AUFERTE OCULOS: MODES OF SPECTATORSHIP IN STATIUS *THEBAID* 11

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RECENT STUDIES OF SPECTATORSHIP in Roman epic have examined the relationship between the acts of observation performed by the characters and the reader's attempt to impose meaning on the text.[1] Though the omniscient narrators of epic generate the illusion of faithful representation, they never present narrative material from an ideologically neutral position, and their emotionally engaged focalization always admits affective elements.[2] The reader must constitute knowledge from a mass of competing focalizations in complex narrative situations where multiple focalizers in addition to the narrator contribute their perspectives. Characters' exercise of their limited powers of observation can also reveal ironic contrasts between the focalized spectator's partial knowledge and the focalizing narrator's omniscience. For example, Vergil's *Aeneid* presents the contrast between Aeneas' "uncomprehending" viewing of the shield made for him by Vulcan and the fuller knowledge of the god and the narrator.[3]

This paper investigates Statius' sophisticated manipulation of epic traditions of spectatorship in the duel between Eteocles and Polynices in *Thebaid* 11. The narrative carefully differentiates the varied audiences of the duel in terms of their authority and responsibility by attending to their particular modes of spectatorship. I argue that the narrative destabilizes the reader's view of the fratricidal duel by either removing or compromising several kinds of authorizing gaze (including divine, regal, paternal, and narratorial) from the narrative. Through the characters' varied and contradictory focalizations of the duel, the narrative complicates the

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[1] In a discussion of the viewing of the epic battlefield in both Lucan and Statius, Lovatt (1999: 126) argues that "viewing is always potentially a metaphor for reading, and the battlefield in all its gore and glory can be one figurative representation of the epic poem." The affective terms in which viewers report their acts of observation can increase emotional intensity (Mader 1997) and also serve as markers of genre: La Penna (1987) analyzes multiple uses of the poetic formula *vidi*, including "evocativo-patetico," "didascalico," and "gnomico-paradigmatico." Spectatorship in Roman epic has also been read in social and political terms: watching the games of *Aeneid* 5 acts as a "socializing process" for the observers (Feldherr 1995: 247), while the responses of Lucan's engaged or dispassionate observers reflect partisan affiliations through their spectatorship.

[2] Fowler (1990) provides a ground-breaking study of "deviant focalization" in the *Aeneid*. More recently, Laird (1999: 98) has argued that in the absence of a zero degree of focalization, all focalization is necessarily "deviant." For the study of focalization in Greek epic, cf. de Jong 1987. For omniscient narrators as emotionally invested focalizers, cf. Phelan 2001.

[3] Aeneas is *rerum ignarus* (Verg. *Aen.* 8.730) as he views the shield, while its maker is *haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi* (8.627).

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identification between the spectators and their purported representatives. Finally, by contrasting the narrator's focalization of the duel with that of *Pietas* and other characters, the *Thebaid* places the exemplarity and representability of spectacle in question.

As the Furies prepare to drive Eteocles and Polynices into single combat, Jupiter orders the other gods to look away (*auferte oculos*, 11.126). Jupiter will not be the only character in a position of authority who refuses to watch the duel, nor the last to argue that watching brings untoward consequences. Before the duel begins, the Argive king Adrastus flees from Thebes after failing to persuade the opposed armies that they should not watch the unspeakable sight (11.429–446). The blind king Oedipus is physically unable to watch the combat, but immediately repents his earlier malevolence after the death of his sons (11.605–626; cf. Franchet d'Espèrey 1999: 297–309). Statius' brothers kill each other as various masculine authorities, such as gods, kings, and their own father, resign control of the battlefield to the Furies. While several readers have argued that the gods neglect their moral responsibility by refusing to watch the combat,[4] comparatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the choices made by many other individuals and groups either to observe the fratricidal duel or to avoid watching the spectacle. These observers include most of the epic's surviving major characters, as well as the Theban and Argive armies, the ghosts of Theban ancestors, the Furies, and the figure of *Pietas*. Far from being detached or impassive spectators, these characters' focalizations of the fratricidal duel involve the use of highly emotive rhetoric. The act of watching prompts a different response in each spectator, evoking emotions such as sadistic pleasure, amazement, or repentance.

The narrative of *Thebaid* 11 contrasts the modes of spectatorship of the multiple audiences of the duel with the readerly expectations already encoded by preceding epic tradition. As many readers have observed, the characters of Flavian epic themselves often demonstrate awareness of the models presented by their literary forebears.[5] The audiences of the single combat between Aeneas and Turnus in Vergil's *Aeneid*, the "example model" duel for subsequent epic (Conte 1986: 31), include a set of attentive and interfering gods, a marveling king, and armies that share some degree of identification with the combatants. These audiences' critical spectatorship and their ability to interfere with or certify the outcome are constitutive features of duel narratives.[6] When the characters

[4] For example, Feeney (1991: 357) argues that "the Olympians must surrender their claims to moral authority," while Franchet d'Espèrey (1999: 361) concludes that the gods' collective abandonment of the action to the Furies is the epic's "scandale moral et théologique majeur." Cf. further Hershkowitz 1998a: 266–267; Dominik 1994: 25; Henderson 1991: 59.

[5] Zissos (2002: 77) terms this self-consciousness on the part of the characters "metaliterary competence." For characters' awareness of literary tradition in Statius, cf. Feeney 1991: 340–343; Hershkowitz 1997: 50–51; in Valerius' *Argonautica*, cf. Feeney 1991: 319–320; Zissos 2002: 77–78.

[6] For armies as spectators and referees of duels in ancient and medieval epic, cf. Udwin 1999: 9, 90.

of the *Thebaid* choose to observe or to turn away from the duel, they present self-conscious responses to their literary forebears. In addition to its Homeric and Vergilian models, the *Thebaid* also appropriates and transforms spectatorship motifs provided by Roman historiography, Senecan tragedy, and the epics of Vergil's successors.[7] The various audiences' reactions indicate the disavowal of divine and regal authority and the failure of identification between the armies and their representative combatants. The narrator complicates his own focalization of the narrative events through his own self-conscious and contradictory reactions to the duel. The narrative exploits the tension between the characters' claims that the event is unspeakable (*nefas*), the narrator's initial dismay that future generations will recall it, and his representation of the *Thebaid* in the epic's coda as a text consumed and remembered by an eager readership (Georgacopoulou 1998; Malamud 1995). Through the episode of the fratricidal duel, the *Thebaid* raises the larger question of the exemplarity and representability of spectacle.

I. THE DISAVOWAL OF AUTHORITY: JUPITER AND ADRASTUS

The gods' refusal to watch the duel in *Thebaid* 11 presents a contrast to the epic tradition that encodes them as authoritative observers. All the Homeric gods watch the duel between Achilles and Hector (*Il.* 22.166), while Vergil's Jupiter and Juno watch the duel between Aeneas and Turnus (*Aen.* 12.791–792). Homer's Zeus weighs the fates of Achilles and Hector on the scales as he watches their duel (*Il.* 22.208–213), as does Vergil's Jupiter during the duel between Aeneas and Turnus (*Aen.* 12.725–727). Unlike the *Thebaid*'s averse gods, the gods of earlier epic frequently intervene to affect the outcomes of duels. After obtaining Zeus' consent, for example, Athene makes a crucial intervention in the duel between Hector and Achilles. "With cunning" (κερδοσύνῃ, *Il.* 22.247), she persuades Hector in the guise of his brother Deiphobus to stand and fight, and restores Achilles' spear to him (*Il.* 22.276–277). Vergil's gods similarly intervene in the duel between Aeneas and Turnus: Juturna restores Turnus' sword and Venus helps Aeneas recover his spear, while Jupiter sends the Dira to end the combat (*Aen.* 12.783–787, 853–854). In Silius' *Punica*, partisan support for the dueling champions Hannibal and Scipio (who are delighted by divine observation: *laetus uterque / spectari superis*, *Pun.* 9.453–454) occasions a brief theomachy between Mars and Pallas until a watchful Jupiter interrupts them (*Pun.* 9.438–485). In the *Thebaid*, however, the Furies' arrival impels Jupiter to avert his gaze (*visusque nocentibus arvis / abstulit*, 11.134–135). The narrator's use of the traditional epithet *omnipotens* ironically emphasizes the fact of Jupiter's *impotence* in his conflict with Tisiphone (*Theb.* 11.134; cf. 1.248, 10.634; Verg. *Aen.* 1.60, 4.25, 4.220, etc.; cf. Venini 1970: 44). The gods remaining on the battlefield (Virtus, Bellona,

[7] For Statius' use of Homeric and Vergilian models in the duel, cf. Juhnke 1972: 151–157; Venini 1970: *passim*. Delarue (2000: 91–116, 141–176) most recently reviews the *Thebaid*'s intertextual appropriation of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and Senecan tragedy.

Mars, and Minerva) flee as Dis appropriates Jupiter's thunder, the most potent symbol of his authority (*Theb.* 11.411–412). While Jupiter's intervention in the duels of earlier epic signifies his engagement with human affairs and active desire to regulate events on earth, his refusal to watch the duel and his surrender of the battlefield to the Furies is the culminating example of the failure of his authority.

Unlike the Iliadic gods, who indicate their supremacy over human affairs through their choice to observe or ignore combats, Statius' Jupiter leaves the Furies unchallenged in their takeover of the Theban battlefield and never again acts in the epic.[8] Earlier episodes in the *Thebaid* that feature foregone opportunities for spectatorship establish the limits of Jupiter's response to mortal affairs. Oedipus predicates the prayer to Tisiphone that begins the conflict between his sons on the fact that Jupiter has apparently neither watched his mistreatment by his sons nor responded with appropriate punishment (*et videt ista deorum / ignavus genitor?*, 1.79–80). Jupiter's belated resolution in the divine council to punish Thebes shows his lack of awareness of events on earth (1.214–247): Tisiphone has already created the strife between the brothers that ultimately leads to the war (1.114–151).[9] Even after resolving to destroy Thebes and Argos, Jupiter waits for three years before he remembers to look back at the cities' affairs. Only then, after observing the situation anew (*prospectans*, 3.219), does he order Mars to begin hostilities and reiterate his resolution to destroy the cities (3.219–220, 244–252). It requires further intercession, such as Juno's prayers on behalf of Hippomedon, to impel Jupiter to keep an eye on Thebes (*leviterque oculos ad moenia Cadmi / rettulit*, 9.520–521). The intermittent spectatorship of Jupiter in the *Thebaid* contrasts with the authoritative and fully cognizant observation of human affairs by his Homeric and Vergilian counterparts.[10]

Even as the narrator emphasizes Jupiter's failure to observe events on earth, other characters make the false assumption that Jupiter is both taking account of their activities and preparing to respond to their entreaties. Polynices consoles his wife Argia with the thought that Jupiter will aid him as soon as *Iustitia* takes notice of his undeserved exile (*Theb.* 2.358–360).[11] While Lycurgus correctly foretells

[8] For the spectatorship of the Iliadic gods, cf. Griffin 1980: 197–198. While Feeney (1991: 356) represents Jupiter's departure as predictable ("it appears that it is the norm for this Jupiter not to be watching the action"), Delarue (2000: 351) argues for the god's enduring influence on the narrative action ("rien ne se passe ensuite sans son aveu").

[9] For the genesis of strife between Eteocles and Polynices, see Hershkowitz 1998a: 260–266; Fantham 1997; Hill 1990: 105–106.

[10] Though the Vergilian Jupiter also has apparent moments of indifference to human affairs, they are rectified through his immediate response. For example, Iarbas' complaint regarding his neglect of Aeneas' ongoing presence in Carthage (*aspicis haec?*, Verg. *Aen.* 4.208) provokes immediate autopsy (*audiit Omnipotens, oculosque ad moenia torsit, Aen.* 4.220) and the dispatch of Mercury.

[11] Hershkowitz (1997: 37–42) identifies this allusion to Jupiter's consolation of Venus in the *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 1.254–296) as one of a series of *parce metu* scenes. She argues that the attempts of several characters (including Jupiter) to emulate the Vergilian Jupiter's authority and omniscience fail throughout the *Thebaid.*

the punishment that awaits the Argives, he misidentifies the reason as Jupiter's observation of his conflict with them over the death of his son Opheltes (*sed videt haec, videt ille deum regnator, et ausis, / sera quidem, manet ira tamen*, 5.688–689). Jupiter's anger against the Argives began before this occasion and rests on different justifications; furthermore, there is no indication that he is watching at present. Jupiter's refusal to watch the duel between Polynices and Eteocles invalidates Dis' assumption that he would take pleasure in observing it (*iuvet ista ferum spectare Tonantem*, 8.74). Both Polynices and Eteocles claim, sometimes incorrectly, that everything on the battlefield occurs under Jupiter's attentive and hostile gaze. For example, Eteocles assumes that Jupiter watched Tydeus' act of cannibalism (*dum videas haec, summe pater*, 9.22),[12] and Polynices that he helped to destroy him (9.71–72). In his prayer thanking Jupiter for striking Capaneus, Eteocles recalls the god's kinship ties to Thebes through Semele and invites him to gaze favorably on the Thebans as his "in-laws" (*soceros . . . / respicis*, 11.217–218). Eteocles does not realize, however, that Jupiter will not respond because he has already averted his gaze from Thebes (11.134–135); that he will not hear the prayer because the Fury has maliciously redirected it to his brother Dis (11.207–209); and that even if Jupiter were to receive the request, he would not honor it because he has earlier resolved to punish Thebes for the crimes of Oedipus (1.214–247). Eteocles' failed prayers, like Polynices' belief in a tardy *Iustitia*, rest on a false assumption of continual and/or sympathetic divine observation.[13] The revelations of the gods' lack of engagement, most often made available through the narrator's focalization, nullify the characters' justifications of their moral decisions through appeal to Olympian spectatorship. The narrative undermines trust in the gods' authority by introducing an ironic distance between the characters' beliefs in divine responsiveness and the reality of the gods' indifference.[14]

In stating his justification for covering the earth in cloud and preventing the gods from witnessing the duel, Jupiter alludes to earlier unspeakable crimes, such as the cannibalism of Tantalus and Lycaon, that have already tested the limits of the gods' powers of observation (11.126–129). Jupiter next alludes to the eclipse at the feast of Thyestes as his present justification for covering the earth in cloud in order to obscure the sight of the fratricidal duel (11.129–131). Through Jupiter's evocation of a lengthy literary tradition of divine response to

[12] Compare also Eteocles' subsequent taunt *non pudet hos manes, haec infamantia bellum / funera dis coram et caelo inspectante tueri?* (9.96–97).

[13] Other figures, however, correctly accuse Jupiter of failing to watch events on earth. In calling upon Theseus, Evadne wonders why Jupiter has not intervened to permit the burial of the Argive dead (*ubi illest / fulminis iniusti iaculator?*, 12.561–562), and Adrastus inquires *ubi iura deique?* (11.430) just before the fratricidal duel begins.

[14] Dominik (1994: 1–75) presents a powerful case for the hostility of Statius' gods. Their spectatorship exemplifies their indifference: Henderson (1991: 59, 77, n. 173) argues that "*aversion* of the gaze . . . is the Theban pattern," citing the examples of Apollo's aversion to watching the death of Amphiaraus and the reaction of the Dioscuri to the death of Alcidamas (7.789, 10.502).

human transgression,[15] the narrative invites comparison between the god's present retreat and his interventions in earlier epic. Jupiter in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, after watching a series of crimes committed by human beings (*quae pater ut summa vidit Saturnius arce, / ingemit, Met.* 1.163–164), undertakes an autopsy of affairs on earth in the hope of disproving human *infamia* (1.211–215). After observing Lycaon's crime (1.226–231) and punishing him with metamorphosis, he decides to destroy the human race as well. By destroying the human beings whom the Fury controlled, the deluge offers a means of countering her domination of the earth (cf. *qua terra patet, fera regnat Erinys*, 1.241). While Jupiter's punishments in the *Metamorphoses* represent the exercise of power without ethical justification (Anderson 1989), the *Thebaid*'s averse Jupiter has neither justification nor power at his disposal. He cannot bring about another deluge, and he has earlier complained that his thunderbolt is insufficient to curb human crimes (*Theb.* 1.214–218). His allusion to the Ovidian Jupiter's observation and active resistance to the Fury serves to emphasize his own impotence. Secondly, while the precedent of the eclipse might suggest a similar evasion of responsibility by the gods of earlier epic tradition, the narrator of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* in fact draws the opposite conclusion. For Lucan's narrator, the eclipse is proof that the gods once intervened in human affairs, while their lack of intervention at the battle of Pharsalus signifies for him that they no longer show any concern for mortals (Luc. 7.445–755; cf. 1.543–544).[16] By choosing not to intervene to prevent the fratricidal duel, however, the *Thebaid*'s Jupiter suggests that the gods were as disengaged in the mythical past as they were in Lucan's historical period. Their lack of sympathy for human affairs is no recent innovation but the typical condition, at least for Statius' unfortunate Thebans. While the eclipse served as a positive foil for Lucan's narrator, it constitutes the negative reality for Statius' characters.[17] Both of Jupiter's allusions to his counterparts' responses in epic tradition reveal his metaliterary awareness of his present insufficiency.

Jupiter's actions also negate the sympathetic dimension typically associated with the aversion of the divine gaze in epic. Divine observers in earlier epic often modify their spectatorship in response to the emotional pain of watching the deaths of their kin. Homer's Zeus "pities as he watches" (ἰδὼν ἐλέησε, *Il.*

[15] As Vessey (1973: 162, n. 13) notes, the eclipse is "almost a *topos*." Venini (1970: 41–42) lists three other references in Statius (*Theb.* 1.325, 2.184, 4.307–308), four in Ovid (*Am.* 3.12.39, *Her.* 16.207–208, *Pont.* 4.6.47–48, *Ib.* 429–434), as well as Prop. 3.22.30, Sen. *Thy.* 776–788, and Luc. 1.543–544. The *tristes nebulae* that shroud Lemnos on the night of the massacre are a comparable example of a meteorological attempt to conceal *nefas* (*Theb.* 5.183–185); cf. Dominik 1994: 59.

[16] Leigh (1997: 94) argues that Lucan "accuses Jupiter of watching, of reading the *Pharsalia* with a culpable absence of passion."

[17] Atreus' representation of the eclipse in Seneca's *Thyestes* suggests that human awareness of the limits of divine observation can provoke further transgression. Rather than using divine observation as a check on his behavior, Atreus laments that he cannot hold back *fugientes deos* (*Thy.* 893) and compel them to witness the cannibalistic feast prepared for Thyestes. Statian characters, however, arouse pathos through their incorrect assumptions that Jupiter is watching their actions.

16.431) Patroclus kill his son Sarpedon, although he continues to watch the battlefield as the armies battle over his son's corpse (*Il.* 16.644–645).[18] Valerius twice appropriates elements of the scene of Sarpedon's death in the *Argonautica* (Zissos 2002: 89, n. 75). The grief of Valerius' Jupiter causes the heavens to react sympathetically as he anticipates the death of his son Colaxes (*iamque pater maesto contristat sidera vultu*, Val. Flacc. 6.622). Valerius' Neptune, however, signifies "resignation to fate" by refusing to watch the death of his son Amycus (*abstulit . . . oculos*, Val. Flacc. 4.131; Hershkowitz 1998b: 91). Kinship in these Homeric and Valerian examples causes the gods to gaze pityingly or to avert their gazes. In the *Thebaid*, Jupiter also has a kinship connection with the royal houses of Thebes and Argos in general (*nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor / ipse ego, descendo*, 1.224–225) and with Eteocles and Polynices through Semele (cf. Eteocles' prayer *soceros . . . / respicis*, 11.217–218). While the Homeric and Valerian gods' kinship with their dying descendants prompts their sympathy, kinship does not deter Statius' Jupiter from punishing Eteocles and Polynices. Rather, in announcing his intention to cover the earth with cloud, Jupiter explains that he wants to protect Astraea and the Dioscuri from watching the combat between Eteocles and Polynices (*saltem ne virginis almae / sidera, Ledaei videant neu talia fratres*, 11.132–133). The sight of the fratricidal duel would be an affront to these figures associated with justice and fraternal love. Concern for his fellow gods' potential spectatorship, therefore, and not the thought of his descendants' suffering, arouses Jupiter's pity and prompts him to spare them from the sight (*parcere*, 11.131).

In resigning control of the battlefield to the Furies, the gods of the *Thebaid* exemplify a pattern of disavowed authority. Earlier episodes where the lives of Eteocles and Polynices were threatened suggest that the Fury's power is superior to theirs. An earlier duel between Tydeus and Eteocles could have precluded the fratricidal combat, had the Fury not intervened to save the Theban ruler's life. Although the gods watch this duel as fully engaged spectators (*convertere oculos utrimque faventes / Sidonii Graique dei*, 8.685–686), it is still Tisiphone's intervention that determines its outcome. Her intentions in diverting the missile that would otherwise have killed Eteocles (8.684–688) are the same as when she chases *Pietas* from the battlefield just before the fratricidal duel begins (11.482–496). The Olympian gods cannot resist her, and their interventions can even serve her ultimate purposes. By sending a monster to guarantee his favorite Amphiaraus' success in the horse race at the funeral games of Archemorus, Apollo unwittingly ensures that Polynices survives and continues to seek the Theban throne (6.491–512). In each of these episodes, the narrator explicitly attributes the survival of both Polynices and Eteocles to Tisiphone's manipulative interventions (6.513–514, 11.482–483). The gods' retreat from the battlefield

[18] Euripides' Artemis withdraws from the sight of Hippolytus' death out of fear of pollution (Eur. *Hipp.* 1437–39); cf. Barrett 1964: 414.

does not represent their first surrender to the Furies but their continuing inability to resist them or to obstruct their activities.

Like the gods, the Argive king Adrastus also disavows his regal authority. Though at first Adrastus attempts to prevent the duel by asking the armies if they intend to become observers of the spectacle (*spectabimus ergo hoc, / Inachidae Tyriique, nefas?*, 11.429–430), he flees from the battlefield when these efforts at peacemaking fail (11.441). Adrastus' flight contrasts with the "example models" which represent kings as well as gods as traditional observers of combats (Hardie 1993: 22–24). Though Homer's Priam returns to Troy to avoid watching the earlier duel between Paris and Menelaus (*Il.* 3.306), he watches the combat between Hector and Achilles (*Il.* 22.405–409); similarly, Vergil's Latinus watches Aeneas and Turnus (*Aen.* 12.707), and Valerius' Aeetes watches the Sown Men fight (Val. Flacc. 7.640). The spectatorship of Lucan's Caesar inspires Scaeva to perform excessive deeds of heroism (Luc. 6.158–160; cf. Leigh 1997: 199–201), while Silius' Hannibal has an inspiring effect on his troops at Saguntum (*obvia quisque / ora duci portans, ceu solus bella capessit*, *Pun.* 1.312–313). Of these figures, the *Thebaid* creates the strongest associations between Adrastus and Vergil's Latinus.[19] Though each performs poorly as father and king, Adrastus' flight exceeds Latinus' disavowal of authority. His retreat instead recapitulates Pompey's retreat from the battle of Pharsalus in Lucan (Luc. 7.677–679). Lucan's narrator ironically attributes satisfaction to Pompey in his refusal to watch the *nefas* of his troops' defeat "through to the end" (*nonne iuvat pulsum bellis cessisse nec istud / perspectasse nefas?*, Luc. 7.698–699; cf. Leigh 1997: 304–305). Both leaders exemplify their weakness by choosing to avoid observing the *nefas* that they have helped to create. Just as the *Thebaid*'s Jupiter performs less authoritatively than his earlier epic counterparts, Adrastus similarly abandons his expected role as a potentially authoritative observer of the duel.

Adrastus' failure to stop the duel and refusal to remain on the battlefield creates an intratextual contrast with his earlier performance as an authoritative observer. He was able to stop the combat between Polynices and Tydeus through the exercise of regal and quasi-paternal authority (*Theb.* 1.431–446).[20] His sudden appearance "before the eyes of the men" (*ante ora virum*, 5.700) prevents the Argives from killing the innocent Lycurgus, and he stops the potentially fatal combats between Capaneus and Alcidamas and Polynices and Agreus during the

[19] Compare their introductions into the narrative: *rex ibi, tranquillae medio de limite vitae / in senium vergens, populos Adrastus habebat* (*Theb.* 1.390–391); *rex arva Latinus et urbes / iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat* (*Aen.* 7.45–46).

[20] Ahl (1986: 2852) observes the suggestive contrast with Polynices' previous experience of a father figure: "A strong paternal hand not only restrains the combatants, but unites them first in friendship, and then in kinship. The contrast with Oedipus is only implicit; but it is powerful. Could a strong fatherly hand have prevented the wars between Eteocles and Polynices too?" As Bonds (1985: 225) has observed, the fratricidal duel also recapitulates elements of the initial combat between Polynices and Tydeus (*Theb.* 1.408–434).

funeral games of Archemorus (6.809–812, 911–923; Dominik 1994: 116–117). The simile describing Adrastus as he restrains his soldiers during the confrontation with Lycurgus responds by inversion to the Vergilian simile comparing the god Neptune as he calms the winds to an authoritative man who returns a furious mob to peace as they gaze upon him (*Theb.* 5.704–709 ~ *Aen.* 1.148–153).[21] Like Vergil's Neptune, Adrastus prevents conflict between the Argives and Lycurgus by acting as a cynosure. He represents himself as the cynosure of his ancestors by displaying their statues in his court and parading his ancestral *imagines* at the funeral games of Archemorus (*Theb.* 2.214–223, 6.268–295).[22] The king is unable to exercise similar control, however, over the combatants in the fratricidal duel. Though both Adrastus' own acts of gazing and his effect on the gazes directed toward him confirm his regal and ancestral authority at earlier points in the *Thebaid*, the king surrenders control to the Furies by quitting the battlefield and refusing to watch the duel.

The *Thebaid* further exemplifies the relationship between the failure of spectatorship and the disavowal of authority by juxtaposing three other observers, the marveling Furies and the blind Oedipus, with the retreating king and the averse gods. The Furies' reactions to the duel are wonder and astonishment (*tantum mirantur et astant / laudantes*, 11.537–538); the simile immediately preceding compares the rushing brothers to battling boars watched by an astonished hunter (11.533–534). The kings who traditionally observe duels in epic also evince astonishment (Hardie 1993: 44–45). Vergil's Latinus is astonished as he watches Aeneas and Turnus fight (*stupet ipse Latinus*, *Aen.* 12.707), as is Valerius Flaccus' Aeetes (*stupet Aeetes*, Val. Flacc. 7.640) when the Sown Men begin to fight.[23] The Furies' marveling suggests that they are the sole remaining authorities on the battlefield, acting as the absent regal observer should have acted. Their mode of spectatorship complements their seizure of power and reinforces their displacement of Jupiter and Adrastus. For his part, Oedipus communicates his belated acceptance of responsibility for the destruction he has caused through a rhetoric of spectatorship that is only partially compromised by his physical inability to see.[24] He offers others the spectacle of his grief (*en*, 11.608), while

[21] Silius uses a similar comparison to Neptune in describing Fabius' restraint of his men (*Pun.* 7.254–259); cf. Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986: 2530–31.

[22] While the *imagines* (a Roman anachronism in an epic set in mythological Greece) convey a kingroup's status to observers, their gaze also communicates the force of ancestral expectations to individual family members; cf. Flower 1996: 221.

[23] Adrastus earlier performed the role of the marveling regal observer while watching the combat between Polynices and Tydeus (*miratus, Theb.* 1.432). Other examples of marveling observers of combat in the *Thebaid* include the gods, who marvel at Capaneus (*mirantur*, 10.920). Vergil's Aeneas is compared to a marveling shepherd as he hears the fighting in Troy (*stupet inscius . . . / . . . pastor, Aen.* 2.307–308), and amazement grips Homer's audience as the duel between Paris and Menelaus begins and ends (θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εἰσορόωντας, *Il.* 3.342 = 4.79).

[24] Jocasta envies Oedipus' physical inability to observe the duel and kills herself to avoid watching (*Theb.* 11. 333–335, 634–636).

imagining the restoration of his eyes so he can remove them again as honor to his sons (11.614–615). His efforts to perform as an appropriately repentant witness, desiring to see the situation he has created through to the end, call further attention to the foregone observations of Jupiter and Adrastus. Oedipus' symbolic spectatorship parallels the return of *Pietas* to his breast (11.605–606), the mark of his freedom from the Furies.[25] The *Thebaid*'s ironic juxtaposition of the blind and repentant Oedipus with the averse Jupiter and the fleeing Adrastus conjoins the themes of spectatorship and disavowal of authority. The refusal of Jupiter and Adrastus to watch the duel signifies incapability on the divine and regal levels; in contrast, Oedipus attempts to account for the misuse of paternal authority that originated the conflict. Through his public display of grief and his desire to witness his sons' deaths, he presents himself as a spectacle of repentance.

II. THE IMPROPER PLEASURE OF THE MOB: THE SOLDIERS AND THE GHOSTS OF THEBAN ANCESTORS

The focalizations of the duel offered by the groups of Theban soldiers and ghosts complement the reactions of the individual observers. After the gods refuse to watch the combat, the collective spectatorship of these two large groups grants it the status of a public spectacle. By initially attributing varied emotions to the Theban soldiers as they watch the duel, Statius' narrator indicates the uncertainty of their identification with the combatants. After the departure of *Pietas*, however, the soldiers take pleasure in the sight of violence itself (*arma placent, versaeque volunt spectare cohortes*, 11.498). The soldiers' enthusiastic spectatorship resembles that of the audience members of gladiatorial games, an association reinforced by the gladiatorial terminology that Jupiter uses to describe the duel (*par infandum*, 11.125).[26] The reactions of the Theban ghosts, meanwhile, reflect an epic and historiographical tradition associating the pleasure in the sight of an enemy's death with the excesses of tyranny and sadism. While Jupiter and Adrastus' refusal to observe demonstrated their failures of authority and responsibility, the avid spectatorship of these groups poses two further problems. Both groups' eagerness to observe violence implicates them in the duel's *nefas*, and the soldiers' difficulties in identifying with their purportedly representative combatants compromise the duel's juridical function and its potential to avert further bloodshed.

The "example model" duels of epic are performed with the intention of ending war and sparing further bloodshed.[27] Like Homer's Paris and Menelaus, Vergil's Aeneas and Turnus each represent a larger faction, whose engaged spectators

[25] Franchet d'Espèrey (1999: 300) emphasizes the tragic aspect of Oedipus' return to humanity and fatherhood, *contra* Erren (1970: 91–92), who argues that Oedipus' spectatorship resembles that of the audiences of gladiatorial combats.

[26] For uses of *par* in gladiatorial contexts, cf. *OLD* s.v. *par*[3] d.

[27] Udwin (1999: 78) argues that the epic duel's "premise is an economy of lives." For the "quasi-judicial function" of dueling in Livy (e.g., the duel between the Horatii and Curiatii at Livy 1.24–25 that decides the dispute between Rome and Alba), cf. Feldherr 1998: 98–99. Ogilvie (1970:

wait for their success or failure to determine their future.[28] Though Eteocles and Polynices also enter combat with the intention of deciding their rival claims for the kingship of Thebes, the *Thebaid* complicates the relationship between the duelists and the factions that they purportedly represent. Coming after the deaths of five of the seven champions, the duel does not present much likelihood of saving lives in itself. Tisiphone does not arrange the duel out of sympathy for human life, but in response to her desire to accept a new challenge (*grande opus*, 11.100). Furthermore, Eteocles does not command universal support among the Thebans; instead, characters represent him as a cruel and unpopular tyrant whose people fear him and long for his replacement (Dominik 1994: 83–88; Ahl 1986: 2828–30, 2873–76). Critics such as the anonymous Theban condemn the system of alternating kingship, while Maeon, the defiant suicide, recognizes the injustice done to Polynices in Eteocles' rejection of Tydeus' embassy (1.171–196, 3.53–113). Just before the duel begins, Creon uses the rhetoric of spectatorship to indicate his lack of faith in Eteocles' ability to represent the Theban people. He imagines Eteocles watching from the safety of a high tower, the traditional location in epic for the female observer's *teichoscopia*,[29] as Haemon goes into battle in his place (*tuque hinc spectator ab alta / turre sede*, 11.291–292). Creon charges Eteocles with behaving like a passive and feminized spectator rather than as a ruler who justifies his claim to the throne by risking his own life instead of a substitute. Eteocles counters by accusing Creon of desiring to watch the duel because of the chance that Eteocles may die and Creon may succeed to the Theban throne (11.298–308; Ahl 1986: 2884). Though Polynices receives no such criticism from his supporters, he similarly questions his own ability to function as a representative of Argos. Before the duel begins, he imagines the hypothetical reactions of an audience of Argive non-combatants (young wives, mothers, and aged parents) to the sight of his combat with Eteocles (11.182–185). He assumes that they would wish him dead because he has caused so much bereavement in their families (*spectent et votis victorem Eteoclea poscant*, 11.186). While this imagined audience does not materialize, Polynices' assumptions about their reaction indicate that he perceives himself as separate from the Argives. Although he has been supported by Adrastus and the Argive army up to this

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109) notes that dueling "to decide the issues of war . . . is a widespread custom," citing among other sources Hdt. 1.82, 5.1.2; Paus. 5.4.1; Tac. *Germ.* 10; Plut. *Alex.* 31. For a cross-cultural survey of ancient dueling, cf. Kiernan 1988: 19–30.

[28] Feldherr (1998: 101–103) argues that the interaction between Torquatus and his Roman observers (Livy 7.10) makes him a surrogate for the group. Ahl (1986: 2815) notes that the Romans who watch the Spanish brothers' duel in Silius (16.527–549) are "doomed to become participants [*sc.* in the future civil wars] in the kind of contest at which they are, as yet, only spectators."

[29] Examples include the *teichoscopiai* of Helen in Homer (*Il.* 3.139–384), Scylla in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8.14–80), Medea in Valerius Flaccus (6.490–760), and Antigone in Statius (*Theb.* 7.243–373).

point, he realizes that the combat is not on their behalf. Both brothers enter the combat realizing that there is no possibility of an easy identification with their supposed factions.

The brothers' conflict is over "naked power" (*nuda potestas*, 1.150) rather than a wealthy kingdom (Ahl 1986: 2884; Bonds 1985: 233). Polynices has been willing since the epic's first episodes to trade his life in order to see (*cerneret*, 1.319) his brother deposed and his own coronation. His brother's admission of defeat is more significant to Polynices than the prize of Thebes itself. Through his attempts to create a personal spectacle for Eteocles, Polynices suggests that the juridical function of the observing armies is less important to him than Eteocles' spectatorship of his victory. As he fights with his brother, Polynices taunts him by inviting him to observe how his own body has suffered in exile (*vides*, 11.551). After delivering a fatal wound, he calls out for his crown and scepter so that Eteocles can witness the sight of his coronation before he dies (*dum videt*, 11.560). Though Eteocles manages to kill his brother before he can actually be crowned, Polynices conceives of Eteocles' spectatorship as essential to the completion of his revenge.

The personal nature of the spectacle and the selection of an ideal observer recall the climaxes of Senecan tragedy. Seneca's Atreus and Medea similarly plan their cruel *spectacula* in order to create particular emotional reactions in chosen spectators. In order to complete her revenge on Jason, Medea requires him to be the *spectator* of the death of their son (*derat hoc unum mihi, / spectator iste. nil adhuc facti reor: / quidquid sine isto fecimus sceleris perit, Med.* 992–994), while Atreus wants Thyestes to be both the participant and the observer at the murderous feast (*quod sat est, videat pater, Thy.* 895). The spectators' participation is required for the completion of each act of carefully staged vengeance; their absence would render the performance of the crime meaningless for the murderers.[30] In satisfying himself by creating a spectacle for his brother, Statius' Polynices has all but forgotten the troops' role in assisting him and their own stake in his victory. His appropriation of the exclusively personal focus of Senecan revenge spectacle compromises identification between group and representative.

For their part, the Theban spectators' reactions over the course of the duel indicate the complexity of their viewing. Rather than experiencing a single dominant emotion as they observe the combat, their responses change from grief through the momentary desire to interrupt the duel to pleasure at the sight of violence. The Theban *vulgus* climbs up to the towers to watch the duel, but tears block its sight (11.416–417). The armies are almost moved to stop the duel by the

[30] "Lo *spectare* è di per sè parte integrante dello *scelus*" (Trombino 1990: 52). Vergil's Turnus cruelly wishes that Pallas' father Evander could watch as he kills his son (*cuperem ipse parens spectator esset, Aen.* 10.443), while Priam rebukes Pyrrhus for causing him to observe the death of his son (*et patrios foedasti funere vultus, Aen.* 2.539). Valerius Maximus' Q. Metellus Macedonicus benevolently raises a siege specifically to avoid causing sons to die *in conspectu patris* (Val. Max. 5.1.5).

prodigium of the spears that miss their targets (11.453–457), a hesitant movement toward pacifism encouraged by the subsequent intervention of *Pietas*. Once the Furies force *Pietas* to depart, however, the armies react by taking pleasure in the sight of violence (11.498). It is not clear that the shouting as Eteocles falls (*clamore Cithaeron / erigitur*, 11.555–556) signifies the Thebans' explicit support for their former king, as the Argives could also be contributing to the *clamor*. The varied emotions of the Theban spectators over the course of the duel indicate that several considerations beyond simple factional identification affect their perception of the combatants. The combat potentially represents the end of the war with the Argives, but also the death of a Theban ruler. What began as an external invasion is now unmistakably a civil conflict, in which the normal demonstrations of joy in victory are suspect.

Through its representations of audience identification, the *Thebaid* creates terms of engagement quite different from those that the *Aeneid* defines for the duel between Aeneas and Turnus. Statius' armies are essentially disenfranchised as audiences thanks to the Furies' control of the duel and Polynices' desire to create a spectacle for his brother. The armies thereby join in the disavowal of divine, regal, and paternal authority. The *Aeneid*, however, emphasizes the power of the identification between the Rutulians and their champion, and the divine management of the duel complements the juridical potential of the observing armies. Aware throughout the duel that he is his people's cynosure, Turnus begins the duel in response to Saces' claim that all eyes are on him (*in te ora Latini, / in te oculos referunt, Aen.* 12.656–657). Although Juturna refuses to watch the duel, all the other divine and human spectators are fully engaged. They "turn their gazes" (*convertere oculos, Aen.* 12.705) on the duel; as we have seen above, Statius employs this phrase to describe the gods' observation of the earlier abortive duel between Tydeus and Eteocles that should properly have precluded the fratricidal duel (*Theb.* 8.685). The audiences' reaction as Turnus strikes is spontaneous and emotional (*exclamant Troes trepidique Latini, / arrectaeque amborum acies, Aen.* 12.730–731), and the Rutulians lament as Turnus falls (*consurgunt gemitu Rutuli, Aen.* 12.928). The audiences' frequent changes of emotion in Statius, culminating in the ambiguous shouting, contrast with the *Aeneid*'s clear assignment of emotional identification to the Rutulians. As spectators, furthermore, the Thebans lack the authorizing function that Vergil attributes to the Rutulians. In supplicating Aeneas after his defeat, Turnus notes that there is no requirement to kill him, as all his people have witnessed his act of surrender (*victum tendere palmas / Ausonii videre, Aen.* 12.936–937). However, there is no possibility of a negotiated surrender in the *Thebaid*. Taunting his brother before the duel, Polynices claims that violence is the only "law and treaty" that can obtain between them now that the earlier agreement to alternate the kingship each year has failed (*congredere: hae leges, haec foedera sola supersunt*, 11.395). In resolving to fight to the death, the brothers remove their spectators' power to authorize the kind of peaceful

conclusion that Vergil's Turnus proposes.[31] The exclusion of the audience from participation as the judges of the duel further compromises human authority and lends greater power to the Furies.

Roman epic often creates associations between the epic duelist and the gladiator. The Vergilian duels between Aeneas and Turnus (*Aen.* 12.797–952) and Turnus and Pallas (*Aen.* 10.439–509) have been compared to gladiatorial combats, as have the conflicts in Lucan and the duels between Silius' Spanish brothers (*Pun.* 16.527–549).[32] In Statius, Jupiter's reference to the combatants as a *par infandum* (*Theb.* 11.125) evokes the image of a gladiatorial combat performed before a mass audience. While the violence of the games may arouse modern distaste, a Roman imperial audience would not have automatically associated them with *nefas*. Both Cicero (cf. *Tusc.* 2.41, *Mil.* 34.92, *Phil.* 3.14.35) and Pliny (*Pan.* 33) suggest the advantages of gladiatorial spectatorship by representing *ludi* as teaching the aristocratic observer to admire the gladiator's contempt for death. Historically, the games also reinforced social hierarchies and provided an important opportunity for the plebs to communicate with the emperor (Futrell 1997: 46–50; Barton 1993: 18–24). The observers' approval of the spectacle depended, however, on their sense of moral superiority to the combatants. The execution of criminals in the arena permitted the audience to perceive the games as supporting the workings of justice, while the lower social status of the combatants precluded the sympathy of aristocratic observers (Coleman 1990: 57–59).[33] Statius' Polynices and Eteocles, however, are not "socially dead" criminals condemned beforehand by their audience but the potential rulers of the city. While the Roman arena isolates the gladiatorial combatant from all social ties, the Theban combatants are brothers who are observed by their kin and countrymen as they fight. The special circumstances of this particular duel contrast with the social reality of the Roman arena. The social power and the kinship ties of this set of duelists are the factors that make the duel an unspeakable spectacle. The duel's *nefas* belies the possibility of the instruction of its audience that Cicero and Pliny envision for viewers of gladiatorial games. The soldiers' pleasure at the sight of the brothers' violence (Theb. 11.498, quoted above, 71) indicates that moral edification at the sight of a noble death cannot be the purpose of their spectatorship. Unlike Vergil's Rutulians, who look to their champion to spare them from further bloodshed, the Thebans are complicit with the brothers'

[31] The observers of the duel between Homer's Paris and Menelaus similarly question their power to authorize an end to the war (*Il.* 4.81–84), and Athene's intervention to restart the conflict confirms their suspicions.

[32] For Aeneas and Turnus as gladiators, cf. Hardie 1993: 152; for Turnus and Pallas, cf. Harrison 1991: 186; for Silius' brothers, see Ahl 1986: 2814–16. For Lucan's use of gladiatorial imagery, see Leigh 1997: 234–291; Ahl 1976: 84–91.

[33] As Barton (1993: 47–49, 66–67) observes, however, the gladiator could also be a figure of erotic appeal and "obsessive identification" (even to the extent of emulation) for the Roman aristocracy.

nefas. Their pleasure in the sight of violence resembles that of the audiences of violent spectacle frequently condemned by Seneca.[34]

The Theban ghosts, who comprise the duel's second mass audience, also evince pleasure in the spectacle. Their mode of spectatorship symbolizes the breakdown of ancestral relationships throughout the epic and pushes the literary tradition of the ghostly spectator to a hostile extreme. Dis commands the ghosts to rise from the underworld and witness the *gentilia monstra* (11.420–423):[35]

> *ipse quoque Ogygios monstra ad gentilia manis*
> *Tartareus rector porta iubet ire reclusa.*
> *montibus insidunt patriis tristique corona*
> *infecere diem et vinci sua crimina gaudent.*

The ruler of Tartarus himself orders Theban ghosts to proceed through the open gate toward the monstrous acts of their kin. Sitting on their ancestral mountains, the grim crowd pollutes the day, rejoicing that their own crimes are being outdone.

Forms of the verb *gaudeo* occur frequently in the *Thebaid* to signify the characters' joy in others' suffering. Examples include Tisiphone's reaction as Eriphyle accepts the fatal necklace (*gavisa*, 4.213), Eteocles' reaction as he learns of his brother's challenge (*gavisus*, 11.250), and the joy of Tydeus and Capaneus in slaughter (*velut primo tigris gavisa cruore*, 8.474; *congressu Capaneus gavisus iniquo*, 7.675; cf. Franchet d'Espèrey 1999: 176–180). Tacitus similarly uses the noun *gaudium* to describe the pleasure that his tyrants take in gloating over the sight of their dead victims: thus Vitellius takes "a notable joy" (*notabili gaudio*, *Hist.* 3.39.1) in gazing at the dead Blaesus, as does Otho in gazing at Piso (*gaudio*, *Hist.* 1.44.1; cf. Keitel 1992: 343; Lovatt 1999).[36] Lucan's Caesar takes pleasure in surveying the "joyous spectacle" of the dead bodies that litter the field after the battle of Pharsalus (*laeta . . . scelerum spectacula*, Luc. 7.797; cf. Leigh 1997: 289–290; Lovatt 1999: 129–133). Valerius Maximus makes Sulla's gazing at the heads of his victims a sign of his insatiable cruelty (Val. Max. 9.2.1); as others avert their eyes, Valerius' Antony orders the head of the proscribed senator Caesetius Rufus to be moved closer so he can consider it *diu diligenterque* (Val. Max. 9.5.4).[37] These examples

[34] Sen. *Ep.* 7.2–6, *Ira* 2.2.3–6, *Ep.* 90.45, 95.33, *Tranq.* 2.13; cf. Mader 1997: 341. Noting that Seneca appears to welcome the diversion of the *ludi* at *Helv.* 17.1, Barton (1993: 23) argues that his principal objection is to "violence characterized by naked victimization," not to the sight of violence in itself.

[35] Dominik (1994: 40) reads this episode as a reminder of Pluto's ultimate responsibility for the brothers' duel. Ghosts also gather at Taenaros (2.48–54) and manifest themselves throughout Greece as "crisis apparitions" in response to the outbreak of the war (7.414–421).

[36] Mader (1997: 339) argues for a similar use of *gaudere* in Seneca: "spectator interest in Seneca . . . has its primary locus in a gratuitous and affective sense of *gaudere* . . . . The spectacle exerts an intrinsic fascination from which neither side is immune . . . . The Greeks who come to witness the gratuitous butchery in *Troades* are interchangeable with the Neronian circus mob."

[37] While the slowness and deliberation of these spectators mark their cruelty, Valerius' centurion Titinius exemplifies the praiseworthy mode of looking at the dead. Surprised to find that his

of joyful reactions to violence suggest similarities between the spectatorship of the Theban ghosts and those who have actually been responsible for an act of violence.

In attributing only the cruellest sort of self-interest to the Theban ghosts, the *Thebaid* presents a set of observers whose hostility exceeds that of the literary tradition of the ghostly spectator. Statius' adaptation of the combat of Pollux and Amycus in Valerius' *Argonautica* has long been recognized (Val. Flacc. 4.257–260; cf. Schetter 1960: 26; Venini 1970: 114; Korn 1989: 174). The audience of Amycus' former victims supplicate Pater Tartarus (*orantis*, Val. Flacc. 4.258) to allow them to watch the defeat of their murderer, and what they watch is "the spectacle of deserved punishment" (*meritae spectacula poenae*, Val. Flacc. 4.259) rather than *monstra . . . gentilia* (*Theb.* 11.420). They have far greater justification for their *Schadenfreude* than the ghosts of the *Thebaid*. In representing the ghostly audience's desire to be outdone in crime, the *Thebaid*'s narrator also recapitulates the claim made by the ghost of Tantalus in Seneca's *Thyestes* that the crimes of his descendants will render him seemingly innocent in comparison (*ac me innocentem faciat et inausa audeat*, *Thy.* 20). Unlike Statius' gleeful ghosts, however, Tantalus attempts to resist the Fury as she compels him to fill the house with *furor* (*stabo et arcebo scelus*, *Thy.* 95). The Statian ghosts' cruel pleasure in spectatorship reproduces in miniature the general failure of ancestral relationships in the Theban royal house, from Agenor's "unyielding" exile of Cadmus (*inexorabile pactum / legis Agenoreae*, *Theb.* 1.5–6) to Oedipus' curse on his sons.[38] While such contrasts between Theban ancestral relationships and those obtaining between Vergil's Aeneas and his kin occur throughout the *Thebaid*, the Theban ghosts' spectatorship of the duel in particular produces a parodic fulfillment of Aeneas' prayer during the storm of *Aeneid* 1. Aeneas describes those who died at Troy "before the eyes of their ancestors" as blessed (*o terque quaterque beati, / quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis / contigit oppetere!*, *Aen.* 1.94–96; cf. *Aen.* 6.308, *G.* 4.477). Aeneas' first words in the *Aeneid* become the narrative pretext for the brothers' last actions in the *Thebaid*. Eteocles and Polynices, the antitypes of ancestral *pietas*, kill each other under the walls of Thebes before the eyes of their *patres*.

In their pleased reaction, Statius' Theban ghosts express the inverse of the narrator's wish (11.576–579, discussed below, 80) that future generations will forget the duel. As criminals themselves, the example of criminal behavior might please them, as would the thought that their descendants' greater example of criminality might improve their own posthumous reputations. Future generations will be less likely to remember the crimes of the Theban ancestors because the

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commander Cassius has committed suicide, he stares at the body only "briefly" before loyally joining him in death (*oculis paulisper haesit*, Val. Max. 9.9.2).

[38] Ripoll (1998: 35) argues that the *Thebaid* develops the "motif pathétique de l'extinction des espoirs dynastiques."

fratricide, an even greater crime, will occupy their attention. The descriptions of spectatorship in the *Thebaid* leave little faith in the legitimacy of the combatants as representatives of their factions. Jupiter refuses to sanction the combat, Polynices worries about an audience of hostile Argive non-combatants, and Eteocles realizes that Creon would be happy to watch him die. The desiring spectatorship of the Theban soldiers and the ghosts of Theban ancestors indicates a degree of participation in the *furor* that afflicts the brothers. Through the examples of their improper spectatorship, Statius recapitulates the problems of factional representation and ancestral relationships raised elsewhere in the narrative.[39]

III. CONCLUSION: THE EXEMPLARITY OF STATIAN SPECTACLE

Watching others act is rarely an inconsequential event in the *Thebaid.* The spectacles of the narrative most often provoke strong emotional reactions in their spectators, from desire and joy to grief and horror. In addition to the fratricidal duel, the epic's spectacles also include extraordinary acts such as Tydeus' cannibalism, a sight which causes Minerva to turn away and flee (*fugit aversata*, 8.764) and ritually cleanse the pollution from her eyes (*purgavit lumina*, 8.766). While the refusal of Jupiter and Adrastus to watch the duel signifies the improper disavowal of divine and regal responsibility, the narrator associates other groups who *choose* to watch (the Theban army and the ghosts of Theban ancestors) with cruelty and illicit pleasure. Statius' narrative of the fratricidal duel tests the limits of engaged and emotive spectatorship by juxtaposing spectators who cannot bear to watch with those who delight in watching.

In presenting the duel as a spectacle, and calling attention to its observers' various modes of observation, the *Thebaid* reflects a widespread contemporary interest in spectatorship. According to Feldherr (1998: 13), spectacle provided a means "of articulating the structure of civic bonds in the Roman state .... It was through seeing and being seen that the social relationships of watcher and watched were realized and the status of each defined."[40] Examples of the connection between spectatorship and social status include the publicly observed *salutatio* and *adsectatio* undertaken by Roman nobles and the seating in the amphitheatre that indicated social hierarchy. A sense of theatricality also influenced behavior at the imperial court, where the emperor performed (not unlike Statius' Adrastus) as cynosure and evaluating observer.[41] As Newlands

[39] The epic's necromantic episode, however, offers the possibility of an alternative view of relationships between a community of ghostly ancestors and their living descendants. Tiresias notes that the *Argolici manes* are weeping (4.587–592) over the imminent destruction of their countrymen, unlike the gleeful Theban ghosts who will rejoice to see their own destroyed.

[40] For the role of spectatorship in the political life of the late Republic, see Dupont 1985: 19–42; Nicolet 1980: 343–382.

[41] For example, the narrator of *Silvae* 4.2 describes his intense delight in looking at the emperor (*ipsum, ipsum cupido tantum spectare vacavit, Silv.* 4.2.40; cf. 14–17). Drawing on the interaction

(2003: 501) argues in reference to Domitian's success in monopolizing public spectacle, "spectacle was integral to the monarchical or imperial process, for by impressing and captivating the people, it persuaded them to acquiesce in a political system where power was unevenly distributed."[42] Spectatorship became a mode of political behavior in itself: "essentially, the people ... substituted observation for participation" (Newlands 2003: 512).[43]

Livy's treatment of exemplary spectacles provides a revealing contrast to the *Thebaid*.[44] His observing narrator instructively models the response of a student of past examples of deeds of virtue. When Scipio presents the duel of the Spanish *patrueles fratres* Corbis and Orsua over their local throne, he claims that the *insigne spectaculum ... documentumque* of kin murder will teach his troops the evil of excessive lust for power (Livy 28.21.6–9).[45] The audience's aversion of its gaze from an unwatchable spectacle also leads to different results. No observer in Livy wants to watch the chariots tear apart the body of the Alban king Mettius Fufetius, and all present avert their gazes (*avertere omnes ab tanta foeditate spectaculi oculos*, Livy 1.28.11).[46] Livy's narrator, however, immediately embeds the unwatchable spectacle in a didactic narrative by reassuring his contemporary readers that the Romans have never repeated this inhumane punishment and that in other punishments they have been milder than other nations (Livy 1.28.11). The narrator thereby "emerges as a rival to the king [*sc.* Tullus] in offering educational spectacles .... The historian takes control of the perspective of his audience, redirecting its gaze from the *foeditas* of Mettius's death to a 'glorious' vision of Rome's past, one where the conflict between the demands of national identity and of 'human laws' disappears" (Feldherr 1998: 162–163).

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model of J. C. Scott, Bartsch (1994: 10–11) uses a "theatrical paradigm" to interpret the behavior of Roman aristocrats in the presence of emperors from Nero to Hadrian. For example, as Nero watched aristocrats' performances for signs of loyalty, they moderated their behavior in response to the visual cues they received from him. Benton (2002: 48–49) argues, in reference to Seneca's *Troades*, that watching Polyxena's suffering recalled for the senatorial viewer his own precarious position at the imperial court.

[42] As Benton (2002: 41) observes, "it became increasingly difficult for [senators] to find their place within [the] visual economy" in the early Empire as a result of their loss of social power to the emperor and their reduced opportunities (by comparison with the Republic) to capture public attention through spectacle.

[43] For example, through their spontaneous acclamation of the emperor as *Dominus* (*Silv.* 1.6.83), the spectators of Domitian's *Saturnalia* willingly handed over their traditional popular liberty, a phenomenon Newlands (2003: 513–515) describes as "licensed complicity" in the imperial spectacle.

[44] For spectacle in Livy, see Feldherr 1998 and Borszák 1973; in Tacitus, Keitel 1992. For the relationship between spectacle and *exempla*, see Leigh 1997: 160–172.

[45] Silius represents the duelists as brothers in order to invite direct comparison with the fratricidal duel of the Theban myth (*Pun.* 16.527–549); cf. Ahl 1986: 2814–16.

[46] Compare Livy's use of *foeditas* to the Vergilian Priam's rebuke of Pyrrhus (*et patrios foedasti funere vultus*, *Aen.* 2.539). Livy uses similar language to describe the refusal of the Roman soldiers to watch the humiliation of their consuls at Caudium (*quisque ... ab illa deformatione tantae maiestatis velut ab nefando spectaculo averteret oculos*, Livy 9.5.14).

Though Statius' narrator offers similar criticism of the desire for power (*regendi / saevus amor, Theb.* 1.127–128), he employs quite different narrative strategies from Livy in constructing a didactic application for the example of the fratricidal duel. While Livy's Scipio argues that kin murder can serve a didactic purpose for his troops, Statius' narrator initially attempts to exclude the fratricidal duel from the exemplary tradition. Immediately after the deaths of Eteocles and Polynices, the narrator protests that the duel should serve as an example only to kings, but should be forgotten by all others (*et soli memorent haec proelia reges*, 11.579). He thereby joins in Jupiter and Adrastus' disavowal of authority by vainly attempting to limit the exemplary force of his epic representation. In his ideal and presumably unachievable vision, the duel would only be available as a didactic example to a limited group of readers with a particular set of interests.

The narrator's apostrophe after the conclusion of the duel has both intratextual and intertextual dimensions. Earlier, the narrator lamented Tisiphone's interventions to save Polynices' life and to remove *Pietas* from the battlefield. In each place he used similar past counterfactual constructions to imagine alternative futures in which Polynices died as a loyal Theban instead of a civil warrior and the fratricidal duel was averted (*quis mortis, Thebane, locus, nisi dura negasset / Tisiphone, quantum poteras dimittere bellum!*, 6.513–514;[47] *nonnihil impulerat dubios, ni torva notasset / Tisiphone fraudes*, 11.482–483). These protests recall the frequent interruptions of Lucan's narrator, who "breaks into his own narrative to address characters and call for a reversal of history" (Leigh 1997: 5). Lucan's narrator invests spectatorship with a performative force, representing the act of observation itself as an intervention rather than a sign of passivity. His narrator and characters reveal their political sympathies through their emotional reactions to viewing. Statius' narrator similarly associates particular kinds of viewing with moral offenses and prays for alternative futures.

Like Lucan's engaged narrator, the Statian narrator protests against the horrendous sight of the duel. However, his protest would initially appear to invalidate one of the major functions of epic narrative. From Homer onward, epic narrators privilege the act of commemoration and speak of recording events in epic as a way to ensure their survival in memory.[48] The fact that the narrator of Statius' *Thebaid* has just commemorated the spectacle of the duel in epic verse threatens the fulfillment of his wish for general forgetfulness and his concomitant attempt to limit memory of the event to a special class of readers.[49] Although the immediacy of the narrator's emotional response to the duel makes it seem as if he

[47] Nagel (1999: 391) argues that Polynices "would have deserved this patriotic form of address" (*sc. Thebane*) had he died at this point and not proceeded to attack Thebes.

[48] For the Homeric narrator, see Ford 1992: 57–79. The narrator of the *Aeneid* associates the memory of Nisus and Euryalus (*Aen.* 9.446–449) with the "perpetuity of the Roman empire," while the narrator of the *Thebaid* hopes for literary immortality in commemorating Hopleus and Dymas (*Theb.* 10.445–448; cf. Pollmann 2001: 27–28).

[49] Cf. Georgacopoulou 1998. Georgacopoulou observes a similar narrative tension in Statius' use of catalogues in the *Thebaid*: while catalogues in general are privileged *loci* for literary commemoration

were present at its occurrence, the narrator in fact speaks from the perspective of a future far removed from the duel.[50] He can confirm through his own experience that future generations have not forgotten the *monstrum*, nor learned from the *documenta* of Creon's tyranny (11.656–657). The narrator's knowledge that the fratricide has already served as an example to many throughout the intervening period invalidates his prayer that only "one day" should see the crime at Thebes (*viderit una dies*, 11.578).[51]

The narrative further interrogates the exemplary potential of spectacle through its contrasting focalizations of the duel by *Pietas* and the narrator. For the figure of *Pietas*, the fratricide confirms the typical nature of the human race. She briefly resists Jupiter's injunction and intervenes in an attempt to prevent the duel until the Furies chase her away.[52] *Pietas* expresses her inability to watch the duel more emphatically than Jupiter: she avoids the sight of the Furies (*vitantem aspectus*, 11.493) and covers her face with her *palla* (*deiectam in lumina pallam / diva trahit*, 11.495–496) as she returns to Olympus.[53] Though she ultimately cannot watch the duel, she attempts to grant it exemplary status by commanding others to watch this further example of abuse (*en mortale genus!*, 11.470), proof that the human race no longer reveres her (11.467). The narrator's apostrophe after the duel attempts to contest *Pietas*' representation of the duel as a typical human experience by describing it as an extraordinary event. As the *Thebaid* sets its narrator's impossible wishes against *Pietas*' knowledge of the morally debased human condition, contrasting rhetoric calls the spectacle's exemplary force into question. The narrator of the *Thebaid*, who "intervenes against history" and is plausibly contradicted by *Pietas* on the subject of human nature, is no impartial purveyor of facts but a fully invested player with a particular interpretation of them. Unlike Livy's narrator, who uses didactic rhetoric to recuperate the punishment of Mettius, Statius' narrator can find no such consolations in either the violent mythical past or the present, where human beings refuse to learn from prior examples of tyranny and the recurrence of civil strife poses a continual threat.[54]

(1996: 124), the names of victims on the battlefield tend to fall immediately back into obscurity as soon as they are mentioned (1996: 101).

[50] Leigh (1997: 44) discusses a similar narrative technique in Lucan; Luc. 4.110–120, for example, is "the prayer of a narrator now entirely taken up with the lived presence of the action."

[51] As Georgacopolou (1996: 121) observes, the epic's commemoration of a violent past threatens the possibility of a peaceful future. Ahl (1986: 2816) compares the narrator's interjections after the duel and after Creon's ascension to the throne: "Statius hopes his archetypal civil war will not burden posterity .... This, he knows, is a vain dream." Leigh (1997: 48) discusses similar examples in Lucan of the narrator's ability "to suspend consciousness and treat the action of the civil war as something coming and not yet passed."

[52] For *Pietas* as an "actant" in the *Thebaid*, see Franchet d'Espèrey 1999: 261–277.

[53] Vergil's Juturna similarly hides her face as the Dira chases her away (*caput glauco contexit amictu*, *Aen.* 12.885). The characters of Valerius' *Argonautica* cover their faces with the *palla* as a gesture of grief (Val. Flacc. 1.132, 3.718; cf. Venini 1970: 131).

[54] Dominik (1994: 130–180) discusses the reflection of the war of A.D. 68–69 and the reigns of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors in the *Thebaid*'s portrait of civil strife and tyranny.

The epic's conclusion, however, partially recuperates the narrator's earlier disavowal of the narrative's commemorative potential. Although the narrator attempted to limit the extent of epic commemoration in his apostrophe after the duel, he now incorporates this episode (along with the many other *monstra* of the epic) into a text that makes its *exempla* available to all readers. In the final verses of the *Thebaid*, the narrator presents the completed epic as a text already eagerly studied and remembered by Roman youth (*Itala iam studio discit memoratque iuventus*, 12.815), thereby revising to some degree his earlier vision of the duel's exemplarity.[55] Yet the division in modes of spectatorship that characterizes the duel's narration persists throughout the images of the epic's didactic reception offered by the narrator. In these two passages (the apostrophe after the duel and the coda), the narrative distinguishes four groups among its actual and hypothetical readership and provides indications of the kinds of focalization they might bring to the completed epic. Actual readers include the emperor (*iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar*, 12.814) and the youthful students of the epic (*Itala . . . iuventus*, 12.815). Hypothetical readers include the kings (*et soli memorent haec proelia reges*, 11.579) and the readers of the future to whom *Fama* will exhibit the completed epic (*iam certe praesens tibi Fama benignum / stravit iter coepitque novam monstrare futuris*, 12.812–813). The narrative represents each of these readers in the same manner as the other internal spectators: as focalizers who bring separate interests to their consumption of the epic narrative. The Emperor's exalted readership and the youthful students' eagerness to consume the epic testify to its legitimacy. Although the kings have been bidden to remember the fratricidal duel's example of excessive lust for power, the narrator remains aware that they may in fact lie beyond the narrative's didactic control.[56] Lastly, the future audience's consumption of the epic depends no longer on the text itself but also on the mediation of *Fama*.

Statius' *Thebaid* constructs its own sophisticated ideal readers by disrupting the process of readerly identification in the fratricidal duel of Book 11 and describing multiple modes of readerly focalization in the epic's coda.[57] The example of the unspeakable and unwatchable duel in Statius presents a paradox of identification for the potential reader. No character in the narrative appears to make a morally justifiable decision by watching or not watching the combat. They have either disavowed authority by refusing to watch or taken improper pleasure in the sight

[55] As Malamud (1995: 24) observes, the language of the epic's coda recalls the apostrophe after the duel: *monstrumque infame futuris / excidat, et soli memorent haec proelia reges* (11.578–579); *Fama . . . / . . . coepitque novam monstrare futuris / . . . Itala iam studio discit memoratque iuventus* (12.812–815).

[56] Markus (2003: 462–463) argues that the narrative represents the kings as "the desirable, but unattainable audience for the didactic messages in [Statius'] epic," replacing the *cives* to whom Lucan addressed the *Bellum Civile*. In contrast to Markus, I distinguish the *magnanimus* emperor as a separate audience from the *reges*.

[57] Malamud (1995: 27) argues that "Statius' epilogue opens up the possibility that his text will teach not ideological indoctrination . . . but rather a process of didactic deconstruction that . . . offers his reader the possibility of disenchantment."

of violence. The narrative's exclusion of the expected focalizers of epic duels and its implication of the remaining audience in the duel's *nefas* leave potential readers without a stable basis of identification.[58] Furthermore, the narrator's depiction of multiple actual and hypothetical audiences, each with separate styles of focalization, alerts the epic's potential readers to consume the narrative self-consciously. Like the characters of the text, who demonstrate awareness of their literary forebears, the epic guides its potential readers to consume it with an awareness of the modes of consumption used by the multiple audiences it has itself constructed.

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[58] Eldred (2002: 67, 79) argues that in the Vulteius episode of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (4.402–581), the narrator similarly challenges readerly attempts to find a stable basis of identification by inviting the reader to identify with both Caesar and Vulteius. Benton (2002: 36) discusses the division of the audience's emotional response to the sacrifice of Polyxena in Seneca's *Troades*.

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