

LUCAN'S *FERRUM FODDER*

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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Scholars such as Shadi Bartsch, Robert Sklenar, and Timothy Hill (1997; 2003; 2004) have noted that Lucan's epic on the Roman civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey is replete with suicidal imagery and impulses. Lucan begins his poem by equating this civil war to voluntary self-killing. This theme runs throughout the *Bellum Civile* and taints most, if not all, of the scenes. The goal of this thesis is to illustrate how Lucan's poem shows the corruption of traditional Roman virtues. He does this by imbuing two scenes that Roman's would have identified as paradigmatic of such virtues with this suicidal proclivity. I will focus on two scenes from the *Bellum Civile* (4.465–581 and 6.144–262) and show how the main characters in these scenes—Vulteius and Scaeva—attempt to assimilate themselves to two of the most prominent figures from the Roman imagination—Cato and Aeneas. Further, I will elucidate how Lucan portrays Caesar and Caesarism as the catalysts and embodiments of this suicidal proclivity.

Chapter one will begin by clarifying the reason for using these two scenes as *comparanda*. I will show how these scenes function as a narrative doublet and ought to be read in tandem. Next, I will establish a working definition of *suicide*. I will argue that the mainstream definition of suicide is too narrow and culturally conditioned to be

applicable to Lucan's poem. Instead, I will make use of Emilé Durkheim's definition of suicide that has a more sufficient scope and better understands the syntactic relationship between the semantic modifier *sui-* and the verbal semantic head *-cide*. This chapter will close by refining a particular type of suicide important to this study and by assessing its paradoxical nature.

In chapter two I will investigate the first of the two *topoi* from Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, the mass suicide of Vulteius and his cohort (*Bellum Civile* 4.465–581). I will begin by contextualizing suicide to *circa* 1st century Rome. Many of Lucan's contemporaries, especially those inclined to Stoic philosophy, saw suicide as a potentially powerful weapon. For these men, Cato was the literary and historical example par excellence of the noble, Stoic suicide. I will argue that in order for Lucan to strengthen his metaphor of civil war as suicide he must address and confute this popular belief that suicide could be a positive act in the hands of the correct individual. Lucan does this by having Vulteius attempt to assimilate himself to key aspects of the literary account of Cato's suicide—*calmness*, *theatricality*, and *philosophical musings*. However, in trying to do so, Lucan shows how Vulteius merely invalidates the act itself by of his moral depravity, his bloodlust, and his utter devotion to Caesar. Further, I will contend that Lucan seems to be using this example of corrupted Roman virtue as a litmus test for his internal and external audiences. He hopes that Vulteius' actions will serve as an instance of a dissonance between these two audiences, that the external audience will recognize the moral decadence of Vulteius.

BIRTH

Mortis A^g/m)or

Bella per Emathios plus quam civilia campos
Iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
In sua victrici conversum viscera dextra,
Cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
Certatum totis concussi viribus orbis
In commune nefas, infestisque obvia signis
Signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.

.....
Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos?
Heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari
Hoc quem civiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae

.....
Tum, si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi,
Totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem,
In te verte manus— (1.1–7, 12–14, 21–3)¹

[The royal “We” sing of wars, more than civil, all across the Emathian plains, of right given to wrong, and of a powerful body-(politic) who gutted itself with its own “victorious” hand; how blood-related battle lines and all the “heroes” of the shaken world vied for a share of the *nefas* once the pact of tyranny was broken; how standards opposed hostile standards, eagles were paired, and javelins threatened javelins.

.....
Did it seem like a good idea to wage unwinnable wars? Alas! How much land and sea could have been purchased with the blood spilt by civilian hands.

.....
Then, Rome, if your love of wicked war is so great, after you have imposed Roman laws on the whole world, turn your hands back onto yourself.]

In the first three lines of the *Bellum Civile*, Lucan equates civil war to voluntary self-killing; from the proem to mass-suicides to suicidal *aristeiai*, this equation dominates Lucan’s work. In fact, twice within the first twenty-three lines he employs the imagery of hands turning against their own bodies. The centrality of this theme in Lucan has been noted by Timothy Hill who wrote, “If the first-century Roman ‘cult of suicide’

¹ All translations of ancient sources will be my own.

finds its chronicler in Tacitus . . . it is to Lucan and his epic on the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey that it owes its poetic voice.”² Lucan makes it clear in line 13—*Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos*— that, in his eyes, civil war is entirely destructive and self-defeating. Therefore, by extension, suicide is just as deleterious. His poem makes no differentiation between murder and suicide, since it is all the same death.³

It is one thing to notice a theme, but it is another to interpret that theme’s purpose. I will argue that Lucan imbues *topoi* from the Roman imaginary with this suicidal penchant in order to show how the Republican and Augustan ethic have been trodden under foot. I hope to show how the bloodlust that has taken hold of Rome, embodied in devotion to the harbinger of death, Caesar, has corrupted and mutilated its most intimate virtues. Lucan portrays devotion to Caesar negatively from the beginning. Laelius’ crazed loyalty to Caesar (1.356–86) brands such devotion itself as *nefas*. He swears, by Caesar’s standards nonetheless, that *pectore si fratris gladium iuguloque parentis / condere me iubeas pleneque in uiscera partu / coniugis, inuita peragam tamen omnia dextra* (“Should you order me to plunge my sword into the chest of my brother, the throats of my parents, or into the innards of my wife teeming with child, I would do it all, even though my hand was unwilling”) (1.376–378).

In Lucan’s world of inverted oppositions the Republican ethic has no place, and any attempt to adhere to it must necessarily fail. Vulteius (4.465–581) and Scaeva

² Hill, Timothy, *Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and the Self in Roman Thought and Literature* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004) 213.

³ Barthes, Roland, “Tacitus and the Funerary Baroque,” in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. S. Sontag (New York: 1982), 162–166.

(6.144–262), two of Lucan’s “Paladins of Decadence”⁴ will, nevertheless, attempt to display true *virtus* by assimilating themselves to two of the most prominent figures in the Roman imagination; Vulteius will try his hand at a Stoic suicide and Scaeva will attempt a heroic *aristeia*. Inevitably their assimilations will fail, but their attempts are paradigmatic of Lucan’s appropriation of scenes from the Roman imaginary. In these two scenes Lucan displays, with full rhetorical flourish, how the values of the *mos maiorum* cannot stand against the impetuously suicidal obsession that has taken hold of Rome. In a way, then, we can read Lucan as not only challenging the Augustan mythos of Vergil, but by extension the mythos of Rome itself.⁵ The choice of these two scenes as *comparanda* that showcase Lucan’s use of his civil war as suicide metaphor is supported by the fact that they mimic one another in narrative structure. In fact, no other scene in the *Bellum Civile* follows the narrative and thematic structure that these two scenes follow.⁶

Both scenes begin with the main character in dire straits, with seemingly no way out (4.465–473; 6.133–139), followed by a speech of the character to his surrounding men encouraging them to their respective deeds (4.476–520; 6.150–165). In this

⁴ Phrase comes from Sklenar, Robert, *The Taste for Nothingness: A Study of Virtus and Related Themes in Lucan’s Bellum Civile* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003) ch. 2.

⁵ Cf. Heinrich, Alan, *Violence in Narrative: Imperium and Identity in Roman Epic*, (PhD. Diss., University of New York at Buffalo, 1996), 103.

⁶ That is not to say the themes in these scenes do not occur elsewhere or that no other scenes mimic one another; only that the specific combination of narrative progression and thematic progression is unparalleled. Other scenes in the *Bellum Civile* are narrative doublets just as the Vulteius and Scaeva scenes are. For instance, the Delphic episode (5.71–253) and the Erictho necromancy scene (6.419–830) are such a doublet. Cf. Masters, Jamie, *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan’s Bellum Civile* (New York, NY: Press Syndicate of University of Cambridge, 1992) ch. 4, who argues that “one thing is clear: that Lucan’s Delphic and Thessalian episodes, split off from the same source, form a contending pair, and it is ultimately as a pair that we must understand them” (93). I also endorse the belief that Lucan’s text, as we have it, is complete or virtually complete—a position I will address in chapter 3. Thus, no further scenes would have been written that would mimic the Vulteius/Scaeva doublet.

speech both commanders invoke Caesar, more or less lamenting his absence (4.500–503/512–514; 6.158–160). Upon hearing the speech, the troops are filled with excitement and frenzy (4.520–525; 6.165–169). The actual battle description ensues, at which point the main character makes another speech (4.529–544; 6.230–235/241–246). The scenes close with the internal audiences expressing admiration for the main characters and their deeds (4.570–573; 6.251–259) while the narrator voices his disgust (4.575–581; 6.260–263). The similarity in the progression of the scenes is also mirrored in significant verbal and thematic echoes.

One of the main themes both scenes have in common is the use of *virtus* to show the corruption of the term. Both scenes involve a Caesarian commander and forces, who are described as *attonitus*, taken unawares by a Pompeian force (4.474; 6.131).⁷ Also, in the first structural section of each scene, the narrator comments, with apparent sarcasm and irony, on the capacity of the respective character's *virtus* (4.469–470; 6.132).⁸ These remarks explain that the way in which *virtus* manifests itself in these scenes, is the only manner in which *virtus* can manifest itself in the context of civil war. In both scenes, as well, *virtus* is described as *depressa*, which more deeply connects

⁷ Further yet, both the name "Vuliteius" (*vultus*) and "Scaeva" (*left hand*) could stand in metonymy for a person. This is certainly not beyond Lucan who has used singular terms to refer to groups of men (e.g. *iuventus* 4.476) or body parts to refer to individuals (e.g. *pectora* 6.161) throughout the *B.C.* For further deconstructionist takes on the names of Lucan's characters cf. Henderson, John, "Lucan: The Word at War," *Ramus* 16 (1987), 122–164 and Masters (1992).

⁸ Lucan uses *virtus* 51 times in the *Bellum Civile*. The number of occurrences in each book is in parentheses: 1 (3), 2 (4), 3 (4), **4 (9)**, 5 (2), **6 (7)**, 7 (4), 8 (3), 9 (13), 10 (2). In book 4 and 6 the uses cluster around Vuliteius and Scaeva. Only 3 occurrences in book 4 are outside of the Vuliteius scene, and in book 6 every instance occurs in within Scaeva's narrative. The preponderance in book 9 can be explained by the pronounced role of Cato in that book, around whose activities *virtus* clusters. As I will argue in chapter 2, Cato was one of the paradigms of *virtus* in Republican Rome. Therefore, it stands to reason that such a figure would textually be surrounded by the virtue he supposedly exuded. I believe that the numerical distribution of *virtus* strengthens my argument that these two scenes ought to be read in tandem and that the characters' *virtus* is one of their thematic centerpieces.

the two scenes at the verbal level (4.469; 6.168). Finally, and quite significantly, both characters, at some point during one of their two speeches, state that death has become an obsession for them (4.517; 6.246). Lucan makes these two announcements mimic one other but with slight variation. Vulteius states that *totusque futurae / mortis agor stimulis: furor est* (“I am driven on by the goad of impending death: it is a crazed possession”) (4.516–517). Scaeva closes his taunt to the Pompeians with *Pompei vobis minor est causaeque senatus / quam mihi mortis amor* (“My *amor mortis* means more to me than both Pompey and the Senate’s cause do to you”) (6.245–246). The echo of the phrase *mortis a^g/m)or* in both scenes is a nice bit of poetics that links Vulteius’ speech with Scaeva’s.⁹ Lucan, however, does not necessarily state outright that his characters are ethical degenerates. Often he leaves this conclusion to be reached by his reader. As such, these scenes also function as litmus tests for his audiences, both internal and external.

Oxford English Dictionary versus Emilé Durkheim

Our first step in understanding Lucan’s metaphor in its depth and beauty is to work under the proper definition of “suicide.” When we have our definition we can refine the type of suicide with which we will be dealing. The Oxford English Dictionary defines suicide as “death by one’s own hand.” While this probably coincides with how the average individual would define suicide, for our purposes this definition seems too restrictive. First, it fails to differentiate between different modes of self-killing and

⁹ Love, it seems, is more often than not an unhealthy emotion in the *B.C.* Aside from Vulteius’ and Scaeva’s *mortis a^g/m)or*, we also find *amor belli* (1.21; 9.228), *amor ferri* (1.355), and *amor scelerum* (4.236). As with most other things in Lucan’s universe, even a pleasant emotion such as love has been corrupted. Recalling the A-M-O-R is simply an anagram of R-O-M-A, perhaps Lucan’s portrayal of love was meant to kill two birds with one stone. By showing that AMOR has been corrupted, perhaps he also intended the same condemnation for its anagram, ROMA.

focuses too much attention on the semantic modifier *sui-* in the *tatpuruṣa* compound.¹⁰ It would also omit many instances in Lucan which, as we will see later, ought to be categorized as suicide or suicidal. Emilé Durkheim also thought this definition was insufficient and proposed a definition in terms of effect rather than intent which, he believed, is “too intimate a thing to be more than approximately interpreted by another.”¹¹ The definition Durkheim formulated and the definition with which we will continue our investigation of Lucan’s suicide metaphor is as follows: “*Suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.*”¹² Durkheim’s definition succeeds where the *OED* fails by focusing on the semantic head of the *tatpuruṣa* compound and analyzing *sui-cide* as “a form of killing *which is effected in some way by oneself.*” In other words, the *OED* defines the syntactic relationship between the semantic modifier *sui-* and the verbal semantic head *-cide* as accusative of affected object; rather we should understand it, following Durkheim, as that of ablative of cause. Durkheim’s definition also allows for circumvention of religious and moral infection which has hindered much suicide research. We find a disinclination to classify certain

¹⁰ *Tatpuruṣa* compounds, also known as endocentric compounds, are compound words consisting of a grammatical head and its modifiers, where the whole compound is a subtype of the semantic head. A *tatpuruṣa* compound, XY, would mean a type of Y which is related to X in a way corresponding to one of the grammatical cases of X. English *doghouse*, where *house* is the semantic head and *dog* is its modifier, is analyzed as a *house* for a *dog* or as a Dative *tatpuruṣa* compound. *Tatpuruṣa*-s are to be differentiated from *Bahuvrihi*, or exocentric, compounds, which do not have a semantic head. English *sabretooth* is a *bahuvrihi* compound, but a *sabretooth* is neither a *sabre* nor a *tooth*; it is an animal that has teeth which are like *sabers*. *Bahuvrihi* itself is a *bahuvrihi* compound—*bahu-* meaning “much” and *vrihi-* meaning “rice.” One who is *bahuvrihi* is neither “rice” nor “much,” but one *who has much rice*, or a rich person.

¹¹ Durkheim, Emilé, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, John Spaulding and George Simpson trans., (New York, NY: Free Press, 1951) 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 4 Italics in original.

acts as suicides because they seem to be morally upstanding actions. But this operates under the assumption that suicide is somehow inherently immoral. Durkheim cites Etienne Esquirol as writing, “That man does not kill himself who, obeying only noble and generous sentiments, throws himself in certain peril, exposes himself to inevitable death, and willingly sacrifices his life in obedience to the laws, to keep pledged faith, for his country’s safety.”¹³ Miriam Griffin also objects to Durkheim’s definition on the grounds that it would label heroic acts in war or martyrdom as suicides.¹⁴ Unless, however, we assume suicide to be an un-heroic, immoral, or irreligious act, there seems to be no reason we should not identify such acts as suicides. In order to have a definition with a sufficiently wide scope which will not render Lucan’s metaphor hollow, we must adopt Durkheim’s definition.

We also need to refine the “kind” of suicide relevant to our study. In line with the lone emphasis on the reflexive aspect, modern society has a tendency to focus on the intention of the suicide rather than on the act itself. Therefore, we must be careful not to cling too tightly to a modern concept of suicide, steeped in images of psychiatric patients and angst-ridden teenagers who kill themselves from a long standing mental disposition, a concept which seems distinct in kind from our ancient examples.¹⁵ The

¹³ Ibid., 66, from Etienne Esquirol, *Des Maladies Mentales* (Paris: 1838) 529. Durkheim also cites others, such as Falret and Bourdin, who refuse to classify certain actions as suicidal that Durkheim believes must be classified as such.

¹⁴ Griffin, Miriam, “Philosophy, Cato, and Roman Suicide: I,” *Greece and Rome*, 33.1 (1986a), 69.

¹⁵ Surely there were suicides which correspond categorically to suicides in modern times, but as per Durkheim’s categorization, they should be significantly fewer since ancient Roman and Greek society differed from our own, homocentric society, in being very community-centric. As the manner of daily life differs from ours, so do the causes of suicide. Cf. Van Hooff, Anton, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), where he does attempt to catalogue and classify ancient suicides according to *modi* and *causae moriendi*, although he omits many cases from Lucan which I would have included *viz.* the Massilians and Scaeva.

general focus will be on altruistic suicide which occurs in societies with high personal integration where the individual's ego is "not its own property . . . where the goal of conduct is exterior to itself, that is, in one of the groups in which it participates."¹⁶

Durkheim also notes that normally there is social prestige to be gained from altruistic suicide and thus it is, in some ways, a political act. We now have a broad, working definition of suicide and a refined notion of an important type of suicide, but there is a paradox inherent in altruistic suicide which we must address. Once we have looked at the general problem we can contextualize it to circa first-century C. E. Rome and see in what way this poses a problem for Lucan's metaphor.

The paradoxical nature of the altruistic suicide arises because the act is simultaneously an assertion of one's agency and the destruction of that agent. The positive, assertive aspect of this paradox finds its voice in Dostoevsky's *Underground Man* who rants about it being sometimes profitable to choose what is in fact contrary to one's best interests. One can assert one's freedom of will by acting contrary to norms because such an act does not accord with reason. "What man needs," Dostoevsky's narrator iterates, "is simply independent choice, whatever that independence may cost

¹⁶ Durkheim, 221. Even though Altruistic is one of Durkheim's four subcategories of suicide, at this point I must part ways with Durkheim. While he cites many examples from Greek and Roman texts, the examples are never about Greeks or Romans; rather, they concern the Gauls, Germans, Celts. In fact, almost every ancient civilization from India to America to China is cited, with the exception of Greece and Rome. Durkheim believed that altruistic suicide was characteristic of "lower societies" (223) and that Greece and Rome were sufficiently individuated as to have "earned" egoistic suicides. He has created a moral hierarchy built on social individuation. But his own words show his error. He writes variously, "A social prestige thus attaches to suicide" (222), "It is also characteristically performed as a duty" (221), "When a person kills himself, it is not because he assumes the right to do so but, on the contrary, *because it is his duty*" (219). All of these statements seem to describe suicide in Rome, especially under the Empire and Principate. Cf. Van Hooff, Anton, "Paetus, It Does Not Hurt: Altruistic Suicide in the Greco-Roman World," *Archives of Suicide Research*, 8.1 (2004), 43–56.

and wherever it may lead.”¹⁷ The Underground Man seems to ignore willfully the obvious counterintuitive logic of his position. If this independent choice leads him to suicide, even though he may be able to assert his will by performing such a purely free choice, he will cease to exist if the action is successful. This, then, is our paradox. To whatever degree suicide is an act of agency, that agency is nullified by death; but if the suicide fails, the act is no longer a display of agency. Thus, altruistic suicide asserts one’s agency if and only if it simultaneously destroys that agent.

¹⁷ Dostoevsky, Fyodor, *Notes from the Underground*, Hugh Alpin trans., (London, UK: Hesperus Classics, 2006), 30.

TEENS

Suicide: The Aristocratic Occupational Hazard

All would be well with Lucan's metaphor if his (near-)contemporaries also saw altruistic suicide, in general, as entirely destructive, but for many of them, especially his uncle Seneca, suicide could be a powerful tool in the hands of the correct individual. Cato was the Roman literary and historical example par excellence of the noble suicide.¹⁸ In order to maintain his metaphor of civil war as suicide in spite of the belief prevalent under the Principate that suicide could be used in a positive way, Lucan must deny its supposed noble and positive aspects while emphasizing its wholly destructive aspects. He does this by directly confronting and confuting important elements of Cato's suicide, while at the same time highlighting the more destructive elements of suicide in general.

In order for altruistic suicide to fit the Roman context we need to identify an affront to the Roman self and autonomy. Timothy Hill deduces, following Cicero's descriptions in *De Officiis*, that in Roman society the human being was most fully realized when fulfilling his or her proper social role in the best manner possible.¹⁹ But as aristocratic social roles began to shrink under the Empire, the *optimates* began to lose their sense of self, as they understood it under the Republic, to the emperor who was slowly usurping their powers. In the same way as, for Dostoevsky's narrator, metaphysical autonomy "preserves for us what is most precious and most important—

¹⁸ Cato modeled his suicide thematically Socrates' in the *Phaedo*, as can be gathered by his choice of reading material prior to his suicide—i.e. Socrates' *Phaedo*. For Cato's conscious emulation of Socrates cf. Griffin (1986a).

¹⁹ Hill, 57–71, 203.

that is, our personality, our individuality,"²⁰ so did political autonomy maintain personality and individuality for a Roman. The political system by which they structured their lives was changing drastically, their position as *arbitri honorum* of the Republican ethic was losing viability, and they were left fewer and fewer means by which to express their *libertas*. One can imagine the aristocrats having something of an existential crisis as they were filched of their autonomy and wanting desperately a way in which to reassert it. It stands to reason that had members of the aristocratic class found a new means of asserting their personal autonomy, they would have cleaved to it zealously. For a new model of affirmation of one's social position and resuscitation of one's *liberum arbitrium* the Roman aristocrats looked to Cato and his choice of suicide over subjugation.

Suicide permeated society in Rome under the Empire and Principate to such an extent that some scholars have argued that political suicide was nearly an institution in Rome, a "Stoic cult of suicide."²¹ Others, such as Yolande Gris , take the contrary position and argue that the data in our sources simply do not support the conclusion that suicide ever reached "epidemic proportions."²² Perhaps "epidemic" is a bit bombastic, but our sources, like Tacitus, do corroborate the extreme frequency of suicides from the ascension of Tiberius in 14 C. E. to the death of Nero in 68 C. E., amounting to what he calls a *caede continua* (Tac. *Ann.* 6.29, 16.16). Moreover, the 16 extant books of his *Annales*, which span only 50 years, record 74 counts of suicide,

²⁰ Dostoevsky, 33.

²¹ Cf. Griffin (1986a), *op. cit.*; Griffin, M., "Philosophy, Cato, and Roman Suicide: II," *Greece and Rome*, 33.2 (1986b), 192–202; Plass, Paul, *The Game of Death in Ancient Rome: Arena Sport and Political Suicide* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995) ch. 7–8; Hill (2004) *op. cit.*; Edwards, Catharine, *Death in Ancient Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). Griffin (1986a) attributes the phrase "Stoic cult of suicide" to A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: 1933) 197.

²² Gris , Yolande, *Le Suicide dans la Rome antique* (Paris: Bellarmin) 53ff.

while Livy's 45 extant books, including the *Periochae*, covering nearly 500 years, recount little more half of this number.²³

Not only are the numbers drastically different between these two authors, but the circumstances surrounding the suicides differ as well. Many of the suicides in Livy occur during a military campaign, on the side whose city has been besieged, in a situation Van Hooff terms *desperata salus* (21.14, 23.41, 26.13–15). During the siege of Capua, when they realized that there was no way to fend off the Roman attack, Vibius Virrius and other top citizens chose to end their own lives rather than submit to Roman *cruciatus contumeliasque* (26.13–15). A similar situation is recorded during Hannibal's siege of Saguntum when many of the Saguntini chose self-immolation over submission to Hannibal (21.14). Livy's Roman suicides are more eclectic, yet differ in kind from the politically motivated suicides recurrent in Tacitus. Lucretia committed suicide because of an affront to her chastity (1.58), the Curules and M. Fabius, M. Curtius, and Decius Mus I offered their lives by way of *devotio*²⁴ (5.41, 7.5, 8.9), Flornia, a Vestal Virgin, committed suicide after having been convicted of *stuprum* (22.57), and Fulvius Flaccus hanged himself after he went mad from *luctus metusque* (42.28). In Tacitus, however, we see a shift of perspective from the martial to the civic context. Also, Tacitus' suicides primarily concern the Roman Senatorial class rather than the "barbarians." Non-Roman, military suicides, reminiscent of those found in Livy,

²³ Van Hooff, appendix A. These numbers may not be entirely correct; Van Hooff, in his BMCR of Timothy Hill's *Ambitiosa Mors*, comments that new data have come to light which were unavailable to him during his research. But the new numbers do not oblige Van Hooff to change his over conclusions. Cf. Van Hooff, Anton, review of *Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature*, by Timothy Hill, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2005.09.09.

²⁴ Hardie, Philip, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition*, (MA: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 30ff; H. S. Versnel, "Self-Sacrifice, Compensation, and the Anonymous Gods," *Entretiens Hardt* 27 (Geneva: 1980) 135–194; C. Barton, "Scandal of the Arena," *Representations* 33 (1991), 1–36 and C. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans* (Princeton: 1995).

such as Boudicca's in *Annales* 14.35–37, become far less prominent. He also relates motivations to suicide that are much more wide ranging than those in Livy. Tacitus writes that fear of execution, the loss of burial rights, and the loss of one's fortune were the primary motivations for suicide (*Ann.* 6.29). Tacitus presents these motivations as a byproduct of the interaction between the Senatorial class and the *princeps*; thus, one would not expect to find them pronounced in Livy's narrative, which ends well before the rise of the Principate. The increase in suicide rates during this period stands in a positive correlation to the solidification of the emperor's power and seems to be a direct reaction to it. By the time of Domitian the *princeps* had usurped many of the Senate's functions such as establishing laws by edict, appointing candidates for magistracies, and appointing Senatorial officers.²⁵ Hill quips that "suicide was, it seems, in the early Principate an occupational hazard of being an aristocrat."²⁶

Political suicide primarily allowed Roman aristocrats to remain loyal to their Republican values and to "establish one's status as a moral witness in the community."²⁷ In Roman society where the individual was viewed mainly in terms of social function, a proper altruistic suicide could affirm one's allegiance to the Republic at the same moment as it could assert one's personal autonomy. In Seneca's *De Providentia* Jupiter declares that Cato's sword will give him *libertatem, quam patriae non potuit* (*De Prov.* 1.2.10). A similar sentiment is found at *De Constantia Sapientis* 2.2.2; where Seneca concludes that *neque enim Cato post libertatem vixit nec libertas*

²⁵ McQuire, Donald T., *Acts of Silence: Civil War, Tyranny, and Suicide in the Flavian Epics* (Germany: Olms, 1997) 8.

²⁶ Hill, 185.

²⁷ Hill, 184.

post Catonem (“In fact, neither did Cato outlive liberty nor did liberty outlive Cato”). The battle for the Republic has been lost, and Cato, as fully committed to its values, cannot viably live under a tyranny; therefore, in order to assert his allegiance to the Republic and show that his own conception of self is symbiotically tied to it, he must render his own existence coterminous with that of the Republic. Cato, just like Seneca, took the right to suicide upon himself rather than be granted it by a tyrant who had no right to act as such (Plut. *Cat. Mi.* 66.2). Thus, Hill claims, as an assertion of one’s autonomy, “genuine *mors voluntaria* was uniquely suitable for conveying reverse political meaning under the Principate” by deflating the emperor’s guise of absolute power.²⁸

Interestingly, both the emperor and the suicidal individual were aware of the potency of a political suicide. As we see in Tacitus *Annales* 3.16, the emperor Tiberius was well aware that these aristocratic suicides could be unfavorable to him, complaining to the Senate that the suicide of Piso was intended to cast *invidia* upon him. On the reverse, Tacitus intimates that Silanus purposefully staged his suicide *agendam ad invidiam* (*Ann.* 12.8).

Although personal goals may have varied, the nobility seem purposefully to have modeled their suicides after a pre-established stereotype. The suicides of Thrasea Paetus and Seneca as described by Tacitus show commonalities readily traceable to Cato’s suicide as portrayed in Plutarch’s *Cato Minor*,²⁹ both scenes include the presence of an audience and philosophical overtones.³⁰ Along with adherence to this

²⁸ Plass, 102.

²⁹ Thrasea: *Ann.* 16.34–5; Seneca: *Ann.* 15.62–4; Cato: *Cato Mi.* 66–73.

³⁰ These common features are more or less noted by Griffin (1986a) 65–6, Hill (2004) 183–88, and Edwards (2007) *passim*.

basic scheme, there was a tendency to wax theatrical among the aristocrats.³¹ Whether the suicidal individuals themselves also took part in this increasing dramatization or not, Hill argues, since the writers of the period “labored strenuously to ensure that the phenomenon was publicized widely and appeared consistently and uniformly Catonian to their readers.”³² Hill further argues, following Van Hooff (1990), that the motif of casting one’s death as precisely as possible in the mold of Cato’s was so standardized by the time of Nero that it could be parodied by Petronius in his suicide in 66 C.E..³³

Incisas venas, ut libitum, obligatas aperire rursum et adloqui amicos, non per seria aut quibus gloriam constantiae peteret. Audiebatque referentis nihil de immortalitate animae et sapientium placitis, sed levia carmina et facilis versus. (Tac. *Ann.* 16.19)

[Having cut open his veins and, according to his humor, bound them up, he again opened them, while he conversed with his friends, *not* in a serious strain or on topics through which one might strive for the glory of *constantia*. And he listened to them as they recited, *not* thoughts on the immortality of the soul or on the theories of philosophers, but light poetry and playful verses.]

Tacitus’ description of Petronius’ suicide employs a set of negative clauses (noted in the translation with italics) to suggest that he did precisely the opposite of what was the normative behavior for an aristocratic, Catonian suicide, and to corroborate Hill’s statement on the self-conscious literary homogeneity of suicide scenes.

Thus, Cato became the paradigmatic political suicide for the Roman aristocratic class because in his suicide he displayed and upheld the *virtus* of an aristocrat, asserted his allegiance to the Republic, and protested against Caesar. Since Cato’s

³¹ Cf. Seneca’s and Petronius’ suicides.

³² Hill, 187.

³³ Hill, 186. Cf. Van Hooff (1990) 52.

ethical ideals were diametrically opposed to those of Caesar, making continued existence under his rule impossible, Cicero concludes that *Catoni . . . moriendum potius quam tyranni vultus aspiciendum fuit* (“It was better for Cato to die than to look upon the face of a tyrant”) (Cic. *De. Off.* 1.112). By choosing to die rather than deviate from the aristocratic *modus operandi*, Cato displayed his own aptitude for participating in the government of the *res publica* and highlighted Caesar’s utter incompatibility with it.

The same set of self-defeating properties noticed in the logic of Dostoevsky’s *Underground Man* can be found in the stereotyped suicides of the Roman aristocrats; one asserting, the other destroying. An aristocrat who wished to redefine his identity or display his allegiance to the Republic through a Catonian suicide, could do so only by completely annihilating himself. Returning to Lucan’s metaphor of suicide as civil war, we seem to encounter a serious hitch. If civil war equates to suicide, and suicide—as defined—has both a positive and a negative aspect, then civil war also has the same two aspects. As noted above, however, Lucan makes it clear in the proem that civil war is unwinnable, it is *nullos habitura triumphos*. For Lucan, the equation of civil war to suicide holds if and only if suicide equals self-destruction. But the passages from Seneca, Cicero, and Tacitus show that belief in an upside to suicide was prominent in the aristocratic milieu of the early Empire. In the end, Lucan’s metaphor fails, or is rendered hollow, if he does not both address this aspect of suicide and attempt to shape the response of his intended audience. But the depth to which the *Bellum Civile* is steeped in suicide and suicidal tendencies indicates that Lucan meant the metaphor to work on a much deeper level. Theodore Crane cites twenty-seven examples of suicide

in his investigation of Lucan's imagery of suicide.³⁴ If we assume Crane's data to be all-inclusive, in a ten book poem spanning less than two years that equates to roughly 2.7 suicides per book or 13.5 suicides per dramatic year. Tacitus' *Annales* yields 4.6 suicides per book, which is more than Lucan, but only 1.5 suicides per year. The numbers for Livy are miniscule compared to both of these authors; a mere .84 suicides per book and .076 suicides per dramatic year. To extrapolate from Masters' arguments about the importance of Lucan's use of historical "blunders," the anachronistic prominence accorded to suicide by Lucan supports this interpretation.³⁵ The dramatic date of the *Bellum Civile* is 49–47 B.C.E. while, according to Van Hooff's data, suicide rates among the aristocracy crested from 14 B.C.E.–68 C.E., which encompasses Lucan's dates of 39–65 C.E. In order to resurrect his metaphor Lucan must counter and cancel out the Catonian aspects of suicide which display the positive side to suicide in Imperial Rome. When the Catonian *calmness*, *theatricality*, and *philosophical musings* have been nullified Lucan can further his metaphor by an intensification of *bodily mutilation* and *anonymity* and by a *de-emphasis of subjectivity*.

The conditions of calmness and philosophical musings are connected to one another. A proper suicide exhibits the former while engaging in the latter. In the

³⁴ Crane, Theodore, *The Imagery of Suicide in Lucan's De Bello Civili* (PhD Diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1964), 122. Data for Tacitus and Livy found in Van Hooff (1990), Appendix A.

³⁵ Cf. Masters (1992: ch. 3–4) and Masters, Jamie, "Deceiving the Reader: The Political Mission of Lucan *Bellum Civile* 7," in *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, and Representation*, eds. Jaś Elsner and Jamie Masters (London: Duckworth, 1994), 151–177, where Masters argues that what previous scholars have seen as glaring historical mistakes in Lucan actually betray a deep and intimate understanding of the facts as presented in authors such as Livy, Valerius Maximus, and especially Caesar. Instead of attempting to explain away these "blunders" or malign Lucan for improper historical research, Masters operates under the assumption that Lucan was a skillful poet who was fully aware of his poem's historicity or lack thereof. Therefore, he concludes, Lucan makes intentional alterations to the historical material. These correlations between Lucan's and Caesar's narratives also lead Masters to conclude that Lucan made heavy use of Caesar's *Commentarii* while composing and that Lucan's text is a conscious rejoinder to Caesar's.

accounts of Cato, Thrasea Paetus, and Seneca each man is seen discussing philosophy with those around him, seemingly unconcerned with his coming doom. In Cato's case, Plutarch writes that after dinner where all manner of philosophical discussion took place, Cato calmly retired and began to read the *Phaedo* (Plut. Cato Mi. 67–68.2). Tacitus relates how Thrasea Paetus was found *de natura animae et dissociatione spiritus corporisque inquirebat* (“Prying into the nature of the mind and the separation of the soul and body”) (Tac. Ann.16.34). Griffin identifies the theatricality in their “length and the presence of a considerable audience.”³⁶ The death scenes of Seneca and Cato are extremely intricate and drawn out, each one attempting multiple methods by which to kill himself. I would like, on the one hand, to alter Griffin's second point so that we might focus on the composition of the audience rather than its size, and on the other, to add a further stipulation of its use as a continuing exemplum. In the case of Cato, his suicide was clearly used as an exemplum of *virtus* and *libertas* for aristocratic Romans. Aside from the fact that the suicides of Seneca, Thrasea Paetus, and Petronius are all directly traceable to Cato's, Cato's suicide was used as a standard exercise on declamation against tyranny (Per. 3.45). Seneca's suicide also became an exemplum for future ages, more by design than happenstance, since he summoned scribes before his death and dictated *plera* to them (Tac. Ann. 15.63). The importance of an audience for Seneca and Cato lay not in how many individuals they could gather around them, but rather in whom they could gather. The success of an aristocratic suicide hinged on its validation as an exemplum by an audience of worthy *arbitri honorum*. Without such an audience or with no audience at all, the suicide would

³⁶ Griffin (1986a), 65.

benefit neither the audience nor the suicide himself since the audience, if not of the correct composition, would be incapable of competently witnessing the act and of understanding its political function. Thus it is termed theatricality because a direct analogy can be drawn to the stage. Acting a part requires an audience to which the actor can communicate a message. In a way, this is the most important aspect of the suicide since all the preparations one made can only achieve their desired meaning when performed on a stage before a suitable audience. We will see how important an audience and being in conspectu Caesaris is for Lucan's characters since it is only against the "other" that they believe they can secure subjectivity and validation for their actions.³⁷

Destructive Methodology

Lucan confronts all three tendencies of the Catonian model and disarms them one by one. We will first look at Lucan's general methodology for dealing with the stereotyped aspects of suicide that aristocratic Romans exploited. Afterward we can look at a case study from Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and identify his methodology in action. Our primary focus will be on Vulteius and his troops who commit mass-suicide at 4.465–581, but occasion for parallel examples will lead us afield. This scene showcases, on the one hand, Lucan's denial of the Catonian aspects of suicide and the Republican values inherent therein and, on the other, allows his ingenuity for describing the

³⁷ Cf. Eldred (2002). We can also recall Nietzsche's arguments for a social genesis of consciousness and the self. He writes, "The 'subject' is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is" (*Will to Power* §481). We must necessarily conclude that each subject is constituted not simply by the fact *that* it thinks, wants, and acts, but also by *what* it thinks, wants, and does. As it is for Nietzsche, so it is for the Stoics who define their conception of self over against the "other" (*Quod facit, corpus est. Sen. Ep. 106.4*). This also reflects, in a way, Cicero's belief, cited above from *De Officiis*, that a person's subjectivity is most fully realized while playing their social role.

destructive aspects of suicide through bodily mutilation, excess, and a general negation of subjectivity to come to the fore.

Lucan most openly grapples with Cato's Stoic calmness by direct inversion and blatant rejection. In turn, this renunciation of tranquility debilitates the philosophical musings elsewhere in the scenes. The Stoic *sapiens* was to be indifferent to the events of the physical world. This indifference would manifest itself by a rational acceptance of the happenings of the universe. As I noted for Cato and Seneca, these two aspects seem intertwined; the person destined to commit suicide was expected to partake of rational, philosophical discourse with those around him, thus displaying his calmness and acceptance of his fate. Once the character's calmness has been directly inverted, their philosophical musings lose their gravity and become more farcical, "philosophical" musings than sincere contemplations on the nature of death or the soul.

But Lucan's master stroke is in his critique of the suicidal *theatricality* and *exemplarity*. Widely, his goal lies in negating the internal audience's status as *arbitri honorum* and thereby negating the acts they deem as praiseworthy, or vice versa. Just as it was in the descriptions of Cato's and Seneca's suicides, the status of the audience as *arbitri honorum* is predicated upon their ability to comprehend the action properly and praise its *virtus*. Reciprocally, the success or failure of the act hinges on the audience, and once the value of the audience has been brought to naught, the action is rendered meaningless. Lucan does this by creating a rift between the internal characters' perceptions of themselves and his external audience's expected perceptions of them. Lucan's *dramatis personae* and his internal audiences believe that their actions are praiseworthy and in line with proper *virtus*. This not only critiques Caesar—Julius and

by extension his successors—but it also allows the poem to work as a litmus test of sorts for the status of its external audience. If the reader agrees with the internal character perceptions, if he lauds the *virtus* of a Vulteius or a Scaeva, he thereby becomes implicit in the same crimes as they do.³⁸ But if the reader notices this dissonance, if he sides with the narrator in feeling disgust at the actions of certain characters, he then validates his status as a proper *arbiter honorum*.

Furor Est

Vulteius enters the stage as a set of three Caesarian *rates* are attempting an escape from the island of Curicta, just off the Illyrian coast, unaware that the Pompeians have laid snares just under the surface of the water. The first two rafts escape, but the third, Vulteius', falls prey. A short battle ensues between Vulteius' small contingent and the thousands of Pompeian forces surrounding them. After night falls and the battle concludes, Vulteius makes an extraordinary speech to his cohort exhorting them to mass-suicide at daybreak. The scene in total is quite long, encompassing 116 lines from Vulteius' entrance to the narrator's apostrophe.

Vulteius begins his speech to his cohort with language steeped in Stoicism. The first word, in fact, connects what follows to the Stoics' obsession with *libertas*, especially as it pertains to death. In a very arresting passage from *De Ira*, Seneca, Lucan's uncle, asks rhetorically, *Quaeris quod sit ad libertatem iter? Quaelibet in corpore tuo vena!* ("Do you seek the road to freedom? You will find it in every vein of your body!") (3.15.4). He further comments on suicide as a means for obtaining freedom in *Epistles* 70 and 77. The first word of Vulteius' speech not only connects what follows to Stoicism

³⁸ For arguments on Lucan's own complicity in the *nefas* of civil war by merely writing about it Cf. Masters (1992).

thematically, but intratextually it sets *libertas* as the topic or the goal towards which his speech is oriented. The first lines of Vulteius' speech function as the *philosophical musings* which would characterize a proper Catonian suicide.

Libera non ultra parva quam nocte iuventus,
consulite extremis angusto in tempore rebus.
Vita brevis nulli superest, qui tempus in illa
quaerendae sibi mortis habet—

...

Par animi laus est et, quos speraveris, annos
perdere et extremae momentum abrumpere lucis
accersas dum fata manu; non cogitur ullus
velle mori. Fuga nulla patet, stant undique nostris
intenti cives iugulis: decernite letum,
et metus omnis abest. Cupias, quodcumque necesse est. (4.476–487)

Soldiers, free for hardly longer than a short night, during this trying time, take stock of the end. It is not a brief life that is left to one who has time to seek death. It is as praiseworthy to cut short the years you might look forward to as it is to curtail the short time of the final day, provided that you summon fate with your own hand; no one is compelled to want to die. No means of escape is at hand; citizens stand all about, intent on your throats: decide upon death and all your fears will go away. Desire whatever is necessary.]

Vulteius further connects his speech to Stoicism in line 478. *Vita brevis* explicitly alludes to another work of Seneca by roughly the same name, *De Brevitate Vitae*, in which he argues, just as Vulteius does here to his crew, that there is plenty of time in a life however short to do what is necessary. He finishes his Stoic invocation by urging his men not to fear death but even to desire it. Interestingly, Lucan's vocabulary at 484–485—*non cogitur ullus / velle mori*—also recalls Suetonius' *ad voluntariam mortem coactum* and, by extension, Tacitus' phrase *liberum mortis arbitrium*.³⁹ On the one

³⁹ Suet. *Tib.* 54.2; Tac. *Ann.* 11.3, 16.33. The *liberum mortis arbitrium* was offered to the aristocrat by the emperor in place of public execution. For a discussion of its consequences and the degree to which the

hand, the phrase is significant because it strengthens the link to *libertas* begun in line 476, specifically as it relates to freedom through death. But more importantly, it allows Lucan straightforwardly to connect, albeit with a heavy dash of sarcasm, Vulteius to the aristocratic suicides prevalent in his own time and thus to the Catonian model in which they were cast. Lucan uses the idea of an autonomously chosen, but forced, death to comment negatively on the institution of aristocratic suicide itself and to draw to the fore the unresolvable contradictions inherent in an action that is supposedly self-generated but yet also imposed.

Lucan describes Vulteius as beginning his motivational speech with *magnanima voce*. He is set in contrast to his soldiers who are *attonitam* and *paventem*, two states which his speech is designed to remedy. But Vulteius, calm and poised during his Stoic exhortation at the opening of his speech, begins to lose his composure by line 506, and his collected demeanor begins to give way to Lucanian frenzy. He proclaims:

Indomitos sciat esse viros timeatque furentes
et morti faciles animos et gaudeat hostis
non plures haesisse rates.— (4.505–507)

[Let him know that our men are unconquerable, let him fear the crazed courage that welcomes death, and let him be glad that only one raft stuck fast.]

One wonders what to make of Vulteius' threat. Is he saying that the battle would have gone in a different direction had the other two rafts gotten caught as well or that all three rafts, presumably carrying roughly 500 soldiers each, would have committed mass suicide? The answer seems to come from Vulteius himself only a few lines later. *Furor*

Romans may have been aware of its paradoxical nature cf. Plass (1995), 96; Hill (2004) 183–212; Edwards (2007), 126–8 For a discussion on the degree to which Lucan might have been aware of it, see below.

is contagious, and once it touches Vulteius, it spreads like wildfire. He is so committed to suicide that even if a path to safety were found, he would willingly shun it. He vows, probably yelling at this point, *Proieci vitam, comites, totusque futurae / mortis agor stimulis: furor est* (“I have cast aside life, comrades, and I am fully driven on by the goad of impending death: it is a crazed possession”) (4.516–517). Vulteius’ speech has its desired effect, and *ardor* stirs the minds of his cohort. With commander and cohort so possessed by *furor*, one questions, as I believe Lucan intends, the sincerity of the philosophical discussion with which Vulteius began his speech. It is clear that Vulteius’ Catonian calmness was simply a flimsy façade to hide his unhealthy, Lucanian *amor mortis*.

In addition to this, in an interesting bit of poetics at line 558, Lucan juxtaposes *mors* and *virtutis*. *Sic mutua pacti / fata cadunt iuvenes, minimumque in morte virorum / mors virtutis habet* (“Thus the soldiers fell, sworn to a mutual death, and in the death of these men death itself needed the least bit of *virtus*”) (4.556–558). The genitive *virtutis* is dependent grammatically upon *minimum* split between the 3rd and 4th feet of line 557, but the juxtaposition, enjambment, and hyperbaton detail nicely just how Lucan sees this scene; as a *mors virtutis*. This is the same effect wrought at 4.484–485⁴⁰ where the enjambment separates the *non cogitur* of 484 from the verbal idea dependent upon it, in effect *unnegating* the infinitive *velle*. The reader is confronted with a line beginning with what could be construed as a positive statement, but is in fact the opposite. By rearranging the syntax and enjambling key phrases, Lucan can simultaneously insinuate one thing with a phrase that grammatically states its opposite. Also, as I noted earlier,

⁴⁰—*non cogitur ullus / velle mori*— (4.484–485).

these lines bear resemblance to phrases found in Tacitus and Suetonius. It is possible that Lucan is drawing poetic attention to this phrase in particular because he himself notices the contradictions inherent in the very idea of a freely undertaken, state-mandated death. He, then, separates in the text what he believes cannot coherently coincide in the world. On another level, if we refer to Lucan's supposed pessimism regarding the moral status of his readership, this sort of enjambment could act on a smaller scale as the poem does as a whole. Should one mentally insert certain words in instances such as this, one could either pass or fail Lucan's test.⁴¹ Regardless of how Vulteius began his speech, Lucan's narrator has taken pains to undermine his *calmness* and *philosophical musings*.

Vulteius' attempt at proper Catonian *theatricality* fares no better than does his attempt at *calmness*. He beseeches his troops with a retrospectively ironic plea to theatricality, reminding them that they have a unique opportunity at hand.

Nos in conspicua sociis hostisque carina
 constituere dei. Praebebunt aequora testes,
 praebebunt terrae, summis dabit insula saxis,
 spectabunt geminae diverso litore partes.
 Nescio quod nostris magnum et memorabile fatis
 exemplum, Fortuna, paras.— (4.492–497)

[The Gods have placed us on this ship, visible to allies and enemies. The sea and land will bear witness, the island will lend its upper peaks, and the twin armies will act as spectators from opposite shores. I am unsure what *magnum et memorabile exemplum* you will make out of our deaths, Fortune.]

⁴¹ This may also be the motivation behind 4.496–497, (*Nescio quod nostris magnum et memorabile fatis / exemplum, Fortuna, paras—*), where Lucan enjambes *exemplum*, the noun modified by *magnum* and *memorable* in the preceding line. The delay here of the noun acts to create ambiguity and a moment of uncertainty in Lucan's readers as to what *magnum et memorabile* thing could possibly be done by the deaths of Vulteius and his cohort.

Vulteius positions himself and his crew to fulfill the Catonian quality of theatricality. He treats their coming deaths as a performance. They occupy a makeshift stage in the middle of the sea, in clear view of the Histrians and Liburnians who have taken their “seats” on the surrounding ships and shores before the slaughter ensues. Lucan’s narrator explicitly labels Vulteius (et al.) as possible exempla, but of what could they be exempla? Vulteius wishes them to be an exemplum of Catonian suicide, but as the scene progresses it becomes abundantly clear that Vulteius’ virtues are in fact vices, on the one hand through his emotional furor and on the other through his outright devotion to Caesar. The episode is surely meant as a parody of a Stoic sage seeking libertas through suicide.⁴²

As the soldiers fall the narrator waxes pessimistic, complaining that —totumque in partibus unis / bellorum fecere nefas— (“All the nefas of war took place on a single side) (4.548–549). This does not bode well for the Pompeians who stand amazed by the devotion Vulteius and his crew have shown. Because Lucan’s internal audience marvels and seems to praise the actions of Vulteius and his crew, actions Lucan has made clear resulted in nefas, their status as arbitri honorum is effectively negated. The Pompeians fail Lucan’s test. The Pompeians’ marginalized moral status has an interesting reciprocity with Vulteius’ actions. Their praise of an action that the narrator has explicitly labeled nefas makes known their moral ineptitude. This very ineptitude works in the reverse and over-determines the worthlessness and depravity of Vulteius’ actions.

⁴² Cf. Martindale, C. A., “The Politician Lucan,” *Greece and Rome* 31 (1984) 69.

The Pompeians, however, are not the audience Vulteius believes could most fully understand the significance of his actions. They are a substitute for Vulteius' audience in absentia, Caesar, whom he invokes at 4.500. Caesar himself, in his *Bellum Gallicum*, stresses that his soldiers fight with more vigor when he is present. Caesar's gaze somehow empowers his men and serves to validate their actions. Even the imagined presence of Caesar seems to be able to embolden his soldiers' courage. Labienus exhorts Caesar's troops to *illum adesse et haec coram cernere existimate* ("Imagine that he is here and is watching these exploits with his own eyes") (B. G. 6.8.4). Similarly, Vulteius' ideal setting is to die while Caesar watches, but by invoking Caesar, Vulteius does nothing for his own depiction as ethically backwards but increase the dissonance between the morally ideal reader's perceptions of him and his own perceptions of himself. Edwards notes that Lucan portrays Caesar a harbinger of evil "whose will to power has, throughout the *Bellum Civile*, been presented as incompatible with *libertas*."⁴³ Thus, it stands to reason that the only actions with which Caesar would be pleased are those as equally corrupt and evil as himself. Vulteius comments that *magna virtute merendum est / Caesar ut amissis inter tot milia paucis / hoc damnum clademque vocet* ("It takes a deed of great virtue for Caesar to call losing a few men out of so many thousands a loss and defeat") (4.512–514). Recalling that *virtus* in this scene has been entirely corrupted and reversed, one must read this ironically. It may take a deed of great *virtus* to warrant Caesar's approval and to affect him emotionally, but Lucanian *virtus* is *nefas*, not the Republican ethical apogee.

⁴³ Edwards, 42.

Vulteius' invocation of Caesar raises a further issue. When one looks at the suicides of Cato or Seneca or Thrasea Paetus it is exceptionally clear that it was the confrontation between themselves and their respective tyrants that occasioned their suicides. From the evidence earlier concerning the fear of *invidia*, this seems to have been a common characteristic of aristocratic suicide as well. Cato confronts Caesar, but then kills himself at Utica in order to outstrip his offer of *clementia*. Vulteius confronts Caesar as well, but commits suicide on behalf of him, *pro te* (4.500), rather than in spite of him. Although Caesar's invocation makes Vulteius' suicide diametrically opposed to common, aristocratic practice, it also connects it to it intimately by being reactionary.

Vulteius thus fails to conform to any of the Catonian aspects of suicide. His attempts at calmness and Stoic ponderings fail miserably because of his penchant for *furor*. His obsession with theatricality fares no better once his *virtus* has been compromised. In addition to these, he beseeches Caesar, the most ethically backwards character in the *Bellum Civile*, and devotes his and his men's lives to him. The deaths of Vulteius and his men are meant to be of moment and consequence, but "all they achieve is show, the ultimate extravagant gesture."⁴⁴

We must also briefly look at Lucan's emphasis on the destructive aspect of his metaphor in this scene before moving to Scaeva. One of Lucan's most potent weapons against Vulteius and his crew is anonymity and subject negation. This becomes all the more striking in light of Vulteius' further pleas to theatricality and his exhortation to his crew that,

⁴⁴ Edwards, 44.

Non tamen in caeca bellorum nube cadendum est,
aut cum permixtas acies sua tela tenebris
involvent. Conferta iacent cum corpora campo,
in medium mors omnis abit, perit obruta virtus. (4.488–491)

[We do not *have* to die in the blind cloud of battle or when their spears envelop the intermingled battle lines. When bodies lie piled up in a field, every death merges into one, *virtus*, beaten down, perishes.]

This speech's effectiveness resides in its implicit recollection of the epic *aristeia* of Homer and Vergil. In the martial-epic tradition, a warrior's battle prowess was determined both by the length of his *aristeia* and by the valor of those he killed. While leading the Myrmidons into battle in *Iliad* 16, Patroclus kills 25 Trojans, all of whom receive names. Upon his reentrance into battle in *Iliad* 19 through his duel with Hector in *Iliad* 22, Achilles slaughters 24 named Trojans.⁴⁵ He gains *kleos* through his sizable list of kills, but those killed by him gain a bit of *kleos* as well simply by falling to him. In *Iliad* 21, he chides Lycaon for not relishing the chance to die at the hands of someone as noble as himself (106–107). Later, he himself complains that he would rather die at the hands of Hector, the most valiant of the Trojans, rather than be swallowed by Scamander, since his own heroism would be validated by having been killed by someone of Hector's stature (21.279–280).

Vulsteius' speech, then, promises his troops such an Iliadic death.⁴⁶ It hinges on the promise that their act would shelter them from becoming a nameless,

⁴⁵ "Glossary and Index for the *Iliad*" (Ian Johnston, Last updated 11.19.2001).
<http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/homer/Iliaddeaths.htm>. (Accessed 10.21.2010).

⁴⁶ For a detailed discussion of the concept of *hero* in epic cf. Nagy, Gregory, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Ancient Greek Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1979) and Nagy Gregory, "The Epic Hero," in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. J. M. Foley (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 71–89. For a discussion of Vergilian battle scenes as heroic *aristeiai* cf. Horsfall, Nicholas, "Non Viribus Aequis: Some Problems in Virgil's Battle-Scenes," *Greece and Rome* 34 (1987), 48–55, Hardie (1993). For Lucan's borrowings from epic cf. Hardie (1993) and Gorman, Vanessa, "Lucan's Epic *Aristeia* and the Hero of the *Bellum Civile*," *The Classical Journal* 96.3 (2001), 263–290.

undifferentiated pile of corpses. But we see that the heroic ideal of individuality is jeopardized from the very first suicidal blow.⁴⁷ No sooner than Vulteius demands death does *non unus ensis* run him through. As Vulteius falls, he returns the blow, not to a specified soldier, but *cui volnera prima / debebat* (4.546–547). No one other than Vulteius receives a name, collective nouns are used to refer to the soldiers, and there is but a single *voltu superbo* (4.569). Suicide compounds the loss of the heroic ideal by collapsing the *victor* and the *victus* into the same individual; if one is unnamed, both are unnamed, and, thus, neither receives the glory of killing or being killed by an heroic warrior. Lucan highlights the ambiguity and anonymity of who has conquered whom by playing loose and fast with the term *victores*, which occurs twice within four lines.

—Despectam cernere lucem
victoresque suos voltu spectare superbo
 et mortem sentire iuvat. (4.568–570)

[To see the light they had spurned, to gaze upon their own *victores* with an upturned face, and to feel death pleases them]

—Bustisque remittent
 corpora *victores*, ducibus mirantibus, ulli
 esse ducem tanti.— (4.571–573)

[The *victores* send the corpses to the funeral pyres, while their leaders marvel that a leader is prized so highly.]

Victores appears, at first blush, to refer to the Pompeians in both lines; they are, after all, the army that has won the day. But one readily notices that the Pompeians have done next to nothing in this scene save be held at bay by a much smaller army. By reference to 7.706 (*vincere peius erat*), a *sententia* clearly at the fore of Lucan's

⁴⁷ Cf. Eldred, Katherine Owen, "This Ship of Fools: Epic Vision in Lucan's Vulteius Episode," in *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body*, ed. David Fredrick (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2002), 71.

mind during the composition of the *Bellum Civile*, I would argue that the *victores* in 569 refers to Vulteius and his men.⁴⁸ Lucan, thus, further degrades Vulteius' moral status by cleverly reminding his readers that the victor in civil war has still slain his own kin and thus committed *nefas*.⁴⁹ The victor here is paradoxically dead, which is exactly how suicide functions. In the same way that we saw political suicide able to assert and to destroy in tandem, here we see that the suicides of Vulteius and his men render them *victores* due solely to the fact that they simultaneously render them *victi*; thus removing any shred of dignity from the former term.

Lucan not only pilfers any chance of a heroic, Iliadic death from Vulteius and his cohort, he also objectifies and entirely removes agency from these men, thereby drawing attention to the destructive aspect of his metaphor begun in the proem. Throughout the *Bellum Civile* Lucan problematizes human subjectivity. Many of Lucan's scenes are marked by an inversion or a confusion of subject-object relations. One recurring manifestation of this is a phenomenon that U. Hübner has called *hypallage*.⁵⁰ Widely, it is a process whereby the logical object is elevated to become the means by which the state of affairs of a sentence obtains—usually resulting in a peculiar verbal quality being conveyed to the subject. In a related vein, Elaine Fantham argues that hypallage renders “the psychological focus of a sentence its syntactical subject.”⁵¹ This,

⁴⁸ 7.706 itself echoes 1.366 where Laelius details his crazed devotion to Caesar. *Usque adeo miserum est civili vincere bello?* (Is it so very bad to be the victor in civil war?). Lucan's comment at 7.706 seems to be the answer to Laelius' rhetorical question in book one.

⁴⁹ The *victores* in 572 obviously refers to the Pompeians, but by being so close to a clearly moralized usage of the term four lines earlier, one cannot help but impute the same meaning to it here. Cf. Barthes, *Funerary Baroque* and Roller, Matthew, “Ethical Contradiction and the Fractured Community in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*,” *Classical Antiquity* 15 (1996), 319–346, especially § I.

⁵⁰ Hübner, U., “Hypallage in Lucan's *Pharsalia*,” *Hermes* 100 (1972), 577–600.

⁵¹ Fantham, Elaine, *Lucan, De Bello Civile, Book 2*, (Cambridge: 1992) 37.

I believe, is nearer the effect wrought by Lucan's uses of hypallage. His narrator describes the suicidal blows of Vulteius and his men as swords being bashed by chests and throats bearing down upon sword hands (*percussum est pectore ferrum, / et iuguli pressere manum*, 4.561–562). By refocusing his reader's lens, Lucan draws attention away from Vulteius and his men *qua* men, thereby marginalizing their subjectivity and objectifying them—both metaphorically and literally. Hill argues, perhaps following Shadi Bartsch, that “this sort of hypallage is frequent in Lucan and is a logical extension of the notion that civil war is a form of suicide.”⁵² Lucan's syntax, then, plays with the concepts of subject and object, sometimes reversing, sometimes melding, in order to affront the personal identity of his characters.

At the end of the day, in a morbidly ironic twist, Vulteius and his crew literally become the anonymous pile of *corpora* he argued suicide would avoid. *Iam strage cruenta / conspicitur cumulata ratis*— (“Now, the *raft* is seen overloaded with bloody butchery”) (4.570–571). Lucan continues to pile on the abuse, using the same verbal stem Vulteius used in the beginning of his plea to theatricality—*conspic**—to describe the new state of the raft. Lucan devalues Vulteius and his men so deeply that even as a pile of *corpora* he begrudges them grammatical prominence; they are no longer autonomous agents but have been demoted to a subordinate descriptor of a raft.

In this chapter I detailed how, in Vulteius' case, Lucan places the primary aspects of a Catonian suicide—aspects in a way, institutionalized by his time—in the mouth of his main character. Vulteius exhibits calmness, partakes of Stoic philosophical discourse, and surrounds himself and his men with testes who presumably will bear

⁵² Hill, 217. Cf. Bartsch, Shadi, *Ideology in Cold Blood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) ch. 1, specifically 24ff.

witness to the *virtus* of their glorious deaths. Lucan, however, refutes these Catonian aspects, expunging any claim to *virtus* the actions of Vulteius might have had. Further, in order to emphasize the negative aspect of suicide and to show that the imagined positive aspect is nothing but smoke and mirrors, Lucan objectifies Vulteius and his men and devalues their subjectivity. When he has had his way with them they are nothing but the blood and gore (*strage cruenta*) which their acts have brought about. We will see that Lucan does similar things in the case of Scaeva. He will make his character go through the proper steps of his respective *topos*, only to end up as a complete bastardization of it.

TWENTYS

Scripti Caesares

While Vulteius' scene lacks historicity but is based point for point on an established Catonian scheme for Stoic suicide, in taking on the heroic *aristeia*, Lucan chooses to use and adapt an historic example, Cassius Scaeva.⁵³ As with his other adaptations of historical events, his reception of Scaeva confronts and reacts to other historical accounts; most notably those of Valerius Maximus and Julius Caesar.⁵⁴ Fierce debate still rages over whether and whom Lucan used as historical sources. Prior to the 1960s scholars doubted whether Lucan had made use of any historian but Livy and argued that his use of Livy was many times ancillary and inaccurate.⁵⁵ They cited Lucan's many digressions and over-amplifications of scenes, which the historians recounted as quite inconsequential, as evidence for his lack of historical wherewithal.⁵⁶ More recently, however, scholars have begun to appreciate the breadth of Lucan's historical borrowings, in part stemming from a realization that Lucan ought not to be

⁵³ Cf. Asso, Paolo, *A Commentary in Lucan, De Bello Civili IV* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), writes, "In the extant text of Caesar's *BC* there is no mention of the Opitergians [i.e. Vulteius' men]" (190).

⁵⁴ Although these instances are widespread, Lucan is still constrained at the end by the outcome of the Civil War. For a discussion of Lucan's historical sources and adaptations thereof cf. Pichon, René, *Les Sources De Lucain* (Paris: 1912), Rambaud, M., "L'Opposition de Lucain au *Bellum Civile* de César," *IL* 12 (1960), 155–162, Marti, Berthe "Cassius Scaeva and Lucan's *Inventio*," in Luitpold Wallach ed. *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 239–257, Masters (1992) and Sklenar (2003) also v.s. n. 35.

⁵⁵ Cf. Pichon, (1912). As Masters (1992: 15) remarks, Pichon's views "rapidly acquired the status of a *communis opinio*." Even scholars who admit that Lucan used other sources are wont to privilege Livy in some way or another. Marti (1966: 240, 241, 243, 245, 246) argues that we should understand Livy's account of the Dyrrhachium episode behind Valerius' and Lucan's, even though it is not extant. While this may perhaps be the case, because Livy's account is non-extant, propositions of this nature add nothing to the scholarship. Also, cf. Masters (1992: 242ff) for a discussion of other of Marti's arguments for Livian mediation.

⁵⁶ For "digressions" such as the oracle and necromancy scenes cf. Haskins, C. E., ed., *M. Annaei Lucani Pharsalia* (London: 1887) xxxiii, and for "over-amplifications" such as the Massilian naval battle, which many ancient historians—Caesar excluded—portray as a pit-stop on Caesar's march to Spain cf. Masters (1992) 13ff.

held to the standards of a historian.⁵⁷ Lucan's poem is not history-in-verse, and, as John Makowski explains, if one comports oneself to the text in this way, one is bound to object to parts of his narrative that are not directly related to the conflict or that grossly distort their reality.⁵⁸ We will begin by looking at Caesar's and Valerius Maximus' accounts of Scaeva so that we may better appreciate Lucan's appropriation of him as a character. We will also be able to sift out the possible effects Lucan intended these changes to bring about. After, we will look closely at Lucan's portrayal of Scaeva to see how miserably he fails in his attempted *aristeia*.

Caesar's narrative of the defense at Dyrrhachium in 48 BCE, written and published sometime between 48 BCE and Caesar's assassination in 44 BCE, is the earliest description we have of Scaeva's exploits (*Commentarii de Bello Civili* 3.53).⁵⁹ Caesar's description is, as most of his writing, quite one sided and somewhat propagandistic. He writes that Pompey lost nearly 2,000 men, but that his own forces lost no more than 20. He also mentions that none of his soldiers escaped unwounded, and further that *quattuorque ex una cohorte centuriones oculos amiserunt* ("Four centurions from a single cohort lost their eyes"). In order to prove that they had fought valiantly, his soldiers counted the spent arrows lying around the fort—amazingly, nearly 30,000—and presented him with Scaeva's *scutum*, which had been pierced 120 times. In return for his valor, Caesar rewarded Scaeva with a copious sum of money and a

⁵⁷ Marti (1966), Henderson (1987), Masters (1992).

⁵⁸ Makowski, John, *Death and Liberty in Lucan's Pharsalia*, (PhD. Diss., Princeton University, 1974) 144. Also, cf. Linott, A. W., "Lucan and the History of the Civil War," CQ 21 (1971), 480–505.

⁵⁹ A Cassius Scaeva is mentioned in an inscription dated from 48 BCE (*C.I.L.* 10.5728), and Cicero mentions a Scaeva who is associated with Caesar in two of his letters to Atticus (13.23; 14.100); neither, however, contain any significant information about the Dyrrhachium defense or anything else.

promotion to the *primum pilum*. Albeit a bit exaggerated perhaps, Caesar's account gives no description of the battle proper, merely its aftermath. He dispenses with narrative in lieu of punctual, straightforward statements of the bare facts;⁶⁰ he tells his readers the number of the cohort, the number of dead on both sides, the number of spent arrows, the suffering of his centurions, and the rewards granted to them. Caesar's text, however, is still meant to praise the soldiers *en masse*, while later accounts tend to focus the lens onto Scaeva and occasionally a second soldier.⁶¹

Next, chronologically, comes Valerius Maximus' account in *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* (3.2.23), published shortly after 31 C.E.⁶² It is much longer than Caesar's and has much more of a literary hue to it. The focus is overwhelmingly on Scaeva, whereas Caesar's account, while featuring Scaeva, focuses more on the loyalty of the whole cohort. Valerius adds Justuleius, a *praefectus* of Pompey, to set over against the Caesarian champion, Scaeva. In the narrative proper, he depicts Scaeva as fighting alone, further marginalizing the efforts of the rest of the soldiers. During his fight Scaeva is wounded in the head, shoulder, and thigh. As in Caesar's narrative, the *scutum* of Valerius' Scaeva also has 120 holes in it. In his effort to focus on Scaeva, however, he alters Caesar's account so that only Scaeva loses his eye, instead of all four centurions. Interestingly, Caesar's account leaves it open to interpretation whether

⁶⁰ "Facts" must necessarily be understood as a relative term in such a propagandistic narrative.

⁶¹ Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, and Suetonius mention a C. Acilius who fought in the sea-battle of Massilia (*Facta* 3.2.23; *Caesar* 16.1; *Caesar* 68.4), Appian mentions that Scaeva's commander, Minucius, was wounded severely (B.C. 2.9.60).

⁶² Cf. Whittick, George Clement and Barbara M. Levick, "Valerius Maximus," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. The accepted date for Valerius' publication is shortly after 31 C. E. However, there is some difficulty in dating the work. For an earlier date of publication and extended bibliography on the issues of dating Valerius Maximus cf. Maslakov, G., "Valerius Maximus and the Roman Historiography. A Study of the *exempla* Tradition," *ANRW* II.32.1 (1984), 437–496.

Scaeva is among the four soldiers who lose their eyes. Overwhelmingly, however, under the influence of Valerius and Lucan, this is how later historians would interpret Caesar's account. Plutarch, Suetonius, and Appian all remark how Scaeva continued to fight despite the loss of his eye.⁶³ Further, Valerius adds a second episode during the battle of Britain of which Scaeva is also the hero. Plutarch also reports this battle; however, he attributes the deeds with which Valerius credits Scaeva to a nameless soldier. The addition of the second episode, not found in Caesar's *Commentarii*, may be due to the fact that Valerius' account is meant to catalogue heroic men and their deeds, in this instance the valor and military discipline of Scaeva. Plutarch, Suetonius, and Appian follow Valerius' example—and as we will see, Lucan's—by also dramatizing and moralizing Scaeva's exploits. Lucan, however, is not writing a military report, like Caesar, nor an encomium of martial deeds, like Valerius, nor a biography, like Plutarch. Instead, he is writing epic poetry, and in choosing to include this well-attested historical episode he must weld two literary genres, historical narrative and epic poetry.

Lucan's poetic imagination refashions Scaeva's defense at Dyrrhachium as we have it in Caesar and Valerius Maximus. We first notice that, despite Lucan's descriptive superfluity, he omits, or contradicts, nearly all of Caesar's factual details—the number of holes in the shield, the number of arrows littering the rampart, the number of the cohort, the courage and injuries of the other soldiers, and the rewards given by Caesar. Lucan does recast some of these details, although he addresses Caesar's and Valerius' accounts as if they were a single description rather than as separate accounts. First, at the close of the scene, Lucan's narrator addresses Scaeva directly, reminding

⁶³ Plutarch *Caesar* 16, Suetonius *Caesar* 68, Appian *B. C.* 2.9.60.

him that *non tu bellorum spoliis ornare Tonantis / templa potes, non tu laetis ululare triumphis* (“you can never decorate the temples of the Thunderer with your spoils of war nor squeal for joyful triumphs”) (6.260–261). While Caesar’s account does not say that Scaeva celebrated any triumphs—presumably because centurions did not receive them—he was rewarded with money and a promotion, things Lucan’s narrator explicitly denies him. Next, Lucan directly contradicts the heroism and valor of Scaeva’s fellow soldiers, which Caesar saw as so important and over which Valerius simply passed. As the Pompeians issue over the rampart, with horn blasts and glittering standards, the Caesarians stand *attoniti*, frozen with fear. Even after Scaeva’s pep-talk (6.150–165), these soldiers do not fight; instead they follow Scaeva to watch in admiration. Finally, Lucan, quite humorously, adapts the pierced-shield motif of Valerius and Caesar. His Scaeva apparently tosses aside his armor and shield and *tot volnera belli / solus obit* (“all alone opposes the many wounds of war”) (6.204–205) because he *veritus credi clipeo laevaue vacasse* (“feared it might be believed that his shield and left hand had been idle”) (6.203). In lieu of his armor, Scaeva farcically dons a vest of spears (*densamque ferens in pectore silvam*), which eventually causes him to stagger and fall (6.205–206). Lucan’s use of the pierced-shield motif extends even further. After Scaeva collapses and his fellow soldiers hoist him onto their shoulders, they praise *velut inclusum perfosso in pectore numen* (“the deity which seemed to be housed in his bored out chest”) (6.253). Lucan describes Scaeva’s chest as *perfossum*, which is the word Valerius uses to describe Scaeva’s shield at 3.2.23.9–10 (*scutum C et XX ictibus perfossum*). Cleverly, Lucan has transferred the pierced-shield motif of Caesar and

Valerius into a pierced-body motif via his choice of vocabulary.⁶⁴ This fits well with his general penchant for blood and gore, of which there is no shortage in this passage.

This is not the first time Lucan has chosen to omit or reverse Caesar's account—even within the events surrounding Dyrrhachium. We meet Lucan's Scaeva while the Caesarian army attempts to maintain the siege of the Pompeians at Dyrrhachium. Paradoxically, the Caesarians seem to be in the worse position; their situation is grim, starvation has set in, and the soldiers are eating *in pecudum* (6.111).

Quae mollire queunt flamma, quae frangere morsu,
quaeque per abrasas utero demittere fauces,
plurimaque humanis ante hoc incognita mensis
diripiens— (6.114–116)

[They vie for whatever they could soften in the fire, crush with their teeth, or force down into their stomachs through their rasped gullets, even many previously unknown “delicacies.”]

In themselves, these lines do not necessarily set off any alarms. When read over against Caesar's account, however, one notices that this is exactly the opposite of how he describes the circumstances. He writes that, after he had ordered the blockade of two passes in order to stop Pompey from foraging for food,

erat summa inopia pabuli, adeo ut foliis ex arboribus strictis et teneris
harundinum radicibus contusis equos alerent; frumenta enim, quae fuerant
intra munitiones sata, consumpserant. Et cogebantur Corcyra atque
Acarmania longo interiecto navigationis spatio pabulum subportare,
quodque erat eius rei minor copia, hordeo adaugere atque his rationibus
equitatum tolerare. (B. C. 3.58.1–3.58.4)

[There was such a scarcity of fodder that they supported their horses with leaves plucked from trees and the green roots of canes, which they bruised; for they had consumed the grain which had been sown inside their forts. They were even forced to import fodder from Corcyra and Acarnania across a long sea voyage. Even this was so measly that they had to mix it with barley and by these methods sustain their cavalry.]

⁶⁴ 3.2.23.9–10 is the only instance in Valerius Maximus of *perfodio*.

One immediately sees the similarities in these two passages and how one, Lucan's, is commenting on the other, Caesar's. Sections of Lucan's poem, and possibly the poem *in toto*, were meant as conscious counterbalances, of sorts, to Caesar's blatantly one-sided narrative. Masters argues that Lucan takes on Caesarian history in much the same way as he does Vergilian poetics; as such, "it is hardly conceivable that Lucan would have had no interest in what his evil protagonist had to say for himself in his own account of the war."⁶⁵ Thus, it is no mere coincidence that both Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and Caesar's *Commentarii* begin and end at nearly the same spots.⁶⁶ Caesar's *Caesar* is a character who is reluctant to fight. He is the well-meaning anti-aggressor. John Henderson, while describing how Caesar consciously molds his own identity in the *Commentarii*, quips that "far from prosecuting energetic *Blitzkrieg*, Caesar was not even at war—let alone a civil war."⁶⁷ This is how Caesar wants *Caesar* to be received and understood. Lucan's *Caesar*, on the other hand, is an unstoppable force of nature, "he is pure energy."⁶⁸ Lucan compares Caesar to a lightning bolt that

Aetheris impulsu sonitu mundique fragore
 emicuit, rupitque diem, populosque paventes
 terruit, oblique praestringens lumina flamma.
 In sua templa furit: nullaque exire vetante

⁶⁵ Masters, 19.

⁶⁶ Both begin, roughly, with the crossing of the Rubicon and end with the beginning of the Alexandrian War. This, however, assumes the completeness of Lucan's text, a position which I endorse. The correspondences with Caesar's text as well as other thematic elements strongly suggest to me that Lucan had, more or less, completed his *Bellum Civile*. For arguments for the texts completeness cf. Masters, 216–259. For arguments for the texts incompleteness cf. Ahl, Frederick, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979); Leigh, Matthew, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 2ff.

⁶⁷ Henderson, John, "XPDNC/Writing Caesar (*Bellum Civile*)," *Classical Antiquity* 15 (1996), 261–288.

⁶⁸ Johnson, W. R. *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and His Heros*, (Ithaca: University of Cornell Press, 1987) 74.

materia, magnamque cadens, magnamque revertens
dat stragem late, sparosque recolligit ignes. (1.151–157)

[strikes with a crack of rent air and a world in tumult, and it splits the sky and terrifies the quaking peoples, while it sears their eyes with sidelong flames. In its own precincts it rages: and since nothing solid dares oppose its coming, in its advance and its retreat it gives great havoc far and wide, and then gathers back up its scattered fires.]

He has created a Caesar to pit against Caesar's Caesar. This is not to say that he is truthfully relating the details of Caesar's activities during the Civil War, for he most assuredly is not. It is only to say that however far Caesar embellishes or skews his account to one side of the spectrum, Lucan warps his own account equally or farther to the other side.

The next thing we notice about B.C. 6.144–262 when compared to *Facta et Dicta* 3.2.23 is that, although they ostensibly are written about the same events, there is an utter incongruity between Lucan's and Valerius Maximus' accounts. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that Lucan, more so than Valerius, throws his literary floodlight onto Scaeva and his deeds; on the other hand, however, it is also due to how Lucan chooses to do this. A cursory reading of both passages shows that Lucan's is much more protracted than Valerius'. He describes Scaeva at Dyrrhachium for a grim and gory 122 lines, one-eighth of book 6, while Valerius needs only 46 lines to report both the Dyrrhachium defense and the subsequent naval battle in Britain.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Caesar uses only a measly 20 lines in his report of the Dyrrhachium defense. Line numbers for Lucan are taken from the Loeb Classical Series. Line numbers for Caesar and Valerius Maximus are taken from Diogenes, which uses Klotz' 1950 edition of the *Commentarii* and Kempf's 1888 edition of *Facta et Dicta*. I realize that comparing scenes from a prose compilation of heroic deeds to scenes in an hexameter poem via line numbers may seem a bit arbitrary, but there seems to be no better metric for determining the relative importance of scenes. Any talk of length is reducible to physical space allotted to certain information. In truth, any method of partitioning will be arbitrary in some sense. However, Hunink, Vincent, *M. Annaeus Lucanus Bellum Civile Book III*, (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1992) xv, writing about his own choice of textual partitioning, is correct that "some form of division seemed indispensable for the analysis of the text." Moreover, for the present work, relative proportion, rather than precision, is

A more in depth reading of the passages shows a marked preference for different tenses in both authors. In Valerius' Dyrrhachium episode proper, he uses only eleven finite verbs, six of which are perfect.⁷⁰ This is because Valerius' account, although it contains more of a narrative than we find in Caesar's *Commentarii*, is still fundamentally a report. Lucan, however, with truly epic poetics, narrates the story of Scaeva. His choice of tenses, overwhelmingly in favor of the present, aids in his poetic project. From the first mention of Scaeva's name through the next fourteen lines (6.144–159)—the same number of lines Valerius' Dyrrhachium episode covers—Lucan uses five present tenses and even one future tense.⁷¹ His text makes it such that one sees Scaeva mounting the rampart to fight off the Pompeians every time one reads this passage. Lucan takes his readers through an in-and-out of internal and external narration, while using narratorial apostrophes much more than is common in his martial epic predecessors.⁷² His pictorial description of the bloody struggle, the details of

important (*v.i.n.85*). Lucan's account eclipses Valerius' by leaps and bounds, in terms of length and depth of description.

⁷⁰ *Perfect* (6) *Subsecutus est, Interemit, Conruit, Apparuit, Aluit, Inhaesit, pluperfect* (3) *Praepositus erat, Fecerat, Accesserant; imperfect* (2) *Dimicaret, Niteretur*. The only two present forms in the entirety of Valerius' description of Scaeva, *prosequar* and *nescio*, come in Valerius' brief address to Scaeva which he uses as a segue between Dyrrhachium proper and the naval battle in Britain.

⁷¹ *Present* (5) *Gerit, cernit, inquit, datis, pudet, future* (1) *Stabitis*. To count the number of finite verbs in this scene seems unnecessary since a small sample will suffice. The tense distribution for the rest of the passage, however, does follow that of these first fourteen lines. Even the few *perfects* Lucan uses (*adegit, electi sumus, negavit*) can easily be explained as *present perfects*, with the focus more on the aspectual usage rather than the temporal. Further, this tense usage seems to be highly associated with Caesar and his cronies as exuding energy and movement rather than stagnation and complacency. Cf. Helzle, Martin, "*Indocilis Privata Loqui: The Characterization of Lucan's Caesar*," in *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Lucan*, ed. Charles Tesoriero (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 355–368, who has shown that "compared to Pompeius, Caesar uses fewer past tenses but more futures."

⁷² So often do the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* make narratological transitions that passages need not be cited at length. I use the term "martial" epic to differentiate between *Homeric epic* and *Hesiodic epic*. Such a switching of narratological perspectives does not seem to be as prominent a feature of the Hesiodic *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Cf. Bal, Mieke, *Narratology*, trans., Christine van Boheemen, (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1985) 134, who writes, "Declarative verbs indicating that someone is about to speak are, in a narrative text, signs of a change of level in the narrative text." For arguments

which are works of his poetic imagination, gives a visceral texture to the scene and elicits feelings of shock and awe. Having outlined how Lucan interacts and adapts the historical sources for this scene, we can now look at how Lucan incorporates these changes into his depiction of Scaeva's aristeia.

What a Lovely Vest of Spears You Have!

As I diagrammed above, one of the main themes of both Vulteius' and Scaeva's scenes is *virtus*. The ambiguous nature of this word shapes the overall meaning of both passages. In Vulteius' scene the *virtus* in question is that of a Stoic *sapiens*. In Scaeva's scene, however, the supposed *virtus* is that of a loyal soldier of Rome, a defender of *libertas*. We saw above that Cicero believed words such as *pietas*, *virtus*, *libertas*, *impius*, *nefas*, and *crimen* were interconnected in a cultural matrix of moral categories in Republican Rome. For him these terms could only exist when defined in reference to a *res publica*. Further, he claimed that proper grasp of these concepts can only be obtained through "extraspection' and learning how to perform on the social stage."⁷³

Itaque, ut in fidibus musicorum aures vel minima sentiunt, sic nos, si acres ac diligentes esse volumus animadversoresque vitiorum, magna saepe intellegemus ex parvis; ex oculorum optutu, superciliorum aut remissione aut contractione . . . ex contentione vocis, ex summissione, ex ceteris similibus facile iudicabimus, quid eorum apte fiat, quid ab officio naturaque discrepet. (De. Off. 1.146.1–9)

[And so, just like the ears detect the slightest error in tuning, so we, if we want to be keen and vigilant observers of vices, often we will interpret

on the relationship between Hesiodic epic and Homeric epic cf. Nagy, Gregory, "Authorisation and Authorship in the Hesiodic *Theogony*," *Ramus* 21 (1992), 119–130 [esp. 125–126], Beall, E. F. "The Plow That Broke the Plain Epic Tradition: Hesiod 'Works and Days', vv. 414–503," *Classical Antiquity* 23 (2004) 1–32, and Steiner, Deborah, "Notes and Discussions: Nautical Matters: Hesiod's *Nautila* and the Ibycus Fragment 282 *PMG*," *Classical Philology* 100 (2005), 347–355.

⁷³ Hill, 70.

significant conclusions from trivial things; we shall easily judge from a glance of the eyes, from a relaxation or a furrowing of the brow . . . from a raising or lowering of the voice, and from other similar things what has been done adequately, and what is at odds with duty and nature.]

The nodes of the ethical matrix are interwoven and have a very pronounced communal quality to them just as we saw earlier in the case of the Stoic suicide. Matthew Roller describes it as threefold system:

First, a person's moral value is determined entirely by the judgments of other members of the community, not by his own self-judgment. Second, moral value is allocated on the basis of observed actions, not on the basis of any internal, privately accessible states of mind. Third, these actions are evaluated in terms of the effect they have on the community as a whole—that is, for the degree to which they further the community's agendas and reproduce its ideologies.⁷⁴

This matrix persists into the Imperial period, but the nature of the relationship between the terms changes.⁷⁵ Once the social bonds by which the older ethical matrix defined itself break down—as in the case of civil war—the relationships between the concepts are thrown into turmoil by dividing the community and turning it against itself. *Virtus* and *pietas* become interchangeable with *nefas* and *crimen*.

Lucan plays with the interchangeability of these terms in the beginning of Scaeva's scene. He defines Scaeva as one *pronus ad omne nefas, et qui nesciret in armis / quam magnum virtus crimen civilibus esset* ("up for any *nefas* and who was ignorant of how great a *crimen virtus* would be in(-between) civil wars") (6.147–148). This biographical note announces that a regular confusion of *virtus* and *crimen* will occur throughout this scene. In line 151, shortly after Scaeva's entrance, Lucan uses

⁷⁴ Roller, 321.

⁷⁵ For the changes in the cognitive scope of *libertas* cf. Wirszubski, C. H., *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

inpius for only the third time in the poem.⁷⁶ For Lucan's contemporary audience, any use of *pius* in the context of Roman martial epic would immediately and unavoidably have recalled Aeneas, the ever-*pius*. There is a high concentration of *pius*-based words or words very intimately connected to them in the first 20 lines of Scaeva's scene. Because the scene centers around Scaeva—it is, after all, his *aristeia*—he becomes the antithesis to Aeneas. In fact, Scaeva himself describes his fellow soldiers' *pavor*, *pavor* that keeps them from engaging the enemy, as *inpius*. However, this action can only be labeled *inpius* in a context other than civil war. In civil war, to abstain from harming one's *hostis*, who is also one's *civis*, is the mark of *pietas* and *virtus*. Scaeva betrays his own moral ineptitude by calling their *pavor inpius*. He is unaware of the ethical system under which he must function.

The narrator intimates the existence of these two conflicting types of *virtus*. He says that *quod solum valuit virtus, iacere perempti / debuerant quo stare loco* ("because *virtus* could do but one thing, they lay dead at the post where they should have stood guard") (6.132–133). All that true *virtus* can do is avoid harming a fellow citizen and maintain proper *pietas*; this is the kind of *virtus* Scaeva's fellow soldiers seem to have at the outset of the scene. The scene progresses from the Republican *virtus* to an explicit announcement that *virtus* is a *crimen* in civil war to Scaeva's use of *virtus*-related concepts in an entirely backwards way. The intertextual irony is such, however, that it almost seems as if Scaeva is self-conscious of his intertextual identity. In his first speech, he calls the Pompeians *hostes*, at which point he is functioning under

⁷⁶ Scaeva's appearance begins a trend of *inpius*-ness. Whereas Lucan uses this word once in book one and once in book three, he uses it five times in book six, four times in book seven, and four times in book eight. The final occurrences in books nine and ten, once and twice respectively, round out the uses of *inpius*, totaling eighteen.

the new ethical matrix where to kill in civil war is not a crime. Later, however, during his fake supplication, he addresses the Pompeians as *cives*. The historical accounts paint Scaeva as a hero and a loyal, imitable soldier. Lucan, however, defies these accounts by setting him up as the antithesis to Aeneas, in order to show yet again how the normative values of Rome devalue themselves under the new Caesarian ethic. Just as Vulteius attempted, but failed, to assimilate himself point for point to Cato, Scaeva will attempt to do the same with Aeneas. But before we can map Scaeva onto a heroic ideal we must briefly outline the heroic ideal as Lucan inherited it. In other words, we must identify to what elements of Aeneas' character Scaeva needs to assimilate. By identifying what makes a successful *aristeia* we can better pinpoint where Scaeva falls short.

Most importantly a proper *aristeia* ought to identify its combatants, of which there should be only two at any given time. Also, these combatants ought to be on the open field of battle, in view of their peers. As we saw earlier, this is exactly the situation in the *Iliad* during the *aristeiai* of Patroclus and Achilles.⁷⁷ Since *kleos* is cumulative and personal, without such an identification neither the hero nor the slain would be able to obtain *gloria* or *kleos* through the battle.⁷⁸ Vanessa Gorman, using an example from Vergil, explains that "Pallas kills six named men (10.525–70), and then a seventh, Halaesus, but not before that man has himself killed five men (10.571–92) so that those

⁷⁷ Cf. n.43.

⁷⁸ The cumulative nature of death is the concept behind the *Highlander* movies. Whenever an immortal kills another immortal, the powers of the slain, and by extension anyone he has slain, are transferred to the slayer. The goal being to outlive all others and be the last man standing. "There can be only one."

five add to the fame gained by Pallas in slaughtering their killer.”⁷⁹ This concept is embodied by Achilles as the river Scamander looms over him when he laments not being able to die at the hands of Hector, for then *tō k’ agathos men epephn’, agathon de ken exenarixe* (“a brave man would have slain, and he would have slain a brave man”) (*Il.* 21.280).

A second important element of the heroic persona and *aristeia* is anger. The first word of the *Iliad* is the insatiable *mēnis* of Achilles, which will flare when he learns of Patroclus’ death and which he will harbor until his reconciliation with Priam. Achilles’ anger defines him throughout the epic and is the motivation behind many of the deeds he undertakes during his *aristeia*.

Similarly, Aeneas also has anger “issues” of his own.⁸⁰ An unhealthy rage seems to take hold of Aeneas as he attempts to escape Troy. However, he slowly learns to cope with this anger in order to fulfill his duties to those around him. The interplay between Aeneas’ inner *furor* and his *pietas* is a central theme to the poem as a whole, which raises the question of whether a Roman man should control his anger in every conceivable situation, or whether there are times where he should give it free rein.⁸¹ Vergil emphasizes Aeneas’ anger towards Turnus at the culmination of their *monomachia*. When Aeneas sees Turnus wearing Pallas’ *balteus*, he *furiis accensus et ira / terribilis* (“waxes wroth and is terrible in his anger”) (12.946–947). He is also

⁷⁹ Gorman, 265. Cf. *Il.* 16.827–828 *hōs poleas pephnonta Menoitou alkimon huion / Hektōr Priamidēs skhedon egkhei thumon apēura* (“Thus did Hector, the son of Priam, wrest away life from the valiant son of Menoitios, who had slain many men”).

⁸⁰ As one would expect since he is, at least in part, the Vergilian counterpart to the Homeric Achilles. Also, in good Vergilian stylistics, since the *Aeneid* is the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in reverse, Aeneas’ anger closes the poem rather than opens it.

⁸¹ Williams, R. D., *Aeneas and the Roman Hero*, (Hong Kong: MacMillan Education, 1976) 55.

fervidus (12.951) as he buries his sword in Turnus' chest. *Ira* drives Aeneas to kill Turnus, but his anger is not unprovoked. Many attempts have been made to find fault with Aeneas for allowing his anger to govern his actions in this scene.⁸² However, ancient commentators, like Servius, do not fault him for his expressions of anger.⁸³ The answer to the dilemma of when to indulge one's anger is vital to our understanding of heroic anger and can be gathered from the interaction between *furor* and *pietas* with which Aeneas has been struggling since Book 2. When he chooses to heed his mother's warning to evacuate Troy (2.594–620), he subordinates his fiery desire for vengeance to his duty; he shows that bridled, controllable anger is not immoral. In fact, the hallmark of Aeneas is his ability to continue to subordinate his anger to his duty. One might even argue that his fury in the closing scene is exactly what his duty towards Pallas and the gods requires of him, since Turnus has broken code by not dedicating the spoils of his battle with Pallas to the gods. He keeps the war prize for himself and must be punished for doing so.⁸⁴ As we see in Turnus' over-determined and long-deserved death, an audience has ample cause for empathizing with Aeneas.

Aristeiai also have a fairly established heroic armory. Iliadic and Vergilian warriors confront their enemies with shield, spear, sword, and, occasionally, a large rock, alternating spear throws before moving in for hand to hand combat. Another set piece of an *aristeia* is the animal simile and supplication scene. Animal similes are

⁸² Galinsky, Karl, "The Anger of Aeneas," *American Journal of Philology* 109 (1988), 322 seems to intimate that criticisms of Aeneas' anger begin with Christian writers such as St. Augustine and Lactantius.

⁸³ Cf. Galinsky (1988: 322), "We cannot ignore, however, the total absence of any criticism of Aeneas' action in the non-Christian ancient *Aeneiskritik*, which was rather copious."

⁸⁴ Cf. Harrison, Stephen, "The Sword-Belt of Pallas: Moral Symbolism and Political Ideology *Aeneid* 10.495–505," in *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, ed. Hans-Peter Stahl (London: Duckworth, 1998), 223–242.

typical of battle scenes, as can be seen from their distributions in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. C. M. Bowra concludes that in the *Iliad* “164 similes occur in scenes of battle, while only 38 occur in other scenes.”⁸⁵ He notes that this same tendency occurs in the *Aeneid*, where *Aeneid* 3, which is not battle centered, contains only one simile, while *Aeneid* 12, which is battle centered, contains 15.⁸⁶ These similes tend to be rather “objective,” meaning that, as Ward Briggs explains, “the comparee of the simile usually resembles the comparand in the most superficial way.”⁸⁷ However, since animal similes during battle abound, they need not be expanded upon here at length, but perhaps a short word on battlefield supplication scenes is in order.⁸⁸ Lycaon begs Achilles to spare his life since he is not a Trojan by birth (21.68–96). In a similar vein, Adrestus begs Menelaus to take him alive and receive an *axia apoina* instead (6.46). Both supplicants’ pleas are rejected and both are struck down, the former straightaway, the

⁸⁵ Bowra, C. M., *Tradition and Design in the Iliad*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930) 123. The exact number and categorization of similes in the Homeric corpus varies from scholar to scholar as the criteria are somewhat *ad hoc*. Cf. Lee, D. J. N., *The Similes of the Iliad and Odyssey Compared*, (Sydney: Melbourne University Press, 1964) 3, and Briggs, Ward W. Jr., *Narrative and Simile From the Georgics in the Aeneid*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1980) 11n.1. For the present work, precision is less important than proportion. Lee tallies 330 similes in the *Iliad* but only 117 in the *Odyssey*. The difference, Lee also concludes, is due to the tendency to crowd similes in the battle scenes (Lee 1964: 5). Battle similes make use many animals including birds (*Il.* 16.582), lions (*Il.* 17.133), boars (12.41–49), wolves (*Il.* 16.156–163), dogs (*Il.* 8.338–340) and snakes (*Il.* 3.33–35). For more on the types and uses of simile in Homer cf. Lee (1964: 50–73); Scott, William, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1974).

⁸⁶ Bowra, 123.

⁸⁷ Briggs, 11. Objective similes are contrasted with subjective similes which admit of multiple correspondences between the comparee and comparand and are more typical of Vergilian poetics. This is not to say that Homeric similes are incapable of such multiple correspondences (cf. *Il.* 4. 275–279) only that in general they tend to focus on a single point of comparison.

⁸⁸ For more on general supplication in the ancient world cf. Naiden, F. S., *Ancient Supplication*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006). For supplication in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in particular cf. Dodds, E. R., *The Greeks and the Irrational*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951) 32, Gould, John, “HIKETEIA,” *JHS* 93 (1973), 74–103 [esp. 74–82], Pedrick, Victoria, “Supplication in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,” *TAPA* 112 (1982), 125–140. Pedrick (1982: 140) notes that although supplication in both poems shows similarities in gesture and vocabulary, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* seem to depict supplication in a manner suited to that poem’s setting. In other words, supplication scenes are manipulated for poetic effect.

latter after some prodding by Agamemnon.⁸⁹ Further, both Lycaon and Adrestus are beseeching the hero of the *aristeia* for their lives in quite a sincere manner. No warrior begs for mercy during his *aristeia*.⁹⁰ Even Patroclus, whose *aristeia* ends in his death, does not ask Hector to spare his life; instead, he foretells Hector's death and vaunts that, although he has dealt the death blow, Apollo, Zeus, and Euphorbus really caused him to fall (16.844–850).

Finally, regardless of whether the hero lives or dies, his endgame in entering battle is to kill and therefore to live. Neither Patroclus nor Aeneas dons his armor believing that it will be stripped soon; they enter battle in hopes of surviving the day. They are aware that any *kleos* gained will be lost in tandem with their lives, and, thus, the only way to retain it is to be, as it were, the last man standing. These aspects of the heroic *aristeia*, or at least their obvious rejections, occur in Scaeva's scene, albeit in a heavily adulterated form.

Scaeva's armory is quite anti-epic. His entrance to battle puts him on a *ruens agger*, pushing the corpses piled around him onto the approaching Pompeians as if they were boulders (6.170). Next, he decides to use fragments of the *agger* as projectiles and cudgels.

—totaeque viro dant tela ruinae,”
roboraque et moles hosti seque ipse minatur.
Nunc sude, nunc duro contraria pectora conto
detrudit muris— (6.172–176)

[And the entire teetering mass provides projectiles for the hero, and with beams, boulders, and even himself he threatens the enemy. Now with

⁸⁹ Gould (1973: 80 n.38) notes that “no successful supplication on the field of battle is described in the *Iliad*.”

⁹⁰ Pedrick (1982: 127), building on Gould's article, explains that only Trojans resort to battlefield supplication in the *Iliad*.

stakes, now with hardened poles he dislodges from the walls the breasts that are coming to kill him.]

Although he uses his sword eventually, its usefulness soon fades when it becomes dulled, thus turning it also into a shillelagh. Scaeva's offensive armory is anything but epic. His defensive armory is equally as questionable. Although he does have a shield, as we saw earlier, he soon is rid of it so that he might have another hand with which to wield an offensive weapon. In lieu of a *scutum* proper, his chest functions as the receptacle for the enemies' spears (6.204–205). Soon, once his "vest" has become too much for him to bear, he actually uses his falling body as a means to take out one more Pompeian. Scaeva uses his sword, spear, and shield, but in ways that challenge epic usage.

The two similes by which Lucan develops the theme of Scaeva's incredible mettle also warp the Homeric simile. Used to qualify Scaeva's vest, Lucan's first simile utilizes the imagery of a Libyan elephant that, just like Scaeva, countless arrows and javelins cannot bring down (6.207–212). The Libyan elephant would have conjured ideas of Hannibal's expeditions and the Punic Wars. So, it seems, Lucan has chosen to use an animal unknown to Homeric zoology, but very well known in the Roman imaginary, to restrict this simile's cultural applicability.⁹¹ Vergil works his similes to a similar effect. The first extended simile in the *Aeneid* (1.148–153) is recognizable as generally Homeric, but it differentiates itself by inverting the typical Homeric relationship between man and nature in order to relate to its Roman audiences.⁹² Lucan also adapts the

⁹¹ Cf. Lee, 65–73.

⁹² Cf. Perkell, Christine, "Aeneid 1: An Epic Programme," in *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*, ed., Christine Perkell, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 29–49, who writes, "In Homeric similes the convention is to compare human events to those in the natural world. . . . For a Roman reader a striking feature of Vergil's [first] simile is its inversion of Homeric practice" (38).

second simile to suit his particular needs. As Scaeva rips out the arrow that has pierced his eye, Lucan describes him as a Pannonian bear that angrily chases the arrows lodged in her body (6.220–223). Reference to a Pannonian bear would remind Lucan’s audience of a scene from the Roman amphitheater.⁹³ In both of these similes, Lucan has foregone the universality and objectivity of the Homeric simile in order to give his similes a specifically Roman tinge. We see that Lucan’s use of epic tradition also is slightly subversive. Sklenar argues that he “acknowledges the epic convention by comparing his warrior to a wild animal but subverts it by shunning the epic bestiary in favor of a Roman experience.”⁹⁴ So Lucan, unlike Vergil in his opening simile, has maintained the general Homeric practice of equating the world of men to nature, but has also altered it by opting for imagery that is culturally conditioned to his Roman audience. Paradoxically, perhaps, the animals described here are wild animals, but wild animals forced into a civilized context. Both similes make use of wild animals put into the service of civilized man, thus putting them at a further remove from the Homeric animals in that they are no longer truly wild. We should not, however, malign Lucan for improper or misplaced similes. He consciously chose these two similes to show, by another avenue, Scaeva’s relation to the epic tradition. Just as the animals used to describe him, Scaeva seems to mimic his Vergilian and Homeric predecessors but yet to differ from them significantly.

Scaeva’s supplication theme continues the destabilization of epic norms that has characterized the rest of the scene. First, and most scathingly, Scaeva is the one who

⁹³ Cf. Lucan, *Civil War*, Susan Braund trans., (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992) 276.

⁹⁴ Sklenar, 53.

begs to be spared, which seems absurd in light of the fact that we are supposedly in the midst of his *aristeia*. Second, in direct contradiction to the battlefield supplications of the *Iliad*, Scaeva's supplication is actually accepted by the Pompeians.⁹⁵ Third, general epic convention requires the battlefield suppliant to address an opponent of a different nationality, as Adrestus and Lycaon do.⁹⁶ Scaeva, however, aims his supplication at a group he identifies as *cives* (6.230). This is complicated further by the fact that he identified this same group as *hostes* earlier in the scene (6.156). This brings to the fore yet again the problematic relationship between *virtus* and *pietas* in civil war. In his first speech, Scaeva chides his fellow soldiers, shouting:

—“Quo vos pavor,” inquit “adegit
 Inpius et cunctis ignotus Caesaris armis?
 Terga datis morti? Cumulo vos desse virorum
 non pudet et bustis interque cadavera quaeri?
 Non ira saltem, iuvenes, pietate remota
 stabitis? E cunctis, per quos erumperet hostis,
 nos sumus electi.”— (6.154–157)

[“Whither has fear driven you,” he said, “an inpius fear unknown to all of Caesar's forces? Are you running away from death? Aren't you ashamed to deprive the mound and funeral pyres of men, to be searched for in vain among the corpses? Even though you have discarded your sense of duty, will not even rage make you stand your ground? Out of everybody, we are the chosen ones; the hostis sallies forth through our ranks.”]

When Scaeva labels their *pavor* as *inpius*, another instance of the dissonance between external audience and internal character perceptions occurs. Lucan assumes that his contemporary external audience is aware of the intimate relationship between *pietas* and *virtus*. If one practices proper *virtus* (conduct befitting a man) one will

⁹⁵ Cf. Gould, 80 n.38.

⁹⁶ *Vide Supra* notes 88–90.

necessarily practice *pietas* (proper conduct towards one's citizens and family).⁹⁷ Thus, by a simple *modus tollens*,⁹⁸ if Scaeva accuses his soldiers of not practicing *pietas* then they have also failed in practicing *virtus*. However, the fear that bids the soldiers to stand *attonitus* is also described by Lucan's narrator as *virtus* (6.131–132). We then have two competing ethical systems; one under which the actions of Scaeva's soldiers are *virtus* and the other under which they are *inpius*. The external audience ought to recognize that Scaeva is erroneously labeling as *inpius* the *pavor* that is inhibiting his soldiers from attacking fellow *cives* and thus from transgressing *pietas* by acting improperly towards members of their community. It seems as if Scaeva himself is aware of this ethical duplicity since it is not until he *tegens alta suppressum mente furorem / mitis et a voltu penitus virtute remota* ("stashes his suppressed rage into the depths of his heart and, with a calm demeanor, banishes *virtus* far from his face") that he can address the Pompeians as *cives* and actually begin his supplication. *Virtute remota* is a metrical echo of *pietate remota* from Scaeva's earlier fulmination against his soldiers. Scaeva is drawing explicit attention to the relationship between *virtus* and *pietas* outlined above, in effect assimilating the former to the latter. In assimilating himself to his soldiers, he thus repositions himself into their ethical matrix (6.229). However, regardless of the ethical framework under which one functions, in civil war supplication falls prey to the same problem as death in general: when the opposing side necessarily consists of one's kinsmen, whether one acknowledges that fact or not, any action directed at the enemy is also directed at fellow *cives*. Hence, Scaeva's

⁹⁷ Cf. Roller, 321.

⁹⁸ If A, then B; Not B; Therefore, Not A.

supplication seems to be doomed for failure, in terms of its reflection of its epic predecessors, before it can even get off the ground.

Finally, Scaeva's supplication, anything but a sincere plea for help or submission, is a ruse intended to lure one more Pompeian to his death, to give Scaeva one more notch on his club. The ruse is successful, and Aulus, the only Pompeian to receive a name, falls victim to Scaeva.

Credidit infelix simulatis vocibus Aulus
nec vidit tecto gladium mucrone prementem,
membraque captivi pariter laturus et arma
fulmineum mediis excepit faucibus ensem. (6.236–239)

[Unlucky Aulus fell for the feigned words and did not see Scaeva gripping his sword while he covered the point; as he was about to lift up the limbs and weapons of the captured man, he took the lightning-fast blade straight in his throat.]

Again we see that Scaeva's actions are motivated wholly by unhealthy *furor* and *ira*. As if this were not clear enough, almost as if refueled by the slaughter of Aulus, his *virtus* rekindles as he again addresses the Pompeians:

“Solvat” ait “poenas, Scaevam quicumque subactum
speravit. Pacem gladio si quaerit ab isto
Magnus, adorato summittat Caesare signa.
An similem vestri segnemque ad fata putatis?
Pompei vobis minor est causaeque senatus
Quam mihi *mortis amor*.” (6.241–246)

[“Whoever hoped that Scaeva had been overcome,” he said, “let him pay the penalty. If Magnus seeks peace from this sword of mine, let him bow his neck to Caesar and lower his standards. Did you really think that I, like you, was reluctant to meet my fate? My *amor mortis* means more to me than both Pompey and the Senate's cause do to you.”]

With the reintroduction of his particular brand of *virtus*, Scaeva undergoes another ethical reorientation. He returns to his previous moral matrix, which, as we saw, was the antithesis of that of Aeneas. Lucan has made clear that within Scaeva's ethical

matrix any display of *virtus* is a *crimen*. Again Lucan uses his syntax to mimic the meaning of his text and to paint pictures with his words. *In armis / quam magnum virtus crimen civilibus esset* (“how great a *crimen virtus* would be in(-between) civil wars”) (6.147–148). He encloses *virtus* within *magnum* and *crimen*, which is itself inside—syntactically, physically, and conceptually—*armis civilibus*. Thus, when Scaeva assimilates *pietas* to *virtus* he simultaneously, via the transitive property,⁹⁹ assimilates *pietas* to *crimen* and *nefas*.

As our look at his faux supplication and anti-epic armory alluded to, Scaeva’s hopes of assimilating himself to Aeneas are also plagued by a lack of identity. The entire scene sees this lack of individuality. In general, Lucan refuses to name names, when he does they are subversive or deliberately intended, as Gorman conjectures, to “clarify the pollution inherent in civil war and condemn the moral failings of its principals.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, even though in Aulus Scaeva finally has found and bested a named adversary, with a name as generic as Aulus—rendered ingeniously by John Henderson as “Unlucky Joe”¹⁰¹—he might as well be nameless like the rest of his fellow soldiers.

This lack of individuality is emphasized by the intense focus Lucan places on the bloody details of the fight. One need not look very hard to find examples of mutilation and loss of subjectivity. In a way strongly reminiscent of Vulteius, Scaeva goads his fellow soldiers to *confringite tela / pectoris impulsu iugulisque retundite ferrum* (“Smash their spears to smithereens with a blow from your chest and blunt their blades with your

⁹⁹ A is B; B is C; Therefore, A is C.

¹⁰⁰ Gorman, 267.

¹⁰¹ Henderson, 1998:173.

throats”) (6.160–161). This sort of hypallage, discussed above, attempts to invoke each soldier’s own *amor mortis* and to deemphasize his subjectivity by focusing attention onto his use as *ferrum* fodder and *pila* prey. When Scaeva begins his onslaught he even uses corpses as weapons, turning previously living beings into passive weapons, stressing that they are now inert lumps of flesh and bones. Bartsch remarks, “The categories of ‘alive’ and ‘lifeless’ become all but meaningless where action and intentionality are concerned: subjects-become-objects are no longer imbued with agency, while objects-become-subjects suddenly acquire animation.”¹⁰² Scaeva’s victims fare no better. Not only do they not receive names, they are not even described as whole human beings:

—Et valli summa tenentes
 amputat ense *manus*. *Caput* obterit ossaque saxo
 ac male defensum fragili conpage *cerebrum*
 dissipat; alterius flamma *crinesque* *genasque*
 succendit; strident *oculis* ardentibus ignes. (6.175–179)

[And with his sword he amputates the *hands* that clutch at the top of the rampart. He grinds a *head* and *bones* into a powder with a rock, scattering the *brains* poorly protected by their fragile covering; he sets the *hair* and *cheeks* of another aflame, and the flames crackle as the *eyes* burn away.

Scaeva unleashes his fury upon hands and heads and hairs, but the single possessive genitive, *alterius*, is the closest Lucan will allow him to come to killing a human being.

Problematically, for Scaeva, Lucan devotes more textual space to a description of wounds he incurs than to wounds he deals. Readers would expect the hero of an *aristeia* to inflict more damage than he suffers. However, again, Lucan happily disappoints his readers. Scaeva’s offensive actions occupy 19 lines (6.169–188),¹⁰³

¹⁰² Bartsch, 25.

¹⁰³ We may wish to add the Aulus episode to this number, which will give us 23 lines total (6.236–239).

while Lucan takes great relish in acutely describing the mutilation inflicted upon Scaeva, allotting 36 lines for this purpose (6.189–225). Scaeva's attempts at obtaining heroic *gloria* are obscured and become merely another aspect of Aeneas' character to which he cannot live up.

Most damningly, Scaeva's endgame does not coincide with that of Aeneas or Patroclus. Scaeva fights in order that he might die. This is symptomatic of the suicidal penchant running throughout Lucan's poem and renders Scaeva more akin to a Norse *berserker* than an heroic warrior. Another look at his initial deprecation of his soldiers betrays an oddity that may not have come to the fore at first blush. He does not reproach them for turning away from battle or for failing to repulse the enemy. He takes them to task for avoiding death (*terga datis morti*) and for not being numbered among the dead (*interque cadavera quaeri*) (6.153–154). Following from this, he seems to have no desire to survive his battle at Dyrrhachium. Before he even begins to fight he avers that *peterem felicior umbras / Caesaris in voltu: testem hunc fortuna negavit, / Pompeio laudante cadam* ("I would seek the shades all the happier with Caesar watching. Circumstances have denied me him as a witness, so I will fall while the Pompeians praise me") (6.158–160). This is exactly the mindset we saw in Vulteius, who vowed to choose death even if he could find a way to escape alive. We also see the same desire for a specific audience, Caesar, whose gaze, however, would do no more to validate Scaeva's actions than it would have for Vulteius'. It merely reinforces his depiction as an ethical degenerate to sue for the approval of Lucan's harbinger of immorality. Slowly, the reader begins to realize that Scaeva's actions and state of mind are more appropriate to a *devotio* than an *aristeia*. Heroic *aristeiai* should not be

suicidal. In fact, neither Caesar nor Valerius Maximus portray Scaeva as anything but heroic. Lucan, in turning Scaeva into a raging berserker who tries his hand at mimicking an heroic ideal, seems to be commenting on the new relationships between words and meaning in the altered cultural and moral matrix of civil war. This again shows how Scaeva's ethical comportment is opposed to that of Aeneas.

Scaeva's expressed desire to die in battle regardless of the circumstances bespeaks his improper balance between *furor* and *pietas*. As R. D. Williams writes, "The word *furens* ('raging') is the word constantly used in the [*Aeneid*] of the irrational kind of human behaviour which man must strive to overcome."¹⁰⁴ As we saw, Aeneas has to come to grips with his *furor* at various places throughout the *Aeneid* in order that he not transgress his duties towards others.¹⁰⁵ *Furor* is, then, at odds with *pietas* in that if the former should run amok, the latter is normally disregarded. Aeneas finds a middle ground wherein he is able to retain some of the Iliadic irascibility while still comporting himself properly towards those around him; Scaeva, however, cannot and, except in order to lure Aulus to his death, never even tries to curb his *furor*. He barely makes it five lines into his opening speech before invoking *ira* (6.155). The reader quickly sees that Scaeva's anger is not healthy heroic anger, but rather a crazed madness. *Furor*-driven destruction controls the entire scene and dictates all of Scaeva's actions. He is the epitome of Lucanian excess and perversion. His *furor*, however, is fundamentally and irreversibly at odds with *pietas*. There can be no golden mean for Scaeva since he

¹⁰⁴ Williams, 54–55.

¹⁰⁵ 1.291; 2.315; 2.353; 10.513; 12.946.

will necessarily direct his *furor*-imbued actions at *cives*, thus violating his relationship to them as members of his community.

Scaeva's *aristeia* is an even more extreme instance of the dissension between external and internal perceptions of events than the mass-suicide of Vulteius' cohort because external audiences, both contemporary and modern, have other historical accounts of Scaeva to which they can compare Lucan's. His actions are clearly excessive and unethical, and any hope of considering him an Aeneas-substitute, from an external perspective, dies with his declaration of an *amor mortis*. In fact, Lucan, in the role of omniscient narrator, does not even allow Scaeva's *virtus* to get off the ground. As Scaeva finally collapses, the internal audience, oblivious to the frenzied and grotesque nature of his deeds, praises him as a hero.

—Labentem turba suorum
excipit atque umeris defectum inponere gaudet;
ac velut inclusum perfosso in pectore numen
et vivam magnae speciem Virtutis adorant. (6.251–254)

[The crowd of his men took him up as he fell and were glad to hoist him, fallen, upon their shoulders. And they worshipped the deity residing in his bored out chest and him as the living incarnation of *Virtus*.]

Because the internal audience praises the *virtus* of a man who himself identifies ethical exemplarity with self-destructive frenzy and whose capacity for *virtus* Lucan's narrator has explicitly equated to a *crimen*, they are no longer capable of functioning as *arbitri honorum*. Lucan's narrator, however, cannot let the verdict of the internal audience stand. Yet again he employs one of his favorite rhetorical devices, the apostrophe, to guide his reader's reaction to Scaeva and his actions.

—Felix hoc nomine famae,
si tibi durus Hiber aut si tibi terga dedisset
Cantaber exiguis aut longis Teutonus armis.
Non tu bellorum spoliis ornare Tonantis

templa potes, non tu laetis ululare triumphis.
Infelix, quanta dominum virtute parasti! (6.257–262)

[*Felix* he would have been with this name to fame, had he routed a hardy Iberian or a tiny-shielded Cantabrian or a long-shielded Teuton. You can never decorate the temples of the Thunderer with your spoils of war nor squeal for joyful triumphs. *Infelix*, with what *virtus* you fought just to have a tyrant!]

EULOGY

Lucan concentrates attention on the destructive side of suicide by culling focus away from human subjectivity, melding subjects and objects, and continually deconstructing the parameters of the body. Civil war is a negative-sum game for Lucan; all bloodshed is that of a countryman, all death is citizen, all murder—even of oneself—is destructive.

Catharine Edwards worries, however, that “one might well argue that in using suicide as a metaphor for civil war, Lucan has effectively devalued it as an act, emphasizing suicide’s negative, self-destructive dimension.”¹⁰⁶ I agree with Edwards that Lucan’s presentation of suicide and its consequences questions the value of the act itself. However, I would argue that that it is the intended effect. Not only is Lucan using the negative dimension of suicide to vilify civil war, I believe he wants to turn the metaphor back around and thus to comment on the social “institution” of suicide. Alongside his disgust of civil war can be seen an acute awareness of its logical contradictions and a lack of conviction in its effectiveness as a “weapon” of the aristocracy. I believe we can read Lucan’s open denial of the stereotyped and ritualized Catonian model of suicide as a commentary on his perceived ineffectiveness of such an act and, possibly, as indicative of his continual disillusionment with Stoicism. Lucan is not alone in feeling ambivalent towards aristocratic suicide. Tacitus, also, seems to intimate a feeling of dissatisfaction with it, calling it an *inani iactatione libertatis* and claiming it bestows *nullum rei publicae usum* (*Agr.* 42.3–4).

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, 40.

I have shown how Lucan uses the metaphor from the proem to adulterate two of the most prominent *topoi* from the Roman imaginary, the aristocratic suicide and the heroic *aristeia*. He has two characters, Vulteius and Scaeva, attempt to assimilate themselves to the Roman persona connected with each *topos*, Cato and Aeneas. For each scene we first identified the primary aspects of the original characters and then mapped Lucan's characters onto them. Three main facets typified Cato's suicide: *calmness, philosophical musings, and theatricality*. Vulteius tried to mold himself and his crew into these characteristics properly but failed. His ethical system was too overrun by his death drive to allow him to properly exude Stoic virtues. Scaeva met a similar fate. Even though he went through many of the steps of a proper *aristeia*, he was unable to become Aeneas because he could not curb his *furor*, and he let his *amor mortis* control every one of his actions. Even two of the most morally upstanding characters in Roman thought, Cato and Aeneas, could not give Vulteius and Scaeva the moral high ground.

Vulteius and Scaeva are not the only ethical degenerates in these scenes. As we saw, both of them needed an audience of *arbitri honorum* to validate their actions. Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, as a text, has two levels of *arbitri*, one internal, one external. But because the internal audiences are continually unable to see Vulteius or Scaeva from the narrator's point of view, to see that they are morally depraved lunatics attempting to act like Roman heroes, they show themselves to be on no higher of a moral ground than they. Lucan's only hope is that his second level of possible *arbitri honorum*, the

external audience—both contemporary and future¹⁰⁷—pay attention to the warnings of the narrator, not fall prey to the same trap as his internal audiences, and pass his test.

¹⁰⁷ That Lucan is not only concerned with his immediate circa 1st century Roman audience but with future readers as well is shown by his apostrophe at 7.210–213 and 9.980–986.

O sacer et magnus vatum labor! Omnia fato
eripis et populis donas mortalibus aevum.
Invidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere fama;
Nam, si quid Latii fas est promittere Musis,
quantum Smyrnaei durabunt vatis honores,
venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra
vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo. (9.980–986)

[O great and solemn task of the bard! You snatch everything from fate and give immortality to mortal men. Do not be jealous of sacred fame, Caesar; for, if the Latin Muses are allowed to promise anything, then, as long as the honors of Smyrna's bard endure, posterity will read me and you—*nostra Pharsalia* will live and at no point will we be ancient history.]

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