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LUCAN AND MORAL LUCK

iustos Fortuna laborat
esse ducis motus et causas invenit armis. (Luc. 1.264–5)[1]

Fortune endeavoured to justify Caesar's revolt and found excuses for warfare.

Fortune will intervene again on Caesar's behalf in Lucan's narrative. But we might protest that *this* report of intervention should be read with scepticism, or at least on the assumption that Fortune's machinations failed. Fortune can, of course, bring Caesar victory at Ilerda and await his safe return from a storm at sea (4.121–3, 5.677). But justification is surely beyond her remit. Caesar may enjoy divine favour (or unnerving luck) when he hazards warfare or his own person, but his dogged good luck cannot salvage his moral worth. As Pompey will claim, Fortune is not so wholly without shame (2.568).

In this article I argue that Lucan does indeed represent Caesar and his other characters as subject to 'moral luck', suggesting that their moral worth is influenced for better or worse by Fortune and, more generally, by factors beyond their control. The phrase and notion of 'moral luck' have been taken from recent philosophical discussions: in Nagel's words, 'where a significant aspect of what someone does depends on factors beyond his control, yet we continue to treat him in that respect as an object of moral judgment, it can be called moral luck'.[2] The notion is a broad one,[3] and so it may seem less than surprising to find engagement with it in an ancient epic. But in Lucan, I will argue, moral luck is not only a pervasive theme, but pervasively and consistently taken to be a reality; this *should* surprise, given recent scholarly accounts of the poet's 'fractured voice'. And I propose that Lucan's interest in moral luck may explain some baffling features of his characterization, particularly in his portrait of Pompey.

In my first section I discuss passages in which Lucan's characters are afflicted by moral bad luck. As we might expect, the misfortune is most often circumstantial, the problems and choices posed by civil war. In his account of circumstantial moral luck Nagel also offers political examples. Citizens of Nazi Germany were, he notes,

[1] Unless stated otherwise all references are to Lucan's *Civil War*. Citations are taken from the edition of D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1997). Translations are my own.

[2] T. Nagel, 'Moral luck', in id., *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, 1991), 24–38, at 26. See also B. A. O. Williams, 'Moral luck', in id., *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980* (Cambridge, 1981), 20–39. For a recent attack on these accounts, attributing the belief in moral luck to 'biases' in our 'psychological makeup', see D. Domsky, 'There is no door: finally solving the problem of moral luck', *Journal of Philosophy* 101 (2004), 445–64, at 462. Domsky focuses on the problem of 'resultant' bad luck, where luck causes an agent to bring about a bad outcome, arguing that this scenario is most central to our concerns about moral luck. It is not clear to me that this is right, and in any case we will meet other forms of moral luck in Lucan. See n. 13 below.

[3] But Williams (n. 2), 25, argues that when I undertake a project with moral risk not *every* sort of luck can 'unjustify' me in the event of failure; to 'unjustify', the cause of failure must be 'intrinsic' to my project. In his example of Gauguin, who deserts his family to devote himself to art, only failure as a developing painter (rather than, say, injury) would 'unjustify' Gauguin's choice. In Lucan, however, I can see little attempt to delineate relevant and irrelevant forms of luck.

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subjected to a moral test, forced to choose between complicity with, and heroic resistance to, the ruling party, and those who failed the test warrant blame. But citizens of other countries were lucky enough to escape such a test, and thanks to this good fortune are not 'similarly culpable', even if they *would* have colluded with a wicked regime.[4] But one of Lucan's examples is more dismal. In his account Romans such as Cato and Brutus did not merely have a pressing choice thrust upon them by civil war (abstention or participation on either side); they faced a choice with no analogue to the heroic opposition of Nagel's example. For Lucan suggests that Brutus and Cato were set a choice without an innocent option: both supporting and resisting Caesar's rise would back a potential tyrant, at least while Pompey led the resistance, and withdrawal from such a crisis was also damning.[5]

This will be the least controversial section, I imagine. We are now used to reading Lucan as profoundly pessimistic about his material, and so another attack on Cato's grounds for complacency is unlikely to unsettle.[6] But in my second section I will argue that Lucan also recognizes the phenomenon of moral *good* luck and represents Pompey as its beneficiary. I will suggest that this accounts for Pompey's elevation at the opening of the ninth book, surprising as it is, given Lucan's ambivalent treatment of Pompey's motives and conduct. Pompey is vindicated, but by events beyond his control; he ascends to the ranks of the innocent not through his own character but, *inter alia*, because of the subsequent history of the troops he enlisted, and in particular through the afterlife of his resistance in Cato and Brutus.

In the third section I discuss the nature and target of Lucan's reflections on moral luck, asking, for example, whether they are polemically aimed at a particular school of thought. Lucan's poem has recently been seen as frequently, even systematically, opposed to tenets of Stoicism.[7] So it might be thought that Lucan's reflections on luck are a hostile reaction to Stoic theory, just as contemporary discussions of moral luck respond to Kantian claims about the independence of moral value from luck.[8] Lucan certainly emerges as no partisan of Stoicism in his account of moral luck, but I conclude that his account is not specifically anti-Stoic in intent.

Two further preliminary points. First, Lucan speaks of Fortune in many contexts, and I will only discuss passages where her influence extends to *moral* assessment of characters or their actions. So in my selection of passages I have worked with a rough distinction between moral and non-moral judgement. Some may object that this

[4] Nagel (n. 2), 34.

[5] Nagel (n. 2), 34, n. 9 notes that such dilemmas exist; see also B. Williams, 'Ethical consistency', in id., *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge, 1973), 166–86. On the threat of tyranny in both camps, compare Sen. *Ep.* 14.13; on the condemnation of withdrawal from civil war, compare [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 8.5.

[6] But contrast F. M. Ahl's claim that Cato's virtue allows him to triumph over fortune: 'Caesar is the darling of history, Fortune's favorite, victorious over those who oppose him on his own, secular ground. Cato, dedicated to *virtus*, cannot be defeated by history or by Fortune. *Furor* may destroy *pietas*, but *Fortuna* cannot destroy *virtus*' (*Lucan: An Introduction* [Ithaca, 1976], 278; see also 304). See also B. F. Dick, '*Fatum* and *fortuna* in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', *CPh* 62 (1967), 235–42, at 239. On my account, Fortune can stymie Cato on his own, moral ground. For further discussion of the contrasts drawn between *virtus* and *Fortuna* see M. Beagon, 'Beyond comparison: M. Sergius, *Fortunae victor*', in G. Clark and T. Rajak (edd.), *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin* (Oxford, 2002), 111–32, at 121–2.

[7] See n. 56 below.

[8] See Nagel (n. 2), 24 and Williams (n. 2), 20–2. Williams, however, suggests that the denial of moral luck is not merely a Kantian quirk but has deeper roots in our philosophical tradition.

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distinction is anachronistic and that my policy will yield a distorted account of Lucan's poem, or at least that I face difficulties in its application.[9] But it does seem possible to isolate passages in Lucan where Fortune affects specifically what we would recognize as matters for moral judgement, where innocence, guilt and the scope for virtue are subject to luck. Take Fortune's attempt to *justify* Caesar at 1.264–5, or the dilemma of Brutus and Cato in the second book, outlined above, where the two men are dealt only *guilty* options; contrast such passages with the non-moral interventions of Fortune in an earlier scene, where she brings habitations (1.251–3) and warfare (256–7). In these examples, at least, my use of the distinction seems to do no violence to our text.

The matter is complicated by Lucan's use of *virtus*, for in his epic the word does not always denote 'moral virtue'. More frequently the poet uses it of 'acts of military daring, usually proved by multiple slaughter, and in special cases topped off with the supreme challenge of self-slaughter'.[10] I of course discuss passages where moral virtue is compromised or threatened by luck. But I will also examine cases where the exercise of 'military daring' is under a similar threat; it is not obvious in Lucan that moral worth is unaffected by inability to execute acts of valour.

Second, if I overlook some of Fortune's interventions, I am not concerned exclusively with her workings either. For the 'luck' of moral luck is construed generously, as factors and events beyond the control of the moral agent.[11] It is immaterial whether they should be ascribed to another person, a god, Fortune or fate, provided that they are a matter of luck relative to his or her agency. And Lucan often moves between *fortuna* (fortune) and *fatum* (fate) with apparent abandon, as Feeney notes: '*fatum*/*fata*, *fortuna*/*fors*, *dei*/*superi* [gods] are explanatory terms which jostle beside each other in every imaginable context'.[12] So events that influence moral worth and are ascribed to fate or divine ordinance will be no less relevant to my theme.

I

I now discuss a series of scenes in which the virtue and innocence of Lucan's characters are jeopardized by events beyond their control.[13] Let us turn first to the

[9] M. C. Nussbaum avoids the moral/non–moral distinction in her classic study of Greek reflections on the vulnerability of human aspirations for the good life; she notes that 'the Greek texts make no such distinction' and argues that the distinction has been understood in a wide variety of ways and so will not aid our reading of ancient material if we do not establish precisely *which* distinction is being invoked (*The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*[2] [Cambridge, 2001], 5, 28–30). Lucan's interests overlap with, but in some ways differ from, the anxieties Nussbaum finds in tragic and Aristotelian texts: Lucan has less interest in the value of emotions in a good life, and is preoccupied with the fragility of *badness* as well as goodness, setting out ways in which luck can dramatically vindicate an apparently culpable choice.

[10] E. Fantham, 'The ambiguity of *virtus* in Lucan's *Civil War* and Statius' *Thebaid*', *Arachnion: A Journal of Ancient Literature and History on the Web* 1.3 (1995).

[11] See Nagel (n. 2), 26 (quoted above on p. 183); Williams (n. 2), 22.

[12] D. C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), 280. Feeney provides a list of examples; see also e.g. Ahl (n. 6), 297–8; Dick (n. 6); E. Fantham, *Lucan: De Bello Civili Book II* (Cambridge, 1992), 9.

[13] Nagel (n. 2), 28, distinguishes four types of moral luck: 'constitutive luck', which determines one's 'inclinations, capacities, and temperament', circumstantial luck ('the kind of problems and situations one faces'), causal luck (antecedent causes of one's actions) and resultant luck ('luck in the way one's actions and projects turn out'). (Williams has a broader notion of 'constitutive luck': see D. Statman, 'Introduction', in id. [ed.], *Moral Luck* [Albany, 1993], 1–34, at 28, n. 31.)

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scene from Book 2 where Brutus calls on Cato at dead of night for advice.[14] As I have already noted, the two men face a choice between participation and withdrawal with no guiltless option. Now we might expect Cato to insist on the innocence of the decision he will make, fighting for Pompey, only for the narrator gloomily to assure us that Pompey also aims at tyranny. Instead it is Cato who strikes the bleakest note, correcting Brutus' confidence that at least in withdrawal there is scope for innocence.

Brutus speaks first, assuring Cato that no blast of Fortune will expel his virtue (2.243–4), a conviction soon to be rebuffed. And while Brutus states that he will follow Cato's lead (244–7), he makes his own preference clear. For he seems sure that involvement in the fray would inevitably incriminate Cato, despite his incorruptibility to date (256–7), stating that Cato's 'only reward for enduring virtue' would be that 'war will *make* you guilty' (258–9).[15] He adds that troops would wish to fall by Cato's sword, even if wounded already, and so be Cato's crime (264–6). But he commends abstention (266–73), adding further considerations against enlisting in Pompey's army (273–81), such as the menace of tyranny on both sides (279–81).[16]

It is for Cato to win Brutus round, and he does so by arguing that abstention is no less shameful than involvement, while yet granting that the latter is not free of guilt:

> summum, Brute, nefas civilia bella fatemur,
> sed quo fata trahunt virtus secura sequetur.
> crimen erit superis et me fecisse nocentem. (2.286–8)

Brutus, I acknowledge that civil war is the greatest evil, but where fate drags virtue will follow without fear. It will be a crime for the gods to have made even me guilty.

Here Cato picks Brutus up on (at least) two of his claims. Brutus had asserted that Cato's virtue was impervious to Fortune (243–4), and Cato seems to accept this claim in 287, only to suggest in 288 that virtue enjoys a pretty minimal kind of security in adversity: while the gods can make a virtuous man guilty, they incriminate themselves in so doing. And in the claim that he will have been made guilty by the gods Cato both casts doubt on Brutus' optimism in 243–4 and broadens Brutus' concern in 259 that war will make Cato guilty. The predicament is not merely that one choice, involvement in the war, would make him guilty; Cato claims that he will inevitably be damned by the situation imposed on him by the gods.

For he insists that abstention would be no better than participation, despite his patent horror of civil war (286) and awareness of Pompey's intentions (320–2), scorning both detachment from so universal a catastrophe and solitary security during

Lucan has most interest in the second and fourth varieties; an example of the second is the choice between abstention and involvement that confronts Brutus and Cato in the second book, an example of the fourth is their good fortune, after choosing involvement, to emerge as the champions of freedom after the death of Pompey.

[14] 2.234–391. Compare Hippocrates' visit to Socrates in Pl. *Prt.* 310A8-314C2, and note that Lucan's Cato is given the edge on Plato's Socrates, spending his night anxiously musing on his country's fate (2.239–40).

[15] Contrast his earlier claim that Cato might choose to 'acquit' (*absolvere*) the war by participation (249–50); see Fantham (n. 12), 126. But in 249–50 Brutus may have in mind an intention which he believes could prompt involvement but which he himself finds naive.

[16] He concludes by offering to fight whoever emerges victorious from Pompey and Caesar's contest, in defence of law and freedom (281–4). His offer of deferred intervention in the service of these lofty causes looks forward to later passages where Pompey's troops are granted such causes by their leader's defeat and death; see section II below.

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Rome's fall (289–97).[17] We may wonder, then, how he could come to any decision at all. And he offers merely psychological explanation, rather than justification, for his choice.[18] A bereft parent is urged by 'grief itself' to lead the funeral procession and draws comfort from direct involvement in the ritual, simply unable to leave well alone, even though the dead child is now beyond help (297–301); in the same way Cato will embrace Rome's corpse and follow the ghost of freedom (301–3). But he has conceded that he was left with no innocent option, and so Cato himself, whom we might expect fiercely to deny the reality of moral luck, has granted its malign influence on his own life.[19]

And Lucan suggests that Cato was denied not only innocence but a proper opportunity to exercise his formidable virtue. Cato expresses a wish to provide a universal *devotio*, to serve as a scapegoat 'for every penalty' and receive 'the wounds of the whole war' (306–19). But he is given no opportunity to play so spectacular a role, and so Cato's scope for virtuous activity (as well as for innocence) seems to be limited by luck. Indeed it is suggested that (at least while Pompey lives) Cato has no fruitful contribution to make to the conflict,[20] except to correct Pompey in the event of victory (322–3)—a victory which Pompey will of course fail to achieve. While Brutus suggests that Fortune would ensure that Cato's virtue would not enter the fray 'in vain' (*ne tanta in cassum virtus eat*, 2.263), it seems that she is quite prepared to menace virtue with futility.

This further sort of misfortune features in several later passages.[21] In a scene in the fourth book (4.465–581) Vulteius and his troops are trapped at sea with no prospect of victory or escape, and Lucan programmatically states that during an aborted battle their 'virtue achieved all that virtue could when caught at a disadvantage'.[22] That night Vulteius insists to his men that there is still a virtuous achievement within their grasp. In pitched battle, Vulteius urges, virtue can be obscured and perish (490–1); suicide, however, promises 'glory' and merits 'praise of mind', even when death is imminent anyway, for *wishing* to die is voluntary (479–85). Fortune has favoured them

[17] The analogy with cosmic collapse (289–92) of course stresses the scale of the conflict, involving as it does 'unknown races', distant kings and tribes such as the Dahae and Getae (292–7). For use of the image in our text see M. Lapidge, 'Lucan's imagery of cosmic dissolution', *Hermes* 107 (1979), 344–70.

[18] *Pace* the scholars who suggest that Lucan attempts to justify Cato's decision: Ahl (n. 6), 247; Fantham (n. 12), 122; D. B. George, 'Lucan's Cato and Stoic attitudes to the Republic', *ClAnt* 10 (1991), 237–58, at 246. See also 9.21–2, where Cato is said to have been 'swept' to Pompey's side.

[19] George (n. 18), 252, claims that fate and not Cato is said to be at fault in 2.288, apparently ignoring Cato's description of himself as *nocens*. Other scholars have suggested that Cato espouses ethics and a creed at odds with Lucan's more pessimistic doubts: see W. R. Johnson, *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and his Heroes* (Ithaca, 1987), 37–8 and R. Sklenár, 'Nihilistic cosmology and Catonian ethics in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*', *AJPh* 120 (1999), 281–96. We have seen, however, that Cato is fully aware of his vulnerability in the face of luck, as Sklenár seems to concede when citing 2.288 (289). And, contrary to Sklenár's claim that Cato's ethics have 'indispensable cosmological moorings' (287, where he apparently has in mind a *providential* view of the cosmos), in our scene Cato does not base ethics on such cosmology; 2.289–92 are merely an image of Rome's collapse, and in any case make no reference to providence, and any suggestion of a benign providence in 287 is contradicted by 288. See also section III below.

[20] See *frustra* (316) and the plausible suggestion of Ahl (n. 6), 249, that Cato's sterile union with Marcia (326–80) is an allegory for his ineffective loyalty to Rome. And note that Cato will all but disappear from Lucan's narrative until Pompey's death, surfacing briefly in 3.164 and 6.311.

[21] See also 7.315–17 and the opportunity for war denied to Lucan and his contemporaries in 7.641–6.

[22] 4.469–70; compare 10.538–9. Earlier in Book 4 Fate has been blamed for bringing about a brief reconciliation merely to exacerbate the crime of civil war (4.194–5, 202–5).

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with an abundance of witnesses, making their deaths paradigmatic for posterity (492–7). But Vulteius does not deny that Fortune could limit, and indeed has limited, their opportunity for virtuous exploits; he states that his company *would* have exceeded all records of martial loyalty and reverence (497–9), presumably if they had received the right opportunity, that they have been denied the chance to make a grim example of their elders and children (503–4), and that they would gain greater renown if given the occasion to spurn an offer of pardon from their enemies (509–12).[23]

And Lucan's account seems to question whether Vulteius' proposal has really found a feat of virtue for his men. For the narrator observes that in their mutual slaughter this one party was committing 'the crime of the wars in its entirety',[24] comparing the carnage to the 'grim omen' of civil war that marked the birth of Thebes (549–551) and to the butchery Medea effected in Phasis, describing the latter as a 'crime' that shocked even its authoress (552–6). And if killing fellow-citizens reeks of such horrors, Lucan adds that their *deaths* made for little virtue either: *minimumque in morte virorum mors virtutis habet* (4.557–8). Lucan's postscript, finally, notes that suicide is a means of escape available to *everyone*, ostensibly praising the act and urging emulation, but also suggesting that suicide does not call for (and so does not always exhibit) 'lofty virtue' at all (575–7, 580–1).[25]

Compare the plight of Scaeva in Book 6. Like Vulteius, Scaeva finds an outlet for his prodigious valour, but an outlet of similar criminality, the slaughter of Roman citizens.[26] Scaeva is portrayed ambivalently, to say the least, even before the massacre begins, described as 'ready for every crime' (147), and yet through the episode the narrator insists on his valour (*virtus*).[27] And Lucan stresses that in his crimes Scaeva was the victim not only of his own frenzy but also of *bad luck*, noting his misfortune in fighting for a prospective master and during a civil war.[28]

[23] Vulteius talks more of glory, fame and spectacle than of virtue (but see 4.491 and 512). So it might be thought that his concern is merely *epistemic*, fear that his men's virtue will go unknown; compare 5.291–2 and Sen. *Prov.* 4.2. But his discussion of what deserves 'praise of mind' (482) suggests that he is struggling not merely to receive but to *merit* praise. For the emphasis on spectacle and fame in this scene see M. Leigh, *Lucan: Spectacle and Engagement* (Oxford, 1997), 182–3, 202 and 259–64; C. Saylor, '*Lux extrema*: Lucan, *Pharsalia* 4.402–581', *TAPhA* 120 (1990), 291–300, at 295. For a narrowly epistemic account of moral luck see N. Richards, 'Luck and desert', in Statman (n. 13), 167–80.

[24] *totumque in partibus unis bellorum fecere nefas* (4.548–9). See R. Sklenár, *The Taste for Nothingness: A Study of* Virtus *and Related Themes in Lucan's* Bellum Civile (Ann Arbor, 2003), 31–2.

[25] For suicide in the Vulteius episode see T. D. Hill, *Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature* (New York, 2004), 218–21 and 232. Compare Sen. *Ep.* 70.24–7, but note a telling contrast: unlike Vulteius and his men, Seneca's barbarian kills *himself* instead of killing *others*.

[26] 6.147–8. Like Vulteius, Scaeva wishes to receive as well as to deserve praise (6.158–60), and in 6.132–3, shortly before Scaeva's appearance, there is a programmatic remark similar to 4.469–70; see also 6.168–9. For further comparisons between these two scenes see Ahl (n. 6), 117–21.

[27] In 6.254 it is uncertain whether Scaeva has more than the *species* of *virtus*, but see 6.169, 229, 240 and 262. For the context and problems of Scaeva's bid to exemplify *virtus* see Leigh (n. 23), 158–90.

[28] *infelix, quanta dominum virtute parasti* (6.262); see also the description of other circumstances in which he would have been *felix* (257–9). Some criticism of Scaeva's actions seems to have overlooked his bad luck; see Ahl (n. 6), 119 and Sklenár (n. 24), 47–58 (*infelix* and *felix* surface in 58, but seem to be underused in Sklenár's account). Scaeva's very name of course suggests bad luck; see J. G. W. Henderson, *Fighting for Rome: Poets and Caesars, History and Civil War* (Cambridge, 1998), 171–6.

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The lack of opportunity for proper employment of virtue also returns to haunt Cato in the ninth book, and in a manner reminiscent of Vulteius' predicament. Cato's men seem to have no hope of victory, and although their leader, like Vulteius, provides them with a monumental exploit, the narrative gives us grounds for disquiet with his proposal. After Pompey's death his troops claim that their cause is dead (9.230) and that Caesar's rule has been forced on them (241). Cato successfully aborts their attempt at desertion, reminding them that Pompey's death has given them a *worthy* cause.[29] But a problem remains: what can he now hope to achieve? Cato's solution is a hellish safari. He offers the rigours of a journey through the desert as 'a great feat of virtue' (9.381), presenting its very dangers as suitable enticement (390) and as 'sweet to virtue' (402–3), and arguing that only the evils of Africa can dignify their flight (405–6).[30]

One episode from his journey calls for special comment. As they pass near the temple of Ammon, Cato rejects Labienus' suggestion that he consult its oracle, noting that he already knows the answer to a range of questions about the merits of an endeavour such as theirs (566–72). Some of his unasked questions bear on the theme of moral luck:

> an noceat vis nulla bono Fortunaque perdat
> opposita virtute minas, laudandaque velle
> sit satis et numquam successu crescat honestum? (9.569–71)

Whether no violence harms a good man, and Fortune wastes her threats when virtue is set against her? Whether admirable will is enough and nobility never grows with success?

Now Cato fails not only to pose these questions to the oracle, but to say how he himself would answer them. We should not, I think, provide answers for him on the strength of this passage. As his speech will later include some Stoic theology, it might seem natural to assume that Cato would provide suitably Stoic replies to these questions about virtue, asserting the independence of the good man's virtue and happiness from fortune. But Lucan is surely putting us on our guard when he describes Cato's response as *oracular* (565),[31] particularly given that other characters have been misled by, or warned about, the ambiguities of oracles (5.224–7, 6.770–3). Furthermore it is precisely the issues of virtue's security from disaster and independence from success that will confront the reader in Cato's subsequent encounter with the horrors of the desert. So I suggest that, in Cato's reply to Labienus, Lucan is

[29] See section II below.

[30] Cato first tackles the perils of the Syrtes, but this endeavour is described in a similar way: *hanc audax sperat sibi cedere virtus* (302). For *virtus* as motivation for the expedition through the desert see also 371, 407 and 445. The emphasis on Cato's *virtus* might be thought to indicate that Lucan wishes to portray him as a Stoic sage, but the value ascribed to external risk and effort suggests otherwise. On a Stoic account, Cato's enthusiasm for external risks is misplaced; a Stoic hero would need no such risks to exercise his heroism, and while he *could* of course react virtuously to external perils, he would value not the danger but the virtue and practical reasoning with which he responds. Nussbaum has argued that Seneca's *Medea* contrasts 'traditional Roman heroism', which relishes adventure and achievement, with Stoic heroism, which values only virtue, and depicts the latter as unattractively inactive; see *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 1994), 466–9. For further discussion of Cato's Stoicism in this scene see p. 195 below.

[31] Leigh (n. 23), 266, n. 84 compares this passage with Lucr. 5.110–13, but seems to miss an important contrast. Whereas Cato's response is 'worthy' of an oracle (and so, on my account, equally liable to mislead), Lucretius declares his account to be *superior* to an oracle.

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flagging his questions as problems for these later passages rather than declaring them solved at this stage.[32]

A rather nuanced answer to Cato's questions emerges from Lucan's description of his troops' ordeal. Fortune's threats are ineffective, in that they consistently fail to deter or daunt Cato, who is said to 'challenge' her 'every hour'.[33] But they are not unreal, and it is indeed important for our appraisal of Cato's enterprise whether he succeeds in crossing the desert or loses his entire army. Cato's men are not merely afflicted by thirst and heat, for the desert's snakes mete out a series of spectacular deaths, and Cato thus seems at risk of becoming a second Odysseus, squandering the lives of his entire band of companions.[34] His men lament that their suffering is merited, a penalty for their invasion of forbidden territory (854–62); as they recognize, the entire obliteration of an expedition inevitably influences moral assessment of the undertaking.[35] But if it matters whether at least a remnant survive, then Cato's virtue needs good luck as its ally, for virtue alone cannot ensure successful traversal of the desert. And it is *Fortune* who saves them, sending the Psylli to repel the snakes and heal stricken soldiers.[36] So Cato, unlike Vulteius, is vindicated, but in a manner that once again emphasizes the influence of luck on moral judgement.

II

In my last passage Fortune came to Cato's aid, albeit after savaging his army with the threat of extermination, and we have already seen Fortune engineering justification for Caesar's cause in 1.264–5. I now turn to other passages where characters enjoy moral good luck, looking particularly at the fortunes of Pompey and his army.[37] At the opening of the ninth book the shade of the dead Pompey springs up from his ashes and is transported to join the 'demigods' of 'fiery virtue' and blameless life (9.1–9). After taking in its new surroundings and mocking the mockery inflicted on its corpse (11–14) it descends to set up home in Brutus' breast and Cato's mind, but this descent also seems part of Pompey's triumph, for it is in these men that it will avenge the evils it suffered (17–18).

Pompey's posthumous reward and triumph may come as a surprise, particularly given the moral terms in which they are couched.[38] For Lucan has not consistently described Pompey's motives as virtuous or his conduct as innocent. It is suggested that his reasons for entering the war were rivalry (1.120–6) and ambition (2.320–2),

[32] See also n. 64 below.

[33] 9.883. For Cato's resilience see 410, 505–10, 587–93, 611–18, 881–9. He evidently doubts his men's resilience, however (761–2).

[34] See P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge, 1993), 11.

[35] For the punitive nature of the troops' suffering see E. Fantham, 'Lucan's Medusa-excursus: its design and purpose', *MD* 29 (1992), 95–120, at 108–9.

[36] *vix miseris serum tanto lassata periclo auxilium Fortuna dedit* (4.890–1). See Sklenár (n. 24), 98. Note that Lucan does not credit Cato with discovering or recruiting the Psylli, and so makes their intervention purely fortuitous; contrast Plut. *Cat. Min.* 56.

[37] There are other examples of such good luck. Lucan says that Fortune showed greatest favour to Caesar when she made his cause 'better' (4.255–9). Luck also denies Caesar the crime of murdering Pompey (5.64) and forces courage on Curio (4.798), despite his earlier timorousness (694, 702, 748). Sklenár (n. 24), 43, claims that Lucan could not have countenanced the notion of a *forced* virtue, as 'true courage is an intrinsic quality of character', but I can see no basis for this claim in Lucan's text.

[38] See M. L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages: I. Stoicism in Classical Latin Literature* (Leiden, 1985), 255; Johnson (n. 19), 70.

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rather than more exalted causes, and his nerve is less than 'fiery' after his decisive clash with Caesar. In 7.654–77 Lucan suggests that his flight from Pharsalia stemmed from anxiety for the lives of his troops (as well as from craving the sight of his wife), rather than from cowardice, and that Pompey took his exit with his dignity and composure intact (680–9).[39] But at the start of Book 8 he cuts a more timid figure, dismayed by the noise of trees and panicking for his life whenever approached by a companion (8.5–12).[40] Book 8 also sees Pompey proposing a desperate alliance with the Parthians (211–38, 289–327), a suggestion forcefully decried by Lentulus, who levels charges at Pompey in terms 'worthy of a recent consul'.[41] The book also contains praise of Pompey's achievements (679–86, 807–15) and fortitude in death (618–36, 663–7), but we may feel that his forthcoming ascension is nonetheless unwarranted.[42]

Some have resolved the discrepancy by belittling Pompey's triumph at the start of Book 9. It has been noted, for example, that Pompey's shade does not remain in the stratosphere but returns to earth.[43] But this fails to explain why Pompey should merit the company of the innocent in the first place, a reward which Lucan has taken care to anticipate in 6.802–5. And I suggest that this reward can only be explained if we look further afield, beyond Pompey's character and behaviour, to events outside his control.

There are three such events from which Pompey seems to profit morally. The first is Caesar's victory at Pharsalia.[44] Caesar, Pompey and the narrator all agree that the battle's outcome will affect the moral worth of the antagonists. Caesar claims not only that victory will *prove* him just and retain his arbitration of his men's innocence (7.259–60, 263), but that the battle will *make* the loser guilty (260); he thus implies that Pharsalia will influence as well as reveal moral worth.[45] With this Pompey and the

[39] But, as Leigh (n. 23), 138–9 notes, Lucan's description of Pompey as *non tergo tela pavens* (7.678) is hardly flattering.

[40] See also *trepidus* (8.35) and *pavidus* (39). The contrast between Book 8 and Pompey's equanimity in Book 7 is noted in Ahl (n. 6), 168–9; S. Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood: A Reading of Lucan's Civil War* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), 95; E. Narducci, *Lucano: un'epica contro l'impero* (Rome, 2002), 324–7.

[41] 8.330. He accuses Pompey of being broken by Pharsalia (331, 344) and of using devotion to freedom as an excuse for war (339–40).

[42] And Pompey meets death unflinchingly in order to gain steadfast love from his wife and son (8.634–5) and fame with posterity (622–7); it seems little has changed since his love of fame was first mentioned in 1.131. (I find little in the text to support the suggestion of Narducci [n. 40], 333–4, that Pompey courts significantly different types of 'fame' in the two passages.) On the theatricality of Pompey's death see M. Malamud, 'Pompey's head and Cato's snakes', *CPh* 98 (2003), 31–44, at 33–6. Pompey's character has been discussed at length. B. M. Marti suggested that Pompey makes moral progress during the poem, 'slowly striving toward the good' ('The meaning of the *Pharsalia*', *AJPh* 66 [1945], 352–76, at 367); this interpretation would make sense of his ascension in Book 9 but now seems out of favour, and rightly so, given Pompey's conduct in Book 8. See also Ahl (n. 6), 155; Bartsch (n. 40), ch. 3; Fantham (n. 12), 33–4; Narducci (n. 40), ch. 11 (particularly the suggestion at 330–1 that Lucan has two distinct programmes in his account of Pompey); Sklenár (n. 24), 107.

[43] See Hardie (n. 34), 42; Sklenár (n. 24), 127. Hardie adds: 'more worryingly still, this monolith of Stoic virtue has split in two'. I find this additional concern rather mysterious; Pompey is re-embodied to exact vengeance from Caesar, and why should *two* avengers be worse than one?

[44] For moral bad luck at Pharsalia see 7.58–9, 486–8. Note that those who triumph in life and receive a lavish funeral are barred from the posthumous reward given to Pompey (9.10–11); it is as well for Pompey, then, that he lost at Pharsalia.

[45] Compare 1.203; as Ahl (n. 6), 211, notes, the tense of *erit* suggests that 'victory will establish who is innocent, as far as Caesar is concerned; and he is confident of victory'.

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narrator agree, but they suggest that it is rather the victor who incurs (and thus the loser who is spared) guilt. Before the battle Pompey notes glumly that while the loser will suffer every evil, the victor will commit every crime (7.122–3).[46] And after Caesar's victory the narrator urges Pompey to 'pity' Caesar (7.701), and to trust the 'gods' and 'the prolonged favour of fate'; 'to win was worse' (705–6).

Second, Pompey is said to have been fortunate in his death. Cato's description of the dead Pompey is deeply ambivalent about his character, as scholars have noted, but also states that Pompey was *lucky* to have died when he did, for his murderers forced on him the violent end he should have sought after defeat.[47] Cato adds that Pompey might have endured Caesar's tyranny, a disgrace which his murder has now eliminated (9.210); in light of Pompey's thwarted plans to appeal to Parthia in Book 8, it does indeed seem that his death has forestalled future discredit. And, third, Pompey's opposition to Caesar is vindicated by its survival and moral triumph in Cato and Brutus. This is surely why Pompey is said to reside in them after his ascent (9.15–18); in Brutus' assassination and in Cato's imperviousness to defeat (*invicti*, 9.18) Pompey prevails over Caesar and avenges the crimes he and others have suffered.

So events conspire to make Pompey fit for such hallowed company. And Cato and Brutus themselves, together with Pompey's other troops, also enjoy such good luck. For Pompey's flight, defeat and death elevate their cause from their leader's ambition to lofty ideals.[48] As Pompey flees Pharsalia Lucan urges him to leave, for after his departure his men were no longer dying merely for him.[49] With Pompey defeated they have a cause that merits Cato's devotion (9.23–4); with Pompey dead 'the entire party was a party of freedom' (29–30), fighting for the republic rather than an alternative tyrant. Cato is quick to remind his troops of their moral elevation when they are poised to desert (9.258–60, 262–5), describing Ptolemy's murder of Pompey as a 'gift' to them (268) as well as to Caesar (278), and the narrator concludes this scene by noting that their war was now a 'just' one (293). Thus in his very defeat and death Pompey both dispenses and enjoys moral good fortune.

III

I now address some general questions about the nature and target of Lucan's reflections on moral luck, comparing his treatment of this theme with portraits of his poem in recent scholarship. We should note first the extent to which his characters and narrator *agree* that luck influences moral worth; where disagreement surfaces, it is over the nature of its influence in particular cases. Caesar, as we have seen, asserts that Pharsalia will make the loser guilty (7.260); when he is corrected it is not for attributing moral import to such an event, but for seeing in defeat moral *bad* luck

[46] The contrast between this passage and 7.259–62 is noted in Hardie (n. 34), 25.

[47] *o felix, cui summa dies fuit obvia victo et cui quaerendos Pharium scelus obtulit enses* (9.208–9). Pompey also describes himself as *felix* as he is murdered (8.630). For the ambivalence of Cato's description of Pompey's character see Bartsch (n. 40), 84; Johnson (n. 19), 71; Sklenár (n. 24), 84.

[48] For the problematic nature of Pompey's leadership see Leigh (n. 23), 143–8.

[49] *fuge proelia dira ac testare deos nullum, qui perstet in armis, iam tibi, Magne, mori* (7.689–91); see Narducci (n. 40), 323–4. Pompey's flight does not merely show that these men do not die for him, but also allows them to die for other causes; they are said not to die for him 'now' that he has fled (691, 694). For their allegiance to Pompey see 7.137–8 and 9.227–30. Contrast the merely epistemic significance of Pompey's flight for the *senators* (696–7); unlike Pompey's devotees, they were fighting for the Senate all along (compare 5.13–14), and Pompey's departure merely allows them to make this obvious.

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rather than good fortune. In this agreement about the reality of moral luck we have an exception to 'the ethical contradictions' that have been said to 'fill Lucan's poem'.[50] And, at least in the case of Pompey, moral luck is an explanation for, as well as an exception to, such contradictions. For Lucan vacillates about Pompey's moral worth not out of artful (or helpless) self-contradiction but because of a generous conception of the sort of events that influence moral judgement.

Lucan's treatment of moral luck is also, I suggest, an exception to recent claims that he has a narrowly *linguistic* interest in ethical questions. Lucan is certainly attentive to inappropriate uses of moral terms in the chaos of civil war; in the second line of his epic he announces that a theme will be legitimated crime, and later he has the astrologer Nigidius Figulus announce that in the coming war crime will be called 'virtue' (or 'valour') (*virtus*, 1.667–8). Scholars have rightly drawn attention to these lines, and some have suggested that Lucan sets himself the more ambitious project of showing *inherent* problems of language, as well as unscrupulous or inaccurate uses of moral vocabulary in war.[51] But I do not think that these programmatic lines from Book 1 look forward to the discussions of moral luck we have examined. Take the example of Scaeva, who is said not to know 'how great a crime valour is in civil war' (6.147–8). The problem is not that he *calls* his criminal action 'valour', and indeed Lucan's narrator himself readily uses *virtus* to describe Scaeva and his behaviour.[52] The issue is more directly a moral one; Scaeva has failed to grasp that in civil war valour really *is* crime, because it can only be exercised through the criminal slaughter of fellow-citizens.[53] Scholars are right to see a challenge in Lucan's reflections on moral judgement, but, at least in the scenes we have studied, Lucan is pressing on the reader a broad notion of what can make for or hinder virtue and innocence, rather than assailing such vocabulary *per se*.

So much for the general nature of Lucan's challenge; what of its target? First and foremost, did Lucan intend his reflections on luck to cause unease specifically for Stoics? While it has been claimed that Lucan's poem is generally Stoic in outlook,[54]

[50] M. B. Roller, *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton, 2001), 11; see also 28 and 51. For talk of Lucan's 'fractured voice' see J. Masters, *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan's Bellum Civile* (Cambridge, 1992), 90. See also the claim of Bartsch (n. 40), 2–3, that the poem is torn between political commitment to Pompey's cause and equal distrust of both sides.

[51] Compare Thuc. 3.82.3–7 and Sall. *Cat.* 52.11, where respectively 'customary' usage and 'true' description are abandoned. Bartsch (n. 40), 49–50, finds 'language under abuse' in Lucan and argues that Lucan's uses of paradox 'effectively demonstrate the dangerous pliability of language that renders it an unstable tool for the maintenance of ethical or political norms'. See also the claim of Sklenár (n. 24), 2, that in Lucan's 'random' world 'the associations between words and their meanings are completely arbitrary' (similar claims are made at 10 and 12). J. Wildberger makes a good case against Sklenár's claim that in Lucan words lose their proper sense, but she also seems to make Lucan's challenge a linguistic one, suggesting that in his poem words lose their *reference* ('*Quanta sub nocte iaceret nostra dies* [Lucan. 9,13f.]—Stoizismen als Mittel der Verfremdung bei Lucan', in C. Walde [ed.], *Lucan im 21. Jahrhundert* [Munich, 2005], 56–88). My thanks to Jula Wildberger for sending me an early draft of her paper.

[52] See n. 27 above.

[53] Compare Cato's claim that he will be made guilty by the gods (2.288); Bartsch (n. 40), 119, claims that in this passage Cato's 'ironic usage of ethical terminology aligns him with the epic's central concern with language's collapse into paradox'. But the mere use of such terms is not flagged as problematic in this scene; besides, surely his use of 'ethical terminology' indicates the *ethical* nature of his plight.

[54] See Marti (n. 42). For a more recent Stoic reading of Lucan's poem see D. George, 'Lucan's Caesar and Stoic οἰκείωσις theory: the Stoic fool', *TAPhA* 118 (1988), 331–41.

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recent scholarship has argued that Lucan at most makes selective use of Stoic thought.[55] And scholars have even suggested that Lucan sets out to combat Stoicism, finding in our text 'systematic opposition between Cato's Stoic ideal and the universe in which he attempts to practice it'.[56] Do we have an example of such opposition in the passages discussed above?

Lucan's discussions of moral luck certainly make or presuppose claims with which Stoics would disagree.[57] These passages not only assume that agents are judged for what they *do* as well as for their moral character, but suggest that at least some actions can be assessed without regard to character or intention. This explains why Lucan welcomes Pompey's flight from Pharsalia, for after his exit his devoted supporters were automatically fighting for freedom and legality, and such an act intrinsically merits praise.[58] Similarly, certain types of action seem to be inescapably culpable, such as killing fellow-citizens, supporting a prospective tyrant, and withdrawing from a cataclysmic civic crisis. And having a virtuous character does not ensure that one will not commit such acts. In Book 2 Cato and Brutus will inevitably be at fault, despite their virtue and laudable intentions: inherently reprehensible actions are their only options.

But Stoics claim that the moral character of an agent guarantees the moral character of his or her actions. For *all* the actions of a virtuous sage are executed in a virtuous manner, thanks to the correct reasoning and virtue to which they conform. Analogously all the actions of an inferior agent tally with his or her vices and are performed 'badly'.[59] And Stoics maintain that actions should be distinguished according to the agent's moral 'disposition', arguing that a virtuous agent's distinctive 'function' is not a type of action, such as looking after parents, but performing actions out of moral expertise.[60] Indeed, Stoics claim that various apparently

[55] Ahl (n. 6), 7; Colish (n. 38), 252–75; Fantham (n. 12), 9, 77–8; C. Gill, 'The school in the Roman Imperial period', in B. Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge, 2003), 33–58, at 57–8.

[56] Sklenár (n. 19), 281; compare Sklenár (n. 24), 10. See also the description by Henderson (n. 28), 209–10, of 'the breakdown of One, Stoic, World of inspirited matter', and the claim of Johnson (n.19), 45, that Lucan is 'ridiculing … the fading dreams of an impoverished Stoicism'. Leigh (n. 23), 267–73, reads Cato's expedition in Book 9 as an attack on Stoicism.

[57] Note that the disagreement is directly ethical; the scholarship cited above (nn. 55–6) tends to emphasize Lucan's deviations from Stoic cosmology and theology. I know of no rival philosophical school which would have endorsed the position I ascribe to Lucan; if we are to search for precedents, the dilemma of Cato and Brutus, for example, seems to owe more to *tragedy* than philosophy. With Cato's claim that he will be made guilty by the gods compare Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, where Juno plots to incriminate Hercules (96–9, 121–2) and the characters debate whether Hercules is guilty of the crime Juno chooses (1200–1, 1237–8, 1264–6, 1278). A similar debate occurs in Seneca's *Oedipus*, where Jocasta claims that fate makes nobody guilty (1019), and yet both she and Oedipus clearly feel guilty for their fated offences (875–9, 936–8, 1024–31). See also n. 30 above.

[58] The senators, however, are depicted differently; see n. 49 above.

[59] Stob. *Ecl.* 2.65.12–14, 2.66.14–67.4 and 2.99.9–12; included as 3.557, 3.560 and 3.567 respectively in H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* [*SVF*] (Leipzig, 1903–5). The second passage is included as 61G in A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1987). Compare Seneca's claims that the sage keeps in mind the *reasoning* behind all actions, rather than the outcome, and that fortune cannot pass 'judgement' on him (*Ep.* 14.16). The Stoics maintained, however, that few if any sages had ever existed; see, for example, R. Brouwer, 'Sagehood and the Stoics', *OSAPh* 23 (2002), 181–224.

[60] Sext. Emp. *Math.* 11.200–1 (*SVF* 3.516, Long and Sedley 59G). But consideration of the type of action performed could supplement a Stoic analysis, for some wrong actions fail not only because of the agent's disposition but also because they involve the contrary or omission of a

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reprehensible actions are appropriate in certain circumstances, and so would be virtuous if executed by a moral expert, despite belonging to a generally objectionable type of action.[61] So laudable or reprehensible actions cannot be foisted upon a Stoic agent regardless of his or her character. This claim is central to the school's defence of our moral responsibility, and could be exploited by a Stoic to challenge Lucan's examples of moral luck.[62]

But we should not infer from this that Lucan sets out specifically to counter Stoic ethics, for in these examples he fails to indicate opposition to Stoicism, even when a signal opportunity presents itself. The historical Cato was a Stoic, and Lucan's epic contains passages which note Cato's Stoicism or use it to explain his behaviour.[63] And so we might assume that Cato will serve as a hostile foil to Lucan's account of moral luck, a stooge confident of his resilience against fortune and set up for correction by the narrator or another character. But, as we have seen, in Book 2 Cato accepts that fortune has assigned him only guilty courses of action (2.288). And at the temple of Ammon Cato does not indicate how he would answer questions about virtue's response to fortune's threats (9.569–71), stating confidence in death's inevitability rather than in virtue's invulnerability, and indeed declaring the former to be answer enough (583–4).[64]

Perhaps, however, Cato's acquiescence in Book 2 shows that Lucan is subjecting Stoic ethics to a more subtle critique, choosing to portray Cato as a Stoic condemned out of his own mouth. It has been argued that in his encounter with Brutus Cato himself serves 'as the agent for the subversion of Stoic values'.[65] But it seems to me more accurate to speak of omission than of subversion, for in Cato's discussion with Brutus Lucan makes startlingly little of their philosophical allegiances. Brutus' own affiliation was not to Stoicism but to Antiochus' renovated Platonism,[66] and yet from

'proper' or 'befitting' action. See T. Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate* (Oxford, 2005), 171–3 and Long and Sedley (n. 59), 367. For Stoic texts emphasizing the importance of an agent's *intentions* see their accounts of the sage's use of falsehoods, presented and discussed in S. Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1998), 271–4. My thanks to Malcolm Schofield for bringing this example to my attention.

[61] An example is self-mutilation (Diog. Laert. 7.109, Long and Sedley 59E). See also Cic. *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 24.

[62] See Bobzien (n. 60), 250–5. But, as Bobzien later notes (290–301), Stoics might concede that we are subject to 'constitutive' moral luck (see n.13 above); see also Williams (n. 2), 20.

[63] See the description of Cato's *secta* in 2.380–3, and in particular Cato's resolve to 'follow nature' and devotion to 'the whole world'. For commentary see Fantham (n. 12), 150. Later Lucan uses Stoic theology to explain Cato's refusal to consult the oracle of Ammon (9.573–80), giving 'a fully Stoic rationale for avoiding a practice that most of the Stoics sanctioned' (Colish [n. 38], 257). There is also some play with Stoicism in 2.287–8, but here Lucan seems to be toying with expectations that his Cato will be consistently Stoic rather than flagging opposition to Stoic ethics. Even scholars who question the extent of Lucan's commitment to Stoicism see in his Cato a portrait (or caricature) of the Stoic sage; see e.g. Colish (n. 38), 254, 270–3; Johnson (n. 19), 37–8; M. Leigh, 'Lucan and the Libyan tale', *JRS* 90 (2000), 95–109; Roller (n. 50), 53; Sklenár (n. 19).

[64] His depiction in Book 2 also tells against attributing to him replies of Stoic orthodoxy in Book 9. It might be objected that Lucan would hardly include Stoic theology in Cato's speech (see the preceding note) if he did not expect us to supply Stoic answers to Cato's ethical questions. But in Book 2 Lucan seems quite prepared to note that Cato's *secta* was Stoicism and yet give him a decidedly un-Stoic rationale (the power of irrational grief) for joining Pompey's camp.

[65] Sklenár (n. 24), 72. See also the suggestion that Cato's virtue is depicted as unstable and alarmingly frenzied in D. Herschkowitz, *The Madness of Epic: Reading Insanity from Homer to Statius* (Oxford, 1998), 231–46.

[66] See D. N. Sedley, 'The ethics of Brutus and Cassius', *JRS* 87 (1997), 41–53. Seneca argues that Brutus' assassination of Caesar was not true to Stoic teaching (*Ben*. 2.20.2).

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Lucan's account of his meeting with Cato one would hardly suspect that their loyalties differed, for Brutus presents himself as Cato's faithful acolyte (2.244–7). And their differences are not irrelevant to the looming political crisis; whereas a Platonist could look to Plato's *Republic* or *Statesman* for evaluations of various civic constitutions, the Stoic tradition shows much less interest in constitutional form.[67] But it is precisely constitutional change that Caesar threatens to impose, and so the nature of the political emergency makes Brutus' deference to a Stoic all the more surprising.[68]

Furthermore, Cato's own Stoicism is not used, either ironically or sympathetically, to justify his choice of response; as we have seen, he merely cites the psychological force of irrational grief to explain his commitment to the 'empty shade' of civic freedom (2.297–303). Instead Lucan suggests that Cato was stirred to action by overwhelming and avowedly irrational public-mindedness, repeatedly stressing this characteristic of Cato in both narrative and speeches.[69] Stoic moral thought, however, is significantly underused in one of the poem's principal reflections on moral luck, which suggests that Stoic ethics was not Lucan's specific target.[70]

And we can find other candidates. In one passage Lucan uses the theme of moral luck to pose a challenge to Romans who celebrate the achievements of their forebears. Cato has just refused to ask Ammon whether good will suffices and nobility is never enhanced by success (9.570–1); Lucan then turns to his reader and suggests that if our answer was 'yes', we should find merely luck in the exploits of our ancestors:

> si veris magna paratur
> fama bonis et si successu nuda remoto
> inspicitur virtus, quidquid laudamus in ullo
> maiorum, Fortuna fuit. (9.593–6)

If great renown is secured by true nobility and if virtue is examined by itself, in isolation from success, whatever we praise in any ancestor was Fortune.

Here Lucan poses a quandary for readers who deny the reality of moral luck: if they insist on merit uncontaminated by luck they will find no instance of it in their lauded heritage.[71] He proceeds to contrast martial exploits with Cato's triumph (596–604),

[67] See Sedley (n. 66), 48–50.

[68] Note that assimilation of Brutus and Cato in Book 2 helps to prepare for the later suggestion that they will *jointly* vindicate the dead Pompey (9.17–18). Scholars claim to have discovered a baffling range of philosophical allusions in Brutus' image of the unshaken stars and lower air (2.266–71): a reference to Epicurean *ataraxia* (Ahl [n. 6]), 237), a challenge to Stoic conflagration (George [n. 18], 250, n. 43) and an appeal to Stoic *ataraxia* and physics (Sklenár [n. 19], 287–8). But they are united in finding something partisan in the (surely unpartisan) claim that the motion of the heavenly bodies, unlike air near the earth, is not disturbed by the weather. See Fantham (n. 12), 130.

[69] See 2.239–41, 295–7, 301–3, 308–13, 315–20, 374–8, 382–3, 388–91.

[70] Scholars have already noted that Cato is not portrayed in strict accordance with Stoicism in this scene. See Ahl (n. 6), 240–4; Bartsch (n. 40), 117–23; Fantham (n. 12), 149; Sedley (n. 66), 50, n. 55; Wildberger (n. 51). Contrast, e.g., Cato's use of the image of cosmic collapse (2.289–97) to stress the *magnitude* of the political crisis with Seneca's stance in *Dial.* 11.1.2; see Narducci (n. 40), 398–401.

[71] Compare Pliny's suggestion that courageous exploits may be the achievements of Fortune rather than virtue (*HN* 7.104). Pliny argues, however, that we find an instance of virtue *overcoming* Fortune in M. Sergius Silus, crippled and disabled in war and yet without due reward (7.104–6); see Beagon (n. 6) for discussion of the philosophical and cultural contexts of Pliny's account. A reader for *CQ* suggests to me that in 9.593–6 Lucan has in mind this sort of precedent, where a man's misfortune and failure guarantee that we admire his virtue and not his luck, and compares Polyb. 6.58, where the republic's greatness is clearest in its response to

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but Cato himself will soon provide an example of Lucan's point, needing fortune's help to save him from the moral disaster of losing an entire army (890–1).

Finally, Lucan's interest in this theme surely poses a challenge to any reader who wishes morally to appraise his characters. Cato, Pompey and Caesar himself are all unexpectedly vindicated or justified by good fortune, and this confirms Lucan's warning about the dangers of weighing the merits of the antagonists (1.126–7). For moral judgement is inevitably complicated by the breadth of factors Lucan urges us to take into account; we cannot look simply to character as described in the poet's narrative and as reflected in intentions. This general challenge to Lucan's readers is still very much alive. Lucan's theme may be philosophical, but we do his treatment of moral luck an injustice if we restrict its addressees to partisans of an ancient philosophical school.[72]

St Catharine's College, Cambridge ALEX LONG
al241@cam.ac.uk

adversity. I agree that Lucan sketches a picture of virtue untainted by luck, but he does so only to *deny* that we will find any instance of it in our admired ancestors.

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