Lucan’s Roman Apocalypse

A Trauma Theory Reading of Lucan’s *Pharsalia*

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Abstract:

This thesis seeks to conduct a trauma theory informed reading of Lucan's *Pharsalia* as a possible expression of individual trauma as well as a presentation of collective Roman trauma. The reading views Lucan's work through the lens of the sublime and specifically the relationship between trauma and the sublime. It examines the apocalyptic nature of traumatic experience via the portrayal of apocalyptic upheaval during the civil war fought between the epic's principal characters, Pompey and Caesar. The ways in which sublime trauma is depicted materially in relation to the body makes up the second major examination of the thesis. In studying Lucan's use of the body - individual bodies, state bodies, and the body of Lucan's text itself, the impact of trauma is measured.

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Huge thanks to my advisor, Dr Lisa Hau for all her help and support.

For Leto, whom this is all for.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis uses the Matthew Fox translation published by Penguin as the primary translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia* (2012). Although this Penguin edition is titled *Civil War,* to avoid confusion between references to Lucan's epic and the historical Civil War that is its subject I have decided to use the title *Pharsalia* when referring to Lucan's poem, when referring to Pompey and Caesar's Civil War, as opposed to the general concept of civil war, it will be capitalised. All line references are taken from this edition. The J.D. Duff (1928) translation published by Loeb was also referenced occasionally to improve my own understanding of the language the text used.

Lucan's *Pharsalia* is a challenging text of great emotion and scope. What can be pieced together and reconstructed of Lucan's biography suggests a politically and personally turbulent life. During the course of his career, Lucan came to the attention of Nero and their relationship allegedly soured severely enough that Lucan became involved in a plot to assassinate the Emperor alongside contemporaries such as Petronius; the conspiracy was discovered, and its members ordered to commit suicide.[1] As part of Nero's court, Lucan would not have been a stranger to violence, how it was wielded, or its impact considering Rome's regular use of violence as a political tool. It is the aim of this thesis to present a trauma theory reading of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. In 'Chapter One: Sublime Apocalypse' I have sought to use this approach to explore the ways in which Lucan utilises the sublime as it relates to traumatic experience, and apocalypse (as an extension of traumatic experience) to investigate the reality of living under Rome's principate. 'Chapter Two: A Body At War With Itself' I contend with the physical aspects of trauma; wounding, death, self-injury, and suicide to name a few, and the way Lucan turns the concept of bodily violence both inwards towards the

[1] Elaine Fantham, 2011, p.4

subject and outwards to the group to convey harm in a layered, contiguous sense. Making definitive biographical conclusions based on Lucan's *Pharsalia* is not possible. Although it is tempting and perhaps interesting to speculate on how specific events in Lucan's life may have directly influenced his writing, especially with regard to trauma at the personal level, there is simply not enough extant biographical evidence to make such conclusions as robust as they would need to be. As such this thesis will lean away from doing so, though where relevant the extant information that is available will be discussed.

It is probably fair to say that Lucan's *Pharsalia* groans under the weight of its subject matter. O'Higgins writes of Lucan, 'The picture that emerges from the *Pharsalia* is of a dazzling and anguished mind, striving to comprehend and express its vulnerability, responsibilities, and powers.'[2] *Pharsalia* is a work of incredible scope and depth, complexly written to express complex themes. Often raw and emotional it is, as Higgins' expresses in the above quote, striving to present the unrepresentable: to understand and express the trauma of life under the Roman principate, and the principate's own relationship with its past.

I have drawn extensively from trauma theory and studies on the expression and representation of trauma as it relates to historical writing, as well as texts that deal specifically with modern day trauma studies. While *Pharsalia* is not a history, certainly not in the modern sense nor in the mode of ancient historians writing Roman history, it is very much an epic poem with all the tendency towards ahistorical embellishment and fictionality that may suggest. However, given that mytho-history was common in Roman writings and that the principate had as part of its literary bedrock the constructed mytho-

[2] O'Higgins, 1988, p.209

history of the *Aeneid*, approaching Lucan in this way is entirely appropriate. After all, Livy begins Book One of his history with accounts of both Aeneas and of Romulus and Remus.[3] Lucan is also fully engaged in analysing and critiquing the shared cultural and political history of Romans, which is inevitably literary but no less historical. As Ankersmit puts it: 'So myth must be the last milestone along the long trajectory of historical experience'.[4] Myth concerns transitions from one prehistorical state to a historical one; this, as Ankersmit also makes clear, is not reserved for vanished ages but occurs whenever an event of sufficient scale creates a new paradigm of historical experience such as revolution, or civil war.[5] The Civil War between Pompey and Caesar can be viewed as the principate's origin myth in this manner and in Virgil's myth-making project the *Aeneid*. The fact that the *Aeneid* was written under Augustus during the formation of the principate would seem to indicate recognition of the importance of transitional myths during a time of huge social change. Additionally, since a modern reader can only interact with Lucan's *Pharsalia* as a historical text outside of living memory, the utilisation of historical approaches to understand and contextualise Lucan's text is entirely appropriate and even necessary as a means of making sense of the historical situations that form the setting of Lucan's epic.

Reading Lucan through the lens of contemporary trauma theory is both a productive and complex endeavour. Lucan himself was writing about events that occurred outside of living memory and so was reliant on the history available to him to construct his setting, characters, and story. Utilising historical approaches is therefore consistent and relevant with Lucan's own methodologies. The value of bringing multidisciplinary approaches to ancient texts is demonstrable

[3] Livy, 1.1-1.59
[4] Ankersmit, 2005, p.363
[5] Ankersmit, 2005, p.366

in the work of classicists like Victoria Wohl, who uses poststructuralist and postmodern philosophy to navigate social and sexual nuances in classical history,[6] and in the writing of Fredric Jameson, acclaimed art historian and cultural philosopher.[7] This thesis uses a similar methodology to support my central argument that investigating the *Pharsalia* through trauma theory is both viable and valuable. The exploration of trauma and mental health in ancient culture is undeniably important, especially as the discourse around mental health and specifically post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is advancing at the level of professional treatment and is becoming more prevalent in media.[8] I wanted to move away from discussions of combat trauma and specific diagnostic criteria in critical analysis of mental health in classics. As such I have attempted to not retread old ground except where relevant when exploring what trauma theory can tell us as opposed to justifying its use in the first place.

The study of trauma in classics and certainly my work owes a debt to the foundational works by the MacArthur Genius Grant awardee and psychiatrist Jonathan Shay. Shay's works present a reading of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (2010) *and Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (2002) respectively. Shay compared the works of Homer to the findings he made in the course of his work into combat-related PTSD and Complex PTSD (CPTSD) predominantly with American veterans of the Vietnam war. Shay sought to establish a continuity of traumatic expression from the immediate and long-lasting causes and effects of trauma; to use the experiences of modern veterans suffering from trauma to provide

[6] Such as in her work: Wohl. V. 2002. *Love among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
[7] Jameson explores modernism as the "new classicism" in: Jameson. F. 2017. *The Ancients and the Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms*. London, Verso.
[8] Critical of the deployment of trauma in fiction, Parul Seghal demonstrates how pervasive depictions of trauma have become in popular media, Sergal, 2021, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/01/03/the-case-against-the-trauma-plot

insight into Homer; and to use Homer to gain insight into the legacy of trauma in human society and to better comprehend how to avoid and treat it.[9]

Shay's methodology acknowledges and prioritises the identification and analysis of cultural context from the source texts to identify the kinds of moral breach that cause trauma and traumatic response. Given that Shay's methodology fully acknowledges that traumatic response is dependent upon differing cultural context it is not contingent on an element unique to Greek texts. Shay illustrates consistent trends in behaviour and expression between modern mental health findings and the works of Homer, as such concepts developed by Shay may be useful in developing approaches to other texts with differing cultural backings (a Roman text specifically in this case) as well as being robust enough to expand beyond trauma directly related to combat.[10] Because of his profession and intent, Shay's approach was specifically informed by PTSD and CPTSD and their symptoms. This thesis does not seek to establish any specific diagnosis for Lucan or any character in his text. Rather it is my intention to look at expression of traumatic experience and Lucan's literary treatment of its long-term causes and effects.

I also utilise Ankersmit's approach to identifying the sublime in traumatic historical experience. Lucan's significant use of sublime themes in his handling of *Pharsalia* as a whole and trauma specifically is demonstrated by Henry Day's work, *Lucan and the Sublime* (2013). In his introduction Day states: Lucan's poem enables us to understand the sublime … as a vital and complex means of engaging with questions of power and its representation [from within a Greco-

[9] Shay. 2002. p.xvi
[10] Shay, 1994, p.xx-xxi, 5-6, and further explored below

Roman context]".[11] When *Pharsalia* is explored specifically with a sublime approach to trauma in mind it can help illuminate the effect of and reaction to traumatic events that occur at a significant, historical scale and the manner in which the author confronts the unrepresentable aspect of trauma and the sublime. In *Trauma and the Possibility of History* (1991) Cathy Caruth challenges the argument in post structuralist literary criticism that "reference is indirect, and that consequently we may not have direct access to others', or even our own, histories." And that as a result "access to other cultures, and hence … political or ethical judgements" are impossible.[12] Caruth challenges this argument through an exploration of trauma in literature to establish an approach to historical expression that "confronts historical events" in a way "*immediate understanding may not"* (emphasis is the author's own).[13] Caruth's case study is Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) which is itself, like *Pharsalia,* a fictionalised account of history[14] that, also like *Pharsalia* seeks to explore and explain contemporary contexts by rethinking a foundational historical moment's connection to its future. The hope is to produce a reading that is illuminating in regards to the methods Lucan uses to investigate and recontextualise the principate's relationship to its Republican past and the violent schism that ended it.

In this thesis I occasionally make reference to the term "what's right" – a term I have drawn from Shay's work. 'Betrayal of "what's right"',[15] or betrayal of "*thémis",* [16] is the term Shay uses to refer to a shattering breach of trust that forms the source of traumatic

[11] Day, 2013, p.11
[12] Caruth, 1991, p.181
[13] Caruth, 1991, pp.182-183
[14] Ibid
[15] Shay. 1994. p.3
[16] Shay defines this term as being roughly equivalent to "what's right", where "what's right" covers such terms and ideas as "moral order, convention, normative expectations, ethics, and commonly understood social values." Shay, 1994, p.5

experience and the formation of PTSD.[17] In *Achilles in Vietnam*, Shay discusses the importance of context where it comes to creating the conditions for moral injury, stating: 'The specific content of the Homeric warriors' "*thémis*" was often quite different from that of American soldiers in Vietnam.'[18] Thus, understanding the context for the core betrayal of "what's right" is key to understanding the source of trauma in a text. For example, in describing Agamémnon claiming Briseis from Achilles, Shay writes that:

> We must understand the cultural context to see that this episode is more than a personal squabble between two soldiers over a woman. The outrageousness of Agamémnon's behaviour is repeatedly made clear.[19]

It is this outrageousness which creates moral injury. In exploring ancient trauma Shay acknowledges that cultural differences can result in differing conceptions of "what's right". Shay asserts that while the conditions that may create a breach of "what's right" may differ the emotional response to that breach is consistent (and consistently damaging).[20] Broadly speaking the foundational breach of "what's right" in *Pharsalia* is civil war itself. The expectation of conflict with foreign neighbours would appear to have made neutrality impossible and that peace was only something that came after victory in war. Civil war makes an enemy of Rome's own community, shattering normality.[21] The influence of Shay is perhaps part of why a great deal of trauma representation and criticism in classics, and history more generally, has been dependent and focussed on experiences of war and violence in battle. What has been given less focus is trauma that is experienced as a product of

[17] Moral injury's relationship to PTSD is not an uncomplicated one either. It is not a diagnosis in the DSM-V due to a lack of consensus in how to clinically define it and its relationship to trauma and PTSD though it remains an important concept in formulating what it is about an event that makes it traumatic. Jones. E. 2020. Pp.127-128, Abu El-Haj. 2022 pp.134-135
[18] Shay. 1994. p.5
[19] Shay, 1994, p.6
[20] Shay, 1994, p14
[21] Lange, 2020, p119, 123

living in conditions of, and being victim to, emotional and physical violence outside of combat.

Even in modern medical contexts recognition of non-military trauma has lagged behind that of combat trauma; significant developments towards a definition of 'civilian' trauma in the west began in the 1980s after combat-related PTSD received codification within the DSM in 1980.[22] El-Haj's analysis of a DRRI report (Deployment Risk and Resilience Inventory) suggests that the emphasis on a combat context overshadows the non-combat contexts of soldiers' trauma to the detriment of understanding and treatment.[23] El-Haj echoes the sentiment that Caruth makes that the traumatised soldier is the "central and recurring image of trauma in our century."[24] Further evidence is demonstrated by Chamayou, who writes on reports of trauma amongst drone operators: 'An… Associated Press article… [reported] "Long-distance warriors are suffering some of the same psychological stresses as their comrades on the battlefield" but the article "produced nothing to corroborate that statement"'.[25] Chamayou finds that identifying an incident as traumatic and the individuals as traumatised, then failing to produce solid evidence to establish the truth of the medical context and findings was common to reporting on military drone operators. This issue was even challenged from within the military.[26] These operators were still under considerable stress, but the initial response was to depict and understand that stress as directly comparable to combat stress even

[22] Abu El-Haj. 2022. p.66
[23] "A literature review of the consequences of military deployment indicates perhaps an overemphasis on combat per se, to the exclusion of other potentially important dimensions." King, L. A., King, D. W., Vogt, D. S., Knight, J., & Samper, R. E. 2006. Deployment Risk and Resilience Inventory: A Collection of Measures for Studying Deployment-Related Experiences of Military Personnel and Veterans. *Military Psychology*, 18(2) pp.89–120, discussed by Abu El-Haj, 2022. pp.144-145
[24] Cauruth, 1991, p.181
[25] "Long-distance warriors" here refers to drone operators belonging to the US military. Chamayou. 2015. p.106. Chamayou quotes from: Lindlaw. S. 2008. *Remote Control Warriors Suffer War Stress: Predator Operators Prone to Psychological Trauma as Battlefield Comrades*. Associated Press, August 7.
[26] Chamayou. 2015. p.107

when that was not possible under current diagnostic criteria. This demonstrates that even in a modern context with access to medicalised and highly systematic approaches to mental health, the definition or categorisation of trauma is highly complex, with regard to what form that trauma takes, which traumas are more respected, and biases surrounding trauma.

In modern discussions concerning trauma, combat trauma, and PTSD there are frequently distinctions made between civilian and soldier trauma; understanding and commenting on war as a 'civilian' seemingly lacks authority.[27] However, the modern definitions of 'civilian' and 'combatant' are very much that; modern, as Helen M. Kinsella's work in *The Image Before the Weapon* (2011) demonstrates. Kinsella does discuss Roman and Greek legal texts as incorporating concepts of who was a valid target for killing.[28] However, even though these texts may have formed a basis from which later legal texts began to define modern concepts of civilian and combatant, the texts themselves appear to treat 'non-combatants' (primarily women and children) in terms of property to be owned by a victor and not as protected classes that receive protection from violence precisely because they are not combatants.[29] Modern texts and contexts must still be interrogated and cannot simply be taken at face value due to the temporal proximity to modern concepts of PTSD and trauma. This uncertainty, rather than rendering ancient texts even more opaque and indecipherable, opens them up to the same level of rigorous study as we can bring to modern texts. Moreover, considering the fluidity in the discussion of trauma in modern texts there is no reason to assume ancient texts are less nuanced, less challenging, or less

[27] Abu El-Haj. 2022. p.213
[28] Kinsella. 2011. pp.29-30; quoted by El-Haj. 2022. p214.
[29] Abu El-Haj summarises Kinsella's genealogy of 'civilian': "…Kinsella develops a genealogical account of "the civilian" in common usage and in the laws of war. While the meaning of "combatant" has been quite stable since the twelfth century, she argues, not so for the civilian. Only in the nineteenth century did the term come to refer to someone "who is not a member of the armed forces.", Abu El-Haj. p.214, Kinsella. 2011. p.29

capable of discussing the trauma of the author, ancient people, or ancient societies. As such the use of modern concepts of trauma and trauma theory are highly valuable when looking to analyse ancient texts as they assist in locating and constructing the contexts which can 'unlock' readings of trauma.

Returning to Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Lucan himself did not experience war as a soldier but chose the conceit of civil war and armed conflict as a framework for the exploration of structurally inflicted and individual trauma. It is valid to understand Lucan's approach to the *Pharsalia* as a means of reconstructing and reinterrogating past violences to challenge present circumstances. Even in the structuralised, sometimes hierarchical approach to trauma we have now the boundaries of trauma are, and have been, challenged and re-examined in contemporary discourse. Ancient concepts of trauma can be expected to be no less open to examination by ancient authors. *Pharsalia* is, among its many facets, about the political structure of Rome and the events that led it to be structured as the principate. Utilising combat trauma as metaphor for varying kinds of trauma, including non-combat trauma is in keeping with a fundamental aspect of trauma writing as metaphor. Trauma writing is in some sense necessarily metaphorical as it "cannot be localized in terms of a discreet, dated experience"[30] and so requires indirect manners of engagement. This is also seen in Caruth's reading of Freud where a recounting of an accident is indirectly, metaphorically, referring to, but directly evoking, Jewish history.[31]

Lucan inhabited a political position within Roman political structure, gaining the position first of senator and, then promoted by Nero, to

[30] LaCapra. 2014. p.186
[31] Caruth, 1991, p.186

Quaestorship.[32] Lucan's position meant he was a political writer making his choices regarding the *Pharsalia* significant as both a work of art and politics. As an active member of the political class his work comes from within Rome's political structure. Lucan's proximity to Nero alone establishes his location in the principate amongst the elite but his social rank and political career were significant without the involvement of Nero. Lucan was an active member of the political class and as such his writing was actively political. Lucan would appear to inhabit the role of a 'craftsman as a poet', in Ankersmit's terms, where a craftsman is someone that attempts to change physical reality in some manner through their chosen craft.[33] In this way Lucan's epic can be explored to seek the ways in which the text challenges 'existing political reality', and the way in which 'political reality' [34] was perceived. This is not necessarily or solely change in a revolutionary, reformative, legislative sense. Lucan's alleged involvement in an assassination plot could suggest that Lucan wished to make serious, systemic, material change in Rome through direct action. Beyond biographical speculation, however, what can be examined is the way in which Lucan's work in *Pharsalia* specifically considered how the legacy of Roman power and the principate was perceived and experienced in the Roman political, personal, and historical consciousness and specifically deals with the realisation of the destruction of certainties regarding Roman identity.[35] I argue that Lucan's *Pharsalia* attempts to achieve this through exploring the traumatising and retraumatising conditions of Rome. Lucan does this through reorienting the political perception of the relationship with the Roman state and its history, and further with regards to the

[32] Fantham. 2011. p.5
[33] Ankersmit. 2005. pp.109-112
[34] The following passage is worth reproducing in whole for clarity: "Political knowledge or experience is not to be found in the kind of data that political scientists and statisticians are interested in and that are so eagerly collected nowadays but in what happens when the politician, just like the craftsmen, tries to *change* existing political reality (and although I am not a Marxist, I have always found this to be one of Marx's more impressive arguments). How politics *reacts* to the politician's effort to change it, what potential resistance it may then develop, this and only this gives us access to the knowledge of what political reality is like," Ankersmitt, 2005, p.110
[35] Day, 2013, p.207

conflict between the ideas of republicanism, tyranny, and Roman state violence emblematic in the conflict between Caesar and Pompey. Ahistorical elements serve to bridge the gulf of understanding inherent in trauma through tools such as metaphor, reversion, and boundary violation.

As previously mentioned, Lucan may have been a politician but he was never a soldier and yet he wrote about a war of incredible violence having never fought in one. *Pharsalia* is a sublime meditation on war, brutality, corruption and Rome's history of violence both on the field of battle and in its actions as a state. The historical context that *Pharsalia* was written under is a period of political violence during the rule of Emperor Nero. It is my assertion that the epic is both a representation of Caesar and Pompey's war as a means to represent the moral and traumatic historical context that led to the creation of the principate, and a representation of the trauma of living under the principate. I assert these two elements exist fully in support of one another and that the conditions for both are fully intertwined. Despite Lucan never having participated directly in combat, having never served as a soldier for Rome, nor having commanded others in battle, Lucan's, and every other Roman's identity, life, and experience and knowledge of trauma is bound up in the concept of war and combat. In this sense the bloodiness of combat is not distinct from the bloodiness of Rome's imperial court. Knowledge of the traumatic - while not 'combat trauma' – is inexorably linked not just to violence but to combat related violence and the position of the Emperor as head of Rome's military. Lucan's *Pharsalia* utilises cultural history as it does cultural militarism. Lucan places huge importance on not just the military actions that occur in the epic but on the military accomplishments of Rome and its characters that occur outside of the Civil War. Pompey's military

successes are raised frequently including in his first introduction,[36] in his dreams,[37] and during his eulogies.[38] Militarism is used as a touchpoint for the communication of not only Pompey's ability as a Roman political figure but his morality and status as a Roman and these are points that Romans within the text frequently relate to. Lucan is not excluded from the narratives of militarism in *Pharsalia* and soldiering as these elements are part of the Roman identity Lucan is speaking to. And so, Lucan's choice to write his epic poem about Caesar's Civil War is a multi-faceted one, and Lucan's lack of direct combat experience does not lessen his authority in commenting on trauma caused through violence and combat and the militarism that formed and perpetuates the principate.

Since the above paragraph addresses Lucan's *Pharsalia* as talking about the Civil War as a way of addressing both the historical and contemporary political reality of Rome I should address the consideration of *Pharsalia* as allegory. It is my inclination to lean away from analysing texts in terms of allegory. It is my opinion that while a text may have been deliberately written to contain hidden meanings, that a character or situation in a text may have been intended to allude to others the text does not specifically mention. Ultimately those things cannot be considered as being the same as they are fundamentally their own things. The themes and narrative of the subject of the text necessarily take precedence.[39] It is difficult to character swap Nero into *Pharsalia* and maintain a coherent narrative and as previously mentioned Lucan did not experience combat

[36] 1.133-141
[37] 7.10-21
[38] 8.996-1003, and 9.240-242
[39] In the Author's Note for the 2006 omnibus edition of Joe Haldeman's (author and veteran of the Vietnam war) fiction trilogy: *'Peace and War'* Haldeman notes that even though younger readers might not realise that the trilogy's first novel, '*The Forever War'* is "[allegorically] about Vietnam" due to the novel concerning a fictional conflict that begins in 1996. What matters is that the communication of the core themes and narrative experiences of the novel remain intact even when divorced from their allegorical content. Haldeman. 2006. p.3

trauma. What is more compelling to me is the consistent themes and experiences and the expansive comparisons that Lucan makes possible through the development of Roman political and social systems. The Proem of *Pharsalia* is purportedly in praise of Nero but may be read with irony, as Matthew Fox and Ethan Adams[40] state. Potential irony is clearly exhibited here:

> "But if the Fates could find, to bring forth Nero, / no other way, and eternal kingdoms cost / gods dearly […] by god, we don't complain; those crimes, the guilt, / are pleasing at this price […] Still Rome owes a lot to her civil war armies, / for it was done for *you*."[41]

The proem creates the conditions for the reader to engage critically with the principate and the received perceptions of *Pharsalia*. It is an expression of the way in which Lucan and Romans are traumatised over and over again by encountering the post-apocalyptic every time they interact with the Principate. Michael Dewar discusses the ways in which the Proem was not overtly ironic and is in fact in the style of less contentiously written texts. However, given the overall context of *Pharsalia* and the criticisms of Caesar and tyranny the proem gains a more ironic meaning.[42] When specifically discussing allusions between text and hidden meaning I prefer to look at the consistency of impressions, themes, and emotions portrayed. In taking this view Lucan is not mapping a character or situation directly onto another but is creating a consistent experience of trauma as part of Roman identity. Additionally, as mentioned earlier there is a danger in drawing concrete biographical conclusions from Lucan's literary work or drawing clear links between text and events in Lucan's life.

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[40] Fox and Adams. Lucan notes, Lucan, Civil War p335.
[41] 1.36-48
[42] "[the] argument that latent ironies would come to the surface at a *re-reading*, and that echoes of the proem in subsequent parts of the epic might force upon the audience or reader a reappraisal of what was at first taken too literally." Dewar. 1994. p.210

Identifying the Traumatic

Returning again to militarism and war as narrative Hayden White points out that: "the encodation of events in terms of such plot structures is one of the ways that a culture has of making sense of both personal and public past."[43] Lucan is overtly employing this approach using his epic poem to renegotiate the personal and public past of Rome and the principate. Collingwood establishes that "the actions" of a period of history will, upon sufficient study, begin to reveal the ideals of that period. He then provides an interesting analogy that through the plot of a tragedy what it is that is tragic is revealed. A tragedy cannot be experienced as tragic unless the context of what is considered tragic is known.[44] For Nero and the principate the Civil War was a triumph as without it the principate could not be established. The deaths of Pompey and others may have been regrettable, even tragic in their individual ways but ultimately justified tragedies that lead to the formation of the principate under Augustus. The *Aeneid* portrays the principate as the triumph to come out of the tragedy of Troy's destruction and goes on to display the future via Aeneas' shield where the reader sees "Caesar in triple triumph" welcomed by cheering crowds and showered with gifts[45] a decidedly untragic scene in its framing. Lucan renegotiates the viewpoint[46] to display the death of the Republic as a continuation of the tragedy of Troy and to incorporate into that tragedy the portrayal of Caesar and Pompey. The hero of Virgillian-Augustan mythology becomes tyrannical villain, while Pompey, not even present on Aeneas' shield, becomes tragic republican hero. Lucan is challenging accepted or official history. Lucan achieves this not so much by altering historical events. The broad sweep of Lucan's narrative is more or less as accepted history is described. Even though unattested episodes such as Caesar's visit to Troy, and more fantastical scenes

[43] White. 1978. p.85
[44] Collingwood. 1993. pp.479-480
[45] Virgil, 8.837-847
[46] "Lucan resists the "unifying historical fictions" of the Julio-Claudians", Connoly, 2016, p.275

such as Erichtho's passage intrude on fact they do not destroy it; the battles and major political and military players remain, and Caesar's victory is assured. But by shifting the perspective of the narrative from one praising Caesar to one highly critical of his motives and personality and of tyranny itself Lucan is reencoding events to upset the accepted relationship with Rome's history. The fundamental historic events that underpin the principate are uprooted by Lucan. A reader is forced to re-evaluate the history and role of the principate and the relationship history has with it.

Introduction to Chapter One, Sublime Apocalypse:

Discussion in Chapter One establishes *Pharsalia* as an apocalyptic text since it concerns the destruction of one Rome and the creation of another through violent upheaval. The importance of apocalyptic themes in discussion of trauma is outlined while context for the literary history and conception of apocalyptic literature and its relevance in a reading of Lucan is provided throughout. The interplay of personal and cultural apocalypse is explored to provide grounding of the literalisation of traumatic response as a way of expressing the unrepresentable. The modern contexts for apocalyptic fiction is described and compared with ancient apocalyptic literature. The apocalyptic themes of *Pharsalia* are described with examples given. Apocalypse's relationship to the sublime is also explored. As sublime historical experience underpins my reading of *Pharsalia*. Ankersmit's *Sublime Historical Experience* provided the foundation on which my reading of Lucan's *Pharsalia* was built, and discussion of the traumatic sublime is central to this chapter. My aim in utilising Ankersmit's approaches in a reading of Lucan's *Pharsalia* is to provide a framework for identifying and discussing the way in which Lucan related to Rome's history, and specifically the history of the principate more widely and the Emperor more specifically. Sublime historical experience is a difficult concept to boil down to a short

explanation, Ankersmit offers the following at the end of the Introduction:

> There is a stage in how we relate to the past *preceding* the one in which historians dispassionately investigate a past that is objectively given to them. This is the stage of sublime historical experience… It is the stage that may invite (admittedly highly impractical) questions about how the very notion of a historical past comes into being, about how we relate to the past, about whether we should believe the past to be important to us (or not) and about how the past may live on in our hearts and minds - in short about *what is the nature and origin of historical consciousness*. It is a stage *preceding* all questions of historical truth and falsity.[47]

Rather than the specific and strictly factual representation of history of dates, names, and chronology, sublime history comes from the breach between present and past experience and concerns the totality of history as it is felt and experienced and, for Ankersmit, particularly during historical events of a huge and disruptive scale. It is the unrepresentable experience of the past as it moves from experience or being into historical 'fact' and can never be revisited or completely restored to the present.[48] Despite Ankersmit's protestation of the impractical nature of the questions sublime historical experience raises this dissertation seeks to use the concept of sublime history practically to explore and decipher the way in which Lucan conceives of and relates to the past as well as how Lucan utilises these concepts to comment and explore his own and Rome's relationship with history. Sublime historical experience is also a useful tool in relation to trauma theory. Trauma and historical experience can both be described as sublime precisely because of the inability to fully convey the experience of either. The specific trauma

[47] Ankersmit. 2005. pp.14-15
[48] Ankersmit. 2005. p.358

of historical experience is raised by Ankersmit and will be discussed in detail in its appropriate chapter.

Ankersmit is largely concerned with large scale events focussed on modern European history such as the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution, and the rifts they cause as new cultural, political, and historical paradigms are established in the wake of these events. These events are sublime because their scale reaches every part of civilisation and overturns previously established norms and traditions. At this scale no part of civilisation can escape contending with the effects of the event[49]. The Civil War of *Pharsalia* and the change from republic to principate is an event of similar scale and so worthy of comparison. However, the importance of smaller events should not be ignored. This is especially evident when smaller events build upon one another in aggregate, or as they later gain additional importance through re-contextualisation due to previously unknown or underplayed impacts. "Quasi-events" is a term borrowed from Elizabeth Povinelli[50] and is introduced and explained using comparison to a situation presented in a story by author Ursula Le Guin[51] in which through the mechanics of the story's setting one member of a city must live in abject misery to ensure the happiness of all other inhabitants of the city. The suffering this individual goes through does not occur as an instance of crisis or disaster and so does not constitute a breach with the past at a scale that would typically be considered sublime in scale. The suffering is ongoing and continuous, a series of 'quasi-events' that individually do not reach the same kind of scale as an event such as revolutions or indeed a civil war. I compare the concept of quasi events to Ankersmit's "the

[49] Civil war, revolution, Ankersmit, 2005, p.366
[50] Povinelli, 2011, p,13; also elaborated on by Julieta Aranda, Davis Barker, Dilip Gaonker, Natasha Ginwala, Liza Johnson, and Elizabeth A. Povinelli in the 2014 e-flux live seminar "Quasi-Events: Building and Crumbling Worlds" https://www.e-flux.com/live/64901/quasi-events-building-and-crumbling-worlds/
[51] Referenced by Povinelli, Le Guin, U. 2006. The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas. In: Cassil, R.V. ed. *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction.* New York: Norton

pain of Prometheus"[52] in which the establishment of a status quo, of a new paradigm must be contended with as the new norm develops after a change. This state can, as the name strongly implies, be painful and difficult but, just as Prometheus cannot prevent the daily consumption of his liver, the pain of transition and adjustment cannot be avoided. As Povinelli writes: "She [the subject who suffers] and they [the citizens of the city] are not like a shared body; they *are* a shared body."[53] emphasis my own. The essential interconnectedness and inseparability of these quasi-events achieve a sublime scale and, as with Prometheus, a new norm must be confronted as the preceding norm becomes near if not totally mythic. The interconnectedness of bodies (human, geographical, cosmic) is repeated throughout the epic as even celestial bodies are given literal bodies[54] and is frequently utilised to demonstrate the breadth and depth of trauma instigated by civil war. The interweaving of cosmic and bodily harm in relation to the Roman state is foundational to Lucan's narrative as noted by Dinter. 'Scars' are created on the body, geography, and the cosmology or Rome simultaneously in a demonstration of the kind of boundary violation discussed by Bartsch[55] "he thus effectively links together places of memory-or scars if translated into body language-on both the cosmic and the Roman state body."[56] The Civil War creates the paradigm that leads to the painful status quo of the 'pain of Prometheus', that is life under the violence of Rome and the principate. And so, in exploring this I seek to establish that Lucan describes a condition of collective trauma created by the social and moral breach of the Civil War and of life under the resulting principate. I will also show that Lucan establishes a traumatic trend

[52] Ankersmit. 2005. p.325
[53] Povinelli, 2011, p.4
[54] "Phoebus/Titan represent the sun, Phoebe/Cynthia the moon, Mulciber/Vulcan stand for fire and Tethys for the ocean. In connection with geographical terms Latin geography in general and Lucan's geography in particular exhibits body imagery: percussit Latiare caput ([a thunderbolt] struck the head of Latium [= a landmark], BC 1.535); caput . . . Titan cum ferret (while Titan ([= the Sun] is lifting up his head , 1.540); ora . . . Aetna (Etna's mouth , 1.545); ignis in Hesperium cecidit latus (fire's flames fell on to Hesperia's flank , 1.547); sanguineum . . . mare (a blood -- red sea, 1.548)." Dinter, 2013, p.13
[55] Bartsch, 1997, p.29
[56] Anatomizing Civil War, Dinter, 2013, p.12

reaching further into Rome's past expressed through the fundamental tension between Republicanism and tyranny.

Ankersmit challenges the presumption that collective trauma occurs based on the severity of the event in question. To back this claim up Ankersmit refers to historical events that do not create a significant "impact written history", and argues that as such a collective "awareness"[57] of the traumatic event is lacking or, when evidence of traumatic events does appear in writing from before the late modern period, that it appears "dispassionate"[58] in describing these events. A weakness appears evident where Ankersmit is specific in considering trauma and the sublime from a Western viewpoint, that is, one originating from Europe and states settled by European colonists (and then specifically the late modern West); he then justifies this with examples taken from outwith that view. Namely: the devastation suffered by the Aztecs and Native Americans, and Central Asia during the Mongol invasions. Ankersmit does also go on to offer earlier European viewpoints such as The Black Death, and the disintegration of Roman power in the West as incidents that support his claim. I do not disagree with the central conceit that there is more than the severity and totality of a traumatic event where it contributes to the experience and expression of collective trauma but "impact on written history" seems a weak argument when it is not the only form of cultural transmission and awareness. Even then one need only read, for example, Bede's *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*[59] to find passionate descriptions of traumatic events leading directly from the withdrawal of Roman rule. All that said I do not challenge the core conceits of Ankersmit's illustration of trauma and

[57] Ankersmit. 2005 pp.352-353
[58] Ankersmit. 2005 p.353
[59] Chapter XIII onwards particularly, Bede. *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Translated by Bertram Colgrave with the Greater Chronicle and Letter to Egbert translated, and edited with introduction by Judith McClure, and Roger Collins. (2008) Oxford: Oxford University Press

the sublime, merely where, and to who it may apply. Lucan's representation of Roman traumatic response is not restricted purely to individuals but the behaviours of massed Roman people as they engage in battles, threaten mutiny, and engage in self-destructive, even suicidal behaviour. The chapter will explore how Lucan's reframing of the Civil War as apocalypse enables the renegotiation of the post apocalypse status quo as a civilisation, culture, and people contending with the sublime trauma of the destruction of Roman republicanism through civil war.

Introduction to Chapter Two, A Body At War With Itself

In the Chapter Two I will explore the way Lucan utilises the body to express trauma at the personal and group level simultaneously and the way Lucan achieves this through expressions of bodily harm, death, and the dead. The chapter revisits briefly the discussion on legitimacy on commenting on combat injury and traumatic experience from a 'non-combatant' perspective to address the way in which Lucan explores and narrativises the injuries dealt to Roman soldiers in pursuit of the Civil War. Special attention is paid to from where, or from whom injury is being delivered. Injury is often presented as particularly personal in *Pharsalia* but treated expansively. Lucan blurs the lines between individual and group in such a way that, even in instances of deeply personal harm, the reader gains awareness of the wider suffering in the process of civil war. Lucan takes injury to superhuman extremes as Roman fights Roman; injury occurs frequently and occasionally in ways that are physically impossible and gruesome. Lucan depicts bodies bloating, being pierced by an improbable number of spears while remaining mobile and capable of fighting, limbs are lopped off, and heads are removed. Sometimes wounds are the result of self-harm or outright suicide. Even when not literally self-inflicted the injury Lucan depicts frequently takes the guise of self-harm as battle scenes are not presented so much as

duels between armies but brutal slaughters as the participants fight themselves to death out of spite and desperation or are forced by battlefield conditions to harm themselves. A pervading sense of self-betrayal infects combatants as Roman civilisation turns on itself. Bodies sustain incredible damage as Lucan expresses the disintegrating boundaries of Roman identities and as the Civil War destroys normality. The sublime plays a part here too; bodies are important in *Pharsalia* as through the dissolution of their boundaries Lucan is able to explore the ways in which the notion of the self becomes blurry at communal and national levels. Shay's exploration of character or "*thémis*", and the betrayal of "what's right" within the context of shared identity with community, state, and companions or "*philoi*" provides a means to bring light to the expression of betrayal and the (self-)destructive response to civil war. Chapter Two explores the way these elements relate to Lucan's text and how Lucan expresses the scale of traumatic experience and its effect on individuals and groups simultaneously through this.

Betrayal of "what's right" and moral injury find their source in the violation of boundaries and boundary violation is of great interest to Lucan in exploring Roman trauma. The boundaries of the body are explored and violated regularly in *Pharsalia* injury and physical suffering are the most obvious examples of this the extreme ways in which bodies are injured. This can be said to express the extremity of the violation of the social boundaries of Rome as they are violated in the pursuit of the Civil War. This chapter pays particular attention to a passage in Book Nine in which members of Cato's army suffer from bites from venomous snakes. Chapter Two will explore the ways in which the boundaries of the soldier's bodies are violated by snake bites and the ways that the passage itself breaches narrative boundaries conflict with *Pharsalia's* narrative at large. The challenging nature of this passage is examined in an attempt to

establish that the seeming irreconcilability of aspects of this sequence with *Pharsalia's* wider narrative approach exist expressly to create literary conflict as part of the expression of trauma.

Νέκυια or necromancy and *katabasis* are explored as avenues for Lucan's treatment of the traumatic relationship with Rome's history. In a similar manner to the way Lucan utilises living bodies for injury and destruction as an expression of trauma Lucan also utilises the bodies of the dead and the relationship the living have with them. Lucan does this to further develop the exploration of the traumatic relationship with the past. Despite there being no literal journey into the underworld in *Pharsalia,* elements of katabasis still remain. In the course of the narrative tombs and ruins take the place of the underworld and characters enter these spaces of the dead to seek communion and answers or potentially seek refuge (though it may not be found). I treat Caesar's journey to Troy in Book Nine as a katabatic episode as over the course of the passage it becomes reminiscent of a journey into the underworld. Firstly, in a sense Caesar is seeking Pompey's shade as he is unaware of Pompey's death. Secondly, in Caesar's exploration of Troy particular attention is paid to ruination and to tombs as he walks amongst the dead remains of the destroyed city. Finally, Caesar communes with his dead ancestor Aeneas about his intentions for Rome's future. Necromancy occurs more literally elsewhere in *Pharsalia* as the spirits of the dead are conjured or encountered. Julia visits Pompey in his dreams in Book Three, and Sextus visits the witch, Erichtho who raises a dead soldier to an undead state in order to supernaturally extract knowledge. Lucan's handling of the dead frequently incorporates the sublime. The dead represent an unbridgeable breach with the past, the trauma of death and the trauma of life. The boundary of death is challenged by these interactions as the living enter spaces of the dead, call on, or are visited, by spirits. This chapter will discuss that even though history

can be investigated by the living, it cannot be experienced as anything other than history, it cannot be entered or altered. Similarly, literally entering the realm of the dead is impossible for the living in *Pharsalia*.

CHAPTER ONE
SUBLIME APOCALYPSE

This chapter will utilise the concepts of the sublime and historical experience, as well as the sublime and traumatic memory to explore Lucan's attempt to narrate the un-narratable; the experience of conflict civil and personal, military and emotional, and of the resulting trauma for Rome and Romans at both the societal and personal level. Ankersmit's book, *Sublime Historical Experience (2005)* provided much of the theory while Heny J. M. Day's work, *Lucan and the Sublime (2013)*, which was of great use in my reading, takes an expansive overview of the use of the sublime in *Pharsalia* and also draws from Ankersmit. In my reading it is my intention to use concepts of the sublime to focus specifically on sublime history. This chapter will also explore the way these ideas of the sublime are conveyed through the concept of apocalypse and post-apocalypse, through the destruction of history and the creation of new history, and through the use of necromancy. While Necromancy will be touched on in this chapter where relevant a more in-depth discussion regarding Lucan's use of necromancy and the dead is handled in the second chapter.

In the preface of his work, '*Sublime Historical Experience'* Ankersmit neatly encompasses one of the underpinning facets of Lucan's *Pharsalia;* that events, societies, and people are all one and the same and that a full expression of the relationship with history and the present requires exploration of the sublime. He writes:

"For a nation, a collectivity, a culture, or a civilisation that has had such a sublime historical experience, the past and an awareness of this past will become ineluctable realities. The past will then be for them no less a part of what they are as our limbs are part of our

bodies-and forgetting the past would then be an intellectual amputation."[60]

In the specific discussion of trauma, the experience of trauma is inseparable not only from the individual physically but also from the historical context. Such totality being unrepresentable in its entirety, Lucan thus uses literal representations of apocalyptic imagery and thought to describe the sublimity of trauma.[61] Apocalyptic fiction for many modern readers may well bring to mind the likes of modern 'post-apocalyptic' media more than that found in theological and mythological texts. These mainstream recent titles in film, gaming, television, music, and literature include all forms of media, *Mad Max* (1979), *The Terminator* (1984),*The Road* (novel published 2006; film published 2009), the *Fallout* video game, and television series (the first of the video game franchise being published in 1997 and the television series first airing 2024), *The Last of Us* (video game published 2013; television series first aired 2023), *The Walking Dead* (graphic novel series published 2003-2018; television series aired 2010-2022), *Station Eleven* (novel published in 2014; television series first aired 2021-2022), *A Canticle for Liebowitz* (1959), and the Gary Numan albums '*Warriors*' (1983) and '*Savage, Songs From a Broken World*' (2017) to name but a few.[62] These representations of apocalypse frequently see an end caused by incredibly destructive war often utilising atomic weapons, or by the spread of deadly

[60] Ankersmit. 2005. p.xv.
[61] Day. 2013. p.101.
[62] The *Star Trek* franchise, referenced directly in the television adaptation of *Station Eleven* (*Station Eleven*, Episode 4, *Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern Aren't Dead*. 2021. Amazon. 42 minutes in) is often overlooked as a piece of post-apocalyptic media despite the nascent Federation and Star Fleet (of which most of the principal characters belong) came about in the wake of a devastating World War III, as described in an episode of the original series (1966-1969), 'Bread and Circuses' (Star Trek, Season 2, Episode 25, Bread and Circuses. 1970). This discrepancy could have a lot to do with the typically positive outlook and themes of the writing and a lack of focus on recovering things lost to the apocalypse in favour of an improving, forward-looking future. The pilot episode of *Star Trek: Next Generation* (1990-1994), 'Encounter at Farpoint' (Star Trek: Next Generation, Pilot, Encounter at Farpoint. 1990. Paramount, 19 minutes 10 seconds in) reiterates that the show is set in the aftermath of what character Captain Picard (played by Patrick Stewart) describes as "The post-atomic horror" of the mid twenty-first century, and mention is frequently made of this throughout the show's run. It is interesting and telling of the close relationship apocalypse has with trauma that in contrast more negatively themed narratives, including Lucan's work, are more readily treated as apocalyptic.

contagions (that may or may not reanimate the dead) rendering civilisations unsustainable at their 'pre-event' level.[63] Rarely are gods and the divine directly involved; perhaps modern post-apocalyptic fiction would not look too strange to Lucan, at least as far as the de-prioritisation of gods and the divine in the face of the destructive capacity of human history. As Tate points out in *Apocalyptic Fiction,* 'End-of-the-world fiction' is emphatically not a recent phenomenon. Indeed, apocalyptic stories are as old as narrative itself.'[64] *The Epic of Gilgamesh* occurs some time after the apocalyptic "Flood"[65] and, particularly relevant to Lucan's *Pharsalia,* Virgil's *Aeneid* occurs as Aeneas flees Troy to escape its complete destruction both as a city and a political entity. This demonstrates how consistent the themes of apocalypse have been from the classical period to contemporary fiction, in various genres and media.[66]

Interestingly certain themes seem quite persistent regardless of aesthetic and genre/sub-genre, namely the destruction of history, memory, trauma, and the sublime in the pre-apocalyptic past or the potentially bright future of recovery. It is also interesting how frequently the concept of necromancy, which will also be discussed below, rears its rotten head, both in the metaphorical sense of, say, certain characters in a narrative attempting to re-establish a dead order from the pre-apocalypse (a government or other institution) and directly as the above-mentioned reanimated dead of zombie fiction or more rarely, vampires, or some other supernatural mythological creature that bridges living and dead in some way. As such even when viewing Lucan through the lens of modern depictions

[63] Hicks provides a helpfully comprehensive introduction to modern and post-modern apocalyptic fiction with a focus on Western and anglophone works, Hicks. 2017. Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Literature
[64] Tate, 2017, p2
[65] Gilgamesh, Tablet 1, p.50
[66] Joy Connoly uses Zizek's writing on 'disaster films' that feature apocalyptic plots and imagery as 'direct participants of political reality' to shed light on *Pharsalia's* role in directly participating in Roman 'imperial reality'. Connoly, 2016, p.276

of post-apocalypse, an apocalyptic reading of *Pharsalia* should seem logical, demonstrating how enduring the themes are and the role they have played in artistic expression of trauma.

Pharsalia's narrative is deeply concerned with apocalypse. Narratives common to apocalyptic texts appear frequently in Lucan's writing. Apocalyptic narratives frequently concern themselves with the survival of the narrative's heroes (sometimes anti- or otherwise morally compromised heroes) as they learn to adapt to, make sense of, and or make the new rules of their new reality. A comparison with Pompey could be made here as he wanders before his assassination, after making good his escape from Caesar's forces, where he must come to terms with Caesar's impending victory;[67] or with Cato's wandering army in the aftermath of Pompey's death as they find reason and the will to continue on, beset by snakes in the desert.[68] The recovery of something lost in the apocalyptic event, and seeking to create or attain an idyllic place of safety that partially or wholly mitigates the dangers of the new post-apocalyptic world also feature frequently; as seen when Pompey finds brief respite on the island of Lesbos as he arrives to retrieve his wife, Cornelia, hidden away during the conflict. Though the threat of discovery by Caesar's forces drives them both to abandon the temporarily safe harbour.[69] Caesar too takes temporary refuge (though for different reasons as he is not being actively hunted) in Troy. What Caesar seeks to recover, and the place he seeks from the apocalyptic ruins is "Pergamum", a reborn Troy[70] with himself as its head. Frequently in apocalyptic narratives promises of a return to something resembling in part or in whole the

[67] Book eight sees Pompey wander, "Seeking desolate places, / he can't find any safe spots to hide his fate" 8.14-15, "Unless one's last day comes when good times end, / outstripping sorrows with a rapid death, / former fortune is a disgrace." 8.34-35
[68] "In his hand / he carries his own javelins and marches on foot / before the fce of his soldiers, who gasp and wheeze, / showing them how to bear up under labors." 9.737-740, "At last, worn out by such peril, Fortune gave / late and grudging aid to the wretched men." 9.1106-1107
[69] 8.38-190
[70] 9.1237

pre-apocalyptic state are revealed to be mirages, or worse, traps. This is seen in the way Egypt offers Pompey a final chance at real refuge from Caesar, which turns out to be a trap.[71] In another about face of fortunes Marius and Sulla's civil conflict ended with republicanism being restored via a bloody purge that "was too much".[72] Ruins and ruination also feature heavily in apocalyptic narratives. Ruins are a prominent feature throughout *Pharsalia* as will be discussed later in the chapter.[73] Not least apocalypse can be seen in the frequent violent deaths Lucan's literary subjects must undergo. The living undergo transition from the apocalypse of their destruction to the post apocalypse of their death.

Apocalypse as it relates directly to *Pharsalia*

Lucan's *Pharsalia* corresponds to the definitions of apocalyptic fiction via the following elements: Revelation, where the future of Rome is revealed;[74] reversal, Rome is dragged forwards into a monarchical future that is indelibly linked to the past;[75] and eschatologically, not only in the sense of the end of the (Republican) world but also with the eschatological fate of the dead, the manner the dead are remembered, and the way they continue to influence the world that has moved on from them.[76] *Pharsalia's* handling of the supernatural is also familiar to modern apocalyptic narratives via the primacy of human led apocalypse over a supernaturally inflicted one. Even though as the above examples the supernatural has a presence, if anything it serves to underscore the central importance of the mortal actors. Despite the positioning of the mortal Pompey and Caesar as the primary motivating characters (though not the only motivating

[71] 8.814-815
[72] 2.148
[73] See Spencer, 2005, below
[74] Nero's reign in the proem, 1.36, the adoption of Egyptian religion and temples in Rome, 8.1026-1027, "a Roman Pergamum will rise" 9.1237
[75] As the proem and "Pergamum", above
[76] The seer, Arruns, 1.657-683, Marius and Sulla, 2.260, 2.186, the spirit of Julia visits Pompey in a dream, 3.10-37, Oracle at Delphie, 5.73-233, The witch Erichtho, 6.626-928, Pompey's spirit, 9.1-19

forces) the supernatural does intrude into Lucan's narrative but in a more passive manner than is typically the case in epic poems[77] This is certainly true in comparison to Virgil, whose description of the sublime is itself the connection between gods and mortals[78] whereas in *Pharsalia*, the Gods look on from the side. Even as the dead return to speak, or the eschatological subjects of the fate of the soul and the mythological origins of the Nile are discussed, or magic is seen to be practiced, the divine is typically powerless in the face of human misery and violence in *Pharsalia*. In Lucan's presentation *Pharsalia* is never entirely mundane as the sublime underpins the narrative. Human action is front and centre as the driving force of the fate of Rome and Romans. As such the apocalyptic conditions of Lucan's epic provide no relief or abdication of responsibility to higher powers.[79] Arguably there is a comparison to be made in the manner in which Romans are swept up by events and the way in which gods must look on as horrified witnesses but where gods are witnesses Romans and others involved in the conflict are the limbs directed to carry out civil war.[80]

Lucan's *Pharsalia* is written from a historical perspective looking back from Nero's Rome to the Rome of Caesar and Pompey rendering it an historical apocalypse. Ergo Lucan is writing from the principate that rose after the post-apocalyptic reality of the apocalyptic Civil War depicted in *Pharsalia*. Here Lucan is living the future history of his epic where the history and order of the Republic has been destroyed and, as *Pharsalia* promised, authority rests with the principate. Unlike the apocalyptic flood of Gilgamesh there is no promise of reclaiming elements of the past for use in a future context[81] or the

[77] Ahl. 1976. p.280-281.
[78] "all significant human actions are related to a higher purpose by their ascription to divine intervention" Woodworth. 1930. p125.
[79] In this way Lucan's epic shares some similarity with many examples of apocalyptic media (as detailed above) where humans are responsible for their own destruction.
[80] Dinter, 2013, p.22

[81] "He brought back a tale of times before The Flood." Gilgamesh, Tablet 1, p.50

destruction of Troy in Virgil's *Aeneid* and the hope of a bright future cultivated by gallant leaders.[82] This is crucial to considering the traumatic elements of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. The apocalyptic nature of the historical Civil War inevitably and unavoidably occurs as an exploration of the personal as well as that of Rome at large, given the positioning of the personal within Rome's own post-apocalypse. In demonstrating the ways in which the Civil War as apocalypse created the conditions for Rome's principate and its continuation, Lucan establishes the traumatic conditions of the Rome and Romans own history, that of their present, and that of their future.

Apocalypse as Trauma

Trauma is apocalyptic in that it constitutes the destruction of a former status quo or way of being which is then unrecoverable after the traumatic event. This is not to say that recovery in terms of health cannot be achieved but that the very nature of reality and consciousness is irrevocably ordered into a before and after in relation to the traumatic event. Any mental and physical healing, or indeed any new state of being, must inevitably and unavoidably contend with this new state – by which I mean new mental state, physical condition, and in broader terms state of the society, culture, or nation – and be negotiated in relation to the event. This applies on the personal, societal, and national scale. Approaching history and civil war from an apocalyptic aspect can be used to negotiate its traumatic content, establishing the traumatic trigger event (or events) that create the before and after that the traumatised individual, or individuals, or society must experience and then confront. Ankersmit's description of traumatic experience supports this, specifically here in relation to the act of forgetting and establishing new identity:

[82] Caesar enthroned in glory, *Aeneid* 8.843

> Think of the French Revolution, of how the Industrial Revolution profoundly changed the life of Western Europeans in every conceivable aspect, think of what the Death of God must have meant to our *outillage mental*. Undoubtedly these dramatic changes belong to the most decisive and profound changes that Western man has undergone in the course of history. In all these cases he entered a wholly new world and, above all, he could do so only on the condition of forgetting a previous world and of shedding a former identity.[83]

The concept of apocalypse encapsulates these ideas precisely because the nature of apocalypse carries with it the idea of an unrecoverable past and the unavoidable need to adopt new identity in the post-apocalyptic reality that comes after.

Personal and Collective Trauma

Ankersmit's discussion of trauma and the sublime includes the following presentation of a common complaint that "[shellshocked] patients suffering from derealization or depersonalization… say that they seem to experience the world "as if from under a glass cheese cover.""[84] This is Ankersmit's "paradox of directness and indirectness"[85] where the sublime and the traumatic occur outside normal experience. Reality is perceived by the subject but from a step to the side, or with a semi permeable barrier between the subject and the experience as they can see through the 'glass cheese cover' but cannot move beyond it. It would presumably not have been safe for Lucan to write literally about his personal life and there is no

[83] Ankersmit. 2005, p.323, it is my position that the destruction of the Roman Republic and the formation of the principate should be considered in line with Ankersmit's list of events as even for non-Romans the effect of the civil war would be felt as the principate would see the expansion of the Empire to its greatest extent. Although non-Romans don't appear to be of as much of a concern to Lucan as Romans, he still factors in Rome's influence over them. Day agrees that "…his model could theoretically be applied to any radical rupture between a past and present order of existence." Day. 2013, p.189.
[84] Ankersmit. 2005, p.336
[85] Ankersmit. 2005, p.336

extant evidence that he did or even that he may have wished to and so despite this Lucan's *Pharsalia* is no less direct (and yet indirect) in its portrayal of the violence of the principate and its founding mytho-history. Trauma creates a dissociation from the 'normal' world and historical writing creates a narrative dissociated yet indelibly linked to the present of the writer. This dissociation exists not only for the author but for the reader as the events of Lucan's *Pharsalia* cannot be experienced as anything other than past events. Again, through this direct yet indirect paradox it is possible for the traumatic historical experience to be transmitted in a way that fundamentally renegotiates the realities of the principate. In the chapter 'Presentation, The Sublime, and The *Bellum Civile*', Day writes:

> Lucan presents his subject of civil war as something sublime, beyond imagining; this sublimity of theme directs us to consider how the poem presents itself, in its very linguistic substance, as a sublime thing and how in turn it projects this sublimity onto us as readers; completing the process, mirroring and anticipating the projected experience of the reader […][86]

Lucan consistently engages in a back and forth between personal and collective as both feed into one another.

The creation of the Caesar and all subsequent Caesars is sublimation of history at the state level: the implementation of the result of the Civil War and the subsequent construction of an absolute authority being the Civil War's material result. My reading is that Lucan's writing is therefore thematic rather than allegorical, as noted above. The distinction being important because of the implications the word allegory has for literal transcriptions of experience or history. Elements of Rome's self-destruction and tendency towards civil conflict can be seen in the experiences of Pompey and Caesar but the

[86] Day, 2013. p72.

Civil War between Pompey and Caesar cannot be directly mapped onto Neronian Rome. After all, Nero is already Emperor. Nero did not have to conduct a military campaign to topple a Republican government. Nor is there a Republican army fighting to reinstate Republican rule. The Roman principate of Lucan's day is holding on to power already won. Lucan is establishing that the experience of apocalyptic traumatic events in the present is not due to reversion but through an ongoing process. Lucan's representation of trauma is not reverting to the Civil War or life in it, Rome is traumatised by the ongoing process caused by it. The trauma has its roots in the Civil War but for Romans living under the principate their retraumatisation occurs under the principate through a system of reciprocal violence as described by Connoly, discussed more below, were traumatic volence is used to maintain a status quo.[87] The distinction here that prevents *Pharsalia* from being allegorical is that the trauma happens over and over forward into time and is not ever a return to the experiences of the past. The ability to return to the past carries with it the possibility of changing the future and this is, for Rome, impossible. This is illustrated by Ankersmit:

> This, then, is what has most appropriately has been called "the Pain of Prometheus," in which a civilisation is permanently aware of the social idylls of the "lost worlds" that it was forced to surrender in the course of its long history and that will never be returned to it, however strong the nostalgic yearning for these lost paradises may be.[88]

Though not part of Ankersmit's original meaning, "the Pain of Prometheus" can be seen to incorporate the idea of quasi-events as events that do not create a new apocalypse or event but (in the specific case here of quasi-events occurring after an 'event') perpetuate a descent into one already achieved. Prometheus' daily

[87] Connoly, 2016, p.278
[88] Ankersmit. 2005, p.325

suffering is a quasi-event in that it is the same suffering each day leading to no new state, the 'event' was being chained in the first place as it is that traumatic punitive action that created Prometheus' new reality. One pecked out liver is, unfortunately for Prometheus, rather like any other and no one of these daily events can be singled out as having reached a sufficient scale to become a new 'event' though they are indelibly linked to an 'event'. Alternatively, in paying attention to the quasi-events that occur in the wake of sufficiently large-scale societal events the original event can gain greater meaning, and the long-term effects of the event may be more clearly seen as they extend into the future, in other words, as the post event, post-apocalyptic history is created.

For the Republic the Civil War was the apocalypse not only because it was destructive and violent, but it brought about the end of the Republic. Moreover, the Republic would never return. This can be related back to the personal in the sense that is discussed by Day in his relation of the "'Promethean' situation" where Day reiterates that the Pain of Prometheus relates that:

> the narration of trauma, the construction of history and the concomitant attempt to 'recapture' the past must all be performed from the perspective of a present that through knowledge and narrative will hence only ever succeed in emphasising the past's distance.[89]

The 'past's distance' does not relate to a remoteness or disconnectedness however, as the conflict between an unreachable, sublime event and its very real and continuing effects on the subject are what create such a powerful personal and societal response to the 'Promethean' event.[90] This is made clear in the opening of Book Seven where "The Titan Sun" is presented as a reflection of Pompey's

[89] Day, 2013. p.186
[90] Day. 2013. p.186

personal relationship as historical figure of the Civil War catastrophe and of his relationship with Rome; the "Titan Sun"[91] grudgingly but inexorably drives his horses across the sky and wishes to "suffer eclipse". The sun cannot recede or slow its ascent no matter how much it wishes despite its power as a deity and so opts to obscure itself with clouds instead[92]. The connection to Pompey is made clear as this occurs in the build-up to Pompey's dream ahead of the battle of Pharsalia.[93] As a figure of the past Pompey has no more ability to stop the battle that is coming nor ultimately what will happen to Rome. This inability to change the past is so strong that Lucan writes: "Would that the gods above had granted one day as a gift to the country and you, / Magnus, when each, certain of its fate, might snatch / the last sweet fruit of their great love!".[94] The inability to change things is so powerful that Lucan does not call on the gods to alter Pompey's future or Rome's past because, once again, this isn't possible. Instead, Lucan implores the gods to simply allow Romans and Pompey the knowledge that they had one last day to praise the Republic and Pompey before the events of *Pharsalia* spiral out. Even this request is only granted in a dream that has no impact on the outcome of the Civil War.

Crucially in Pompey's dream the praise has the appearance of a funerary procession: "As though / you are to die in Ausonia's city you go".[95] In the liminal space of his dream Pompey and Rome are given knowledge of the future so they may pretend Pompey shall die at peace in Rome despite having full knowledge that this will not be the case. Pompey is both alive and dead, dead to elicit the mourning of "elder", "youth", and "women" but alive to experience their mourning and adoration. Even in his idyllic dream Pompey dies.

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[91] 7.1-7
[92] "he wanted to suffer eclipse … so drew clouds in", 7.1-7
[93] 7.8-52
[94] 7.35-38
[95] 7.38-39

Pompey relates to this future event similarly to the way Lucan relates it as a past event, immutable, material, and affecting. However, dream and reality are not neatly mirrored. The reaction of Pompey's wife, Cornelia on Pompey's last day does not match up to the kind of adoration the Roman crowds showed in Pompey's dream. "Cruel man!"[96] Cornelia calls him. She had been previously left on Lesbos during the war to fear for her husband and the eventual fate of herself and her son. Then upon Pompey's arrival to retrieve her she is uprooted to wander the Mediterranean with him and, upon reaching Egypt subsequently left again by a clearly fatalistic husband as he boards the Pharoah's envoy's ship. Upon Pompey's assassination she is once again alone facing a vulnerable and lonely future, one can only sympathise with her accusation. Cruel was certainly not an epithet being levelled in Pompey's dream but of course that was a dream. Pompey's reality is not as uncomplicatedly heroic. At the point of his death Pompey has all but given up and is resigned to accept his fate, he prefers "death to cowardice" [97] and as his death approaches Pompey relays a nonverbal monologue that begins "The ages are listening now".[98] This is a particularly on the nose way to begin and reinforces the readers relationship to the event as witness to past events. The only way both Lucan as author and his readers may experience this passage is from a place detached from Pompey's death in space and time separated by the "gulf of history"[99]. Pompey believes that his death may rob Caesar of some measure of joy from his death, [100] and that quietly accepting his death is the best thing he can do for Cornelia and his son under the circumstances.[101] Pompey takes solace in his long and prosperous life, possibly being fortified by the dream he has prior to his defeat at Pharsalus.

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[96] 8.717
[97] 8.704-706
[98] 8.763
[99] "the civil war opened up a gulf within history" Day, 2013, p.190
[100] 8.769-770
[101] "My son and wife will love me slain / if I die with dignity" 8.777-778

However, Cornelia, despite Pompey's intentions is predictably distraught, "Cornelia is watching my murder, and my Pompey – / so conceal your pain and groaning all the more / with patience. My son and wife will love me slain / if I die with dignity".[102] She takes no solace in Pompey's stoic approach to his own murder and instead turns to self-blame, saying: "Oh, my husband! / My cursed self has killed you! Lesbos, off your path, / caused you deadly delay".[103] Cornelia's curse echoing Julia's, and goes on to lament that it is Pompey that is killed and not her: "Husband, do I deserve this? Left safe in a ship?".[104] Cornelia claims that if Pompey's enemies really wanted to harm him, she should have died in front of him instead. Cornelia and Caesar are not bound by Pompey's expectations. Their response, while linked to the events at large and their societal effects, also occurs at the personal level. Cornelia acknowledges and understands Pompey's intent; "You rush to level blows / where he would pray to be beaten."[105] but is not comforted by this. Cornelia's earlier claims that she is responsible for Pompey's fate return.[106] Cornelia also incorrectly assumes that the murder was orchestrated by Caesar - "Caesar reached / the Nile's shores before you."[107] However, Caesar's responsibility is indirect, a result of the full scope of the Civil War being outside the reach of any individual. The influence of Caesar having reached Egypt's shores effectively rendering moot whether or not he arrived. Caesar's reach is sublime in scope encompassing the known world, making escape or evasion of his traumatising power seemingly impossible.

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[102] 8.776-779
[103] 8.786-788
[104] 8.800
[105] 8.792-793
[106] "I should have been the bride of hateful Caesar! / An unlucky wife who makes no husband happy" 8.105-106, "I was unfaithful / to marry you if I was bound to bring you sorrow" 8.114-115
[107] 8.789-790

Caesar's response upon finding out about Pompey's murder does not include any concern for the way in which Pompey met his death. Instead Caesar is more interested in delivering the correct performance of mourning to maintain a political edge over Egypt. Caesar "squeezed out groans / from his happy breast – the only way he could / suppress the manifest pleasures of his mind were his tears" (9.1286-1289). Indeed, Caesar is more worried about being indebted to Egypt for Pompey's murder[108] and turns the situation back on the Pharaoh accusing them of crimes against Rome for the murder of Pompey challenging the right of any non-Roman to kill Pompey: "Your crime has earned you worse / from Caesar than from Pompey … Did your realm ask to act with such free licence? … Am I to bear you, Ptolemy?".[109] Caesar goes on to offer clemency so as to keep an edge over the Egyptian leader.[110] Pompey's death has become just another part of Caesar's tyrannical power plays. Caesar used Troy to reinforce his own intentions and now does the same with Pompey's memory. Using memorialisation as a weapon to exert power over Ptolemy. Caesar's acting and politicking is an example of the events in the text expanding beyond Caesar, taking the events out of a purely individual context while still relating back to them and demonstrating the effects of the machinations of the states involved. Caesar does not have full control over everything even if he exerts influence, and precedent for the situation has already been set in previous examples of brutality enacted for the benefit of the soon-to-be Principate, creating the conditions for the reiterative violence required to maintain it. In this case, a Roman soldier, Septimius, working for the Pharaoh is the assassin (8.731-749). A Roman soldier suborning himself to the authority of a deified Egyptian Pharaoh is not unimportant as it establishes a precedent for Romans giving themselves over to tyrants, and committing unjust acts in their name. This will be repeated under the principate and impact Lucan's Rome.

[108] 9.1291-1292
[109] 9.1320-1332
[110] 9.1345-1348

Generations on from the events of the war, this sense of historical weight is felt in the social consequences of the principate contemporary Romans experience. This incident also decries the way in which history collapses into the present and dictates present day experiences, or specifically experience contemporary with Neronian Rome where Lucan states that "we have accepted / your Isis and demigod dogs".[111] In this way the historical apocalypse of the Civil War and the destruction of the republic unavoidably impacts and predicts the post-apocalyptic experiences of Rome and Lucan. Both Rome and Lucan have no choice but to reflect on it, consciously or not, as an intrinsic element in traumatic experience.

Caesar's attempt at honouring Pompey in death is corrupted to such a degree that Pompey's dream of being celebrated and mourned[112] is made impossible by the sheer magnitude of betrayal where Pompey is even geographically removed from Rome to the "Pharian embers"[113] of his pyre on the shores of Egypt. Caesar's unconvincing reverence for Pompey in the wake of his apocalyptic acts shows how little respect Caesar has for Rome's existing republican institutions. Lucan's reconciliation of Caesar's praise and Pompey's actual burial comes in the opening of Book Nine in which Pompey's "mighty shade"[114] which has parallels to the aforementioned discussion of the Titan Sun.[115] Lucan locates Pompey as one of many whose heroics alienated them from celebrated burials, 'laid to rest in gold or entombed with incense'[116] and whose' spirits' ascent into the "eternal spheres" and desire for resistance is unavoidable. This continuation of spirit is also strongly linked to the physical circumstances of his death and his removal from the geographical

[111] 8.1027-1028
[112] 7.43-46
[113] 9.1
[114] 9.2
[115] 7.2
[116] 9.11

confines of Rome. It is a confirmation in excess of Lucan's description of Hector and other heroes' unremarked or unmarked tombs.[117] Lucan's decision to place Pompey's ascent before Caesar is made aware of Pompey's death and feigned honouring of Pompey's memory is an important act in the text with regard to trauma writing's relationship to restoration, though not without complication.[118] There is a sort of victory in Pompey's triumphant ascent to the spheres[119] since it occurs before we encounter Caesar's satisfaction at discovering Pompey's death. There is a moment of freedom here as Pompey is a "mighty shade" that "leaped from the fire" and goes "to where demigod spirits dwell".[120] There is a restorative element in Pompey's freedom to leave through death.[121] There is then some brief truth to robbing Caesar of his satisfaction. This is of course complicated by Caesar gaining that satisfaction regardless. Furthermore, Lucan associates Pompey and common people in a shared funerary act, drawing a connection when Cordus, scratching out a meagre burial for Pompey on a beach, makes use of the wood from "a small fire, cremating a poor man's body / with no guardian".[122] In a sense Cordus becomes guardian of both these pyres further drawing a connection between them. Sharing funeral rites with a poor, untended man emphasises the senatorial, Republican relationship Lucan portrays Pompey as having with the Roman people. This is in contrast to Caesar's absolute rule where he simply takes.[123] Pompey is not a common Roman and Lucan does not portray him that way but a collaborative servile element to Pompey's high rank is engendered. Cato's eulogy enforces this view; stating the way in

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[117] "demigod spirits dwell… their fiery virtue…" 9.7-8, "The small heap of dust will scatter in no time… maybe our descendents will call Egyptians liars… about the tomb of Magnus." 8.1071-1076, "a Phrygian local / warned [Caesar] not to trample Hector's ghost. / Some stones were lying scattered without a trace of sacred purpose." 9.1208-1211

[118] LaCapra, 2014, p.95

[119] 9.9

[120] 9.2-7

[121] Caruth, 1991, p.191

[122] 8.915-916

[123] Felling the Massilian Grove demonstrates Caesar's destructive power as exceeding even nature's power, "he achieves what even lightning cannot", Day, 2013, p138

which, despite the many opportunities to do so, Pompey did not enrich himself and exert excessive power over the Roman people; “A citizen has passed” Cato begins his eulogy, and continues, “He asserted power / and liberty survived. He kept to private life / when the people were ready to be his slaves … He demanded nothing by force, but wanted / to be given only what could also be denied him.”[124] Pompey’s place in the conflict and identity is sublimated within the wider Republican struggle by positioning him as one of them, not a tyrant but a citizen. The “duel” is not between Pompey and Caesar but “liberty and Caesar”[125] bringing to the fore issues of agency in the face of the titanic forces of the onrushing principate. In this way Julius Caesar becomes just as sublimated in the cause of tyranny as Pompey becomes in that of Republicanism, it is the direction in which the power and agency travels that differs. Where the Republican cause appears to spread laterally to all those involved in the fight against Caesar, the cause of Caesar, while focussed on Julius Caesar and those under him, reaches far into the future too.

Day demonstrates the way that Lucan associates Caesar with phenomena related to concepts of the sublime, frequently lightning, and in doing so ‘reveals the sublime’s…’ and so Caesar’s, “…tendency towards tyranny”.[126] Pompey’s comparison is to an oak which also embodies the sublime.[127] An oak is stable and long lasting but finite, anchored but essentially historical in comparison to Caesar’s dynamic, forward moving, aggressive power. Caesar is forging history while Pompey is history. The ruination of Pompey’s oak[128] cements it as a symbol of republican resistance. It is an ultimately doomed totem for the Republican cause. In creating the principate Rome is harming a part of itself, injuring a foundational part of its state body, to

[124] 9.230-245
[125] 7.801-811
[126] Day, 2013, pp.106-107, Connoly also notes this connection, Connoly, 2016??, p.280
[127] Day, 2013, pp.212-213
[128] Day, 2013, p212

perpetuate tyranny. Further reinforcing this image, Lucan strongly associates Rome and Rome's leadership with the physical head with Pompey's decapitation being the obvious symbolic and literal removal of a head of state and its subsequent damage to Rome itself through the destruction of Republicanism.[129] The damage is a reflection of Sulla's 'remedy' that was 'too much' and 'went too far'[130] with the positions of republicanism and tyranny reversed but the destruction no less harmful.

Pompey's Apocalypse

Lucan's approach to death in a civil war context frequently utilises language and framing that evokes self-harm and suicide even in cases where death is through combat or murder.[131] So much so that the line between murder, killing, and suicide is extremely blurred and becomes sublime in its presentation. This can be seen in Pompey's ideation of his own death and indeed in the manner in which he meets his real death. Pompey is murdered by Septimius, a Roman turned agent of the Pharaoh. Despite being murdered there is a sense he had been seeking his own death, as evidenced in Book Eight, which describes Pompey's own kind of purgatory or liminal space of surrender wherein he awaits that death.[132] After Pharsalia Caesar and Pompey both enter liminal space as they both gradually make their way to Egypt. By the end of Book Eight Pompey is dead and by the end of Book Nine Caesar learns of Pompey's death upon arriving in Egypt. The passages between Pharsalia and Pompey's death and Caesar's learning of Pompey's death have moments of unreality about them. In Book Eight's opening moments, it is as if Pompey wishes to be a shade as he is "Seeking desolate places" and would "prefer to be

[129] Dinter notes the way in which lightning strikes the 'heads' of Roman geographical sites which allude to Pompey's literal beheading, as well as the figurative beheading of the Roman state, Dinter, 2013, pp.19-20, while Day clearly draws the connection between the use of lightning and Caesar's divine power, Day, 2013, p.107
[130] 2.149
[131] Day, 2013. p191-192
[132] Dinter notes Pompey's murder-as-suicide, Dinter, 2013, p.23. 8.221-227

unknown in every nation".[133] He strikes out into the Mediterranean Sea from a river running red with blood[134] in a "barely safe"[135] boat. Even when Pompey lands in friendly Lesbos he cannot stay and must continue to wander. Pharsalia has uprooted Pompey entirely and what friendly allies there are, are still unsafe for him to turn to:[136]

> Over the entire Ocean / keep one thing I view, that your ship is always / farther away from Emathia's coast. Abandon the sky / and sea of Hesperia. Leave the rest to the winds. / I rescued my dear companion whom I had placed in trust. / Then I knew for certain what shores I wanted most. / But now, let Fortune choose our port[137]

Hiding, slinking away on a tiny, rickety boat from a site of mass death Pompey is close to death despite his temporary escape.

Pompey's death is inevitable on multiple levels. As an unchangeable historic event his death is immutable; only by deviating into complete fantasy could this be altered. Lucan's epic does not indulge in a fantasy in which Pompey survives. Instead, summoned into existence by Lucan's narrative Pompey is brought back to relive his last days. And inevitably, Pompey will die all over again. Pompey dreams about death on more than one occasion, it is as if Pompey is conscious of his inevitable death almost as surely as if the textual Pompey was aware of his narrative. In Book Three Pompey dreams of his former wife, Julia who appears to him, crawling out of a hole in the ground and appearing as a Fury, a spirit of condemnation and vengeance: "Julia's sorrowful head rose up from a gaping ground / like a Fury standing on her grave in flames".[138] Upon appearing she emphasises Pompey's connection to Caesar as family through her, making stark the trauma of fractured familial bonds caused by civil conflict. She then

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[133] 8.14-26
[134] 8.38-39
[135] 8.41
[136] 8.161
[137] 8.223-227
[138] 3.10-12

prophesises certain doom for Pompey. Pompey's reaction however is as resigned here as it is at his death in Book Eight. Julia disappears "through / the embrace"[139] of Pompey; at some point during her appearance Pompey must have reached out to hold her, or perhaps she reached out to him, and he accepted the embrace. Perhaps Pompey did this to embrace the idea of death. This is echoed by Pompey's acceptance of his real death at the hands of Septimius. During his dream encounter with Julia's spirit Pompey muses to himself that "Either the departed soul senses nothing after death - / or death itself is nothing".[140] In death Pompey will either experience forgetful oblivion and no longer have the capacity to experience and relive the traumas of the Civil War, or his continued existence in a next life renders the threat of death meaningless. "His mind made certain / of misfortune" Pompey accepts his own role in it.[141] Pompey's attitude towards death is established long before he knew the exact circumstances it would occur under. In other words, Pompey's death, and importantly his approach to it, is a continuation of the traumatising conditions of the Civil War. Pompey knows he will die eventually one way or another of course, that it will occur as a result of the Civil War and that his death is just one part of the trauma of the conflict. Upon her appearance Julia also describes the strain the underworld is under to adjust to the impacts of the Civil War; she was herself brought forth by the war: "I am torn after civil war".[142] Not only that but "the Eumenides with firebrands [are] goading both your armies".[143] The Eumenides are not the only ones hard at work: "Acheron is preparing / countless rafts", "Tartarus expands for more punishments", and "The three sisters" and "the Parcae" are all finding the task of keeping up with the demands of Roman violence difficult. The Fates are struggling so much that they can "hardly keep up with their work" and "are getting tired of

[139] 3.37-38
[140] 3.43-44
[141] 3.40-41
[142] 3.15
[143] 3.16

breaking threads of fate".[144] Again, otherworldly powers are reduced to witnessing and keeping up with the destructive efforts of the living. After Pompey's death the exuberance of his spirit at the beginning of Book Nine may point to the relief from this state of stasis in awaiting his death. Pompey is rapturous even, at the momentary release from his pre-death stasis.

Caesar tours the ruins[145] of Troy, An apocalyptic landscape, from which, according to Augustan tradition, Rome would eventually emerge from the exploits of its refugee son, Aeneas. Spencer[146] points out the importance of ruins in Roman cultural memory, specifically the ruins of Troy. In *Pharsalia* Rome is born from the ruin of Troy not once but twice. First as per the *Aeneid*, and second from Caesar's trip to Troy in Book Nine. Rome is also rebuilt or reborn from its own ruins as the principate; Augustus makes note of the neglect and subsequent degradation and ruination of buildings and his projects to restore them.[147] Caesar appears to recognise the tomb of Ajax, Hersione's crags (mother of Teucer, who fought against his Trojan family), the grove where Aeneas was conceived, the cave where the Judgement of Paris was meted out, where Ganymedes was abducted to die and become immortal as Zeus' cup bearer, and a peak where Oenone, who prophesised the death of Paris, wept. But, without knowing, Caesar walks over the dry Xanthus/Scamander River and the tomb of Hector.[148] It is interesting to note what Caesar is and is not aware of regarding Trojan geography and memorialisation, failing to recognise Hector's tomb is significant. Caesar only recognises elements with relevance to his ego. Caesar recognises Ajax, enemy of Troy, Teucer, half-brother to Ajax and traitor to Troy, the place of conception of Aeneas (something which relates directly to Caesar's family and ego),

[144] 3.18-21
[145] 9.1177
[146] Spencer. 2005. p.51-52
[147] Spencer, 2005, p.51
[148] 9.1209

Paris, and Ganymedes, whose fate was decided at the whim of a powerful god. Caesar's approaches the post-apocalyptic space of Troy as something for him to take from. He only recognises the elements that serve him. Caesars eyes are filled with "reverence for antiquity".[149] And yet he does not seem to understand the relation between the things he recognises and the destruction of Troy, nor does he appear to care about his ignorance as no rebuttal or mention is made of a response to his tour guide warning him "not to trample Hector's ghost".[150]

Caesar's familiarity with elements relating to the destruction of Troy and not with its greatest defender, Hector, is startling. When Caesar goes on to pray and swear to recreate Troy as the descendent of Aeneas, he does so without being fully cognisant of history. Nor with care for the negative implications for Rome's future. If Caesar was, he would consider Troy's fate in wanting to recreate it in Roman form. Even in praising Pallas Athena he says: "never beheld by any man, concealed deep / within your shrine, a lasting pledge of safety".[151] Given the destruction of Troy the reader can only doubt the strength of the "pledge of safety". Caesar is either aware of the irony,[152] and is mocking the gods by placing himself above them all while arrogantly calling on their assistance, is unaware of the irony[153] and so fails to appreciate the possibility of fallibility and folly in recreating Troy, or does not care. Perhaps assuming that if Rome were to meet the same end it would be far enough in the future it doesn't concern him. The similarity between Pompey and Hector's tomb great importance here as they both precede destruction, representing trauma on an apocalyptic scale. Caesar may not be fully cognisant of history but for Caesar that is not important. Caesar

[149] 9.1221
[150] 9.1209
[151] 9.1229
[152] The notes for the Matthew Fox translation assume irony, Lucan, Civil War p.431
[153] Caesar's indifference to Hector point to a corresponding ignorance here

refuses to be limited in any way in the pursuit of his goals including by the past and so Caesar does not allow any element that might detract from his view intrude upon him. Caesar "[creates] absolute freedom for himself" and so "becomes an insuperable obstacle to the freedom of the rest of Rome"[154] Caesar is reaching for a sublime state in which he is completely unfettered by the needs and demands of others and can inflict his tyranny with exquisite exactness. For Caesar history is already destroyed and so the apocalyptic conditions he sets about to create are inevitable, perhaps even thoughtless, expressed through his sublime power.[155]

As much as Caesar desires power and to change Rome to suit his goals he is incapable of fully knowing what is being lost as a result. It does not appear to matter to him. This is demonstrated in his ignorance regarding Troy. More than being ignorant through a lack of care Caesar is ignorant due to a commitment to tyrannical ideology. He believes his own constructed version of Troy, and even when warned of trampling Hector's ghost scarcely seems to let this knowledge intrude on his own construction. As human with the power of a god he embodies the destruction a mortal is capable of but without the far-reaching wisdom of a god. Rome is traumatised as a result. Caesar's visit has been successfully compared to that of Alexander the Great's visit[156] as well as Aeneas' underworld adventure in Book Six of the *Aeneid*, and Aeneas' vision of Rome's future in Book Eight. All these comparisons hold significant weight and correspond to the themes of apocalypse and the way in which Lucan utilises them to convey the depth of trauma these events engender. As an embodiment of tyrannical leadership, it is hard to find a better avatar than Alexander the Great. Similarly to Troy and its destruction, Alexander the Great's accomplishments are unavoidably tied to that what came after them.

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[154] Day, 2013, p.166
[155] Day, 2013, p.116
[156] McRoberts. 2018. p.58

The result of the empire won by Alexander was not peace but its dissolution and the struggles between Successor States. Caesar's trip as katabatic episode also stresses the apocalyptic nature of Troy where its destruction was so complete that visiting its site is tantamount to visiting the underworld. Troy is a destroyed and unrecoverable place and idea that serves as a repository of memory and the dead both politically and geographically. This is reflected in Lucan's description of the Trojan ruins where: "Even its ruins have perished."[157] as "rotting trunks of trees… Tired roots… [and] thorns."[158] bury and hide Troy's buildings. The allusion to Rome sharing the fate of Troy is made clear again and reflected in Lucan's text where Caesar swears to recreate Troy. In comparison to Aeneas' Book Eight journey into a triumphantly presented future of Rome the pessimism over Rome's future seems clear.

As the principate built its justification to rule on the Augustan-Vergillian construction of the *Aeneid*, so is Lucan's Caesar anachronistically granted knowledge of Vergil's epic, unwritten at the time of the Civil War. Here the layered constructions are made obvious and stark due to just how confused they become. Caesar is experiencing a history that has not been created yet while experiencing his own selective version of Troy's history. Under these conditions the agency, history, and identity of other Romans can mean very little except in whatever way Caesar decides is important, and useful, to him. The ability to create and direct history exists beyond objective reality. Caesar's experience of history is damagingly sublime in that it is a construction that can overturn the reality of others. This is significant in its contribution to a discourse of apocalypse that is shaped by the reiterative qualities of traumatic political events. Connoly notes the way reiteration works to form a

[157] 9.1200
[158] 9.1198-1200

picture of the Roman state body as one constantly injuring and conquering itself as a form of communal reiteration under Caesar: “I have argued here for an understanding of the violence in the Bellum Ciuile as reiterative violence, and that this violence, practiced by protagonist and populus together and made visible in Lucan ’ s grotesque sublime, forms and sustains the Roman Empire under the Caesars.”[159] In this case Caesar embodies and becomes the symbol of the power to control history, representing the principate’s ability to *create* history the way a tomb’s monument can be manipulated and conversely in the way that Pompey’s unmarked tomb complicates that manipulation. Monumentalism to Lucan is a way of enacting control.

As noted above Hector’s burial reflects Pompey’s. Both Hector and Pompey were mutilated. Pompey’s and Hector’s tombs are both barely recognisable as such.[160] The disparity between their spirits’ textual importance and their tombs are similar. The small rock and charcoal dedication is too restricting for Pompey’s spirit, according to Lucan, “Thoughtless hand. Why do you hinder Magnus in a grave and jail his roving spirit?”, but the similarity with Hector’s tomb is still felt keenly as “the name of POMPEY, now not far above the lowliest sand, so low down on the tomb that passersby can’t stand up straight and read it; is not pointed out, Roman travellers miss it”.[161] One can easily imagine, given Caesar’s lack of care for Hector’s ghost in the dust of the Xanthus during his tour of Troy that Caesar would miss Pompey’s tomb just as readily. Though Hector’s tomb must be known[162] to some it is not marked in a way travellers would immediately recognise. Even when Caesar becomes aware of Pompey’s fate, he does not know the condition or location of Pompey’s buried body. Caesar does not acknowledge any parallels or

[159] Connoly, 2016, p.295
[160] 8.967-977, 9.1205-1209
[161] 8.1016
[162] Connoly. 2016, p.281

connection between Pompey and Hector the way he does with himself and Aeneas just as he cannot see the 'tomb' of Hector or recognise its importance. Of course, in protecting Troy Hector was fighting, and died, to maintain the status quo. Aeneas, while also fighting for the same cause fled rather than die protecting Troy and created a new order out of the Trojan apocalypse, paving the way for Rome. If Hector had succeeded, Troy would have persisted and there would be no use for Aeneas to begin his quest and no origin for Rome. Caesar goes a step further and directs the destruction of the Republic to create the apocalyptic conditions for his Rome. Despite this Caesar clearly views his role as being similar to Aeneas'. Certainly, he sees himself as acting on his legacy. Caesar is seeking to necromantically resurrect the kingship of dead Aeneas in his dedications to him at Troy through Caesar's promise of a return to power for Troy, his "Roman Pergamum".[163]

Caesar is ignorant of the warnings contained in Erichtho's dialogue that the cruellest thing about reanimating something dead is that it will have to die again. It is hard to imagine Caesar taking such warnings too seriously even if Erichtho told him herself; the threat of divine calamity did not prevent Caesar from destroying a sacred Massilian grove of trees.[164] Caesar's soldiers feared retribution for the sacrilege: "they believed / that if they struck those sacred trees, their axes were sure / to rebound back on their own limbs." Notably the destruction of the grove, constituting a breach of "what's right",[165] did mean calamity. Just not in this moment for Caesar, though he will, of course, eventually be assassinated by fellow Romans.[166] The stolen Oxen used to transport the lumber deprived

[163] 9.1237
[164] 3.415-472
[165] "they believed / that if they struck those sacred trees, their axes were sure / to rebound back on their own limbs." 3.457-459
[166] Augoustakis, 2006, p.638

farmers of the means to harvest and so the whole crop was lost.[167] Caesar's sublime power makes him heedless of apocalypse. Rome under the principate does not receive the same protection and care (such as it is) that Erichtho's soldier did; that it may never again be resurrected only to have to face death all over again. Caesar as instigator of the Civil War and power-hungry tyrant views apocalypse as something he should pursue and that will benefit him. The fate of the Trojans explains how destructive Lucan envisages Caesar's ambitions being for the Roman people.

Aeneas as written by Virgil is not so much denied by Lucan or inverted through allegory. Narratively speaking, in Lucan's terms Aeneas is as much a part of the principate's cultural origins and authority as Caesar and Pompey are. In engaging with Virgil, Lucan is fully embracing the *Aeneid* as part of Rome's mytho-historical canon via reference-as-fact.[168] Caesar and Pompey's thematic involvement with Aeneas is exhibited throughout Civil War. Pompey is compared to an oak tree in a way that recalls Aeneas.[169] And as above Caesar directly invokes Aeneas as his descendent. The above-mentioned Massilian grove counted oaks amongst its trees further entwining the virgilian aspect of Pompey with Lucan's narrative. However, unlike Aeneas, Pompey is not unambiguously a hero even though he can be seen to exhibit many positive, virtuous traits over the course of *Pharsalia*. Similarly, Caesar also exhibits positive traits. Not least is Caesar's enormous will and his ability, and strength, to enact that will on the world around him.[170] Arguably, Caesar is genuinely accomplishing the goals of Aeneas, and in the Virgillian sense he literally is by creating the conditions for the principate. Incorporating rather than denying Aeneas leads to a renegotiation with the text of the *Aeneid* and its goals. Aeneas incorporates aspects of both Caesar and Pompey is

[167] 3.472
[168] Through Caesar's relation to Aeneas, 9.1227, Santangelo, 2015, p.180
[169] *Aeneid*, 4.555. Lucan, 1.149
[170] Day, 2013, p.178

important in this renegotiation.[171] Lucan creates a chain of traumatic event and after effect as one trauma eventually begets another. Creating this link between Pompey and Aeneas brings this chain to the fore and forces a renegotiation with the *Aeneid*. Using this renegotiation one can detect similar chains of events; Aeneas is compared to an oak in Book Four of the *Aeneid* as he ignores the pleas of Dido. Spurning the Queen of Carthage sets the stage for Carthage's confrontation with Rome, and this confrontation leads to the apocalyptic destruction of Carthage. For Caesar, as successful he may be in creating a new Pergamum, Rome will once again be under the influence of a North African power as Egyptian influence makes its way into Rome. The principate is traumatic and traumatising, its origins are traumatic and traumatising, Aeneas' quest to create Rome was traumatic and traumatising. Lucan's approach is chaotic but structured as all the elements he presents are combined but individually playing out. The text's use of the sublime serves this as Lucan uses the sublime to construct an intricate layered picture that not only serves to provide form to the unrepresentable but forces the reader to interrogate every aspect of the narrative. Creating the conditions from which a reader can re-examine Roman culture, history, and mythology through a lens that allows them to read the ways in which they and others are traumatised. Lucan's characterisation of Pompey and of opposing the principate is that it is worthwhile but doomed, and it will be as if that resistance never occurred in terms of tangible results, but its effect is still material and materialised in texts like Lucan's *Pharsalia*. In the text itself there is little to no hope of recovery. If the tyranny of the principate is to end then it will have to die a similarly apocalyptic death that republicanism did which, even if it led to a 'brighter' more 'republican' future (or some other more just society), would be no

[171] "Virgil stressed the impact of traumatic experiences by mirroring past and present political constellations in his narrative approach to another manmade disaster, the ultimate fall of Troy. Readers also encounter antagonistic Caesar and Pompey, former in-laws, in the underworld, but only get a glance of them from a distance in the midst of gentle forgetfulness" Walde. 2011. p.291

less destructive and traumatic in and of itself. A bloody revolution may be hard to look forward to even if one is committed to the positive after-event reality it may create.

CHAPTER TWO:

A BODY AT WAR WITH ITSELF

This chapter will look at the transmission of trauma, re-traumatisation, and specifically the use of the body in regard to trauma. The individual body, the state body, the principate as body, and the body of the text itself. where in the other chapter I talk about Lucan using the sublime and apocalypse to demonstrate the breaching points in the relationship between Rome and its history here more attention is paid to the physically represented manifestations of trauma, traumatic damage, and material breaching points. Damage to bodies, illness in bodies, and the use of bodies and their memorialisation (tombs, burial) and how those things tie into the representation of traumatising events, or the representation of the retraumatising nature of principate. Use of traumatic events at a national, societal level are used to contextualise personal trauma under those conditions. The expression of abstract emotional trauma through the literalisation of it through bodily harm is also covered. Emotions are not detached from physical processes, the brain is after all an organ like any other required to live, and this chapter will also treat emotions as material as any other bodily function.

Combat Trauma as a Common Language

War in Lucan's Pharsalia is not 'simply' war. War trauma is not 'simply' trauma experienced explicitly through combat. Authority to discuss and utilise warfare in literature is not solely that of the soldier. Narrativising trauma in epic poetry communicates and contextualises the cultural and emotional legacy of national loss. Both socially and individually, that legacy is a product of the traumatic consequence of violence on a massive scale. Lucan begins to construct a language with which to describe non-combat trauma, i.e. trauma incurred outside of war. Non-combat trauma is still

expressed through descriptions of combat, which then acts as a lens for similar emotions to be refracted through. Conflict and conquest were particularly salient as they were not only a core element of Roman mytho-history but of the practical and material conditions of Rome's existence. The importance and relevance of violence in a militarised society such as Rome's can be seen in how Roman non soldiers — civilians or non-combatants in modern parlance — were inundated with depictions of Roman military endeavours such as through triumphal arches.

Most relevant to Lucan's Pharsalia is the formation of the principate through traumatic civil war. Indeed, every major epoch, and many minor ones, of Rome's history is framed around a conflict of incredible stature; the destruction of Carthage, the civil wars ending with Octavian's victory over Marcus Aurelius, and going back to Rome's prehistory in the Virgilian tradition, the destruction of Troy. These events had traumatic effects that went beyond their battlefields. The soldiers that fought on them would carry the legacy of the experience with them, or as in the case of Virgil's presentation of the Trojan War, were utilised to construct a sense of connection with those traumatic events. While Troy may not have been a traumatising experience for Romans directly the theme of trauma was embedded into the mytho-history. Each of these events created notable and recognisable breaches between past and present, Rome's major conflicts mark endings and beginnings. Rome only achieves peace through victory over a foe, civic peace means freedom to conduct war on foreign powers. It can be seen then that the language of Rome was often one of violence and the formation of the Roman sense of self inevitably built on that violence, Lucan states as much in the passages following Pharsalia's proem. The discussion of self, of trauma, and of history utilises violence and conflict as its bedrock. As Lucan's epic unfolds these elements are inevitably borne

out physically in the bodies of Romans both literally in the form of injury and lasting trauma. Lucan's language treats groups of bodies and individuals as interchangeable further demonstrating the degree to which Lucan views the way in which state and society collectively interacts with individuals at the bodily level. Even in instances where an individual is acting they are doing so as a representative as a whole.

Community as a Body

In discussing the psychological concept of damage to character, Johathan Shay explores the idea of shared identity between groups using the Greek term "*philoi*" to describe these groups and their interaction with 'character'. Shay again adopts a Greek term: "*thumos*" while discussing 'character' when referring to all aspects that feed into the concept of character. Shay identifies the concept of "*thumos*" with the modern psychological concept of narcissism but importantly makes the distinction that narcissism is not in and of itself harmful unless it is expressed excessively.[172] Following from "*thumos*", Shay identifies forms of attachment using Aristotle's definition and formulation of "*philoi*" to mean "people and social groups"[173] and of connection between individuals in those groups. The nature of the close connections within those groups means that betrayal from the in-group can be especially traumatic. Character is of great importance to Lucan and the portrayal of Pompey and Caesar; in Book One's opening passages we are treated to an overview of the aspects of personality, deeds, and politics, that would lead to conflict between both camps.[174] Shared identity is just as important. The fate of Roman political identity is at stake in the face of civil war. In instances where mutiny is brewing amongst the

[172] According to Shay narcissism is overly associated with its pathologised and negative connotations in a modern context, Shay. 2002. p.156
[173] Shay. 2002. p.158
[174] 1.132-172

armies of the Republican and Caesarion camps appeals are made in speeches to consider their own character and their place within the wider Roman community: Caesar makes an appeal to his men to become part of a victorious body, "Victory / will give me a crowd … While you'll be bloodless old men just watching / our triumphs".[175] While Cato points out that, with their erstwhile leader behaded, they are now truly a Republican army with no one ruler, Cato: "You don't know how / to bear life without a king! But now the cause / is worth the hazard for men".[176] The accusation of betrayal of Shay's "*thumos*" and the group in the case of mutiny or desertion is clear in these speeches. More than that however is the contrast between Caesar's appeal to become part of his body versus Cato's headless liberty.

Through individual association with "*philoi*", that is with community, the values and actions of others of the same group "implicate" all other members.[177] The sense of self felt outside of '*the self*' is key here and Shay draws from Aristotle again to use the term "another myself".[178] The behaviour of community members outside the individual is as if it was performed to, by, or in the name of, the individual regardless of if this was explicitly the intent. If that behaviour breaches the values of an individual or of a wider communal unit it can betray and destroy trust and become a source of trauma and damage to character.[179] Shay is focussing here on smaller communal groups in his study of Homeric texts but draws comparisons to modern communities, most obviously ones based on statehood.[180] As such it follows that trauma can be caused and felt at

[175] 5.346-351
[176] 9.323-325
[177] Shay. 2002. p.158
[178] Shay. 2002. p.159
[179] Bartsch notes the importance of boundaries (personal, social) and the effects of their violation in Lucan's work, Bartsch. 1997. pp.13-14, this meshes well with Shay's approach.
[180] "In the modern world, the nation-state has appropriated the status of "*philos*", along with other groups such as armies, religions, and professions." Shay, Odysseus in America, p.159

these larger scales of communal organisation. Rather than a purely modern phenomenon the concept of "national *philos*" can be demonstrated in Roman ideology too. Under the principate Roman national identity in the form of the executive and the military was central to Roman culture and the formation of a standing army and the concentration of executive power into the body of the Emperor served to reinforce the concept of national "*philos*". Triumphal arches provided monumental material reminders of Rome's military might. Lucan laments in the proem that civil war was disruptive and harmful to national identity pointing out that there is "no hope for triumphs".[181] In doing so Lucan explains that there will be no celebrations as is the case in victory against a foreign enemy.

Lucan also refers to the death of Crassus at the hand of the Parthians.[182] Both these items point to the central importance of Roman militarism in Lucan's presentation of Roman identity. Indeed, the concept of "another myself" and the violence that can occur within that relationship is further demonstrated when Lucan writes: "A brother's blood / soaked Rome's first walls"[183] placing fratricide at the very core of Rome's identity via the myth of the twins, Romulus and Remus, making an apt demonstration of experiencing the self in another. Rome as a "state *philos*" means that Rome is experienced as "another myself" by Romans in the same way that Shay describes the way in which military personnel experience membership to their branch of the military, or their nation. When faced with a foreign enemy, Rome had significant social and civic systems to structure state and individual aggression and its legacy,[184] however since civil

[181] 1.15
[182] Lucan, Civil War, notes p.334
[183] 1102-103
[184] "In Rome, each external (that is, "normal") war left visible traces of varied temporal extent (mutilated soldiers, memorials, triumphs, epics, praetextae , etc.). In contrast to civil wars, they could be harmonized within political and cultural coordinates via valorization or at least a positive construction of the Roman Sendungsbewusstsein , "sense of mission," where the individual was subordinated to the common greater good" Walde. 2011. p.286

war is a violent disintegration of social and civic norms the capacity to absorb and regulate the effects and legacy of civil conflict are accordingly decreased, if not outright destroyed. "The human being is a bio-psycho-socio-cultural whole *at every moment*"[185] Shay writes, also noting that "*philos*" as "another myself" predicates most organised human violence and that threat to "*philos*" can cause "killing rage".[186] As humans operate as the embodiment and enactors of social structure when a threat emerges that is not foreign but domestic and comes from within those social structures it is as if the threat comes from the within the body itself. When that threat triggers 'killing rage' it must be directed inwards towards the "*philos*" of Rome itself and so manifests as self-destruction.

In this case the Civil War is experienced as a traumatic event in which the bodies of Romans can become fractured both physically in combat and by the emotional toll of war and social disintegration. Lucan demonstrates trauma through the handling of bodies as vessels for the storage and processing of pain and damage and in the way traumatic damage is transmitted not only in the time in which it occurs but forward in time within Rome as its own momentum causes ongoing damage leading to the re-traumatisation of future Roman society. Lucan's communication of trauma sees graphic descriptions of bodily damage and of Rome being crushed under its own weight: "…the mighty / don't stand long. A grave downfall, excessive weight: / Rome couldn't bear herself."[187] This description of Rome evokes later scenes as Roman bodies injure themselves while crushed in battle "he barely got through unpunished by comrades' swords. / The ring compressed as front ranks took steps back"[188] and clog the sea " The waves could not sustain the weight of corpses floating on their

[185] Shay. 2002. p162
[186] Shay, 2002, p.159
[187] 1.77-78
[188] 4.829-820

surface".[189] These passages demonstrate Romans destroying themselves in civil war. Societal trauma is reflected in the bodies of Romans and also in the way in which deceased bodies are interred and memorialised. Lucan represents traumatic all-encompassing inner conflict through the use of self-harm. The two sides created in the conflict, the republicans and the Caesarions are not neat delineations. Republicanism and tyranny exist within Rome as part of its whole not as separate bodies foreign to one another. Even the republican hero Pompey possesses within him the capacity for tyranny.[190] When Lucan describes battles between the warring Roman factions the self-destructive combat demonstrates the internal disintegration of the self.

If betrayal from "*philoi*" can be an especially damaging breach of "what's right" then the opposite must be true. Pompey's embodiment of the Republican cause is one such instance, and so is, more complexly, Pompey's death. Pompey's death cements him as the purified spirit of Republicanism because in dying in defence of the Republic he is removed from the possibility of betraying Republican ideals to become a tyrant himself. The jubilation at Pompey's 'ascension' to unproblematic republican hero is felt in the text particularly in Cato's glowing eulogy[191] in which Pompey's lawfulness, selflessness, and loyalty to the Roman state are emphasised. As the Republicans face mutiny Cato, now housing Pompey's spirit, addresses the panicking troops: "Now / you live and die for yourselves".[192] Cato calls on the Republican Romans to see themselves in each other, to see their 'other myself' in their fellow Romans, the Senate, and in the Republic at large rather than in a sole leader. Agency over death remains an important theme: "The best lot

[189] 3.705-706
[190] 2.294-301
[191] 9.280-259
[192] 9.318-319

for men is to know when to die, / but next best is to be forced … I won't beg to be spared for the enemy. He can save me after he cuts off my head"[193] emphasising again that it is better to die in a way that an enemy benefits less from. Shay notes that Hegel establishes there are two ways to lose a fight, "death with honor, or the all-encompassing dishonor - the social death – of enslavement.[194] Such an attitude maps on to the self-destructive desire to spite the enemy by both cheating them of the satisfaction of personally delivering or witnessing their death or of becoming enslaved in one form or another, to the will of the victor in defeat. Cato's eulogy speech for Pompey[195] makes the same claim that he would prefer death to enslavement by his enemy. The self-destructive episodes in various battles discussed elsewhere as well as Pompey's death further enforce the point of Self Harm as retaliation and as refuge from submission to the enemy.

According to Shay, reaction to betrayal by "*philoi*", by fellow Romans in this case, is especially strong as it is the self-injuring of the self. Lucan's imagery of self-injuring bodies literally supports the theme of communal betrayal. The destruction being wrought by a split from the very top of Roman society, and by friends, family, and citizens, is so insulting, such a serious breach of "what's right", to the self that it causes damage to "*thumos*", to the sense of self and in Lucans presentation results in bodily destruction through acts of self-harm. Lucan's shows that self-injury is not just a self-inflicted expression of betrayal, but that the bond between Romans is such that self-harm can also be experienced as injury to one's enemies:

> So a mighty army was squeezed to a small circle, / and if a man afraid, tried to hide in the middle, / he barely got through unpunished by comrades' swords. / The ring compressed as

[193] 9.255-259
[194] Shay. 2002 p.156
[195] 9.255-259

> front ranks took steps back, / tightening their own noose. There is no space / left to swing a sword. Crowding bodies grind; / as armoured chests collide their armour breaks. / The victorious Moor could not enjoy the full spectacle / that Fortune granted, He missed the rivers of gore, / limbs falling, bodies ground into the earth- / crowded corpses, propping each other up.[196]

This passage barely mentions the actions of the enemy army other than the incredible pressure created, the damage is self-inflicted, pushing through the throng results in being injured "by comrade's swords" almost as punishment for retreating from the enemy. The soldiers are "tightening their own noose" as opposed to the enemy doing it for them, and in crowding together so tightly "armoured chests collide" causing "their armour [to break]", "corpses [are] propping each other up.". The dead, unable to drop to the ground are mixed with the living, the line between living and dead blurring as even armour breaks, removing the physical barrier against not just weapons, but other bodies. Even their enemy, "The victorious Moor" is prevented from viewing the destruction of the Romans. Hiding or stealing an enemy's satisfaction or enjoyment of a kill is consistently denied in Lucan's narrative. As such the soldier's deaths are rendered violently intimate forcing the reader to view civil war in terms of introspective violence alongside external violence from opposing camps.

Self-harming is presented as a form of agency, taking control away from the attacker, and emphasising the personal nature of injury in civil conflict. Intent and affect do not always follow cleanly, however. We don't know whether the Moor, King Juba laments missing out on the grisliest scenes, but Lucan, through Fortune, invokes the vengeful spirits of defeated Carthage to receive Roman

[196] 4.817-827

sacrifices.[197] Lucan presents the impression that agency is clawed back in the final act of self-destruction. However, Lucan also shows that any mediating factor cannot reverse or erase the damage that has been done as Rome's old enemy itself gains satisfaction from Roman losses. In civil war since the enemy are *philoi* spiting an enemy still results in a diminishing of the communal group. Further, the ghosts of Carthage taking satisfaction in Roman destruction due to a desire for revenge further cements the view in *Pharsalia* that societal trauma at the societal scale creates the conditions for retraumatisation and future conflict. Rome's destruction of Carthage echoes into the future despite the death of Carthage. That North Africans under Caesarion command fighting in a Roman civil war harbour a desire for revenge on Rome predicated on Carthage's destruction points to the reciprocal nature of violent traumatic response. The civil conflict becomes sublime in its totality and in the blurring of self cannot emerge from it whole or unaltered.[198] Whatever survives will be permanently changed and exist in a state inseparable from the traumas that created it. Lucan establishes early on the precedent that past horrors prepare the ground for later trauma, even when Rome and the Republic were victorious. Lucan details the horrors of the conflict between Marius and Sulla as the preceding Roman civil conflict. Again, even though the Republican cause was victorious in that conflict the horror is comparable to the horrors of the Civil War as we see in the following passage:

> Fugitives crowded tombs, / living bodies mixed confused with those buried there. / Caves of beasts could not contain all the people. / One man slipped a noose on his neck and broke it, another leapt down headlong and dashed himself / hard on the ground – they stole their deaths away from the bloody conqueror. One man piled high wood for his own pyre, and

[197] 4.828-830

[198] In very literal terms the Roman political system was completely altered and there is no way to return to its former state. The same can be said of Carthage, even if Rome was wiped out without a trace Carthage would still be lost, Ankersmit. 2005. pp.328-329

> while he still had blood / and freedom, dove into the fire, embraced the flames.[199]

The fugitive's deaths in the tombs mirrors not only the self destruction carried out on Roman bodies from battles that occur during the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar. It also mirrors Pompey's effort to keep from Caesar the satisfaction, and perhaps added legitimacy, of capturing and killing him. As the fleeing fugitives "stole their deaths away from the bloody conqueror", Pompey "wanted to steal his death away from Caesar's gaze".[200] Like the fleeing Romans entering the tombs, Pompey, running towards a potential safe place, finds only his death. Pompey then, much like the man who built his own pyre, accepts his fate.[201] Capitulation to Romes reiterative violence winning out in the end. Entering the tombs is consistent with the themes of necromancy and katabatic narratives which are explored elsewhere in the text as the people flee into tombs and mix with the dead to create what Connoly calls a "community of the dead".[202] The living and the dead join each other to become united by their trauma.

The self-destruction spoken about above extends into overt attempts to protect or repair social and political damage: "He drained what little blood remained in the city; / and while he forcefully excised the rotting limbs- / his remedy was too much".[203] The medical terminology used by Lucan reinforces the allusion that the state is a body, and the people operate within it as components, limbs, and or organs. Rome and Romans function as an organism. Rome's illness (tyranny) required treatment but as Lucan points out excising tyranny damaged the surviving Republicanism. Even a successfully amputated limb will cause issues in the future without proper care and support,

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[199] 2.160-168
[200] 7.780
[201] 8.706
[202] Connoly, 2016, p.289
[203] 2.147-148

and even under perfect conditions and with good prosthetics the event of the injury cannot be erased. Past traumatic events in Rome created the conditions that would flare up into later conflict and further trauma.[204] Inevitably there is no state without a participating society or individuals and as such injuries are dealt to the whole. Commitment to Republicanism does not preclude the threat of tyrannical ambition. The threat of tyranny from within Republicans can be seen in Pompey's tyrannical potential if there was to be a Republican victory,[205] and from Sulla's purges. The importance of the presentation of traumatic cause and effect is in showing that the persistence and presence of trauma is as much a part of Roman society as it is a part of the Roman body, that one influences the operation of the other seamlessly. The continual retraumatisation[206] has no easy solution and indeed Lucan does not appear to offer or muse on one except just maybe in the peace of death as we see in the flight of Pompey's spirit, or (not unlinked) within a continued dogged moral resistance. Such as that seen in the way Cato holds to his ideals regardless of the cost or whether it will bring material success. Lucan's shows that the dead do not always attain rest and wrestling with tyranny is itself a traumatic part of Rome's relationship with itself. Given the process of re-traumatisation can appear cyclical the cliché of history repeats itself may be tempting to reach for, but Lucan is not attempting to establish a system of cyclical repetition. Events do not repeat, nor do past events act as allegory for future events. The civil conflict preceding Pompey and Caesar's took a different form and had a different outcome. The plot to assassinate Nero Lucan was alleged to have been part of is again of a different form of civil conflict than the Civil War of *Pharsalia*. The relationship established with the past is what creates the conditions of the present. Literary personification gives "tangible form" to

[204] "These things we will suffer again, this cycle of war / is coming. This will be the result of civil conflicts.", 2.237-238
[205] 2.297-301
[206] So elders sadly wept, / mindful of the past, and so, fearing for the future." 2.247-248

intangible concepts[207] and so Lucan uses the personification of the self-harming destruction of Roman bodies to render tangible the all-encompassing sublime destruction of civil war and the Roman state as "another myself", something experienced fully within the bodies of Romans as it also happens around them. Lucan also personifies Rome's traumatic history in the form of the re/animated or memorialised deceased as something with constant material effects on living Romans.

Rome's relationship with memorialisation is a "contentious political force"[208] and the imposition of memorialisation is problematic for Lucan. Pompey's burial is portrayed as meagre for someone with Pompey's stature and any attempt to contain his memory that ends before the borders of the known Roman world is too little. Lucan highlights the danger of architectural memorialisation constructed with the intent to guide a visitor towards a particular narrative. Even the humble tombs of Pompey and Hector are not immune from manipulation or misrepresentation, however. Lucan demonstrates this tension where in Book Nine at Troy Caesar is able to impose his own view on the landscape-as-tomb. The openness of Pompey and Hector's burials is not erased even if Hector's tomb has no effect on Caesar or what he decides to take from Troy. Memorials and the legacy of the dead's vulnerability to subversion is also seen in Book Nine where Caesar is confronted with Pompey's head. "the only way [Caesar] could / supress the manifest pleasures of his mind / was by his tears; demolishing the merit.".[209] Caesar's reaction to Pompey's death is still so jubilant that he must make effort to perform grief for politics' sake. Caesar's crocodile tears "demolish the merit", they betray "what's right". Caesar is still able to claim personal gratification at the death of Pompey. Caesar's path to victory suffers

[207] Day. 2013. p.78
[208] Spencer, 2005, p.50
[209] 9.1287-1289

no particular obstacle as a direct result of Pompey eluding him, in fact Egypt has served Caesar's aim twofold; first by eliminating Pompey and second by presenting Caesar with an opportunity to use the incident to gain further leverage over Egypt.[210] Through Caesar Lucan demonstrates the way in which trauma can be appropriated for state ideology. Caesar sees Troy in himself, but it is a version of Troy based on his own conception of it based on his relationship to the history of Troy and Rome and the way he views his place within that. Although Troy is the source of Rome's Virgilian mytho-history geographically it is a foreign land that was ruled by a monarchy. Aeneas himself was not a republican either. Lucan would appear to be wary of looking outside of Rome instead of to other Romans with whom to form community with and to build a state's society from, as Cato instructed his army to do in his speech. Lucan laments the influence of Egypt and Alexandria on Roman society, a state ruled by divine monarchs.[211] In taking on their gods and religion and ideas regarding divinely appointed heads of state Alexandrian religion 'infects' or 'poisons' Rome upon its incorporation into the Empire rather like Lucan's snakes destroy Republican bodies in Book Nine. Through damage to the character of Rome and the disintegrated trust in a Roman *philoi,* Rome becomes structurally retraumatising. Civil conflict and damaging foreign influence, or alternatively the Roman appropriation of foreign ideas as tools to further civil conflict becomes a continuous trend embedded in the Roman body(politic).

Necromancy and Katabasis

Lucan uses necromancy to further deal with the tension that exists between the living and undead (not always dead, strictly speaking), especially regarding the undead as historical artefacts made available, literally and literarily, for interrogation by the living. Using

[210] 9.1319-1326
[211] 8.1017-1037

necromancy to explore the living's relationship with the dead also serves as a way of exploring the boundaries and structures of civilisation and their handling of the past and its dead. From Romulus and Remus through to Marius and Sulla, and the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey the closeness of the dead, and so history (and vice versa) is consistently present in Lucan's writing. The dead and their closeness are clear indications from Lucan of the constant presence of the trauma of past events on Roman society and people and the destructive behaviour engendered by systems and society built on traumatic events.

Physically representing space dedicated to the dead is important to Lucan's presentation of Romans and being able to physically enter these spaces as still living people is also important. The representation of space and traversal is consistent with Caesar's journey into Troy as a way of connecting to the dead and the past while still living and without literally traversing natural boundaries between life and death. Troy is no longer urbanised the way that the tombs are in Book Two nor are the ruins of Troy as deliberately constructed as memorials but they are still inhabited or visited by the living as seen by the presence of Caesar's tour guide.[212] Here again the closeness of the dead is noted. While not literally necromancy since magic is not being used to raise the dead for fortune telling or other purposes, the utilisation of spaces dedicated to the dead, and the connection of living Romans to the dead is thematically consistent with ideas relating to necromancy as is Lucan's consistent use of the dead and their spaces as motif. The dead, and spaces dedicated to, or closely linked to, the dead hold a power in the minds of Romans. They flee into the tombs for protection, Caesar visits destroyed Troy to commune with his forebears, reinforce his megalomania through historical justification and prophecy. Similarly, it is not literally

[212] 9.1211

katabasis, the living do not actually enter the afterlife. The tombs are constructed, and the dead interred there by the living. The importance of tombs is conferred upon them by the living and their relationship to history and to the dead. Lucan makes this plain by referring to a dry riverbed as Hector's tomb.[213] Even compared to Pompey's makeshift burial Hector's tomb is particularly bare and unadorned. The status as a tomb is conferred upon it entirely by the living despite not having been constructed as one. It is a physical space to house a conceptual idea through which the living can structure their relationship to the dead and history. As a physical space it is vulnerable to the afflictions that materiality brings. The living infect or invade these spaces compulsively just as they are driven to construct them in the first place. Not all examples of memorialisation are negative according to Lucan (Cordus is seen to make an imperfect but earnest and caring effort to provide Pompey with proper burial)[214] he demonstrates the way in which they can become destructive spaces or are otherwise utilised by the living to achieve certain goals. As such Hector's tomb is not invulnerable to Caesar's appropriation, however misguided or not where it comes to Caesars material goals. Caesar's relationship to the past and the dead reinforces his dedication to civil war, the destruction of Republicanism, and his desire to establish himself as tyrant. The importance of spaces dedicated to the dead in times of strife is consistent. Just as the Romans fleeing in Book Two seek refuge so does Caesar, though of a different kind. Both seek closeness to the dead for their own reasons and both are deeply ingrained in a referential relationship with history.

[213] 9.1209
[214] 9.987-977

Caesar's journey to Troy has been likened to katabasis and compared particularly with Book Six of Virgil's *Aeneid* although Caesar does not take a literal journey into and out of the underworld.[215] Indeed, no such event where a living person enters the underworld occurs in the entirety of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Despite this, multiple passages involve features of katabasis or skirt the border between life the un-dead and death and the underworld. Rather than the living journeying into the realms of the dead in *Pharsalia* the dead are frequently summoned or evoked by the living in a more or less necromantic manner. The distinction between and nature of the literal and figurative involvement with the underworld creates a profound existential effect on the reality presented by Lucan and would seem to reflect the realities of Lucan's work itself. While the living cannot move into and out of the underworld the dead can still be called on by the living in various forms and guises. Lucan, and anyone else for that matter, cannot journey into realms of the dead while living, however in writing about the past and the dead Lucan also engages necromantically with the dead. Of course, Lucan does not actually raise the dead as Erichtho does but conjures them literarily in an attempt to gain access to something unreachable. The principate was fundamentally backward-looking. Virgil's *Aeneid* is itself about the eventual resurrection of Trojan power under the new guise of Rome and achieves Trojan resurrection by constructing a mytho-historical account in which Aeneas is compelled to create the conditions for the inevitable rise of Rome. Even the title 'Caesar' unavoidably anchors the head of the Roman state to its murdered namesake, and every Caesar resurrects the authority of all previous Caesars.

Lucan's 'necromancy' is not unique to his epic but a key component of Roman culture, historical writing, and as a result, I argue, Lucan's literary and worldview. Necromancy concerns the ability to

[215] McRoberts. 2018. p.59

communicate with the dead and sometimes to raise the dead, often with the aim of gaining access to knowledge that is difficult or impossible for the living to entertain, frequently knowledge of the present or the future. Since the dead are fundamentally historical any interrogation of the past will interact with the dead. Exploration of the past will render meaning to the events of the present and a civilisation's relationship to its past will shape a great deal of its national identity. The dead, then, shape the future but only in accordance to the way in which the living choose to utilise the dead. The dead inhabit a sublime space the living attempt to tap into as a way of approaching the unrepresentable. The concept of necromancy is important to Lucan because it makes the intangible elements of history and trauma relatable, if not fully representable. The dead are historical objects that persist, not only in memory but physically, materially. Their remains pose an immediate issue for the living to contend with for purposes that are myriad. Memorialisation of the dead is incredibly prominent and important but no less is the medical and hygienic aspect of and disposal or storage. While spiritual and practical concerns may seem separate in the cartesian sense to a modern reader, Lucan's repeated grounding of spiritual elements in the flesh of his characters demonstrates the unalterable melding of the two in Lucan's world construction. Even when Pompey's spirit is temporarily freed from his physical remains to laugh at his own truncated corpse and soar through the heavens, Pompey is quickly drawn to and enters the breast of Brutus and the mind of Cato.[216] Pompey's temporarily unfettered spirit of republicanism cannot be fully or permanently separated from the physical bodies of the republican Romans. It is not just an idea unconnected to materiality but one that exists within corporeal Roman bodies, and crucially, minds. The materiality of Republicanism here demonstrates Lucan's views on the physical human relationship with history and the nature of retraumatisation through transmission. Concepts and events do not

[216] 9.12-19

simply dissipate into the ether. They continue to exist physically within Romans. Transmission occurs precisely because it is manifested in the bodies of Lucan's characters and physically manifested by those characters in the world they inhabit. The consistent theme of necromancy or of the close physical proximity the living have to the dead, both sought and unsought, are crucial in showing that the conditions that the dead lived under, the ways in which they died, and the concepts and beliefs they carried, are completely inescapable.

Erichtho probably exhibits the most blatant display of necromantic power; the passage Erichtho appears in is awash with macabre imagery: "At last she picks a body / with its throat cut, takes and drags it by a hook / stuck in its fatal noose, a wretched corpse / over rocks and crags".[217] The spririts of the dead are never far from their crude fleshy bodies no matter their various states of decay and dismemberment and as such the reader's vision of the spirit is unavoidably linked to the very physical aspects of death. What remains is not only the memory of the dead but their remains, a physical reality the living must contend with. The material reality of death is not hidden behind a sanitised presentation of spirit. Erichtho does not enter the underworld even though she commands it to give up the soul of a recently deceased soldier. For all her considerable power,[218] Erichtho, like Lucan, can only summon the dead. In fact Erichtho's medical expertise indicates a keen medical knowledge.[219] When Erichtho summons the dead soldier's spirit, "it dreads to enter that opened chest / and guts and innards ruptured by lethal wounds"[220] the spirit is horrified at the prospect of returning to life,

[217] 6.708-711
[218] "If she had tried to raise up all the ranks / and return them to war, the laws of Erebus / would have hauled out of Stygian Avernus / a people ready to fight." 6.704-708, Erichtho is capable of far greater act of summoning than she performs.
[219] Silva, 2023, p.785
[220] 6.804-805

and Lucan laments with the dead soldier: “Poor man, unfairly stripped of death’s last gift - / to not be able to die!”[221] “Erichtho is astounded”[222] by the dead soldier’s reluctance to return to the “hateful confines of its old prison”,[223] Erichtho has to threaten the forces of the underworld at length[224] and whips the spirit’s body with a live snake[225] to compel the dead soldier to return. However, it is interesting that in response to the dead soldier’s reluctance Erichtho then goes on to offer the spirit a reward for following her commands; “great / will be your reward. For if you tell the truth, / we promise to make you immune for all the ages / from the Haemonian arts… your shade will never be summoned by spells / of any magicians. Living twice is worth this much!”.[226] While the reward is given as part of an arrangement to secure unambiguous truth from the dead soldier it is clear that Erichtho also recognises the pain and trauma of being returned to life, that dying twice is worse than dying once, and that a spirit does not want to be returned to life. Having to experience a second personal apocalypse is quite enough for the soldier, and the freedom from a third clearly appeals implying that not only is the process of summoning traumatic but that living in a traumatised body, in a body that can be traumatised is a horrifying fate even for the already dead. It also carries the implication that it can happen over and over again to the same soul, perhaps in the way the name Caesar resurrects dead Emperors as mentioned above or the way memorialisation drags the memory of the dead into the present for the use of the living. Despite being called “The evil Thessalian”[227] Erichtho still appears to treat the dead soldier fairly (snake-whip aside) and with understanding, even intimate understanding, of the

[221] 6.806-807
[222] 6.807
[223] 6.803-804
[224] “Megaera… I’ll conjure you.. and then abandon you… hunt you down… expel you from tombs… Hecate… I will forbid you from changing the face you wear… declare what banquets hold you… by what marriage bond you love night’s gloomy king… what pollution you suffered that your mother, Ceres, would not call for your return…” (6.813-837) and so on.
[225] 6.809
[226] 6.851-856
[227] 6.673

ordeal that the spirit is being put through. This subversion of Erichtho as evil witch is typical of Lucan's consistent attempts to unsettle unseat the reader with interruptions to narrative expectation. The promise of eternal rest in particular stands out especially as Lucan's narrative itself regularly drags the dead and dying out for lengthy examination creating a tension in the narrative as Lucan's "Evil" character shows greater care than the author.[228]

Erichtho must also add a spell to enable the spirit "to know whatever / she asked of it"[229] indicating that the realm of the dead is one of history. If Erichtho's spell would work on the living then presumably she would use it that way as it would require less of her power since for all her grim ostentation Lucan never claims her rites are exaggerated compared to the power they evoke. And so while the reference to the spell is almost off hand it is important to understanding the nature of the dead in Lucan's text. If the spell requires a deceased soul then the knowledge to answer Erichtho's questions can only exist in perfect clarity in the past, in the underworld, within the dead. The individual that the soul of the dead soldier belonged to in life is not as important as simply being recently deceased and in so having access to the sublimated knowledge of the collective dead and a link to the forces of the underworld. The dead as a gestalt form can be seen in the way bodies are blended together as fallen and destroyed bodies mingle,[230] ceasing to hold their individual shape as they become connected to one another in an intense, all-encompassing way, Connoly's community of the dead again.[231]

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[228] Cruz, 2023, p.357
[229] 6.865-867
[230] The Rome-as-gestalt-body appears in Livy as a positive, living, entity of mutual support, Connoly, 2016, p.289, Livy, 2.32-3.
[231] Connoly, 2016, p.289

Erichtho's necromantic power and knowledge of the underworld would appear to indicate that she is in possession of a great deal of knowledge concerning the laws of death. As such it reveals much about the natural and spiritual laws that Lucan has constructed. These points are reinforced by the manner in which Pompey approaches his death and makes all the more plain the damage Caesar causes. In Lucan's universe we see that the dead continue to impact the living, that the dead exist on the other side of a barrier that is at once unknowable and yet permeable if only in one direction,[232] and that the dead can intrude upon the living bidden,[233] unbidden,[234] or even ignored,[235] and even in being ignored the dead exert influence in one way or another. Death follows the themes of apocalypse most obviously in representing, and being, a definitive ending and destruction of self not only for the dead individual but also for those who survive them. A death cannot be transgressed, reversed, or denied. For those who survive a person's death there is no return to a point in which the dead person is alive. They must contend with their only contact with the deceased being in the form of remembrance and reconstruction, which in Lucan's text frequently takes the form of dream or necromancy. For the dead their only life beyond death can be in the remembrances and reconstructions as experienced by the living. Both cases represent and reflect concepts of the apocalyptic and the sublime. Death is apocalyptic in its decisive ending of one state and entering a radically different one and death encompasses the sublime for the same reasons. It is inevitably and unavoidably historical to experience the dead. "The past is then born from the historian's traumatic experience of having entered a new world and from the awareness of irreparably having lost a previous world forever."[236] The act of being separated from the

[232] Pompey dreams of death and the dead and yet does not know precisely what death is, 3.43-44
[233] As in Erichtho's summoning, 6.792-799 and Caesar's prayer at Troy, 9.1225-1237
[234] As in Pompey's dream of Julia, 3.11
[235] As when Caesar does not acknowledge Hector's spirit, 9.1209
[236] Ankersmit. 2005. p.265

formerly living by their death is a practical expression of sublime historical experience. The act of dying and being separated from the present is necessarily as, if not more traumatic. Both the living and the dead enter new worlds at the point of death separated by the creation of history. The living cannot experience the world of the dead, nor can they experience death itself while still living. The living cannot travel into and out of the underworld. The living cannot travel into the past or circumvent events that have already happened. As such the past is as dead as any corpse. Lucan also establishes that the dead do not want life, or at least do not want to live only to die again. Perhaps as historical entities they cannot want life, wishing the dead to life is the purview of the living as it is with Erichtho's magic. The pain of living again to die a second time is severe enough to warrant a special magical pact to protect the dead soldier's soul from ever being called upon again. Death is thus potentially a release from a system of constant retraumatisation, in being returned to a mockery of life, bound to a physical body vulnerable to physical threats, a spirit is being thrust back into that system.

Boundary Violation in Text and Body

Bartsch highlights the themes of "fragmentation, boundary violation, subject-object confusion, [and] disruptions of agency"[237] as being themes Lucan narrowed in on in his exploration of the Civil War. Bartsch draws particular attention to the passage in Book Nine in which Cato and his army are variously harassed by snakes.[238] Even when dealing with a passage that has been identified by various scholars as appearing to have little consistency with the rest of the epic, even being "ridiculous".[239] Rather than being ridiculous, some kind of unintentional error on Lucan's part or a 'fluff' passage invented purely for gruesome spectacle it is instead entirely

[237] Bartsch. 1997. p.40
[238] 9.915-
[239] See, Bartsch, 1997, p.29 for an overview of criticisms of the passage

consistent with the discordant and unsettling themes of the *Pharsalia*, as Bartsch correctly identifies. Lucan creates the capabilities of the snakes from imagination rather than drawing from reality, and the deaths they cause are horrifyingly monstrous as Roman bodies become incapable of holding their form and variously bloat and liquefy. It is in its inaccurate portrayal of the nature of snake venom and the seeming abandonment of the relatively grounded ecology Lucan presents elsewhere in the epic that the consistent themes of *Pharsalia* can be read. Hypallage is an important aspect of Lucan's writing, indeed Day notes it as "his favourite trope"[240] and the inclusion of passages that clash with other elements of the epic see this approach write large in the text. Connoly notes 'Lucan ' s dominant theme [is not] not the violated human subject but Rome, the violent community.'[241] It is in the 'boundary violation' we see in the human subject the dissolution of individual and community into one another occur and through the process of dissolution we see Rome as the 'violent community. These themes of boundary destruction can be seen in the scene where a Caesarion soldier, Scaeva fights to death against a republican army.[242] Scaeva performs acts that appear superhuman and physically impossible. The spears embedded in his body are so dense they perversely armour him against further harm and his sword becomes a club encased in gore. The violence in this scene is discordant in ways that are similar to the effects of the snake venom; the boundaries of the soldier's body are destroyed, as it is pierced and enlarged by weapons and the body reacts in unexpected and exaggeratedly gory ways. When he is finally mortally injured, Scaeva claims falsely to the republican soldiers around him that he has had a change of heart and wishes to renounce Caesar only to use the opportunity to kill again.[243] Beyond the destruction of a body's boundaries the political boundaries and the

[240] Day, 2013, p.83
[241] Connoly, 2016, p.276
[242] 6.160-287
[243] "He'll pay the price, whoever had hopes / that Scaeva was beaten!" 6.262-263

boundaries of loyalty are so permeable and deformed that republican soldiers could, or are so desperate to believe such a claim from someone who has just killed dozens of their fellows in a frenzy.

To return to a comparison between Pompey's burial and Caesar's visit to Troy we see again the conflict in the text. In Troy we see that Caesar is able to appropriate and draw inspiration and meaning for himself from the site of the city's destruction based on his own relationship with the history of Troy. In the absence of formal memorialisation Caesar can construct his own remembrances and take from them meanings that support his goals and ignore the tombless shade of Hector. With Pompey's burial the memorialisation is said to restrict the impact that the memory of Pompey could have.[244] Lucan's narration is not always consistent, claims are made problematic through conflict, and truths are rarely the whole, or sole, truth. There is however consistency in this discordance as Lucan's text always maintains tension with itself. As such the 'snake passage's' uneasy relationship with the rest of the text is consistent with the recognised discordant effect of hypallage. Hypallage erodes the barriers in the language of the text itself. It becomes a means whereby even the words of the poem are at war with one another.[245] The body of the text conflicts with itself in words and structure. In creating uncertainty Lucan is creating anxiety in the reader; Lucan is upsetting expectation and obfuscating the rules of his text. As evidenced by the difficulty scholars have had in placing the 'snake passage' within the context of the epic. In a way the literary concept of "what's right" has been upset and in some modern critics this seems to produce a breach of trust in Lucan's narrative. The conflicting nature of the passage has led it to be labelled a "failure" or even ignored or bypassed.[246] However, *Pharsalia's* seeming

[244] 8.991-993
[245] Day, 2013, p.85
[246] Bartsch, 1997, p.35

narrative inconsistencies serve precisely to engender themes of civil conflict where the text conflicts with itself in ways that reinforce and entrench Lucan's themes. Bartsch challenges claims that Lucan engages in narrative inconsistency unintentionally or in error and instead suggests that not only is it intentional, but it is a deliberate effort to create a degree of emotional detachment in the reader. Rather than through the tragic, Bartsch claims that *Pharsalia* achieves detachment through being grotesque. Instead of experiencing the misery of tragedy and feeling the pain of the murdered and injured Lucan creates an unbreachable space between reader and subject where the characters become "machines for mutilation".[247]

In the final book Caesar, with Pompey defeated, considers the scope of his victory while being courted by an ambitious Cleopatra. Cleopatra seeks to overwhelm Caesar with displays of wealth that become grotesque in its excess. The palace he feasts in is 'like a temple, any age more decadent / could hardly build one like it',[248] the passage goes on with excess after excess summed up perhaps best by the line, 'luxury, / raving to show its vanity, hunted the world over / though no hunger demands it'.[249] Caesar is 'ashamed'[250] of Rome's Civil War not because he regrets the harm it has caused but because it has not yet provided him with the scale of plunder he is envisioning now. The Civil War apocalypse is not enough for him, and there is no end in sight, or consideration, to the trauma this may cause. He is grotesque[251] in his feasting and desire for power (and Cleopatra) and, not content with possessing the head of Pompey and of Roman governance, even hungers for the head of the Nile, bargaining with Acoreas that he will 'quit this civil war', an obvious lie given the preceding passage, if he could see the source of the

[247] Bartsch, 1997, p.38
[248] 10.139-140
[249] 10.186-198
[250] 10.210-213
[251] 'His sublimity is grotesque, his grotesqueness sublime.' Connoly, 2016, p.282

Nile.[252] The boundaries of Caesar's ambitions have been violated externally and internally and he is not content with what he has already won. Caesar has no intention to cease his destructive behaviour.

Bartsch in discussing Lucan and the grotesque highlights a reading of Lucan that is "untragic", and that "Its grotesqueries may provide us with a frisson of horror, but there is no emotion provoked".[253] It is hard to fully support the view that no emotion is provoked as the grotesque, the tragic, the melodramatic, and the absurd can and often do exist simultaneously. Lucan does not seem to intentionally lack emotion and neither does it seem that Lucan does not seek to invite the reader to feel for the victims. Emotion is as physical for Lucan as the bodies of his characters. The desperation of soldiers facing death is articulated by Lucan regularly. Even on the back of success Caesar has to put down the danger of mutiny in Book Five: "What good that we poured our blood out in the Rhine / and Rhône to conquer the North? / For so many wars / you reward me with … civil war?"[254] The soldiers complain of ageing as war goes on around them, the conflict and violence sapping them of time and life, "We have wasted away our years in warfare. / Dismiss these old men to die" the emotion in the soldier's statement is clear; time lived pursuing a difficult, gruelling endeavour has taken years away that might have been spent more joyfully, and at the end of this even more is asked. The picture of rapidly ageing men, their hair visibly growing grey and skin thinning and becoming slack is certainly grotesque. Such rapid ageing is an unnatural prospect and taps into primal horrors regarding mortality. Even more than a detached and horrific image it is communicating the emotional trauma created by the soldier's realisation that time has gone never to return. The memories the

[252] 10.239
[253] Bartsch, 1997, p.37
[254] 5.278-281

soldiers carry contain incredible amounts of pain from their hardships that the physical ageing they experience embodies. Once again Lucan is dealing with the relationship with history, in this case it is that the tired soldier is contending with the feeling that their life has largely become history, and they are themselves passing into past tense. The soldier is expressing mortality in full bodied terms. The inescapability of history and the traumatic emotional impact of experiencing it is represented here alongside the physical. Emotions are created through material processes within the human body and the grounding of human psyche, experience and existence in the physical is intensely intimate and emotional as, in the way Lucan expresses it, it concerns the materiality of being in a wholistic sense. Again, the deal Erichtho strikes with the dead soldier to avoid being reanimated is indication of the emotional pain that being alive can bring, the dead soldier certainly doesn't seem to fear purely physical pain as much. Extreme violence and its depiction is a common feature of traumatic experience. Shay quotes a veteran who recounts a graphic description of violent behaviour he engaged in while on deployment and says of delivering on the demands his military and state made of him: "I hope they're fucking happy. But they don't have to live with it. I do."[255] A level of emotional detachment or suppression may be required to engage in the kind of hyper violent acts described by Lucan and the incredible and exaggerated gore is expressive of the experience of traumatic violence. However, after the act the emotional impact remains and finds ways to expression internally and externally.

[255] Shay, 1994. p.83

The physicality of Lucan's writing is important because it grounds emotions and experience in the physical. Materiality is in everything including trauma and trauma is of course deeply emotive. Dissociation is not truly the absence of emotion but the result of being overwhelmed with too much emotion. It is an emotional and physical reaction to an event that occurs at a scale hard to process by the individual and so in the case of dissociation those emotions are repressed. Lucan's outpouring of physical destruction is overwhelming, but the victims are also very vocal about the rage, desperation, pain, and anguish they are feeling even when the language becomes clinical. Again, in the same way that denying, forgetting, or reacting to the past can never occur in the complete absence, that is nonexistence, of the corresponding event (since that event cannot unhappen) dissociation and repression are still indelibly linked to their emotional source. As an incident devoid of emotion Bartsch gives the example of a Roman sailor, Catus, pierced by spears. His blood, unsure from which wound to leave his body, eventually ruptures from both as the pressure becomes too much.[256] However, here is a Roman soldier fighting in a civil war between the two Romes, one republican and one a tyranny. His body is pierced by two spears and the when the pressure is too much "a mighty surge of blood … divvies up his soul between the deadly wounds".[257] This death is the anguished rupture of civil war expressed in the body of a Roman. His soul is so conflicted by the pain of the war that his blood cannot even choose a wound to flow from until it is too much. Lucan deals with emotions as physical responses wed to the body. Lucan is indeed deliberately upsetting the expectations of the reader as Bartsch correctly argues[258] but not unemotionally. Connoly calls the cavalcade of injury and disfigurement 'almost beyond human'[259] and describes the drawn-out suffering as 'a state of ghastly

[256] 3.611-617
[257] 3.616-617
[258] Bartsch, 1997, p.39
[259] Connoly, 2016, p.284

suspension'.[260] However, these drawn-out sequences where victims face their own horrific deaths explode the moment of grotesquery, or tragedy, from a single moment of anguished death into a moment of grim contemplation of the moment, where the reader must experience the victim's emotional response instead of simply moving on as the bodies drop. "Poor Telo" is an able seaman, we are told, "He always readied the canvas for the winds to come." When he takes a javelin to the chest "Gyareus tries to crawl to his comrades boat"[261] before being shot with an arrow and pinned in place unable to reach Telos. Twins, "a fertile mother's glory" become estranged by death and their parents "no longer mistook them but recognised the one / who had survived - a cause of endless tears".[262] The physical deaths underscore the emotion, Gyareus will never reach his friend, the parents of the twins will never again laugh or argue about mistaken identity. The physical and the emotional are fully enmeshed.

Killing and being killed in Lucan's epic is never trivial despite how frequently it occurs. Even when describing the fates of nameless soldiers Lucan places squarely in the reader's view the full bodily horror of it. The moments leading to death are frequently anguished, traumatic, and painful, and death itself more so. Death and destruction may become common events in the course of a civil war but the almost unnatural horror of it is clear in the way reality strains at its bounds to allow communication with the dead and the gods wish they could stop or turn away from the slaughter. However, Lucan is careful to show that all the brutality he puts on display is not unnatural but caused and perpetrated by Romans in pursuit of their political goals. Violence and killing isn't trivial as a result of being an existential reality to Romans. The frequency with which it happens is

[260] Connoly, 2016, p.283
[261] 3.618-628
[262] 3.629-633

part of what makes it so significant. The former Civil War does not make the latter less tragic or traumatic and indeed the material conditions that were created by ending the previous one echo into the causes and conditions of Caesar and Pompey's war. The physicality of death is so important to Lucan because of the way it makes concrete the traumatic circumstances under which Rome exists. The death, destruction, and decay of Roman bodies is felt at the state and political level. To continue the assertion that Lucan is not dealing in allegory; the destruction visited on Romans is not just representative of Rome, it is a material reality of Roman history, and of living under Roman rule.

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion of *Odysseus in America,* Shay, in discussing the treatment of trauma, points out the importance of the communication of traumatic experience and the subsequent transmission of that received experience by the recipients. He also points out that this is frequently forbidden under tyranny.[263] I do not attempt to suggest that Republican Rome did or would have developed a booming social welfare system dedicated to the treatment of mental health issues had Pompey's cause been victorious. Nor that modern democracies are innately good at protecting people from and treating trauma and traumatic response. Just that Roman society experienced traumatisation under the principate and was a victim of suppression. It is, after all, strongly alleged that Lucan experienced suppression of his creative voice.[264] Regardless of how much Lucan intended to directly criticise Nero through his epic, the presence and expression of trauma in *Pharsalia* is clear.

Trauma and traumatic experience are everywhere in *Pharsalia* as is Rome's role in it. As the eminent power on earth trauma at the scale Lucan portrays could come from nowhere other than Rome. Even the gods can only look on as the Civil War of *Pharsalia* grinds on. The destruction and perversion of Rome that occurs during civil conflict is lamented. *Pharsalia's* narrative is not against Roman supremacy itself, or necessarily the use of violence in the pursuit of Rome's goals. Both Pompey and Caesar achieve incredible military success and, as the elder of the two, Pompey's name and reputation had

[263] Shay, Odysseus, p.243.
[264] Brill, Controversial, p.12, pp.16-17

already been made through military conquest. Not only that but both receive comparisons to Aeneas. It is this familiarity and ease with militarism and its use that makes Lucan's more negative portrayals of violence and the trauma experienced under Roman rule compelling and effective. Militarism as a common cultural touchpoint amongst Romans provided Lucan the language for the expression of traumatic experience regardless of his experience of direct military action. Lucan was thus able to utilise conflict and militarism to express emotions and traumatic response that occur beyond the boundaries of a battlefield.

The apocalyptic and the sublime forms the foundation of *Pharsalia* as Lucan deals with scale and totality that reach into every facet of Roman civilisation, to all Romans, and beyond into foreign lands and foreign peoples. Through the theme of apocalypse Lucan portrays the total upturning and destruction of Rome's established norms and order. Utilising the sublime enables Lucan to portray the scale required for Lucan's narrative and to literalise the unrepresentable. Sublimity and apocalypse provide an opportunity for the personal experience of trauma do be narrativized in a manner that sets it within its larger context. Both in a more expansive version of the personal that draws on the impact of history and wider contexts that the individual is placed within but also to simultaneously place the individual within their communal context. The ending of the Roman Republic through civil war conforms to the criteria of apocalypse in the same manner that the French Revolution does as entire structures, up until now solidified by tradition, are torn down and new structures are required to take their place. The chaos and upheaval of this process is unavoidably traumatic as the underpinning of everyday life becomes unstable. A reading that views events of traumatic upheaval in terms of apocalypse enables an in depth understanding of the breaches with history such an event can cause

and how that breach and subsequent post-apocalypse renegotiation impact varying scales of experience (individual, group, systemic, etc) in mutually sympathetic ways. Given the violence of these upheavals and the bodily harm and destruction that goes along with it the trauma is acute. In utilising the framing of apocalypse in communicating personal trauma in *Pharsalia,* Lucan provides both a personal framework for the literalisation of trauma and a wider cultural reference that contextualises it within the environmental and historical conditions that contributed towards it. Lucan's apocalyptic portrayal also forces a renegotiation with the Civil War to achieve the goal of reconsidering what the principate is built on and what that means for Romans. The sublime is exhibited throughout Lucan's text once again as a way of presenting the unpresentable and portraying scale. Not all instances of sublimity are traumatic, but Lucan's portrayal of trauma is intrinsically linked to the sublime as trauma innately touches on sublimity through its unrepresentability in terms of conveying the experience of trauma but also as Lucan seeks to convey the trauma of the individual within its wider communal framework. Lucan establishes context through complex scenarios and language.

I have shown that Lucan does this through an eschatological exploration of Roman history and its relationship with both living history and the accepted history of Rome. In broad terms where it comes to personal and societal relationships with history the degree to which it is mythologised is less relevant than what aspects of that mytho-history are successfully incorporated into Roman collective thought. As far as influence and importance goes history-as-fact is no more effective unless it is taken as fact. Certainly, Lucan utilises the epic form to create ahistorical scenarios to further his interrogation of Rome's accepted history; aspects of which are themselves ahistorical. Lucan successfully upsets accepted history with

explorations of harm. Although scenes of harm frequently appear blown out to excessive degree, they contain truths about the wider conflict and the experience of that harm. Trauma occurs because it overwhelms the body's ability to admit the event to consciousness in the normal way,[265] it overwhelms and undermines the assumptions upon which a mind constructs its approach to reality. Once trust is destroyed in that way then either new rules must be learnt, or nothing before or after the traumatic event can be trusted. Lucan expresses this in the discordant, disintegrating world of Roman civil war.

Lucan's use of the body can be seen to continue the approach of presenting and literalising the totality of historical experience and trauma that sublime apocalyptic narrative achieves. Bodily injury, the dead, entombing and memorialisation, are utilised by Lucan to present, most obviously, the sheer physical destruction large scale war achieves but also the personal and interconnected nature of trauma as it is expressed through the body and through physicality relating to the body. Even the text, as demonstrated, by the use of, hypallage becomes a tortured body conflicting with itself. Lucan's goal in the use of bodies is to render the abstract solid and affecting. As the rules of the natural world seem to be in flux as the Civil War drags on the effect of this is marked by its impact on the bodies of *Pharsalia's* characters. The Snakes of Book Nine are part of this civil war world where the former natural laws seem not to apply or are changed in unpredictable ways. However, the material effect is measurable via the impact on the bodies of the narrative as they die horrifically to the snake venom. Lucan reveals to the reader a text and author that question the underpinnings of all preconceived notions of history and the people and states in relation to it.

[265] Ankersmit. 2005. p.335

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