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Dreams, Visions, and their Interpretation in Lucan's *Pharsalia*

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of Classics

Dreams, Visions, and their Interpretation in Lucan's *Pharsalia*
by
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The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts

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May 2017

Introduction

Perhaps the most striking feature of Lucan's *Pharsalia* is its stance at variance from the other works in the epic tradition. Its use of dreams and visions as a literary device is no exception. The *Pharsalia* features only three dreams and one vision beheld by its two main characters Caesar and Pompey, in contrast with, for example, the eleven dreams in Vergil's *Aeneid*.¹ These four dream and vision passages in the *Pharsalia* are Caesar's vision of Roma (1.183–227), Pompey's dream of Julia (3.1–45), Pompey's dream of his theater before the battle of Pharsalus (7.7–27), and Caesar's dream of dead spirits after the battle (7.771–96).² Of these, only the first introduces a divine figure (the personified city of Rome). Only the first two employ messengers, both female, as counterparts to the two male dream recipients. The final two dreams serve to bookend the pivotal moment of the poem and to reflect the fortunes of the respective dreamers. Pompey's dream before the battle contrasts his current plight with his earlier successes, while the victorious Caesar is unaffected when the spirits of dead Romans declare him guilty. Despite their relative paucity, dreams in Lucan's epic and the apparatus by which they function are weighted with interpretive significance and, I shall argue, are instrumental in understanding Lucan's approach to writing historical epic.³ It is because there are so few dreams

¹ Hunink (1992) 34–6. Cf. also Veremans (1975).

To wit, the eleven dreams in the *Aeneid* are the dream of Sychaeus (1.353–60); the dream of Hector (2.268–302); the dream of the Penates (3.147–78); the dream of Anchises as Aeneas recounts to Dido (4.351–3); Dido's dream (4.465–8); the vision of Mercury (4.554–72); the dream of Cassandra (5.636–8); the dream of Anchises (5.720–40); the oracle of Latinus (7.81–105); the dream of Allecto (7.413–61); and the dream of Tiberinus (8.26–67). See H. R. Steiner (1952) *Der Traum in der Aeneis* and Heinze (1915) 313–5.

² Pace Penwill (2009), who includes the final scene of the poem, in which Caesar looks back (*respexit*, 10.543) and apparently sees Scaeva, as a vision. It is my opinion that this scene is too concrete to qualify as a vision, lacking the key terminology such as *imago* or *visus*, not to mention the ambiguity and uncertainty involved in the scene's place at the end of what is most likely an incomplete poem.

³ I take the point of Morford (1967) 76, "There is little speculation about the explanation of dreams in Lucan's dream-writing: even the passage at 7.19–24 has pathos as its primary aim. It is clear that Lucan was himself skeptical about dreams as a method of divination, and would have had serious reservations in accepting the Stoic

in the *Pharsalia* that each one stands out so prominently, making it easier to read a dialogue between them. This dialogue in turn carries meaning relating to the poem as a whole.

My approach to Lucan's dreams, and the way in which I argue we can most profitably understand them, is to frame them in terms of epic and historiography. Given that the *Pharsalia* is itself a historical epic, this may seem *prima facie* to be the most obvious way to proceed. However, there are further reasons to analyze Lucan's dreams with the lens of historiography. As I will discuss in greater detail, the dream is an oft-used historian's tool. By inserting a dream into a historical narrative as part and parcel of a specific historical moment (e.g. Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon), the historian simultaneously calls attention to the event itself and applies to it a specific meaning, significance, or interpretation. The dream, with all its creative potential and malleability, therefore comprises part of the historian's individual, subjective engagement with history. Where the dream has become part of the cultural memory of the particular event, the historian may choose to alter details or recontextualize it. With his dreams in the *Pharsalia*, Lucan engages in this same activity of personal engagement with the events and facts of the civil war.

With all of this in mind, it will be beneficial to look briefly at other ancient frameworks in which dreams appear and by which they are understood, namely those of epic and philosophy. The origin of dreams in epic is couched in divine, mythological terms, and their employment can be traced all the way back to Homer. Homer locates the Land of Dreams beyond the streams of Ocean and near the Gates of Helios.⁴ Virgil famously presents the Underworld as the source of

doctrine on dreams." Morford's reading of the *Pharsalia* is as a rhetorical epic. Of the dreams specifically, he remarks upon their manipulation of *color*. For my purposes, the presence of dreams in the *Pharsalia* serves more than merely a dramatic function. They lend much to our interpretation of the work as a whole without relying upon any specific framework to make them intelligible or to account for their origin and appearance. Indeed, such ambiguities are an intrinsic part of Lucan's dreams and of the poetic world that he constructs.

⁴ *Od.* 24.11–4. Cf. *Hes. Th.* 211–2, where Dreams are the offspring of Night.

dreams, with a gate of horn for true dreams and a gate of ivory for false dreams, a model he adopts from Homer.⁵ Unlike these epics, however, Lucan's *Pharsalia* is largely devoid of the presence of the divine; the gods do not, at least, play significant roles or appear as participants in the action as in Homer and Vergil. This, too, is a sharp deviation from epic norm, and I see these deviations as explicitly connected. It is perhaps because of this deviation that there are so few dreams in the *Pharsalia*.⁶

The same explicit connection between divine presence and the occurrence of dreams holds true in the philosophical dream traditions. I take Stoicism as a prominent example. Its relevance is motivated by the presence of Cato in his role as Stoic sage in the *Pharsalia*, by Lucan's connection, for what it is worth, to his uncle Seneca, and by Lucan's tutelage, alongside the satirist Persius, under the Stoic philosopher Cornutus. While Lucan's personal commitment to specific tenets of Stoic doctrine may be doubted, Stoicism found increased importance and cultural significance in the intellectual and philosophical milieu of the Roman empire.⁷

Contrasting with the rational, scientific approach to dreams taken by Plato and Aristotle,⁸ the Stoic approach involves what E. R. Dodds has termed the "religious view of dreams."⁹

According to the Stoics, it is because of the divine nature of the soul that humans are able to receive divine revelation.¹⁰ In *De Divinatione* Cicero cites examples apparently used by the

Stoics in their arguments that dreams are supernatural in nature (1.27.56):

⁵ *Aen.* 6.893–6; *Od.* 19.562–7.

⁶ As has been suggested by Hunink (1992) 34.

⁷ On both of these points, see Fantham (1992) 11–4.

⁸ At *Tim.* 71c–72b, for example, Plato sees dreams as the product of the rational soul, yet their deeper meaning becomes obscured by their reflection in the liver, as in a mirror. It is for this reason, according to Plato, that dream interpretation is necessary.

⁹ Dodds (1951), 121.

¹⁰ Cicero, *De Div.* seems the most comprehensive ancient account of the Stoic view of dreams. At 1.64 he notes three facts relevant to the Stoic conception of dreams: that the soul has foresight by its divine nature, that the air is full of immortal souls, and that gods contact men directly in their sleep. For a deeper discussion of Stoic dream-theory, see Miller (1994), 52–5.

Quid? Illa duo somnia, quae creberrime commemorantur a Stoicis, quis tandem potest contemnere? Unum de Simonide: Qui cum ignotum quendam proiectum mortuum vidisset eumque humavisset haberetque in animo navem conscendere, moneri visus est, ne id faceret, ab eo, quem sepultura adfecerat; si navigavisset, eum naufragio esse periturum; itaque Simonidem redisse, perisse ceteros, qui tum navigassent.

And what of those two dreams which are so frequently recalled by the Stoics? Who can disregard them? One is about Simonides, who, after finding and burying some unknown dead man, having in mind to board a ship, dreamt that he was warned not to do it by that same man whom he had buried, and that if he sailed he would die in a shipwreck. And so Simonides returned, but the rest who sailed at that time perished.¹¹

The words *visus est* or such-like commonly denote the presence of dreams. This dream formula with the use of the perfect passive of *videre* or the nouns *visus* or *imago* will recur in Lucan to denote the presence of dreams. From this passage, we see that visions of the dead appearing in dreams originate not from the unconscious mind of the beholder but from an external source. Real, external events (Simonides' burial of an exposed body) trigger the appearance of the dead man's spirit. The vision or dream, then, offers prophecy relevant to the viewer himself. The present example is of a propitious vision bearing a message beneficial to its recipient, but the ancients understood (and the dreams of Pompey in the *Pharsalia* will furnish examples) that malevolent, intentionally deceptive dreams were also possible. The positive outcome in this case, and the accuracy of the prophecy, are vouchsafed in the anecdote itself. The content of the dream, applied to Simonides' immediate circumstances, ends up saving his life. The nature of the vision is precipitated by Simonides' actions immediately leading up to it: he performs a kindness for the dead man who in turn gives him a useful warning.

I have presented the epic and philosophical models of dreams not as approaches to understanding the dreams of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, but as background and as foils. The same fundamental features will serve as the foundation of Lucan's use of dreams: external source, a

¹¹ All translations throughout are my own.

message both provoked by the recipients' actions and relevant to their circumstances, and vectors of these messages in dreams, spirits, or spirits appearing in dreams. However, it is the reliability of these revelations, and their ability to be categorized easily by benevolence or malevolence, truthfulness or deception, that breaks down in Lucan's schema of dreams. It is this breakdown in the dream apparatus in the *Pharsalia* that provides the impetus for my investigation. Though the fundamental features of the dream are present, the outcome will be unexpected. Rather than trust in the messages' content, as Simonides did, the heroes of the *Pharsalia* will opt to have an argument with them. Caesar and Pompey will attempt to demonstrate that the dreams have no bearing on reality, and in doing so will assign them meanings different than what is clearly intended. The result is that the addressees within the poem interpret their own dreams from a level of remove, like that of an external reader, divorcing the message from its literary context. I do not apply philosophical analysis to Lucan's dreams, save briefly to Pompey's dream of Julia in Book 3 (Chapter 2).

In the absence of the divine, Lucan's dreams take on a more naturalistic flavor. Since divine origin is such a crucial part of both the philosophical and epic conceptions of dreams, unexpected results come of the dreams in Lucan's literary world. Here the gods, as it seems, no longer hold the sway they once did. The inversion and corruption of the late Republic as depicted in the *Pharsalia* is reflected in the subversion of epic techniques and *topoi*. On Lucan's formulation, the genre of epic is no longer capable of describing such a world, and if the Civil War is to be told in epic, epic fixtures must be adjusted to accommodate it. The dream apparatus is one such change. Without the gods, there exists no force to vouchsafe the authenticity of dreams and visions. The characters themselves seem to recognize this fact. The response to dreams in the *Pharsalia* is fundamentally different than, say, Aeneas' response to Mercury in the

Aeneid.¹² However, Vergil's poem is Lucan's most important model for epic dreams. Lucan's dreams respond to the text of the *Aeneid* in part through intertextual allusion.¹³ This allusion in turn reinforces how dreams are functioning differently in the *Pharsalia*, and how these dreams are in conversation *intratextually* as well.

As the hero of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas serves as a foil for Caesar and Pompey as a dream recipient. While Aeneas heeds the messages in his dreams, following their instructions in keeping with the movement of the epic plot (and sacrificing part of his autonomy in the process), Caesar and Pompey, the "heroes" of the *Pharsalia*, do not engage with their dreams in such good faith. Dreams in Lucan's world are no longer trustworthy sources of relevant information. Rather, Caesar and Pompey argue with the contents of their dreams, employing debate and philosophical argument to disregard them. These dreams cast aside, they come to their own conclusions and, despite messages urging the contrary, stand firmer in their convictions than before. Not only do they disregard their dreams, they prove that they can do so without consequence in the grand scheme of the epic. Dreams, then, traditionally meant to be a sort of conversation with the divine, now become divine conversations these men have with themselves, propelled by their own subjective, and now equally valid, interpretations. There exists no agent to enforce divine will.

Furthermore, with the gods absent, there is room left for the dream apparatus to provide a sort of alternative battleground for hierarchies on the mortal plane to be negotiated and established. As Caesar ascends to power, his dream responses reveal a correspondent preeminence in the "divine" realm, while Pompey's emphasize the stagnation and decline that

¹² *Aen.* 4.279–82: *At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens, / arrectaeque horrore comae et vox faucibus haesit. / ardet abire fuga dulcisque relinquere terras, / attonitus tanto monitu imperioque deorum.*

¹³ The resonances of Lucan's dreams with those of earlier epic and their employment in that capacity have been noted by Bernstein (2011).

accompany his character in the epic. Caesar's mastery of the dream apparatus heralds him as the divine power in this new world, just as his victory in the Civil War declares him ruler of the Roman state. By this reading, the dreams in the *Pharsalia* thus constitute a microcosm of the grander story of poem itself.

In my discussion, I will focus only on the four dream and vision scenes of the two main characters, Caesar and Pompey, following the order they appear in the text.¹⁴ I will address the two dreams of Cornelia (5.805–15; 8.43–9) as they come to bear upon those of Pompey, to which considerably more attention is given. I include Caesar's first scene, his vision of Roma, among the dream scenes by dint of the fact that it accomplishes much the same purpose.¹⁵ I exclude the Erictho episode and the necromancy scene from my considerations on the grounds that necromancy and magic seem to belong to a separate sphere; dreams are ethereal and presented to the dreamers' senses spontaneously. Erictho's magic, though unquestionably supernatural, must be conjured and tethered to the physical plane in the waking world. Furthermore, the Erictho scene does not involve Caesar or Pompey (Magnus), and so is disqualified from this study. This reasoning may run the risk of being circular, but as I hope will soon become apparent, there is much to be gained from reading the four dreams of Caesar and Pompey as forming a sort of tetrptych.¹⁶ The dreams, read in conjunction, become a way of understanding Lucan's poem. They need not be merely an object of investigation in and of themselves.

¹⁴ I do not seek to exclude Cato, who rounds out the trio of protagonists, but there is no scene in the poem in which a dream or vision appears to him (the closest would be Pompey's metempsychosis at the beginning of Book 9). In fact, Cato seems to preclude himself from any such visitations or divine counsels, declining to test the oracle at the temple of Jupiter Ammon (9.566–86).

¹⁵ Thus Morford (1967) 75.

¹⁶ The dreams' use as a framing device for the figures of Caesar and Pompey has been noted by, e.g., Ahl (1976), Batinski (1993), and Penwill (2009).

As the two primary figures of the *Pharsalia* and of the historical events with which the poem is concerned, Caesar and Pompey understandably call attention to themselves as subjects of inquiry. The work constitutes Lucan's own engagement with and bringing-back-to-life of the civil war. The dreams provide opportunities for the poet to color his depiction of the past, but they also allow us, the readers, a window through which to see these historical players interacting with their own histories through dream response. By combining epic with historiography, Lucan calls the very notion of historical truth into question, mixing subjective response with objective fact and blurring the line between fiction and reality, past and present.

“Whither go ye beyond here? Whither bear ye my standards, o men? If ye come justly, if ye come as citizens, only this far is permissible.”

Though the focus shifts quickly to the appearance of Roma, the first two lines do much to characterize Caesar and contextualize the content of the vision. In just one line Caesar conquers the Alps, penetrating the natural barrier that had protected Italy from so many foes.¹⁷ He joins Hannibal and the Gauls among the ranks of Rome’s mortal enemies who cross the Alps. Rather than evading notice by its succinctness, the suddenness with which line 183 signals a state of emergency is startling. By the facility and speed with which he has moved into a position to threaten Rome, Caesar has surpassed even Hannibal as an existential threat to Rome. What makes Caesar’s transgression worse, though, is that he is a Roman. We see, too, that his belligerent intentions are already present. The figure of Caesar represents the threat of *ingentis motus* and *bellum futurum* at the moment of his introduction, and he will continue to personify the threat and evil of civil war throughout the *Pharsalia*. It is this threat that the apparition of Roma attempts to check at the Rubicon.

Roma’s appearance is introduced by the formula *visa...imago*, as is typical for the introduction of divine apparitions in epic.¹⁸ The waking vision “fulfills the function of an epic dream” and so ought to be analyzed on those terms and alongside the three other dreams in the *Pharsalia*.¹⁹ Her appearance—mournful expression, unbound and torn hair, and bare arms—is evocative of a woman in mourning, though, as she embodies the city of Rome, her grief is representative of that of the populace. The quasi-divine nature of the personified Roma is

¹⁷ Penwill (2009) 88.

¹⁸ Roche (2009) at 1.186.

¹⁹ Morford (1967) 75. See also Maes (2005) 7–8 who in comparing this scene to its Vergilian models notes the important elements of divine message scenes: they typically occur at night, often when the recipient is asleep; stress the physical presence of the divine; involve the deity departing suddenly, leaving the recipient stupefied; conclude with prayer and/or the execution of the order; and are stylized by formulas and recurrent vocabulary. Only the execution of the order is absent in this instance, which I find to be crucial to our understanding of how these divine message scenes are functioning in the *Pharsalia*.

confirmed in the size of her stature; the Rubicon is *parvus* compared to the *ingens imago*. Yet in a Lucanian inversion, it is the divine figure terrified at the sight of Caesar rather than the mortal being afraid of her (186: *patriae trepidantis*). (I shall return to this point soon, for it has important implications for the apparatus of dreams and divine messages and addressees' responses to them in the *Pharsalia*.) The characterization of Caesar and Roma overall is colored by this scene's Vergilian model, the appearance of Hector's apparition to Aeneas (*Aen.* 2.270–95).²⁰ Hector, like Roma, is *maestissimus* (2.270), his presence denoted with *visus* (271), with emphasis on his visibility in the presence of Aeneas (270: *ecce, ante oculos*) and his squalid appearance (277: *squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis*). Hector, too, delivers his message mixed with sighs (288: *gemitus*). By placing Caesar in the same position as Aeneas as recipient of a divinely ordained injunction, Lucan underscores not only the incongruity of their responses but also the disparity between the significance of their actions vis-à-vis the city of Rome. Both visions are delivered to recipients who “respond by inaugurating the main line of their respective narratives.”²¹ Yet while the narrative of the *Aeneid* forecasts the foundation of Rome's walls and future glory, Caesar's victory in the civil war entails Roman destruction and loss. This, at least, is Lucan's emphasis. *Pius Aeneas* is recalled subliminally as a foil for the impious, warmongering Caesar.²² So, too, is Hector, who died defending his city, contrasted with Caesar, who now, about to destroy his own city, is forced to confront its personification.²³ Maes takes a slightly different approach, arguing that the Roma apparition recalls not just the Hector scene from *Aeneid* 2, but the theme of the entire epic. Thus, he says, as “Caesar is confronting

²⁰ As has frequently been noted and discussed, e.g., by Bernstein (2011) 261, Maes (2005) 12, Narducci (2002) 194–207, Conte (1988) 33–9, Thompson & Bruere (1968) 6–8.

²¹ Bernstein (2011) 261.

²² On the breakdown of *pietas* in the *Pharsalia*, see Coffee (2011).

²³ Thompson & Bruere (1968) 6.

his past, the tradition he is about to demolish, Lucan faces his past, Patria fitted out in the garments of Virgilian epic.”²⁴ Embroiled in the interpretation of visions, then, is the question of literary reception and response. Caesar’s response to Roma is really the same activity as Lucan’s reception of Vergil and the epic tradition (this idea will be readdressed later in this chapter). We shall see, too, that by importing a vision scene from Vergil Lucan subverts his audience’s expectations not only for the tone of the scene but for the response to the vision itself.

Is such a dream attested in the historical writers, and how much did Lucan (re)invent for his own purposes? Plutarch, Appian, and Suetonius give accounts of Caesar at the Rubicon. Their earliest source was Asinius Pollio, who was present on the occasion, but whose history of the events is now lost.²⁵ Plutarch records, “It is said that on the night before the crossing he saw a horrible dream, for he dreamt that he was joining in incestuous intercourse with his own mother” (*Caes.* 32.6: λέγεται δὲ τῇ προτέρᾳ νυκτὶ τῆς διαβάσεως ὄναρ ἰδεῖν ἕκθεσμον ἐδόκει γὰρ αὐτὸς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ μητρὶ μίγνυσθαι τὴν ἄρρητον μῆξιν). Morford suggests that Caesar’s mother is “possibly here symbolic of Rome or Roman Italy.”²⁶ Caesar’s crossing the Rubicon, then, is a violation on several levels. It violates the laws of Rome, but read in light of the dream it is in some sense a violation of the natural order. The resultant internecine civil war, with Romans killing their fellow kin and countrymen, is as depraved an act of war as incest is an unspeakable sex act. Caesar violates his mother in his dreams and the city of Rome in his invasion. Echoes of

²⁴ Maes (2005) 12.

²⁵ It is not my intention to conduct a thorough *Quellenforschung* on these historians. Though I am interested in the historical sources of Lucan’s dream scenes (and of dream scenes generally), I reserve the topic for a later date. For a survey of the historians on whose work Lucan drew, among whom Livy is certain and Caesar, Asinius Pollio, and Seneca the Elder are likely, see Pichon (1912). On later writers’ use of Asinius’ Pollio’s histories, see Kornemann (1896), Gabba (1956), and Morgan (2000). On Plutarch’s sources, see Stadter (1992) and Pelling (2002), esp. 1–44, “Plutarch’s Method of Work in the Roman Lives” and 91–116, “Plutarch’s Adaptation of his Source Material.” On Suetonius’ sources, see Gascou (1984) 1–339 and de Coninck (1991). On Appian’s sources, see again Gabba (1956), Gowing (1992), and Westall (2015).

²⁶ Morford (1967) 77.

these ideas can be found in the *Pharsalia* as well: that the very idea of civil war is perverse and that Caesar is the embodiment of transgressive force.²⁷ Plutarch's placement of this dream in this context is important considering the same dream's recurrence in other historians' works.

Suetonius and Cassius Dio both place this dream during Caesar's quaestorship in Spain (69 BCE).²⁸ There, the dream takes on different, positive connotations: his mother symbolizes the earth itself, and their intercourse signals a positive response.²⁹ Setting thus informs interpretation, and Plutarch's transposition of this dream to the Rubicon demands an all-new meaning for the scene. We can see that the historians, too, took advantage of the narrative device of dreams to add flavor to their histories. Dreams' use as a device hinges upon their ability to be interpreted subjectively. History, inasmuch as it reflects a facet of cultural memory, echoes the same sort of sentiment that an epic might. Lucan's *Pharsalia* is very much a historical epic.³⁰ As such, its dream content, belonging, as Plutarch proves, as much to the historical tradition as to the epic, is interpreted by the poem's external as well as internal readers. The pathos evoked by the first vision of the poem pertains to the sense of national despair and disorder felt at a specific historical moment. In rewriting these dreams, Lucan unearths that moment and those feelings again.

Appian lists only portents that appeared at the time of Caesar's crossing the Rubicon.³¹ Suetonius, however, describes a scene most like Lucan's version: "Such a sign appeared to him

²⁷ Cf. the opening lines of the *Pharsalia* (1.1–7), where the natural order has been utterly inverted: *Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos / iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem / in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra / cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni / certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis / in commune nefas, infestisque obuia signis / signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.*

On the character of Caesar see Johnson (1987), Ch. 4 "Caesar: The Phantasmagoria of Power," 101–34.

²⁸ *Divus Julius* 7; Cassius Dio 37.52.2.

²⁹ Cf. Pelling (1997) 200–1.

³⁰ Cf. Servius *ad Aen.* 1.382: *Lucanus namque ideo in numero poetarum esse non meruit, quia videtur historiam composuisse, non poema.* ("Lucan does not deserve to be counted among the poets, because he seems to have composed a history, not a poem.")

³¹ *Civil Wars* 2.36.

as he was hesitating: a certain figure of outstanding size and beauty suddenly appeared, sitting on the nearby bank...the figure snatched a horn from one [of the trumpeters], rushed toward the river, and, with a great blast, started up the trumpet and went on to the other bank. Then Caesar said, ‘Let us go where the signs of the gods and the injustice of our enemies call us. The die is cast’” (*Jul. 32: cunctanti ostentum tale factum est. quidam eximia magnitudine et forma in proximo sedens repente apparuit...rapta ab uno tuba prosilivit ad flumen et ingenti spiritu classicum exorsus pertendit ad alteram ripam. tunc Caesar: “eatur,” inquit, “quo deorum ostenta et inimicorum iniquitas vocat. iacta alea est,” inquit*).³² Though the stage is set, so to speak, quite like Lucan’s, the scene plays out entirely differently. The apparition incites rather than prohibits civil war. Whereas in the *Pharsalia* the onus is upon Caesar himself to make the decision to cross the Rubicon, here the call to action and initial step are made by the apparition. Thus in Suetonius, when making the famous statement *iacta alea est*, Caesar essentially admits that the Rubicon has already been crossed *on his behalf*.³³ The apparition, of dubious identity in Suetonius, performs utterly opposite functions in the two instances. Suetonius’ account, if it takes Lucan’s into consideration, comes to a different conclusion about the fall of the republic, and this hinges on variant interpretations of a vision from the same historical moment. The fact that so many sources relate a dream or vision in retelling the same story speaks not to an assumed historicity of one version or another, but rather that they all understood the significance of such a watershed moment and shared the impulse to employ a dream to express the import and ambiguity it encapsulated. A canonical early source mentioning such a vision is possible but would not explain the variation among the accounts.

³² The reading of *esto* for *est*, “Let the die be cast,” is in play. See Casaubon (1647) *ad loc.*, cited by Lewis and Short, and cf. the Greek ἀνερίφθω κύβος (Plut. *Caes.* 32.8, *Pomp.* 60.2; Men. *Arr.* fr. 1.4 in *Fragm. Com. Graec.* 4, p. 88, ed. Meineke).

³³ Thus Beneker (2011) 87. Suetonius’ Caesar, on Beneker’s view, is a far more passive figure than Lucan’s Caesar.

In Lucan, the content of Roma's message to Caesar comes to bear directly on his intentions and the trajectory of his course of action: (190–2: *quo tenditis ultra? / quo fertis mea signa, viri? si iure venitis, / si cives, huc usque licet*). The ideas of *ius* and *civis* form the basis of Roma's appeal, and just as it is the violation and corruption of these ideals that characterize the civil war, as well as Lucan's *Civil War*, their rejection springs from Caesar's refusal to obey. In one sense, Caesar is not "supposed" to cross the Rubicon in view of these civic and moral concerns. In another sense, however, he is supposed to, because it is a fact that he did. This conflict between the epic's historical aspects and moral outrage at Caesar's transgression throws the entire world into a sort of flux, which in turn reflects upon the place and time Lucan reconstructs in his work. Lucan is aware of and plays within the contradiction created by these antithetical preoccupations. For Lucan, history did not play out in a way conducive to the narration and preservation of eternal Roman virtues. In fact, the civil war seemed an explicit rejection and corruption of Roman values. As far as dreams go, however, the divine vision of Roma has followed all the "rules" it is meant to follow.³⁴ Yet her knowing sorrow portends that the hoped-for response is not forthcoming. As Maes has noted, variations of *quo tendere* are used in Vergil "when a situation is at hand in which danger or foolishness threatens, in an effort to stop the perilous or unfitting behavior of others. When used in the context of an epic in the Virgilian manner, the speaker's success is guaranteed."³⁵ As in the case of the allusion to Hector's ghost, Lucan subverts Vergilian precedents as a way of reconstructing the meaning of the set pieces of epic. Caesar's response to what is to all appearances a divine message suggests that all is not right with the apparatus of dreams and visions in the world of the *Pharsalia*.

³⁴ See Maes' criteria in n. 19, above.

³⁵ Maes (2005) 16. E.g. Iulus at *Aen.* 5.670–1: "*quis furor iste novus? quo nunc, quo tenditis,*" inquit / "*heu miserae cives?*" and Pallas at 8.113–4: "*quo tenditis?*" inquit / "*qui genus? unde domo? pacemne huc fertis an arma?*"

Caesar's response to Roma picks up within the same line she left off her speech, and the suspense builds (1.192–203):

	tum perculit horror	
membra ducis, riguere comae gressumque coercens		
languor in extrema tenuit vestigia ripa.		
mox ait "o magnae qui moenia prospicis urbis	195	
Tarpeia de rupe Tonans Phrygiique penates		
gentis Iuleae et rapti secreta Quirini		
et residens celsa Latiaris Iuppiter Alba		
Vestalesque foci summique o numinis instar		
Roma, fave coeptis. non te furialibus armis	200	
persequor: en, adsum victor terraque marique		
Caesar, ubique tuus (liceat modo, nunc quoque) miles.		
ille erit ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerit hostem."		

Then dread struck the leader's limbs, his hair stood on end, and enfeeblement, checking his step, stopped his tracks at the edge of the bank. Presently, he spoke, "O Thunderer, you who look from the Tarpeian crag o'er the walls of this great city, and you Phrygian *penates* of the *gens Iulia*, and mysteries of snatched-up Quirinus, and Jupiter of Latium dwelling in lofty Alba, and hearths of Vesta, and you, o Rome, likeness of the highest divinity, show favor to my undertakings. I do not pursue you with rabid arms. Behold! I am here, victor on land and sea, Caesar, everywhere your soldier (even now, should it only be allowed). That man shall be guilty, he who made me your enemy."

Caesar's initial reaction is characteristic of the typical addressee response to divine appearance in epic: *horror* striking the limbs, hair standing on end, and *languor* checking his step. An obvious parallel is Aeneas' reaction to Mercury: "Frantic, he went dumb at the sight. His hair stood on end with dread and his voice stuck in his throat" (*Aen.* 4.279–80: *at vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens, / arrectaeque horrore comae et vox faucibus haesit*). There is correspondence in language between these two passages in *horror/horrore* and *riguere comae/arrectae comae*. Crucially, however, Aeneas is dumbstruck by Mercury's appearance, and follows the commands with obedience. Caesar, conversely, soon finds his voice and offers up a rebuttal. Penwill has noted that the fact that Caesar is responding to a vision rather than a dream means that he cannot

rationalize the message away as Pompey will try to do with the appearance of Julia.³⁶ Dreams present the dreamer with a host of interpretive options (I will pick up this idea again in discussing the two dreams of Pompey). The dream might be benevolent or malevolent, portend good or ill, and be taken by the recipient as natural (that is, we might say, psychological) or supernatural, coming from the gods.³⁷ Depending upon one's interpretation, one might convince oneself that the dream is naught but a *vana imago* with no bearing on reality, as Pompey will in Book 3.

Yet with a waking vision, Caesar cannot offer a refutation simply by denying that it has relevance.³⁸ He first has some interpretive legwork to do. Recovering quickly, Caesar begins by appealing to the traditional gods of the city of Rome: Jupiter Tonans, the *Penates* of his house originating from Troy, Quirinus, Latian Jupiter, Vesta, and finally Roma herself. The invocation of the gods of Rome is in part a response to Roma's claim that Caesar and his men will not be *cives* if they go any farther. Caesar counters this by asserting his Romanness with an appeal to a litany of traditional Roman deities. This is irony on Lucan's part, as Caesar's actions show exactly how *un-Roman* he is by marching his army on Rome and disobeying Roma herself. In effect, Caesar is attempting to prove that he is more Roman than Roma. As far as rhetorical strategies go, one must admit the absurdity of this. He cannot hope to justify his actions this way, but the apparent futility of his argument contrasted with his subsequent success suggests either that divine visions are powerless to persuade or that the gods are powerless to punish temerity in Lucan's world.

³⁶ Penwill (2009) 89.

³⁷ Some holistic studies of dreams in Latin literature attempting to categorize them in this way are Stearns (1927) and Harrison (2009).

³⁸ As we have seen, Lucan has tried to make it inescapably clear that Roma's appearance has to do reality, addressing Caesar's past and subsequent actions at a moment of crisis. That Caesar is *praeceps* from here on demonstrates that Roma's failure to check him marked a point of no return, as the Rubicon scene has always done in history and literature.

Caesar's assertion contains in it a certain amount of self-aggrandizement, as is evident from his phrasing and choices of invocation. Note the emphatic enjambment of *Caesar* in line 202, as well as *liceat modo* in the same line, signaling his rejoinder to Roma's *huc usque licet* in 192.³⁹ He appeals to the "Phrygian *penates*," recalling the connection of the *gens Iulia* to Aeneas. We have already seen the disparity between Caesar's response to divine injunctions and Aeneas'. If Lucan's Caesar were to follow his epic model, he would heed Roma's warning and never cross the Rubicon. Historical epic is bound too much by historical fact to allow such a change to happen. Nevertheless, Caesar makes his own connection between himself and Aeneas, doubtless intending to justify his actions by the comparison. The latter, after all, was a paragon of *pietas* whose mission was divinely sanctioned. In fact, Caesar's reference to Aeneas makes his actions even worse; he is destroying the very city his ancestor was instrumental in founding.⁴⁰ The point is made even more salient by Caesar's invocation of Jupiter Tonans (195: *magnae qui moenia prospicis urbis*). This particular phrasing "recall[s] the apparition of Hector encouraging Aeneas to seek new walls for his people (*his moenia quaere / magna*, 2.294–95). Lucan's reference here is concurrent rather than adversative: Caesar threatens the great and storied walls of long foundation."⁴¹ This is to say that Lucan's repetition of *moenia magna* evokes the same tone as in the *Aeneid*, rather than subverting it.

This concordance between *Aeneid* and *Pharsalia* makes the juxtaposition of Caesar and Aeneas vis-à-vis the walls of Rome all the more stark. Caesar's move here, however, puts a spotlight on how dreams and visions have changed from Vergil to Lucan. Whereas the vision of

³⁹ On enjambment in the *Pharsalia*, see Holgado Redondo (1977).

⁴⁰ Ahl (1976) 211.

⁴¹ Coffee et al. (2012) 390. This publication, "Intertextuality in the Digital Age," actually concerns the use of the online program Tesseract to find intertexts in Classical texts. That they selected Vergil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Pharsalia* to compare and analyze was fortuitous for my purposes.

Hector and appearance of Mercury in the *Aeneid* contained clear, direct messages demanding compliance for themselves, Caesar has countermanded Roma's request by introducing alternative interpretive options. By his own twisted logic, just as he can represent Aeneas and still march on Rome, so too can he disobey Roma and still be a citizen. The guilt will be transferred to someone else. Unlike in the *Aeneid*, recourse to subjective, self-serving interpretations is proven to be a viable option in the *Pharsalia*, and in fact becomes the new rule. Caesar does not engage with the literal content of Roma's warning, but skirts and distracts from the issue with external appeals. This maneuver is central to the theme of dream response in the *Pharsalia*, and the fact that Caesar can do so without penalty kick-starts the breakdown of dreams' authenticity in the poem.

Caesar's distortion of logic indicates that the function of dream interpretation in the *Pharsalia* is not to extract inherent truth from the dreams and visions themselves. Rather, each dream is an opportunity for the dreamer to impose his own provisional reading and interpretation upon it. He cannot hope to counter the deified Roma's injunction to stop his march with a "higher" appeal to other gods enshrined as part of the religious and cultural fabric of Rome itself. The logical incongruity of his conclusion, *fave coeptis*, thus stands out even more, and not just for the rarity of such pleas in the *Pharsalia*.⁴² Caesar's victory, inasmuch as it is a historical fact, is in effect a preordained occurrence in the epic. Prophecy, in this world, comes not from oracles and divine messages, but from historical knowledge. Even the gods, including Roma herself, are powerless to oppose him. Once past the Rubicon, Caesar cannot be stopped. The brief hesitation preceding his response will be uncharacteristic of him for the rest of the poem. From this point

⁴² Ahl (1976) 211 on this rarity.

onward, he is rushing “headlong” (*praeceps*) into every event and conflict.⁴³ The brief delay seems only to have made him more dangerous. Compare lines 193–4, where Caesar halts on the bank of the Rubicon, to the lion simile concluding the scene (205–212).⁴⁴ The lion, “in close quarters with a perceived enemy, crouches down cautiously while he gathers all his anger” (206–7: ... *viso leo comminus hoste / subsedit dubius, totam dum colligit iram*). It then goads itself with the lashing of its own tail and presses on despite the spears of its enemies.⁴⁵ Caesar’s *horror* and *languor* at the Rubicon are translated into caution, this moment of preparation making him even more lethal. Roma, who maps onto the *visus hostis* of 206, fails to subdue him with the spears of her logical appeal. So too will Pompey in the course of the war.

The final line of Caesar’s response, *ille erit ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerit hostem* (203), is pregnant with meaning. Caesar ultimately acknowledges that he has become a *hostis* to Rome, making his request that Roma “show favor to [his] undertakings” all the more outrageous. He diverts blame to an unnamed *ille*, assuredly Pompey, who *will (erit)* be guilty in the end. History, after all, is written by the victor. This is not only Caesar’s attitude but a problem of which Lucan is acutely aware. In his own way, Lucan fits Caesar’s description of *ille nocens*, as he has fashioned a Caesar whose very existence is antithetical to Rome’s. He is cognizant of the conceits of his own poetic project, that he is utilizing history and cultural memory to rewrite and re-characterize the past, but that the actors within that past also have a voice that cannot be silenced. Accordingly, dreams not only play a part in Lucan’s project but give the same interpretive power to the

⁴³ This is the upshot of his characterization at 1.143–57, as Fantham (1992) notes at 2.656. Cf. 2.656 *Caesar in omnia praeceps*, 3.50–1 *neque enim iam sufficit ulla / praecipiti fortuna uiro*, 9.47–8 *praeceps facit omne timendum / uictor*, 10.507–8 *Caesar semper feliciter usus / praecipiti cursu bellorum*.

⁴⁴ Maes (2005) 8n24, citing Radicke (2004) 174, notes that this simile provides “a suitable rounding off of the message scene... This way Lucan presents the Virgilian type scene in full and as a self-contained unit.”

⁴⁵ 210–1: *tum torta leuis si lancea Mauri / haereat aut latum subeant venabula pectus*. Might one see a correspondence between these lines and the bristling *comae* of 193? The hairs become transmuted into spears, symbolizing Caesar’s resilience and lethality. Though not explicit, I see it as not implausible given Scaeva at 6.205 (*solus obit densamque ferens in pectore siluam*) and the subsequent elephant simile (6.208–10).

characters of his epic. The Roma vision provides a particular interpretation of the watershed moment at the Rubicon. In Lucan's view, the crossing proved Caesar to be a dangerous enemy to Rome and all that it stands for, and his wickedness is proven in his willingness to start a civil war. External readers of the *Pharsalia* receive this scene and its implications and in turn can interpret it as a part of Lucan's poetic program. As an internal reader of the Roma vision, however, Caesar arrives at an alternative interpretation that allows him to avoid the blame and place it on Pompey. Lucan will not let him get away with it, but this question of historical interpretation, raised in the occurrence of visions and responses, forces the poet to acknowledge that subjective interpretation of ambiguous material of any kind is a double-edged sword. He and his Caesar are ultimately conducting the same exercise.

I conclude my discussion of the Roma vision with Caesar's arrival on the other side of the Rubicon (223–227):

Caesar, ut adversam superato gurgite ripam
attigit, Hesperiae vetitis et constitit arvis,
“hic” ait “hic pacem temerataque iura relinquo; 225
te, Fortuna, sequor. procul hinc iam foedera sunt;
credidimus fatis, utendum est iudice bello.”⁴⁶

When he had overcome the stream and reached the opposite bank, Caesar stood fast in the forbidden fields of Hesperia and said, “Here I leave behind peace and the violated laws. It is you I follow, Fortune. Let pacts now be far off from here. I have trusted the fates; war must now be the judge.”

Caesar's transgression is reinforced, once by the narrator (*vetitis...arvis*) and again in Caesar's own words: he hereby abandons peace and the laws (which he has already violated). He then addresses not Roma or the gods of Rome, but Fortuna. Ending his speech in this way indicates a greater

⁴⁶ I follow the MSS in reading *fatis* at 227. I am in agreement with Getty (1940) and Fraenkel (1926) (*contra* Housman 1926 and Shackleton Bailey 1988, who print *satis his*) who are satisfied with a gnomic use of the perfect tense here. The sense is thus, in Getty's formulation, “my trust has always been in my destiny and still is in it.” Cf. also George (1988) and Helzle (1991) who have defended the MS reading on poetic grounds. I find Harrison's (1991) suggestion (used by Roche), *credidimus paci*, to be fascinating though unconvincing.

allegiance to his personal pursuits, whatever may come, than to Rome or the gods, now that he has defied divine will by crossing the Rubicon. Lucan's omission of the gods from the *Pharsalia* seems pointed, then; if they cannot change the past, cannot affect the outcome of the epic, there is no use in giving them a prominent role. Roma is the first and only instance of a divine figure participating in the action, and she is quickly bypassed.⁴⁷ With the gods displaced, then, the mortal figures are free to negotiate the distribution of power amongst themselves. The prominence of Fortuna in the epic, as well as the support she lends to Caesar's cause, suggests the displacement and weakening of the divine, as Beneker argues, saying, "Fortuna's late endorsement of Caesar's decision to cross the Rubicon makes the gods look weak, as if they too have been subdued by Caesar's aggressiveness..."⁴⁸ Fortuna, inasmuch as she determines mortal success, is responsible for dividing power among the mortal heroes from the void left by the gods' withdrawal. Yet even she does not quite wield the power expected of a goddess in epic, for she is forced to watch helplessly as her community of Praeneste is destroyed.⁴⁹ Caesar, as the ultimate victor, is the figure closest to omnipotence in this world. As he ascends to still greater heights of power, the problem with dreams in the *Pharsalia* is magnified. Without the gods, their source is unclear.

The Roma vision scene concluded, we ought now to take stock of where the dream apparatus stands and its trajectory going forward. I have taken the epic and philosophical dream traditions (the latter of which will become more important in considering Pompey's response to his dream of Julia) as a means of understanding how dreams are *supposed* to function. Namely,

⁴⁷ Morford (1967) 75 pointedly suggests that "Roma, in Caesar's vision, is no more than a personification of an abstract idea," a far cry from an epic divinity. In any case, this abstract idea, that of an idealized Rome, is doomed from the opening lines.

⁴⁸ Beneker (2011) 94.

⁴⁹ 2.193–5: *vidit Fortuna colonos / Praenestina suos cunctos simul ense recepto / unius populum pereuntem tempore mortis.*

divine powers are responsible for acting as guarantors for the occurrence and validity of dreams and visions in both Stoic thought and epic. The absence of gods from Lucan's epic is crucial to the interpretation of the *Pharsalia's* dreams. This cause and effect is not an accident of Lucan's poetic choice, but rather a conscious and purposeful response to the tradition in which he is working. Compared to the *Aeneid*, dreams in the *Pharsalia* do not possess the same epistemological foundation because they are not vouchsafed by divine powers commanding belief, respect, and obedience to their message. Lucan's dreams share more in common with those of the historians; they point toward a specific interpretation of a specific historical event. But because of the breakdown of dreams within the poem, the direct recipients of dreams go through the same interpretive process rather than taking them at face value. In other words, Caesar and Pompey have the same meta-level response to their own dreams as the external readers have. In a way, they act as historians, employing dreams to make certain value judgments about the past, their poetic present. Thus, Lucan lays bare the interpretive complexities and ambiguities not just of dreams but of all constructs of language: literature, history, performance, and, most startlingly in Caesar's case, direct experience.

We can also look forward to certain correspondences between this vision and the dreams later in the poem. The Roma vision and Pompey's dream of Julia each frame pivotal moments in the war for these leaders: one as Caesar enters Italy, the other as Pompey leaves it for good. Caesar's vision is thematically intertwined with the last dream in the poem, his dream after the battle of Pharsalus in Book 7. Caesar's character follows a certain trajectory between these moments as he comes into his own as a quasi-divine figure with a firm grasp of how to deal with these visions. Momentarily put off by Roma in Book 1, Caesar beholds horrific dreams of dead soldiers without so much as flinching in Book 7. In the meantime, he displaces the other two

heroes, Pompey and Cato, from the epic. Dreams, then, reproduce the conflict in their own way as Pompey declines and Caesar moves to take center stage.

II: Pompey's Dream of Julia (3.1–45)

Pompey's dream of Julia marks the beginning of Book 3, occupying a position of structural and narratological significance. After Caesar crosses the Rubicon, he begins his invasion of Italy, to which the Roman populace reacts with horror. They recall the legacies of Marius and Sulla, vestiges of earlier Roman civil discord, precursors to Caesar and Pompey. Caesar captures Corfinium, where he spares the life of Domitius Ahenobarbus, brother-in-law of Cato and great-great-grandfather of Nero. Pompey is forced to flee Italy, narrowly avoiding being caught by Caesar at Brundisium. It is in the wake of this escape, his final departure from Italy, that Pompey has his first dream in the poem. This is perhaps the most widely treated and deeply discussed of all the dreams and visions in the *Pharsalia*. As we shall see, much scholarly attention has been devoted to the scene's epic correspondences, elegiac resonances, and philosophical significance.⁵⁰ By bringing these comparanda to the fore, Lucan at once raises and subverts expectations of how dreams will influence their recipients and relate to the events unfolding in the narrative.

If Caesar's repudiation of Roma's warning heralded a reformulation of dreams' usefulness, whereby the dreamer could reject the obvious interpretation in favor of one that suits his own needs, Julia's appearance to Pompey represents this change in action. Though not altering the trajectory of the plot (contrast Mercury to Aeneas at *Aen.* 4.265–82), Julia's message, like Roma's, brings under investigation the character and motives of the one responding to it.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Specifically, on the dream's relation to Ovid's Ceyx and Alcyone, see Bruère (1951) 222 and Fantham (1979); on the parallels between Julia and Creusa (and thus between Pompey and Aeneas), see Pichon (1912) 226, Hunink (1992) with bibliography cited, Batinski (1993), Mills (2005); on elegy, see McCune (2013); on the Epicurean ideas in Pompey's dream-response, see Earnshaw (2013).

⁵¹ Cf. Stearns (1927) 30: "These dreams and the other dreams of the *Pharsalia* do not motivate the action of the poem in the same way as the dreams in the *Aeneid* influence Vergil's development of the plot. Pompey's dream,

Given that the absence of the divine in the *Pharsalia* places the crux of dream interpretation on the level of mortal affairs, Pompey's dream of Julia, read in isolation, reflects upon his various relationships. Read in tandem with the other dreams in the poem, the dream reinforces the combative relationship between Caesar and Pompey, eliding geographical and poetic distance, and foreshadows Pompey's eventual submission. This tension is heightened in some sense by the fact that, as Caesar's daughter, Julia represents for Pompey a connection to the man with whom he would just as soon sever all ties. The intertexts of this passage serve to highlight the interpretive significance of these dreams and the relationships they concern. To read Lucan's dreams intertextually compels the reader to analyze them intratextually as well; since Caesar and Pompey's dreams both find analogues in those of Vergil's Aeneas, we inevitably draw comparisons between the two leaders within the text of the *Pharsalia*. With their respective dreams as touchstones, Caesar and Pompey's relations to Rome, Italy, the republic, each other, and the dream apparatus come into focus via the figure of Julia. Pompey's response to her and failure to disarm this "divine" message with the same deftness as Caesar had done reinforce the ever-present irony behind his continued appellation "Magnus" and mirror his defeat in the course of the war.

The Julia dream occurs at a pivotal moment in the poem for Pompey. Not only does it initiate Book 3, it has prophetic significance for the remainder of the epic and the war as Pompey leaves Italy, looking upon it for the last time. The role of dreams in framing the *Pharsalia*'s narrative action is not accidental. Caesar's vision preceded (and sought to prevent) his arrival into Italy. The final two dreams will bookend the battle of Pharsalus. All four dreams, to the extent that they are in dialogue with one another, signify an opportunity for historical and literary

however, foreshadows the crisis of the epic and so controls the dénouement of Lucan's story as effectively as Aeneas' dreams dictate the subsequent course of the events of the *Aeneid*."

comparison and interpretation of the events they represent. Lucan makes the import of this moment clear by prefacing the dream scene with a few lines dwelling on Pompey's departure.

Pompey is the only one of his crew to continue watching the Italian shoreline (3.4–7):

solus ab Hesperia non flexit lumina terra
Magnus, dum patrios portus, dum litora numquam
ad visus reditura suos tectumque cacumen
nubibus et dubios cernit vanescere montis.

Magnus alone did not avert his eyes from the land of Hesperia as he looked upon the harbors of his paternal land, looked upon the shores never again to return to his sight, saw the hilltop covered by clouds, the hazy mountains disappear...

The verbal correspondence between these lines and the scene of Aeneas' departure from Troy at *Aeneid* 3 has been well noted.⁵² Both men depart from their homelands never to return, Aeneas headed toward Rome's foundation, Pompey away from its destruction. In *Pharsalia* 1, it was drawn out in the comparison between Aeneas and Caesar that both converged upon the same geographical point but on antithetical missions. The distinctions Lucan makes between Caesar and Pompey thus hinge not just upon their positions relative to Italy but also on their comparisons to the model of Vergil's Aeneas.

The association of these liminal moments in the poem with the occurrence of dreams speaks to the importance of Lucan's dreams as vehicles for metaliterary (and metahistorical) commentary as well as the characterization of the principal figures of his epic. Where Caesar's vision occasioned prospective soliloquizing, Pompey's departure from Italy is cause for introspection. Having narrowly escaped Brundisium as Caesar tried to pen him in, Pompey is left in solitude (3.4: *solus*) to contemplate the world he has left behind. He alone looks back at Hesperia, his men looking out to sea, and symbolically, to the future. The emphatic enjambment

⁵² *Aen.* 3.10–11. *litora cum patriae lacrimans portusque relinquo / et campos, ubi Troia fuit.* See Penwill (2009) 80n3, Fantham (1992) 220, Mills (2005) 53–4, Hunink (1992) 32, Radicke (2004) 232n140.

of his title *Magnus* at line 5 ironically underscores his fall from the heights of success and the failure represented in being forced to relinquish the *portus* and *litora* of his homeland.⁵³ The incumbent clouds and evanescence of the mainland features reflect how Pompey views Italy in both the short- and long-term. As Italy fades from view, Pompey must come to terms with the fact that Caesar now holds sway there, and the land that saw his past accomplishments is now out of both sight and retraceable memory. The recurrent language of vision in these opening lines (4: *flexit lumina*; 6: *visus*; 7: *cernit*) reveals Pompey's ongoing internalization and pondering of such thoughts and reveals a continuous process of seeking and hoping to find. The reader, too, looks back upon the Italy that he saw and sees it unchanged for the last time.

Nor is Pompey's future any clearer than his past. As Julia appears to him that night to lay open the fortune that awaits him in the war, his analytical response, prefigured in his outlook on the fading Hesperia, draws a contrast between his approach and that of Caesar, who, when faced with the specter of Roma, decided to take his destiny into his own hands. The disparity of fortune between these two men is at play here, as Pompey's unsuccessful plea to Fortuna before leaving Italy recalls Caesar's *te, Fortuna, sequor* (1.226), continuing the narrative of Pompey's decline and the shifting of power and influence between the two.⁵⁴ The relationship between the two men, historical, political, poetic, psychological, and otherwise, is embodied by the figure of Julia. The dream, apparently, is Lucan's literary creation; it does not, at any rate, have a basis in any surviving account of the historians.⁵⁵ As with Caesar's vision of Roma, the content and the

⁵³ Cf. 1.135: *stat magni nominis umbra*.

⁵⁴ BC 2.699–701: *dux etiam uotis hoc te, Fortuna, precatur, / quam retinere uetas, liceat sibi perdere saltem / Italiam*. Cf. Morford (1967) 79, "It is this part of the *color* that is particularly important in the portrait of Pompey; throughout the poem *stat magni nominis umbra* (1.135) is the key to the portrait, and the desertion by Fortune of her favourite is a leading motif. The dream marks a decisive stage in this process, as can clearly be seen from its context."

⁵⁵ Thus Bruère (1951) 222: "Had this vision been attested in Lucan's historical source, as is the case with Pompey's dream on the eve of Pharsalia, Lucan would not have made the mistake of placing any of Pompey's triumphs in the period when he was married to Julia, for his last triumph was celebrated two years before she became his wife."

recipient's response allow for a characterological analysis, and the similarity of their circumstances allows Caesar and Pompey to be contrasted in terms of their interactions with the dream apparatus.

As Pompey falls asleep, the vision of Julia appears to him in a description with all the familiar trappings of a dream (3.8–11):

inde soporifero cesserunt languida somno
membra ducis; diri tum plena horroris imago
visa caput maestum per hiantes Iulia terras
tollere et accenso furialis stare sepulchro.

Thence the leader's tired limbs yielded to drowsy sleep. Then, an image full of dread horror, Julia appeared to raise her sad head through the gaping earth and stand Fury-like on her flaming tomb.

Julia's ethereality is confirmed in the words *visa* and *imago* which recall the appearance of Roma in Book 1 (186: *ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago*). Her very appearance already bodes ill for Pompey, as it is not just generically Fury-like, but evokes specific literary analogues: Vergil's Allecto and Lucan's own Erictho, perhaps a prospective evocation.⁵⁶ Before she has even spoken, Julia's dream-state appearance prefigures the prophetic nature of her message. The peculiarity of dreams' functionality in the *Pharsalia* will account for the unexpected content of her speech, the factual infelicities of her words and accusations, and, perhaps most surprising given the parallel in Aeneas, Pompey's idiosyncratic decision to refuse to countenance the dream's plausibility.

The thrust of Julia's address to her former husband is threefold. First is a description of the Underworld, Julia's place in it, and the increased activity caused by the civil war. We learn that Julia bears the guilt and blame for the war's occurrence, as was hinted in the poet's address to her in Book 1, "By your death good faith was shattered and the leaders were allowed to set war in motion" (1.119–20: *morte tua discussa fides bellumque movere / permissum ducibus*). Whereas

⁵⁶ At *Aen.* 7.324 Allecto comes *dirarum ab sede dearum*; Erictho, herself modeled on Allecto, is described clad in *discolor et uario furialis cultus amictu* (*BC* 6.654). Cf. Mills (2005) 56.

Julia's presentation in the opening book was as a sympathetic mediator, in Book 3 she is punished for her role in instigating the war, driven out of the Elysian fields and into "the shadows of Styx and the guilty shades" (3.12–3: "*sedibus Elysiis campoque expulsa piorum / ad Stygias*" inquit "*tenebras manesque nocentis*"). Acknowledging this fact and lamenting the injustice of her circumstances given her lack of agency, or given that it was her ultimate loss of agency that was the cause of civil war, she says that it was, "in the wake of civil war" that she was dragged out among the guilty (14: *post bellum civile trahor*). Given the lack of divine causes given for the war, Julia must play the role of human scapegoat. The disparity between Julia's blameworthiness here and in Book 1 comes about as a result of Lucan's interest in historical revisionism and interpretation.⁵⁷ Here again, as with Caesar and Roma in Book 1, a vision is the vehicle for raising critical questions regarding the interpretation of the past. By omitting the gods, Lucan removes them from the table as an option for the civil war's *causae*. Neither are the gods behind the dreams themselves. Rather, dreams become a tool for subjective human interpretation. Julia herself, given a voice through Pompey's dream, makes use of its potential as a hermeneutic device. She even claims the Underworld itself as a divine authority for her malevolence, saying, "The kings of the silent ones allowed me to pursue you" (29–30: *regesque silentum / permisere sequi*). In so doing she seeks to bolster her credibility as a messenger.

Second, Julia expresses her indignation that Pompey would so soon forget her and the successes that accompanied their marriage. She claims that Pompey "led triumphs with [her] as wife," but that "fortune changed along with the marriage bed." She takes affront at her rival (23: *paelex*) Cornelia wedding him "while her own tomb was still warm" and insinuates that this

⁵⁷ This point is well-argued by Chiu (2010). She writes, "Through [Julia], Lucan highlights his epic's theme of historical judgment and cosmic disorder, which comes to grim fruition in Book 6 as chaos from the Roman civil war infects not only the world but the Underworld as well" (355).

change brought about his string of disasters in much the same way as Julia's death brought about the civil war.⁵⁸ It has been noted that this speech is influenced by elegy, of which the *coniunx/paelex* dichotomy is but one example, and furthermore that many of Julia's claims are exaggerated or outright fabricated.⁵⁹ Her argument for exclusivity as the inspirer of Pompey's success, *contra* Cornelia, finds a parallel in Propertius' Cynthia.⁶⁰ Yet while Cynthia more plausibly argues that her presence is essential to the success of Propertius' poetry, Julia's claim may be explained by reference to the tradition of love elegy and as part of the larger tendency of Lucan's dreams to manipulate and distort historical facts.⁶¹ Pompey celebrated no triumphs while Julia was his wife, did not marry Cornelia until two years after Julia's death (not, as she claims, *tepidus busto*), and, despite her claim that she will continue to haunt his dreams (25: *dum non securos liceat mihi rumpere somnos*), she does not appear in this way again.⁶²

These lies, while part of the repertoire of the elegiac mistress, show how Julia uses the opportunity her appearance in Pompey's dream affords her to reinvent the facts of their relationship. While Roma's tearful plea portended genuine disaster for the city and its people, Julia's invective is more conniving and self-serving; she uses her appearance in Pompey's dream as an opportunity to use deceptive untruths to advance a specific argument about their past. The ancients realized that dreams, even those divinely authored, could be deceptive. Yet a deceptive message is not what Lucan's audience is led to expect. Pompey's dream of Julia recalls Aeneas'

⁵⁸ *BC* 3.20–3: *coniuge me laetos duxisti, Magne, triumphos: / fortuna est mutata toris, semperque potentis / detrahare in cladem fato damnata maritos / innupsit tepido paelex Cornelia busto.*

⁵⁹ For the elegiac resonances of this passage, see Hübner (1984), and Caston (2011) for elegy's influences throughout the epic.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Prop.* 4.7.77–8: *et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine uersus, / ure mihi: laudes desine habere meas.*

⁶¹ McCune (2013) 175, "Julia's claim that Pompey's success depends on his having her as his wife makes less sense and can only be explained as an imitation of an elegiac situation." McCune's thesis is sound, but her claim that Julia's argument "can only be explained" this way is too bold.

⁶² McCune (2013) 176.

encounter with the shade of Creusa in a burning Troy.⁶³ Yet the differences in the messages of their wives emphasize the differences between the heroes themselves: Creusa frees Aeneas from his past while Julia would bind Pompey to his; Creusa bids Aeneas seek a new wife, while Julia holds Cornelia in contempt. Julia's curses have more of the tenor of Dido's speech at *Aeneid* 4.590–629 than Creusa's. There will be a disparity in response, too: Aeneas takes his wife's words to heart, while Pompey reaches for reasons to disregard what he has heard. Another parallel of interest is Ovid's Ceyx and Alcyone, where Morpheus appears to Alcyone as a dream in the guise of her late husband.⁶⁴ There the dream is fundamentally deceptive, but reflects the truth, is presented propitiously, comes clearly from a divine source, and is accepted. The dream of Julia, while it distorts the truth, renders a true prophetic account of Pompey's fate, though her aim is malevolent and, despite her claim to the contrary, invested in the mortal plane. It is for this last reason that Pompey will see fit to reject it.

The juxtaposition of Julia and Cornelia as recurs with Cornelia's brief dream in Book 5. Though Cornelia accompanies Pompey initially (2.728: *cum coniuge pulsus*), she is sent away to Mytilene when the battle is imminent. After a lengthy, sorrowful exchange with her husband,⁶⁵ Cornelia endures the loneliness caused by her separation, which manifests itself first in sleeplessness (5.805–6: *quae nox tibi proxima venit / insomnis!*) then uneasy sleep beset by dreams. Unused to solitude and an empty bed, her dreams attempt to elide the distance between herself and Pompey: "How often, heavy with sleep, she embraced the empty bed with betrayed hands and, forgetting her flight, sought her husband in the night!" (5.808–10: *somno quam saepe gravata / deceptis vacuum manibus complexa cubile est / atque oblita fugae quaesivit nocte*

⁶³ Rossi (2000) 574n15.

⁶⁴ *Met.* 11.650–73.

⁶⁵ 5.739–90, on which see Bruère (1951) 223–5.

maritum!). Only in her dreams does Cornelia reunite, or imagine that she reunites, with her husband. Line 809 is frontloaded with language reinforcing her error. Not only is she (or her hands) deceived, but the bed itself is *vacuum*, not just physically empty but a token of the idleness of her dreams. This line recalls Pompey's second dream (discussed in the next chapter), which likewise deceives him (7.8: *decepit*) with a false (*vana*) image. Thus, at their moment of physical separation, their dreams serve to unite them thematically. In sleep, each receives a pleasant reunion with the object of their longing and separation—for her, Pompey; for him, Rome—only to be rudely reminded upon waking that the distance between them and their *desideratum* is insurmountable. In this way, Cornelia finds a foil in Julia, who lays claim to Pompey's dreaming existence and will be united with him forever in the hereafter upon the leader's death (3.33–4: *bellum / te faciet civile meum*).⁶⁶ Whereas Cornelia represents Pompey's success and good fortune, which he now leaves behind, Julia stands in, as if constantly by his side, as a reminder of his doom, which her connection to Caesar helps to reinforce.

The third aspect of Julia's dream message is a prediction, with the tone of a menacing promise, about Pompey's fate in the civil war. In a harsh reminder of Pompey's current circumstances, Julia envisions herself taking part in a two-pronged offensive against him with Caesar (27, 31–4):

sed teneat Caesarque dies et Iulia noctes
 ...
 ...numquam tibi, Magne, per umbras
 perque meos manes genero non esse licebit;
 abscidis frustra ferro tua pignora: bellum
 te faciet civile meum.

“Let Caesar occupy your days and Julia your nights... Never, Magnus, by the shades and by my own ghost, will you be allowed not to be a son-in-law. In vain do you break your bond with the sword. Civil war will make you mine.”

⁶⁶ Morford (1967) 80–1.

Julia acts out her titular role as *coniunx*, effectively binding Pompey to his past, present, and future.⁶⁷ Yet it is not just to Julia that Pompey is bound, but to Caesar, in whom her antagonism lives on. The *pignora* that connected husband and wife also connected father- and son-in-law, and as such Julia would have both relationships avenged. Julia transfers the blame for dissolving that familial bond to Pompey; it was he, according to her, who instigated civil war and in so doing displayed *impietas* on multiple levels, civic and familial.⁶⁸ Her final words to him, “Civil war will make you mine,” predict his death, at which point he will join her again in the Underworld. This is accurate prophecy, and, insofar as it predicts his death, one of the only pieces of true information in her speech.

Pompey’s response to this dream progresses through multiple stages of reaction. His initial attempt to embrace her fleeting shade connects him yet again to Aeneas (34–5: *sic fata refugit / umbra per amplexus trepidi dilapsa mariti*).⁶⁹ Contrary to Aeneas’ response, however, Pompey’s attitude upon waking is defiance (3.36–40):

ille, dei quamuis cladem manesque minentur,
 maior in arma ruit certa cum mente malorum
 et ‘quid’ ait ‘vani terremur imagine visus?
 aut nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum
 aut mors ipsa nihil.’ 40

Although gods and shades threaten destruction, he rushes all the more into arms with a mind certain of evils, and says, “Why am I frightened by the sight of an empty vision? Either nothing of the senses remains for souls after death, or death itself is nothing.”

This attempt at dismissal seems to be inconsistent with his in-dream reaction; a failed embrace would signify that he thought Julia’s appearance all too real. This disparity might plausibly be

⁶⁷ Penwill (2009) 82.

⁶⁸ Mills (2005) 59.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Aen.* 2.792–4: *ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum; / ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago, / par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.*

explained by the difference between his dreaming and waking psychology.⁷⁰ More obviously, Pompey's attempt to embrace Julia is a textual allusion, part of the topos of interaction with the shades of deceased loved ones. Additionally, his choice to "rush all the more into arms" (37: *maior in arma ruit*) is a reworking of Aeneas at *Aen.* 2.353: *moriatur et in media arma ruamus*.⁷¹ The *dei* of 36 have been variously interpreted as either the *reges silentum* of line 29,⁷² or as gods in only a general, nonspecific sense.⁷³ The gods' absence from the equation allows the exchange between Julia and Pompey to focus "strictly upon human relationships and upon the significance of individual human action."⁷⁴

This in turn opens the door to Pompey's skepticism. While *mariti* of line 35 conflates past with present, dreaming with waking, Pompey's rationalization is an assertion of the sober reality of the physical universe: there can be no sensation after death, this could not *really* have been Julia, and so he need not be concerned by what he has seen and heard. The philosophical underpinnings of his explanation are essentially Epicurean, echoing the famous *sententia*, "Death is nothing to us; for that which is dispersed has no sensation, and that without sensation is nothing to us."⁷⁵ Pompey's refusal to utilize his dream as a source of prophecy bearing information relevant to his waking life is markedly at odds with the Stoic attitude towards dreams. Yet he has mistaken the Epicurean position as well; by disconnecting the coordinate

⁷⁰ Penwill (2009) 82–3 attempts to explain this scene along these lines, arguing that "Pompey is clearly in that confused state which we often experience as we are waking from a dream" and, symbolically, that it is "Pompey's attempt to cling to a past in which Julia was the bond that linked him to Caesar and thus to the Italy that he is leaving."

⁷¹ Thus Hunink (1992) *ad loc.*

⁷² Haskins (1887) *ad loc.*

⁷³ Hunink (1992) 48.

⁷⁴ Ahl (1976) 292.

⁷⁵ *Kyriai Doxai* 2: ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ διαλυθὲν ἀναισθητεῖ, τὸ δ' ἀναισθητοῦν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς. Lucretius treats this argument at length in *DRN* 3, e.g. 830–1: *nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum, / quandoquidem natura animi mortalis habetur* ("Therefore death is nothing to us and does not matter in the least, since the nature of the mind is held to be mortal").

parts of the Epicurean doctrine (there is no sensation after death, ergo death is nothing to us) into mutually exclusive propositions (39–40: *aut...aut*), Pompey misses both marks. He can neither take advantage of his dream’s interpretive possibilities nor proficiently posit an alternative viewpoint. This serves only to compound the confusion rather than offer clarity.⁷⁶ In rejecting his dream and refusing to engage with its message, however, Pompey is in error. Julia’s prophecy is accurate and the death she predicts for him comes about in the fullness of the poem. Her deceptive rhetoric caused Pompey to write off the entire message as an *imago* of a *vanus visus*. He does not deny the reality of his experience, only that it should alter his mindset to any degree.

There remains the question of how this dream ought to be classified. The possibility that Pompey’s dream of Julia is an “anxiety dream,” reflecting his own guilt for his role in Julia’s fate and the civil war, seems to suggest that the vision was self-authored by Pompey’s subconscious rather than coming from an external source (Julia’s shade).⁷⁷ Harrisson’s conclusion, given the gods’ absence from the *Pharsalia*, is that dreams “all ultimately originate from within the dreamers.”⁷⁸ To be sure, Julia’s threats successfully make Pompey anxious (3.35 *trepidi...mariti*). What is more, it would be characteristic of Lucan, and perhaps not an unattractive reading in itself, if he subverts the reader’s expectations by making Julia’s shade in fact merely a projection of Pompey’s subconscious. It is difficult to assert that Julia, as she appears in Pompey’s dream, is “real,” or even to state quite what that means. Yet I find this subjectivity, this inability to nail down precision and to make the finer points of detail concrete, to be essential to the character of Lucan’s dreams. Without any source to stand as authority for any one dream’s codified meaning,

⁷⁶ Earnshaw (2013) 262 discusses this scene and its Lucretian resonances, arguing, “As epic uncertainty promises a retreat backwards towards Lucretian certainty, Pompey is shown to contrast sharply the darkness of poetic *religio* with philosophical enlightenment, yet his confusion over Epicurean doctrine ultimately infects any potential for clarification and illumination.”

⁷⁷ Harrisson (2009) 213–5.

⁷⁸ Harrisson (2009) 155.

each dream is open to interpretation, which inevitably involves an analysis of history, interpersonal relationships, and even the self. So long as they are not from the gods, dreams might as well come from anywhere. For Julia's ghost to appear autonomously would at least be a familiar eventuality (compare the example from *De Divinatione*, above), but as we shall see, Lucan becomes intentionally opaque about dreams' origins in Book 7.

Dick's assessment that "Lucan is clearly using Pompey as the mouthpiece for his own sentiments" regarding the philosophy of death and dreams needs some modification.⁷⁹ As Earnshaw has pointed out, Pompey's expression of Epicurean doctrine is intentionally mistaken and is not meant to be a reflection of Lucan's own philosophical opinions.⁸⁰ Dick is correct when he writes, "Lucan is not content simply to employ an epic technique like the *Orakeltraum*; he must divorce it from its literary context and subject the very concept of a shade endowed with prophetic powers to a withering analysis, thereby exploding one of the most venerable of the epic devices."⁸¹ In other words, Lucan employs the figure of Pompey to demonstrate the inherent unreliability, that is to say the subjective nature, of dreams as interpretive devices. As if realizing it for himself, Pompey rejects the dream entirely. Ironically, the prophecy of the dream was in fact accurate. Pompey is right to mistrust his dream, but does so on shaky philosophical grounds, and so his unwillingness to interrogate it is to his own detriment.

The literary context (Creusa and Aeneas) subverted by the Julia dream involves lucid messages and obedient response. Julia's obfuscation of the truth and Pompey's subsequent defiance reveal the injection of individual attitudes and personal objectives into a process otherwise uncomplicated by such extraneous factors. Chiu's argument, that Julia's poetic shift

⁷⁹ Dick (1963) 46.

⁸⁰ Earnshaw (2013) 262 in note 76, above.

⁸¹ Dick (1963) 46.

from historical figure to revenge-seeking shade is “symbolic of interpretative retrospection and a sign of cosmic chaos” comes closest to my own view.⁸² All of Lucan’s dreams are designed to raise the question not only of how to interpret the dreams themselves but how to interpret the circumstances in which they arise and to which they relate. Just as Lucan’s poetic Caesar, in confronting Roma, also confronted the pivotal historical moment at the Rubicon, his Pompey faces his figurative demons in the visage of Julia, who casts in his face his decline from past successes, the morality of his remarriage to Cornelia and breaking the bond with Caesar, his role in the civil war, and his morbid fate at the end of it. Nor is the historical engagement Pompey’s alone; Julia, given a voice, makes arguments, albeit deceitful, on her own behalf. Both messenger and dreamer take active part in the process of historical criticism.

Finally, the difference between Pompey and Caesar’s responses is important and worth consideration. Julia’s speech suggests that she has come to haunt Pompey on Caesar’s behalf, as if the two are working in tandem against him (3.27: *sed teneat Caesarque dies et Iulia noctes*). When Julia invades Pompey’s dreams, it is as if Caesar himself has invaded his dreams. The civil war has moved beyond the setting of the Roman world and entered the battlefield of the subconscious. In Book 1, Caesar exerted and displayed his mastery over the dream apparatus, disarming Roma’s command and interjecting his own interpretation. This involved seemingly intentional misapprehension of Roma’s words and a disingenuous style of argumentation. Yet as the seemingly ever-present phantasmagoria of power, ultimate victor in the civil war and author of its history, Caesar’s interpretation of the Rubicon wins out despite what are obviously enough to Lucan its logical shortcomings. Pompey has refused to play this game; rather than reinterpret his dream, he denies any possibility of its pertinence or legitimacy. He sees how the game is

⁸² Chiu (2010) 343.

played: Julia's blurring the line between truth and fiction furnished an example not unlike Caesar's. Yet Pompey's wholesale rejection of dreams yields Caesar another victory, for he misses an opportunity to prove himself a critical reader of his own history and to take command of his own fate. By refusing to engage Julia's message, he allows it to stand. In much the same way he will allow himself to be beguiled by pleasant, false dreams before the battle of Pharsalus, which, too, he will receive uncritically.

III: Pompey in the Theater (7.7–27)

Pompey's second and final dream, like the other dreams in the *Pharsalia*, signals a pivotal moment in the war and the poem, and serves to flesh out Pompey's character. The dream is both prospective, combining with Caesar's final dream to bookend the battle of Pharsalus itself, and retrospective, looking back to the moment of his first dream when he left Italy for good. By recalling and encapsulating Pompey's decline and eventual defeat, this second dream sets the stage for Caesar's victory, furnishing another context in which the disparity in their respective fortunes can be articulated. Again, it is helpful to point out that the selective use of Lucan's dreams imbues them with narratological, characterological, and thematic significance. Pompey's pre-Pharsalus dream, set at the beginning of Book 7 just as his first dream began Book 3, marks a historical point of no return and emphasizes this theme by its reference to the similarly poignant dream of Julia. His dreams are a cruel reminder of the Rome he has left behind, to which he can return only in his dreams, and which, by battle's end, he will yield to Caesar. It is also at this moment that Lucan as poet-narrator is most explicit about the process of dream interpretation, interjecting to offer possible origins and explanations for Pompey's dream while the leader sleeps. As Lucan lays bare the subjective and opaque nature of literary dreams, he makes an implicit argument against their capacity to provide sufficient impetus for literary action. As a result, they seem only to supply fodder for numerous arbitrary, mutually exclusive interpretations. Paradoxically, however, this makes them indispensable as opportunities for readers' individual engagement with history.

Book 7 opens with a somber scene on the morning of the battle of Pharsalus, as the Sun rises "slower than eternal law commanded" and tries in vain to hide its light lest morning come and

bring about the day of Pompey's defeat.⁸³ While night endures, however, we are introduced to the world of Pompey's dream with a brief yet forceful transition, "But night, the last part of life's happiness for Magnus, deceived his anxious sleep with a deceptive vision" (7–8: *at nox felicis Magno pars ultima vitae / sollicitos vana deceptit imagine somnos*). The scene is set temporally with *nox* contrasting with the rising sun of lines 1–6 and keying the audience in to the setting of sleep and dreams. The *vana imago* here recalls Pompey's own ruminations over his dream of Julia in Book 3 (3.38: *et 'quid' ait 'vani terremur imagine visus?'*) and indicates both that it is a dream that engages him and that its nature is inherently deceptive. While that vision was *vana* because Pompey was desperate not to believe it, this image is *vana* because it offers a false picture of reality.⁸⁴ Yet this deception, unlike Julia's, is a pleasant one, as night, and the deceptive dreams it provides, are now the only source of joy left in Pompey's life. Line 8, a silver line—not an ancient term but not therefore insignificant—reflects a sort of false order within chaos. The chiasmic arrangement punctuated by a verb contrasts meaning with form, a silver lining offered by Pompey's unconscious state as a balm for his worldly anxieties.

The following lines delve into the dream content, manifesting a world that is spatially, temporally, and psychologically distant (9–12):

nam Pompeiani visus sibi sede theatri
 innumeram effigiem Romanae cernere plebis
 attollique suum laetis ad sidera nomen
 vocibus et plausu cuneos certare sonantes.

He dreamt that he saw an innumerable phantom of the Roman plebs from a seat in the Theater of Pompey, that his name was being extolled to the stars by joyous voices, and that resounding sections vied in applause.

⁸³ *BC* 7.1–6: *segnior, Oceano quam lex aeterna uocabat, / luctificus Titan numquam magis aethera contra / egit equos cursumque polo rapiente retorsit, / defectusque pati uoluit raptaeque labores / lucis, et attraxit nubes, non pabula flammis / sed ne Thessalico purus luceret in orbe.*

⁸⁴ Cf. Penwill (2009) 85.

In his dreams, Pompey finds himself returned to that Rome and Italy he left for good at the beginning of Book 3. Lucan will later comment on the significance of this as the only avenue of return open to him. Yet Pompey's dream casts his self-image not in the present or into the future, but back into the past when he was still a *iuuenis* and *eques*, celebrating the defeat of Sertorius, his "first" triumph.⁸⁵ This tendency of Pompey's to live (and to dream) in the past and rest on his laurels hearkens back to his characterization at 1.129–35, where he is said to be *longo togae tranquillior usu, a famae petitor, and a magni nominis umbra*. His dream here in Book 7 "both symbolizes and terminates the passive years in which Pompey, relying on his past successes, let slip the opportunity to lead the Republic to a better destiny."⁸⁶ Just as Pompey's dreams fail to create novel, even fictitious achievements (but do fictionalize real achievements), he fails to achieve a new success in a crucial moment at the battle of Pharsalus. Caesar, in providing the impetus for Pompey's return to action, indirectly gives rise to Pompey's dream wherein past triumph is replayed as a substitution for real triumph in the battle to come. The republic's decline is mirrored in Pompey's skewed priorities in the dream world, as his pleasure at the applause of the Roman people and approval of the senate (7.18: *plaudente senatu*) is motivated not merely by his sense of duty and *pietas* but also a self-serving feeling of emotional satisfaction.⁸⁷ Compare the dream of Julia, nominally arising from an external source, of which guilt was among the intended emotive responses. Here, as Pompey retreats into the world of nocturnal fantasy, an echo chamber of positive reinforcement and happy memories, it seems plausible that this dream

⁸⁵ 7.13–19: *qualis erat populi facies clamorque fauentis / olim, cum iuuenis primique aetate triumphis, / post domitas gentes quas torrens ambit Hiberus / et quaecumque fugax Sertorius inpulit arma, / Vespere pacato, pura uenerabilis aequae / quam currus ornante toga, plaudente senatu / sedit adhuc Romanus eques.*

⁸⁶ Morford (1967) 81.

⁸⁷ Coffee (2011) 422. He goes on to say that Pompey's *fides* and *pietas* liken him to Vergil's Aeneas, "But if Aeneas was identified with the rise of Rome, Pompey represents the obsolescence of Rome's republican values. Aeneas' faithful *pietas* may go significantly unrewarded: Pompey's proves a liability, leading to his ruin and that of the republican cause" (423). Cf. Ahl (1976) 181.

originates from within Pompey's own subconscious in an act of willful self-deception (a possibility to which I shall return). Like Julia's claims and accusations, the key details of Pompey's dream are historically inaccurate: Pompey's triumph over Sertorius was in fact his *second* triumph, on which occasion Pompey's theater was not yet constructed.⁸⁸ Factual infelicity is a mainstay of Lucan's dreams, malevolent and benevolent alike.

Like Caesar's vision of Roma in Book 1, this dream has analogues in the writings of the historians.⁸⁹ Appian records simply that Pompey dreamt that he had dedicated an altar to Venus Victrix, with no mention of his theater.⁹⁰ Julius Obsequens, conversely, mentions applause in the theater, but no altar.⁹¹ Plutarch's version is fuller and closer to that present in Lucan.⁹² He writes, "That night Pompey dreamt that the people clapped as he entered his theater, and that he was outfitting the temple of Venus Victrix with many spoils. In some respects the dream emboldened him, in others troubled him, fearing lest reputation and renown come from him to the race of Caesar through Aphrodite: and certain panicked uproars rushed about and roused him."⁹³ Like Lucan, Plutarch opens the dream up to interpretive possibilities, with the added wrinkle of the presence of Venus and her connection to the *gens Iulia*. Pompey seems to acknowledge the dream's ambiguity: his decoration of Venus' altar might indicate that he will gain glory for

⁸⁸ Penwill (2009) 84n12. Penwill likewise notes that this dream and that featuring Julia constitute a doublet, 85–7.

⁸⁹ Pichon (1912) 71 is useful on this passage.

⁹⁰ Appian, *BC* 2.10.68: περιγεγράφτων δ' αὐτὸν τῶν φίλων, ὄναρ ἔφασκεν ἄρτι νεῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ καθιεροῦν Ἀφροδίτῃ νικηφόρῳ.

⁹¹ Obseq. 65a: *ipse Pompeius pridie pugnae diem visus in theatro suo ingenti plausu excipi*.

Obsequens' work on prodigies is based on Livy. See Schmidt (1968).

⁹² As with the Roma vision, the historians cited postdate Lucan. For a survey of Lucan's historical sources, see Pichon (1912). As is suggested by Lucan dipping into multiple sources, the historical tradition surrounding specific dreams takes the form of a back-and-forth, multivalent dialogue with no version emerging as canon.

⁹³ *Pomp.* 68.2: τῆς δὲ νυκτὸς ἔδοξε κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους Πομπηίου εἰς τὸ θέατρον εἰσιόντος αὐτὸν κροτεῖν τὸν δῆμον, αὐτὸς δὲ κοσμεῖν ἱερὸν Ἀφροδίτης νικηφόρου πολλοῖς λαφύροις. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐθάρρει, τὰ δὲ ὑπέθραττεν αὐτὸν ἡ ὄψις, δεδοικότα μὴ τῷ γένει τῷ Καίσαρος εἰς Ἀφροδίτην ἀνήκοντι δόξα καὶ λαμπρότης ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γένηται: καὶ πανικοί τινες θόρυβοι διάττοντες ἐξάνεστησαν αὐτόν.

Cf. *Caes.* 42, of which *Pompey* 68.2 is the more complete account: ἐδόκει γὰρ ἑαυτὸν ὄραν ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ κροτούμενον ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων [...].

himself through victory, or that, through her, he has gained glory for Caesar by his defeat. Lucan does not include this aspect of the dream, focusing instead on the people's applause and adulation, which stylistically complements the character of Pompey as the poem has constructed him.

Yet Pompey's awakening to the sound of commotion in the camp seems to have an analogue in the *Pharsalia*, as Lucan implores the watchmen not to wake him (7.24–5: *ne rumpite somnos, / castrorum vigiles, nullas tuba verberet aures*). Florus' version of the dream zeroes in on the crowd response more than any other aspect, telling that "In a dream, Pompey himself was surrounded by his own theater's applause, which sounded like the sorrowful beating of breasts. And he was spotted at his headquarters early in the morning wearing a grey cloak: a bad omen."⁹⁴ Like the *Pharsalia*, Florus' account of Pompey's dream provides a context in which theater applause can have a negative connotation. Instead of exemplifying a past from which Pompey cannot escape, here the audience's applause is conflated immediately with the sound of lamentation. This theme arises in context of Pompey's dream in the *Pharsalia* as the narrator looks ahead to a time when the Roman populace will mourn his death. For now, it is important to note that the variant historical accounts of Pompey's dream on the eve of the battle of Pharsalus possess and utilize their different interpretive and storytelling options to much the same end. Each detail is a kernel of revelatory possibility upon which the historical facts may shed light, but which in the moment do no more than reinforce the dreamer's uncertainty.⁹⁵ In the wake of

⁹⁴ Flor. *Epit.* 2.13.45: *dux ipse in nocturna imagine plausu theatri sui in modum planctus circumsonatus et mane cum pullo pallio — nefas — apud principia conspectus est.*

Florus' *Epitome* relies primarily on Livy, but he can be seen to differ from Livy's account in places. He draws from Sallust's and Caesar's histories as well as Vergil's and Lucan's poetic styles. See den Boer (1972) 1–18, Goodyear (1982) 664–6, and Bessone (1993).

⁹⁵ As the interpretive onus shifts from internal reader to external reader, Pelling (1997) notes, the readers, who once had no doubt as to the dreams' significance, now are uncertain as to how the dreams ought to be interpreted, and as a result are "cast back into the events to feel something of the perplexity which afflicted the original actors" (210).

Pompey's dream, Lucan as author and narrator makes clear the extent to which his own dreams function in this capacity.

Lucan follows up the description of Pompey in the theater with his most explicit commentary on dream interpretation and its variety of subjective, mutually exclusive options. He expresses interest in why this particular dream appeared to Pompey at this time (7.19–24):

...seu fine bonorum
anxia venturis ad tempora laeta refugit, 20
sive per ambages solitas contraria visis
vaticinata quies magni tulit omina planctus,
seu vetito patrias ultra tibi cernere sedes
sic Romam Fortuna dedit.

Perhaps, at prosperity's end, his rest, anxious about what was to come, took refuge in happy times, or by its customary riddles prophesied an outcome opposite to his vision and bore the omens of a great lamentation, or, because it was forbidden for you to see your paternal homeland again, Fortune gave Rome to you this way.

Here are three interpretive possibilities, punctuated by *seu...sive...seu* in a manner that recalls Pompey's own attempts at rationalizing the appearance of Julia earlier in the poem.⁹⁶ Stearns calls Lucan's own authorial interjection here "rationalistic,"⁹⁷ but the difference in perspective, internal versus external, is crucial. While Pompey was keen to see his vision of Julia as a *vana imago* and thereby disabuse himself of any illusion of its veracity, the "outside-looking-in" perspective produces the same effect for the reader.⁹⁸ When pulled out of the dream, whether by Pompey's analysis or the narrator's, and onto a level of second-order engagement with it, the reader finds meaning in Pompey's dreams that the man himself misses. The passage has been

⁹⁶ 3.39–40: *aut nihil est sensus animis a morte relictum / aut mors ipsa nihil*. Compare also the following lines in which the setting sun is compared to a gibbous moon, either waxing (42: *seu plena futura est*) or waning (43: *seu iam plena fuit*).

⁹⁷ Stearns (1927) 35.

⁹⁸ Ormand (2010) sees this distinction and reads Pompey as a narrator of his own life, with a "sharp distinction between the external and internal narratees: while Pompey projects cheering crowds, we see that projection for what it is" (335).

seen as having “pathos as its primary aim.”⁹⁹ While this is among the most potent effects of the passage (and undeniably present, given the plaintive apostrophe *tibi* in line 23), the sorrow we are made to feel on Pompey’s behalf is itself an indicator of what we know about his fate that he, despite the benefit of his dreams, does not. For Lucan, each dream is also an opportunity to analyze the dream apparatus both in his work and in literature more broadly, posing questions about their meaning for those who receive them, those who employ them, and those who read them.

The first option is that the dream is a flight of subconscious escapism: Pompey’s mind turned to happy memories as a way of avoiding the unhappiness produced by the present and in store in the future. This interpretation presupposes that the dream is ultimately self-authored. Following this, as has already been discussed, Pompey’s interaction with his own subconscious informs his established character, a man who is out of place in the present and more in tune with the past. Given his refusal to accept Julia’s message and its obfuscation of the truth, it is damning that Pompey’s dream would manufacture its own historical inaccuracies, especially in light of the dream’s prevalence in historical accounts of the civil war. This moment contributes to the multifaceted cultural memory of the war, but Pompey is not above accepting a *vana imago*, at least temporarily, if what it has to offer him is pleasant.

The problem is more complex than this, however. Memory and history meet at a crossroads, the faultiness of one entailing an indictment of the other. As Pompey misremembers his own political and military career as he dreams, Lucan reconstructs history through the lens of Pompey looking back on it. Yet the task of historical engagement itself is problematized if we, the audience, with Lucan as a medium, must rely upon those embroiled in history to provide a

⁹⁹ Morford (1967) 76. The effect is also noted by Pelling (1997) 204.

clear picture of it, while even these figures get the facts of their own history wrong. Under these conditions, there exists no reliable metric by which to judge factual accuracy. It is just this paradox that Lucan seeks to drive home by lacing his epic's dreams with historical infelicities. In so doing, he clears the way for his poem to provide a revisionist history of the civil war and end of the republic, but makes it so that his reading of history cannot stand above other readings by virtue of being more stably grounded in historical fact. By his own admission, such footing is beyond his reach.

The second alternative is that the dream is effecting "prophecy by opposites," which is to say that a pleasant dream really forebodes an undesirable future. It has been noted that "dreaming by contraries is not frequently mentioned in classical literature."¹⁰⁰ Still, Lucan is not introducing a novel concept here. Echoes of the idea of dreaming by contraries are present in the historians' accounts of this same dream, where applause signified mourning and dedication of spoils to Venus Victrix paradoxically meant Pompey's defeat. If anything, dreaming by contraries is more the rule than an exception in the *Pharsalia*, as Roma's warning sent Caesar hurtling headlong into Italy, Julia's makes Pompey more eager for war, and, after the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar's horrific dreams will leave him with an air of nonchalance. One can see, then, how Lucan's use of dreams "explode[s] one of the most venerable of the epic devices."¹⁰¹ The array of viable interpretive options, by Lucan's own admission, includes the literal message itself, its opposite, and everything in between (recall how Julia, despite her lies about Pompey's triumphs and the period of delay before his next marriage, nevertheless accurately predicted his death). The

¹⁰⁰ Stearns (1927) 35n88. Other classical examples include Pliny *Epist.* 1.18 (*refert tamen, eventura soleas an contraria somniare*) and Apul. *Met.* 4.27 (*bono animo esto, mi erilis, nec vanis somniorum figmentis terreare. nam praeter quod diurnae quietis imagines falsae perhibentur, tunc etiam nocturnae visiones contrarios eventus nonnumquam pronuntiant*).

¹⁰¹ Dick (1963) 46.

recipient may choose to accept the dream as is, as Pompey does here, or impose his own reading of it, as does Caesar. Given the two men under consideration, one's approach to dream interpretation is a question of character.

The third and final possibility Lucan provides is the first to bring in an explicit external source for the dream; he proposes that Fortuna allowed Pompey to return to Rome in a dream in lieu of his ever physically returning there.¹⁰² In considering Pompey's worthiness, this line seems to imply that "a return to Rome was somehow due to him," that Pompey, though far from blameless in the grand scheme, nevertheless deserved better than he received.¹⁰³ The mention of Fortuna at this juncture (24: *sic Romam Fortuna dedit*) reasserts Fortuna's takeover of the role traditionally held by the more established gods in epic but also affirms the ambiguity that this creates for the interpretation of dreams and visions. This point brings to mind the relationship of Roma and Fortuna with the two heroes and inevitably recalls for the reader the scene of Caesar at the Rubicon in Book 1. Where Caesar takes a hostile and adversative stance against Rome but meets with success by following Fortune, Pompey, still beloved by Rome and its people, finds his mission at odds with his destiny. Though well-meaning in a cosmic sense, Pompey's dream is still at variance with reality if understood this way. It is indicative of Lucan's own pro-republican leanings that the subjective, unreal world of dreams privileges Pompey's wholesome relationship with the city of Rome and undermines Caesar's (an idea I shall pick up again in the next chapter).

The following twenty lines serve to reinforce the relationship between Roma and Pompey, casting the two as lovers.¹⁰⁴ Ahl has opined that this excursus ought to be taken as as much a part

¹⁰² In some sense, these variant interpretive possibilities are a survey of the historiographical use of dreams, as Pelling (1997) 209–10 argues, because external dreams reveal "something objective about the cosmos," while internal dreams reveal a preoccupation with characters' psychologies.

¹⁰³ Rose (1958) 81. He continues, "It was long held that if something was to happen, it might suffice if it happened in a dream," and goes on to cite *Oedipus Tyrannus* 980–2.

¹⁰⁴ Morford (1967) 82: In contrast to Caesar and Roma, "Here Pompey and Rome are presented in a romantic light: their relationship can only be described by the vocabulary of love (e.g. 32)." Dinter (2012) 30: "The two are

of the dream as the dream proper, given that it forms a natural coda, presenting us with “an unfulfilled vision of [Lucan’s] own.”¹⁰⁵ As such, it provides an example of Lucan, as a student and critic of history, using dreams to engage with the past. The Romans who cheered in Pompey’s dream (as distinct from the Romans of history) find their jubilation turned to sorrow in the fullness of time.¹⁰⁶ The reality-bending power of these dreams, deceptive and false though they may be, comes to the fore here, as they create a joy and openness that once existed but have since been choked by civil war.¹⁰⁷ The marriage of past and present in a single literary moment forces one to consider cultural memory, its development, and its alteration. As suggested by the resonances with the historical accounts, Pompey’s dream both coincides with the particular qualities of the man himself and serves as commentary on a pivotal historical moment.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of Lucan’s intent, Pompey’s dream is embroiled in and by all accounts manifestly concerned with the cultural memory of the war.

As the events of the *Pharsalia* are all part of Rome’s past, the poem constitutes Lucan’s engagement with it as such. Dreams provide him and his audience a tool (and opportunity) for historical investigation, not only for individual and subjective analysis of the events, but also for exploring the minds of Caesar and Pompey as historical figures. Though dead, Pompey is brought back to life by Lucan’s poem, and it is in this capacity that he can revive and transmit memory as

depicted as a loving yet doomed couple...Rome’s grief is then transferred onto and multiplied by the people of Rome (7.37–44): her inhabitants stand for the city.”

¹⁰⁵ Ahl (1976) 180.

¹⁰⁶ 7.43–4: *o miseri, quorum gemitus texere dolorem, / qui te non pleno partier planxere teatro.*

¹⁰⁷ In Ahl’s eloquent words, “...it is in these two false visions that dream merges with reality. When Pompey lived, Rome could openly express its joy. When Pompey dies, it cannot even give vent to its grief” (182).

¹⁰⁸ *Contra* Harrison (2009) 15, “...when Lucan gives Pompey a dream, he is using that dream for his own narratological purposes and does not intend it to become part of the cultural memory of the war, only to add to the artistry of his poem.”

well.¹⁰⁹ Epic joins past and present together. Working from the eve of Pharsalus as a starting point, Lucan uses Pompey's past, when he received applause in his theater, as a lens by which to understand a future in which Pompey and the republic he represented no longer exist. For Lucan, that future is the present, and it is only by deconstructing Pompey's role in shaping the past that he can come to understand it. Perhaps Pompey's understanding of his own past was too selective to appreciate the full picture of the world to come, but Lucan's critical eye makes it clear to his audience how the events, like falling dominoes, unfolded the way they did. In so doing, he performs the task of a historian, making the past real for his contemporary audience and providing a glimpse (albeit through a glass, darkly) of the republic as it was.¹¹⁰ His loyalty to and longing for the republic come out vividly in the process, as he combines intense poetic emotion with historical engagement. This is as much for Lucan's contemporaries' intellectual benefit as his own. In looking at the *Pharsalia* in this light, I cannot help but recall the probing rhetorical question Tacitus posed when considering the final years of Augustus' reign (*Ann.* 1.3.7): *quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam vidisset?* Lucan was not alive to see the republic, but this does not prevent his lamenting its loss, and in fact makes his monumentalization of its death all the more necessary.

Later in the poem, in Book 8, the defeated Pompey reunites with Cornelia on Lesbos.

Prior to their encounter, Cornelia is seen dreading news of his fate, as "forebodings stir up sad

¹⁰⁹ Thorne (2011) 375: "Yet it is true that, unlike civil war's headless corpses, in this case even an *umbra* has the potential to convey a preserved identity, and with identity comes memory and the potential of continued life...it is precisely when Pompey dies that his *umbra* will take on new life and reenergize his ability to transmit memory." See also Gowing (2005) 87: "...as Lucan observed earlier in Book 1 (1.457-8), death is merely the halfway point in life. Memory conjoins the two, and memory alone has the capacity to counteract the annihilating effects of death . . . or of civil war."

¹¹⁰ Cf. Thorne (2011) 367: "The great anxiety that seems to drive Lucan's epic of commemoration is that his fellow Romans have mostly forgotten what those civil wars really meant. This epic portrays the answer in overtly funereal terms: the civil wars meant nothing less than the death of *Libertas* and of Old Rome, the Rome that existed before the rise of the Principate and which, despite its failings, was still free."

cares, and her sleep is vexed by anxious fear. Every night contains Pharsalia” (8.43–5: *tristes praesagia curas / exagitant, trepida quatitur formidine somnus, / Thessaliam nox omnis habet*).

Though intentionally kept at a remove from the reality of Pharsalus, Cornelia nevertheless sees the battle in her dreams. Its outcome is figured in her *tristes curae* and *trepida formido* and her fears are confirmed in Pompey’s pallid appearance. As Richard Bruère has noted, these lines recall Morpheus’ appearance to Alcyone as Ceyx at Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 11.651–70.¹¹¹ By reading this intertext into the passage, the Pompey Cornelia encounters is functionally and contextually obsolete, as he admits (8.84–5: *vivit post proelia Magnus / sed fortuna perit*).

In her lamenting speech, Cornelia expresses a wish that she had married Caesar and so brought misfortune to him instead and addresses Julia directly (102–5):

...ubicumque iaces civilibus armis
nostros ultra toros, ades huc atque exige poenas,
Iulia crudelis, placataque paelice caesa
Magno parce tuo. 105

“Wherever you lie, you who have taken revenge on our marriage by civil arms, come here and exact the penalty, cruel Julia, and once you have killed your rival and taken Magnus back, spare him.”

Here, the rivalry between Cornelia and Julia is renewed. As though in direct conversation with Julia’s ghost from earlier in the poem, Cornelia acknowledges her claim upon Pompey, echoing the term *paelex* from 3.23 (*innupsit tepido paelex Cornelia busto*). She willingly disassociates herself from him on the grounds that their marriage has brought him misfortune, and asks to bear the brunt of Julia’s vindictiveness on his behalf. The tables have turned, and Cornelia, who symbolized Pompey’s success, now takes the blame for his turn in fortune, while Julia, who falsely laid claim to his military victories (see Ch. 2, above), now will make good on her promise that he would die.

¹¹¹ Bruère (1951) 226.

Accordingly, in a sort of perverse reversal of fortune, Cornelia looks helplessly on as Pompey is torn from her forever,¹¹² but Julia ontologically reunites with her former husband in death.

Book 7 and the battle itself are pivotal in the course of the poem and the war. Pompey's dream at the opening of the book ties together all of the dreams in the *Pharsalia*. By virtue of his friendly relationship with Rome, Pompey recalls by contrast the first vision in which Caesar interacted with Roma directly and defied her wishes. Of course, Pompey's second dream must call to mind his first as well, thematically related by presence and non-presence in Rome, loving relationships, and blurred lines of truth. Finally, the dream looks ahead to Caesar's final dream, which occurs later in the book, after the battle has concluded, framing the event. If Pompey's dream looked back to an intact republican Rome, Caesar's represents the price to be paid in the republic's undoing.

¹¹² 8.589–92: *haec ubi frustra / effudit, prima pendet tamen anxia puppe, / attonitoque metu nec quoquam avertere visus / nec Magnum spectare potest*. His death follows some 20 lines later.

IV: Caesar's Nightmare (7.771–96)

If I seem to elide the battle of Pharsalus itself by jumping to Caesar's dream at the end of it, I do so no more than Lucan himself did. The poet confesses that it was clear that this battle and historical moment “would fix (*conderet*) the fate of human affairs for all time and would raise the question of what Rome was.”¹¹³ In so doing, he evokes, like the *Aeneid*, the theme of Roman cultural and historical foundation. Yet as he introduces the day of destruction with speeches by Pompey, Caesar, and Cicero (who was not in fact present at Pharsalus—an inclusion of ideologically poignant poetic invention),¹¹⁴ prodigies, the marshalling of forces on either side, and further speeches, the reader gets the sense that Lucan, rather than merely building up the tension for the climactic moment, is in fact *delaying* his being forced to tell of it.¹¹⁵ When he finally reaches the critical point (550 lines in), Lucan refuses to narrate any further. “Shun this part of the war, o mind of mine,” he writes, “and leave it to the shadows. Let no age learn from me, prophet (*vates*) of such great evils, how much license is granted to civil wars. Ah, rather let my tears be wasted, my complaints be wasted. Whatever you did in this battle, Rome, I shall be silent about it.”¹¹⁶ In so doing, Lucan “abnegates his epic task” of “perpetuating and commemorating glory as do Homer and Vergil.”¹¹⁷ By Lucan's day there is no need for the perpetuation and commemoration of the battle's outcome, as the course of history and the legacy

¹¹³ 7.131–3: *advenisse diem qui fatum rebus in aevum / conderet humanis, et quaeri, Roma quid esset / illo Marte, palam est.*

¹¹⁴ On these speeches and the way they engage one another in argument and constitute an ongoing political debate, see Rolim de Moura (2010).

¹¹⁵ Feeney (1991) 277; Grimal (1980); Bramble (1982) 540; Henderson (1988) 133–4, 136.

¹¹⁶ 552–6: *hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinque, / nullaque tantorum discat me vate malorum, / quam multum bellis liceat civilibus, aetas. / a potius pereant lacrimae pereantque querellae: / quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, tacebo.*

¹¹⁷ Feeney (1991) 277.

of empire accomplish this already. It is this legacy that inspires his poetic rage yet holds him duty-bound to relate it.

He goes on to justify the decision to skip the narration of the battle proper, claiming that “it is a shameful thing” (617: *pudet*) to weep for and recount individual deaths when the loss in this war is universal.¹¹⁸ The evil at which Lucan so scornfully shudders, embodied in Caesar, set loose and empowered in the civil war, and vindicated at Pharsalus, lives on in Nero, his contemporary Caesar.¹¹⁹ For Lucan, the grief of Pharsalus is still too near, and the intervening years, in which the evil he abhors has had time to take root and flourish, cannot have dulled the pain. As poet, his task is to make the past present again, renewing the grief of the loss of what was once held dear. Lucan’s clear investment in his project and in its subject explain why he feels so strongly the emotions he stirs up. What solace there is (if any) in the wake of Caesar’s victory and the defeat of *libertas* and the republic is to be found in the final dream Lucan attributes to Caesar, wherein both author and leader engage with this climactic historical moment.

Whether thematizing their relationship with Rome, with each other, or with fate in the war, dreams in the *Pharsalia* juxtapose the characters of Caesar and Pompey and thereby emphasize their differences. With Pompey’s defeat comes his near-removal from the poem, as those who continue to resist Caesar fight no longer for Pompey but for *Libertas*.¹²⁰ It is by comparison with Pompey and his dream interactions that we can measure the extent and

¹¹⁸ 617–46. He claims, e.g., *non istas habuit pugnae Pharsalia partes / quas aliae clades: illic per fata uirorum, / per populos hic Roma perit; quod militis illic, / mors hic gentis erat* (632–5).

¹¹⁹ An important point to which I shall return. Cf. Johnson (1987) 122: “Caesar, both Nero and Julius, all the Caesars: this is the *donnée* of the poem, the source of its wit, its virulence, its despair. *Sed par quod semper habemus / libertas et Caesar erit* (7.695–96). The never-ending wrong. Freedom destroyed again and again by fear disguised as power.”

¹²⁰ 694–6: *non iam Pompei nomen populare per orbem / nec studium belli, sed par quod semper habemus / libertas et Caesar erit*. Cf. Thorne (2011) 377–8, who connects these lines (and others throughout) to the struggle over memory of the past.

completeness of Caesar's victory.¹²¹ As I will argue, the presentation of Caesar's nightmare and the resultant analytic response are consistent with the previous dreams and take the same premises to a logical conclusion: mastery over one's dreams corresponds to mastery over the waking world. In Pompey's dream, the general is cast as a passive observer who yields even the labor of interpreting what he sees to an external narrator. Caesar, though also a viewer, asserts his dream agency by amassing the visions of his soldiers unto himself and demonstrating through his subsequent actions that, as victor, the contents of his dreams hold no sway over him.

While Pompey's dream "rewarded" him for being a hero of the state despite (or perhaps because of) the inevitability of his defeat, Caesar's dream is an argument for the latter's guilt. In my view, given the malleability of dreams in this epic, the narrator's injection of a moralizing reading is inextricable from the dream itself (as it was with Pompey's dream of the theater), and this subjectivity is precisely the point. As seen in Pompey's interaction with Julia, guilt (both personal and historical) is a major theme of the epic, and Book 7 early on establishes guilt as a consideration in the outcome of the battle. Caesar claims that "this battle will make the loser guilty" (7.260: *haec acies victum factura nocentem est*). We might compare his words at 1.203 (*ille erit ille nocens, qui me tibi fecerit hostem*), which reveal that guilt is long a concern of the man who is the most guilty. The narrator rebuts Caesar in an aside to Pompey, insisting that "to win was worse" (7.706: *vincere peius erat*) given that victory is measured in Roman blood.

¹²¹ Penwill (2009) 79n2 acknowledges but ultimately takes issue with the pairing of the two Pharsalus dreams, preferring to take the vision of Scaeva at the (extant) end of the poem in tandem with the Roma vision at the beginning. He argues that "the bad dreams of Caesar and his troops after Pharsalus lack the specificity of either of Pompey's dreams or Caesar's visions, and are simply what the narrator 'thinks' (*putem*, 768) should have afflicted the minds of those who perpetrated the horrors narrated at 7.557–630."

depth and breadth of their crimes but also clashes with the broad categories of the dead listed (old men, young men), as if the death of an entire civilization were on each man's conscience.

The list culminates in the man who is truly responsible, who sees them all.¹²⁴ They have killed *Roman citizens*, whom Lucan takes to be their very fathers and brothers (whether symbolically, to heighten the pathos, or as a concrete example of betrayed solidarity). Neither young nor old are spared. The transgression is thus both civil and familial; Romans kill fellow Romans, and in so doing inevitably commit fratricide and patricide. In this way, the conflict between Caesar and Pompey on the individual level, father- and son-in-law, plays out on the macroscale on the battlefield. And as the opposing factions meet, they constitute Roman society itself in microcosm. Lucan's opening lines, *populumque potentem / in sua victrici conversum viscera dextra*, have finally come to fruition.¹²⁵ Though Caesar receives these dreams as punishment, there remains the sense that the man is now all but untouchable.

Once Caesar is mentioned at the culmination of the nightmares his entire army witnesses, Lucan magnifies his guilt by invoking other transgressive figures. He, like Orestes, sees the faces of the Furies and, like Pentheus and Agave, suffers profound mental strife.¹²⁶ The comparisons to Pentheus and Orestes recall Dido from *Aeneid* 4.¹²⁷ It is difficult to avoid reading parallels between the two figures. Dido is a transgressive figure in her own right, her lovesickness providing a foil to the dutiful Aeneas,¹²⁸ and her parting curse, marking her and Carthage as

¹²⁴ Hardie (1993) 42 suggests that *omnes in Caesare manes* is indicative of Caesar's "imperialist expansiveness," an interesting if not entirely convincing way of reading of the scene.

¹²⁵ 1.2–3.

¹²⁶ 7.777–80: *haud alios nondum Scythica purgatus in ara / Eumenidum vidit voltus Pelopeus Orestes, / nec magis attonitos animi sensere tumultus, / cum fureret, Pentheus aut, cum desisset, Agave*. Orestes, however, is ultimately absolved. Caesar may be forgiven by history (which he has a part in writing), but will not be forgiven by Lucan.

¹²⁷ *Aen.* 4.469–73: *Eumenidum veluti demens videt agmina Pentheus / et solem geminum et duplices se ostendere Thebas, / aut Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes, / armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris / cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae*. Cf. Penwill (2009) 79n2.

¹²⁸ On which point see, e.g., Starry West (1983).

eternal enemies of Rome, may in fact find unintended fulfillment in Caesar, who has taken up civil arms against his *patria*. To pursue this point, Lucan later places Caesar alongside Hannibal as an enemy of Rome.¹²⁹ Though these are damning comparisons, Caesar nevertheless outstrips them all, for the next morning finds him not duly castigated nor in any way repentant, but holding true to the course of his impiety.¹³⁰ What function, then, does this dream fulfill for our reading of Caesar? It is not “unessential” and merely securing “atmosphere” for the battle’s aftermath, as Stearns describes it,¹³¹ nor does it seem to qualify as an “anxiety dream,” an indication and product of a guilty conscience, as Harrison argues,¹³² for, in Caesar’s case, it is a profound *lack* of anxiety or guilt that characterizes his response to these images.¹³³

Demonstrating his peace of mind the next morning, “a place is prepared for his feast so that he might survey the faces and features of those lying dead” (793–4: *epulisque paratur / ille locus, vultus ex quo faciesque iacentum / agnoscat*). So densely packed is the landscape that Caesar can take joy in the fact that he cannot even see the ground (794: *iuvat Emathiam non cernere terram*), and “he finds proof in [the soldiers’] blood that Fortune and the gods above are his” (796: *fortunam superosque suos in sanguine cernit*). As with the appearance of Roma in Book 1, here there is a striking disconnect between the content of the vision and Caesar’s response, between the anticipated (and hoped-for) outcome and the actual outcome. Though compared, directly or indirectly, to Orestes, Pentheus, Agave, Dido, and Hannibal, humbled

¹²⁹ BC 7.799–801: *...non illum Poenus humator / consulis et Libyca succensae lampade Cannae / conpellunt hominum ritus ut servet in hoste*. Cf. Ahl (1976) 44n50.

¹³⁰ Bernstein (2011) 274: “The consequence of such madness, however, is not the movement toward expiation or punishment found in the tragic narratives. Rather, the result is the continuation of such violence: *furor* is the primary motivator both of Caesar and civil war.”

¹³¹ Stearns (1927) 50.

¹³² Harrison (2009) 213.

¹³³ As Penwill (2009) 79n2 notes in the comparison with Dido, “whereas Dido’s mental anguish is existential and incurable, Caesar’s (such as it is) dissipates with the coming of dawn as he sits down to enjoy his breakfast while contemplating the grim relics of the previous day’s carnage (792–4).”

transgressors all, Caesar nevertheless persists in the commission of *nefas* despite coming face to face with his own folly. His dining on the battlefield, a veritable landscape of corpses, may recall Erictho in Book 6, who scans battlefields for the choicest morsels.¹³⁴ In a further act of impiety, Caesar denies burial to Pompey's slain soldiers, who, as the preceding lines revealed, are corporeal proof of his victory.¹³⁵ Yet in a sense, the fact that their corpses are above ground and covering it constitutes a sort of inverse burial.¹³⁶ By playing games with readers' expectations, Lucan shows that Caesar's perversion of funerary ritual is part of a Pharsalian zeitgeist that will prove enduring.

Throughout, I have noted that the persistent failure of dreams and visions to make any appreciable impact on the course of events—on the course of history and the two leaders' actions within it—coincides with the jettisoning of divine forces from the narrative. Caesar's nonchalance in the face of dread horror and the dire Furies is the culmination of a character arc that began, albeit with some minor hesitation (1.193–4: *gressumque coercens / languor in extrema tenuit vestigia ripa*), with his refusal to be cowed by the personified Roma. From that point on, a void in the power structure of the universe was left for Caesar to fill. Pompey, as though not quite up to speed and still trapped in the old mode of thinking, finds himself still giving undue credence to his dreams, time and again deceived by a *vana imago* (7.8). Even in the wake of his defeat he “held that the gods were still worthy to be entrusted with prayers and chose them as a solace for his misfortune” (7.657–8: *sustinuit dignos etiamnunc credere votis / caelicolas voluitque sui solacia casus*). In a manner reminiscent of his “refuge in happier times”

¹³⁴ That this connection is hinted at is suggested by Ahl (1976) 213–4, who compares consuming corpses to dining among them (perhaps a sort of ocular consumption).

¹³⁵ 797–9: *ac, ne laeta furens scelerum spectacula perdat, / inuidet igne rogi miseris, caeloque nocenti / ingerit Emathiam*. Cf. Johnson (1987) 102: “Like Erictho, that other artist in death, Caesar rejoices in mutilated corpses and is loath to have his masterpiece ruined by funerals—reasonably enough, since it is the number of corpses and the sheer quantity of gore which betoken not only his triumph but also his unique luck, his *right* to be *the* survivor.”

¹³⁶ Joseph (2012) 148.

(7.20: *ad tempora laeta refugit*), Pompey fails to see that such measures are now made meaningless by Caesar.

In displacing, even surpassing the gods, Caesar becomes more than just a man; he comes to represent and symbolize a primal force, that of chaos and fear.¹³⁷ Johnson, the self-avowed “militant aesthete” (ix), expresses this somewhat nebulous idea clearly (110–11):

[The poem] evokes, suggests, points toward—it cannot represent without falling into the very illusion it is trying to lay bare—the “reality” of naked, aimless, self-destructive power, the will-to-power that exists for its own sake, which the splendid myths of rational power are designed to hide...Of these monsters, Caesar is the archetype in whom all the qualities necessary to the monster are perfectly realized, and it is therefore on him that Lucan lavishes his anger in its purest form.

As a critical reader of the past and careful observer of his own circumstances, Lucan cannot refrain from pointing to the primordial, the overarching theme present in individual kernels of history. Lucan’s Caesar makes no pretense at being the historical figure Caesar. He is not the Caesar of Plutarch and Suetonius who wistfully lamented *hoc voluerunt* in the wake of Pharsalus.¹³⁸ His omnipresence and the palpable pressure he exerts on the rest of the poem seem to make him more than human. Lucan could not impose the gods upon this state of affairs, because their defeat is made manifest in Caesar’s victory, for the gods “are no stronger than the city that reveres them.”¹³⁹ In addition, though nominally the divinely inspired *vates* of epic (7.553: *me vate*), he nevertheless lacks any prophetic certainty as to the gods’ motives.¹⁴⁰

At the culmination of his final dream, Caesar is pressed by “all the swords, either the ones Pharsalia saw or the day of vengeance would see the senate draw,” prefiguring his

¹³⁷ Cf. Johnson (1987) 110–2 on this point.

¹³⁸ Suet. *Div. Jul.* 30. Cf. Plut. *Caes.* 46: τοῦτο ἐβουλήθησαν.

¹³⁹ Johnson (1987) 106.

¹⁴⁰ Feeney (1991) 278.

assassination.¹⁴¹ By offering this interpretive choice (*aut...aut*), Lucan conflates the dreams he casts upon Caesar with Caesar's eventual demise. Currents of Caesar's assassination are present throughout Book 7, as Lucan points to Brutus among the ranks of the common soldiers and proclaims, "Let [Caesar] live and, that he may fall as Brutus' victim, let him reign" (7.596: *vivat et, ut Bruti procumbat victima, regnet*). Despite the leader's preeminence, Lucan sees in Caesar's victory the seeds of his downfall. The poet uses Caesar's dream as a tool to juxtapose historical antitheses. Just as his characters use their own dreams to reinterpret history and their roles in it, the author injects cosmic justice and retribution into an inherently unjust circumstance. Whereas Pompey's dream had to look backwards to a better time, the spotlight of Caesar's dream must turn from the present to the future to see him duly punished. In the end, this is only cold comfort, for "though Brutus may assassinate Caesar, the Roman people will not thereby regain their *Libertas* and will thus remain enslaved to the Caesars as the result of the defeat at Pharsalus."¹⁴² Lucan cannot ameliorate the defeat of the republic by recourse to a future moment when Caesar, the embodiment of the evil that destroyed it, will be slain. By that point, the evil will have transmigrated, become hereditary, and lived on to find its seat in Lucan's Nero.

¹⁴¹ 7.781–3: *hunc omnes gladii, quos aut Pharsalia vidit / aut ultrix visura dies stringente senatu, / illa nocte premunt.*

¹⁴² Bernstein (2011) 275.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I wish to begin by examining the scene at the start of Book 9, the flight of Pompey's soul. I select it because of its air of finality, placing a capstone on Pompey's death which is confirmed by the events of Book 7 (accomplished in Book 8). Yet it also has a prospective outlook, establishing Brutus and Cato as his successors. The scene is not quite a vision or a dream, but it thematically evokes the dream of Ennius and Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*.¹⁴³ After Pompey's death, in a scene reliant on Pythagorean metaphysics, his soul transmigrates and plants itself in Brutus and Cato. It leaps forth from the ashes "unable to contain so great a shade," surveys the heavens, "smiles at the mockery of his own corpse," and flies over the fields of Emathia (*Emathiae campos*) and Caesar's troops before placing itself "in the sanctified breast of Brutus and mind of unconquerable Cato as the avenger of crimes" (9.1–18). Pompey seems to transcend the limitations of space, time, and the physical plane, as he escapes the containment of his ashes and rises above—both literally and figuratively, with all the tones of philosophical contemplation implied—to "look down upon" the fields of battle, Caesar and all his troops, and even his own mortal shell.

By placing his soul (effectively himself) in Cato and Brutus, Pompey implicitly lives on through them. This version of an afterlife would seem to provide hope for Pompey and the republican cause; if Pompey can "outlive" his own death, the republic, too, may spring from its own ashes. Pompey's rebirth as *scelerum vindex* (17) sounds particularly promising and doubtless looks ahead to Caesar's assassination.¹⁴⁴ Yet such an optimistic reading of Pompey's

¹⁴³ On the theme of succession via metempsychosis in Homer's appearance to Ennius at *Annales* 6, see Aicher (1989).

¹⁴⁴ Cf. 7.781–3: *hunc omnes gladii, quos aut Pharsalia vidit / aut ultrix visura dies stringente senatu, / illa nocte premunt...*

transmigration is not without its shortcomings. Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* gives a similar view—famously in the form of a dream—of life after death. Rather than present another dream, Lucan imports one by way of allusion. Given the unreliability of Pompey's other dreams, the content of this dream, albeit on loan, can scarcely be relied upon.¹⁴⁵

It is at this, the moment of Caesar's victory, at which his lasting success becomes solidified, that we can turn our thoughts to Lucan's time. It was, after all, Nero rather than the Muses whom Lucan took as the inspirer of the *Pharsalia*.¹⁴⁶ Given Lucan's attitude towards tyranny and deep, nostalgic loyalty to the republic throughout, it can only be a touch of bitter, sardonic humor that Lucan professes, "Rome owes much to civil arms, since the deed was done for you!" (1.44–5: *multum Roma tamen debet civilibus armis, / quod tibi res acta est*).¹⁴⁷

To say that Nero inspired Lucan's poem and to say that (Julius) Caesar inspired Lucan's poem amount to the same claim. Caesar, the self-conscious will-to-power, outlives his own death and becomes solidified in a dynasty. Nero is Lucan's Caesar, and it is through him that the air (and heir) of Caesar lives on. Addressing Caesar directly, Lucan promises immortality for both of them through his poem (9.980–6):

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Earnshaw 283: "The very notion that this passage might offer genuine intelligence as to the nature of Pompey's eternality is undermined by its allusions to other philosophical narratives offering insight into life after death, most notably, perhaps, the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, where a literary dream setting provides a similar template for the vision of the heavens. As it was indicated that both of the previous dreams of Pompey were potentially false constructions of the text, an allusive relationship to another dream text should only serve to caution the reader as to the veracity of what is 'seen' here."

¹⁴⁶ 1.63–6: *sed mihi iam numen; nec, si te pectore vates / accipio, Cirrhaea velim secreta moventem / sollicitare deum Bacchumque avertere Nysa: / tu satis ad vires Romana in carmina dandas*. (But you are already a divinity to me; if I, the *vates*, receive you in my breast, I would not wish to incite the god who sets in motion the rites of Cirrha, nor to turn Bacchus from Nysa. You are enough to give strength to Roman poetry!)

The tonal conflict between the encomium to Nero at the beginning of the poem and Lucan's hostility towards Roman empire and Caesar's imposition of tyranny constitutes what Fantham (1992) has called "the biggest dilemma in considering the *De bello civili*" (13). O'Hara (2007) 132–9 notes a split, like that among Homeric scholars, between the Separatist view, which divorces Book 1 from Book 7 by pointing to details in Lucan's biography to the effect that he published three books of the *Pharsalia* before falling out of Nero's favor, and the Unitarian view, which finds the two books compatible by reading the encomium ironically. I incline toward the latter position, and am persuaded by O'Hara's argument that Lucan's inconsistency is intentional.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Johnson (1987) 121–3.

o sacer et magnus vatum labor! omnia fato
 eripis et populis donas mortalibus aevum.
 invidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere fama;
 nam, siquid Latiis fas est promittere Musis,
 quantum Zmyrnaei durabunt vatis honores,
 venturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra 985
 vivet, et a nullo tenebris damnabimur aevo.

O, holy and mighty task of the poets! You pluck all things from fate and grant eternity to mortal peoples. Caesar, do not be touched by envy of sacred fame. For, if it is permitted to the Latian Muses to promise anything, as long as the honors of the poet from Smyrna shall last, those who are to come shall read me and you. Our Pharsalia shall live, and by no generation shall we be condemned to the shadows!

Our Pharsalia, Lucan calls it.¹⁴⁸ In immortalizing Caesar in his poem and thereby achieving immortality himself, Lucan is condemned to share his legacy with Caesar, and to share *in* Caesar’s legacy. One wonders if the *sacer labor* might be not only “sacred,” but “accursed.” In promising literary immortality for both poet and literary figure, Lucan essentially conflates his creation with Caesar’s in a way that quickly becomes problematic. Who owes his greatness to whom? What becomes Lucan’s status if his remembrance is now bound to the evil that Caesar wrought? There can be no satisfying answer.¹⁴⁹ Lucan is either implicated in Caesar’s deeds or reliant upon them for his own fame.

The expression of this notion that the poet lives on through his poetry is reminiscent of Ovid’s words at the end of his *Metamorphoses*: “Wherever Roman power holds sway in conquered lands I shall be read on the lips of the people, and through all ages (if the prophecies of bards ever tell the truth) my fame shall endure—I shall have life” (15.877–9: *quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris / ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama / (siquid habent*

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Housman (1926) on *nostra* in line 985: *proelium a te gestum, a me scriptum*. It is often argued (and I agree) that this line refers to *Pharsalia* as the title of the epic. See Ahl (1976) 327–32 for a summary of that controversy.

¹⁴⁹ The question is raised and similarly dealt with by Rudich (1997) 145.

veri vatum praesagia) vivam).¹⁵⁰ Under this formulation, Ovid's *fama* is dependent upon the persistence of Roman empire to vouchsafe and perpetuate it. Having just narrated the deification of Julius Caesar, Ovid puts his own immortalization on a level with Roman emperors.¹⁵¹ Ovid's playfully transgressive assertion appears less morally fraught than Lucan's out-and-out condemnation of empire. There is no question that Lucan makes the same claim regarding legacy upon his own Caesar, but if read in light of the Ovidian intertext, whereby the poet's longevity is dependent upon the continuation of empire, Lucan seems to have secured himself two immortal enemies: Caesar and the political institution he set in motion by his victory.

Lucan's address to Caesar takes place at the culmination of the latter's tour of Phrygia and the ruins of Troy. The site, though of obvious significance to Roman heritage, has nevertheless fallen into a state of disrepair, such that Caesar must rely upon the guidance of a Phrygian native to point out all the important landmarks.¹⁵² The scene is one of mocking irony, as Julius Caesar himself stands unwitting amidst the fallen heirlooms of his *gens*. His pretensions toward building an empire are ironically undercut by his surroundings; the wreckage of Troy is "the paradigm of what happens to empires."¹⁵³ The destruction of Troy is also allegorically relevant to Caesar's Rome. Lucan problematizes the very genesis of empire as an institution. There is none of the optimistic prophecy of Vergil's *Aeneid*, whereby *Troia capta* in short order gives way to a sight of *Roma condita*.¹⁵⁴ At this historical juncture, Rome's ontological status is in danger; Caesar does not grasp the magnitude of the changes he has wrought nor the

¹⁵⁰ Cf. also Horace's "monument more lasting than bronze" (*Od.* 3.30.1: *exegi monumentum aere perennius*). On *Ode* 3.30 and the preservation of memory see Nisbet and Rudd (2007) 364–78.

¹⁵¹ Hardie (1993) 107.

¹⁵² Green (1991) 252 has suggested that this Phrygian is a stand-in for the poet Lucan.

¹⁵³ Johnson (1987) 120.

¹⁵⁴ Masters (1994) 155, "Flatly contradicting Vergil's melancholic optimism, and at every turn giving the lie to Vergil's implication that an Augustan golden age was worth even the price of civil war, Lucan opposes Vergil as much on the stylistic as on the political plane..."

significance of Troy's ruins. If he is to effect the continuation of Trojan glory under Roman empire, it will be only by accident.¹⁵⁵

Yet the invocation of Homer, the "poet from Smyrna," is also significant in this context. Just as Homer's *Iliad* preserves the memory of Troy from a time before it was destroyed, so too does Lucan's *Pharsalia* cast an indelible image of the Roman republic, not at its height but in its death throes. Just as Troy did, the republic, now gone, "will need the services of a poet to remain in man's memory."¹⁵⁶ Lucan tells Caesar not to fear for his legacy. Achilles had Homer, and Caesar has him. Lucan is critically aware of his role as poet and the duties and pitfalls involved in that office. He styles himself a *vates*, though crucially not of the Vergilian variety, the sort of poet tasked with revealing divine ordinance in support of a national program and ideology.¹⁵⁷ Lucan realizes that he does not belong to such a category, nor does his epic.¹⁵⁸ Rather, he takes it upon himself to view the Roman past with a critical lens, to pluck out from a particular historical moment what he considers to be the root of the evil still lamentably present in his own time, and to be a conscientious objector in light of what he has come to understand. With luck, though he is by no means optimistic, such an investigation may unearth a solution. If not, there may still be some solace to be found merely in understanding the quandary.

Like the Rubicon, Pharsalus is a point of no return at which the powers that be attempt in vain to stop Caesar and turn him back. Roma, in her divine apparition, made idle appeal, nor could Lucan, with his threats of swords and future death, change historical fact. Lucan, like his gods, can only fade into powerlessness in the face of history's march, and neither poet nor deity

¹⁵⁵ Hardie (1993) 107, "Rome succeeds Troy only as one shadow of a city succeeds another shadow in a sterile repetition; poetic vitality has become totally detached from political vitality."

¹⁵⁶ Ahl (1976) 328.

¹⁵⁷ Leigh (1997) 18–9.

¹⁵⁸ Leigh (1997) 102.

can create dreams to alter it. Even though Lucan makes claims upon Caesar's legacy and controls him as a character (recall 9.984–6), his poetic strategy is ultimately an admission of political and historical impotence.¹⁵⁹ Lucan cannot conquer Caesar any more than Pompey could, nor any more than he can outlast Nero, through whom Caesar lives on.

It is Caesar's existence that inspires the anger that sustains Lucan's poem, and it is in that sense that he is Lucan's Muse.¹⁶⁰ For a concrete demonstration of this, one need only look at Lucan's personal life and the biographical details of his work under Nero. By historical accident, only his *Pharsalia* survives to us, his literary legacy. His short career was ended prematurely by Emperor Nero, the groundwork of whose legacy this poem serves to immortalize.¹⁶¹ Though he may expose its evil, its path of death and destruction paved in Roman blood, this is all so much screaming into the abyss. Lucan's own legacy, defined artistically by his brief yet forceful style and passionate fury,¹⁶² nevertheless bears the mark of Nero, as a medieval epitaph's opening couplet succinctly conveys: *Corduba me genuit; rapuit Nero; proelia dixi / quae gessere pares hinc socer inde gener.*¹⁶³ If he cannot defeat Caesar in the past nor outlive him in the present, Lucan can only wait for the great conflagration, in which fortune is level and all are equal, and the cycle begins anew.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Johnson (1987) 121, "At the moment when Caesar lays claim to the royal heritage that his conquest has proved to be rightfully his, Lucan lays claim to *him*. In a certain sense, this is the climax of the poem as we have it: Caesar shows what Pharsalus means to him, and in a savage, cool, unforgettable satiric image, Lucan shows what Pharsalus, anytime, anywhere, really means."

¹⁶⁰ Johnson (1987) 118–23.

¹⁶¹ A discussion of this aspect of the poem in the context of 9.980–6 can be found in Dinter (2012) 87–8.

¹⁶² See Quint's (1993) characterization of Lucan, 131–57.

¹⁶³ *Epitaphium Lucani*. Cf. Usener (1869) 6–7; Baehrens (1883) 386–7; Riese (1906) 668.

¹⁶⁴ Lucan mentions this specifically in his parting words to Caesar upon the occasion of Pharsalus, expressing the idea that Caesar will be equal with those he has killed when all are dead (7.812–19): *hos, Caesar, populos si nunc non usserit ignis, / uret cum terris, uret cum gurgite ponti. / communis mundo superest rogos ossibus astra / mixturus. quocumque tuam fortuna uocabit, / hae quoque sunt animae: non altius ibis in auras, / non meliore loco Stygia sub nocte iacebis. / libera fortunae mors est; capit omnia tellus / quae genuit; caelo tegitur qui non habet urnam.*

Lucan's dreams reflect an outlook upon a world that is fundamentally uncertain and which calls into question the role of gods and men within it. This uncertainty is inextricable from human nature. That the dreams of the *Pharsalia* are ultimately subjective, conflating and confusing space, time, truth, and understanding, approaches this understanding of the universe. Lucan is not alone in this among ancient writers, nor even may he be the only Roman epic poet to use dreams to make this point. Vergil's Aeneas exploits dreams' subjectivity in his speech to Dido, claiming that "the troubled image (*imago*) of my father Anchises warns me in my dreams and frightens me" (*Aen.* 4.351, 353: *patris Anchisae / ... admonet in somnis et turbida terret imago*).¹⁶⁵ Even in this, there is a sense, held (or exploited?) by Aeneas himself, that Jupiter and his father (now a shade and agent of prophecy) compel him to do what he says he must. Yet the claim that Aeneas makes is not backed up by Vergil's narrative (nor even by his own narrative: Books 2 and 3). His destiny is, to all outward appearances, a divinely mandated and poetically justified mission. The *Pharsalia* lacks any such necessitating force, save history itself. Yet given the potential subversiveness of the Underworld prophecy in *Aeneid* 6, it may not be implausible that a fundamental uncertainty about divine ordinances pervades the entirety of Vergil's epic, including the speech of *pius Aeneas*.¹⁶⁶ For Aeneas, as for Lucan's Caesar, the dream provides a pretext for carrying out his personal mission.

Lucan's *Pharsalia*, a historical epic with an overt interest in ethical and metaphysical philosophy, employs dreams which are not in line with the epic, philosophical, or even religious notions thereof, but which have more in common with the dreams of the historians. This is to say that Lucan, like the historians, takes seriously the constraints placed upon him by historical fact and uses dreams both merely to color or propel the narrative and to interrogate and respond, often

¹⁶⁵ My thanks go to Micaela Janan for recalling this to my attention.

¹⁶⁶ This is the thrust of O'Hara (1990), wherein see 163–72 for the prophecy of Book 6.

in a profoundly personal way, to the events of his past. This historiographical motif can be seen clearly in the histories dealing with the crossing of the Rubicon. Recall that the same dream Plutarch attributes to Caesar at the Rubicon is placed at a different time and different context in other historians. It accordingly holds completely different implications for his subsequent actions (see Chapter 1, above). By inserting different dreams at the Rubicon, Plutarch and Suetonius effectively make different arguments about the significance and morality of Caesar's actions. It would seem, from these examples, that the truth value dreams seem to contain is contingent upon their context and implementation. We find Lucan playing within this same realm and using his dreams in this way.

In order to dig more deeply into an investigation of Roman history, Lucan places this historiographical tool in the hands of his characters, Caesar and Pompey, who in turn respond to their own history, in which they are enmeshed, in personal, character-driven ways. Thus it is that Pompey's dreams trap him in the past while Caesar's propel him (or, rather, he uses them to propel himself) into the future. The individual dream narratives in the *Pharsalia* conspire to raise further questions about the nature of history and historiography. The altering of history that takes place within dreams (e.g. Pompey recalling his early career in Book 7) is not mere "inaccuracy" but a nod to the process of (re)writing history. The entire project of historical writing is problematized by the constant interplay of memory and history. If even those who lived the past (Pompey) get its facts wrong, how can those who seek to recount it (Lucan) hope to get it correct? There are also the further questions of whether or not the audience is meant to catch the factual inaccuracies, and what the significance of their noticing is.

In fact, unfaithful reporting of the facts was often noticed by ancient readers. Cicero, for example, in complaining of funeral eulogies' tendencies to transgress the boundaries of truth,

writes, “Still, the recording of our history has been made more faulty by these eulogies; for many things have been written in them which did not happen: false triumphs, additional consulships, false genealogies, and transfers to the *plebs*...”¹⁶⁷ The reconciliation between this strain within the writing of history and the purported goal of transmitting true information comes, according to Woodman, from the realization that “the Romans required the hard core of history to be true and its elaboration to be plausible, and further that they saw no contradiction between these two requirements but rather regarded them as complementary.”¹⁶⁸ To decorate one’s historical account with dreams, then, is to elaborate upon the factual mainstays in a plausible way.

In closing, I would like to propose that it is possible to read the *Pharsalia* as Lucan’s contradictory reading of Roman history in opposition to that of the empire. We see the Julio-Claudian dynasty begin to construct a memory of itself early on, exemplified in the *Res Gestae* of Augustus and narratives like Vergil’s *Aeneid*.¹⁶⁹ Lucan, writing at about a century past the inception of empire, offers his epic poem as a counterpoint to the pro-Caesarian historical narrative. Lucan cannot pluck the republic from the past, and in looking back upon it he only contrives, like Orpheus, to lose it forever. What he can do, however, is to create in Caesar a force against which to stand in eternal opposition, and in Pompey an enduring spirit which, despite all uncertainty, may live on.

¹⁶⁷ Cic. *Brut.* 16.62: *Quamquam his laudationibus historia rerum nostrarum est facta mendosior. Multa enim scripta sunt in eis. quae facta non sunt: falsi triumphi, plures consulatus, genera etiam falsa et ad plebem transitiones.* Cf. Livy 8.40.4–5.

¹⁶⁸ Woodman (1988) 91.

¹⁶⁹ E.g. Anchises’ speech in the Underworld, *Aen.* 6.826–53. See Seider (2013) on the *Aeneid*’s construction of memory. On the *Res Gestae*, see Slater (2008).

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Appendix: The Dream and Vision Scenes of the *Pharsalia*

1. Caesar's Vision of Roma (1.183–92)

iam gelidas Caesar cursu superaverat Alpes
ingentisque animo motus bellumque futurum
ceperat. ut ventum est parvi Rubiconis ad undas, 185
ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago
clara per obscuram voltu maestissima noctem
turrigero canos effundens vertice crines
caesarie lacera nudisque adstare lacertis
et gemitu permixta loqui: “quo tenditis ultra? 190
quo fertis mea signa, viri? si iure venitis,
si cives, huc usque licet.”

Already had Caesar surmounted the chilly Alps in his march, and in his mind he had conceived great upheavals and future war. When he arrived at the waters of the small Rubicon, a great image of the fearful Fatherland appeared to the leader, clear through the hazy night, most mournful in appearance, pouring forth white hair from her turreted head, standing there with hair torn and arms bare. She spoke words mixed with a sigh: “Whither go ye beyond here? Whither bear ye my standards, o men? If ye come justly, if ye come as citizens, only this far is permissible.”

2. Pompey's Dream of Julia (3.8–35)

inde soporifero cesserunt languida somno
membra ducis; diri tum plena horroris imago
visa caput maestum per hiantes Iulia terras 10
tollere et accenso furialis stare sepulchro.
“sedibus Elysiis campoque expulsa piorum
ad Stygias” inquit “tenebras manesque nocentis
post bellum civile trahor. vidi ipsa tenentes
Eumenidas, quaterent quas vestris lampadas armis. 15
praeparat innumeras puppes Acherontis adusti
portitor: in multas laxantur Tartara poenas.
vix operi cunctae dextra properante sorores
sufficiunt: lassant rumpentes stamina Parcas.
coniuge me laetos duxisti, Magne, triumphos: 20
Fortuna est mutata toris: semperque potentes

detrahere in cladem fato damnata maritos,
 en nupsit tepido paelex Cornelia busto.
 haereat illa tuis per bella, per aequora signis,
 dum non securos liceat mihi rumpere somnos, 25
 et nullum vestro vacuum sit tempus amori,
 sed teneat Caesarque dies et Iulia noctes.
 me non Lethaeae, coniunx, oblivia ripae
 immemorem fecere tui, regesque silentum
 permisere sequi. veniam, te bella gerente, 30
 in medias acies. numquam tibi, Magne, per umbras
 perque meos manes genero non esse licebit.
 abscondis frustra ferro tua pignora. bellum
 te faciet civile meum.” sic fata, refugit
 umbra per amplexus trepidi dilapsa mariti. 35

Thence the leader’s tired limbs yielded to drowsy sleep. Then, an image full of dread horror, Julia appeared to raise her sad head through the gaping earth and stand Fury-like on her flaming tomb. She said, “Driven out of the Elysian abode and the field of the blessed into the shadows of Styx and the guilty shades, I am dragged in the wake of civil war. I myself have seen the Eumenides holding torches which they shake at your arms. The boatman of burnt Acheron is getting countless ships ready. Tartarus is making room for many punishments. Scarcely are all the Sisters, with their hands hastening, enough for the task; breaking threads tires out the Parcae.

When I was your wife, you led blessed triumphs, Magnus. Fortune changed along with your marriage bed. See! that paramour Cornelia, doomed by fate always to drag her powerful husbands down to disaster, wed you while my ashes were still warm. Let her cling to your standards through battles, through seas, so long as I can disturb your troubled sleep, and there is no time available for your love. Let Caesar take hold of your days and Julia your nights.

The oblivion of Lethe’s bank has not made me forget *you*, husband. The kings of the silent ones have permitted me to pursue you. I shall come into the middle of your battle-lines as you wage war. Never, Magnus, by the shades, by my own spirit, will you be allowed not to be a son-in-law. In vain do you break off your pledges with the sword. Civil war will make you mine.”

Thus she spoke, and her shade slipped through her trembling husband’s embrace and fled.

3. Pompey in the Theater (7.7–27)

at nox felicitis Magno pars ultima vitae
 sollicitos vana decepit imagine somnos.
 nam Pompeiani visus sibi sede theatri
 innumeram effigiem Romanae cernere plebis 10
 attollique suum laetis ad sidera nomen
 vocibus et plausu cuneos certare sonantes.
 qualis erat populi facies clamorque faventis

olim, cum iuvenis primique aetate triumphi,
 post domitas gentes quas torrens ambit Hiberus, 15
 et quaecumque fugax Sertorius impulit arma,
 Vespere pacato, pura venerabilis aequae
 quam currus ornante toga, plaudente senatu,
 sedit adhuc Romanus eques. seu fine bonorum
 anxia venturis ad tempora laeta refugit, 20
 sive per ambages solitas contraria visis
 vaticinata quies magni tulit omina planctus,
 seu vetito patrias ultra tibi cernere sedes
 sic Romam Fortuna dedit. ne rumpite somnos,
 castrorum vigiles, nullas tuba verberet aures 25
 crastina dira quies et imagine maesta diurna
 undique funestas acies feret, undique bellum.

But night, the last part of life's happiness for Magnus, deceived his anxious sleep with a deceptive vision. For he dreamt that he saw an innumerable phantom of the Roman plebs from a seat in the Theater of Pompey, that his name was being extolled to the stars by joyous voices, and that resounding sections vied in applause. Such was the appearance of the people, and such was their applause as they showed him favor, once upon a time, when he was a youth at the time of his first triumph after he conquered the tribes embraced by the rushing Hiberus and the arms Sertorius sent against him in guerilla warfare. The West pacified, he sat, still a Roman knight, just as venerable with his pure while toga as with that which decorates the triumphal chariot, as the senate applauded. Perhaps, at prosperity's end, his rest, anxious about what was to come, took refuge in happy times, or by its customary riddles prophesied an outcome opposite to his vision and bore the omens of a great lamentation, or, because it was forbidden for you to see your paternal homeland again, Fortune gave Rome to you this way. Don't disturb his sleep, guards of the camp! Let no horn beat on his ears! Tomorrow's rest, dread and sad with the image of today, will bring him funereal battle-lines on all sides, on all sides war.

4. Caesar's Nightmare (7.768–86)

ingemuisse putem campos, terramque nocentem
 inspirasse animas, infectumque aera totum
 manibus et superam Stygia formidine noctem. 770
 exigit a meritis tristes victoria poenas,
 sibilaque et flammam infert sopor. umbra perempti
 cuius adest; sua quemque premit terroris imago:
 ille senum voltus, iuvenum videt ille figuras,
 hunc agitant totis fraterna cadavera somnis, 775
 pectore in hoc pater est, omnes in Caesare manes.
 haud alios nondum Scythica purgatus in ara
 Eumenidum vidit voltus Pelopeus Orestes,
 nec magis attonitos animi sensere tumultus,

cum fureret, Pentheus aut, cum desisset, Agave. 780
 hunc omnes gladii, quos aut Pharsalia vidit
 aut ultrix visura dies stringente senatu,
 illa nocte premunt, hunc infera monstra flagellant.
 et quantum poenae misero mens conscia donat,
 quod Styga, quod manes ingestaque Tartara somnis 785
 Pompeio vivente videt!

I should think that the fields groaned out, that the guilty earth breathed out spirits, that the entire sky was tainted by shades, and that the night of the world above was tinged by Stygian terror.

Victory deservedly exacts harsh penalties from these men, and sleep brings hissing and flames. The shade of a slain citizen appears, and each man's phantom of terror presses him: one sees the faces of old men, another the forms of youths. This man is disturbed in all his dreams by his brother's corpse, this man possessed by his father. Caesar sees all the shades at once.

The faces were just like those of the Furies, which Pelopean Orestes saw before he was cleansed at the Scythian altar. Neither did Pentheus feel greater thunder-struck mental upheaval when he raged, nor Agave, when she regained her senses.

All the swords, which Pharsalia saw or which the day of vengeance would see the senate draw, press him that night, infernal monsters flog him.

Yet his guilty mind spares the wretch much punishment, for though he sees the Styx, sees the shades and Tartarus thrust upon his sleep, Pompey is still alive.

5. Cornelia Parts with Pompey (5.804–15)

fida comes Magni vadit duce sola relicto
 Pompeiumque fugit. quae nox tibi proxima venit, 805
 insomnis; viduo tum primum frigida lecto
 atque insueta quies uni, nudumque marito
 non haerente latus. somno quam saepe gravata
 deceptis vacuum manibus complexa cubile est
 atque oblita fugae quaesivit nocte maritum! 810
 nam quamvis flamma tacitas urente medullas
 non iuvat in toto corpus iactare cubili:
 servatur pars illa tori. caruisse timebat
 Pompeio; sed non superi tam laeta parabant:
 instabat miserae, Magnum quae redderet, hora.

Once the loyal companion of Magnus, she now goes alone without the leader, flees Pompey. What a sleepless night came for you next! Then for the first time she felt the chill of a widowed bed; the silence was strange to her, alone; and her side was bare without her husband nearby. How often, heavy with sleep, she embraced the empty bed with betrayed hands and, forgetting her flight, sought her husband in the night! For although a flame was burning silently her innermost being, she did not like to cast her

body over the whole bed. His part of the bed is kept untouched. She was afraid that she had lost Pompey. But what the gods above were preparing for her was not so happy as that. The hour that would return Magnus to her, poor wretch, was coming.

6. Cornelia after Pompey's Defeat (8.43–5)

...tristes praesagia curas
exagitant, trepida quatitur formidine somnus,
Thessaliam nox omnis habet. 45

Forebodings stir up sad cares, and her sleep is vexed by anxious fear. Every night contains Pharsalia.