

A NEW HEROISM:
A STUDY OF THE BATTLE SCENES IN LUCAN'S *BELLUM CIVILE*

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By
MATTHEW CRUTCHFIELD
Dr. Raymond Marks, Dissertation Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

A NEW HEROISM:
A STUDY OF THE BATTLE SCENES IN LUCAN'S *BELLUM CIVILE*

presented by Matthew Crutchfield,

a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Raymond Marks

Professor Daniel Hooley

Professor Dennis Trout

Professor David Schenker

Professor Susan Langdon

meae familiae

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Chapter 1: Reading Lucan's Epic

Heroism and Epic

Lucan's epic on the Roman civil war, the *Bellum Ciuile*, has long posed a problem for readers. Lucan writes in the meter of epic poetry and includes many elements that are specific to that genre, such as similes, descriptions of battle, and elevated language, yet he also calls into question many aspects of that tradition. Lucan omits any real function of the gods and there seems to be no clearly defined hero. The readers' frustrations in the epic may be due to the difficult task to which Lucan committed himself, for how does one talk about the civil war? Choosing to recall something as politically sensitive and controversial as the civil wars during the Principate could be dangerous. The future emperor Claudius as a young man was interested in writing Rome's recent history, but on the suggestion of his mother and grandmother he skipped straight from Caesar's death to the peace instituted by Augustus. He realized that he would not be able to speak openly and truly (*neque libere neque vere*) about the events of that time period.¹ Likewise, Seneca the Elder cites Labienus who declared that the best way to deal with civil wars in public discourse was to forget they even happened: *optima ciuilis belli defensio obliuio est*.² Moreover, Valerius Maximus, in his *exempla patientiae* cites only two Roman examples before moving on lest he "be forced to proceed into the accursed memory of

¹ Suetonius, *Claud.* 41. Cf. Osgood (2006:1ff)

² Seneca Maior, *Const.* 10.3.5

civil wars.”³ Yet despite these fears and concerns for writing about the civil war, Lucan wrote an entire epic poem dedicated to a “forceful and emotional exploration” of this very subject that others had considered taboo.⁴ The *Bellum Ciuile* comes as a shock to the Roman system in that it consciously memorializes and calls on its audience to memorialize in epic poetry something that is painful and fearful.⁵ By writing this poem, Lucan pits *memoria* against *oblivio*, or rather, Lucan’s memory of the civil wars against a competing narrative that often chooses to forget.⁶

Throughout this study, I propose to read the *Bellum Ciuile* as a literary dialectic on the role and nature of heroism. Lucan presents the battle scenes in his epic as such a distortion of traditional heroism that his readers inevitably question their traditional understanding of heroic activity. Such a perspective invites us to reconsider heroism as a crucial theme in the narrative and to take a closer look at the ways in which heroism

³ Val. Max. 3.3.2: *ne...ad civilium bellorum detestendam memoriam progredi cogar*. See also Gowing (2005:55)

⁴ All of this suggests that Petronius in his own short *Bellum Civile* (through Eumolpus at 119.1-124.1) is responding to Lucan’s own work. For an assessment of the possible motives behind this, see Courtney (2001) 184-9. Seneca the Younger at times does recall the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, e.g., *Ep.* 14.13 and 104.30, but always for the purposes of discussing an *exemplum* of some virtue, usually that of Cato. Mayer (1981) 3-4 suggests that the theme of civil war might have been “unexceptional” given the fact that even Augustus and the other Julio-Claudians were hesitant to identify themselves too closely with Caesar. A similar argument is made by Thorne (2010) 1-2.

⁵ Throughout this study I will refer to the title of the epic as the *Bellum Civile* or *BC*, in line with current practice. There is an old debate about the intended name of the epic: the manuscripts typically give *De Bello Civili* while many scholars over the last couple of centuries have named it the *Pharsalia* (and some still do), reading Lucan 9.985 as the author’s own declaration of the name of the work. For a summary of the arguments, see Ahl (1976) 326-32.

⁶ See Thorne (2010) 2. This is not to suggest that Lucan’s contemporaries had forgotten that the civil wars ever took place, for they surely had not. Caesar’s commentaries on them were available, and the many references to the civil wars in the Augustan poets would keep some knowledge of the historical events alive and well—but only to a point. In the aftermath, it was clearly in the best interest of the Principate to handle such a traumatic series of events by recasting them in as favorable a light as possible, a process that required selectively promoting some memories while overlooking others.

operates throughout the epic.⁷ Heroism is at the heart of the epic genre and poets represent their heroism through the action of individuals in war.⁸ In the proem to the *Bellum Ciuile* Lucan offers his readers three individuals as the potential heroes of the epic, Caesar, Pompey, and Cato, each of whom is introduced with an epic simile.⁹ Because of the rapid destruction that Caesar causes throughout the poem, Lucan describes him as a lightning bolt (*BC* 1.151-157). Pompey, due to his inability to act against Caesar, is compared to the dead trunk of a once-great tree (*BC* 1.135-143). Cato, on the other hand, is equated with and opposed to the gods (*BC* 1.128).¹⁰ Frederick Ahl suggests that these three individuals represent a different type of hero. Ahl argues that Caesar represents the traditional, Homeric (or the *Iliadic*) hero. Pompey is the tragic hero, modeled along Jason and Aeneas. Finally, Cato represents a new type of philosophical hero. Lucan, therefore, offers the reader several types of heroism through which he or she may understand his poem. Throughout the epic Lucan attempts to guide the readers'

⁷ The approach of reading Lucan through the lens of his engagement with the epic tradition has been largely focused on certain epic features, such as the role of the divine and hero. See Bartsch (1998) who views Lucan through the lens of the audience engagement in history, Masters (1992) who focuses on the poet's engagement with the epic tradition, Leigh (1997) who reads the engagement from the perspective of the audience, and Quint (1993) who views Lucan's epic both from the perspective of history and epic.

⁸ For a discussion on the identity and function of the hero in epic, see Feeney (1986) 138, argues that the term "hero" has no literary implication, but merely is used to refer to individuals who were believed to be descended from gods. This definition of "hero" is similar to Nagy's (1979). Nevertheless, I contend that the presence of hero and the heroism that he/she/they represent is one of the central components of the epic narrative. For a thorough discussion of the role of the hero in epic narratives see Scholes and Kellogg (1966); Feeney (1986) 137-158; Frye (1957); Bloomfield (1975) and Nagy (2005) 71-89.

⁹ Von Albrecht (1970) 276 argues that Lucan based his characterization of Caesar on Homer's Achilles, "Im 10. Buche wird Alexander mit einem Unstern (*sidus iniquum gentibus*, 10.35 f.) verglichen; 10.89 f. nennt Cleopatra Caesar *gentibus aequum sidus*. Beides ist deutlich auf einander bezogen; hinter Caesar steht Alexander, hinter beiden Achilleus, der vor dem Kampf mit Hektor (*Il.* 22.25-32) mit einem Unstern verglichen wird." Lebek (1976: 70) has shown Caesar's poetic relationship to Achilles through Horace's description of Achilles in *Ars P.* 120ff. Others have accepted an implied comparison Ahl (1976) 219; C.M.C. Green (1991) 234-238 argues that Caesar is depicted as Achilles, while Pompey represents the older, less bellicose leaders in the *Iliad*.

¹⁰ These three individuals provide the format for two important studies on Lucan's epic: Ahl (1976) and Johnson (1987).

decision through his focus on the dangers and downfalls of traditional martial heroism. His narrative exposes the destructive nature of Caesar's character and the ineffective actions of Pompey, thus finding the philosophical heroism as exemplified in Cato to be the only expression of heroism fit for his culture and political climate.

There are three types of heroes present in most epic poems: the central figure around whom the plot is structured, the character with whom the audience sympathizes, and the character who best embodies the morality and concerns of the poets' literary and cultural climate. These representations of heroism have a long tradition in epic poetry and all three of these types of heroisms are present in Lucan's *BC*.

The heroic types of hero who provides narrative unity to the poem as a whole is easily recognizable in Achilles in the *Iliad*, Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, Jason in the *Argonautica*, and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. In these epics the central figures focus the readers' attention and provide a unifying force to the entire epic. The anger of Achilles, his separation from society, and his subsequent rejoining through his meeting with Priam provide the unifying thread for the *Iliad*'s narrative. Likewise, Odysseus' *nostos* provides the narrative unity of the *Odyssey*, Jason's adventures and his encounter with Medea provide the structure for the *Argonautica*, and Aeneas' search and struggle to found Rome shape the plot of the *Aeneid*. In each of these instances the central figure may not be a "good" character and we, as readers, may not agree or approve of their actions. Nevertheless, these characters do provide the narrative structure of the poem. Therefore, according to Aristotle, these characters are the heroes of their respective epics.

Among such narrative heroes, we may also find characters who earn the audience's sympathy or respect. This is a different type of heroism, but is no less

important in our view of the epic. A few examples of this type of character may be Priam, Hector, or Dido, whose fate is to be defeated. Although these characters are doomed to failure, they persevere, often remaining true to their ideals or goals that are long outdated or defunct. Priam is the king of a city doomed to fall to the Greeks; nevertheless, we are moved by his emotional plea to Achilles for the return of his son's body. The audience knows that once Hector kills Patroclus, his fate is sealed; yet when he faces Achilles, we want Hector to win. The fate of Dido, caught up in the struggle between Juno and Venus, has long moved audiences. Her death is a mere result of her chance encounter with Aeneas. These characters in epic, while not providing the unifying force for the entire epic, make the epic more interesting. Their appearance, though it may be brief, is not forgettable as they often teach the audience useful lessons in completing one's duty.

The third type of hero embodies or represents the values and concerns of the society in which the epic was written. Perhaps the most obvious examples of this type of heroism is Hector from the *Iliad* and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. Not only does Hector possess the necessary military and combat skills to make him a *bona fide* hero, he also represents the moral and cultural motivation that is central to Homeric heroism. He explains to his wife that he must fight Achilles to spare both himself and his family from shame, for if he chose not to fight Achilles, he would be accused of cowardice and failing to protect his community. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas represents his society, in many ways. His epithet, after all, is *pius*. When he flees the burning city of Troy, he not only leads his son and carries his father, but he also carries with him the *Penates*, the symbol of Roman religion. He is the past, present, and future of Rome. Although these moral heroes of the poems may or

may not be the narrative hero as well, through their morals and values they provide a different type of unity for their epics.

Epic poetry, which typically celebrates actions in combat, describes the actions of these heroes within the context of warfare. Hector's actions may not seem so heroic if not for the context of the Trojan War. Aeneas' actions would seem less *pius* if not for his role in both the Trojan War as well as his combat in Italy. Battle scenes, then, perform an important function in the definition of the epic hero. To accentuate this fact, we need only offer the example of Lucretius, who in his *De Rerum Natura* offers the philosopher Epicurus as his hero. In this epic Lucretius presents the actions of Epicurus, though a philosopher, as if he were a soldier or a general on the battlefield. Lucretius utilizes the vocabulary of epic warfare to make his philosopher into a hero. Because battle scenes have played a central role in the definition of the epic hero, an examination of Lucan's battle scenes may help understand his idea of heroism.

As discussed above, Lucan offers three heroes in his introduction: Caesar, Pompey, and Cato. I argue that these three heroes represent the three types of heroes discussed above. Caesar represents the unifying narrative hero, Pompey the sympathetic hero, and Cato the moral center of the poem. Lucan however is not content to leave the audience guessing as to which type of heroism he prefers. Caesar is depicted as a demonic force of nature and is shown as much too brutal and brazen to earn any respect by readers of Lucan, Pompey, while sympathetic, is much too lackadaisical in his efforts against Caesar. In the end Cato, although cartoonish and stiff, is perhaps the best hero that civil war has to offer.

Background to Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile*

As noted above, there are varying types of heroism in epic poetry. In every case, however, the nature of the hero and the heroism found in the epic are reflections of the poet's political, cultural, and social climate. It is therefore important to consider Lucan's epic and his definition of heroism within his literary climate. Though the details of Lucan's life and his relation to the court of Nero are uncertain, we are able to ascertain a few facts. Due to his Uncle Seneca's connection to the court of Nero, Lucan moved from Spain to Rome at an early age. Lucan proved to be a gifted and accomplished court poet. He wrote a poem in praise of Nero and became one of the emperor's *amici*. Lucan was then honored with a quaestorship at an unusually young age. Lucan was obviously trusted and respected by the young emperor, Nero. At some point in their relationship, however, there arose a feud between the two. There is much controversy surrounding this feud, with its exact nature unknown. What we do know from the historical record is that as a snub to Lucan, Nero walked out during a *recitatio* by Lucan and subsequently banned the poet from engaging in lawsuits or publishing poetry.¹¹ Shortly after the ban on Lucan's poetry, we learn that Lucan was accused of being involved in the Pisonian conspiracy.¹² The members of this conspiracy planned to replace Nero with Piso. In his *Life* Suetonius tells us that Lucan was the *signifer*, "standard-bearer," of the conspiracy. This term may

¹¹ Martindale (1984) 65. There are three surviving lives of Lucan, one by Suetonius, another by Vacca, and one that is anonymous (in the *Codex Vossianus*). These can all be found in Hosius's edition of Lucan (Leipzig 1905). The *Vita* by Suetonius is clearly defective with various conjectures on possible lacunae, but its tone is generally hostile towards Lucan. See also Statius's *Genethliacon Lucani* (*Silvae* 2.7) which offers a few details of Lucan's life.

¹² In his *Life* Vacca suggests that three books of the *Bellum Ciuile* were published before the ban. These are naturally taken to be books 1-3. See also Dilke (1972) 62-82; Martindale (1984) 69.

point to Lucan's composition of a poem that denounces the tyranny of the Caesars. Lucan was sentenced to death based on his involvement in this conspiracy. He died at the age of twenty six, and seems to have died before he completed the *Bellum Ciuile*.

Though Lucan obviously fell into disagreement with the emperor toward the end of his short life, we are not necessarily bound to reading his epic as an overt criticism of the emperor. While it may be easy to read the *Bellum Ciuile* as a criticism of tyranny and of Nero in particular, Lucan's treatment of Nero himself is problematic. There are two main instances in the poem where the figure of Nero himself is involved: the Nero proem in Book 1.33-66 and the death of Domitius Ahenobarbus, a relative of Nero, in Book 7.599ff. In the proem Lucan praises Nero, equating him with the gods and claiming if the results of the horrors of civil war are Nero's reign, then it was worth it. Though Lucan's praise of Nero is a bit extravagant, the praise of the *princeps* is fairly conventional in imperial literature.¹³ There is a tendency, however, to read the Nero-proem as ironic. Perhaps the easiest explanation of the Nero-proem is that it allowed the poet to avoid the traditional appeal to the Muse. Lucan claims at the end of the proem *tu satis ad vires Romana in carmina dandas* (You alone are sufficient to give strength to a Roman bard.) This may indicate that Lucan intends to write a poem that is not inspired by muses, but rather by Nero. This inspiration, of course, can go both ways. One way, the way Lucan most undoubtedly intended for the emperor to read this line, is that the emperor, in his divine glory, is all the inspiration a poet could need. Another way of reading this passage sees the corrupted and the egomaniacal emperor as the inspiration for a poem of rebellion. No doubt, on some level, Lucan intended for both readings.

¹³ See Lebek (1976) 81-107.

Another connection between the emperor and the poem can be found in Lucan's description of the death of Domitius Ahenobarbus. Domitius' role exemplifies optimate resistance to Caesar. In the historic accounts of the battle of Pharsalus, Domitius Ahenobarbus flees and is killed in the hills around the battle. In Lucan's account, however, he dies heroically fighting against Caesar for his commitment to *libertas*. His death in this battle illustrates the great price paid in defeat by the *nobiles*. Nero, who honored his connection to the Domitii, would likely have been pleased by the actions of Domitius Ahenobarbus. Though the actions of Domitius Ahenobarbus seem to reflect favorably upon Nero, Lucan consciously present his struggle as one against tyranny, possibly represented by Nero himself. Again, Lucan sends a mixed message of praise and criticism in his references to the emperor. Here, with his praise of Domitius, he is possibly urging the emperor to a noble rule. One in which the young emperor would reject the autocracy of the Caesars.

The fight against autocracy, however, is most evident in the poet's depiction of Cato, who looms large as a controversial character in the period of the early empire. He appears in numerous speeches, dialogues, and declamatory pieces. The question of his participation in the civil war was a commonly assigned *suasoria* by the schoolmasters in the first century CE. When Lucan wrote his epic, Cato was something of a lightning rod of criticism.¹⁴ During Nero's reign Cato became particularly divisive due to his role in the Stoic opposition to the emperor. Cato became symbolic of the struggle for *libertas* against the tyranny of the Caesars and of a republican government against a monarchy.¹⁵

¹⁴ On Cato's role in the declamation of the early principate see George (1991) 239; MacMullen (1975) esp. chaps. 1 and 2; Wirszubski (1950) esp. chap. 5; Toynbee (1944) 43-58.

Lucan takes the declamatory question of whether Cato should have become involved in the civil war and composes an epic around it. In Book 2, Lucan has his Cato argue for his own involvement. Cato claims that he will defend and care for the Republic as a parent defends and cares for his child (*BC* 2.301-303). In Lucan's epic, therefore, Cato comes to symbolize the concern that a *sapiens* should show toward his society. Here, Cato attempts to preserve Rome. Lucan therefore uses Cato to set the standard for leadership. The true leader of a nation will care for his nation as a father cares for his sons. This may have been written as a call to arms for the conspirators against Nero, or it may have been written simply as a reminder to the emperor himself of what true leadership requires.

Lucan's epic represents an intersection between the historical struggle against an autocratic emperor and a poet who would create a unique and strange, if not inspired epic on the civil war. Lucan does not shy away from controversy. If he had wished to be non-controversial, he would not have written about the civil war. We must ask ourselves, then, what was the point of Lucan's epic? Like most art, the *Bellum Ciuile* serves many purposes, one of which is to argue for a definition of heroism that aligns with his cultural and political climate. I submit that Lucan seeks a definition of heroism that is more relevant to his day and age. He does this by first showing the complete failure of martial heroism in the context of the civil war followed by the guarded success of the new "philosophical" hero. In the epic Cato appears as the embodiment of this new type of heroism. Therefore it seems necessary to consider Cato's role in the epic. Although he stands as one of the three main characters in the poem, Cato only appears in two books of

¹⁵ On Lucan's and like-minded Stoics' opinion on Cato see Sullivan (1985) 115-52; Ahl (1984) 70-77; Sullivan (1984) 40-110 and Salmne (1974) 22-33. Lucan and Stoics like him saw the Republic as preferable to a monarchy. Seneca in *Epistle* 14 on the other hand, viewed the Republic as a doomed enterprise and saw Cato as a flawed *sapiens*, arguing that he should have withdrawn from the conflict.

the extant epic, Books 2 and 9. He is introduced in Book 2 (2.234-325) when Brutus seeks his advice on whether he ought to choose to side with Caesar or Pompey. Cato replies that he will nominally join Pompey, but that his real cause lies with defending *Libertas*. We do not hear from Cato again until Book 9, where he becomes the leader of the broken remnants of the senatorial army. Lucan tells us that under Cato the army is transferred from a *dominus*, namely Pompey or Caesar, to *Libertas* herself (9.29-30). After his men are shipwrecked on the African coast, he and his men march through the deadly desert (9.294-949). Cato emerges here as the good general who leads his men to the ideal of personal freedom despite being surrounded by dangers and fear. After Cato's march, Lucan turns his attention back to Caesar. If the epic is not complete, as some scholars argue, it seems likely that Lucan would have turned again to Cato as the final balance to this. Ending with the suicide of Cato would have added the final victory of the defeated that has permeated the entire epic. By dying, Cato claims his last chance at freedom.

Review of Scholarship

Reception of Lucan's epic has varied widely throughout the centuries, but it seems to have been generally well-received both in antiquity and in the medieval period.¹⁶ Soon after Lucan's death, Statius appears to have been inspired by the epic. He writes a poem (*Silvae* 2.7) to Lucan's widow in honor of the poet's birthday. He praises the *Bellum Ciuile* and declares it equal to the *Aeneid*. Petronius also responds to Lucan's epic. He appears to mock it when his character, Eumolpus, gives an example of a mini-

¹⁶ Conte (1994) 449 calls the *Bellum Ciuile* "one of the great successes of world literature."

epic on the civil wars that certainly responds to Lucan's work.¹⁷ Quintilian lists the epic in his list of classics that are worth reading. He famously adds that he considers Lucan's work a better model for orators than for poets: *magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus*.¹⁸ The *Bellum Ciuile* was widely read throughout the middle ages. It was praised for its powerful rhetoric as well as a source for history, geography, and natural phenomena (especially for its astronomical knowledge and occult practice). This popularity of the epic is witnessed by the survival of 164 manuscripts, all of which were copied by the end of the 12th century, along with multiple surviving collections of *scholia*.¹⁹ Lucan's impact can be attested by his presence in Dante's *Purgatorio* (1.31ff), who includes Lucan with Homer, Virgil, and Ovid as one of the four *spiriti magni* (*Inferno* 4.85). Political idealists continued to admire the *Bellum Ciuile* throughout the Renaissance up to the French Revolution. Many readers were inspired by Cato to fight in the struggle for Liberty against oppression.²⁰ The epic continued to inspire other authors such as in Petrarch's *Africa*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Addison's *Cato*. The *Bellum Ciuile* then has long been interpreted in many different ways.

In the last 125 years of scholarship on Lucan one can see a wide range of methodological approaches. In more recent decades these approaches have produced diametrically opposed conclusions.²¹ The modern era begins with the publication of

¹⁷ Petronius 119-124

¹⁸ Quintilian 10.1.90

¹⁹ See Gotoff (1971) who provides an excellent survey of the early manuscript tradition. On the published scholia see the *Commenta Bernensia* (ed. Usener 1869), *Adnotationes super Lucanum* (ed. Endt 1909), and the *Glosule super Lucanum* attributed to Arnulfus (ed. Marti 1958). See also Werner (1994).

²⁰ Edward Fraenkel (1924) recently translated into English in Tesoriero (2010) provides an overview of Lucan's admirers during the Middle Ages up through the Renaissance.

Haskin's edition of Lucan's text in 1887 with an introduction by W.E. Heitland, who outlined the scholarly concerns of his time and focused on two issues: 1) the identification of the true hero of the epic, and 2) ascertaining to what extent the *Bellum Ciuile* represents a true epic and not a failure.²² Heitland suggested that Caesar was the hero in traditional terms but that Cato was a kind of moral hero.²³ Fraenkel (1924) began to argue for a more favorable reception of Lucan's epic style. He argued that Lucan's rhetorical style was not necessarily a mark of "silver" decadence but a tool for conveying his poetic voice. Snell responded in 1939 with an article in which he openly begs classicists to read Lucan.²⁴ A few years later Marti (1945) agreed that Lucan failed because he was not a good enough poet to match his theme.²⁵ Nevertheless, Marti's article marks a shift in Lucan's reception. Her reading of the epic as a Stoic project to write epic based on the tenets of Stoic philosophy gave critics a starting point for approaching the epic with Cato embodying the ideal of the Stoic *sapiens*.²⁶

A secondary goal of scholarship has been to understand Lucan's political views and goals. This line has considered the role of *Libertas* and thus has emphasized the role

²¹ Braund (2010) in her introduction to the volume on Lucan in the *Oxford Readings in Classical Studies* series offers a wonderful synthesis of Lucan scholarship over the past century.

²² Heitland, W.E. (1887).

²³ See Duff (1927) 263 for his view of Cato as a "spiritual hero" and Marti (1945) 361 for her emphasis on Cato's Stoic virtues and C. Martindale (1984).

²⁴ Snell (1939) however, automatically accepts that overall Lucan falls short of real genius, due to the three alleged faults of "irreverence, ghoulishness, and exaggeration" (84).

²⁵ Marti (1945) 376

²⁶ Marti (1945) 361 claims that due to Cato's perfection 'we find in him nothing lovable.' Therefore, she offers Pompey as a figure more like the rest of humanity, a *proficiens* trapped in bad circumstances, yet trying to make the correct choices that will move him to a successful *apotheosis*, as we see in Book 9.

of Cato as *exemplum Libertatis*.²⁷ Marti (1945) viewed the epic as “the final call of the conspirator to a general rebellion” against the autocratic emperor. Brisset (1964) continued to promote this political reception of Lucan’s epic.²⁸ A few years later Morford (1967) wrote that Cato inherited the “cause of freedom and Rome” from Pompey. Morford also described Cato as Rome’s true *pater patriae*.²⁹ Lintott (1971) also saw the epic as a call-to-arms against the principate and sees in Cato the exemplar of such a rebellion, while Dilke (1972) advanced the view that Cato’s opposition to Caesar represented the poet’s own political feelings toward the whole institution of the Principate. Lebek (1976) finally places the entire epic within its historical context and analyzes the structural outline of much of the poem.

The 1970’s marked Lucan’s entrance into the scholarly mainstream. The decade began with Werner Rutz’s volume on Lucan in the *Wege der Forschung* series which made available to scholars some of the best thoughts on Lucan up to that date.³⁰ In 1976 Frederick Ahl published his pivotal book that changed the landscape and revived critical interest in Lucan by presenting a clear and comprehensive study of Lucan’s poetics and epic purpose. Ahl analyzed not just the epic but the entirety of the work in its historical and cultural context. He argued, and I agree, that Lucan presented the three protagonists as representatives of different type of heroism.

²⁷ Thorne (2010) 17

²⁸ Marti (1945) 375; Brisset (1964) 82 identifies Cato’s thoughts as matching those of Lucan’s own narrative voice.

²⁹ Morford (1967a) 9 and (1967b) 126.

³⁰ Rutz (1970) 1 opens the introduction to the volume by lamenting, ‘Lucan steht dem heutigen Gebildeten fern’, with regard to the comparative neglect that Lucan has suffered in his generation, especially in German scholarship.

Following Ahl's lead, Narducci (1979) published a work that considered Lucan's role as a successor to Virgil. He also maintained that Cato represents Lucan's own pro-liberty and anti-Caesarian feelings.³¹ Martindale (1984) argued that there are two types of *libertas* present in Lucan, political and personal. Cato proves that personal *libertas* may exist even if political *libertas* is defeated. George (1991) reads Cato's actions as revealing Lucan's own desire to embrace true Republicanism.³² Quint (1992) published a seminal work in which he accurately places Lucan against Virgil as the model of all the "epics of the defeated, a defeated whose resistance contains the germ of a broader republican or antimonarchical politics."³³ He then argues that the key characteristic to Lucan is an ongoing struggle against Caesar. Most of these studies were traditional/historicist in their approach and focused more on characters and their relationship to the poet.

Another new direction appeared in 1987 with Ralph Johnson's publication of *Momentary Monsters* and John Henderson's "Lucan: The Word at War." Both these studies moved scholarship beyond the old debates over Lucan's political motivations. Johnson and Henderson argued that the whole epic was a literary exercise in irony and in horrific absurdity.³⁴ Others followed in this new deconstructionist path, notably Masters (1992), Hardie (1993), and Martindale (1993).³⁵ Along with these more pessimistic

³¹ Toohey (2001) 451 characterizes Narducci's approach as one of 'ideologically driven historicism' in that he tends to interpret through the lens of Lucan's assumed political anti-Caesarianism.

³² George (1991) 257.

³³ Quint (1993) 8.

³⁴ Ralph Johnson and John Henderson both arrive at these similar conclusions in different ways: Johnson with a more formalist, close-reading approach and Henderson with his full-blown deconstruction. In his revision Henderson (1998) 168 states "the ideology forged to bridge from ordeal of the City of Rome to that of the imperial World is exposed as a schizo drivenness; as the cult of aggression and 'Oneness' leads to a logical end in suicidal implosion. And Lucan offers no remedy, no alternative promise."

readings of Lucan followed the theory that Lucan openly questioned or even denied a Stoic order to the cosmos. For these scholars the epic does not elevate any character, but rather makes Cato into a parody of the Stoic *sapiens*, who in the end is revealed to be a spectacular failure. Shadi Bartsch (1998), however, taking up many of these contemporary arguments and approaches, comes to different conclusions. She advocates instead for a middle ground. The epic does in fact have an ideological center, but it is subjective. In reading Lucan's epic, which is a world devoid of meaning, as readers we must choose for ourselves how to construct the meaning of the poem from its chaos. Matthew Leigh (1997), who also attempts to reconcile the competing narrative voices, points out the tension built into the text by Lucan between spectating (disengagement) and emotional and ethical participation (engagement).

In regard to the poem's definition of heroism and its relation to the epic tradition, the tendency has been pessimistic. Leigh (1997) reads Lucan as portraying the quest for heroism as a failure. He focuses mostly on Cato's actions in Book 9. Hershkowitz (1998) also concludes that virtue is defeated.³⁶ Salemne (2002) sees in Lucan's epic a teleology toward a ruin that is unavoidable: "La storia va, implacabile, verso la rovina." Cato's heroic efforts are isolated among such ruin that they are devoid of any influence or capability to improve or impact others.³⁷ Recently, Sklenar (1999) has expressed the view

³⁵ Masters has been highly influential on subsequent scholarship with his well-argued illustrations of ways in which Lucan self-consciously manipulates and fragments language itself and the expectations of language. Hardie and Martindale consciously utilize a blend of more recent theoretical and intertextual approaches to suggest the multiple levels at which a text is "implicated" in the creation of a message. Such an approach leads them to a more pessimistic view of the epic, especially with regard to Cato. Hardie (1993) 11 states: "Eventually, after the present ending of the poem, Cato will die as literally the 'one man', as the last Republican, the sole survivor of his race. What will be left will be Caesar—everything but nothing, the living corpse of Rome."

³⁶ Leigh (1997) 267; Hershkowitz (1998) 243.

that Lucan constructs a nihilistic cosmology in which Cato and his construction of heroism is exposed as worthless.³⁸ De Nadal (2000) continues these pessimistic readings by arguing that Lucan subverts the Aristotelian ideal of *mimesis*, that his epic refuses to properly narrate the events, and thus is, in fact, anti-mimetic.

As all things change, the pendulum has now swung back a bit against these pessimistic readings. Some readers continue to see some hope in the epic, mostly embodied in Cato's stance against servitude. To these readers Cato represents a genuine champion of *libertas* and exhibits Stoic *virtus*. Emmanuele Narducci (1999) has pushed back against what he terms the "deconstruzionistica" tendencies in certain dominant trends in scholarship (particularly among the English-speaking scholars).³⁹ In his works he defends the older, more positive view, that Lucan did not intend any kind of ironic reading of the epic and that any attempt to do so is a misreading of the poem.⁴⁰ Radicke (2004) maintains a positive view of Cato in his book on Livy's influence on the epic.⁴¹

³⁷ Salemne (2002) 74.

³⁸ Sklenar (1999) 293 develops this argument further in his book (2003).

³⁹ Narducci (1999:40)

⁴⁰ Narducci (1999, 2002).

⁴¹ He takes Cato at face value "Cato verkörpert in der Pharsalia den Typus des stoischen Weisen"(140). He concludes that Cato possesses "drei Rollemeister, die in seiner Figur zusammenfallen: (1) der epische Held, (2) die historische Person, (3) der stoische Weise." (148). This more positive view of Cato has influenced recent commentaries on Book 9, particularly Raschle (2001), Wick (2004), and Seewald (2008), who all read Cato as an authentic model of *Virtus*. Raschle (2001) 56: "Für Lucan zählt in einem nach Pharsalus endültig sinnlos und absurd gewordenen Krieg nur noch die Bewahrung des Einzelnen, die er in Cato als Leitbild aufzeigt. In der Fortführung dieses Gedankens musste dann auch der Freitod Catos nicht als Untergang, sondern als Sieg der *virtus* über die *Fortuna* bewertet werden". Seewald (2008) 28: "Ungeachtet der Idealisierung verbleibt Cato damit in der Sphäre des Irdischen; er wird zu einem historischen Exempel des Kampfes gegen einen Tyrannen und fordert den Leser, der unter der Herrschaft des Nero lebt, zur Nachfolge auf. Er ist nicht einen unerreichbare mythische Gestalt der Vorzeit wie der pius Aeneas Vergils." And finally Wick (2004) I.32: "Diese ikonoklastisch-dekonstruktive Lesart von Lukans Text dewertet die Catofigur mit Massstabem, für die sie nicht geschaffen wurde, was jedenfalls sehr problematisch erscheint und als interpretatorische Fehlentwicklung einzustufen ist."

Lucan studies have enjoyed a full renaissance in the past few decades with the appearance of numerous conferences, articles, monographs, and commentaries.⁴² Multiple edited volumes are evidence of this growing field. In 1999 the volume *Interpretare Lucano* (Esposito and Nicastrì, eds.) was published. This volume renewed the study of Lucan for Italian scholars,⁴³ and has the tone of “righting the ship.” First, Narducci, made his case against the pessimistic approach to Lucan studies.⁴⁴ Esposito and Ariemma (2004) helped edit a second volume on Lucan, and a third volume a result of a conference in Germany and edited by Christine Walde appeared 2005.

The most recent studies have taken a more positive view of the epic through multidisciplinary approaches. Gorman (2001) explores Lucan’s concept of heroism through the various *aristeiai* of his epic. She argues, and I agree, that Lucan offers Cato as a model for heroism in a civil war world in which the traditional definitions of heroism are impossible. Cato’s suicide becomes the model for his heroism.⁴⁵ Similarly, Hill (2004), looking at the epic through the lens of sociology, discusses Cato’s suicide. He calls this act the most positive act of moral witness of his ideals before the community at large and names Cato the “center of moral gravity in Lucan’s poem.”⁴⁶ Behr (2007),

⁴² Braund (2010) 12 lists no fewer than five international conferences solely devoted to Lucan and his influence since 2001.

⁴³ Only Fantham and Leigh’s works are in English in the volume.

⁴⁴ In his review of the work Hunnicks (2002) 69 writes: “As a whole, the volume is more than an aimless mélange of scholarly exercises, and can even be seen as the embodiment of a programmatic statement: Lucanean studies must get back to normal.” Here, “normal” is meant as a push-back against what are seen to be the excesses of postmodern theoretical approaches that threaten the ability of literary scholarship to make any kind of definitive, meaningful statement about a text.

⁴⁵ Gorman (2001) 263-290 claims that after considering the epic’s *aristeiai*, primarily Scaeva and Vulteius, Cato gets right what the others miss.

taking a less multi-disciplinary approach, examines Lucan's use of apostrophe. She studies the competing voices in the text and argues that the intruding narrator's voice corresponds best to Lucan's own voice and is used to navigate the reader through the text's subversive poetics. Coffee (2008) reads the epic through the lens of socio-economic struggle and its ethical dimensions. In this reading Cato embodies the positive and inherently Roman quality of frugality. Stover (2008) defends Cato as Lucan's hero, and others have rushed to the defense of Cato recently. Cogitore (2010) views Cato as the embodiment of the *respublica* and of the incarnation of *libertas*,⁴⁷ and Shadi Bartsch (2010) argues that Lucan presents his narrator as the opposite of the Tacitean narrator ideal who narrates *sine ira et studio*. Rather, Lucan narrates with a particular historical and poetic purpose.⁴⁸ Likewise, La Fico Guzzo (2010) sees Cato as the new Aeneas.⁴⁹ In truth Cato has proven the most controversial character in recent scholarship and the reader's interpretation of Cato has determined his understanding of the entire epic.

Over the years scholarship on Lucan has alternated between positive and negative interpretations of the epic. Currently the scholarship is roughly split into two camps: those who feel that the poem is driven by irony, fragmentation, absurdity, or nihilism, and those who take Lucan's narrative at face value and read Lucan in a more sincere and often more optimistic light.⁵⁰ As Mark Thorne points out, however, the ongoing problem

⁴⁶ Hill (2004) 222 goes on to say: However unengaging and remote he might seem to modern readers, he is the only figure in Lucan's work who participates in the action of the poem unscathed by the polluting *nefas* of civil war.

⁴⁷ Cogitore (2010) 167-177.

⁴⁸ Bartsch (2010) 21-31.

⁴⁹ La Fico Guzzo (2010) 181-192.

has been the fact that hitherto very little constructive dialogue has existed between the two approaches.⁵¹ Studies often fail in applying the type of systematic approach to the epic that allows it to speak for itself. Lucan's epic has often been examined through theoretical or thematic studies. When we read the poem through the narrative practices of epic poetry, we come to a more sympathetic appreciation of Lucan's poem.

Method of Argumentation

In this dissertation I will argue that Lucan creates a dialogue between his readers and his narrator concerning the nature of heroism. Lucan engages his audience in this dialogue primarily through his descriptions of the battle scenes in the epic. There are three such battle descriptions in the epic: the siege and naval battle at Massilia in *BC* Book 3, the battle of Pharsalus in *BC* Book 7, and Cato's desert march in *BC* Book 9. My approach in this dissertation will focus on a systematic reading of the type scenes of epic narratives as they appear in Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile*.

In this study I have chosen to focus on Lucan's large scale battles and not on his *aristeiae* largely because there have been numerous insightful works that have analyzed these scenes.⁵² All of these scholars have examined how Lucan inverts the literary motifs of the epic *aristiea* to such a degree that he leaves the audience questioning the validity of

⁵⁰ Hunink (200) 106, in a review article summarizes the situation as follows: Lucanean studies have now even led to a scholarly debate between followers of the more radical (mostly English) and even conservative (continental) approaches. There are, of course, representatives of each view to be found among all groups.

⁵¹ Thorne (2010) 28.

⁵² For book length treatments of the *aristeiae* of Scaeva, Vulteius, et al see Ahl (1976), Johnson (1984), Henderson (1983), Herschkowitz (1998), and Sklenar (1999). All these scholars show how Lucan corrupts the elements that are common to epic *aristeiae*. Gorman's (2001) article similar addresses how Lucan corrupts the *aristeiae* of Scaeva and Vulteius yet redeems Cato's actions.

the epic narrative. Scaeva's actions in the siege of Dyrrachium are so bombastic and over the top that they make the whole epic enterprise seem ridiculous. While similar to actions of Homeric warriors, Scaeva's are unbelievable. After Scaeva, wounded in the left eye, plucks out both the arrow and the eye, stomps on them, and then keeps fighting, we readers are left incapable of appreciating Lucan's narrative as an epic *aristeia*. The result of these actions and Lucan's presentations of them make it difficult to take Lucan's epic seriously, and Lucan's treatment of the *aristeia* is no different than his treatment of the large scale battle scenes. In both types of narratives Lucan plays upon his readers' expectations of the genre and asks us to rethink how we consider the actions performed in the context of that genre.

In the three battle narratives that I will examine, Lucan juxtaposes the traditional use of these type scenes with their precise function in the *Bellum Ciuile*. This juxtaposition exposes the inability of traditional heroism to comprehend civil war. Lucan argues, in exchange, for a reevaluation of the definition of the epic hero. My interpretations fall more into the traditionalist, positive camp and view Cato as the hero of the civil war. Though recent critiques have been helpful on Lucan overall, adding many interesting insights and sparking debate on the work in general, the pessimism of the entire epic that they advocate is unconvincing. While it is true that Lucan's narrative does lend itself to a rather deconstructionist reading, these approaches tend to go so far in this direction that it is difficult to argue that Lucan intends to express anything at all other than frustration. It seems unlikely that Lucan, or anyone, would compose an epic primarily to show off his rhetorical powers, clever uses of intertextuality, and metapoetic interests without having a message. He must have intended for his poem to mean

something.⁵³ Far too many recent critics have focused on what Lucan negates rather than what he proposes. This study considers not only what Lucan negates about heroism, but also what he proposes to replace traditional heroism.

Traditional epic has defined heroism by the actions of heroes in battle, especially through the actions performed in the *aristeia*.⁵⁴ *Aristeiai* celebrate the actions of the single warrior who receives *kleos* based on his role in the protection of the community. While these *aristeiai* have been the focus of much scholarly debate on heroism in the epic tradition, the large scale battles in which the *aristeiai* occur have not been as thoroughly examined. These large scale battles are important in defining the context in which the *aristeiai*, and therefore heroic actions, take place. Therefore, by focusing on the large scale battles, we are able to determine the context in which heroism may (or may not) be earned. While epic authors have varied their particular definition of heroism, battle scenes have often been the vehicle through which they have defined their heroes. This dissertation will argue that Lucan intends to negate the traditional definition of heroism as described in the actions of heroes in large scale battles and replace them with the actions of the philosopher. This study will examine how Lucan articulates this through his presentation of the large scale battles. These battle scenes are narrated in a fairly typical pattern that includes certain type scenes, each of which fulfill a certain function within the context of defining heroism: the advance, the collective fight, the melee, and the rout scene.⁵⁵

⁵³ A similar positive sentiment is advanced by Thorne (2010:29).

⁵⁴ For the heroic actions as defined by the Homeric battle scenes see Redfield (1993) 99-128 and Van Wees (1998); in Roman historic epic see Goldberg (1995) 147-153; for heroic actions in Virgil see Hardie (1986) 195, Goldberg (1995) 155, Heinze (1993) 156, Willcock (1983); Horsfall (1989).

The first type scene, the advance scene, establishes the identities of the two combating forces as two discrete forces that are distinct from one another. In Homeric narrative, each day of battle begins with a fresh advance scene. The Greeks and Trojans are introduced in balanced introductions. In Book 3, when the battle begins after the duel between Menelaus and Paris falls apart, both armies are introduced (*Il.* 3.1-9). When the second day of battle begins in book 6, the movements of both the Greeks and Trojans are narrated in an advance scene (*Il.* 8.53-60), and again on the third (*Il.* 11.49-71), and the fourth days (*Il.* 20.1-3). Likewise in Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Trojans and the Italians are introduced before each battle in an advance scene which distinguishes the two armies. Virgil alters the presentation of this advance. While the *Iliad* has a balanced narrative, in which one army's action mirrors the others and both described through the narrator's words. Virgil often narrates the action of one army, while the movement of the other army is narrated through the perspective of the other.⁵⁶ In the first day of battle in book 9, Virgil describes the overall movement of the Trojans, and narrates the Italian movement through the reactions of the Trojans (*Aen.* 9.25-38). Likewise, the second day of battle Turnus leads the Rutulians against the Trojan camp (*Aen.* 9.459-67), and the Trojans react (*Aen.* 9.468-72). On the third day of battle Aeneas arrives at the Trojan camp with the new found allies and Pallas (*Aen.* 10.257-62), then the Trojans react to this event (*Aen.* 10.262-66), and finally the Latins react to the Trojans' reaction (10.267-69).

⁵⁵ For a discussion of these four divisions of epic battles see Rossi (2004). Others have dissected Homeric and Virgilian battle scenes in other ways, see also Van Wees (1997); Heinze (1993) 156; Wilcock (1983); Horsfall (1987); Harrison (1991); Horsfall (1995:180); Kirk (1968); Latacz (1977); divides the collective fight and melee scenes into four subcategories based on the characters fighting: the collective battle includes the leaders, the secondary characters, and finally those that include characters referred to only by their ethnicities or groups (i.e., Greeks, Trojans, or Italians). On the codified system of Homeric battle scenes see Strasburger (1954), Beye (1964), Krischer (1971), Latacz above, and Kirk (1978).

⁵⁶ This "focalization" creates more sympathy for the armies in Virgil's narrative. The "focalization" was coined by Gerard Genette (1983) to refer to the perspective through which a narrative is presented.

When the Trojans first attack the city of the Latins on the fourth day of battle, Virgil narrates Aeneas' march against the city (*Aen.* 11.445) and then the reaction of the Latins (*Aen.* 11.447-85). This pattern is repeated on the fifth day of battle in book 12 (*Aen.* 12.574-92). The advance scene is used in epic battle narratives to introduce and distinguish the different combating forces. Lucan utilizes this type scene, but often suppresses or confuses the identities of the two forces involved, thereby negating the proper function of this type scene.

Once the armies have advanced, the narrative shifts to the collective fight scene. This type scene is characterized by the description of a massive collision of armies. The focus of the collective fight scene is on the movements of the two armies as a whole. In Homeric narrative, the collective fight scene often narrates the tactical movements of the armies, the blood covered earth, the shine of the sun reflected off the weapons, and the soldiers' fatigue, sweat, shouts, fear and thoughts. Each of the three days of battle in the *Iliad* contains a collective fight. On the first day of battle in book 3, Homer describes the dust that is stirred up by the armies rushing into each other (*Il.* 3.13-25). Then, as the two forces join arms, Homer describes the groans and cries of the men as they fight on the blood-covered earth (*Il.* 4.446-451). This narrative scene is then completed with a simile in which Homer relates the flow of men to a winter flood (*Il.* 4.452-456).⁵⁷ The Homeric collective fight describes the large movements of two equally matched forces engaged in conflict. In *Aeneid* Book 11, Virgil describes the Trojan siege of the Latin city. Here Virgil narrates the initial javelin attack and the shouts of the men. The poet describes the

⁵⁷ This general pattern is followed throughout all three of Homer's large scale battle narratives: The sweat and fatigue of the soldiers, and the blood covered earth (*Il.* 8.65; 15.715; 17.360-1); the clash and gleam of the weapons (*Il.* 4.447-449; 8.61); sweat and shouts (*Il.* 4.449; 16.566); fear (*Il.* 385; 11.810-11; 17.745). Throughout these scenes the men are referred to as a group.

rush of men and the gleam of the armor, and this is followed by a brief simile that compares the flying weapons to snowflakes (*Aen.* 11.609-612). The collective fight provides a general construct in which the individual warriors may successfully win or lose their *gloria/kleos* in individual combat. To successfully create this construct the collective fight scene must present a battle that is composed of large and equally balanced forces, is fought by anonymous groups, and concludes with a simile that relates the action on the field to a scene from daily life. On the surface Lucan adapts this type scene in his narration of his battle scenes. He presents his battles, however, as lopsided affairs in which one army has the overwhelming advantage over the other, or he confuses the identities of the two sides to such a degree that it is not possible to tell the two armies apart.

Following the anonymous and large scale fighting of the collective fight scene, the melee scene narrates a great number of individual combats. Here the poet narrates the successes and failures of individuals, but does not linger long on any one warrior. This type scene often includes the description of wounds, sympathy for the vanquished and praise of the victors. In this type scene individual warriors gain or lose *gloria/kleos*. In *Iliad* Book 4, Antilochus strikes Echeolus (*Il.* 4.457-472), which begins a melee in which several “secondary” characters kill each other.⁵⁸ After this first attack, Homer describes how Elphenor drags Echelopus from the field and strips his armor (*Il.* 4.463-466). Elphenor is then quickly slain by Agenor (*Il.* 4.467-472). This type of scene is repeated again in Book 5, in which Menelaus kills Scamandrius, Strophius’ son (*Il.* 5.49-58). The melee scenes in the *Aeneid* are constructed in a very similar fashion. In Book 9, when the Latins attack the Trojan camp in the absence of Aeneas, Virgil narrates the

⁵⁸ On Homeric melee scenes and the prominence of “secondary” characters, see Beye (1964).

series of slaughters, which begins with Ilioneus' slaying of Lucetus (*Aen.* 9.569-576). Likewise, in Book 10, when Mezentius and his men successfully attack the enemy, Virgil lists several of the men who are killed. Here the Italians Caedicus, Sacrator, Messapus, and Valerius kill a series of Trojans, namely Alchathous, Hydaspes, Rapo, Parthenius, Orses, Clonius, Ericetes, and Agis (*Aen.* 10.747-53).⁵⁹ The melee provides a stark contrast to the rather anonymous combat that is described in the collective fight scene by focusing on the fates of several individuals. In the melee scene the effects of the war on the individual become more manifest. The individual struggles, deaths, and victories accentuate the drama of war. In traditional epic, the deaths and struggles are counterbalanced by the account of the victor. There *gloria/kleos* is lost, but is then gained by the victors. Lucan's battles each contain a version of the melee scene in which there is a scramble and a series of deaths. However, unlike the melees in Homeric and Vergilian epic there are no successes. Lucan focuses only on the deaths and the tragedy of war. Lucan represses the glory of such scenes. This repression leaves the audience with only the loss of glory. Lucan is showing his readers that civil war can yield no glory.

The final type scene, the rout, describes the retreat of the defeated army. This retreat may be either orderly or chaotic. This scene focuses on the reactions of the defeated army themselves, their loved ones, or the victorious army. These rout scenes distinguish the victors from the losers, for as one army flees, the other pursues killing many of the retreating army.⁶⁰ Such a rout scene can be found in book 5 of the *Iliad*. Here

⁵⁹ Wilcock (1983) 96-97 recognizes the winning faction as the Italians and the losing faction as Trojan: "And if we bear in mind that this passage comes immediately after Mezentius' aristeia, it is not surprising that the Italians are winning, and Aeneas' men losing."

⁶⁰ On the description of the rout scenes see Rossi (2004) 80-81; Fenik (1968) 10 and 198; Willcock (1983: 88). The attackers slaughter the hindmost men: *Il.* 5.84-94; 8.335-42; 11.148-62, 171-180; 16.367-93, 588-92, 656-62; 17.319-21, 755-61; 18.148-54; 21.540-43, 606-11. The attackers strike where the ranks are the

the Trojans retreat from Diomedes who is relentless in his pursuit of the Trojans (*Il.* 5.84-94), a pattern repeated throughout the *Iliad*. Another common motif in Homeric rout scenes is the image of the horses pulling their dead masters (*Il.* 11.159-61; 16.370-71; 11.179-80). The rout scene also signifies a change of momentum in battle, such as in *Iliad* book 21, when Apollo inspires Agenor to lead a counter charge (*Il.* 21.540 fl.). Virgil also employs the rout scene to mark an end to combat, as in *Aeneid* book 11 when the Italians flee to the city of Latinus for protection while their mothers watch (*Aen.* 11.868-878). Both Homeric and Virgilian rout scenes clearly distinguish which army has lost and which army has won the conflict. It is in the rout scene, then, that glory is awarded to the victorious army. As in the past three scenes, Lucan again corrupts the route scenes in his epic. Instead of focusing on the glory that is won by the victorious army, Lucan focuses on the defeat, dehumanization, and dishonor of the defeated. There is no redemption in civil war.

Because of the role that large scale battle narratives play in the definition of heroism, it makes sense to examine how Lucan manipulates this narrative to redefine the type of heroism present in his epic. He narrates his large scale battles according to the four type scenes listed above. However in each instance he manipulates the presentation of these type scenes to call into question or criticize the traditional definition of heroism. In a civil war context, such martial prowess is self-destructive and cannot lead to *kleos*. The three major battle scenes from the *Bellum Ciuile* form the core of this dissertation. I analyze each of these battle scenes by examining the relation between Lucan's narrative

thickest: *Il.* 8.342, 11.178. *Il.* 11.148, 16.377-78. The horses now pull their dead masters: *Il.* 11.159-61, 16.370-71; 11.179-80. The slaughtered are now dearer to the birds than to their wives: *Il.* 11.162. See also 11.395, 452-55. The narrator describes the dust and shouts raised by the men in battle: *Il.* 11.151-52, 16.373, 21. 540-41.

and the four type scenes outlined above. The three battle scenes I discuss are the siege and sea battle of Massilia in Book 3, the land combat at Pharsalus in Book 7, and Cato's march through the Libyan Desert in Book 9.

Chapter 2 will discuss the Massilian siege and sea battle. In this battle Lucan presents the Massilians as the true Romans. Caesar's attack on this town appears as an attack on Rome itself. The similarity of these two armies complicates the proper function of the battle narratives. By presenting the Massilians as Romans, Lucan exposes the bloody battle for what it really is, a fratricidal conflict that is civil war. In this type of conflict there is no possibility of glory or of honor.

Chapter 3 will discuss the battle at Pharsalus. This battle narrates the first and only direct conflict between Pompey's and Caesar's armies in the epic. This has been called the most depressing moment of the *Bellum Ciuile*. In this episode Lucan displays the tragedy of civil war. He laments Rome's loss of freedom and the devastating effects the civil war has on Rome's future. Lucan rejects any possibility of honor from such a battle.

Chapter 4 will discuss Cato's march through the deserts of Libya. Here we finally see a successful battle scene (that really is a non-battle scene). Lucan is careful to cast this march as a struggle between *libertas* and servitude. Cato leads his men, as well as the remnants of Pompey's armies, out from slavery to a leader into being soldiers of the cause of Rome. This desert march represents the first time that a conflict is successfully waged with the possibility of heroism, and Lucan praises Cato as the good general who sacrifices himself for his soldiers.

Each of these three battle scenes is narrated through the four type scenes that make up large scale epic battle narratives, and each of these type scenes functions differently in each battle narrative. The overall effect of these battle scenes, though, is to chip away at the monolith of epic heroism. While Lucan breaks down the traditional definition of epic heroism by showing the dangers of applying traditional standards of valuation to the actions of civil war, he offers Cato's actions as their replacement. This dissertation will address many of the issues that are central to Lucan's epic such as heroism, his relation to the epic tradition, and his poetic technique. All these come together in his rendition of the battle scenes. By arguing for a new definition of heroism Lucan does not simply negate the epic tradition but rather tries to refine it to fit the needs of his society. Rome under Nero does not need an Achilles, but a Cato.

Chapter 2: Massilia

Background to the Battle at Massilia

The first large scale battle narrative in the *Bellum Ciuile* is the siege and subsequent naval battle at the town of Massilia in Book Three. In the first three books of Lucan's epic Caesar easily subdues much of Italy and, after taking Rome, begins his pursuit of Pompey's forces to the west. In their pursuit, Caesar's troops arrive at the town of Massilia. Caesar requests aid from the Massilians; the Massilians, however, request to be left out of the war. Caesar decides to force conflict upon them and besieges the city. Having made the preparations for the siege, Caesar leaves the attack under the command of his generals as he continues to pursue Pompey in Spain.¹ Siege warfare follows in which neither the Caesarians nor the Massilians are able to gain a decisive victory. Eventually the Massilian navy breaks the siege and takes the battle to the sea. A bloody naval battle follows in which many Caesarians and Massilians are killed in horrific and gruesome deaths. The narration of both movements is structured according to the patterns of epic narrative, but used by Lucan to question the heroism possible in the context of the civil war. In his description of the battle at Massilia Lucan presents the soldiers that are involved as an anonymous group of men. This anonymity questions the central premise of the epic tradition, namely to earn *gloria* and fame through actions performed in battle. By assigning these actions to anonymous men, he rejects this premise.

¹ The Massilian siege is referenced in other historical works: Caesar *BC* 35.5; Cass. Dio. 41.19.2; Florus 4.4.23; Velleius 2.50. On Lucan's interpretation of this event see Pichon (1912: 124f.); M. Leclerc (1903:45); E. Davin (1952:70/83); Metger (1957).

Though Lucan rejects the basic heroic function of this battle, he nevertheless narrates it according to the narrative patterns of epic poetry, including an advance scene, the collective fight, the melee, and the rout. The sea battle at Massilia contains both siege warfare as well as a naval battle. The siege has been the basic battle scene of the epic tradition since *Iliad*.² Naval battles, on the other hand, are fairly unusual in extant epics. Though there may have been a larger tradition of naval battle narratives, it has been largely lost.³ Despite presenting this siege and sea battle as traditional epic battles, however, Lucan does not allow this battle to be interpreted heroically. The poet questions the legitimacy of civil war as an expression of heroism through his own commentary in the text, his rejection of traditional terminology, and his confusion of identities.⁴

In this study of the Massilian battle narrative I shall focus on the narration of the siege and naval battles,⁵ in which Lucan plays on the theme of confused identity that is prevalent throughout the civil war. This confusion of identity has a direct influence on the proper function of the battle narrative and the definition of heroism in the *Pharsalia*. In their studies of Massilia, Ilona Opelt, Robert Rowlands, and Robert Sklenar have also focused on the identity of the Massilians.⁶ Ilona Opelt concludes her study of the sea

² The siege also plays a large role in Roman epic. Consider also the siege of the Trojan camp in Virgil (*Aen.* 9.503-589), the siege of Thebes in Statius (*Theb.* books 7-10), or the lesser well-known example of M. Fulvius Nobilior's siege in Anatolia in Ennius' *Annales* (*Ann.* 15.391-98).

³ Masters (1992:11-42) presents some evidence of a tradition of naval battles.

⁴ It is a common scholarly opinion that Lucan's "decadence" complicates the success of his epic. Fraenkel (1924) however, begins the trend of understanding Lucan's narrative as part of his epic mission. Snell (1939:84) argues that Lucan fails as an epic poet.

⁵ The majority of scholars have focused on Caesar's desecration of the woods outside of Massilia as a prelude to the gruesome battle that follows: Phillips (1968) 96-300; Masters (1992); Green (1991) 228-230. Henderson's (1987) and Sklenar's (2003: 16-32) works have generally focused on how Lucan's narrative redefines the vocabulary of epic poetry.

battle at Massilia by stating that Lucan presents the Massilians as more Roman than Caesar's army through their close association with the old Roman values of *fides*, *uirtus*, and *grauitas*. The Massilians become associated with these values by their opposition to Caesar's advance. By resisting Caesar, the Massilians embody the Roman values that Romans themselves are lacking in their surrender to Caesar in book 3. Robert Sklenar argues that Lucan establishes a false distinction between these two armies to force this narrative to conform to traditional epic battle in which the preliminary requirement of an ethnic distinction between combatants is met.⁷ As the narrative progresses, however, Lucan reveals that this distinction is false, for throughout the battle the Massilians are presented as Romans. Lucan clarifies this fallacy by structuring his narrative according to the traditional epic large scale battle scene motifs and demonstrating the motifs' failure to comprehend civil war.

Advance of the Armies BC 3.525-543: Confused Identities

Traditional epic battle narratives are introduced by a scene that describes the advance of the army. One of the functions of this scene is to establish an ethnic distinction between the combating forces and to ensure that the following conflict allows for the performance of heroic duties. According to Sarpedon's *noblesse oblige* to Glaucou at *Iliad* 12.310-328, the hero's duty is directly related to the protection of his community against invaders. Left unstated, but implied, by Sarpedon is the fact that these

⁶ Opelt (1957: 444-45) portrays the Massilian battle as a chain of individual combats rather than as a string of *aristeiai*, as Gorman (2001:272-273) does; and Rowlands (1969: 204-208), has focused on the confused identities of the Massilians and the Caesarians. Sklenar (2003: 16-32) also mentions the confused identities of the Massilians and the Romans.

⁷ R. Sklenar (2003) 16.

aggressors are from a different community with a different identity. When the combatants share an identity, as in civil war, the proper function of these heroic duties is made impossible. For, by performing the very acts that would protect their community, the warriors simultaneously destroy that community. Lucan uses structural and verbal perversion in his narration of the Massilian battle scene to confuse the ethnic distinctions between the Massilians and the Romans in order to discount the possibility of a proper performance of heroic duties in a civil war.

Lucan narrates the Massilian battle in two distinct movements, the siege and the naval battle, both of which are introduced by advance scenes that question the fulfillment of the scene's traditional objective. The advance to the siege battle begins with confusion of identity. In their embassy to Caesar the Massilians request that they be allowed to remain uninvolved. They claim that they have long shared the fate of Rome.

Semper in externis populo communia uestro
Massiliam bellis testatur fata tulisse,
comprensa est Latiis quaecumque annalibus aetas.

(*BC* 3.307-309)

[In every age of Latin history it has been attested that Massilia has shared the fortunes of the Roman people in their foreign wars.]

The Massilians see themselves as long-time members of the Roman race. Though the Massilians recognize that ethnically they are not Romans, they see themselves as members of the Roman community. At *BC* 3.305 the Massilians call Caesar a *hostis propinquus*, a close enemy, because they understand themselves to be Roman. They have chosen to be a part of this community and do not wish to sever themselves from it. As Rowlands claims, this is the key to the Massilians' self-identity; they view themselves as Romans.

Having become so intertwined with Rome's destiny over the years, Massilia now attempts to avert from itself, by non-participation, the horror that, in Lucan's eyes, awaited both Rome and the world as the outcome of the fratricidal civil war.⁸

The Massilians remind Caesar that they have long shared in Roman fate and that they would happily fight with Caesar if he were engaging in legitimate warfare against an external foe, but they refuse to participate in civil war (3.310-311). Since they consider themselves Roman, the Massilians consider Caesar's current war a violation of natural law, thus echoing the narrator's disdain for civil war.⁹ As the envoy continues, there are further signs that the Massilians understand that a civil war will yield no glory. The Massilians hope to be excluded from this civil war because they understand themselves as Romans, and they therefore view Caesar's war as a civil war, which they understand will yield no triumph; for no glory is possible in such a conflict.

They conclude their embassy to Caesar with the claim that they are willing to suffer a fate similar to the inhabitants of Saguntum, which was destroyed by Hannibal (3.350-355). If Caesar wishes to attack, the Massilians promise to slow his advance with their deaths. They will refuse to surrender, preferring suicide to being subjects to Caesar. At *BC* 3.351-355 they clarify this stance in the final vignette of the speech, in which they vow to throw their babies into the fires and kill their wives and brothers. This conclusion highlights all the brutality of civil war. The family itself is destroyed. Caesar rejects the Massilians' claim of this shared identity with the Romans, dismissing them as Greeks who are simply standing in the way of his progress (3.358-60). He promises to make

⁸ Rowlands (1969) 206-207 claims that Lucan's inconclusive ending to the battle allows the Massilians to retain their freedom.

⁹ Sklenar (2003) 16, recognizes an echo of the narrator's description of civil war as *cognatasque acies* in the Massilian description, *funestas acies*

Massilia pay for its request for peace with war and death. By rejecting this identity of the Massilians he redefines his community of obligation.¹⁰ Throughout the civil war Caesar redefines his community of ethical and social obligations to include only those who support his cause. By claiming the Massilians as Greeks, he rejects their claim to be Romans and therefore legitimizes his attack on their town. He then begins to prepare for his siege of the town.

The second phase of the battle, the naval battle, also begins with an advance scene which confuses the identities of the two armies as opposed to Homeric and Virgilian epic advance scenes which clarify the distinctions of the two armies. Homeric advance scenes often make this distinction by separating the actions of the two armies,¹¹ as when the actions of the Greeks mirror those of the Trojans, and the two armies, though acting simultaneously, are clearly distinguished.¹² In the advance scenes of the *Aeneid* such distinctions are confirmed through focalization; one army sees the other advancing and then moves out.¹³ Thus Homeric and Virgilian advance scenes, though accomplished differently, effectively distinguish the actions of the two armies. In the Massilian naval battle advance, however, any distinction between the two armies is muddled.

¹⁰ See Roller (1996:319-347) for the use of this term.

¹¹ See also Rossi (2004)76; van Wees (1998) 676-680; Orman (1994) 21.

¹² These examples are taken from the first day of battle in Book 3. For the second day of battle, in Book 8, see 8.53-60; for the third day see 11.49-71; and for the fourth day see 20.1-3. In each instance the Trojans and the Greeks act in parallel, though distinguished action.

¹³ See Rossi (2004) 87-88. First day of battle (*Aen.* 9.25-158) 9.25-32, Turnus and the Rutulians march against the Trojan camp; 9.33-46, reaction of the Trojans. Second day of battle (*Aen.* 9.459-818) 9.459-67, Turnus and the Rutulians march against the Trojan camp; 9.468-72, Reaction of the Trojans. Third day of battle (*Aen.* 10.260-908) 10.257-262, arrival of Aeneas at the Trojan camp; 10.262-66, reaction of the Trojans; 10.267-69 the reaction of the Latins.

The naval battle begins with a description of the simultaneous organization and approach of the two armies. Both the navies appear simply and crudely built: the Caesarian ships are described as simple vessels, consisting of roughly hewn trees fastened together to form a platform from which they may fight (3.510-513), and the Massilian fleet is composed of ships pulled out of retirement (3.516-518). Once the ships begin to move, Lucan stresses the shared identity of the two navies by combining their actions with singular verbs.

mouit ab omni
quisque suam statione ratem, paribusque lacertis
Caesaris hinc puppes, hinc Graio remige classis
tollitur; impulsae tonsis tremuere carinae,
crebraque sublimes conuellunt uerbera puppes.

3.525-529

[Each man moved to his own ship from its position, with equal strength here the Caesarian ships, here the ship is lifted with Greek oar; the keels struck by the oars tremble, and the frequent strokes move the tall ships.]

In lines 325-6, Lucan tells us that each man moved to his station (3.525-526). The men are not distinguished, as Lucan uses the indefinite pronoun *quisque* to refer to members of both armies. Using the singular indefinite pronoun also allows Lucan to describe the actions of both armies with the singular verb *mouit*, therefore portraying all the events as a single action. As the ships set sail, Lucan again describes the actions with the singular verb *tollitur* (3.527). The subjects of this passive verb are both *puppes* and *classis* (3.525). By combining both the subjects with one verb in this way, Lucan stresses the unity of the two fleets.

Epic poets often use the sounds and weapons of the advancing armies to distinguish them. In book 3 Lucan comments on the sound of the armies, but only to

mention the collected sound of both approaching armies, and not to distinguish them. The sound of the men of both armies blends together as if to underscore their shared ethnicities.

ut tantum medii fuerat maris, utraque classis
quod semel excussis posset transcurrere tonsis,
innumerae uasto miscentur in aethere uoces,
remorumque sonus premitur clamore, nec ullae
audiri potuere tubae. Tum caerulea uerrunt
atque in transtra cadunt et remis pectora pulsant.

3.538-543

[When only so much of the sea was between the fleets as each one could cover with one strong stroke, countless voices were mixed in the empty air; the sound of the oars was not covered by shouts, nor was any horn able to be heard. Then they swept the blue sea and they fell to the benches and struck their chests with the oars.]

In this passage, Lucan continues to describe the actions of the two armies as one. Line 3.538 tells us that the fleets come from both sides (*utraque classis*), which thus lumps the ships together under one term, *classis*. Here, Lucan also pauses in his narration just before the two navies meet in the middle of the sea.¹⁴ In this pause Lucan describes the sounds of both the armies: the crash of oars, the sound of waves, and the noise of the strokes on the boats fill the air. There is nothing to distinguish the navies. Lucan avoids distinction between these two forces, presenting the actions of both armies as a single action. Furthermore, in line 360, Lucan tells us that the voices of both navies mix together in the air (*innumerae uasto miscentur in aethere uoces*). Compare this scene to *Iliad* 3.2-15, where the noise of the Trojan army is contrasted with the silence of the

¹⁴ Rossi (2004) 75-76. See also Van Wees (1997) 673-74, who identifies the cinematic quality of Homeric battle scenes in their constant alternation between close-ups and wide-angle views. This pause just before the clash is a common practice in Homeric battle scenes.

Greeks. This contrast distinguishes the two armies and at the same time characterizes them.¹⁵ Because Lucan mentions the voices without distinguishing the two groups of soldiers, he reminds the reader that this scene does not conform to the standard narrative practice.

While the two armies had earlier been distinguished by the separate words *classis* and *puppis*, they are now referred to with the common term *classis*. In addition, the repetition of *remus*, oar, (*remorum* 340, *remis* 343) marks the shared tools of both the armies. Possibly most telling, however, is the use of the third person plural verbs throughout this passage (*uerrunt*, 342; *cadunt*, 343; *pulsant*, 343). These verbs are used to describe the actions of both navies. While Homer often uses similar verbs in narrating the actions of both armies, the actions are distinguished; this distinction is not present in Lucan's narrative. The entire group of soldiers is the subject of these verbs. The advance scenes fail to establish the first prerequisite for a successful epic battle: distinct ethnic identities.

Lucan confuses the nationalities of the two armies in both the siege and naval battle narratives through verbal parallels, terminological "slippage," and structural blurring. This confusion results in the corruption of the proper heroic narrative and negates the proper function of the advance scene. Once the function of this type scene is complicated, heroism in the entire battle narrative is negated and complicated.¹⁶ The remaining three types-scenes that follow the advance are all likewise complicated by this

¹⁵ Homer describes the advances of the two armies at *Iliad* 3.2-15. See also Rossi (2004) 76; Latacz (1997) 52; van Wees (1997) 676-80, all of whom comment on how Homer uses this description to characterize and distinguish the two armies.

¹⁶ See Sklenar (2003) 17-18: "it would be *fas* for the Massilians, being foreigners, to fight Romans, but the civil war itself is, as the poem tells us, a *commune nefas*, a 'communal sacrilege', and the Massilians' participation in it would violate the most basic epic premise, which was by Lucan's time already unstable".

lack of ethnic distinction, further complicating the proper function of the heroic narrative structure.

The Collective Fight *BC* 3.460-579: Shared Identities

In his introduction to the battle at Massilia Lucan questioned the validity of the conflict by presenting both the Massilians and Caesarians as similar. Following this advance scene, Lucan again presents the Massilians and the Caesarians as the victims of the same fate. As the battle begins in earnest between the two armies, men on both sides are killed by the dehumanizing war machines of the Roman military. In his collective battle scene Lucan focuses on the use of the *ballistae*, catapults, and other war machines that cause deaths *en masse*. Not only do these military machines allow Lucan to describe massive amounts of death at once but they also allow him to present the cause of these deaths as objects instead of people. The ballistas and catapults appear to fire on their own, because Lucan never mentions the men who load and operate these machines. By suppressing the human action in these scenes Lucan exempts his characters from the blame of civil war, but this suppression also denies the proper transfer of *uirtus*. This denial results in a dysfunctional battle narrative in which heroism is not possible.

In the epic tradition the collective fight scenes create the appropriate background to a battle in which a hero may win *gloria*, which can only be won in battles fought between evenly matched forces, in which a decisive victory is possible.¹⁷ Poets create such a context in their description of the mass of men, their armor, their noise, the dust they cause, the thoughts of the soldiers, and often a simile that compares the marching

¹⁷ Fenik (1968)10; Rossi (2004)79-80; Willcock (1983) 88.

men to a natural or mythological element, which helps the reader picture the movement of the armies. One of the primary functions of the collective fight, however, is to create a distinction between the two armies. This distinction is created by the author's focus on the differences in weaponry, shouts, or actions of the two armies. As in his description of the advance scenes which were marred by the confused identities of the combatants, Lucan rejects the proper function of the collective fight by making the soldiers the passive recipients of the destructive forces of the Roman military machinery. This passivity and their shared identities complicate the traditional function of this battle scene. Instead of appearing as heroes fighting for glory, they appear as anonymous men dying from weapons thrown by invisible, nameless entities.

As Caesar prepares for his siege of Massilia, he builds a huge siege machine which threatens to collapse and crush the Massilians: *Concussisse sinus quaerentem erumpere uentum/credidit et muros mirata est stare iuuentus.* (BC 3.460-461). In these lines Lucan reminds his readers of the epic tradition through the allusion to the image of the Trojan horse teetering above the walls of Troy *scandit fatalis machina muros/ feta armis* (*Aeneid* 2.236-237), while simultaneously evoking for his readers the complications that modern warfare poses to the heroic tradition by removing the human element from the Virgilian siege narrative. Whereas the Trojan horse threatened destruction from human agency, through the Greek warriors who would spill out into the streets of Troy, Caesar's siege engine is inhuman and threatens death from itself rather than from any human forces. This threat of death from the inanimate object is followed by a description of weapons that fall upon the town *illinc tela cadunt excelsas urbis in arces* (BC 3.462). These lines tell us that missiles are fired but do not name the person

who throws them. Lucan simply tells us that the weapons fall from this place (*illinc*) onto the highest buildings.¹⁸ Death is threatened not by human forces but by the machines themselves.

This anonymous slaughter continues and indeed worsens with the Massilians' use of the ballista. This weapon, once fired by nameless men, kills many at once:

sed maior Graio Romana in corpora ferro
uis inerat. nec enim solis excussa lacertis
lancea, sed tenso ballistae turbine rapta,
haud unum contenta latus transire quiescit,
sed pandens perque arma uiam perque ossa relicta
morte fugit: superest telo post uolnera cursus.

3.463-468

[But greater was the force of Greek weapons upon the Roman bodies, because the lance was thrown not by arms alone but shot by the taut whirl of the ballista; it comes to rest only after passing through bones and speeds away, leaving death behind: after dealing wounds the weapon still moves onwards.]

This is the height of mechanized slaughter, yet it has its roots in the Homeric battle narrative. Homeric collective fights often begin with a volley of missiles between the two armies (*Il.*4.47-449; 4.452-456; 8.61). In Homeric narratives, particularly, this initial volley is anonymous; both armies launch spears at the other, with spears thrown by the mass of men. Through his introduction of current military technology, Lucan makes this anonymity mechanical. Lucan explicitly states that this volley is impersonal, or even inhuman. Lucan tells us that the *lancea* was not thrown by arms (*lacertis*) but rather by the tense whirl of the ballista (*tenso ballistae turbine*). Moreover, once the weapon has

¹⁸ Horace *Carm.* 1.34.14-16: *hinc apicem rapax/fortuna cum stridore acuto/sustulit, hic posuisse gaudet*, suggests that adverbs such as *hinc* and *hic* may refer to specific persons. Lucan's use, however, seems to indicate a more literal and hence more dubious translation. See also Sklenar (2003)18 n. 10.

inflicted its wound, it does not stop, but keeps going. This mechanical warfare negates the personal danger that comes with waging traditional war.

The Massilians, who are forced into combat by Caesar, heroically defend their town using every means they have at their disposal. In order to clarify the failure of modern combat to fulfill the heroic element, Lucan accentuates the inhumanity that results from modern weaponry. The bodies (*corpora*) of the men once hit by the ballista become only arms (*arma*) and bones (*ossa*). Likewise, the Massilians fire huge boulders at the Caesarians (*BC* 3.469-473). These stones not only kill the men, but annihilate the limbs and blood as well: *totos cum sanguine dissipat artus* (3.473). Through the agency of these military machines *uirtus* is lost, but none is gained. Both armies share armory and weaponry--there is no distinction between Massilian and Caesarian. In life and death, their identities are shared, which is certainly not the proper context in which to gain *uirtus*.

Just as in his description of the siege narrative Lucan uses the military machines to comment on the anti-heroic effect of modern Roman warfare, likewise in the naval battle Lucan likewise demonstrates the dehumanizing effects of naval warfare. The sea battle at Massilia is unique, for this is one of the few examples of a naval battle extant in epic poetry.¹⁹ Though there exists a tradition of naval warfare, especially in historical texts, Lucan quickly turns this into a land battle, which is more familiar in the epic tradition. This narrative shift is again facilitated by the use of modern military technology, as Lucan presents a historically accurate Roman naval battle. The military

¹⁹ Masters (1992) 11 entertains the notion that a tradition of naval warfare may have existed, but that this tradition is too fragmented to reconstruct. For Naevius' and Ennius' supposed treatments of naval battle see Skutsch (1985) *ad Ann.* 217-9, 238, 294-6, 375-80. On the general influence of Ennian influence, see Conte (1970) and Von Albrecht (1970) 277-80.

practice of joining boats by cables and then attacking hand-to-hand also allows Lucan to present the battle as a land conflict, thus conforming to traditional epic battle narratives. For in the initial clash, the boats become so crowded that the men are basically fighting on land.²⁰ Lucan's description of the clashing navies is similar to Homeric and Virgilian descriptions of the clash of two armies. Lucan simply exchanges the language of infantry warfare with that of nautical combat (*rostris*, *puppim*, and *rates*). To help his readers understand the effect of this clash of armies, Lucan includes a simile comparing the clash of the armies to the sea that is churned by the winds.

ut, quotiens aestus Zephyris Eurisque repugnant,
huc abeunt fluctus, illo mare, sic ubi puppes
sulcato uarios duxerunt gurgite tractus,
quod tulit illa ratis remis, haec rettulit aequor.

3. 549-552

[As whenever the tide battles against the Zephyrs or the Euri, the waves go this way, but the sea that way, so when the ships traced different tracks in the furrowed flood, one thrust back the sea which was thrust forward by another's ship.]²¹

The Caesarian admiral Decimus Brutus next crowds the Massilian navy, rams a ship, and then orders his troops to allow the Massilian ships to follow suit. This strategy of self sacrifice slows the Massilian ships and creates a situation that better suits the Caesarian attack (*BC* 3.559-561). Lucan then describes how the Massilian boats seem to stick fast to the bulky Caesarian ships and cover the entire sea. Brutus' strategy conforms to the standard practice of naval conflict by turning the naval combat into a hand-to-hand

²⁰ On Lucan's general hyperbolic piling on, see Masters (1992) 34-39. See also Bachofen (1972) 89-91, which stresses Lucan's description of the gigantic barricade at Brundisium, which Masters connects to the gigantic boats in the sea battle.

²¹ Perhaps there is an allusion to Virgil's description of the sea at *Aeneid* 7.528-530.

combat. We begin to see however that his self-sacrificial strategy may lead to his own destruction. At this point the narrative has been a relatively standard account of Roman naval battle. As the combat intensifies Lucan points out the destructive force of the *furor* in civil war, thereby stripping Brutus' men of their heroic qualities.

As the men are infected with the spread of *furor*, their actions become increasingly self-destructive. In their eagerness to engage in this war the men rush to one side of their boat causing it to capsize. These actions, the results of unchecked *furor*, lead to their own destruction. Here Lucan shifts his narrative from the passive voice that has dominated this scene to an active voice. This shift emphasizes the destructive actions of *furor*. The role of *furor* is stressed in two key phrases: *pronus in adversos ictus* (3.571) and *nulli perempti/in ratibus cecidere suis* (3.571-72).²² In these two phrases Lucan describes how the men rush to one side of the boat, causing the boat to capsize and the men to fall onto the enemy boat. The men's *furor* causes them to transgress both literal and metaphorical boundaries. As the men reach too far over their ships they extend beyond the natural limit of the ship, and as they fall off their ships onto the enemy ships, the soldiers transgress the boundary between enemy and ally. This confusion of proper boundaries appeared in the initial scene of the collective fight, when Brutus caused the Massilians to become stuck to his ship. The Massilians have now caused themselves to fall onto the Caesarians' boats.

This confusion of boundaries is symptomatic of Lucan's conception of civil war. Civil war effaces the proper boundaries of community and boundary violation in general

²² So Hunink (1992) 221: "In a regular naval battle, men struck by missiles tend to fall on their own ships or in the water. Here, paradoxically, they fall onto the enemy's ships."

is a recurring theme in Lucan narrative of the Massilian sea battle.²³ As the slaughter becomes direr and death becomes more frequent, Lucan blends the boundary between life and death. This blurring of boundaries is a recurrent theme in the collective fight of the sea battle. Over the course of the battle, the sea becomes covered in a crust of gore and blood, a hyperbolic version of the traditional epic motif in which the blood from the wounded men covers all the land.²⁴ The sea, covered with gore, marks the confusion between land and sea as the crash of the ships creates confusion among the men as to which ships are which. The battle creates a mass confusion among the armies.

Lucan next exploits the plights of these soldiers to characterize the perverse nature of the battle and the dehumanizing effects of civil war:

semianimes alii uastum subiere profundum
hauseruntque suo permixtum sanguine pontum.
hi luctantem animam lenta cum morte trahentes
fractarum subita ratium periere ruina.

3. 576-579

[Some sailors sank half alive into the bottomless deep and drank the brine mixed with their own blood. While others, still drawing the breath that struggled against tardy death, perished by the sudden downfall of their wrecked craft.]

Lucan accentuates the categorical mixing that has pervaded his description of the battle of Massilia. This passage begins with the word, *semianimes*, which indicates “a vague condition between life and death.”²⁵ The men who engage in civil war occupy this blurred state. As the images progress, however, there is more blurring of boundaries. As

²³ Bartsch (1998) 10-47 outlines the importance of the boundary violation to the entire epic.

²⁴ For such an example of blood stained earth see *Iliad* 8.65; 15.715; 17.360-1.

²⁵ Hunink (1992) 223. Cf. *Enn. Ann.* 484; Vergil. *Aen.* 4.686; 10. 396; 404; Ov. *Met.* 5.105; 7.577; see also Esposito (1987) 40.

the soldiers sink to the bottom of the sea, Lucan tells us that they drank in the sea mixed with blood (*hauseruntque suo permixtum sanguine pontum*). The motif of the sea, or water, being defiled by blood has a long history in the epic tradition.²⁶ Moreover, this scene also shows the boundary violation that permeates the epic. As the bodies of the live men drink up the sea, they mix the brine with their blood. Lucan accentuates this blending with the verbs *hauserunt* and *permixtum*. Lucan then focuses on the men who are in the midst of the struggle between life and death. These men who are struggling to breathe are finally killed as they are crushed by the collapse of their own boats. In this final scene, Lucan inverts the phrase from the beginning of the collective fight where he tells us that no man fell dead on his own boat. We see here that all men in the civil war share in an equal fate, which is death.

The Melee BC 3.583-725: Anonymity

We have seen how Lucan alters his presentation of the identity of the two groups in his presentation of the battle of Massilia. In the advance scene Lucan presented both groups as identical and in the collective fight showed how civil war makes equal all those involved. In the next type scene, the melee, Lucan shows the corrupt nature of civil war by focusing his narrative on the victims of violence, refusing to mention the victor's names. This focus on the victims creates a tragic impression of the battle and denies the heroism that is traditionally sought in epic battle narratives.

In Homeric and Virgilian epic, these melee scenes are comprised of long lists of slain warriors, in which a Greek or Trojan warrior slays many of the opposing forces. The

²⁶ Hunink (1992) 223. The particular imagery here echoes *Man. Poet.* 5.666: *inficiturque suo permixtus sanguine pontus*, noted by Metger (1957) 47; and *Ov. Met.* 12.326, where a man's blood pours into his drinking cup.

poet narrates these deaths in *androktasiai* (lists of the war dead). These lists contain a brief biography and description of each victim's death and articulate the transfer of *kleos/gloria* from one individual to another.²⁷ In the melee scene of the battle of Massilia, Lucan withholds the victors' names, thereby focusing all of the readers' attention onto the victim. While Lucan may have presented the type scene in this way in an effort to exempt the victor from the blame that incurs from harming a fellow citizen, his presentation also complicates the heroic mission. By withholding the mention of the victor in the Massilian melee, Lucan articulates a defective exchange of *kleos/gloria* that results not in the accumulation of honor, but only in its loss. Lucan thus denies the *gloria* of such lists and focuses instead on their tragic aspects.

There are two distinct movements in Lucan's narration of the Massilian sea battle. First the initial impact of the missile volley, exchanged between the two armies, and then the fire that sweeps through the ships. Both the movements are organized through a series of individual deaths.²⁸ The first movement may be divided into five sections according to its protagonists: (i) Catus (3.583-591); (ii) Telo (592-9); (iii) Gyareus (600-602); (iv) a pair of twins; (603-34) and (v) Lycidas (635-46). There is very little connection between these deaths except for their proximity to one another. The second phase of the melee is also organized around a series of individual deaths: (i) Phoceus (696-708); (ii) Tyrrhenus and Lygdamus (709-22); and (iii) Argus and his father (723-751). These individuals are slightly more connected, as Lygdamus hits Tyrrhenus, who hits Argus, which causes the death of his father. This type of "chain fight" is a subtype of Homeric catalogues in battle

²⁷ Beye (1964) 345-373

²⁸ Opelt (1957) views these narratives as a chain of individual combat; Gorman (2001: 272) sees this as a string of individual *aristeiai*. There is really little difference between the two. I agree with Opelt in that it best represents a melee scene, fitting in with the collect battle motif.

narratives.²⁹ As there is little historical evidence for this battle scene, Lucan seems to have based his depiction of the naval battle primarily on his poetic predecessors. Once again, though the battle is fought on the sea, Lucan describes it as if it were a land battle.³⁰

The first named warrior is Catus. The description of this warrior contains many of the hallmarks of Lucan's melee scene, especially in the Massilian narrative. The battle and death scene is narrated along the epic pattern. The warrior is introduced and singled out from the mass of men and is then wounded and dies.

Puppe Catus Graiumque audax aplustre retentat,
terga simul pariter missis et pectora telis
transigitur; medio concurrat pectore ferrum,
et stetit incertus, flueret quo uolnere, sanguis,
donec utrasque simul largus cruor expulit hastas
divisitque animam sparsitque in uolnera letum.

3.586-591

[Daring Catus on the deck held back the Greek ship, was equally pierced at the same time in both the back and the chest by the sent spears; the iron met in the middle of his chest, and the blood stood uncertain about through which wound to flow, until at last the flow pushed both spears out and divided his soul and spread his death among the wounds.]

The Catus episode inverts the basic premise of epic poetry, which is to celebrate the heroic actions of individuals. Lucan narrates the gruesome wound that Catus receives as well as his bizarre death. The victor, however, is omitted, which focuses our attention simply on the loss of *uirtus*, rather than its exchange. Catus' actions are corrupted because he is involved in a civil war.

²⁹ *Iliad* 13.576-672; 14.440-507; cf. Heinze (1903) 95-6; Beye (1964); Hunink (1992) 250.

³⁰ See Hunink (1992) 198-202 on Lucan's modernization of traditional epic battle scenes. See Juhnke (1972) 12 suggesting that Massilia may be considered a modernized version of *mache parapotamios* in *Il.* 21; Syndikus (1958) 30-1 argues that Massilia modernizes the cavalry battle in *Aen.* 11.597-647.

With his narration of Catus' death Lucan makes a larger comment on the nature of the epic by building on an epic precedent established by Hector. Lucan tells us that Catus tries to prevent the Greek ship from fleeing: *Graiumque audax aplustre retentat* (3.586). This act mirrors Hector's actions at *Iliad* 15.716-17 in which the Trojan hero attempts to set fire to the Greek ships: Hector grabs on to the beak of the Greek ship with one hand to prevent it from fleeing while he applies fire to it with the other. Like Hector, Catus restrains the Greek (Massilian) ship from fleeing, but instead of setting fire to the ship, he is simultaneously struck by two spears in both his chest and his back. The symbolism of Catus' double wound cannot be ignored. The fact that Catus is pierced by two different spears, from different directions, and, quite poetically, that these spears meet in his chest, serves as a clear reminder that this double wound is a feature of his involvement in a civil war.

Not only does the civil war cause Catus' unique and noteworthy death, but it also prevents Catus from fulfilling his proper epic role, which is to follow the *exemplum* of Hector. In civil war such an action of wartime heroism only leads to fruitless destruction. Furthermore, Lucan describes how the blood pushes out the two javelins by its own force: *donec utrasque simul largus cruor expulit hastas* (3.590). This motif has a simpler form in the epic tradition. There the weapon is torn out of a wound and then the blood and life flows out.³¹ In Catus' example, Catus' body itself rejects the arms that caused his death, a hyperbolic image which exemplifies the self-destructive and unnatural state of civil war.

³¹ *Iliad* 16.504-5; Vergil *Aeneid* 10.486-7; Ovid *Met.* 9.129-30. Lucan seems to be trying to outdo Ovid *Met.* 6.259 in particular.

The next death in the series is that of the steersman, Telo, whose death shares certain elements with the epic tradition. Following the traditional pattern of such narrative scenes Lucan provides a focus on the anatomy of the wound, a brief biography, and then a description of his death. Lucan introduces Telo by claiming that he was the best helmsman and an adept navigator (3.592-596). This life is abruptly snuffed out, however, when several javelins pierce his chest: *pila sed in medium venere tremantia pectus* (3.597). As he collapses, Telo falls and steers his ship away from the enemies.

Lucan supplies his biography and a brief description of his heroic virtue, which is his ability as a navigator. This heroic virtue is frustrated by the civil war. As Telo performs his duty (*virtus*) as a navigator, he is pierced by many spears, but Lucan names none of the warriors who have thrown these spears. They seem to simply fall into his chest, and no one is able to claim the victory of this death. As Telo dies, his hand slips and turns the ship away from the Roman ship he was about to ram. While death in battle is a common feature in epic narratives, Telo's death is different in that it is the result of anonymous weapons seemingly thrown by their own volition. Lucan's refusal to name the active agents, who threw the weapons, results in a malfunction within the epic economy. Rather than narrating a valid exchange of *virtus* between the victor and victim, Telo's death results in only the loss of the *virtus*.

After these two deaths, Lucan narrates the death of one man who is pierced by the beaks of two ships meeting one another. Lucan focuses on the gore and unique death caused by this violence.

nec prohibere ualent obtritis ossibus artus
quo minus aera sonent; eliso uentre per ora
eiecat saniem permixtus uiscere sanguis.

[nor were the joints strong enough to prohibit them with their crushed bones, indeed the bronze sounded: his blood mixed with bloody guts spurted from his belly through his mouth.]

As is typical of this type scene, Lucan also focuses on the blood and the gore. While the mode of death is unique among Lucan's epic predecessors, the narrative pattern remains true to the epic tradition. Homeric and Virgilian narrators describe in great detail the effects of wounds on the body. In this description of the crushed body, Lucan seems to revel in the gory effects on the body. First Lucan describes the ease with which the clashing prows grind the man's bones: *nec prohibere ualent obtritis ossibus artus* (3.656). We may imagine Homer describing the skill with which a Trojan spearman pins a Greek to the Trojan plain.³² Next, Lucan describes the result of this crushing. As a Trojan or Greek spear would cause the victim's blood to spurt and stain the ground, so the blood and organs, having nowhere to go, spew out of the man's mouth: *eiecat saniem permixtus uiscere sanguis* (3.658). Lycidas is pierced and pours out his blood and life through his wounds like a Homeric or Virgilian warrior pours out his life into the dust.

In the actions of Tyrrhenus, Lucan demonstrates the dehumanization that civil war causes. In this scene, Tyrrhenus becomes blinded and then in turn becomes an impersonal agent of civil war. Lygdamus fires the shot that pierces Tyrrhenus' temples, leaving him blinded. Tyrrhenus then orders his companions to use him as they would an engine of war: *'Vos,' ait 'o socii, sicut tormenta soletis, / me quoque mittendis rectum componite telis'* ("As you are wont to place your engines, so place me too in the right position for

³² The examples of such scenes are plentiful in the Homeric corpus. Some of the more gruesome can be found in Books 4 and 5: Cf: 4.501-504; 521-526; 5.53-58; 5.72-75.

hurling darts” 3.716-717). Tyrrhenus, if we can attribute this act to him, strikes Argus in the groin, who then drives the spear deeper by falling on it (3.721-725). In this episode Lucan comments on the loss of heroism, dehumanization, and blindness that is part of civil war. Lygdamus, though he strikes Tyrrhenus, attains no glory. His strike is not lethal and only blinds Tyrrhenus, which only makes Tyrrhenus’ engagement in the civil war more intense. After he is blinded by the strike he is able to become the embodiment of the blind rage and mindless slaughter that is civil war. He therefore becomes a symbol of the blindness that Lucan attributes to the propagation of civil war.

As we can see, then, throughout the Massilian melee scene the victor remains anonymous and though there are many named warriors, they all belong to the defeated. Gorman states that these men are all shown at the moment of death as “the passive recipients of wounds.” This passivity prevents the glory from passing to the victor because the victim is not killed by a named man.³³ While Gorman views this perversity from the vantage of the traditional *aristeia*, the same conclusion holds true when this scene is viewed as a melee. This passivity and anonymity is the opposite of the epic tradition. Gorman argues that by forgoing identification of the victor, Lucan avoids the glory and pollution of civil war. As we have seen, however, the pollution remains. Through his focus on the wounds, blood, and weapons Lucan denies the glory of conquest, leaving only the pollution that results from murder. Through his omission of the victors, moreover, Lucan makes this pollution anonymous and therefore universal.

³³ Gorman (2001:273)

The Rout *BC* 3.752-762: Lost Identity

Lucan does not narrate the entire Massilian sea battle; rather, he leaves us in the midst of the melee stating, rather vaguely, that the Greek forces received a heavier loss than the Romans (3.752-756). Lucan proceeds to narrate the aftermath of the bloodshed through the perspective of the parents, wives, and children of the slain. Lucan narrates the difficulties that these mourners have in distinguishing the body parts of their husbands, fathers, and sons (3.756-761), which often results in a Caesarian corpse being mistaken for a Massilian (3.758-59). Here Lucan most clearly relates the pathos of civil war, ruminating on the disastrous consequences of civil war, not only for those who are consumed by the *furor* of war, but for the community as a whole. Lucan has heavily transformed the historical material to suit his poetic purpose, which is to provide a final sympathetic reading for the Massilians and a final condemnation of the Caesarians.³⁴

By narrating the rout scene of the battle through the eyes of those left behind within the city walls, Lucan follows an epic model. This narration reminds his readers of the reactions within Troy to Hector's duel with Achilles or of the reactions of the Italians to Turnus' duel with Aeneas.³⁵ He uses these allusions to earlier epic to focus the pathos on traditional concepts of heroism. The dire result of the horrific sea battle is focalized

³⁴ Compare Lucan's account to Caesar *Civ.* 1.58; 2.7 on the treatment of Massilia, see, Caesar *Civ.* 2.22.5-6; D.C. 41.25; Flor. *Epit.* 2.13.25; further e.g. Str. 4.1.5. The treatment of Massilia was not severe; the city was allowed to keep its freedom and was not attached to the province of Gallia Narbonensis. The poet probably discarded these points because they would have thrown a more favorable light on Caesar and would have damaged the picture of Massilia's glorious and heroic resistance against the demonic Caesar. On the historical account of the events following Massilia's defeat see Clerc (1929) 150-6; Clebert (1970) 51-2 and 130. On Lucan's transformations of historical material in the Massilia section see Metger (1957) 4; Syndikus (1958) 109 n 33; Masters (1992) 20-5.

³⁵ On Lucan's use of allusion in this scene see Metger (1957) 74-6; Opelt (1957) 442.

through the elders, wives, and children of the slain. As these non-combatants literally try to piece together the body parts of their loved one many of the themes of the advance, collective fight, and melee scenes are revisited. One of these themes is the identity of the combatants. Lucan intentionally negates, exploits, and ultimately rejects any ethnic distinctions between the combatants.³⁶ This shared identity is once again stressed at the conclusion of the conflict. Parents, wives, and children of the slain fight over the anonymous body parts so that they may be able to provide a proper burial for their loved ones.

The scene begins with the recognition that the battle has ended. Attention is suddenly diverted away from the fierce fighting around Massilia to consider the larger dimensions of the battle:

inclinant iam fata ducum, nec iam amplius anceps
belli casus erat. Graiae pars maxima classis
mergitur, ast aliae mutato remige puppes
uictores uexere suos; naualia paucae
praecipiti tenuere fuga.

3.752-56

[The fates of the leaders now shifted; nor was the outcome of the war any longer in doubt. The greater part of the Greek fleet was lost, but others with changed oars now carried their conquerors; a few held the dockyards with their hasty flight.]

Turning our attention away from the battle, these lines indicate that the Caesarians are victorious and remind us of the role of the leaders in this conflict. The rout scene clearly states that one side is the victor and the other the loser, narrated through the hasty retreat

³⁶ This scene contrasts with the final scene from Sallust's *Bellum Catalinae* 61. In that work, the witnesses of the final decisive conflict between the senatorial forces and the conspirators are able to recognize many of the bodies that litter the field. Unlike that civil conflict, this conflict completely negates the identities of the combatants.

of one army and the determined pursuit by the other. Secondly, they remind us of the absence of the generals throughout this entire episode.³⁷

Lucan clearly moves from the melee scene to the rout scene by briefly summing up the results of the battle and focusing on the reactions of the townspeople.³⁸ The confusion of identities that permeated the actual battle seems to be at rest now. It is clear that there are now more Caesarian ships than Massilian. Before this rather traditional description of the victory of one army over the other, however, Lucan comments on how this battle affects the fortunes of the leaders. This seems to be a nod to the idea that military leaders would be involved in battle.³⁹ Through this subtle reminder of the traditional practice of leaders who marshaled, commanded, and fought in the front ranks fought, Lucan reminds his audience of both Caesar's and Pompey's conspicuous absence from the entire Massilian episode. In fact, the battle at Massilia was in vain. It matters little whether Massilia is conquered by Caesar or not, but was rather a frivolous battle fought simply because the town stood in Caesar's way. The whole enterprise seems vile and the deaths there empty. The Massilians fight valiantly, but their bravery is corrupted by civil war.

Here Lucan follows the Virgilian tradition and focuses on the reaction of those within the walls of the city.

Quis in urbe parentum

³⁷ Shackleton Bailey (1987)79: *inclinant...ducum* should be taken to mean that their destinies determine the outcome of this battle, rather than vice versa. Accordingly, both here and in his text edition he prints *inclinant rem*, introducing a new conjecture for the MSS. Caesar and Pompey do not determine the battle of Massilia any more than they are determined by it. In their general role of *duces* they merely represent both sides in this particular conflict.

³⁸ See Fenik (1968) 10; Willcock (1983) 88.

³⁹ On the role of the generals in Homeric warfare see: H. van Wees (1988: 1-24); (1994a:1-18); (1994b: 131-155).

fletus erat! quanti matrum per litora planctus!
coniunx saepe sui confusis uoltibus unda
credidit ora uiri Romanum amplexa cadauer
accensisque rogis miseri de corpore trunco
certauere patres. at Brutus in aequore uictor
primus Caesareis pelagi decus addidit armis.

3.756-762

[What tears of the parents were shed in the city! How many complaints of mothers were on the shore! Often a wife mourned a body with its face mangled by the waves as her husband's. But Brutus, the first victor on the sea, added glory to Caesar by the arms of the sea.]

The image of parents mourning their children is a traditional epic scene, especially on the occasion of war and the capture of cities.⁴⁰ In this scene of mourning, wailing, and regret, the Massilians once again offer a foil to Rome. In *BC* 3.97-100, when Caesar takes Rome, the Romans do not react with wailing and mourning, but with grim silence and dumb fear.⁴¹ This scene also mirrors the traditional motif in which the parents, wives, and children watch the battle from within the walls.⁴² In Homeric and Virgilian epic, the observers are able to watch the battle and pray and hope for the combatants. In Lucan's presentation of this combat, however, the conflict is over and the would-be observers are left to sort through the unidentifiable body parts for those of their sons and fathers. Lucan continues to suppress the identities of even those who died for the state. Not even these men, who are among the most honored by epic tradition, are allowed their glory.⁴³ All

⁴⁰ The *urbs capta* motif is clearly present here. For this traditional motif, used throughout antiquity see Paul (1982), who gives many examples on Tacitus.

⁴¹ Hunink (1992) 76.

⁴² Cf. e.g. *Iliad* Book 24 in which the Trojans watch the duel between Achilles and Hector, or *Aeneid* Book 12 in which the Italians watch the combat between Aeneas and Turnus.

⁴³ Gorman (2001:277): "Lucan is fashioning for himself an anomalous role as epic poet. Instead of immortalizing the names of heroes, his aim is the suppression of individual identities".

that is left is the unnamable corpse, which robs the glory even from the dead, because civil war denies all glory.

The next vignette is even more pathetic and reminiscent of *Iliad* 24. Here fathers fight with fathers over the unidentifiable bodies of sons. The reader is reminded of the aged Priam begging Achilles for the body of Hector. With as much pathos as Homer narrates that scene, there is still a societal obligation that Achilles honor by returning the body of the warrior to the father. In the *Bellum Ciuile*, however, such manners are negated. Here two fathers fight over the body of a mutilated corpse. Unlike Priam's begging of Achilles, we are left uncertain of the correct identification of the men. This ultimate anonymity is a further condemnation of the civil war. Not only does it rob fathers of sons, but it also robs those sons of their identity. In the Homeric model, the gods protect the identity of Hector's corpse, though Achilles tries to mutilate it with his daily dragging, but the warriors in the civil war lose their identity by their involvement in civil war.

The book concludes with a second mention of Brutus and his role in this scene. Lucan reminds us in lines 761-2 that Brutus, the conqueror, added the first glory to Caesar's arms, since the consequences of fighting for Caesar is that all the individual actions get added to his overall glory. Brutus himself receives little Homeric *kleos* for his actions in this bloody and hard fought battle. We are once again reminded of the symbiosis of anonymity and civil war. The concluding two lines of this book sufficiently sum up the inane and pointlessly brutal conflict that was Massilia: *at Brutus...addidit armis* (3.761-62). The juxtaposition of Brutus and Caesar here has been recognized by

many scholars.⁴⁴ Moreover this juxtaposition establishes a paradox between the blame that Lucan attributes to Brutus with the term *decus*. After the brutal deaths to which we have just been exposed, to call these a glory for Caesar can only taint our appreciation of Caesar.⁴⁵

The rout scene of the battle of Massilia is similar to the scenes from the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* in which the non-combatants mourn their dead kin. Such scenes in Homeric and Virgilian epic concentrate on heroes' observed actions in battle, while here Lucan narrates the reactions only after the combat has ended. By shifting the focus away from the action on the field to its gruesome aftermath, Lucan focuses on the pathos of civil war instead of the heroism of combat. As the loved ones try to identify the strewn body parts and provide a proper burial for their sons, husbands, and fathers, Lucan reminds us of the great tragedy of war. As the non-combatants begin to fight over the body parts, we are reminded of the particular disaster that is civil war: a conflict that destroys the very sinews that hold a civilization together. The anonymity that corrupts the proper functioning of the epic battle narratives now corrupts the proper burial of those men. The entire Massilian battle scene is corrupted by the presence of civil war.

⁴⁴ Rowland (1969) 208 notices that Lucan does not distinguish M. Brutus from D. Brutus, and observes a final irony, which places the new, Caesarean Rome in stark contrast with Massilia and with old Rome. This seems to miss the point. It is not the past of an abstract Caesarean Rome, but the future of Caesar, which elicits the paradox.

⁴⁵ Hunink (1992) 256 argues that with the conjunction, *at*, the poet has created a simple contrast between the suffering of the Massilians and the victory of Brutus. Hunink, instead, sees this *decus* as an allusion to L. Junius Brutus, the first slayer of tyrants. Cf. Metger (1957) 76, who supports the ironical reading of *decus*.

Conclusion

The large scale battle at Massilia systematically rejects the traditional function of the large scale battles in the epic tradition. Instead of creating a martial environment in which heroes may fulfill their heroic duties of protecting their community, civil war sets armies of the same community in armed conflict. Because of the fratricidal nature of civil war, as the warrior tries to fulfill his traditional epic function, he paradoxically negates it. Indeed this is the paradox of civil war: there can be no heroism, no triumph. Lucan articulates this impossibility of heroic action by categorically denying the proper function of the elements of epic narrative. The advance scene denied the primary requirement for epic battle, an ethnic distinction between the combatants. Since the Massilians and the Caesarians offer competing definitions of identity, there arises a confusion, the result of which is a denial of the proper distinction between the armies. The collective fight traditionally offers an environment in which warriors are able to win glory. The Massilian collective fight offers a scene of anonymous killing, unchecked *furor*, and self-destructive actions that lead, not to glory, but to guilt. The melee at Massilia, which traditionally narrates the exchange of *gloria* between warriors, only narrates the deaths of numerous warriors who are killed by anonymous men. This anonymity complicates the proper function of this type scene. If the person who has killed the warrior is not named, there is no transfer of *gloria*. Finally, the rout scene stresses the hopeless and dehumanizing nature of the civil war. The battle scene at Massilia, therefore, presents a conflict in which the winning of *gloria*, the traditional goal of the epic warrior, is unattainable.

Chapter 3: Pharsalus

Background of the Battle of Pharsalus

In his narrative of the battle of Pharsalus Lucan presents us with what appears to be the decisive battle of the civil war. Both Caesar and Pompey are present, both generals lead their large infantry and cavalry forces, and there is a clear victor and a clear loser. Some editors have even named Lucan's poem after this event, calling it the *Pharsalia*. Though this event may seem to be the climactic event in Lucan's epic, we must remember that it occurs in Book 7 and that there are at least two more books to go (that are extant). So, it seems unlikely that this event is as decisive as it may appear. At first read, however, Lucan's narrative of the battle of Pharsalus appears to be a more traditional battle narrative. For, unlike his narrative of Massilia, both generals, Caesar and Pompey, are present at Pharsalus and are involved in the combat, which involves both the infantry and cavalry. This type of conflict is more suited to the epic tradition than the naval conflict at Massilia. Even so, in the Pharsalan narrative Lucan continues to invalidate epic heroism as defined by the brave exploits of individuals on the battlefield. In his narrative of the events at Pharsalus, he articulates this rejection of traditional heroism through his refusal of the proper narrative functions of epic type scenes. He thus condemns the soldiers' actions on the fields.

Lucan condemns the actions in the battle by inverting the proper function of epic narrative type scenes. He rejects the proper use of the advance scene by presenting two

competing views of the coming battle, one the objective voice of Gaius Cornelius and one condemnatory from the narrator. By dividing his narrative between these two perspectives Lucan creates an unreliable narrative of the coming battle. The collective fight scene normally creates the impression that the battle is fought between anonymous armies of equal size and abilities. In his account of the battle at Pharsalus, however, Lucan reminds the reader that both of these armies are Roman and that this battle will not result in heroic actions, but rather the destruction of Rome. The melee scene presents the accumulation and transfer of *uirtus* between individuals. In his narration of the Pharsalan melee, though, Lucan rejects his role as narrator and refuses to describe the events of the battle. Finally, Lucan rejects the proper use of the *phobos*/rout scene, which is focalized through Pompey as he flees. Through Pompey's reflection of the battle, we are left with no other option than to view the battle, and the entire civil war, as the destruction of Rome.

Criticism of Lucan's description of the battle of Pharsalus has centered on the fact that it is riddled with authorial insertions, asides, and apostrophes that make it difficult for the reader to follow. This fractured narrative has led many critics to despair and condemn Lucan as non-poetic and label him as a "decadent" or "rhetorical" poet.¹ More recently, however, scholars have theorized that Lucan's narrative techniques stress the conflict that permeates civil war.² The development of a Caesarian and Pompeian

¹ Lucan's narrative has been the focus of many studies of his poem. Initially, Lucan's rhetoric led scholars to dismiss his poem as it was "decadent" or "rhetorical", W.E. Heitland (1887:lxiii) first tried to figure out to what extent the BC was not just a rhetorical failure from a decadent, but actually an epic poem worth reading; Fraenkel (1924) argued that Lucan's style was not just due to the decadence of the age, but rather a tool for him to convey his voice; Snell (1939:84) concludes that Lucan ultimately fails because of his "irreverence, ghouliness, and exaggeration"; Marti (1945:376) also agrees that Lucan failed because his topic was beyond his skills as a poet.

interpretation of the events has been noted by Masters, Bartsch, and others. These scholars have argued that at the battle of Pharsalus Lucan condemns one leader and exonerates the other. Some scholars understand these allegiances to be static, others view them as shifting throughout the poem, but I argue that Lucan does not wish to exonerate anyone. He presents Pharsalus as a complete malfunction of the heroic code. Historically speaking, Pharsalus offers no triumph, and poetically, it offers no *gloria*. This criticism is articulated through the very medium in which it is related—epic narrative. Lucan utilizes the narrative features of the epic large scale battle scenes to condemn the actions of the civil war. I begin my study of the battle of Pharsalus as a failed epic battle with the advance scene.

Advance Scene BC 7.195-469: Combating Narratives

As discussed in the first chapter, the advance scene in an epic narrative offers the readers a perspective through which to view the upcoming battle. Homer presents the narratives through an “objective” narrator but colors his narrative by his choice of similes. Virgil, on the other hand, offers his readers alternate perspectives of the advance scenes by narrating the scene through the reactions of the members of the opposing army. Through these different narrators the epic poets attempt to alter the way in which their battles are told and interpreted. Lucan utilizes both these models of narration in this

² Ahl (1976) claims that many of Lucan’s irregularities were part of his epic purpose; that Lucan wanted to glorify the losing side. More specifically on Lucan’s narrator, see Ralph Johnson (1987) and John Henderson (1987) each argued, in their different ways) that Lucan’s narrative casts the entire epic model as an absurd idea. Masters (1992), Hardie (1993), and Martindale (1993) all similarly argue that Lucan fractures his narrative into discursive segments that seem to reenact the civil war on a meta-poetic level. Leigh (1997) notices the tension between disengagement and engagement in the competing narratives. Bartsch (1998) argues that Lucan offers two competing voices: a pro-Caesarian voice and a pro-Pompeian one.

advance scene, with the objective voice of Cornelius mirroring the Homeric narrative, and the narrator's passionate narrative mirroring the Virgilian. In addition, however, Lucan then fractures his own narrative voice, introducing the perspective of the poet who looks back at the events in the battle and condemns them. These narrators offer two different perspectives of the Pharsalan battle through which Lucan fractures the narrative of the event as well as the audience's reception of the battle.³ This complicated narrative pattern allows Lucan to offer multiple interpretations of the advance. Scholars have argued that Gaius Cornelius represents an "epic" voice and through this connection they have read Cornelius as supportive of Caesar and Lucan's narrator as representative of a more "Pompeian" perspective.⁴ Moreover, these scholars claim that Lucan's narrative either shifts allegiance between the two leaders or, at the very least, offers these two readings as two equally valid interpretations of the battle.⁵

³ Leigh (1997) 6-17: discusses the differing narrators of this episode. He however, approaches this difference as one of engagement and disengagement. I agree with this approach. He seems to neglect, however, the full effect of the dueling narrators. He understands them in a historiographical context and less of an epic context. The bibliography on Lucan's fractured narrative is immense. Lucan sometimes presents his narrative in a pro-Caesarian, or Neronian viewpoint see Masters (1992) Cambridge; Ormand (1994) 38-55; Grimal (1960) 297ff contains a useful summary of early scholarship on the allegiance of Lucan's narrator; Mayer (1978) 85-88. Or other scholars have argued that Lucan presents his epic through his stoic views see B. Marti (1945) 352-76; Bartsch (1997) views Cato as the pivot for the entire poem. Scholars have now understood that Lucan's narrative is profoundly affected by his subject matter see Feeney (1991) 276-83 and Henderson (1987) 124. For more on narratology in general see De Jong (1987) chap. 2. DeJong follows Bal (1985).

⁴ Cornelius, as is attested in historians, is talented at reading signs and predicting the future and reading the signs to interpret events occurring in the distance. Gaius' talents are attested to elsewhere in Latin literature: his talents are praised by Livy (111), Plutarch (*Caesar* 47), and Aulus Gellius (NA 15.181-3) and Dio Cassius (41.61.4-5) this impression is also mentioned in *Commenta Bernensia* at Lucan 7.192: "*Euganeum nomen est collis Illiriae. [et] Gaium Cornelium augureum ante urbem ex more sedentem augurari dicunt, qui a et haec praedixit quae poeta refert. Nam*** et Caesarem uictorem ea die nuntiauit,*" which confirms that Gaius Cornelius had talent as an augur This allows him to narrate these events in an objective manner typical of a traditional epic narrator.

⁵ Quint (1993:151), Lucan expresses again and again his "political hope-against-hope" for "historical open-endedness"; likewise, Masters (1992: 211-212) Lucan must keep writing so as not to admit defeat. See also Le Bonniec (1970: 186); Leigh (1997:16) who comments on the poetic voices that compete between an engaged and disengaged poet. See also Bartsch (1993:145) who argues that the entire epic is a rejection of the historical events.

Lucan begins the narrative of the battle of Pharsalus with the vision of the seer Gaius Cornelius who proclaims:

“uenit summa dies, geritur res maxima,” dixit
“inpia concurrunt Pompei et Caesaris arma,”

7. 195-96

[“The final day comes, great things are done” he said “the impious arms of Pompey and Caesar meet”.]

Lucan presents Gaius as part of a tradition of epic seers including Homer’s Calchus and Virgil’s Panthus.⁶ The first three words of Cornelius’ speech *uenit summa dies* recall Panthus’ speech in *Aeneid* Book 2, where he tells Aeneas that the wooden horse concealed the Greeks and that now the end has come for Troy. Both Cornelius and Panthus narrate what they assume to be the final event in their story: the destruction of Troy and the destruction of Pompey’s forces, respectively. Both narrators are equally incorrect, however. As the rest of the *Aeneid* makes quite clear, Panthus wrongly assumes that the destruction of Troy is the destruction of the Trojans. Likewise, though Cornelius maintains that this battle represents the destruction of Rome, the audience understands that Rome is not destroyed here but endures, changed from Republic to Empire.

Lucan is not content to allow Cornelius’ objective narrative to stand. Instead Lucan inserts his own narrative voice as a contrast to Cornelius’. The poet’s narrative of the advance of the two armies responds to Cornelius’ in three ways: first, he collapses the

⁶ See *Aeneid* 2.324-7. See also Leigh (1997) 16. It might be reasonable to object that Lucan 7.196 has different sense in the mouth of Cornelius than in Panthus’: that it implies only the coming of the crisis, not one specific outcome. This is true for any surface reading of the text but not for one which recognizes any intertextual dimension. For what Virgil’s Panthus and Livy’s Cornelius have in common is certainty. The former acknowledges his side’s defeat, and the latter asserts Caesar’s victory. The determination of Lucan to have the last word over Virgil is emphasized in Conte (1988) 32-9, esp. p. 34, which demonstrates Lucan’s overturning of Virgil’s optimistic tone. Conte (1988:32-9), however, argues that Lucan overturns the optimistic tone of Virgil *Aeneid* 7.145 in *BC* 7.129-33

spatial and temporal distance created by Cornelius; secondly, his narrative is passionate and condemnatory; and in the end, he rejects the finality of the event.⁷ He not only questions the morality of the men involved on the field, but he also condemns the outcome of this civil war, the principate, and demonstrates the destructive effects of this battle.

First Lucan moves himself closer to the action both in space and time. He presents his narrative as if he were on the field with the men and he calls them the happiest of all men. This may later be understood as ironic, but here he seems to genuinely call these men who fight for the Republic the most blessed of men.⁸

O summos hominum, quorum fortuna per orbem
signa dedit, quorum fati caelum omne uacavit!
Haec et apud seras gentes populosque nepotum,
sive sua tantum uenient in saecula fama,
sive aliquid magnis nostri quoque cura laboris
nominibus prodesse potest, cum bella leguntur,
spesque metusque simul periturae uota mouebunt,
attonitique omnes ueluti uenientia fata,
non transmissa, legent et adhuc tibi, Magne, faebunt.

7.205-213

[Oh luckiest of men, whose fortunes were advertised throughout the whole earth and for whose destiny all of heaven made room! These acts will survive among later generations and posterity whether only by their own fame, or whether my care is able to add anything to the great labors and names, when the civil wars are read they will elicit at the same time hope, fear, and prayers about to perish, and all will be astonished just as if they read future events, not past, and they will still favor you, Magnus.]

⁷ See Nicolai (1992) 148-149 and Narducci (1985) 1538-64 on Lucan's use of allusion.

⁸ Leigh (1997) 16, connects Gaius Cornelius' narrative with the epic traditions vatic voice, as most evident in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Leigh also sees Lucan's refutation of Cornelius' narrative as a refusal of the vatic and etiological narrative so common in the *Aeneid*. For ancient parallels for Lucan's narrative see Xenophon *Art.* 8.1; Cicero *Part. Or.* 6.20 and Longinus *Subl.* 15.2; see also Walker (1993) 359-60.

The first three lines establish Lucan's perspective as one of the participants on the field of battle. By directly addressing the warriors in line 205, "*O summos hominum*," Lucan appears as either a spectator or as one of the fellow fighters. Then at line 207 Lucan again directly addresses the soldiers with the word *haec*, indicating a nearness that is absent in Cornelius' speech.⁹ To accentuate his presence at the battle, Lucan narrates the event in the narrative present. Lucan pronounces the lasting effects of this battle, promising the men that the actions performed on this day will earn fame in following generations (*uenient in saecula fama* 7.208).

Not only does Lucan narrate the events in the present, but he uses the future tense in lines 7.211-213 to stress the lasting effects of this battle. In these lines he explains that he hopes his poem will arouse (*mouebunt*) hope, fear, and prayers and that everyone who will read (*legent*) his lines will favor (*fauebunt*) Pompey. By using the future tense to describe the readers of his poem, Lucan imagines himself as present on the Pharsalan field on the day of battle. Through this use of *enargeia* Lucan places himself at the event.¹⁰ Unlike Cornelius, who visualizes the events from far away, this proximity elicits a more dramatic response from his audience, which he calls *spes*, *metus*, and *vota peritura*. He then calls his audience *attoniti*, which again stresses the emotional response of his audience, one in which the outcome has not yet been decided.

In the final vignette of the advance scene Lucan concentrates not only on the thoughts and feeling of the soldiers who are about to engage in the battle, but also on the

⁹ For Lucan as a *uates* see Leigh (1997) and Wiseman (1992) 284 and n. 105 in which he provides a number of instances in Ovid where *augur* actually functions as a synonym for *uates* but here the title *augur* appears to derive more specifically from the actual sacral role which Cornelius performs.

¹⁰ *Enargeia* is the tendency in ancient texts (history, rhetoric, and poetry) to create the impression that the narrator is on present at the events as they occur. For discussion of the development and employment of *enargeia* see Leigh (1997) 10-15 and Zanker (1981).

consequences on this battle, by further fracturing his narrative voice. Here, Lucan assumes the role of a poet writing from the perspective of a Neronian poet who is able to look back at the events of Pharsalus and recognize their disastrous repercussions. Here Lucan focuses on the shared weaponry and identities of these two armies, thus clarifying that this conflict is completely civil and a perversion of epic warfare. Finally, through his use of apostrophe, Lucan condemns outright the actions at Pharsalus. First he addresses the men involved in the battle:

Hae facient dextrae, quidquid nona explicat aetas,
ut uacet a ferro. Gentes Mars iste futura
obruet et populos aevi uenientis in orbem
erepto natale feret. tunc omne Latinum
fabula nomen erit; Gabios Veiosque Coramque
puluere uix tectae poterunt monstrare ruinae
Albanosque lares Laurentinosque penates,
rus uacuum, quod non habitet nisi nocte coacta
inuitus questusque Numam iussisse senator.

7.387-396

[These right hands will bring it to pass that, whatever the ninth century unfolds, it shall be free from warfare. This battle will destroy nations yet unborn; it will deprive of their birth time and sweep away the men of the generation coming into the world. Then all the Latin race will be a legend; dust-covered ruins will scarce be able to indicate the site of Gabii and Veii and Cora, the houses of Alba and the dwellings of Laurentum—a depopulated country, where no man dwells except the senators who are forced to spend one night there by Numa's law which they resent.]

This passage makes it clear that Lucan denies that the events at Pharsalus is the will of the gods. He then goes on to condemn those who are about to engage in this battle. In this passage he explains why he had called his readers' prayers about to perish, *peritura* (7.211). Lucan blames the men at Pharsalus for condemning Rome to slavery to an emperor and of robbing Rome of its power, and identity. In essence, the men who fought at Pharsalus have limited Rome's freedom and power.

Lucan's first complaint against the men who fight at Pharsalus is that they have caused Rome's loss of freedom and its slavery under the Caesars. He states: *quidquid nona explicat aetas, /ut uacet a ferro* (7.388-89). Though this seems at first to be a statement of the relative peace in Rome's future, Lucan makes clear that there is peace because of the lack of men left to fight (7.389-390). Rome will have peace after Pharsalus, but it is a peace devoid of life and full of slavery to the Caesars. Lucan then claims that, due to the actions of these men, Rome will lose its importance and become an empty shade of what it once was: *tunc omne Latinum/fabula nomen erit* (7.391-92). This battle will destroy defining qualities of Rome. For, this battle will also destroy the holiest relics of Roman religion, the Lares: *Albanosque lares Laurentinosque penates, rus uacuum* (7.393-94). Finally, Lucan says that after this battle Rome will become a liability: *quod non habitet nisi nocte coacta/inuitus questusque Numam iussisse senator* (7.395-96). This battle destroys Rome at its very heart. Here Rome loses its freedom, religion, and identity as *caput mundi*.

Lucan's narrative of the advance scene shows the lack of honor in the actions of civil war as well as the inability of epic narrative to celebrate it. Lucan's overt condemnation of the actors and actions at Pharsalus does not allow the reader to consider them as heroic. The self-destruction of Rome that occurs at this battle can only be understood as negative. Moreover, Lucan's narrative condemns the *vatic* role of the epic narrator through his presentation of Cornelius' narrative. Cornelius only tells the readers that Pompey and Caesar have come into conflict, but recounts little else. In contrast Lucan, as narrator, not only gives a clear and compelling description of the actions at Pharsalus, but an accounting of the consequences of those actions as well. The proximity

that Lucan creates through his narrative allows him to respond to the feelings and emotions of the combatants.

Collective Fight *BC 7.491-551*: We are all Romans

Through the contradictory narratives of Gaius Cornelius and the narrator Lucan questions the ability of epic poetry to adequately describe the civil war. The collective fight exposes the crisis of identity and heroism caused by civil war. In order to exploit these problems, Lucan stresses the internecine nature of this conflict. Traditional collective battle scenes create the proper agonistic struggle between two equally balanced armies of differing ethnicities. The Pharsalan battle, however, is a lopsided contest between members of the same community.

Lucan includes many traditional aspects of the collective fight scene and focuses on the strategic motions of the armies, their weapons, their shouts, their blood, and the dust they create. All of these details are also found in the collective fight scenes of Homeric and Virgilian epic. These poets use the elements of the collective fight scene to create the appropriate background that allows for an appropriate agonistic struggle in which men may win glory and perform their proper heroic duty by offering protection against an invading force. The Pharsalan collective fight scene does not provide the proper context for the fulfillment of this obligation. While Lucan's narrative of the armies' advance condemns the battle because it is fought between citizens, his narrative of the collective fight accentuates the civil nature of this conflict.

Lucan begins his description of the collective fight at Pharsalus with his description of Caesar's and Pompey's armies who are so tightly packed that they are

barely able to use their weapons. Lucan describes the moment when Caesar's strength crashes into Pompey's:

Pompei densis acies stipata catervis
iunxerat in seriem nexis umbonibus arma,
uixque habitura locum dextras ac tela mouendi
constiterat gladiosque suos compressa timebat.

7.492-495

[Pompey's soldiers, closely packed in ordered ranks, had joined their shields, boss against boss, to form an unbroken line; they scarce had room to move, as they stood to ply their hands and weapons, and their close order made their swords a danger to themselves.]

Lucan also stresses the shared identity of the two armies by a repetition of words.¹¹ Lucan repeats the words *dextras* (7.491 and 494), *uiscere* (7.491 and 500), and *acies* (7.492 and 502) in his description of this phase of the Pharsalan narrative. The repetitive use of these terms suggests the doubling and paradox that occurs when armies from the same community of obligation slaughter each other. The words repeated in these lines also remind the readers of Lucan's proem: *in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra, /cognatasque acies* (1.3-4). At line 491 the terms *dextras* and *uiscera* serve to mark the guilt of the Romans, as the opposite of the innocence of the barbarians: *odiis solus ciuilibus ensis/sufficit, et dextras Romana in uiscera ducit* (7.491). Not only do these terms remind the reader of the fact that the crime of civil war was waged by Rome against herself, but they also exemplify the paralysis of Pompey's men. Later Lucan tells us that the Pompeians were too closely crowded to properly wield their weapons: *vixque habitura locum dextras ac tela mouendi* (7.494). Pompey's forces are not able to use their weapons against Caesar and thus, for the moment, they are free from guilt. One could say

¹¹ This scene is reminiscent of what Frederick Ahl calls the "Roman Microcosm" (1976:21-25). See also, C. Wirszubski (1950).

that both armies are guilty of civil war: Pompey's by refusing to engage in battle and Caesar's for being too indulgent.

Lucan uses anaphora to point out the guilt of civil war. The first instance of *uiscera* (491) again serves to move the focus and guilt from the barbarians to the Romans. The second use at line 500, places this blame squarely on the Caesarians. While the Pompeians are crowded together so tightly that they are scarcely able to move, Caesar's nimble force falls on them and wreaks havoc on them. Lucan tells us that every sword thrust causes slaughter: *hac quoque peruentum est ad uiscera, totque per arma/ extremum est, quod quisque ferit* (7.500). These terms stress the guilt that arises from the civil war. In these lines Lucan reminds the reader that no one is innocent in civil war.

Having established that everyone involved is guilty of slaughter in civil war, Lucan then uses the term *acies* to explain the nature of the slaughter. Lucan repeats the term *acies* in two lines, 7.492 and 7.502. Lucan comments on the crowded nature of the conflict: *Pompei densis acies stipata catervis* (7.492). Here, Pompey's troops join together to create a solid line. Ten lines later Lucan describes the conflict between the two armies in a succinct manner: *una acies patitur, gerit altera* (7.502). Both armies are referenced by the same word, *acies*. Lucan here shows the similarity between the two armies by referring to them with the same word. The fact that this noun is implied in the second clause further underscores the similarities of these armies.

In the next sequence Lucan once again stresses the claustrophobic nature of civil war by commenting on the similarity of the weapons used by both armies, the familial relations between combatants, and the wickedness of the actions carried out.

Ventum erat ad robur Magni mediasque cateruas
quod totos errore uago perfuderat agros,

constitit hic bellum fortunaque Caesaris haesit.
non illic regum auxiliis collecta iuuentus
bella gerit, ferrumque manus mouere rogatae:
ille locus fratres habuit, locus ille parentes
hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Caesar.

7.545-51

[It came to the middle of Pompey's army, where his main strength lay. The fight that had spread throughout the field was concentrated here and here Caesar's fortune was checked. The men who fought here and plied their weapons were not brought from many quarters or borrowed by aid of kings: this place held brothers, this place held parents, here was the furor, here the madness, and here are your crimes, Caesar.]

Pompey's men, in their dense formation, finally offer a check to Caesar's constant advance. The battle now is fought amongst fellow Romans, even family members. To underscore the familiarity of these combatants Lucan tells us that these fighters were brothers and parents (*ille locus fratres habuit, locus ille parentes* 7.450). This is not the proper setting for a warrior to engage in heroic battle. According to Sarpedon (*Il.* 12.310-28), the role of the hero is to protect his community from invaders. Here the warriors are destroying that community, and this kind of battle will yield no glory. It is at this point that the war becomes truly civil and Lucan finds its narration most difficult. Matthew Leigh has correctly noted that this scene provides another example of Lucan's refusal to narrate.¹²

As the battle that had ranged across the field becomes focused on Pompey's forces, Caesar's fortune is finally checked by Pompey's forces. *Ventum erat* marks a

¹² Leigh (1997) 102, see also Newman (1967) 99-206 and (1986) 204-6; O'Higgins (1988); Masters (1992) 138-9 and 205-6 and his discussion of Phemoneo and Erichtho. He points out Lucan's simultaneous reluctance and urge to narrate. Thus O'Higgins (1988) 215, compares Lucan at 7.552-5 to Apollo and Phemoneo in Book 5, observing that "a similar abhorrence of the 'nefas' of civil war is detectable in Lucan. If Apollo hesitates to create a world so alien to the gods, Lucan-to an extent- shrinks from recreating it. Although the impulse to write is stronger, there is evident a counter-impulse to maintain a decent silence". Then O'Higgins (216) talks of himself proceeding "in spite of his scruples".

clear narrative shift from one sphere of battle to the next. The collective fight that had indeed encompassed the whole plain of Pharsalus as well as nations from all over the Roman world becomes condensed into a melee that will engage only Roman soldiers. Not only does the collective fight become a melee, but a “legal” war including external enemies becomes “illegal,” a civil war fought entirely between Romans. Lucan’s narrative of the Pharsalan melee is inappropriately made up of fraternal and related combatants. To stress the proximity of these combatants Lucan accentuates the mass of soldiers in the battle and the claustrophobic conditions of civil war. Lucan indicates this claustrophobia through his use of the terms *robur* and *cateruas*. In its military context, *robur* implies a crowded force and *cateruas*, a plurality of soldiers, in some connotations implies a crowded mass on its own.¹³ Lucan further accentuates the claustrophobic feeling of the civil war and its fraternal nature (*cognatas acies*) by explaining that the war became concentrated at Pompey’s center. What had been scattered at random, *perfuderet*, became stuck fast, *constitit* and *haesit*, two words that stress the congealing effect that civil war has on the battle in general.

Lucan next clarifies the breakdown of proper martial engagement, explaining that the foreign combatants have fled and all that remains are Romans engaged in civil conflict. Lines 7.548-551 tell us that Pompey’s foreign allies fail at this crucial moment. This failure condemns the civil war as *nefas*. This point of the battle is characterized by fathers fighting fathers and family members fighting family members, and is the realization of the *cognatas acies* foreshadowed at 1.4. This is civil war. Lucan then condemns the civil war as Caesar’s *furor*, *rabies*, and his *crimina*. By pairing these terms

¹³ Cicero *Cael.* 77; Hor. *Carm.* 3.20.5; Tib. 1.6.81; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.77; Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.35; Lucr. 6.1092; Verg. *A.* 11.456; Stat. *Ach.* 1.557; Apul. *Met.* 4.20; Plin. *Nat.* 18.25

throughout his narrative of the collective fight of the Pharsalus narrative Lucan shows the inability of civil war battles to produce heroism. While this battle conforms more easily to the epic tradition, Lucan challenges the heroism of those fighting in this battle. He makes it quite explicit that heroism and civil war are incompatible. Lucan's criticism of the epic tradition becomes even more explicit in the next narrative phase, the melee.

Melee BC 7.558-737: Shame of Narrative

While the narrative of the collective fight phase focuses on the collective movements of the armies, the melee scene describes the battle as a series of combats between individual soldiers. As we have seen, in Homeric and Virgilian epic the melee scene describes the exchange of *gloria* from one army to the next through a series of one-on-one conflicts. Each duel transfers *gloria* from the victim to the victor. This narrative feature is characterized by descriptions of slaughter and lists of victims and victors. It is through these individual combats that epic poets narrate not only the general shift of momentum in any given battle but the transfer of *gloria* from one army to another as well. In his narration of the Pharsalan melee, Lucan rejects this function of the narrative in two ways. Lucan refuses to narrate, then, when he is pressed by his poetic obligations to narrate the battle, he condemns the actions. Lucan essentially refuses to participate in the narrative. As the battle moves from the rather anonymous phase of the collective fight to the more intimate contest of the melee, Lucan's narrative becomes more emotionally charged and disjointed. By condemning the actions as crimes and by refusing to narrate the actions altogether, Lucan condemns them to anonymity. This anonymity is the

opposite of the heroic ethos. Lucan condemns the actions at Pharsalus to the ultimate punishment possible by a poet—omission.

Lucan begins the Pharsalan melee scene with his refusal to narrate. This refusal continues the poet's rejection of his role of the *uates* that began in the advance scene:

Hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinqui,
Nullaque tantorum discat me uate malorum,
Quam multum bellis liceat ciuilibus, aetas.
A potius pereant lacrimae pereantque querellae:
Quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, tacebo.

7.552-556

[Flee this part of the battle mind, and leave it to the darkness. Let no age learn of such evil from me as a prophet, or how much is permitted in civil war. Rather let the tears and the complaints perish: whatever you have done in this battle, Rome, I will be quiet.]

Epic narratives often include a brief pause such as the one above, in which the narrator shifts from the collective fight to the melee. This pause allows the poet to consider and stress the impact of the coming battle. Lucan, however, uses this pause to reiterate his refusal to narrate the melee scene. The poet's refusal to participate in the exchange of *gloria*, which is the purpose of the melee scene, demonstrates his complete rejection of the *gloria* in civil war. At this point in the narrative the full horror of civil war is realized and Lucan, who is unable to reconcile his values with his epic, rejects his duty as a vatic epic poet.¹⁴ As a *uates* the poet implicitly endorses the historical outcome, but Lucan is unable to endorse the outcome of the civil war. His reluctance to embrace his role as *uates* stems from his feeling that there is no heroism in civil war. As stated elsewhere, civil war is counterintuitive to heroism. Self-destruction is not heroic.

¹⁴ Leigh (1997) 102. Cf. Newman (1967) 99-206; (1986) 204-6 and 219. And O'Higgins (1988) cf. Masters (1992) 138-139 and 205-206.

Above we saw that Lucan rejects his role as narrator; nevertheless, Lucan is compelled to continue the narrative. In the narrative that continues, however, he condemns those actions he narrates. In the following section Lucan describes Caesar's actions in the battle of Pharsalus. Lucan begins by presenting Caesar's action as those of a heroic general. As his actions are performed in the context of civil war, the actions are condemned for destroying Rome. According to Lucan, Caesar embodies the very *furor* that characterizes civil war. Lucan makes clear that *gloria* in civil war is blame:

Hic Caesar, rabies populis stimulusque furorum,
ne qua parte sui pereat scelus, agmina circum
it uagus atque ignes animis flagrantibus addit.
inspicit et gladios, qui toti sanguine manent,
qui niteant primo tantum mucrone cruenti,
quae presso tremat ensem manus, quis languida tela,
quis contenta ferat, quis praestet bella iubenti,
quem pugnare iuuet, quis uoltum cieue perempto
mutet; obit latis proiecta cadauera campis;
uolnera multorum totum fusura cruorem
opposita premit ipse manu. Quacumque uagatur,
sanguineum ueluti quatiens Bellona flagellum,
Bistonas aut Mauors agitans, si uerbere saeuo
Palladia stimulet turbatos aegide currus,
nox ingens scelerum est; caedes oriuntur, et instar
immensae uocis gemitus, et pondere lapsi
pectoris arma sonant confractique ensibus enses.
Ipse manu subicit gladios ac tela ministrant
aduersosque iubet ferro confundere uoltus.
promouet ipse acies, inpellit terga suorum,
uerbere conuersae cessantes excitat hastae,
in plebem uetat ire manus monstratque senatum;
scit, cruor imperii qui sit, quae uiscera rerum,
unde petat Romam, libertas ultima mundi
quo steterit ferienda loco.

7. 558-581

[Here Caesar, maddening his troops and stirring up their frenzy, moved to and fro round the ranks and added fuel to the fire of their passion, in order that wickedness might not anywhere be wrought in vain: his eye marks whether their blades stream with blood from point to hilt, or glitter still with only the points

reddened; whose hand trembles as it grasps the sword; whose arm is slack and whose braced; who merely obeys the order to fight, and who delights in it; and who changes their expression when he has killed a fellow citizen. He visits the corpses that sprawl on the wide plain; with his own hand he staunches the wound that would otherwise pour out all the blood of the men. Where he moves, like Bellona shaking her bloody whip, or like Mars driving his Bistones, when he whips with his savage whip his horses frightened by the aegis of Pallas, a great darkness of crime and slaughter arises, and a groaning like one great cry, and a rattle of the breastplate when a man falls heavily, and a snapping of blade against blade. His hand supplies fresh swords and provides missiles; his voice bids them hack with the steel the faces of the foe. In person he advances the fighting line and urges on his rearguard; he rouses the laggards with blows from the butt-end of his spear. Bidding them spare those of low degree, he points out the senators. For he knows where the blood of the empire runs, the pulse of the machine; he knows in what quarter Rome must be struck, and the vulnerable points of liberty now making her last stand on the earth.]

Caesar appears in these lines as the primary, if not sole, instigator of the civil war. It is on him that all the responsibility of the slaughter lies. In traditional epic, this would be a great honor to Caesar, whose actions are reminiscent of a Homeric hero. This passage, however, expresses Lucan's unqualified condemnation of Caesar, who performs his duties as a battlefield general ought, pushing his men into battle, and noticing who is not fully engaged in the battle and whose face shows regret at the slaughter of a family member.

Lucan presents Caesar as a good commanding general whose actions would gain him *gloria* in traditional narrative, but in civil war gain him blame. Similar to Caesar's own battle narratives in *de Bello Gallico* and *de Bello Civili*, Caesar appears to be doing everything at once. Even before he describes Caesar's actions, Lucan provides the proper context for his actions. Caesar's actions are not driven by his desire for *gloria*, but driven by *furor* and madness (*rabies*). The anaphoric uses of *rabies*, *furor*, and *scelus* underscore Caesar's association with these qualities so endemic to civil war. Caesar adds fuel to the

already burning minds (*ignes animis flagrantibus addit* 7.559). Lucan condemns Caesar's intensity for battle not only because it is responsible for his defeat of the sluggish Pompey but because it is undertaken in the context of the civil war. This melee scene establishes Caesar as the ultimate purveyor of civil war and the embodiment of *furor* itself.

Should the reader become too comfortable with Caesar's actions, Lucan includes a mythological simile that places these actions in a slightly different perspective, comparing Caesar's actions to those of the war goddess Bellona and Mars (7.567-575). Lucan next reminds his readers that the target of these actions are fellow Romans, which negates the heroism implicit in the actions. This condemnation of Caesar becomes clearer when Lucan reminds the readers of the ruthlessness that Caesar shows against the Romans. Caesar orders his men not to pursue the common soldiers, but to strike instead the senatorial army. He knows that here is the blood of Roman freedom: *in plebem...ferienda loco* (7.578-81). Lucan here pulls the curtain back to reveal the true nature of Caesar's leadership. Although it is admirable and heroic, it is, nevertheless, unacceptable because it only serves to destroy Roman freedom. These lines negate the earlier heroism displayed by Caesar.

The next scene repeats Lucan's claim of denial. Once again Lucan rejects the epic poet's vatic role:¹⁵

inpendisse pudet lacrimas in funere mundi
mortibus innumeris, ac singularis fata sequentem
quaerere, letiferum per cuius uiscera uolnus
exierit, quis fusa solo uitalia calcet,
ore quis aduerso demissum faucibus ensem
expulerit moriens anima, quis corruat ictus,

¹⁵ Masters (1992) claims this as an example of the poet's so-called "fractured voice". More than this, though, it shows Lucan's struggle to simultaneously conform to and reject a tradition he wishes to criticize.

quis steterit, dum membra cadunt, qui pectore tela
transmittant, aut quos campis adfixerit hasta,
quis cruor emissis perruperit aera uentis
inque hostis cadat arma sui, quis pectora fratris
caedat et, ut notum possit spoliare cadauer,
abscisum longe mittat caput, ora parentis
quis laceret nimiaque probet spectantibus ira,
quem iugulat, non esse patrem. Mors nulla querella
digna sua est, nullosque hominum lugere uacamus.

7.617-631

[It is shame for me to spend tears on a few of the innumerable deaths where a whole world died, and to follow the individual fates asking, through whose organs the death dealing sword passed, who trod upon his own entrails which had been poured out upon the ground, who faced the foe and dying drove out with his last gasp the blade buried in his throat. Some fell to the earth when stricken; others stood upright while their arms were lopped off; the weapons passed right through the breasts of some, while other were pinned to the ground by the spear; the blood of some, pouring from the veins, spouted through the air and fell on the armor of their foes; one man pierced his brother's breast, and then cut off the head and hurled it into the distance, that he might be able to rob the kindred corpse, while another mangled his father's face and tried by excess of fury to convince the eye-witnesses that his victim was not his father. But no death deserves a lament to itself, and we have no leisure to mourn any individual.]

In these lines Lucan is reluctant to complete the role of the epic poet, which is to describe the fates of individuals. Lucan rejects the very essence of this tradition. The epic poet, by his choice of subject matter and genre, celebrates the heroic actions of past warriors and leaders. Those who died were also honored because of the purposes that their deaths served, namely either the preservation or the protection of the state. This primary role of the traditional warrior is complicated by civil war, which pits state against state. In Virgilian epic, all actions lead to the inevitable fulfillment of history, and the actions of the epic are validated as divinely sanctioned by the progress of history. Virgilian characters do suffer, but their sufferings are redeemed by the promise of Augustan Rome

and the will of Jupiter. Lucan does not promise such redemption to the suffering in his epic. He is unable, or unwilling, to condone Caesar's victory, yet his subject matter compels him. In the following lines, he explains his struggle as a poet of the civil war. He simultaneously fulfills his role as an epic poet while maintaining his distance from the events he narrates by posing a series of questions to the audience which require the audience to reconstruct the events for itself. In this way Lucan places the burden of narrative on the reader and removes the stain of narrating the civil war from himself, placing it onto his audience.

Lucan explains that he will not narrate these events because of his sense of shame. He claims that this refusal is an effort to protect his audience from the atrocities of civil war, though he continues to ask them a series of rhetorical questions that force the readers to provide their own narrative of this battle.¹⁶ These questions in no way lessen the effect of the narrative, but rather intensify it by forcing the audience to take an active role in the narrative. His narrative spares the reader none of the blood and gore, but rather he omits the names thereby making this battle a defective exchange of *gloria*.

An examination of the questions which Lucan asks the audience reveals their narrative function. These questions request the readers to construct a narrative of the events for themselves. He first asks his readers to tell whose body was pierced by the sword (*letiferum per cuius uiscera uolnus/exierit*, 7.619-20), who walked through the gore they had spilled (*quis fusa solo uitalia calcet*, 7.620), and finally who faced the foe bravely and died from a stab wound in the throat *ore quis aduerso demissum faucibus*

¹⁶ Leigh (1997) 220 argues that these rhetorical questions force the reader to use "the eyes of Caesar to make sense of his actions" and therefore engage in Lucan's continuation of civil war. A clear discussion of these questions marks Lucan's disgust with civil war. The reader is encouraged to imagine civil war in his own mind to expose its sheer repulsive nature.

ensem (7. 621). As these questions progress, however, the wounds and deaths become more gruesome and more fanciful. Lucan asks who stood while their arms are lopped off and whose chest was pierced, and whose blood fell to the ground, and whose blood fell on the armor of the enemy (*quis steterit...cadat arma sui*, 7.623-626). Though these wounds are becoming more bizarre and specific to Lucan's narrative, such as the corpse standing while his limbs are lopped off around him, or the blood spurting like a fountain into the sky, they are not unusual in Homeric or Virgilian battle scenes. Lucan only alters these epic narratives by omitting the names and therefore places the onus of narrating onto the reader. This authorial shift allows the poet to further distance himself from the horror of civil war and to increase that horror in the reader.

Furthermore, Lucan tells us that Pharsalus was different from all other battles in Roman history. In other battles men died; however, at Pharsalus a nation perished:

non istas habuit pugnae Pharsalia partes,
quas aliae clades: illic per fata uirorum,
per populos hic Roma perit; quod militis illic,
mors hic gentis erat

7. 631-635

[Pharsalia played a different part in battle from all other defeats: in them Rome suffered by the death of men, but here she was destroyed by the nations; a people died here.]

The stakes at Pharsalus are too great to be commemorated in an epic. Lucan feels that epic poetry may be sufficient to remember individual deaths in normal wars, but the massive deaths of the civil war are inappropriate for the epic. This is the closest that Lucan comes to outright claiming that civil war is a poor topic for epic. To complete the condemnation of the events at Pharsalus Lucan blames the men at Pharsalus for the

current slavery of Romans in his own day. Pharsalus marks the destruction of Rome and the melee scene captures most explicitly the incompatibility of civil war and epic narrative structures. The context of civil war repeatedly corrupts the epic narrative patterns and results in the deformation of the traditional narratives.

Rout BC 7.636-706: Pompey's Imaginary Heroism

Lucan inverts the features of the rout scene as well. Instead of presenting the rout from the perspective of a non-combatant, as is typically found in Homeric and Virgilian epic, Lucan presents the rout of Pompey's forces from the perspective of Pompey himself. As Pompey flees the field of Pharsalus, he attempts to convince his soldiers to stop fighting for him, so that they may live even though he may be defeated (7.659-666). As Lucan narrates Pompey's retreat, he considers the leader's former greatness despite his defeat (7.680-697). If we are not careful readers of the tradition, this presentation of Pompey may seem somewhat heroic, since the defeated general retreats in an effort to ensure the safety of his men. When we consider this scene in the context of the tradition, however, we are able to see how mistaken and blinded Pompey really is. In short, Pompey's flight represents the misunderstanding of the epic tradition that has pervaded this poem.

Homeric epic offers suitable *comparanda* for this type scene. There are numerous rout scenes in the epic, nearly all of which are narrated from an authorial perspective and explain the hurried retreat of one army and the determined pursuit of the other. In Book 22 of the *Iliad*, Homer offers a different sort of rout scene narrative. As Hector and

Achilles engage in their duel, the Trojans behind the Scaean gates witness their doom.¹⁷ This instance provides a model for the similar scene in the *Aeneid* where Virgil offers the Italian perspectives on the duel between Aeneas and Turnus. In both these instances the poet describes the spectators' reactions to each blow and wound as they collectively mourn not only for the warriors, but for their own fate.

These scenes share certain features that characterize them as rout scenes. First, both the combats are ultimately decisive. Hector's death means the defeat of the Trojans and Turnus', the defeat of the Italians. Secondly, the spectators realize that the consequences of the battle will result in the destruction of their causes. Both Homeric and Virgilian scenes are observed by parties that are not involved in the war: women, children, and the elderly. In Lucan's scene, however, the observer is Pompey, the general who ought to be leading the men on the field. Given the paradigms of Hector's duel with Achilles or Turnus' duel with Aeneas, Pompey should be dueling Caesar. Instead Pompey flees. His perspective, as one looking back on the battle field, destroys the heroic context through which Pompey wishes his actions to be interpreted. This focalization of the flight through the defeated general himself negates any possible heroism we as readers may attribute to Pompey. Pompey's actions are so incongruous to our understanding of the "good general" that we find it difficult to find any redemption in such cowardice. Though Lucan reminds us that it is better to lose than to win in civil war, this hardly seems a satisfactory reaction to loss.

¹⁷ Matthew Leigh has noted the connection between Pompey and Hector (1997) 113. For like Hector, Pompey at 5.747-9 recognizes his doom and removes his wife from the battle lines.

On the whole, the Pharsalan narrative clarifies the blame that is contingent upon involvement in civil war. This blame becomes more apparent in the rout scene as Lucan contemplates the effects of Pompey's defeat on his current generation:

maius ab hac acie quam quod sua saecula ferrent.
uolnus habent populi; plus est quam uita salusque
quod perit: in totum mundi prosternimur aeuum.
uincitur his gladiis omnis quae seruiet aetas.

7.638-641

[A blow too heavy for their own age to bear was dealt to all nations by this battle: more was lost there than mere life and existence: we were overthrown for all time to come; all future generations doomed to slavery were conquered by those swords.]

Lucan's description is no longer tragic or sympathetic, but accusatorial. The poet asks why his generation should pay with the loss of their freedom that resulted from the weakness of this earlier one. Lucan blames Pompey's ineffectual and indecisive leadership for Rome's current slavery to the Caesars. These lines condemn the combatants not for their engagement, but for their weakness. Because the combatants did not fight with the Caesarians as bravely as they could or should, Rome is a slave to the Caesars.

To properly understand Lucan's reaction to the soldiers at Pharsalus, we must place it in its narrative context. We must consider an important scene from the *Iliad*: the duel between Hector and Achilles (*Iliad* Book 22). Though this scene is not technically a rout scene, the presence of spectators to whom Homer gives voice offers a critical comparison to Lucan's intrusion here. The death of Hector is viewed by his wife, his son, his father, and his mother along with many other Trojans. These observers witness the doom of Troy; however, there is no blame in their mourning. This is similar to Virgil's

use of this motif in book 11 in the battle between Aeneas and Turnus. In this scene the Latin elders, women, and children lament the defeat of the Latin troops. This pathos is also present, as we have seen, in book three, where the Massilians mourn their dead. Instead of mourning, at Pharsalus Lucan blames the troops, and especially Pompey, for their weakness against Rome.

As the rout continues, Lucan attends to Pompey's flight. Pompey rationalizes that he flees the battle field to stop his men from fighting (7.669-73). As Pompey flees he has no fear that may be struck in the back, as is the normal fear of ignoble death of those fleeing, but he is secure that he will die elsewhere (7.680-82). By denying Pompey this traditional fear, Lucan negates the pathos found in traditional rout scenes. As Pompey flees, Lucan calls his readers' attention to the past strength and present weakness of Pompey with a lengthy apostrophe, and blames Rome's slavery to the Caesars on Pompey's weakness:

nonne iuuat pulsum bellis cecidisse nec istud
perspectasse nefas? spumantes caede catervas
respice, turbatos incursu sanguinis amnes,
et soceri miserere tui. quo pectore Romam
intrabit factus campis felicior istis?
quidquid in ignotis solus regionibus exul,
quidquid sub Phario positus patiere tyranno,
crede deis, longo fatorum crede fauori,
uincere peius erat.

7.698-706

[It is not pleasant for you, beaten by war, to have withdrawn from the war and not to have witnessed this crime? Look back on the ranks foaming with slaughter, the rivers mixed with the influx of blood, and then pity your son-in-law. With what feelings will he enter Rome, owing his good fortune to that damned field? Whatever you as a lonely exile in unknown regions will suffer, whatever you suffer under the tyrant Pharius, trust in the gods, trust in the fates so long favorable to you, it was worse to be victorious.]

This apostrophe marks the differences between this instance and traditional rout scenes. At its beginning this scene differed from the tradition in that the general himself watches the deaths of his troops. We are primarily reminded of Pompey's justification of his flight: that if he fled, the fighting would stop. We now see that this reasoning is as faulty in reality as it was in premise.

Here, in the Pharsalan narrative, the rout is visualized by someone who was involved and who still ought to be involved. Therefore, it casts his observation and his reaction in a much different light. Lucan blames Pompey for his weakness, but more than that he blames Caesar for the entire civil war. Lucan reminds the audience that it is better to lose than to win a civil battle, which runs counter to the very idea of epic. The martial epic tradition, especially Roman epic, celebrates the victor. As sympathetic as Virgil may have been towards the Italians, Aeneas is unquestionably the victor. Here, Caesar is the victor, but Pompey is the better for not winning. If nothing else in Lucan's epic, this line encourages us to question the validity of martial heroism when applied to the context of civil war.

The rout of Pompey's army, as focalized through Pompey himself, addresses many of the themes that are discussed earlier in the episode. The battle at Pharsalus, more so than any of the other battles in the *Bellum Civile*, addresses the identity crisis that results from the civil war. Lucan tells us that in this conflict the entire Roman population has been undermined. The future of Rome has also been decided. This destruction of *Romanitas* is stressed in the first lines of the rout scene, where Lucan tells us that Pharsalus offered too large a shock for Rome to absorb. He blames Rome loss of freedom

on the failure of those involved at Pharsalus. This censure from Lucan must be understood in conjunction with Pompey's rationale for fleeing the battle field. His flight is motivated by a desire to stop his men from fighting, and he thinks that if he leaves, the fighting will stop. Pompey is mistaken in thinking that his influence is equal to or even greater than Caesar's. As he looks back at his army that is slaughtered by Caesar's, there is little indication that they even notice that their general has left.

By imagining that his flight would stop the battle, Pompey imagines himself as a *devotus*. His actions, however, are antithetical to the model *devotus*, Decius Mus. Decius rides out into the midst of the enemy to receive the expiation for the transgressions of the army; Pompey flees, protecting himself.¹⁸

The effect of Lucan's construction of the retreat of Pompey as a form of devotion is to highlight the distortion of the trope. The reader holds present the ideal form of the self-sacrificial charge and uses it as a measure by which to assess the inadequacies of the actions of the general.¹⁹

This action degrades the heroism that Pompey himself hopes to display. The rout of Pompey, then, demonstrates the collapse of Roman heroism in three ways: first, Pompey's heroism is questioned first because he loses, secondly, because he abandons his army in its loss, and finally because this loss is responsible for the loss of freedom.

¹⁸ On the role of the *devotus* see: M. Leigh (1997:128-142). Cf. the "good" generals' decision to charge the enemy in response to defeat. The examples of this in Roman literature abound. Sometimes this leads to the death of the general: Livy 2.6.8 on the charge of Brutus and Arruns, Livy 27.49.4, the charge of Hasdrubal. For the charge to the enemy as a successful tactic, cf., *Caesar at B. Gall.* 2.25.2-3 and the Fabii at Livy, 2.46.4-47. 1. For the social pressures of proper behavior for generals, see Rosenstein (1990), esp. ch. 4, "The Aristocratic Ethos and Preservation of Status", 114-52. For the importance of showing heroism in defeat, see esp. *ibid.* 117-118, "A general was expected to display courage and take risks, and, if necessary, meet death fighting bravely...Generals died in battle frequently enough during the last two and a half centuries of the Republic to indicate that crisis often led commanders to put themselves in harm's way, and those who survived took pains to advertise the fact."

¹⁹ Leigh (1997) 139.

Conclusion

The battle of Pharsalus continues Lucan's rejection of traditional epic heroism as unsuitable for the civil war context. He complicates the application of epic narrative patterns to the civil war to demonstrate that civil war cannot be comprehended by the genre. Lucan then negates the traditional application of every narrative feature to make the point that traditional heroism is not possible in civil war.

The advance scene presents two competing interpretive models for this conflict, a narrative split that reflects the duality that is civil war. The reader's sympathies are thus torn. The advance scene finally disregards the name-game in the Massilian advance. There are no faux-Greeks and Romans here. At Pharsalus all the participants are Roman. This is the full recognition of civil war and Lucan responds by resorting to anonymity. The collective fight is plagued by anonymity in his narration of Pharsalus. The false distinction between combatants that was made at Massilia is not present. After Pompey's foreign allies flee, there is no way to deny that this is civil war. Lucan stresses its claustrophobic and self-destructive nature. Civil war can yield no victory or glory. Lucan is so overcome with condemnation of the events in this battle that he cannot narrate the events, and his refusal to do so is another indication of the perversion of heroism that occurs in civil war. The rout reminds us again of the identity crisis that is civil war, for it results in no glory, but only in the collapse of freedom

Chapter 4: Cato's Desert March

Background to Cato's March

As we have seen in the last two chapters, Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* represents systematic reappraisal of the definition of epic heroism, articulated this through the perversion of the epic narrative sequences that make up battle narratives. In Book 9 of the *BC*, the reader is finally presented with a "functional" battle narrative. This battle narrative, however, is markedly non-combative. Lucan introduces and narrates Cato's march through the deserts of Libya according to many of the motifs of large scale battle narratives, presenting this march as if it were a battle scene. He describes the snakes, who act in the most unnatural of ways, as if they were weapons and Cato, as if he were a successful general. Unlike the previous battle scenes, Lucan presents this battle scene with a unified authorial voice. At several points in this advance scene Lucan makes explicit statements that condone Cato's speech and actions. In the end, though, Cato's efforts are meaningless as he is unable to preserve his men, and his march through the Libyan Desert is pointless. It is noteworthy that Lucan finds a march against snakes, a notably non-martial battle, the only appropriate context for epic battle narrative in his epic.

Following Cato's speeches he and his men engage in a life and death struggle with the snakes that inhabit a rare oasis in the midst of the desert. This battle becomes an ideological struggle for liberty. This struggle with the snakes takes two forms: the collective battle, which outlines the broader struggle of the combat, and the melee, which

describes the various gruesome deaths the snakes inflict on the men. Cato and his men are finally rescued by the acts of the native tribe, the Psylli. In these episodes Lucan presents successful, though wholly untraditional versions, of these epic type scenes. The entire Libyan excursus offers a comprehensive redefinition of the epic hero, moving heroism away from martial and toward philosophical achievement.

Before we begin our discussion of the actions of the Libyan excursus, it is necessary to discuss Cato's first appearance in the epic at *BC* 2.234-325. Here, Cato eloquently explains to Brutus his definition of heroism. This scene has an epic precedent in the colloquy between Paris and Hector at *Iliad* 6.321ff, where Hector persuades Paris to join the fighting, just as here Cato persuades Brutus to join the fighting.¹ In his justification for becoming involved in the civil war, Cato contrasts his definition of heroism with that of Caesar and Pompey. In his view Caesar and Pompey fight for selfish reasons, as both are primarily gaining power for themselves. This type of individual advancement has no merit for Cato who loves the republic as a parent loves his children. He vows that he must do all he can to ensure its safety, even if this means engaging in civil war (2.285-295). This devotion to the republic leads Cato to pray that he may serve it by becoming a *devotio*, an expiatory sacrifice (2.306-13).² Through this speech to Brutus, we see that Cato believes that true heroism is defined by self-sacrifice for the preservation of the state.³ Cato hopes to become such an expiatory sacrifice like Decius

¹ See Fantham (1992: 123); Lausberg (1985); Adatte (1965: 232-40); Aumont (1965: 304) and (1968: 103-119); Brouwers (1989: 49-60).

² Matthew Leigh (1997: 131-134) has also noted Cato's wish in these lines to become a *devotio*.

³ Many scholars have noted the lack of continuity between Cato's speech to Brutus in Book 2 and in Book 9; see: W.R. Johnson (1987: 55), who claims that Cato appears ineffectual and silly. Johnson primarily considers Cato's actions in the desert march. Narducci (2002: 416) responds to Johnson's criticism, explaining that while Cato's attitude might stir the antipathy of the modern reader, we cannot know for sure

Mus, who, according to Livy, acted on the order of the haruspices and removed the anger of the gods bringing his men victory in the end (Livy 8.9-11). Here Cato wishes to become another *devotio* and to accept the gods' anger that has led Rome to civil war. In Book 9, Cato thinks of himself as such a hero.

Lucan articulates this heroic self-sacrifice through Cato's actions in his march through the Libyan deserts. Like the other battle scenes in the *Bellum Civile*, Cato's march is narrated according to the four type-scenes: advance, collective fight, melee, and rout. In each of these type scenes Lucan defines heroism through Cato's insistence on the importance of the preservation of the state. In the advance scene Cato gives a number of speeches, all of which stress the importance of community (9.190-597). The collective fight pits Cato and his men against a band of savage snakes, a battle cast as an ideological fight against the fear of individual death itself (9.604-733). In this scene Cato strives to maintain the community in the face of overwhelming fear. The melee scene shows how several of Cato's men encounter and respond to this fear caused by the snake bites (9.737-889). Cato himself appears as the calm protector of the community amidst this flurry of fear. In the rout scene, Cato and his men are saved by the Psylii, a local native tribe whose strength comes from their communal actions against these snakes (9.890-914).

if a Neronian reader would feel the same way. Sklenar (2003: 1-12), however, again resurrects this idea of a negative reading of Cato's stoicism. Berthe Marti (1945b: 361) and W. Hemmen (1954:125) conclude that Cato represents a caricature of Stoic virtue in his speech in Book 2. Even though both consider Cato the Stoic hero of the epic, they also judge him to be a cold and dispassionate individual unable to be affected by external circumstances. Shadi Bartsch (1997) discusses the desert march within the context of the dialogue in Book Two and argues that Cato represents traditional boundaries, "the principle of boundary maintenance". If we consider these two events as part of the entire development of Lucan's Cato, however, we find that Cato's view of heroism remains consistent throughout the scenes.

Before I begin my discussion of Lucan's description of Cato's march through the Libyan Desert, it is important to note here that Lucan's depiction of Cato is as Johnson calls it, "extrarational."⁴ Johnson goes on to say of Lucan in general:

In trying to imagine not only what happened at Pharsalus but also what that battle means to human beings everywhere, in trying to discover, in poetry, what power and liberty are, Lucan, like Euripides and Ovid before him, so far from using the classical disciplines of philosophy and history, is intent on showing the inadequacies of these supremely rational modes as well as the tendency of rational discourse to misread and to misrepresent what human beings do to others and to themselves out of greed and fear.⁵

Lucan's epic is such a poem. The poet continually questions our expectations and the rational limits of the genre. As Rutz and others have commented, there has yet to be a rational way to "read" Lucan.⁶ Attempts to read Lucan as a rational explanation of heroism have failed because Lucan is not rational. The world of civil war and his depiction of it cannot be understood and defined by reason, which is no less true in his depiction of Cato's march through the desert. While Lucan presents the earlier battle scenes as legitimate battles, he perverts their presentation to reject the heroism in the actions of those battles. He presents Cato's march through the desert, which is a non-battle, as a battle between Cato's men and the snakes. This battle becomes an allegory between liberty and servitude, or liberty and death.

Not only does Lucan present this non-battle as a battle, but he also presents it as the only successful battle in the epic. For here, Lucan quite comfortably applies the narrative structure of large scale epic battle narratives to the scene. The poet himself even

⁴ Johnson (1987) 35.

⁵ Ibid , 36.

⁶ Rutz (1985) 140-173 is concerned primarily with the question of the hero in Lucan's epic. Rutz explains that the reason critics keep failing for their search for a hero in Lucan's epic is that there is no rational hero in Lucan's epic.

includes apostrophes to Cato and the men that condone and celebrate the actions. It seems that here Lucan wants to present Cato and his campaign as successful, though it is not. Cato's campaign is a parody of a battle. His *aristeia* is composed of several speeches and watching his men while they suffer and die. These are hardly heroic actions. Moreover, Cato's battle has little to no effect on the rest of the civil war. His men are trying to get to Utica and are attacked by cartoonishly vicious snakes and are finally rescued by an obscure African tribe, who is immune to the snake bites. This entire episode is irrational, silly, and pointless. But this is the one battle in the epic that Lucan presents as functional. Lucan depicts Cato as the good general and the *pater patriae*, who can do little more than to watch his men suffer. In Lucan's irrational depiction of the civil war, the only battle worth fighting is the allegorical one. In a world where it is better to lose than to win, the only hero is the man who fails, but whose motives are pure.

My reading of Cato's desert march is not an attempt to rationalize Lucan's epic, for as many scholars have proven, this is impossible (or at least not yet realized). Rather my intent is to explore how Lucan depicts this non-battle, though flawed, as a functional battle and uses the battle to comment on the fruitlessness of civil war. This reading is as much a commentary on Lucan's definition of his hero as it is on Lucan's condemnation of civil war. Lucan presents this desert march as an irrational and ironic celebration of Cato's actions while he simultaneously condemns his heroism for being ineffective.

Advance Scene *BC 9.190-597*: Into the Wild

The advance scene of Cato's desert march is marked by four speeches: his eulogy to Pompey, his address to the mutiny led by Tarcondimotus, his speech by the side of

Lake Triton, and his speech at the temple of Zeus Ammon. In each of these speeches Cato states that his concerns are the preservation of freedom for the community. Lucan then inserts his authorial voice to agree with Cato. This agreement represents the first time in the epic where the narrator agrees with his character.

In Cato's eulogy he praises Pompey for his overall restraint in an age of personal indulgence and for his respect of the constitution. He first clarifies Pompey's respect of the constitution, particularly the legal limits of the power of individual leaders (9.190-195). Cato next praises Pompey for his restraint of military power and wealth (9.195-197). He explains that Pompey used military force when it was needed, but preferred to accomplish his goals with peace (9.197-200). Pompey made Rome seem great to foreign nations (9.202-203). Most important to Cato, however, was the nature of Pompey's death. Cato claims that since Pompey died before becoming a slave to Caesar, he was fortunate in his death (9. 208-210). As Cato concludes his eulogy, he tells his men that the man who knows how to die is the happiest (9.211). Throughout his eulogy of Pompey Cato has clearly explained his idea of heroism, namely that an individual should prioritize the state over an individual, have respect for tradition, and work for the preservation of liberty. The themes of unity and idealism are a central feature of the Libyan excursus from the beginning.

Cato begins the eulogy by calling Pompey a *civis*, thus emphasizing Pompey's legal status within the republic.⁷ Pompey provided a much needed check against the

⁷ Sklenar (2003: 83) "Yes, he was a citizen, but he was also an example of how far the Romans had degenerated from their ancestors. The adverbial *multum* is particularly devastating; coupled with *maioribus impar*, it is a most inauspicious beginning to a eulogy". Sklenar understands that Pompey's citizenship is qualified by *impar*, which places the current age as inferior to Rome's prior greatness.

ravages of Caesar's imperialism.⁸ Lucan clearly states that in the current age Pompey was the best example of heroism possible. He next lists the achievements of Pompey in a long list of litotes. By describing Pompey's qualities as what he was not, Lucan emphasizes Pompey's differences from Caesar.⁹ Cato begins describing Pompey's attributes by focusing on the use of his power. Unlike Caesar, Pompey did not use his power to destroy the republic: *nil belli iure poposcit, / quaeque dari uoluit, uoluit sibi posse negari* (9.195-6). This statement clearly contrasts the actions of Pompey, who was happy to allow his actions to remain legal, with those of Caesar. Again, unlike Caesar, Pompey refused to become a *rex*: *privatus servire sibi rectorque senatus/sed regnantis, erat* (9.194-5). Pompey was content to allow the rule of Rome to remain in the control of the senate. Pompey did not abuse the treasury; rather he increased it: *inmodicas possedit opes, sed plura retentis intulit* (9.197-8), this fiscal responsibility which provides a contrast to Caesar's robbing of the Roman treasury in BC 2. Cato goes on to comment on Pompey's proper use of force and power, all of which make him the direct opposite of Caesar. Finally, Cato's eulogy praises Pompey for what he represented, the last vestige of republican *libertas*:

Olim uera fides Sulla Marioque receptis
 libertatis obit: Pompeio rebus adempto
 nunc et ficta perit. Non iam regnare pudebit,
 nec color imperii nec frons erit ulla senatus.

9. 204-7

⁸ Sklenar (2003: 83) argues that the terms *nosse modum iuris* indicate Pompey's deficiencies in respect for constitutional boundaries, thus lumping Pompey along with Caesar as destroyers of the Republic.

⁹ See Morford (1967: 5-7); Feeney (1986b: 242); Sklenar (2003: 84-85) holds Pompey's comparison to Cato, which is unreasonable. The real comparison exists between Pompey and Caesar. Against this comparison, Pompey's actions are judged much more fairly.

[True faith of liberty died when Sulla and Marius were received: now with the death of Pompey even the fictitious belief is dead. No longer will it be a shame to rule, nor will any blush for the ruler nor will the senate be a screen.]

Pompey's death marks a watershed moment. Cato tells us that true liberty died in the regimes of Sulla and Marius. With the death of Pompey, however, even imagined liberty has perished. Sklenar argues that Cato condemns Pompey with the slight-handed remark that the *libertas* left behind by Pompey was a fraud. Pompey's death, though, removes this pretense. Now no one will be ashamed to take power by force (9.208-209). However weak Pompey was, his presence offered a certain appearance of old republican values, but Cato now presents to his men a renewed vision of *libertas*.

Cato concludes this speech by praising Pompey for accepting death rather than living under Caesar's dominion:

Forsitans in soceri potuisses uiuere regno.
scire mori sors prima uiris, sed proxima cogi.

9.210-211

[Perhaps you might have been able to live under the reign of your son-in-law. It is the best luck of men to know how to die, the next happiest, to those men upon whom death is forced.]

Cato concludes the eulogy with a wish that he too may meet with a similar ending (9.211-213). No doubt this eulogy expresses an idealized notion of the historical figure of Pompey, but I argue that this speech galvanizes Cato's view of Pompey, at least in the minds of his men, as a strong leader who exemplified the points of heroism essential to garner Cato's support. Cato's Pompey prioritizes the welfare of the state before himself. It is this concern for the communal over the individual that is the *sine qua non* for Cato's

view of heroism. This point is further clarified when Cato addresses the potential mutiny that immediately follows this speech.¹⁰

His second speech is his harangue to Pompey's troops who, under Tarcondimotus, threaten to abandon the Republic's cause and return to their peaceful lives. In this speech Cato criticizes these troops for failing to understand the liberty that Pompey's death offers. These men, who had been mercenaries to Pompey, now are given the option to choose to fight for Rome. Tarcondimotus' response reveals that he still considers himself and his men as loyal to Pompey only as an individual leader and not to Rome. (9.258-62). Cato then presents their current location, the Syrtes, as a crossroads where they may choose a new path (9.376-81). He presents to them a difficult path, but one that will result in their freedom from tyranny (9.390-94). In short, in his harangue to Pompey's men he offers himself as a model of heroism. In these two speeches Cato tells his men that he expects them to sacrifice their own safety and happiness for freedom from tyranny for the entire state. For Cato, this type of self-sacrificial heroism is the only type that matters.

After hearing of Pompey's death, the weary soldiers are led by Tarcondimotus, the king of Cilicia, to desert Cato, for which he harshly rebukes them. Tarcondimotus' reasons for leaving seem fair enough, they had been soldiers of Pompey but now that Pompey has been defeated and they wish to return home to their families (9.227-251). Cato, however, sees this desertion not as a personal desertion of his cause, but rather as a desertion of Rome. He sees their choice to leave as a decision to elevate service to an individual above dedication to the state. In other words, this is slavery to a general, which Cato cannot tolerate. He rebukes the men for prioritizing allegiance to individual

¹⁰ George (1991) 254-55 and Bartsch (1997) 123.

over the community as a whole. Cato explains, then, that since Pompey has died, their lives and death now belong to them, not to a tyrant:

quod non in regna laboras,
quod tibi, non ducibus, vivis morerisque, quod orbem
adquiris nulli, quod iam tibi vincere tutum est,
bella fugis quaerisque iugum cervice vacanti
et nescis sine rege pati.

9. 258-62

[You no longer suffer in order to set up a tyrant; your life and death belong to yourselves, not to your leaders; there is no one for whom you gain the world. And now you may safely conquer for yourself alone. Yet now you flee the ranks; you miss the yoke when your neck is relieved, and you cannot endure existence without a tyrant.]

Cato encourages the men to take advantage of the opportunity that Pompey's death offers them to fight for their own freedom, rather than for the ascendancy of yet another tyrant. Yet, if they are determined to flee, he tells them to kill him and take his head to Caesar, so that they will become more than fugitives joining Caesar's side.

As Cato leads his men into the dangers of the Syrtis, he stresses the physical and ideological dangers that his men will face. He asks them to conduct themselves bravely as they traverse these dangerous lands, exhibiting *uirtus*:

O quibus una salus placuit mea castra secutis
indomita cervice mori, componite mentes
ad magnum uirtutis opus summosque labores.

9. 379-81

[Men who have chosen this one path of safety—to follow my standard to the death with spirits unsubdued, prepare your minds for a high feat of valor and utmost hardships.]

He asks for a demonstration of *virtus*, which the soldiers would have understood as a traditional epic warrior's courage. At the same time, he also urges his men to conduct

themselves with the Stoic attitude toward death (9.379-80). Sklenar reads *componite mentes* as an exhortation toward rational composure.¹¹ Cato thus connects the *virtus* of the epic warrior with the mental strength of the Stoic *sapiens* and fashions his men into a troop of idealized Stoic warriors.

He goes on to clarify this call to suffering in the latter half of the speech:

hi mihi sint comites, quos ipsa pericula ducent,
qui me teste pati uel quae tristissima pulchrum
Romanumque putant. at, qui sponsore salutis
miles eget capiturque animae dulcedine, uadat
ad dominum meliore uia.

9.390-94

[I seek as my companions men who are attracted by the risks themselves, men who think it glorious and worthy of a Roman to endure even the worst, with me to watch them. But if any man craves a guarantee of safety and is tempted by the sweetness of life, let him take an easier path and go to a master.]

This harangue is similar to other pre-battle speeches throughout the *Bellum Civile* and indeed the greater epic tradition. In this speech, Cato explains that he expects the soldiers who follow him to be willing to suffer physical pain for their patriotic duty. Lucan stresses this link between suffering and patriotism through the allusion to Horace's *dulce et decorum pro patria mori*.¹² Cato calls it *pulchrum Romanumque* to suffer while he is a witness. Cato rejects, however, those soldiers who require secured safety and a pleasant life. As stressed above, Cato posits the actions of his men as a choice between *dominus* and *ego*, between Caesar and Cato.

As his speech continues, he asks his men to take his example as their guide. He offers his endurance, his dedication, and his bravery as a paradigm for his soldiers to follow:

¹¹ Sklenar (2003) 85- 86.

¹² Horace *Odes* III.2.13

sitiat quicumque bibentem
uiderit, aut umbras nemorum quicumque petentem,
aestuet, aut equitem peditum praecedere turmas,
deficiat: si quo fuerit discrimine notum
dux an miles eam.

9.398-402

[If any man sees me drinking, or seeking shade of trees, or riding in front of the infantry, then let him feel thirst, heat, and weariness—if there is any distinction to mark whether I am general or a soldier in the ranks.]

Cato clarifies in this speech that he wants to lead by example as a *miles*, rather than as a *dux*. He does not want his men to give in to thirst, seek shade, or succumb to fatigue until he does so first. The fact that Cato chooses to suffer and endure all the same as his troops clarifies his choice to be a fellow *miles* and not a *dux* like Pompey, who is content to observe his troops from afar.

Cato concludes this speech with a summation of all the hardships he and his soldiers will face—serpents, thirst, heat, and burning sand—all of which serve to strengthen the endurance and the bravery of the virtuous (9.402-406). Cato presents Libya as the final proving grounds for heroism: *sola potest Libye turba praestare malorum/ut deceat fugisse viros* (9.405-406). In Cato's mind virtue welcomes adversity, and it is in the deserts of Libya that this adversity may be met in its greatest abundance. The snakes, the thirst, and the sands of the desert will yield *dulcia virtutis, patientia*, and *honestum*.

In this set of preliminary speeches, Cato outlines the sort of heroism he hopes to see from his troops in the coming battle. Not unlike a harangue in earlier epic, Cato challenges his men to meet his high expectations. These expectations focus on the supremacy of the collective over the individual and the forging of character through

endurance of unpleasantness. And what is most important to his view of heroism, Cato assures his men that he will share in their struggles with them.

In the final episode of the advance scene, Cato and his men come upon Lake Triton. It is here that the battle against fear, slavery, and death itself will be fought. Here Cato delivers his final speech to his troops. This speech, which acts as the traditional pre-battle harangue from epic and historiographic narratives, accentuates the dangers that Cato and his men are about to face. It also stresses the importance of such dangers toward refining the individual soul, as Cato converts these men from mercenaries of Pompey to soldiers of Rome. In his introduction to this speech, Lucan calls Cato *uirtus*, which is the Latin term that best represents the Homeric κλέα ἀνδρῶν and the epic virtue *par excellence*. Not only does Cato embody this trait himself; he also inspires this in his men. As the speech concludes, Lucan tells us that Cato inspires in his men this same virtue: *sic ille pauentes/ incendit uirtute animos et amore laborum* (9. 406-7). Cato and his men march into the desert, and Lucan reminds us that Cato will not return from this march: *et sacrum paruo nomen clausura sepulchro/ inuasit Libye secure fata Catonis* (9.409-10). This reminder of Cato's fate puts the entire operation into perspective. This awareness of his own death parallels Cato to Hector, Achilles, and the other heroic *exempla* from the epic tradition. As Achilles goes on to fight at Troy, though he understands this to mean his early death, so Cato marches into Libya to forge his men's dedication to the cause of Rome, though it mean promises death.

The final speech/action paradigm in the advance scene of Book Nine occurs at the temple of Jupiter Ammon. Here Cato responds to his soldier, Labienus, who requested that Cato consult the oracle. Cato responds not by consulting the oracle, but by

responding to the god in his own chest: *Ille deo plenus, tacita quem mente gerebat/ effudit dignas adytis e pectore voces*: (9. 564-5). In these lines the narrator continues to make Cato a hero, in this instance by bestowing upon his hero the power of prophecy. In his response to Labienus, Cato claims that the only thing he needs to be sure of is that good and bad alike will die, but that you must live according to your nature and always protect your freedom. After Cato addresses Labienus thusly, he places his javelin on his shoulder and leads his men on into the desert:

ipse manu sua pila gerit, praecedit anhelis
militis ora pedes, monstrat tolerare labores,
non iubet, et nulla uehitur ceruice supinus
carpentoque sedens; somni parcissimus ipse est;
ultimus haustor aquae, quam, tandem fonte reperto,
indiga cogatur laticis spectare iuuentus,
stat, dum lixa bibat.

9.587-593

[Carrying his javelin in his own hand, he marched on foot in front of his gasping soldiers; issuing no order, he taught them by his example to endure hardship; he was never borne at ease on the shoulders of men or seated in a carriage; of sleep he was more sparing than any. When at last a spring was discovered, and the thirsty men must be forced to look on at it, he was the last to drink and stood still till the camp-followers drank.]

These final lines in this advance scene once again stress Cato's role as a *miles*. He does not privilege himself as the general, but rather acts as a fellow soldier. In fact, he allows his men to go first. He is the republican leader *par excellence*, allowing his men to have more benefits than himself.

Throughout Cato's speeches, Lucan inserts his own affirming authorial voice into the narrative. These authorial interruptions confirm Cato's status as the true leader of his people, as a leader who leads not to the further destruction of Rome but to the true unity

that will end this civil war. These authorial utterances appear throughout the advance scene in support of Cato's actions and words, with the first appearing just before Cato eulogizes Pompey. As Cato prepares to deliver his speech, Lucan tells us that Cato's words, though brief, are full of truth: *Catonis uerba sed a pleno uenientia pectore ueri* (9.189). A little later, Lucan calls Cato sacred: *ducis sacro de pectore voces* (9.255). Lucan next praises Cato's leadership for having concern for the community over his individual power, an essential quality for Cato to possess if he is to be a Republican leader. Lucan claims that Cato indeed surpasses other military leaders: *quis Marte secundo,/quis tantum meruit populorum sanguine nomen?* (9.596-7). Lucan concludes with an address to Cato in which he calls him the father of the fatherland: *ecce parens uerus patriae, dignissimus aris,/Roma, tuis, per quem numquam iurare pudebit,/et quem, si steteris umquam ceruice solute,/nunc, olim, factura deum es.* (9.601-604).¹³ This address puts an appropriate conclusion to the advance scene to this battle. Lucan can, without hesitation, put his support behind Cato's actions.

Scholars have found plenty of irony and sarcasm both in this address by Lucan and throughout the entire Cato section (if not the entire epic).¹⁴ Though Lucan appears to praise Cato's action, it is difficult not to ignore the irony in his apostrophes. While Lucan presents him as the good general, he really accomplishes very little. He provides his men some strength of courage as they await their deaths, but this is hardly reason to praise his actions. Lucan reminds us throughout the epic, as he does so here that, inaction is better than action and it is better to lose than to win a civil war. We see in his presentation of

¹³ Behr (2007) 128 also recognizes the importance of this line and the praise of Cato.

¹⁴ For a more thorough treatment on Lucan's sarcasm and irony see Johnson (1987) 55, Henderson (1987), Narducci (2002) 416, and Sklenar (2003) 1-12.

Cato's desert march that the only battle worth fighting in a civil war is the one that is a non-battle.

Throughout the *Bellum Ciuile* soldiers have fought and died over the proper examples to follow. Vulteius offers his men's sacrifice to the enemy as an example of Caesar's leadership. Likewise, Scaeva offers his actions as an example to his own men of heroism, and finally Pompey, before he is killed, imagines how his body will look as an example of statesmanship as he is killed. In all these examples, however, the role of *exempla* is nullified; Vulteius and Scaeva demonstrate their desire for a master, who is often absent, and the headless trunk of Pompey is buried in a makeshift grave on the Egyptian shore. In Cato's battle with the snakes, we see a battle against the fear of death itself. As his men encounter the dangers of the desert, heat, thirst, and, of course, the snakes, Cato proves by his own presence and equanimity the powerlessness of death even while his men die. His actions, therefore, are noteworthy for Lucan, even if they fail.

The Collective Fight BC 9.604-733: The Ideological Fight

As Cato and his men march through the Libyan Desert, they come upon an oasis infested with snakes. Here, Cato and his men endure a vicious serpentine attack and thereby prove their dedication to Cato and Rome. Lucan narrates the serpents' attack on Cato and his men according to the type scenes of the collective fight, including the following scenes: the large scale movements of the armies, a mythological simile, and the distinction of armies. In his speeches earlier in Book 9, Cato has presented the struggle in the desert as the stoic's struggle for freedom. This struggle is embodied in his men's struggle against the snakes who, through their connection to Medusa, represent death and

tyranny. These elements characterize Cato's battle not only with a particularly nasty bunch of snakes, but with the fear of death itself.

Lucan presents the collective fight narrative in two movements: Cato's final harangue to his men and the description of the Medusan etiology of the African serpents. In Cato's speech to his men on the shores of the oasis he explains the nature of the threat that the snakes pose. At this point, Cato and his men have been walking through the desert for some time (9.604-607). They come upon the shores of Lake Triton, which is infested with all sorts of hideous snakes, particularly the *dipsas* (9.609-610). Cato recognizes that if his men do not drink here, they will die: *doctor, ut aspexit perituros fonte relicto* (9.611). So, Cato explains to his men that the death they fear from drinking the water is illusory since the snakes' threat lies not in the water, but in their bite (9.612-616). Cato takes advantage of this moment to explain the negative power of the false fear of death: *vana specie conterriti leti* (9.612). He reminds his men that their fear of the snake-infested water is false-appearance (*vana specie*) of death and that the real death lies in their bite. In his speech he explains that the snakes are embodiments of the fear of death that haunts humanity. He then drinks from the water, offering himself as a model who frees himself from this fear: *dixit dubiumque venenum/hausit* (9.616-617). Lucan tells us that this is the only time that Cato drank first from any spring that they encountered in the desert: *et in tota Libyae fons unus harena/ ille fuit, de quo primis sibi posceret undam* (9.616-618).

The majority of critics have focused on the debilitating effects of the snake bites (9.737-889) in order to validate their perception of Cato and his march as futile. Others have noted that Lucan establishes these snakes as embodiments of desires and passions,

which prey upon the irrational soldiers. Matthew Leigh has commented on the allegorical quality of the Libyan Desert. He points to the common tradition that has surrounded various heroes, including Hercules, the Argonauts, Alexander the Great, Regulus, and Cato.¹⁵ He goes on to argue that the journey through Libya was often a symbolic pilgrimage, allegorically describing the travelers' confrontation with excessive desires and passions.

Libya is a conceptual space in Roman literature that allows symbolism to be infused into Lucan's version of this pilgrimage. Similarly, Shadi Bartsch argues that Cato's trek through the desert reenacts the "confrontation *par excellence*" of the principle of boundary violation and the principle of boundary maintenance, two obsessive concerns for the poet throughout the epic.¹⁶ Cato's actions in the desert, therefore, may be read as symbolic and ideological. Lucan sets up this ideological reading of the text through his advance narrative, in which Cato, through his speeches, outlines the coming conflict. In all of his speeches Cato encourages his men to consider themselves soldiers of Rome over soldiers of an individual. With this move away from service to individuals toward service to the state he presents his soldiers as anti-tyrannical. To do this, he engages Caesar in his purest form, as the fear of death personified in the serpents of Libya.

Lucan begins his presentation of Cato's battle with the snakes as a symbolic battle against death when the snakes are first introduced at 9.606. Lucan and his men come upon an abundantly flowing spring, only to find it surrounded by various deadly snakes. Cato and his men are then left with two equally lethal decisions: to avoid the water and die of thirst, or to drink from the spring and risk death from snake bite. Thus is the

¹⁵ Leigh (2000)

¹⁶ Bartsch (1997) 35.

dichotomy of civil war, as expressed by Brutus in Book 2.¹⁷ Here Brutus sees the choices offered in Caesar and Pompey as equally destructive to Rome (2.242-284). After Cato recognizes that his men are afraid to drink, he assures them that this is only the image of death, not death itself:

“uana specie conterriti leti,
ne dubita, miles, tutos haurire liquores.
noxia serpentem est admixto sanguine pestis;
morsu uirus habent, et fatum dente minantur,
pocula morte carent.”

9.612-616.

[Soldiers, don't delay to drink the safe liquid, you are terrified by the empty appearance of death. The poison of the snakes is harmful only when mixed with blood; they have strength in their bite, and they threaten death with their teeth, there is no death in the cup.]

This speech and the action that follows present Cato as the general who, after giving his men a pre-battle harangue, marches off to the contest. Therefore Cato's speech and action initiate the melee scene that follows, in which his men are attacked by the snakes. Lucan uses Cato's speeches actions to establish the clear distinctions that exist not only between Cato's men and the snakes, but also between Cato's men and the tyranny and fear of death against which he hopes to protect them. The Medusa myth that follows more clearly defines the boundaries of this struggle.

Here, Lucan clarifies that the snakes' danger lies in their bite and that the water is perfectly safe. He then goes to prove this by drinking down the dreaded water. Lucan comments that in all the springs of Libya, it was only here that Cato asked to drink the water first:

et in tota Libyae fons unus harena
ille fuit, de quo primus sibi posceret undam.

¹⁷ Behr (2007) 138-39; Herschkowitz (1998) 236-38; Fantham (1992b) 38.

9. 617-618

[And in all the sands of Libya this was the one spring from which he first demanded water.]

Cato thus shows his ability to see dangers for what they truly are. He is also able to stress once again the strength and style of his leadership in this scene. Cato takes it upon himself to show the soldiers the proper reaction to this false perception of death: reason through it and then lead. Cato is able to distinguish between the perceived danger of the water and the actual danger of the snake bites and of dehydration.

The Medusa myth stresses the uncertainty that Cato's men undergo in their desert march. This myth explains the dangers of Libya, which represents the ubiquity of death. What better place for Cato's men to prove their trust in their leader who will ask them to face death to preserve their freedom than at this oasis? Lucan investigates the origin of the serpents:

cur Libycus tantis exundet pestibus aer
fertilis in mortes, aut quid secreti nocenti
miscuerit natura solo, non cura laborque
noster scire ualet, nisi quod uulgata per orbem
fabula pro uera decepit saecula causa.

9. 619-623

[Why the Libyan air abounds with such plagues and is so full of deaths, or what secret harm nature has mixed in its soil, our care and study is not able to know, unless a story common throughout the world has deceived the generations as a true cause.]

Several points are important to note in this passage. First is that Lucan claims that the snakes are evils that are endemic in the location: *aut quid secreta nocenti/miscuerit natura solo* (9.620-1) and secondly that this is a *fabula* that has replaced the truth (9.623).

Curiously enough, Lucan goes on to spend several lines relating this *fabula*, which demonstrates that this must relate to the plot and be more than a mere digression.

Lucan tells us that this area of Libya had long been home to Medusa, and that this realm was populated with the rugged sculptures of people who had beheld her eyes. Lucan also tells us that malignant nature *natura nocens* (9.629) first bred Medusa's serpent hair. Medusa herself becomes the embodiment of death (9.652-3). After Perseus slays the gorgon, he drops her blood on the infertile sand. This land, though barren, gives life to these savages from Medusa's blood. The snakes of Libya are thus born from the death of the deadly Medusa. Medusa and the snakes resemble a sort of deathless death. As one bane is destroyed a thousand other, equally deadly, snakes are born.

Martha Malamud has argued for the symbolism between Pompey, Medusa, and the snakes. In her interpretation of this scene, Cato's combat with the snakes leads to his becoming thoroughly Pompeian.¹⁸ Given the context of Cato's speeches and the actions against both death and tyranny that are connected to the snakes, I argue that the snakes represent not just Pompey, or Caesar, but the idea of tyranny itself. For the snakes, all of whom are born from the destruction of one represent tyranny. Cato has made it quite clear in his speeches and actions thus far that he does not want his men to be dedicated to Pompey, but rather to freedom. It only makes sense then that this etiology would stress the death as represented in the snakes not as Pompeian or Caesarian, but as tyrannical. It is against this institution that Cato wages his war. Through the Medusa myth Lucan links the notions of death and tyranny.

Lucan has distinguished these two combating forces. While the snakes represent death, Cato and his men represent the struggle for life. Through their association with the

¹⁸ Malamud (2003) 31-44.

tyrant Medusa, the snakes also take on the characterization associated with Caesar and tyranny in general. As outlined by Cato in his introductory speeches, Cato and his men represent the march from slavery to freedom. In this way Lucan fulfills the primary task of the collective fight, which is to properly distinguish the two combating parties. Unlike the two armies at Massilia, whose identities are confused, and at Pharsalus where both armies are in fact Roman, here there can really be no confusion. One army is men, the other snakes. As unexpected and unusual as this conflict may be, in it we finally see the appropriate function of the collective battle motif. It is telling that for Lucan the only proper civil war battle is one that is fought between men and snakes. If Lucan has been obtuse in his references to the epic tradition, in this passage he makes clear allusions to the tradition by including a catalogue of the snakes. In this list Lucan briefly describes each one's *ἀρετή*, as if reviewing a line of troops prior to a battle (*BC* 9.711-733). Each warrior snake is armed with his particular skill. Into this mess of snakes marches our Cato, leading his men into the den of the serpents. At the risk of (mis)understanding this passage to be a mockery of epic tradition, we must ask what is the point of this unusual battle scene, and does Lucan indeed expect us to take this passage seriously?

It is not unique to Lucan to narrate the struggle between a hero and a serpent.

According to Philip Slater, snakes often represent confusion or chaos.

In mythology and literature, the serpent is associated not only with the waters of chaos—with disorder and nothingness...or with the unconscious...but also with narcissistic concern over self-maintenance and protection from ego-violation by others. The most common symbol of boundary ambiguity[,] it appears in connection with the boundary between life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, male and female, and so on. Devouring and being devoured are associated with it, dying and being born, and everything that has to do with the edges of the body or with changes to its shape.¹⁹

¹⁹ Slater (1968) 91.

To the ancients, and to many moderns, snakes represent this blending of boundaries, an element so important in the civil war context in which legality and illegality become blended and in which semantics determine criminals and leaders. These snakes represent the loss of definition, for which Cato fights. Moreover, as Elaine Fantham has argued, the Medusa story mirrors the ethical collapse of Rome: “The evil of Medusa is matched by the evil of man: he kills face to face what he should not look upon or kill, he carries evil with him to pollute an innocent and unpopulated region.”²⁰ Even Johnson agrees that the snakes represent “the violence and the anger unleashed by the knowledge of lost freedom.”²¹ Most critics agree that the snakes represent a break down in society along ideological, sociological, philosophical, or physical lines. At this point in the epic, the only battle left worth fighting is the metaphysical battle for the soul of Rome. This is the battle Cato fights on the Libyan sands. To attempt to determine whether Cato is fighting at this point for Caesar or Pompey is ludicrous. He fights the snakes and all they represent: loss of clear boundaries, fear of death, passions, the ethical collapse of Rome, and the ethical collapse of man.

Examining Cato’s encounter with these snakes through the lens of the narrative structure helps to make some sense of the cartoonish nature of this scene. Both the snakes, in their brutality, and Cato, in his idealism, appear to be a bit of a caricature. When read through the lens of narrative structure, it is evident that Lucan is attempting to cast this ideological struggle into the narrative structure of epic poetry. I argue that the scene is undoubtedly functional in the narrative sense. Though Cato is a flawed character

²⁰ Fantham (1992b) 109.

²¹ Johnson (1987) 57.

and the march serves no real strategic purpose, Lucan narrates the actions according to the structure of the large scale epic battle. Moreover, Lucan presents this battle as successful, despite its failure. The primary function of the collective battle motif is to distinguish the two combatants. Elsewhere, in the more traditional battle scenes of this epic, this has not happened. Here, however, the sides are clearly distinguished. For the first time in the *Bellum Ciuile* we have thus far encountered a fully functional, if unusual, battle scene. In the next scene, the melee, we will see how the distinctions established in the collective fight hold true.

The Melee BC 9.737-889: The Power of Fear

Once the snakes begin their attack of Cato's men there is a series of brutal and dehumanizing deaths as the men succumb to the wounds of the snake bites. As Cato observes the suffering of his men, he can only watch, but Lucan says that his presence brings them strength and hope (9.885-887). Cato appears helpless, yet Lucan tells us that for his men he proved that pain was powerless and gave them courage to die nobly (9.887-889). The attack is completely one-side; all the victories are gained by the snakes. To remind us of the epic setting of these attacks, Lucan includes many elements of the traditional melee scenes in his narrative, including biographies of both the victims and victors as well as detailed descriptions of the wounds. While the snakes defeat the men, they gain strength through the human suffering. The gruesome effects of the snake bites offer Cato and his men the opportunity to face death, and the fear of death, in all its brutality.

The first victim is Aulus, an Etruscan standard bearer. Lucan narrates his death according to the traditional leitmotifs of the melee scene. He provides a brief biography and then a detailed description of his death and the effects of his wound.

signiferum iuuenem Tyrrheni sanguinis Aulum
torta caput retro dipsas calcata momordit.

9.737-738

[The dipsas bent his head backwards and bit Aulus the young standard bearer of the Tyrrhenians.]

Lucan, as is characteristic of the epic tradition, introduces the victor, the *dipsas*, and the victim, the young man, Aulus. Lucan then describes the wound as if he were describing a spear going through the body of a warrior. He spares none of the detail found in Virgil or in Homer. Only instead of describing the piercing of a spear, he describes the effects of the snake's venom:

uix dolor aut sensus dentis fuit, ipsaque leti
frons caret inuidia, nec quidquam plaga minatur.
ecce subit uirus tacitum, carpitque medullas
ignis edax calidaque incendit uiscera tabe.
ebibit umorem circum uitalia fusum
pestis et in sicco linguam torrere palato
coepit; defessos iret qui sudor in artus,
non fuit, atque oculos lacrimarum uena refugit.

9. 739-746

[There was hardly any pain or feeling from the bite. The look of the wound itself lacked hatred, nor did it threaten any plague. Behold the quiet venom rises; it seizes the marrow with greedy flame and it burns the warm intestines with decease. The poison dries the moisture that surrounds the vital organs and it begins to consume tongue in the dry mouth; there was no sweat which runs down the tired limbs, and the flow of tears fled the eyes.]

Though Aulus does not at first recognize that he has been bitten, the poison spreads throughout his body and Lucan tells us that he is consumed by a fire deep in his marrow.

This description of the poison spreading through the body closely resembles the epic narrator detailing the path a spear may take through the body of a victim as in a Homeric melee scene in which the author describes how a thrown spear severs the tongue or pins a warrior to the ground.²² In his melee scene, Lucan substitutes the snake venom for a traditional weapon.

Lucan next narrates the reaction of Aulus to his snake bite. This is the chance for Aulus to prove his *virtus*. Lucan clearly feels that Aulus fails both Cato and Rome by his actions:

non decus imperii, non maesti iura Catonis
ardentem tenere uirum, ne spargere signa
auderet totisque furens exquireret aruis
quas poscebat aquas sitiens in corde uenenum.

9. 747-750

[Neither national pride, nor the orders of grief stricken Cato could hold back the burning man, neither did he dare to spare the standard, thirsting and raging in his heart from poison he sought water to drink in all the sand.]

Lucan judges Aulus' actions to be *non decus*, not suited to the fatherland or to Cato. The poet judges that Aulus' actions are *non....tenere uirum*, not compatible with *virtus*. This phrase is an exact parallel to the effect of the snake bite, which Lucan calls his *uirus*. *Vir* is a loaded word. It refers to a hero's strength, or the special *ἀρετή* of the warrior in the epic tradition. By failing his leader and his country, Aulus does not perform his *virtus*.

As the effects of the bite worsen, Aulus further fails. Driven mad by the thirst caused by the snake bite he first digs in the sand, then drinks the salt water from the Syrtes, and finally opens his veins and drinks his own blood (9.756-60). In this grotesque act Aulus fails Cato and the state. Here Aulus, by his self-slaughter, detracts from and

²² Cf. *Il.* 5. 21-85 in which Greeks and Trojans trade spear throws before Diomedes begins his *aristeia*.

threatens Cato's cause, and offers an example of the power of fear, slavery, and death. Aulus represents the failure of Cato's moral lessons. Matthew Leigh argues that Cato leaves Aulus in order to cover up the truth. The vice (thirst) which he thought he had conquered is now seen in all its power.²³ In fact, as Lucan tells us, after witnessing Aulus' actions, Cato hustles his men out of there, fearing that if his men stayed nearby they would be perverted by this example.

However, Cato marches on only to encounter a more dreadful image of death as Sabellus is attacked by the tiny *seps*. Lucan likewise describes the effects of the wound as it slowly melts away the body (*BC* 9.766-788). As Sabellus' body is wasted away at the bite of the *seps* it is left exposed to the desert sun. Next Nasidius is bitten by the *prester*. The *prester*'s bite causes the body to swell and become inflamed. Lucan describes how Nasidius' face becomes swollen. Soon, however, the man's whole body becomes swollen (*BC* 9.789-804). In the midst of this painful death Lucan inserts a simile. True to the epic tradition in which the poet inserts a more familiar scene to help the audience understand the battle, Lucan includes a simile from the audience's world, here steam billowing out of a caldron, to help explain the effect of the *prester*'s bite on Nasidius:

spumeus accenso non sic exundat aeno
undarum cumulus, nec tantos carbasa Coro
curuauere sinus.

9. 798-800

[The foaming cloud of steam does not pour out so violently from a steaming cauldron, nor do the sails billow with a storm.

As steam billows out of a caldron, or as the wind fills the sail, so Nasidius' limbs can no longer contain the swelling and his skin bursts.

²³ Leigh (1997) 272-3.

Cato and his men march on, encountering more snakes. In this melee scene Lucan offers a counter to his earlier melee scene at the battle of Massilia in Book 3. As in that scene, there are many named warriors, but in book three Lucan only names the victims, not the victors. Here, Lucan offers a more complete melee scene, giving names to both the victims of the snake bites and the snake themselves. Tullus is bitten by the *haemhorris* (9.809-810); Levus succumbs to a deadly snake bite (9.815-821); the *iaculus* takes down Paulus (9.822-827); the *basilisk* defeats Murrus (9. 828-838). The battle scene, though somewhat unconventional, contains many aspects that are found in Homeric and Virgilian battle scenes. While the deaths in the Massilian battle represent the vanity of heroism in civil war, the deaths in the Libyan excursus represent the struggle for freedom.

The importance of this Libyan excursus is clarified at the end of the melee scene, in which Lucan stresses the importance of Cato's presence to his men:

cogit tantos tolerare labores
summa ducis uirtus, qui nuda fusus harena
excubat atque omni fortunam prouocat hora.
omnibus unus adest fatis; quocumque uocatus
aduolat atque ingens meritum maiusque salute
contulit, in letum uires; puduitque gementem
illo teste mori. quod ius habuisset in ipsum
ulla lues? casus alieno in pectore uincit
spectatorque docet magnos nil posse dolores.

9.881-889

[The great strength of the leader, who keeps guard lying on the bare sand and challenges destiny in every hour, forces them to tolerate such labors. He alone is present at the death of all; wherever he is called he rushes and he offers a great benefit, greater even than life, courage even in death. The soldier was ashamed to die with a groan while Cato was watching. Could any plague have force against him? He conquered calamities in the hearts of others, and proved by his mere presence that pain was powerless.]

This passage begins by claiming that Cato's *virtus* inspired his men to complete actions that they would normally have been unable to withstand: *cogit..uirtus* (9.881-2). Some have read this as a negative estimation of Cato's empathy for his troops, understanding *cogit* to imply an unwilling, or forced, endurance. Matthew Leigh has argued that at this point Lucan implements gladiatorial imagery to describe Cato's action. Cato continues to fight even though he is *nuda fusus harena*, laid out on the bare sand.²⁴ Similarly, Lucan tells us that Cato *prouocat fortuna*, a term that is directly drawn from the repertoire of the Stoic athlete or gladiator. As Lucan goes on to point out, however, Cato was present for all who called and brought great consolation with him: *omnibus...contulit* (9.884-86). He provides strength in death: *in letum uires* (9.886).²⁵ This is really all a leader can do in this situation. He is not remaining aloof from the dangers: rather, Lucan stresses that Cato becomes involved in the struggle with the snakes. He provides strength for his men by his presence and by his witness.

When the bizarre images of this melee scene are read through the lens of traditional epic motifs of the melee scene, we come to a new appreciation of what Lucan

²⁴ Leigh (1997) 274 discusses the use of military vocabulary in this scene: *fusus* is regularly used for a fighter, an army laid low in combat (see *TLL* vi. 1.569.70ff.) "*Nuda...harena*" suggests the location of that combat. *provocare* as a challenge to a fight in general, see *OLD* *provoco* 3a. A provocator was a specific type of gladiator, for which see Cic. *Sest.* 134 and *CIL* v.4502. *CIL* v.2884 also offers *provocare* in the sense of following the profession of provocator. Seneca as well used the term *provocare* as a key term in "Stoic athleticism", Sen. *Q. Nat.* 6.32.3, he claims that '*Ingenti...animo mors provocanda est*', and at *Ep.* 64.4 comments that the effect of reading Sextius is that '*Libet omnis casus provocare, libet exclamare*', '*Quid cessas fortuna? Congredere: paratum vides.*' Cf. also Sen. *Ep.* 67.6 and *Prov.* 2.9. *provocare* as a challenge to a fight in general, see *OLD* *provoco* 3a. A provocator was a specific type of gladiator, for which see Cic. *Sest.* 134 and *CIL* v.4502. *CIL* v.2884 also offers *provocare* in the sense of following the profession of provocator. Seneca as well used the term *provocare* as a key term in "Stoic athleticism", Sen. *Q. Nat.* 6.32.3, he claims that '*Ingenti...animo mors provocanda est*', and at *Ep.* 64.4 comments that the effect of reading Sextius is that '*Libet omnis casus provocare, libet exclamare*', '*Quid cessas fortuna? Congredere: paratum vides.*' Cf. also Sen. *Ep.* 67.6 and *Prov.* 2.9.

²⁵ Leigh (1997) 274-275 reads this as ironic: 'While it is asserted that Cato's lessons bring "a huge boon, greater than salvation" (*ingens meritum maiusque salute*), it is hard to forget that the one service this huge boon of "strength against death" cannot perform is actually to stop men from dying.'

is attempting to show us in this scene. Far from a painful and largely vain journey through the Libyan deserts, Lucan shows us a journey that fortifies the men's devotion to the Roman cause. Cato provides strength as his men undergo the struggle caused by the snakes. It is at this point that Lucan can finally narrate a properly functioning battle scene. While the snakes represent Caesar, and through this connection to Caesar, tyranny in general, it is possible for Cato, who represents freedom, to engage in the battle because finally the two combatants are clearly distinguished. Lucan narrates the men's encounter with the snakes similarly to the epic traditional battle melees so that we may imagine these events according to those traditional motifs. In the end, we see a fully functional, if unsuccessful, epic battle scene. The narrator supports the actions of the men. He approves of their struggle because it serves to glorify Rome as opposed to one leader. The intent of Cato's march is to convert mercenaries into soldiers of Rome.

The Rout *BC* 9.890-914: Saved by the *Psylii*

The rout scene traditionally accomplishes two things: it solidifies the victory of one side and captures the emotional responses of those affected by, but not directly involved in, the battle, such as parents, wives, and elders. Lucan concludes Cato's march with a sort of rout scene. As the men flee from the snakes, they meet a local tribe, the *Psylii*. This tribe is immune to the snakes' poison and help Cato and his men overcome their bites. This rout scene narrates a shift in fortune. Whereas before Cato and his men were helpless against the snake bites, now with the help of the *Psylii* Cato and his men

are able to control the snakes and their poison. In this scene Lucan stresses the importance of communal preservation at the risk of personal injury. The Psylii, because they live successfully in the deserts, have vowed to help fellow travelers and by their actions enable Cato and his men to pass safely. This sort of community good is the type of heroism Lucan has been searching for throughout the epic.

Throughout the *Bellum Ciuile*, *Fortuna* has played an important role, often aiding Caesar.²⁶ Finally, though late, *Fortuna* plays a role in Cato's march by leading them to the tribe of the Psylii.²⁷

uix miseris serum tanto lassata periclo
auxilium Fortuna dedit.

9.890-1

[Reluctantly and late did Fortune, tired of inflicting such dangers, give aid to their wretched plight.]

At this point Cato and his men, pursued by the serpents, meet the Psylii, who are immune to the snake bites because of their constant exposure throughout their lives. Lucan tells us that these natives expose their children to the venom of these snakes in small doses so that the infant may be immune to it. As the child grows, these doses become larger. They are thus able to control the snakes with their song. Lucan makes a point to tell us that this is heroic. Though the Psylii are safe themselves, they wish to help others who are in danger. It is these men who help the Romans and send the snakes into retreat (9.911-914).

These men protect the Romans with their song and the words. In the actions of the Psylii

²⁶ The role of *Fatum* and *Fortuna* in the *Bellum Civile* concerned critics throughout the late 19th century. See Sourlau (1885) and Oetl (1888) who found Epicurean elements in the poet's use of *fortuna*. Millard (1891) finds that *Fortuna* means the stoic idea of fate. More recently see Friedrich (1938) and Dick (1967). For a more general discussion of *Fortuna*'s role in Latin poetry, see Canter (1922).

²⁷ Dick (1967) 240 argues that Cato is beyond the importance of *Fortuna*. This claim however is false. While Cato is certainly not as bound to *Fortuna* as Caesar or Pompey, he is still not entirely free from *Fortuna*. As we see in this episode, *Fortuna* places Cato and his men in the Syrtes in the first place and *Fortuna* arranges their meeting with the Psylii as well.

the readers are finally able to see the saving power of philosophy that Cato had promised. Scholars have criticized Cato for failing to provide safety for his troops, for merely being spectator to their hardships. We see finally, in the appearance of the Psylli, the safety that Cato had promised, and it comes from the very antithesis of combat—from songs and words. Both fear of death and death itself are finally routed in the actions of the Psylli.

While Lucan generally approves of Cato's march, Cato fails where the Psylli succeed for he is able to provide strength to the dying men, but he is unable to stop them from dying. I argue that in this march Cato himself learns something about leadership. When the Psylli save the Romans by sucking the venom out of the wounds (9.933-937), they actively take on the wounds of the wounded. Thus they following the precedent set by Decius Mus, a true expiatory sacrifice, by taking on the pollution and sins of the people. Had Lucan completed the civil war and narrated Cato's suicide at Utica, we would have seen Cato's final realization of this wish. He, like the Psylli, like Decius, would have assumed the sins of the people that had led to civil war and become the *devotio* he foresaw in Book 2.

Conclusion

In his narration of Cato's march through the Libyan Desert, Lucan is careful to present a functional epic battle narrative that includes all four type scenes. In the advance Cato's speeches clearly distinguish his men from their foes, fear and death, as represented by the snakes. In the collective fight Lucan further strengthens this division by focusing on the snakes' connection to Medusa and to tyranny. The melee is fully functional and includes descriptions of both the men who are wounded and the snakes who wound them.

Finally, the rout scene comments on the heroism of the Psylii as they put the snakes to flight. So, unlike in the first two battle narratives discussed in this dissertation, Lucan's narrative of Cato's march is successful. Though Cato fails, failure in civil war is victory.

Conclusion: Exemplarity, Heroism, and Philosopher.

The Mutability of Heroism

Shortly after the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar lands at the site of Troy. What follows is Lucan's contemplation on the role of the epic poet and its audience. In this episode, Caesar visits the fabled landscape.¹ As he tours the ruins, however, Caesar is unable to recognize the monuments. An elderly guide then explains the importance of these monuments to Caesar:

circumit exustae nomen memorabile Troiae
magnaue Phoebi quaerit uestigia muri.
iam siluae steriles et putres robore trunci
Assaraci pressere domos et temple deorum
iam lassa radice tenant, ac tota teguntur
Pergama dumetis: etiam periere ruinae.
aspicit Hesiones scopulos siluaque latentis
Anchisae thalamus; quo iudex sederit antro,
unde puer raptus caelo, quo uertice Nais
luxerit Oenone: nullum est sine nomine saxum.
inscius in sicco serpentem puluere riuum
transierat, qui Xanthus erat. securus in alto
gramine ponebat gressus: Phryx incola manes
Hectoreos calcare uetat. discussa iacebant
saxa nec ullius faciem seruantia sacri:
“Herceas” monstrator ait “non respicis aras?”

9.964-979

[He walks around a memorable name—burnt-out Troy—and seeks the mighty remains of the wall of Phoebus. Now barren woods and trunks with rotting timber have submerged Assaracus' houses and, with roots now weary, occupy the temples of the gods, and all Pergamum is veiled by thickets: even the ruins suffered oblivion. He sees Hesione's rock and Anchise's marriage-chamber

¹ On this episode see Green (1991); Hardie (1993) 107; Edwards (1996) 64; Rossi (2001); Narducci (2002) 177-80; Gowing (2005) 89-92; Tesoriero (2005).

hiding in the woods; the cave where the adjudicator sat; the place from which the boy was snatched to heaven; the peak where naiad Oenone grieved; no stone is without a story. Unwittingly, he had crossed a stream creeping in dry dust—this was Xanthus. Oblivious, he placed his footsteps in the deep grass; the Phrygian local tells him not to tread upon the shade of Hector. Scattered stones were lying there, preserving no appearance of anything sacred: the guide says: “Have you no respect for the Hercean altars?”

Caesar is famously lost in this passage. Lucan clearly comments on his ignorance of the ruins calling him unknowing (*inscius*, 9.974).² Caesar remains oblivious to the story of Troy, despite being surrounded by it.

Ahl agrees that Caesar is shown here to have a weak understanding of the Trojan story, focusing on his shortcomings as a tourist.³ Bartsch arrives at a similar conclusion:

And indeed, the earth he (Caesar) tramples would be meaningless were it not for the guide’s intervention: through this man’s eyes, through his interpretation of the overgrown grass and scattered stones, old Troy comes alive, the site of legend and history: through him, “no stone lacks a name.” Otherwise Caesar is *inscius*, unknowing, without the Phrygian’s ability to provide a narrative for the ruins, the fragments of history remain only that, a heap of traces (*uestigia*) with no internal cohesion and nothing to hold them together. No one asks about the nature of this native’s authority; that is not the point. Certainly no witness to the fall of Troy, he nonetheless carves out a story from the little he has, and it is enough. For Caesar is happy with his version of history: inspired by the tale, he sees an ancient city where we could only see the ruins of ruins.⁴

Caesar is completely unable to understand the ruins of Troy because he is unable to broaden his perspective. Caesar understands where he is and what he looks at only after the tour guide explains it. Nevertheless, Caesar still does not see the whole picture. He is

² Lucan seems to offer Caesar as a counterpoint to Alexander the Great’s visit to Troy. Where Alexander recognized the monuments, Caesar appears lost. On the similarities between Caesar’s visit of Troy and Alexander’s, see especially Zwierlein (1986) 465-70; Rutz (1970) 235-265, esp. 249). On Alexander’s visit to Troy, see Diod. 17.17.2; Plut. *Alex.*, 15.4; Arr. *Anab.* 1.11.7-8. All the sources mention that he also made offers.

³ Ahl (1976) 215. For a general analysis of the Trojan scene and its interpretative problems, see further Zwierlein (1986) 461-462.

⁴ Bartsch (1994) 132.

only to view his surroundings from his own perspective. Like we readers, Caesar is left to construct his own meaning from ruins of the past. Due to Caesar's cluelessness, Johnson suggests that this moment is the "funniest in Latin Literature."⁵ Ormand, however, suggests that Caesar is not entirely ignorant, but rather reads Troy with Roman sympathies. He recognizes the Troy of the *Aeneid* and not that of the *Iliad*.⁶ More recently Thorne follows Rossi and argues that Caesar is an adept tourist and recasts his tour of Troy to conform to his own agenda.⁷ It seems, therefore, that Caesar either recasts the traditional narrative through his own perspective, or, perhaps more innocently, misunderstands the tradition to begin with.

In his presentation of this scene, Lucan comments on the mutability of the definition of epic and its definition of heroism. Here in the location of the original epic, Caesar, who acts as the reader of epic, has no idea how to understand what he sees. Only when the guide, who serves as the poet, explains the monuments can Caesar understand his surroundings. Lucan is concerned that a reader of his epic (or any epic really) may approach his poem in a similar fashion. Like Caesar, the ignorant reader pieces together a narrative so that "no stone lacks a name;" every monument is significant, even if the significance is misunderstood. The meanings that Caesar gives to these monuments, however, are false. Only after the guide, the poet, has explained what the monuments actually are can the audience understand the true meaning of the ruins. In this scene Lucan makes a parallel between the reader and Caesar, for both create an impression of

⁵Johnson (1987) 119; cf. Edward (1996) 65.

⁶ Ormand (1994) 38-55. See also Quint (1993) 6-7 who emphasizes that Caesar's tour of Troy offers a particularly Trojan-centric sightseeing tour, beginning at the palace of Assaracus and ending not with the tomb of Achilles, but with that of his Trojan victim, Hector. Like Orman, Quint traces the origin of this "Trojan" version of the Trojan War to Virgil's epic.

⁷ Thorne (2010) 215; Rossi (2001) 313-326.

epic heroism that may be misguided or wrong. Just as the guide corrects Caesar's interpretation, it is the poet's duty to explain the proper role of the epic tradition.

The entire *Bellum Ciuile* has represented a contemplation of how one should properly define heroism within in the context of the civil war. Civil war complicates the definition of heroism due to the fractured nature of the community that characterizes civil war. This dissertation has explored how Lucan articulates this exploration of heroism through his narrations of the large scale battle scenes, forcing his readers to reconsider the actions that have typically been considered heroic in the tradition of epic poetry. Lucan acts as the guide and attempts to correct the audience's understanding of these actions. By placing the horrific actions of the civil war into the type scenes through which epic battles are traditionally presented, he exposes the fallacy of determining heroism solely based on martial exploits. Instead he offers a more nuanced explanation of heroism, which considers the morality of the actions as well as their bravery.

Lucan and the New Heroism

The battle scenes of the *Bellum Ciuile* create a composite image of Lucan's study of epic heroism. Through his narrative of these battle scenes, Lucan points out the faults of heroism as defined by actions in the context of warfare and instead argues for a redefinition of heroism. He has shown that in the context of civil war, heroism cannot be earned by actions in combat. In his battle narratives Lucan exposes the typically heroic actions of warriors as merely brutal and senseless killing. The civil war forbids the logical appropriation of heroism to these actions. In place of this type of heroism Lucan offers an alternative. The divisive, bloody warrior is replaced by the unifying,

philosophical hero. The heroic model of Cato replaces Caesar and Pompey, who both represent the traditional mode of heroism.

Poetry in general and epic poetry in particular served exemplary purposes. Poets elevated the actions performed in war to the status of *exempla* by praising them and thereby setting them as models to be followed. Epic poetry has always been highly concerned with this function of poetry. The hero of the *Iliad*, Achilles, is depicted sitting by his tent singing songs about the actions of earlier heroes (κλέα ἀνδρῶν).⁸ Elsewhere in the epic, such as Phoenix's speech to Achilles, the actions of past heroes are upheld as worthy of emulation.⁹ As Achilles looked to the actions of earlier heroes to inform his actions, he too thought of how his actions and glory would inform those that came after him. Epic heroism has always served a paradigmatic function. Young men (and women at times) were called to fulfill their duties as did the heroes of old. This is no less true for Roman epic and history.

Crucial to a Roman fulfilling this duty, however, is the idea of the "good contest." It is in these contests that those exemplary qualities, *uirtus* and *honor*, are won. Colin Barton has explained that "*uirtus* and *honores* are both won and lost in the crucible of the contest" in the public arena.¹⁰ The context of the "good contest" affects the possibility and nature of both *uirtus* and *honor*. In Republican Rome, this contest was the protection and service to the *res publica*. However, as Rome shifted from Republic to Principate and power moved from the community to the individual, the role of the individual in society

⁸ *Iliad* 9.187-189 where the embassy sent to persuade Achilles find him singing songs.

⁹ *Iliad* 9.529-605 where Phoenix tells Achilles of the actions of the warriors when the Curetes besieged the Aetolians.

¹⁰ Barton (2004) 34.

changed greatly. So too did the nature of the contest in which individuals could engage.

As J.R. Fears writes:

when men came to believe that the charisma of victory no longer resided in the collective entity of the *res publica* but rather in the figure of an individual leader, communal authority and republican government were doomed and monarchy was the only reality.¹¹

Lucan's civil war describes the details of such a paradigmatic shift. The men in Lucan's epic are left without a compass. The very method by which heroism has been judged has become obsolete. These men, therefore, are stuck in the shift precipitated by the rise of monarchy. The question of Lucan's hero, therefore, is no simple question, for as the *Bellum Ciuile* narrates the shifting paradigm of Roman political culture, it also narrates the shift in understanding what it means to be exemplary.

So far in my discussion of Lucan's epic I have primarily been concerned with Lucan's definition of heroism without connecting this ideal to any one character in the epic. At this point, however, it seems fitting to examine to what degree the three projected heroes confirm the particular brand of heroism that Lucan seems to be suggesting in his epic. This approach to the *Bellum Ciuile* has been common since Berthe Marti offered Caesar, Cato, and Pompey as the candidates for the "hero of the *Bellum Ciuile*." ¹²

¹¹ Fears (1981) 824

¹² Marti (1945) 352-354.

Modes of Interpretation

Lucan offers his readers three protagonists in the proem to the poem: Caesar, Pompey, and Cato. In his prologue in Book 1, Lucan introduces these three leaders with metaphors: Caesar is introduced as a lightning bolt (1.151-157), Pompey as the dead stump of a once great tree (1.135-143), and Cato is opposed to the gods as the champion of the defeated (1.128). Each of these heroes offers a different perspective through which to read the poem. Pompey represents a “post-Homeric” heroism that has been highly influenced by tragedy and focuses more on the internal struggle of the hero. Ahl summons Apollonius’ Jason as a suitable parallel to Pompey, as both are paralyzed by a sense of *amechania*, indecision or inaction.¹³ Ralph Johnson also characterizes Lucan’s Pompey as a bumbling, sensitive scapegoat and leader guilty of the corruption and collapse of the Republic. Pompey becomes the victim of history.¹⁴ He fails because he is a remnant of the past. He fails to see the shift in power that comes with Caesar and, moreover, misunderstands his role in that shift. According to Johnson, Pompey is a dinosaur and ineffective because he does not know how to respond to the struggles of civil war. As this study has made clear, however, Pompey represents an outdated style of heroism that is not sufficient for the civil war.

The second candidate for the hero of the *Bellum Ciuile*, Caesar, offers complications that are completely different than Pompey’s. If Pompey is consumed by a sense of *amechania*, Caesar is an endless source of power whose restlessness always

¹³ Ahl (1976) 150-156. Bartsch (1994) 73-100 likewise views Pompey as the “pivot” of the readers’ understanding of the Civil War. He represents the “Stoic *proficiens*” the man who progresses from unenlightened to enlightened individual. See also Marti (1945); Brisset (1964) 114f.; Conte (1968) 239-41; Menz (1952) 86; Narducci (1979) 125-130; Rimbaud (1956). Ahl (1976) 190-192 views Caesar as a vestige of the old, Homeric warrior, who is defined by his exploits on the battlefield.

¹⁴ Johnson (1988) 67-73.

pushes him to do more. In the character of Pompey Lucan was forced to make the morally superior (it has been claimed) into the defeated leader. In Caesar, however, he is forced to narrate the success of someone whom he views as morally inferior. Ahl claims:

Lucan's task would have been easier if he had been well-disposed to Caesar and to the consequences of history (Caesar's victory). Since he was not, he had to face numerous rhetorical and historical difficulties.¹⁵

Lucan presents Caesar as a man who is in complete control of his men as well as nature itself. This depiction of Caesar as a force of nature becomes evident in the prologue. Here Lucan describes Pompey as a rotted-out oak and Caesar as the lightning that strikes and destroys that oak (*BC* 1.143-157). Later Caesar compares himself to the forces of nature.¹⁶

Throughout the *Bellum Ciuile*, Caesar moves from being portrayed as a force of nature to being portrayed as a divine force.¹⁷ Likewise, Ralph Johnson characterizes Caesar as an unstoppable force bent only on destruction.¹⁸ Caesar appears in the *Bellum Ciuile* as the catalyst for change. He is the destruction of the Republic, yet Lucan cannot allow him to stand as the hero of his epic. Caesar, though the most powerful character in the epic, does not represent the ethos of the epic. He represents a traditional sort of hero that is defined by his exploits on the battle field. In Lucan's depiction of such action, Caesar appears as the embodiment of rage and destruction. As foreshadowed in the prologue, Caesar is a raging fire that will set the whole world ablaze (1.155-157).

¹⁵ Ahl (1976) 190.

¹⁶ *BC* 3.362-366; 370-72 (here Lucan compares himself to the wind and fire).

¹⁷ Famously in Caesar's nighttime crossing back to Italy he is caught in a storm with the boatman Amyclas. Here Caesar reveals himself in control of nature itself (*BC* 5.578-585).

¹⁸ Johnson (1988) 101-107.

Though in his introduction to the characters Lucan equates Cato with a god and subsequently presents him as an oracle, a *sapiens*, and as the *pater patriae*, nevertheless he has been read as a caricature of Stoic virtue that is stubborn and unaffected by the destiny of his soldiers. The Stoic saint does not stir our sympathy.¹⁹ Others concede that while Cato is the Stoic hero of the epic, he is too cold and passionless to be the hero and that “he remains a lifeless abstraction.”²⁰ Matthew Leigh, focusing on Lucan’s description of Cato’s desert march, says that Cato does not liberate his men, but seems satisfied with the show of their sad and unusual deaths.²¹ What kind of heroism is this? These scholars have all argued for a negative view of Cato. His actions, while noble, are pointless and his *aristeia* in the Libyan Desert is too far removed from the battles of the civil war to provide any advantage for the republican cause in the civil war as a whole.

There has been some support for a more sympathetic reading of Cato. Shadi Bartsch and Francesca D’Alessandro Behr have argued for a more positive reading of Cato’s actions. According to Bartsch, Cato represents the maintenance of boundaries and defender of traditional values.²² Moreover, Behr has argued that in the person of Cato the narrative and narrator seem to have reached a consensus on the merits of the hero. Lucan endorses Cato as the sole individual who represents his conception of heroism.²³ I argue as well that Cato represents the true, redefined, heroism that Lucan advocates throughout the *Bellum Ciuile*.

¹⁹ Johnson (1987) 55.

²⁰ Marti (1945) 361 and Hemmen (1954) 125; see also Fantham (1992) and Hershkowitz (1998) 236 who claim that Lucan’s Cato is, in fact, a failed Stoic hero.

²¹ Leigh (1997) 274-82.

²² Bartsch (1997) 140-41.

²³ Behr (2007) 116-123.

Civil War and the Obstacles to Traditional Heroism

When Cato's actions are read in the context of the civil war, Lucan's presentation of both the man and his actions makes more sense. Civil war is the narrative of competing ethical frameworks. As part of these ethical frameworks, the definition and identity of an epic hero are intimately connected to their role within their society. In the tumultuous society of civil war, the definition of the hero must necessarily be changed as well. When the actions in battle are performed as part of a unified society, the hero can safely be praised for his bravery in battle. In a society rent by civil war, however, heroism is not so simple. In the *Bellum Ciuile* Lucan presents two divergent views of Roman society. Matthew Roller blames the discordant ethical framework for the loss of clearly defined heroism:

A consistent, coherent ethical discourse—praising and blaming, and deploying value terms with reference to the actions of others—therefore requires a notionally coherent, well-defined community to serve as the social basis for moral valuation.²⁴

This understanding of society complicates the hero's actions and the audience's judgment of those actions. Not only must the hero reflect his society's ethical framework, but in the Roman tradition, the hero must also exhibit both *pietas* and *uirtus*.

In the civil war *uirtus*, martial valor directed against members of the same community, incriminates the soldiers. For the characters who view the present conflict not as a civil war but as a war against an external enemy *uirtus* is the defining characteristic of the hero. Matthew Roller describes the two narrative viewpoints that are present in Lucan's epic as the communitarian viewpoint and the alienating viewpoint. The communitarian viewpoint sees the civil war as a tragedy that has taken place between

²⁴ Roller (1996) 321, Roller also concedes that such a society may not have ever existed.

a single community that, despite this conflict, remains intact. The alienating viewpoint, however, views the civil war as a conflict between two distinct communities. The communitarian viewpoint is most clearly represented in the character of Pompey while the alienating viewpoint is found in Caesar.

The proponent of this “alienating” viewpoint is most commonly associated with the Caesarians. The first articulation of this perspective comes at the initial point of conflict in the poem—Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon. The vision of Rome that appears to Caesar as he stands on the river bank asks Caesar to put down the Roman standards (1.185-86). Caesar’s response betrays his view of the civil war. He claims that he does not make war against the community but only against his enemies. These enemies, he claims, will ultimately receive the blame for his invasion of Rome (1.200-201). As becomes clear in his following speeches Caesar does not wish to be seen as the alienator, and that instead he views Pompey as the purveyor of civil war. Caesar believes that *ius* and *pietas* are on his side. As the narrative progresses, however, Caesar’s connection to the alienating view of the conflict is strengthened. In the description of Caesar’s march south (2.439-46), we are told that he rejoices in destroying the men, towns, and fields.²⁵ In Caesar’s action we have a direct conflict between *pietas* and *uirtus* that we saw in Pompey’s actions in Dyrrachium. Unlike Pompey, however, Caesar chooses to indulge his desire for *uirtus*. As a result of this indulgence Caesar jeopardizes his heroism and becomes a monster.

. The communitarian viewpoint seems to be preferred by the narrator, but it consistently proves incompatible with both the historical circumstances of the epic as well as the epic tradition in general. Pompey, because of his insistence on the

²⁵ Fantham (1992) 165; Woodcock (1959) 196-97

communitarian view of the civil war, is ineffective. He refuses to engage Caesar in outright battle because of *pietas*. Caesar is not only a member of the same community, but also a family member. This *pietas* is noble, but leads in the end to a prolonged and needlessly bloody war. In the person of Pompey, this communitarian viewpoint is viewed as useless or worse in the civil war.

Not only does Pompey embody the concept of *pietas*, but it is *pietas* that also forces him into the communitarian view. However, it becomes increasingly obvious that *pietas* and the communitarian view are contradictory, for how can Pompey wage a war to preserve his community when that war is against his own family? To engage in this war, therefore, would require him to reject his *pietas*.²⁶ So then Pompey, and the brand of heroism that he represents, is doomed to fail, because his brand of heroism is anachronistic. In a civil war, *pietas* is useless, if not detrimental. In the battle of Dyrrachium, Pompey has surrounded Caesar's army and could end the war immediately by killing them. He restrains his men's swords, however (6.299-305). Lucan calls Pompey *pious* (305), which seems to be a positive judgment, for restraining his men's swords. This act of *pietas*, however, is responsible for the extension of war. By suppressing his men's *uirtus*, Pompey gives life to Caesar's cause and they are able to fight another day. In this context, Lucan does not praise Pompey for this act, but instead condemns him, for in this instance Pompey's piety comes into direct conflict with *uirtus*, the other positive epic characteristic.²⁷

²⁶ On the conflict between *pietas* and *virtus* in Lucan see Roller (1996) 321-323; Moore 1989 (5-14) and Hellegouarc'h (1963) 244-46.

²⁷ Roller (1996) 325.

While Pompey has his hands tied in civil war by *pietas* and is not able to realize *virtus*, Caesar, who is not restrained by moral boundaries and can freely engage in civil war, is successful but consistently condemned by the poet. Caesar, who, unlike Pompey, is not restrained by moral boundaries, can unquestionably engage in civil war. His actions, however, destroy the community. As Matthew Roller has argued, heroism is impossible without both *pietas* and *uirtus*. Pompey's *pietas* negates his *uirtus* and Caesar's *uirtus* negates his *pietas*. A third option presents itself in the person of Cato, who successfully embodies both *pietas* and *uirtus*.

Thus far the two main characters, Pompey and Caesar, each represent mutually exclusive modes of heroism: one that prejudices *pietas* at the expense of performing *uirtus* and the other that prejudices *uirtus* to the total obliteration of *pietas*. Neither of these modes have produced a successful epic hero. Two heroic virtues, *pietas* and *uirtus*, come together in the character of Cato. Cato demonstrates the *pietas* that Caesar rejects by maintaining the correct community of obligation among those whom he views as maintaining the legality of the Roman republic. Moreover he encourages similar action in his men by impressing on them the importance of becoming soldiers of Rome rather than soldiers of Caesar, Pompey, or even of himself. Cato also manages to pair this sense of *pietas* with a sense of *uirtus*. He protects his *uirtus* by encouraging his men to fight the true enemy, fear of death. Lucan turns this character into a philosophical hero. Cato is the stoic sage who fights against Caesar's tyrannical desire and mental lethargy, and against the indifference of the gods.²⁸

Lucan presents Cato as the good general because of his attempt within the context of civil war to represent both *pietas* and *uirtus*. Cato represents a Roman political leader

²⁸ D'Alessandro (2007) 163.

who is committed to the state at the expense of sacrificing all to ensure its success. Throughout the *Bellum Ciuile* Cato expresses his desire to preserve the Roman Republic. In the famous exchange between Cato and Brutus in Book 2, Cato talks about himself as the father of the dying Republic (2.297-305; 2.389-91). Later in Book 9, as Cato leads his men through the deserts of Libya, Lucan describes the leader as the ideal Roman general who never lies to his troops, marches side by side with them, and does not request or expect special privileges (9.379-408).²⁹ Cato warns his men of the dangers that they will face on their trek and he chooses to undergo these struggles alongside them. This is the characteristic of a good Roman general.³⁰ The narrator himself seems pleased with Cato's particular brand of heroism. As Cato leads the march through the desert, Lucan calls this man the father of his country (*parens uerus patriae* 9.601), something that is not true for the other candidates.³¹

Many scholars have been drawn to the grotesque element that is ubiquitous in the Libyan march. The central question has been, if Lucan wishes to glorify Cato's march, why does he make the desecration of his men so ugly? This "deglamorization" of death is central to Lucan's rejection of Virgilian epic.³² The grotesque details employed in the description do not criticize the soldiers' sufferings, but rather stress the tragic futility of their sufferings.³³ Cato's men suffer for their leader, and Cato shows his love and support of his troops. It does not really matter if Cato and his men accomplish anything practical.

²⁹ For the selflessness attributed to the best Roman leaders see Gill (1997b) 232-33.

³⁰ Leigh (2000) 100; Conte (1968) 230.

³¹ D'Alessandro (2007) 130;

³² On the Virgilian "beautification" of death see D'Alessandro (2007) 130; Greene (1966) 93.

³³ D'Alessandro (2007) 130.

The narrator proclaims that Cato's virtue should be valued on its own merit with all success stripped off (*successu nuda remoto*, BC 9.597).

Success in battle is often more a result of luck than anything to do with *uirtus*. Livy, Polybius, and Plutarch have all contributed the growth of Roman *imperium* to *fortuna*.³⁴ Due to Caesar's association with *fortuna* throughout the epic, Lucan distinguishes *uirtus* from *fortuna*. In the *Bellum Ciuile*, *fortuna* favors the impious Caesar.³⁵ While in previous epics, most notably the *Aeneid*, victory and history appear as the fulfillment of the will of Jupiter, or fate, Lucan favors the defeated.³⁶ Therefore, Lucan wishes to accentuate the distance in his epic between *uirtus* and *fortuna*. He is happy to leave Caesar with *fortuna* as long as his Cato can have *uirtus*. To admit the legitimacy of victory would force Lucan to accept Caesar as the legitimate, moral victor of the civil war. Lucan cannot accept this conclusion. Instead he rejects that victory is the only legitimizing force, choosing Cato as the embodiment of his epic *uirtus* and the victor in spite of his defeat.

Cato and Neronian Rome

Having confirmed Cato as the best candidate for the hero of the *Bellum Ciuile*, we must ask ourselves why. Why would Lucan be so adamant about making Cato his hero?

³⁴ Luce 1977. On *uirtus* and *fortuna* as complementary or contrasting qualities present in the makeup of a successful man, see Wistrand 1987 and Kajanto 1981, discussing the dichotomy between moral effort and random chance in the literature of the early Empire.

³⁵ On Caesar's connect to Fate and Fortune see Dick (1967) 235-242.

³⁶ On the will of Jupiter in the *Aeneid* and of fate see Hejduk (2009) 279-327; Wilson (1979) 361-371. See also Nix (2008) 281-294 who argues that in Lucan Caesar represents Jupiter.

There are two reasons for this decision: the political context of the principate and the freedom offered through Stoicism. The political framework of the principate precluded the traditional avenues for the pursuit of *uirtus*. The squelching of political freedoms by the principate led thinkers to consider other modes of personal freedom, according to the beliefs of stoicism.

Frederic Ahl has claimed that the Roman Empire was an expansive and totalitarian empire with little room for the individual to move. He calls this the “Roman Microcosm”:

Vast though the Roman Empire was, it was also paradoxically small. Its largeness made it a prison in times of political oppression; nothing was beyond the emperor’s reach.³⁷

This loss of freedom primarily affected the Roman intelligentsia. The focus of the political identity must have shifted dramatically for the upper-class Roman. This shift in political identity from a republic in which an individual fulfilled a specific role to one in which he did not, or could not, closed one of the ancient avenues of winning *uirtus*. The holding and performing of political offices was the basis for winning *uirtus* and *gloria* in the old Republic. Not only was the political avenue for winning *uirtus* closed by the rise of the emperor, the *Pax Romana* also closed the military avenue for winning *uirtus*. By creating a peace among the neighbors, the Romans were no longer able to appropriately gain *uirtus* by fighting against a foreign enemy. In the *Bellum Ciuile* we see the perversion of *uirtus* that comes when this impetus is directed inward instead of outward. When this drive for *uirtus* is driven against one’s fellow citizens it perverts the proper function of *pietas*. What is left is a monstrous parody of *uirtus*.

³⁷ Ahl (1979) 22.

The Roman found it difficult to reconcile the ideals of *libertas* with an absolute ruler.³⁸ Therefore, along with the peace that the Caesars brought they also brought an ideological dilemma: they had lost their freedom not to an external enemy, but to themselves.³⁹ Roman writers therefore examined themselves to find the fault that led to this self-destructive impulse. There was no military weakness that led to this fall; there must instead be a moral breakdown within the state itself. A man like Julius Caesar became the embodiment of such a moral breakdown, since he was invincible and yet completely amoral, “capable of turning the sword of victory into the very vitals of the state.”⁴⁰ This loss of political freedom led writers to search for the freedom that could not be affected by external forces, not even by a totalitarian leader-- the freedom of a Stoic sage. Individual freedom, though, may not be sufficient. Something is needed from the external world to actualize this freedom. Moreover, Stoicism teaches that all matter is bound together.⁴¹ It is difficult to have personal freedom and still happily endure repression externally.⁴² Therefore this philosophical freedom spills over into political activism. The fight for individual freedom becomes the fight for freedom for the state. This is embodied in the character of Cato, who decides to engage in the civil war, even though he is secure in his freedom. He wishes to preserve that freedom for all.

³⁸ For a full discussion of the notion of *libertas* at Rome see C. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Empire*, Cambridge (1950).

³⁹ Horace in *Odes* 2.1 and *Epodes* 7 and 16. See also C.R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford, 1939, 1-9.

⁴⁰ Ahl (1979) 24

⁴¹ For a discussion of the Stoic notions of the physical nature of the universe see S. Sambursky, *The Physics of the Stoics*, London, 1959; H. A. Schotes, *Stoiches Physik, Psychologie und Theologie bei Lucan*, Bonn 1969, 14-46; Ahl (1979) Chapter 3.

⁴² This is fact is demonstrated in the life of Seneca who wears three masks: philosopher, statesman, poet. See Herington, 422 ff.

When both community and individual freedom are lost due to the societal changes
rent by the civil war, the path to heroism is limited. The political path has been closed by
monarchy and the martial path has been closed by Roman military supremacy and the
subsequent peace that this supremacy created. The personal freedom engendered by
philosophy encouraged the development of a different type of hero, namely one who
represents both moral fortitude and military prowess. The other candidates for hero,
Caesar and Pompey, represent, by and large, the defunct brand of heroism. As a central
character, Cato represents this new brand of heroism and a philosophic counterpoint to
the martial heroes of traditional epic.

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VITA

Matthew Crutchfield was born to Dale and Billie Crutchfield in Jefferson City, Missouri on May 24th in 1978. He lived a relatively happy life in suburban central Missouri. Largely due to the popularity of the Indiana Jones franchise, and his grandfather who was an archeology enthusiast, Matthew became interested in ancient history and archeology at an early age. Upon entering high school, Matthew, largely following the influence of his older sister, chose Latin for his foreign language. While at Jefferson City High School, he learned to love the language and culture of the ancient Romans from the imitable James Farris.

Upon graduating from High School in 1996, Matthew enrolled at Truman State University. After majoring in both History and English briefly, Matthew eventually returned to the study of the Classics. His decision to study Latin and Greek at the University level was guided largely through the influence of the Classics department at Truman.

After graduating from Truman State in 2000, Matthew began his graduate studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia. After completing his PhD course work and comprehensive exams, Matthew accepted a teaching position at Chaminade College Preparatory School, in St. Louis, MO.

For the last 8 years Matthew has been teaching Latin and Greek at Chaminade. In addition to teaching, Matthew has coached Cross Country and Track. He currently lives in St. Peters, MO with his wife, Julia, two children, Emma and Elijah, and two elderly dogs, Po and Guus.