* in seventeen lines, and with it the poet considerably complicates our understanding of the story he relates. Although these words beg the reader not to criticize the narrative too severely, they also suggest that the narrator is not reporting the truth.[205] We are thus left in the difficult position of not knowing whether to accept or reject, to believe or disbelieve the *famae* that are being presented to us.

We are drawn deeper into this quandary as the book progresses. In trying to explain the origin of Libya's snakes, the narrator tells the story of how Perseus slew Medusa. As a preface to this digression, however, he insists that "neither our concern nor diligence is capable of learning the truth, unless the **tale** spread throughout the world **in place of the real reason** has cheated the ages" (*non cura laborque | noster scire valet, nisi quod vulgata per orbem |* ***fabula pro vera*** *decepit saecula* ***causa***, 9.621-3).[206] Here again we find the stuff of myth (*fabula* ≈ *fama*) being described in relatively pessimistic terms: the Medusa story has survived "in place of the real reason" (*pro vera… causa*,

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[204] Wick (2004) at 9.348 cites parallels for such expressions in poetry and history. She argues that this casts Lucan as the protector of the mythic tradition, but distances him somewhat from the tradition in question. She refuses (quite rightly) to accept that such asides are meant to undermine the myth in its entirety.
[205] See Wick (2004) at 9.359 for parallels in the *Bellum Civile*.
[206] Lowe (2010) 128 suggests that *noster* means both Lucan and his reader. In the context of his argument this seems premature, but fits well with my own readings below.

9.623), and has only somehow managed to cheat the ages so as to be passed on.[207] The narrator does not claim that this is a sufficient alternative to a more rational explanation (*nisi quod*… 9.622), but nevertheless records it in case it contains some kernel of truth. In doing so, however, he also points to his own inability to guide the reader to an adequate understanding of Libya's snakes. This is a crucial point. His own labors are insufficient (*non cura laborque* | *noster*… *valet*, 9.621-2), and he only relates the myth as a last resort, virtually as a consolation prize for a reader, who—it is implied—is seeking more definite answers. The narrator's admission of impotence in this context is striking, and indeed deeply problematic:[208] if our poetic helmsman is unable to make sense of the world that he has conjured, who is able to do so? This would seem to be a hopeless endeavor, the poem, in turn, an ode to nihilism.[209]

But perhaps there is more to it than this. When introducing the academic question of whether Libya is part of Europe or its own continent, Lucan raises the possibility that the reader must grapple with the poem's great questions for himself: "Libya will be the third part of the world, **if you should wish to believe entirely in a rumor**; but **if you should follow** the winds and the sky, **it will be** a part of Europe" (*tertia pars rerum Libye,* ***si credere famae*** | ***cuncta velis****; at* ***si*** *ventos caelumque* ***sequaris,*** | *pars erit*

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[207] Malamud (2003) 40 and Wick (2004) at 9.623 independently suggest that Lucan is here opposing μῦθος and λόγος.

[208] See esp. Malamud (2003) 40-2. Lucan's disavowal of responsibility here is strange. The only ancient parallel—and this an imperfect one—seems to be Cicero's assertion at *Div*. 2.45-7 that he should not be faulted or held accountable for presenting certain meteorological events in *De consulatu suo* as divine signs that a disaster, i.e. the Catilinarian conspiracy, was near at hand. Wick (2004) at 9.620*sq*. cites parallels for the hendiadys *cura laborque*.

[209] Thus Johnson (1987); Sklenář (2003).

Europae, 9.411-3).[210] Although the second option is expanded at some length, the narrator does not make any overt judgment between these two possibilities.[211] Indeed, by stating each in a future less vivid protasis, he expresses them on equal terms and refuses to commit himself entirely to either one. At the same time, he suggests that the reader is responsible for resolving this conflict.[212] We may note in this regard the emphatic, second person verbs *velis* and *sequaris*, which directly implicate the audience in the poem and demand that we personally choose between the geographical possibilities that the narrator presents.[213] This sort of mythical disclaimer is admittedly common in Latin epic, but the most prominent examples—to judge by those Wick cites in her commentary on Book 9—are impersonal constructions; Lucan, on the other hand, has clearly preferred a more personal form of address.[214] Indeed, the importance of the reader's choice in this matter is underscored by a shift to a future more vivid apodosis to complete the conditional expression: "if you *should* follow the winds and the sky, Libya *will be* a part of Europe." This sort of mixed conditional indicates the absolute certainty of the apodosis, provided that the less certain terms of the protasis are met. It is thus striking that Lucan should adopt this form when introducing two options of equal probability that are also mutually exclusive. One gets the impression that the reader's choice, which

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[210] Wick (2004) at 9.411 connects the expression *si credere famae* to the references to *fama* and *fabula* discussed above, but comments only that this is more typical in treatments of myth than geography. Stinton (1976) discusses the former expression in detail, but leaves Lucan out of consideration. Lucan is surely drawing on Sal. *Jug*. 17.3.
[211] Cf. Acoreus' discussion of the reasons for the Nile's flood (10.195-267), with the comments of Manolaraki (2013) 86-8.
[212] Lowe (2010) 131 makes this point explicitly, but in a different context and to my mind on weaker grounds.
[213] Other poets routinely use an impersonal expression for such expressions of doubt; see Wick (2004) at 9.411.
[214] Thomas (1982) 17, 109 claims that this is typical of ethnographical treatments, but the examples he cites in n. 42 are uniformly impersonal or first person constructions.

itself cannot be made on purely rational grounds, leads to the actualization of the option selected. This may be pushing the linguistic evidence too far, but it remains true that the poet has created a dilemma of interpretation, that his narrator has declared his inability to resolve it, and that his readers are left to decide the matter for themselves. This decision does not seem to admit any rational analysis, however, but rather depends entirely on an individual's will to believe (*si* ***credere velis***, 9.411).[215]

This web of fact, fiction, history, myth, and belief is woven throughout the entirety of *Bellum Civile* 9, and it should come as little surprise that it also touches upon Cato. During the praise of Cato that follows his rejection of the oracle of Jupiter Hammon, the narrator declares:

> *si veris* ***magna*** *paratur*
> ***fama*** *bonis et si successu nuda remoto*
> *inspicitur virtus, quidquid laudamus in ullo* 595
> *maiorum, fortuna fuit* (9.593-6).
>
> If a **great reputation** is prepared for true good deeds, and if *virtus* is seen stripped bare of success, whatever we praise in any of our elders was good luck.

The implication of these lines is that the prize Cato will earn for his struggles in the desert is indeed a "great reputation," a reward that fits well with Cato's own interest in how others perceive him throughout the desert march. Considering this assertion in light of how *fama* and *fabula* are treated elsewhere in Book 9, however, this reward may not be as positive as it initially seems.[216] Lucan's depiction of Cato is emphatically marked by contradictions, and the reader can never tell whether to trust the narrator's praise of him or to focus instead on the cracks in his character. Indeed, since both optimistic and

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[215] For a more optimistic treatment of these scenes, see Ahl (1976) 268-70.
[216] *Contra* Hardie (2012) 185-6, who seems to imply that Cato's redefinition of *fama* is positive, inasmuch as it outstrips that of Pompey.

pessimistic evidence exerts so strong a pull, we can never be drawn fully into the orbit of either one. Yet this will also mean that it is impossible to know whether Cato's *fama* is a good reputation rightfully earned through his feats in the desert (*OLD fama* 5-7) or a more dubious reputation tantamount to rumor or myth (*OLD fama* 2-3). Like the origin of Lake Triton's name or the "truth" about Libya's status as a third continent, Lucan's audience must decide for themselves whether they wish to believe in Cato's greatness or view his objectives more critically.[217] The contradictions and negative undercurrents of Lucan's narrative, meanwhile, ensure that we can never be certain of our choice.[218]

Conclusions

The frustration produced by Lucan's contradictory depiction of Cato has long vexed readers seeking a clear statement about how Lucan viewed the civil wars and the world that allowed them to happen. Such a direct approach, however, would be ill suited to the events that Lucan narrates. The Romans who experienced the civil wars effectively had to make a leap of faith in deciding to support Pompey, Caesar, or Cato. All had to live or die with the consequences of this choice, and all no doubt suffered for it in some way. Moreover, their ability to make this decision was clouded by aggressive propaganda on

[217] Masters (1992) 87-90 would have this be a call to nihilism. Bartsch (1997) points to this tension within the text, but concludes that Lucan himself chose to believe in the Republican cause despite his doubts. This position seems to me untenable in light of the ambiguities in the depiction of Cato and the relatively mild treatment of Caesar throughout Book 10. Papaioannou (2005) and Lowe (2010) both take the position that I advocate here, but to my mind base their conclusions on insufficient evidence and without reference to the larger issues at play in the narrative of Cato's march.
[218] Cf. 1.126-7: *quis iustius induit arma* | *scire nefas*. Thus Martindale (1976) notes that Lucan's paradoxical style "forces the reader to think, demanding the utmost concentration. Intellectually astringent, evoking no more than it states, Lucan's style is at the furthest remove from the sensuous suggestiveness of the Virgilian manner."

both sides.[219] Determining fact from fiction, distinguishing myth from history would have been all but impossible, and these problems were compounded for Lucan by a century of Caesarian rule. The contradictory and ambiguous story that he tells, however, at least according to the reading I have offered over the last two chapters, is a perceptive mimesis of this conflict: the world of the *Bellum Civile* is one in which the reader is always doomed to be plagued by doubt. Instead of trying to simplify Lucan's complex picture of the civil war, we should recognize his poetic skill in describing a world where truth is always relative, and where one's ability to understand it is inevitably a question of one's will to believe.

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[219] On this, see Scott (1929); Zanker (1988); Osgood (2006) *passim*, but esp. 236-42, 335-9, 344-7, 350-7.

Conclusion:
Caesarian Stability?

It has been my contention throughout this project that Lucan weaves ambiguity and contradiction into every layer of the *Bellum Civile*. In order to prove this, I have shown how the poet frustrates his reader's ability to interpret the poem's language and syntax (Introduction), its fractured proem (Chapter 1), the shape and structure of its *cosmos* (Chapter 2), and its characterization of a major character, Cato (Chapters 3-4). Although I am aware that one must always be cautious in speaking of authorial intent, the consistency and pervasiveness of contradiction and ambiguity throughout the *Bellum Civile* strongly suggest that they are fundamental aspects of Lucan's poetic program. I have consequently argued that these features are intentional devices designed to lead the poem's readers into a state of anxiety and frustration about virtually every aspect of the civil war. Stripped of any clear guiding principle for how to interpret the text, we must accept uncertainty as the state forced upon us by the poem. Any determinations about its meaning, which is to say about how and why the Republic fell, ultimately derive not from the poem, but from the individual reader.

Despite this tendency towards interpretive confusion, Julius Caesar appears as a singular force of stability within the chaotic world of the *Bellum Civile.* Indeed, although the *imperator* confronts a number of crises, he always manages to escape intact, from the opening lines of the narrative through to the final scene. Caesar's success is of course determined by historical necessity, but it nevertheless remains possible to see Lucan's hand working within the narrative: apparent threats to Caesar's position are consistently

magnified using every literary tool at the poet's disposal,[1] and Lucan rhetorically punctuates many Caesarian victories with harsh editorial criticism.[2] Readers of the *Bellum Civile*—even though they know the outcome of the war—are consequently given the impression that Caesar might yet be stopped and are encouraged to respond negatively when he or one of his minions overcomes the challenges that threaten to impede his advance. On one level, this can be understood as a simple means of creating suspense or underscoring the impressiveness of Caesar's accomplishments.[3] Yet few of the episodes in which Caesar figures are concerned with military *realia*; rather, they are situations in which Caesar's status is called into question and in which his view of reality risks being contradicted.[4] Lucan, then, is less concerned with casting Caesar as a bully using brute force than as a man with a terrifying power to renegotiate his position relative to any entity that stands in his way.[5] Indeed, by successfully compelling others to accept his vocabulary, cosmology, and characterization of events, Caesar effectively shapes the universe according to his own liking.[6] For all the horror that the poet may want these events to provoke, it must be admitted that Caesar promises a type of fixity that is denied elsewhere in the text: the one thing the reader can always count on is that Caesar will be victorious. There is consequently something profoundly tempting—if not appealing—in

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[1] Thus Masters (1992) 20-4 on the Massilian naval battle.
[2] E.g. 3.167-8; 6.260-2; 6.303-5; 7.334-6; 7.721-3; 7.803-24; 10.341-2.
[3] Thus Quint (1993) 138, describing Caesar and the Storm; on this episode, see pp. 329-4.
[4] Thus Pitcher (2008) 246-7, speaking in the limited context of Caesar and the storm.
[5] On this, see Marti (1945) 363; Ahl (1976), esp. 191, 200; Feeney (1991) 292-301; Day (2013) 106-78.
[6] For an instance of Caesar (possibly) reshaping the metaphysical world, see pp. 163-72. On civil war as a contest over moral vocabulary, see esp. Roller (1996) and (2001) 17-63.

Lucan's portrait of him, and it is thus with a consideration of Caesar's place within the *Bellum Civile* that I would like to bring this project to a close.[7]

Caesar invictus

The first challenge to Caesar's position occurs the moment Lucan's introduction is complete. As the general marches his army across the Rubicon, the *imago Patriae* appears to his army and insists that it is illegal for citizens (*cives*, 1.192) to march any further under arms (1.185-92).[8] Although Caesar initially shudders at this impressive goddess, he quickly regains his composure (1.192-5) and delivers a speech that completely ignores both her and her formulation of the legal issues in play (1.195-203). Indeed, he addresses not *Patria*, but "the Thunderer" (*Tonans*, 1.196, anticipated by the masculine relative pronoun *qui* at 1.195) and invokes—anachronistically—a number of gods that are dear to the Julian *gens* and the dynasty established by Augustus.[9] After this lengthy preamble, he finally offers a few lines to justify his actions:

> *non te furialibus armis* 200
> *persequor: en, adsum victor terraque marique*
> *Caesar, ubique tuus (liceat modo, nunc quoque) miles.*
> *ille erit ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerit* ***hostem*** (1.200-3).
>
> I do not pursue you with savage wars: lo, I am present as a victor on land and sea, Caesar, everywhere *your* soldier (only let it be permissible now, too). *That* one, *that* one will be guilty, who has made me **an enemy** to you.

[7] On this, see Haffter (1957); Green (1991); Masters (1992) 244-7. In what follows I discuss only the most evocative episodes; the same sort of readings could nevertheless be applied to other scenes.
[8] Feeney (1991) 270-1 plausibly suggests that this flirtation with divine intervention in the narrative proves the passage is one of Lucan's earliest; at 292 he notes that *Patria* addresses the entire army, even though Caesar subsequently acts as if she speaks to him alone. See also Narducci (1985) 1558-63 and (2002) 194-207; Masters (1992) 1-10.
[9] Thus Grimal (1970) 56-9, who is followed by Feeney (1991) 292-3; Roche (2009) at 1.195-203; Fratantuono (2012) 23-5.

Throughout this speech, Caesar inverts *Patria*'s concern about his citizen status. He insists that he will always be identified as a soldier of Rome, and that the real problem lies in somebody else making him out to be a *hostis* (1.203).[10] Caesar's greatest coup, however, is his insistence that the person who has done this is the guilty party and thus is worthy of censure (*nocens*, 1.203). This, it would seem, is his primary justification for war. Despite the impressive epiphany of *Patria* and the delay with which she threatens both Caesar and the narrative, her sudden disappearance suggests that she has given way to the *imperator*. The reader may thus infer that Caesar has been successful in reframing the issues at play: his act at the Rubicon is not a question of a citizen crossing the boundary of Italy, but rather of a *victor* and *miles* of Rome pursuing a guilty party.

A second challenge comes when Caesar tries to explain his actions to his troops. Responding to the arrival of the tribunes M. Antonius and C. Scribonius Curio in his camp, he defends his decision to march on Rome in terms of uprooting the faction of Pompey, Cato, and Metellus that, to his mind, is dominating the government and preventing him and his troops from receiving their proper due (1.299-351).[11] The narrator tells us that the men are initially torn: duty and the thought of their ancestral homes (*pietas patriique penates*, 1.353) outweigh their desire for slaughter until "they are called back by their dread love of steel and fear of their leader" (*diro ferri revocantur amore* | *ductorisque metu*, 1.355-6).[12] At this point, the fictional personage Laelius stands up to express the views of the troops. His speech recasts the moral issues of the

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[10] *Contra* Fratantuono (2012) 25, who interprets this as a tacit admission by Caesar that he is, in fact, a *hostis*.
[11] On this speech, see Roche (2009) at 1.296-351, which expands on Tasler (1972).
[12] The enjambment of the second element suggests that the emphasis is rather more on the men's fear of Caesar than their love of war.

war in a manner similar to how Caesar had responded to *Patria*:[13] the political maneuvering at Rome is largely irrelevant because the men define citizenship in terms of loyalty to Caesar (*nec civis meus est, in quem tua classica, Caesar, | audiero*, 1.373-4); consequently, it will be appropriate for them to oppose anybody who dares challenge him, even if this means committing acts of gross impiety (1.374-86).[14] At the end of this oration, the men acclaim their support and joyfully press south towards Rome (1.386-91). Although it is true that Caesar does not escape from this potential mutiny by his own actions,[15] instead allowing Laelius to bring the troops around, the fact remains that the sudden resolution of the conflict appears entirely fortuitous. Indeed, Lucan casts the episode as a moment in which the progress of the civil war might have been derailed, and it is only though the unexpected intervention of an otherwise unknown figure that things manage to fall out as Caesar had initially planned.

We find a similar progression when the tribune L. Caecilius Metellus imposes his veto in order to prevent Caesar from emptying the treasury housed in the Temple of Saturn (3.112-68).[16] The issue in play is Caesar's respect for tribunician sacrosanctity: this had nominally been his justification for war, and he is now forced to reveal whether his need for gold is greater than his support of Republican laws. Although Metellus makes these issues explicit in a direct speech (3.123-33), Caesar tries to recast the terms of debate: he does admit that killing a tribune would result in pollution, but denies that

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[13] On this, see Roller (1996) and Roche (2009) at 1.352-91.
[14] The acts of impiety include slaughtering a brother or parents, stabbing pregnant wives in the stomach, despoiling temples of the gods in order to mint coins, and breaking down the walls of Rome. On the irony of Laelius saying this while wearing the *quercus civilis*, see Ahl (1976) 200-1.
[15] Fantham (1985) compares this episode with the mutiny against Caesar that arises in Book 5, on which, see pp. 242-8, 325-6.
[16] For a structural analysis of this episode, see Lebek (1976) 195-206.

Metellus is an opponent worthy of himself (3.134-40). Interestingly, Metellus refuses to relent, and Caesar very nearly uses force against him (3.141-3).[17] At this point, however, a certain Cotta intervenes and manages to persuade Metellus to yield. His argument is based on the theory that displays of freedom undermine whatever freedom remains under a tyranny, and that, since Caesar effectively controls the treasury anyway, he will only harm himself by robbing it (3.145-52). With this Metellus finally gives way, and Caesar claims the total wealth of Rome for himself (3.152-67). Indeed, although the narrator laments that this was the first time Caesar became richer than Rome itself (3.167-8), his complaints do nothing to stop Metellus from suddenly—almost automatically—falling into line (*protinus*, 3.153).[18]

The structural similarities between this scene and the Laelius episode suggest that the two should be read in tandem: in each instance Caesar's attempt at persuasion initially fails, another speaker then emerges to plead the *imperator*'s case again, and this individual is finally successful. Moreover, by drawing these episodes out in the manner that he does, Lucan effectively heightens the narrative tension and so draws his reader's focus to the way in which the situation is resolved.[19] We may be justified, then, in asking what Laelius and Cotta have in common that allows their rhetoric to succeed when Caesar's plainly fails. The most obvious answer would seem to be their willingness to speak openly and explicitly about the new political reality that comes with Caesar's decision to wage a civil war. In each of the episodes discussed thus far, Caesar talks

[17] By my reckoning, the only characters who persist in opposing Caesar when confronted by him personally are Metellus (here) and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (2.478-525; 7.597-616).
[18] *OLD protinus* 3, 4.
[19] Thus Hunink (1992) at 3.112-153.

around issues related to the definition of citizenship and the loss of *libertas*. Laelius and Cotta, however, have no such qualms. It would thus seem to be their frankness about Caesar's position that allows them to win the day, and so to bring about the result that the *imperator* had intended all along. Viewed from the other side, one may likewise be struck by the willingness of both the troops and Metellus to subject themselves to Caesarian autocracy.[20] This speaks volumes about the role of history's minor players in the world of the *Bellum Civile* and, as we shall see, is not a lesson that Caesar must be taught a third time.

Caesar once again attempts to assert his position during a mutiny of his troops (5.237-373), which Lucan presents as the greatest threat to afflict the general since the start of the war. At the start of this uprising, Caesar learns that his position is wholly precarious (*haud magis expertus discrimine Caesar in ullo est | quam non e stabili tremulo sed culmine cuncta | despiceret staretque super titubantia fultus*, 5.249-51),[21] and the poet heightens the emotion of the scene by praying that the gods might let even an act of *discordia* bring the civil war to an end: "Thus let it come, o gods: since duty and loyalty fail and our only remaining hope is for bad character, let discord bring about an end of civil war" (*sic eat, o superi: quando pietasque fidesque | destituunt moresque malos sperare relictum est, | finem civili faciat discordia bello*, 5.297-9).[22] With this exclamation the poet encourages the reader to view Caesar as wholly negative, and

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[20] Cf. the reaction of Cato's troops during their "mutiny," discussed on pp. 255-7. Although to my mind the similarity between these episodes is strong, it must be admitted that Lucan does not draw any explicit connection between them or discuss obedience overtly in the present context.

[21] There is perhaps an echo here of Lucan's advice to Nero to choose a realm in the center of heaven in order to prevent the *cosmos* from toppling (1.53-9).

[22] Cf. his prayer that both armies might be drowned during the Spanish flood reported at 4.48-143; on this episode, see pp. 116-20, 335.

indeed to deem any force that might stop him a genuine boon.[23] At this stage, however, Caesar has grown accustomed to risking everything in a single engagement and is eager to test the limits of his *fortuna* (5.300-2). As discussed in the last chapter, he unleashes a fearsome speech in response to his soldiers, belittling them and insisting that any success they have enjoyed derives from him, and not *vice versa* (5.319-64).[24] Although the narrator roundly criticizes Caesar for his continued love of civil war, repeatedly saying it should be a source of shame to him (*piget*, 5.310; *pigebit*, 5.311), this time Caesar's attempt to shape his relationship with others has its desired effect: the men immediately fall into line and strike a new compact according to the terms of service Caesar has set forth (5.364-73). Throughout the rest of the *Bellum Civile* the reader hears of no further uprisings.[25]

Another type of obstacle confronts Caesar during his siege of Massilia. Here, when he finds himself in desperate need of lumber to construct his engines of war, he decides to level a grove that is sacred to a local Druidic deity. Lucan builds tension by describing this precinct as a *locus horridus*—a terrifying inversion of the *locus amoenus* familiar from bucolic poetry (3.399-425).[26] Although Caesar's men initially balk at defiling this space, the *imperator* strikes the first blow to assure them that any retribution

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[23] The paradox of *discordia* bringing about the end of civil war—itself the height of discord—is strongly marked and adds to the pathos of the scene. Thus Barratt (1979) at 5.297-9 observes that "the paragraph ends with an indignant and pessimistic intervention by the poet."
[24] See pp. 242-8.
[25] Fantham (1985) 119-20 notes that Lucan conflates a later mutiny with the one depicted here. Caesar's men declare their continued acceptance of this relationship after Caesar survives a storm (5.682-99); for the events that preface that speech, see pp. 329-34.
[26] For a summary of the scholarship on this term, see Leigh (1999) n. 15.

for the impiety will fall on his own head (3.426-36). This accomplished, the grove is felled, and the campaign against the city proceeds as planned (3.436-52).

On first glance this episode is a straightforward instance of Caesar's intolerance for delay and frenzied impulse to wage civil war. The passage has drawn the attention of scholars, however, because it finds no firm parallel in the historical record and seems to be modeled most closely on Ovid's account of Erysicthon (Ov. *Met.* 8.738-878).[27] In that episode, it will be recalled, the king's punishment for desecrating a sacred grove was affliction with an insatiable hunger that led him to consume all his riches and eventually to feast on his own body. Lucan's purpose in alluding to this story is not difficult to see: he wishes to raise the possibility that the *imperator* will suffer a similar punishment.[28] Indeed, this is the very outcome feared by Caesar's troops, the Gauls who watch on in horror, and the Massiliotes who witness these events from inside their city (3.445-52).[29] An interpretive difficulty emerges, however, when Caesar is not immediately punished and the narrator concludes the episode by asserting that "Fortune preserves many guilty men, and divine powers are only capable of growing angry at the wretched" (*servat*

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[27] Lucan's likely sources are outlined succinctly by Phillips (1968); this work is elaborated, amongst other, by Esposito (1988); Hunink (1992) at 3.399-455. Masters (1992) 25-9; and esp. Leigh (1999). Thomas (1982) discusses tree violation in Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan; it is his contention that Vergilian parallels may be more prevalent than others have allowed. Radicke (2004) 252-3 emphasizes these literary antecedents, but suggests that the episode may also find parallel in Alexander's desecration of the grove of the Branchidae. Augoustakis (2006) argues that Lucan is alluding to the death of one Turullius in order to anticipate Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March; the link between these episodes, however, is to my mind too tenuous to support his interpretation. In any event, the allusion Augoustakis mentions was first noted—and largely passed over—by Leigh (1999) 183. The Ovidian parallel decidedly predominates. For a fuller summary of the scholarship, see Augoustakis (2006) 634.

[28] Fratantuono (2012) 112 suggests that Caesar is already affected by such an appetite, and so cannot be punished.

[29] On this, see esp. Thomas (1982); for the horror shared by all three groups, see Leigh (1999) 176-7.

multos fortuna nocentes | *et tantum miseris irasci numina possunt*, 3.447-8). The implication of this *sententia* is that Caesar is no *miser* and so can do as he pleases.[30] This would seem to signal to the reader that Caesar's actions have placed him on par with the gods, or perhaps even above them: when his power is pitted against theirs, they are incapable of stopping him.[31] Yet the concern with punishment cannot be shaken so easily. Although Caesar is not struck down in the present scene, it remains possible that we are meant to understand his "insatiate ambition [as] a sort of retribution, analogous to Erysicthon's hunger," or else to think forward to the Ides of March as the moment at which the axe finally bounces back to fell the *imperator*.[32] Nothing in the text, of course, requires that we adopt one of these stances; rather, Lucan uses the allusion to Erysicthon to raise two possibilities simultaneously: either Caesar will eventually be punished or he has proved himself free to disregard the gods. As so often, individual readers are left to interpret this ambiguity as they will. What makes Caesar different from other characters, however, is the consistency of his success in opposing gods and men; as such episodes build upon one another, therefore, the reader is invited—or even encouraged—to

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[30] *Contra* Leigh (1999), who argues that Caesar should be understood in religio-philosophical terms as an individual who lets the light of rationalism into the darkness of pagan superstition. On Caesar's conviction that he is greater than others, one may compare his words at 5.343: "the human race exists for the benefit of a few" (*humanum paucis vivit genus*) and the assertion that his confrontation with a storm was "not to be dared by slaves" (*vix audenda famulis*, 5.509); see also the remarks of Sklenář (2003) 128-35. Fratantuono (2012) 114-5 suggests that the word *miseri* alludes to changes in fortune, but the interpretive payoff of this is not immediately clear from his subsequent comments.

[31] It thus calls into question the narrator's suggestion that Cato was the gods' rival at 1.128; on this, see also Day (2013) 137-43.

[32] Thus Phillips (1968) 300. Leigh (1999) 179 denies that divine retribution can remain a possibility.

question the implications of Caesar's victories for the structure of Lucan's poetic universe.[33]

Caesar's power is again demonstrated when he confronts a storm while sailing across the Adriatic to collect a fleet that his legate M. Antonius hesitated to convey to Greece (5.476-97).[34] Although Caesar is warned against sailing by a local ferryman, who meticulously explains the various signs of an advancing typhoon, he nevertheless presses on (5.497-593). A massive storm then arises, and Caesar's tiny ship is only saved when a wave miraculously drives it back to shore (5.593-677). Whereas Lucan earlier combined the literary trope of the *locus horridus* with an allusion to Ovid in order to elevate his episode at the Massilian grove, here he achieves the same effect by leveraging one of the most famous type scenes from ancient epic: the storm at sea. Throughout this episode, Lucan consciously seeks to "imitate, adapt and outdo earlier storm descriptions,"[35] with the result that his "superstorm" feels like the culmination of the entire epic tradition. Indeed, this point is underscored by the poet's invocation of language drawn from the Stoic theory of *ecpyrosis*, through which he seems to intimate that the world is on the brink of collapse, and thus that his account is—quite literally—the epic storm to end all epic storms.[36]

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[33] Phillips (1968) 300: "Lucan has elsewhere abundantly indicated that the divine gives way to Caesar with disheartening regularity." Although I am not wholly convinced by the arguments set forth by Leigh (1999), his general point that Caesar is displacing the old gods is surely correct.

[34] For further discussions of this episode, see esp. Morford (1967a); Ahl (1976) 205-9; Quint (1993) 137-40; Narducci (2002) 247-58; Pitcher (2008); Day (2013) 145-56.

[35] Matthews (2008) 23, with an outline of Lucan's adaptations provided on pp. 23-5. Additional comments are provided ad locc.

[36] Day (2013) 146-9 argues that Lucan's allusions to *ecpyrosis* elevate this episode into the realm of the sublime. On Stoic language in Lucan, see Lapidge (1979), esp. 367-8 on references to Stoic cataclysm in this episode. See also Hershkowitz (1998) 226-9;

Apart from its sheer magnitude, however, the storm is also significant because it is cast in terms that make it appear to respond to Caesar's hubris. Although this is seen in a limited way at its onset, when it cuts Caesar off as he insists that the weather will obey his own desire (5.593-6),[37] it is more strongly suggested at the end of the episode. Here, as the storm reaches its climax, Caesar unleashes a direct speech in which he interprets the cyclone as a divine attempt to snuff out his life and subsequently declares that he is not bothered by a death at sea since it will ensure that men will always fear him (5.654-71). No sooner does Caesar end his cry than a miraculous wave deposits him on land, "where the narrow shores are free of jagged rocks" (*scruposis… angusta vacant ubi litora saxis*, 5.675).

Monica Matthews has noted that there is a potential contradiction in this outcome. On one level, it is surely meant to demonstrate Caesar's *fortuna*, to prove that he holds some special favor that allows him to escape even the most dangerous situations unharmed; on another, however, the weather consistently goes against Caesar's stated wishes and expectations, and so seems to respond to him antagonistically.[38] The problem lies in the weather both favoring and opposing Caesar simultaneously. Although for obvious reasons I am hesitant to dismiss this apparent contradiction, the sequence of the narrative suggests a third option that casts Caesar in a rather different light than the two possibilities Matthews has proposed, namely that the weather actually yields to the force

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Matthews (2008) ad locc. and esp. 5.596; 5.612-20; 5.620-6; 5.632-7. The result of the episode, however, is obviously not a literal cosmic collapse; on this, see pp. 104-22.

[37] Thus Matthews (2008) ad loc.; *contra* Ahl (1976) 205-9, who insists that the meteorological explanations for the storm preclude any metaphysical cause. Ahl is followed by Johnson (1987) 107; Quint (1993) 137-40.

[38] Matthews (2008) 5.672-7. For other instances of responsive geography, see pp. 124-31.

of Caesar's character.[39] Justification for this view comes from comparison with the mutiny scene discussed above: in each episode, we can see that there is a major challenge to Caesar's position, that he responds with a speech describing the state of affairs he wishes to impose on others, and that the crisis quickly dissipates. It is consequently tempting, especially in light of the short gap between these episodes, to interpret the storm according to the same logic employed in the mutiny: just as Caesar's troops accepted the position that their general assigned them, so too do the forces in control of the weather tacitly accede to the implications of Caesar's speech. In order to gauge the significance of this possibility, however, it will be helpful to consider what type of status Caesar envisions for himself at the height of the storm, and what entities might be thought to acquiesce to his demands.

Lucan constructs Caesar's speech as follows:

Credit iam ***digna*** *pericula Caesar*
fatis *esse* ***suis****. 'quantusne avertere,' dixit,*
'me superis labor est, parva quem puppe sedentem 655
tam magno petiere mari! si ***gloria leti***
est pelago donata ***mei*** *bellisque* ***negamur****,*
intrepidus quamcumque datis ***mihi****, numina, mortem*
accipiam*. licet ingentes abruperit actus*
festinata dies fatis, ***sat magna peregi****.* 660
Arctoas ***domui*** *gentes,* ***inimica subegi***
arma *metu, vidit Magnum* ***mihi*** *Roma secundum,*
iussa plebe ***tuli*** *fasces per bella negatos;*
nulla ***meis*** *aberit* ***titulis*** *Romana potestas,*
nec sciet hoc quisquam nisi tu, quae sola meorum 665
conscia votorum es, ***me****, quamvis plenus honorum*
et dictator eam *Stygias* ***et consul*** *ad umbras,*
privatum, Fortuna, ***mori****.* ***mihi*** *funere nullo*
est opus, o superi: lacerum retinete cadaver
fluctibus in mediis, ***desint mihi*** *busta rogusque,* 670
dum ***metuar*** *semper terraque* ***expecter*** *ab omni.'*

[39] Thus Hershkowitz (1998) 226-7, citing Morford (1967a) 37; Newmyer (1983) 249.

> Now Caesar believes the dangers are **worthy of his fates**. "How much effort," he said, "do the gods require to overturn me, whom they have sought sitting in a small ship upon so great a sea! If **the glory of my death** has been granted to the sea and **we are denied** to wars, **I shall receive** fearlessly, divinities, whatever death you give **me**. Although the day hastened by the fates has shattered huge undertakings, **my accomplishments are great enough**. **I have conquered** the northern races, **I have subdued** with fear **my enemies' arms**, Rome has seen Magnus second **to me**, by a decree of the plebs **I have born** the *fasces* that were denied with war; no Roman office will be absent **from my titles**, nor will anyone know this except you, *Fortuna*, who alone are conscious of my vows: that I perish as a private citizen, even though **I go** to the Stygian shades full of honors as **both dictator and consul**. **I have** need for no funeral, o gods: keep this wounded corpse amidst the waves, **let me have no** tombs and pyre, so long as **I am feared, I shall** always **be awaited** by every land.

Throughout this passage, Caesar pits himself against the divinities that he believes are attacking him. He mocks them for needing to raise so great a storm in order to destroy him (5.654-6) and insists that his death will bring *gloria* upon whatever entity manages to cause it (5.656-7). Although this latter assertion is a tacit admission of Caesar's mortality, it also reveals that he will not let the gods cow him with the threat of death; on the contrary, the *imperator* remains fearless (*intrepidus*, 5.658) because he has achieved every office that Rome has to offer and has compelled the city to admit his primacy over Pompey (5.659-64).[40] For all intents and purposes, then, he can already claim victory in the war's ideological theater.[41] It is this fact that allows him to judge death at sea a benefit: his greatness has been proved, and his sudden disappearance while both consul and dictator would only prevent others from pulling him down from this height (5.665-7).

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[40] This looks back to the introduction, where the narrator told us that "Caesar could no longer endure any superior, nor Pompey any equal (*nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem* | *Pompeiusve parem*, 1.125-6). For a fuller discussion of this theme across the *Bellum Civile*, see Matthews (2008) at 5.662.

[41] On the ethical competition between Caesar and Pompey, see Roller (1996) and (2001) 17-63.

Yet perhaps this misstates Caesar's concerns. His faith in his *Fortuna* is never in doubt (5.655-6), and he recognizes that if there are no witnesses to confirm his death, then future generations must always fear his imminent return (5.665-71).[42]

Caesar, of course, must be preserved for the Ides of March, but his assertion here reveals that his end-game is not mere victory over his son-in-law; rather, his greatest desire is to become a shadowy force of terror whose power and presence are recognized—and dreaded—by all.[43] To put this another way, the *imperator* wishes to become a god like those he addresses throughout his speech: indistinct forces that are believed to have complete control over mankind and to be able to crush or support it at will (*superi*, 5.655, 669; *numina* 5.658; *Fortuna*, 5.665-8). Indeed, Caesar has already intimated that he possesses certain aspects of divinity earlier in the episode;[44] now that the storm threatens his life, however, he is willing to express it in no uncertain terms. The reader may thus infer that Caesar has no fear of drowning because it will effectively secure him the sort of divinity he so eagerly desires.[45] The assertion of this fact, however, is tantamount to a threat against the gods: in an ironic twist, their attempts to

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[42] This formulation must have been shocking to an ancient audience, for whom lack of burial was normally depicted as a severe disgrace; on this, see Matthews (2008) at 5.688-71. Ahl (2976) 205-9 attributes this to Caesar's megalomania; he is followed by Johnson (1987) 104-7. For a less terrifying statement on lack of burial in the *Bellum Civile*, see Lucan's consolation to Pompey's spirit at 8.865-72 and the discussion of Hardie (2012) 179-96, esp. 184-8.
[43] The closest parallel for the sort of demonic return that Caesar here envisions is perhaps Freddy Krueger, the villain of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* film series. Positive iterations can be found in the second coming of Christ and the belief that King Arthur will someday return from Avalon.
[44] Matthews (2008) at 5.577-93 notes that Caesar envisions himself as the gods' superior (5.580-3); intimates that he is a godhead already (*tutela*, 5.584); implies that he possesses the preternatural weight typically attributed to gods (*pressam… onus*, 5.585-6); and claims foreknowledge of the future (*defendet… dabitur*, 5.586-7).
[45] Day (2013) 155-6 argues that Caesar experiences danger as a form of sublimity, and that he is consequently able to draw on it as a source of power.

kill Caesar will only accelerate his plans to displace them. Indeed, it is only when Caesar has made this point, as noted above, that a wave deposits him safely on the shore. Whatever gods exist in the *Bellum Civile* would thus seem to have yielded to Caesar's power and to have accepted the status he so boldly claims for himself.[46] Lucan thus ends the episode with an assertion that Caesar, "when he touched upon the land, received simultaneously so many kingdoms, so many cities, and his own fortune" (*pariter tot regna, tot urbes | fortunamque suam tacta tellure recepit*, 5.676-7).

Throughout the episodes discussed thus far, the reader can see a general progression. Caesar's rhetoric at the start of the poem largely fails to achieve its goals. Apart from the encounter with *Patria*, he requires the aid of an outside party to speak on his behalf and win a crowd or individual to his cause. Soon, however, Caesar acts with greater bravado, whether because he learns that this is effective or because he comes to believe in the privileged status that others have attributed to him. Thus at the Massilian grove he is quick to disregard the divinity that—Lucan emphasizes—is immanent in the woods, and likewise during the mutiny and the storm insists on his own privileged position in the world. Although he repeatedly challenges other entities to strike him down, none is willing to do so. The way Lucan constructs his narrative consequently gives the reader the impression that Caesar is correct: by asserting his quasi-divine status with impunity he seems to prove that he has, in fact, achieved it.

A range of smaller scenes in which events unexpectedly turn out in Caesar's favor reinforces this broad narrative progression. Although such episodes may be Lucan's

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[46] Cf. Erictho's threats against the gods, discussed on pp. 144-53.

attempt at expressing the *imperator*'s famous "luck" (*fortuna*),[47] the effect of their inclusion is to underscore the ineluctability of Caesar's onslaught.[48] Two brief examples will show how this pattern functions within the text. At the start of Book 4, heavy rains swamp the Caesarian and Pompeian armies (4.48-143). In the midst of describing this storm, Lucan interjects and prays that all the world's waters might flow into Spain in order to drown the men and prevent the civil war from progressing (4.110-20). This monologue heightens the emotion of the scene and—as in the case of Caesar's mutiny above—paints a horrible disaster as morally preferable to further conflict between fellow Romans. Despite the narrator's plea, however, his prayer is immediately frustrated by the assertion that Fortune soon returned to Caesar's side, content to have given her man a little scare (*sed parvo Fortuna viri contenta pavore | plena redit*, 4.121-2).[49] Against the odds, and against the narrator's wishes, Caesar manages to escape unharmed.

The *aristeia* of Scaeva is cast in similar terms. Although Scaeva alone is matched against an entire army (***par**que **novum** Fortuna videt concurrere, **bellum** | **atque virum***, 6.191-2), he nevertheless holds off the Pompeian troops as they prepare to press their advantage and bring the war to an end (6.1-262).[50] The grotesque details of this battle narrative stretch the limit of the imagination and emphasize the implausibility of the account: after slaughtering countless men and suffering countless wounds, Scaeva regains

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[47] On Caesar and *fortuna* see esp. Friedrich (1938); Dick (1967); and Ahl (1976) 293-305
[48] *Contra* Quint (1993), who insists that the force of Caesar's *Fortuna* and *Fatum* "denies any meaningful historical teleology to either winners or losers" (135); this view is reiterated in his discussion of Caesar and the Storm, where he claims Lucan's intent is to show that "Caesar is simply very, very lucky" (139).
[49] See pp. 116-20.
[50] On Scaeva, see esp. Rutz (1960); Marti (1966); Ahl (1976) 117-21; Johnson (1987) 57-60; Leigh (1997) 158, 221-33, 293-6.

his strength by killing an unfortunate Pompeian through deceit (6.228-47).[51] Here, too, the narrator criticizes the action, this time insisting that Scaeva will be unable to celebrate a triumph because he displayed his *virtus* in a civil war and faulting him for using his prowess to prepare a master (6.257-62).[52] This outburst prompts the reader to oppose the Caesarian victory, and thus to fight against a narrative progression that is ensured by history itself. Since none of this can change the destined outcome, however, Lucan's rhetorical inflation of the battle and his editorial opposition to Scaeva do little more than emphasize the ineluctability of Caesar's advance.

Scenes such as these pervade the *Bellum Civile,* conspiring to suggest that Caesar enjoys the support of whatever gods inhabit its world and virtually justifying his continual willingness to test his *Fortuna*. As Debra Hershkowitz has argued, however, they do not need be interpreted as evidence of Caesar's megalomania; rather, they seem to suggest that "perhaps this so-called self-delusion [i.e. the belief that *fortuna* will ensure escape from forces of *furor*] is in fact an awareness on Caesar's part of the *furor* which has been vital in making his career successful."[53] Indeed, we have seen how Caesar tests the limits of his *fortuna* with increasing boldness and frequency, and even suggests that he is a rival to the gods themselves. This narrative progression reaches a climax at Pharsalus. There, the *imperator* is overjoyed to see "the time he had sacrificed for and sought with a thousand prayers, when he might entrust **everything** <u>to the extremes of</u>

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[51] Were it not for Caesar's own report of the man's actions, Lucan's critics might well assume that the entire episode was invented. Although Lucan admittedly exaggerates Scaeva's actions, he does not depart so far from the historical account as one might think. On the virtually magical restoration of strength that we see in this episode, cf. Lucan's story of Antaeus and Hercules (4.589-660).
[52] Cf. the concern with Cato's position during the desert march, discussed on pp. 242-75.
[53] Hershkowitz (1998) 226; *contra* Ahl (1976) 205-9, 227-30.

chance" (*oblatumque videt votis sibi mille petitum | tempus, in extremos quo mitteret* ***omnia*** *casus*, 7.238-9). At least in Caesar's mind, this contest promises to grant him final confirmation of his own position, firmly establishing that what he asserted in the storm is a true reflection of reality. Lucan's reader, of course, already knows what the outcome of the battle will be will be, and has been clued in to the metaphysical implications of Caesar's victory.[54] Once again, it only remains for the poet reluctantly to describe the events (or in this case to pass over specific details, 7.552-6), and so to confirm the validity of Caesar's success.

Although Caesar comes to the fore briefly at the end of Book 7, he largely disappears from the narrative until the end of Book 9. After this point, however, he becomes the sole focus of Lucan's attention: we hear of an (unhistorical) visit to Troy (9.951-999); his arrival in Egypt and receipt of Pompey's head (9.999-1108); and a sojourn in Alexandria that includes a trip to Alexander's tomb (10.1-52), his introduction to the seductress Cleopatra (10.53-106), and a lavish feast that includes discussion of the Nile's source (10.107-331). The general tone of the poem changes during this time. Rather than impugning Caesar for his destruction of *libertas* and criminal actions, much of Lucan's ire is directed at Alexander and the Ptolemaic kings who followed in his wake.[55] Indeed, the treatment of Caesar is generally mild, and, as noted earlier, he is even said to enjoy the tutelage of Pompey's shade.[56] All of this would seem to support my contention that Lucan's opposition to Caesar in Books 1-7 is chiefly rhetorical, and

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[54] See my discussion of Erictho's necromancy, pp. 163-72.
[55] Ahl (1976) 225-7 proposes that this change in focus occurs as Caesar becomes soft under Cleopatra's influence.
[56] See pp. 154-7.

that the heightened emotion surrounding Pharsalus can be attributed to the fact that the battle was a natural point of climax in the epic's progression.[57]

Yet just as the narrative began with Caesar pushing headlong past *Patria*, so too does the *imperator* escape a major threat in the poem's final lines. Before an analysis of this episode can be undertaken, however, it must be acknowledged that "the end of the *Pharsalia*" has been a hoary problem in scholarship on the *Bellum Civile*. From at least the 17th century we find scholars and poets writing continuations of Lucan's narrative or speculating about where the poet would have ended if his life had not been cut short.[58] Jamie Masters has reined in this sort of speculation by demonstrating that any argument about the planned ending of the poem depends on circular logic,[59] but he has won few supporters for his own conclusion that the *Bellum Civile* is complete and that the ending in our manuscripts is the one Lucan intended from the start.[60] I do not intend to wade too deeply into this debate, but my own suspicion—and I confess it is nothing more than a suspicion—is that Lucan's death is indeed responsible for the poem's abrupt ending, and that Lucan originally envisioned extending his narrative beyond the events of winter 48-47 BC. Saying anything more specific than this, however, would be to enter unnecessarily into the realm of speculation, and so to open the door to the type of criticism that Masters has so rightly leveled against others. Yet even if we cannot speak with any certainty about the *finalé* that Lucan originally envisioned, I do think that the episode with which our manuscripts end can be shown to cohere quite well with the rest

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[57] On Lucan's narrator, see pp. 91-7.

[58] On early-modern English readers of Lucan, see Paleit (2013). To my knowledge the most recent assertion of the poem's planned ending is Stover (2008).

[59] Masters (1992) 216-59, which summarizes previous scholarship on the issue.

[60] Fratantuono (2012) 430-1 echoes Masters' judgment, but is content to draw the reader's attention to Thomas May's *Continuation* (1640).

of the poem. Indeed, when viewed as the culmination of the portrait of Caesar presented above, it appears as a suitable—if not intentional—conclusion to the *Bellum Civile*.[61]

Lucan rapidly brings his epic to a close by narrating the siege of Alexandria in 47 BC (10.332-533). This brings us to a point where Caesar is hemmed in on Pharos and unsure of his escape. The final lines of the poem run as follows:

> *Molis in exiguae spatio stipantibus armis*
> *dum parat in vacuas Martem transferre carinas,* 535
> *dux Latius tota subitus formidine belli*
> *cingitur: hinc densae praetexunt litora classes,*
> *hinc tergo insultant pedites. via nulla salutis,*
> *non fuga, non virtus; vix spes quoque mortis honestae.*
> *non acie fusa nec magnae stragis acervis* 540
> *vincendus tum Caesar erat sed sanguine nullo.*
> *captus* ***sorte*** *loci pendet;* ***dubius****que timeret*
> *optaretne mori respexit in agmine denso*
> *Scaevam perpetuae meritum iam nomina famae*
> *ad campus, Epidamne, tuos, ubi solus apertis* 545
> *obsedit muris calcantem moenia Magnum* (10.534-46).

> As the weapons are packed in the space of a narrow jetty while he prepares to transfer the war onto empty ships, the Latin leader is overcome by the sum of war's fear and hemmed in: on one side packed fleets stretch across the shores, on the other infantry threaten his rear. No path of safety, no flight, no prowess; scarcely even hope for an upright death. At that moment Caesar was about to be conquered not with his army routed nor with heaps of great slaughter, but without any blood. He hangs in the balance, trapped **by the chance** of the place; and, while doubting whether he should fear or hope to die, he caught sight of Scaeva in the packed battle-line, already having won the reputation of continual fame on your plains, Epidamnus, where he alone, though his fortification lay open, besieged Magnus even as he tread upon the walls.

On one level, we can observe that Lucan here reverts to a depiction of Caesar that we have not seen since Book 3: the general is genuinely afraid (10.536, 10.538-41), doubts

[61] Masters (1992) 247-59 argues that this is the intentional ending, making the good point that this is the only time in the poem when Caesar pauses to reflect on what has transpired in the course of the poem. My own reasons for thinking the episode forms an adequate ending, as will be seen, are rather different.

his ability to escape the situation alive (10.542-3), and even feels that chance has worked against him (*capus* ***sorte*** *loci*, 10.542). Indeed, whereas Caesar's troops had insisted earlier that the life and safety of others is dependent on him (*tot in hac anima populorum vita salusque* | *pendeat*, 5.686-7), now it is he who hangs in the balance (*pendet*, 10.542). All of this serves to build tension within the episode, and to give the impression that Caesar is on the cusp of defeat.

With the appearance of Scaeva, however, the old pattern is restored: this, too, is to be a danger that Caesar will narrowly escape.[62] Even so, the centurion's presence must surely come as a surprise. The last time the reader saw him, he was being carried off the battlefield after succumbing to countless wounds: "A crowd of comrades catches him **as he collapses** and rejoices to place **the dead man** on their shoulders" (***labentem*** *turba suorum* | *excipit atque umeris* ***defectum*** *imponere gaudet*, 6.251-2). It is true, of course, that the verb *deficio* can mean "weakened" (*OLD deficio* 5), but Lucan's dreadful portrait of the hero makes this interpretation unlikely. Scaeva has just torn out and trampled upon his own eye when it was fixed with an arrow (5.214-9), and so many spears have pierced his skin that they form a hedgehog-like armor that protects him from further wounds (5.205-12).[63] Indeed, it is these very missiles that men rejoice to pluck from Scaeva's flesh as offerings to the god of war (5.255-7). The natural conclusion for the audience to draw when it hears the word *defectum* (5.252), then, is that Scaeva has given up the ghost

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[62] Thus Masters (1992) 256-7 "[W]ith one gesture Lucan is building up the battle on the mole (out of nothing) into a crisis which has all the trappings | of a final, climactic moment, in which the protagonist meets his end; and with another gesture he is insisting that the end is still a long way off, that Caesar will escape even from here, as he did from Dyrrachium."

[63] I confess my indebtedness to Bartsch (1997) 54 for the delightful image of Scaeva as "steel hedgehog." Fratantuono (2012) insists "we might have every reason to suspect Scaeva's death" at Dyrrachium (431), but offers no defense of the assertion (431-2).

(*OLD deficio* 6). Consequently, we must deem his sudden reappearance in the poem's final lines wholly unexpected, as if he has been revived to help his general beat the odds just one last time.[64]

In trying to account for Scaeva's presence at the end of the poem, Lee Fratantuono has recently argued that the centurion serves as an emblem of *furor*, and that he is meant to show Caesar that escape from the jetty will require an act of *furor* similar to the one he provided at Dyrrachium.[65] Although there is much to recommend this interpretation, I hope to have shown above that Scaeva's actions equally revealed him to be a sign of Caesar's *fortuna.* Indeed, whether through his own efforts or the unexpected help of others, Caesar has overcome every obstacle that has challenged him since the poem's opening lines. We may consequently infer that Scaeva's miraculous appearance is meant to intimate that the *imperator* will live to fight another day, and thus that *Fortuna* has not abandoned her darling even when things seem to be at their worst.[66]

Although it is true that Lucan occasionally directs our attention beyond the limits of his text, we must accept that the image with which the *Bellum Civile* ends is not a wishful glance towards Cato's suicide at Utica or even the Ides of March. On the contrary, he leaves us gazing upon a Caesar who is victorious and unpunished, saved once again by *Fortuna*, ready to finish off the civil war he began when he first burst onto

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[64] On this, see Fratantuono (2012) 431. Masters (1992) 255-6 notes that *respexit* can also mean "recall," and prefers a metapoetic interpretation of the episode. The virtual revivification of Scaeva serves as another way in which Caesar is assimilated to Erictho; on this, see pp. 141-54.
[65] Fratantuono (2012) 431-7.
[66] Thus Haffter (1957) 124 suggests that the final lines look back to Caesar's unexpected success in facing the mutiny in Book 5 and in having Scaeva save his forces in Book 6.

Lucan's page. The parting message of the *Bellum Civile* is thus a reminder of the one certainty the reader has witnessed throughout Lucan's narrative: Caesar always wins.[67]

A Crisis of Interpretation

I noted briefly at the start of this conclusion that narrative descriptions of Caesar as an unconquered and unconquerable champion are frequently punctuated with editorial comments that encourage the reader to oppose him. The rhetorical approach that Lucan has taken to this character, then, is a precise inversion of what we have seen with Cato: whereas the audience is told that Cato is worthy of the greatest praise even as he marches inevitably towards failure, Caesar is presented as a figure worthy of the greatest scorn even as he marches inevitably towards victory. As I argued in Chapters 3 and 4, however, the narrator's positive evaluation of Cato is consistently undermined by a narrative that reveals the shallowness of his moral position, and even raises the possibility that he is little better than his supposed rival. A similar tendency seems to be at play in Lucan's treatment of Caesar: the more success he achieves and the more he proves that he can act with impunity, the more the reader is invited to accept that the position he envisions for himself is an accurate reflection of some greater reality. Given Caesar's lucky escape at the end of the poem, one may well conclude that "following the fates" and "following Caesar" are one and the same. The *Bellum Civile* can thus be thought tacitly to encourage its reader to embrace the imperial government of Caesar's

[67] It has no bearing on my argument whether Lucan wrote this final scene before or after he was implicated in the Pisonian Conspiracy. I do admit, however, that it would be especially poignant if it were composed when the poet had learned of the decree that he must die by his own hand. The fact that *Magnum* is the last word of Book 10—as it is the last word of Book 2 (*Magni*, 2.736) and features in the last line of Books 5 and 8 (*Magnum*, 5.815; *Magni*, 8.872)—perhaps bolsters this argument; on this, see Haffter (1957) 124; Masters (1992) 258.

descendants.[68] Although this view goes against a surface reading of the narrator's outbursts, and no doubt would have been terrifying to Stoic- and Republican-minded members of Lucan's audience,[69] it is a logical conclusion to be drawn from Lucan's account of the civil war, and indeed one that has been maintained by reputable poets, scholars, intellectuals at various points in history.[70]

Even if this interpretation might seem to move us forward, a positive evaluation of Caesar must remain every bit as slippery as a negative evaluation of Cato. Once we recognize that Lucan's narrative and narrator often contradict one another, our ability to trust the latter is no longer guaranteed—indeed, any decision on this front will depend on the inclinations of the individual reader. Some may well choose to privilege the narrator's judgments in spite of the problems discussed throughout this dissertation in order to come to a more concrete conclusion about the purpose of the civil war and the appropriate responses to its protagonists.[71] At the same time, those who reject the validity of the narrator as a moral guide are free to interpret textual contradictions as an indication of the meaninglessness of Lucan's universe, or even the impotence of the

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[68] It recommends, in other words, that the reader adopt the teleological interpretation of the war set forth in the Praise of Nero; on this, see pp. 44-52.
[69] On the Stoic imperative to "follow the fates," see pp. 197-9. Matthews (2008) at 5.577-93 comments on numerous Stoic elements in the portrayal of Caesar.
[70] It is known that Dante was an admirer of Lucan (*Inferno* 4.90), and his decision to place Brutus and Cassius in the deepest layer of Hell (*Inferno* 34.64-9) may suggest that he was a Caesarian reader of the poem. Paleit (2013) 93-127 discusses "Caesarist" readers of Lucan in early modern England (c. 1590-1610). Marti (1945) 352-3 discusses those who deemed Caesar the hero of the poem in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although Caesar—and consequently Lucan's Caesar—has found few western supporters since World War II, the modern bias against him should not blind critics to potentially favorable interpretations of his actions. One may compare Blake's assertion that Milton was "of the Devil's party without knowing it" (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 6); this parallel is particularly apt if one accepts that Lucan's Caesar was the primary model of Milton's Satan, on which, see Blissett (1957).
[71] E.g. Narducci (2002); and D'Alessandro Behr (2007).

poet.[72] Still others may try to skirt criticism from each extreme by trying to find middle ground between them.[73] The problem for critics, of course, is that none of these views has greater textual support than any of the others. It is therefore impossible to make a definitive judgment between them.

Faced with this situation, an understandable step might be to seek alternative criteria on which to base an analysis of the poem and the events that it relates. Here, too, however, Lucan manages to cut off virtually every path that one might take towards a clearer understanding of the civil war. The introduction to the *Bellum Civile* forcefully reveals that teleological, scientific, and historical analyses of its events are insufficient on their own and yet contradictory when employed together: however apt any one of these methodologies might appear in explaining a single event or class of data, Lucan assures us from the start that none can ever be universally compelling. In a similar way, the reader's ability to determine man's place within the poem's *cosmos* is carefully undermined. Contradictions in the description of its physical stability and ambiguities about the beings in charge of it prevent us from forming any certain judgments about how we should approach its awesome power.[74] On the contrary, we can never be sure about its nature, or even about its permanance.

The most frustrating aspect of Lucan's narrative technique, however, does not lie in the mere creation of ambiguity and contradiction; rather, it lies in the fact that we are constantly encouraged to take a stand on the very questions that the poem's ambiguities and contradictions prevent us from answering. The narrator's powerful voice—for all

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[72] E.g. Johnson (1987); Masters (1992); Sklenář (2003).
[73] E.g. Bartsch (1997).
[74] For Lucan as a poem about sublimity, the experience of natural and universal forces that far exceed human reckoning, see Day (2013).

that we might recognize its fallability—demands that we either agree or disagree with its portrayal of the war and its protagonists. We are thus prompted at every turn to evaluate Lucan's language, universe, and characters, even as his poem prevents us from coming to any firm conclusions about them: indeed, the contradictions and ambiguities that Lucan has woven into his text ensure that it can admit a limitless range of interpretions. Yet just as this allows individual readers to adopt any position they please concerning the poem's meaning, it also provides others with an endless supply of evidence that can be used to counter the views of their rivals.[75] Lucan would thus seem to have set his readers to an impossible task, and simultaneously to have ensured that discussion of his poem will continue in perpetuity. From this we can see that the *Bellum Civile* goes far beyond other epics in its cultivation of ambiguity and contradiction: Lucan has not merely imbued a few episodes with studied inconsistency, but has turned inconsistency into a driving poetic principle.[76]

The reader may thus conclude that the most consistent and unifying attribute of the *Bellum Civile* is its tendency to inflict a crisis of interpretation upon its reader. Indeed, even if there is some method behind Lucan's madness, the poet's manner of portraying events and characters effectively guarantees that we will never be able to ascertain what it is. Although this conclusion will no doubt be unsatisfying to those who expect an epic to present a unified and intelligible treatment of a single theme, accepting it goes a long way towards explaining many peculiarities of the *Bellum Civile*, as well as towards understanding the dissent that has defined criticism of it for nearly two

[75] It is as if Aristarchus' principles of understanding Homer from Homer and of treating each author as his own best interpreter are bastardized to the extreme; *contra* Schrijvers (1989).

[76] On inconsistency in Roman epic, see O'Hara (2007).

millennia.[77] Yet I would also posit that the persistent denial of any certainty about the causation and meaning of the civil war is Lucan's greatest innovation within his chosen genre: whereas other epic poets purport to offer a coherent picture of the universe and man's place within it, Lucan has constructed a discordant text whose *cosmos* cannot be understood and whose characters cannot be reliably evaluated. Indeed, as my individual discussions have shown throughout this dissertation, the poet carefully sets us up for defeat in each of these arenas. We are thus now in a position to say—and at last to say with certainty!—that the feelings of anxiety and frustration that we experience in confronting Lucan's ambiguities and contradictions are not an indication of our failure, but rather of the poet's success.

[77] Aesthetics and reader response have thus offered a path forward where studies of the poet's philosophy and politics have failed. Other recent work on the *Bellum Civile* suggests that the approach I adopt here is part of a new trend; see esp. Dinter (2012); Day (2013).

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