ECHOES OF THE REPUBLICAN PAST.
SENECA'S TRAGIC CHORUS AND EARLIER LATIN LITERATURE

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford

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Table of Contents

Note on Texts, Abbreviations, and Other Conventions

All editions used are listed in the bibliography. Editions and commentaries are referred to according to the same system of citation as monographs and articles (by author's name and date of publication). The following is a list of the editions used for the most common authors and texts quoted in the main text of the thesis. I have indicated in a footnote whenever I have printed a different text.

Aeschylus

Page 1972

Catullus

Mynors 1958

Euripides

Diggle 1981–94

Horace

Shackleton Bailey 2001

Roman Republican Tragedy

Ribbeck 1897

plus

for Accius: Warmington 1936

for Ennius: Vahlen 1903, Jocelyn 1967, and Manuwald 2012

for Naevius: Schauer 2012

for Pacuvius: Schierl 2006

Seneca

Dialogues: Reynolds 1977

Epistles: Reynolds 1965

Natural Questions: Hine 1996

Tragedies: Zwierlein 1993

Vergil

Mynors 1969

Some editions are abbreviated, usually according to widespread convention. The following list refers those abbreviations to the bibliography via the author-date system otherwise employed throughout the thesis:

CIL i², II. 1:	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. I², II.1 = Lommatzsch 1918
GLK:	*Grammatici Latini* = Keil 1857–80
Jocelyn:	Jocelyn 1967
Manuwald:	Manuwald 2012
Nauck:	Nauck 1889
Ribbeck:	Ribbeck 1897
Schauer:	Schauer 2012
Schierl:	Schierl 2006
Skutsch:	Skutsch 1985
SVF:	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* = Arnim 1903–24
TrRF:	*Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta* = Manuwald 2012 and Schauer 2012
Usener:	Usener 1887
Vahlen:	Vahlen 1903
Voigt:	Voigt 1971
Warmington:	Warmington 1936

Abbreviations of the Greek and Latin authors and works follow those used in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and the Greek dictionary by Liddell, Scott, and Jones respectively (but note that I use '*DRN*' in referring to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* in addition to *OLD*'s 'Lucr.', and '*Odes*' instead of 'Carm.' in referring to Horace's *Odes*).

Journal titles in the bibliography are abbreviated according to *L'Année philologique* wherever possible.

Throughout the thesis, I use the form 'chorus' in minuscule and consider it singular. This use of 'chorus' is to include references to the chorus as a character in the play (in which case it is also widespread practice to use the capitalised form and/or use plural verbs with it), references to (the genre of) the tragic chorus in general, and references to an individual choral ode. Other characters

in tragedies, such as messengers and chorus leaders, will also occur in minuscule throughout. As will names of metres, ‘books’, ‘acts’, and the like.

The orthography of the Latin always follows the editions quoted (which means that, for instance, there is no consistency throughout my study in the use of ‘v’ vs ‘u’ in the Latin).

INTRODUCTION

… quae fuit durum pati,
meminisse dulce est.
(Sen. *Her. F.* 656–7)

The chorus in tragedy is one means by which memories of the past and of things external to the play's main action are introduced into the tragic experience. Moreover, according to Schlegel's influential characterisation of the chorus's role in Greek tragedy, the chorus represents the 'idealised spectators' of tragedy.[1] As one of its key functions,[2] the chorus performs, Schlegel posits, the role of 'virtual', intra-textual spectators of the tragedies, and provides guidance for the actual, extra-textual spectators of the plays, assumed to be thrown into a state of emotional turmoil by the dramatic action.[3] In other words, the chorus initiates a dialectic that is central to the experience of tragedy: that between affective participation and cognitive distance. The chorus would thus fulfil its highest potential when it sings (recites, and speaks) from a position of detached spectatorship, leading the audience to contemplation of something more abstract – something greater – beyond the depths of tragic despair.[4]

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[1] 'Whatever the chorus may be or do in particular in any given play, it represented above all and first of all the common spirit of the nation, then the participation of general humanity. The chorus is, in one word, the idealised spectator. It eases the impression of a deeply unsettling or deeply moving representation, by presenting to the real spectators their own emotions expressed already in lyric, that is musical, form, and leads them into the region of contemplation' (text: Lohner 1966, 65; my own translation of the original German: 'Was er auch in dem einzelnen Stücke Besondres sein und tun mochte, so stellte er überhaupt und zuvörderst den nationalen Gemeingeist, dann die allgemeine menschliche Teilnahme vor. Der Chor ist mit einem Worte der idealisierte Zuschauer. Er lindert den Eindruck einer tief erschütternden oder tief rührenden Darstellung, indem er dem wirklichen Zuschauer seine eignen Regungen schon lyrisch, also musikalisch ausgedrückt entgegenbringt und ihn in die Region der Betrachtung hinaufführt'). It is worthy of note that Schlegel speaks about 'idealised' – not 'ideal' – spectators.

[2] A subtle account of the chorus's key features and role in Attic Greek drama is given by Kranz 1933, 201–25. See further Rutherford 2012, 217–82 (with select references to earlier scholarship at n. 2).

[3] See also Mastronarde 2010, 96, who summarises that the chorus 'provides an internal analogue for the theatrical spectators in its conventional status of distanced engagement with the actions affecting the characters'. For further references to scholarship on the Greek chorus's literary as well as communal influence, see Mastronarde 2010, 90, n. 5. For potential problems with Schlegel's characterisation of the Greek chorus, see esp. Gould 1996, discussed below, chapter 1, at the end of section 1.1, 'Introduction'.

[4] For the Horace of the *Ars Poetica*, this is still the key role of the tragic chorus: see *AP* 193–201, esp. 198–9 (*ille* [sc. *chorus*] *dapes laudet mensae brevis, ille salubrem | iustitiam legesque et apertis otia portis*). Note that, while lines 193–6 reiterate the Aristotelian view, the more moralistic section in 197–201 does not seem to have an equivalent in Aristotle. As Brink 1971, 254, *ad* 193–201 points out, this merging of traditions (Aristotelian and probably Hellenistic) is likely to be Horace's own Roman view.

Citing Schlegel at the outset of a study of Senecan tragedy may be a rather bold move given his influential negative attitude towards the plays, a view that was to help shape – and hinder – scholarship on Seneca's tragedies for decades to come. His views on the Greek chorus, however, throw one crucial aspect about Seneca's tragic poetics into relief: if the chorus fulfilled the role of 'idealised spectators' at the beginning of Graeco-Roman drama, the picture is different at the end of the extant tradition, in the Roman tragedies of the poet and philosopher Seneca the Younger.

Scholars have long noted the many peculiarities in Seneca's handling of the chorus.[5] To many, the chorus has seemed far from central to the Senecan tragedies, 'designed to fade from view as necessary and to yield priority to the actors'.[6] If the chorus in Greek tragedy provided pathways to contemplation and reflection from a position of spectatorship that was distanced from the dramatic action, one of the curious mechanisms of the Senecan chorus's distance towards the tragic action would be one of blatant ignorance: although interested in and affected by the action, the chorus often seems unaware of what is happening during the spoken episodes. A case in point is the fourth choral ode in *Thyestes*, where the chorus, in a state of anxiety and bewilderment, sings about the end of the world – without even showing any awareness of Atreus' atrocious murders narrated by the messenger in the previous act. As Hill puts it in his analysis of Seneca's chorus, 'the ode … dwells on thoughts that must be imagined to have been felt by remoter onlookers, not privileged, like the audience, with full information'.[7] Or, to give another example, the second chorus in *Troades*, whose

[5] For an overview of the scholarly literature on Seneca's chorus, see below, n. 13. Zwierlein 1966 detects many dramatic inconsistencies in Seneca's handling of the chorus, features that, to him, would have made the plays unstageable. One of these features is the problem of how the chorus's presence on and/or absence from the stage is handled by Seneca: see Tarrant 1978, 221–8, and Davis 1993, 16–38. For an overview of scholarship on the 'staging question' – i.e. whether Senecan tragedy was originally meant to be performed on stage – see e.g. Kugelmeier 2003, 14–23 (whose study essentially agrees with Zwierlein's findings). The opposite position to Zwierlein is the common core of the collection of essays in Harrison 2000. In my critical approach, it makes no crucial difference whether Seneca's plays were originally meant for staging; their subsequent influence would have been mostly exerted in reading: cf. below, chapter 4, section 4.3, 'Metre, Meaning, and Reception Contexts: Preliminaries for Seneca's Horatian Reception', with n. 562 and 568. While I will thus remain formally agnostic on the question of Senecan drama's original primary reception context, Seneca's stichic use of metre in the choruses may point towards recitative settings as attractive suggestions: see further below, chapter 1, *passim*.

[6] Goldberg 2014, 644.

[7] Hill 2000, 579.

assumptions about death are, scholars have argued,[8] curiously at odds with the previous dramatic action.[9] When it comes to the chorus's role as potentially 'idealised' spectators, guiding the reactions of audiences and readers, the Senecan chorus, despite moralising and more philosophically-inspired odes, ultimately fails.

The second component Schlegel brought out as a key function of the Greek chorus is to represent 'above all and first of all the common spirit of the nation'. According to him, the chorus in Attic tragedy was vital as the voice of the popular collective.[10] This feature of the chorus is not too dissimilar in Senecan tragedy, where the chorus also represents the voice of the collective in the face of the tragic protagonists. In a recent article, Tarrant suggests that 'the disjunction that is often visible between the perspective of the chorus and that of the protagonists is a deliberate choice by Seneca, and that it reflects the position of the Roman people in an imperial environment'.[11]

The present thesis will be concerned with both features – the chorus's (non-)distance as spectators of the tragic action and various forms of its function as a collective of citizens recalling the Republican past – as *foci* through which one can better understand the role of the chorus in Senecan tragedy. My study arrives at these two crucial features in Seneca's choral odes through reading the Senecan chorus from the perspective of literary history, employing the methodology of allusion and intertextuality. In this area, the role of the chorus in Senecan poetics and intertextuality is at least as important as the dialogic parts of the plays.[12] It is, however, not the aim of the present study to attempt a systematic description of all of Seneca's choral odes. Nor is this a study which describes comprehensively the dramatic function of Seneca's choruses and their respective relationships to the surrounding dramatic action.[13] What will be revealed in my analysis of key moments from several of

[8] See, e.g., Owen 1970.
[9] For a detailed re-interpretation of this ode, see my analysis below: chapter 2, section 2.6, 'The Second Chorus in *Troades*: Anxiety and Lucretian Rationalism'.
[10] Since, in Schlegel's words, 'according to their Republican spirit, to the completeness of an action belonged also the public of such an action' (Lohner 1966, 49).
[11] Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming), 1.
[12] Boyle 2017, xc–xcii makes a brief plea for taking Seneca's use of the chorus seriously as a key ingredient of the tragic poetics in *Thyestes*.
[13] For a brief systematic overview see now Mazzoli 2014 (with Mazzoli 1996). Scholarship on the Senecan chorus from 1965 to 1975 is summarised in Hiltbrunner 1985, 989–91. Of older studies, see esp. Richter 1864, Leo 1897b, and Marx 1932. Canter 1925 is especially worth consulting (the chorus is treated at 31–55), and Herington 1966, one of the groundbreaking studies of Senecan

Seneca's choral odes is one central characteristic of the Senecan chorus: by approaching Seneca's odes via their engagement with earlier Latin literature, one can see how the chorus, far from watching and speaking from a detached vantage point, very often displays no distance from the dramatic action.[14] They are as engaged in the unfolding of the tragedies as the other characters in the plays. Theirs is not usually a worked-through, lyric version of emotions to 'ease' the audience's 'impression of a deeply unsettling or deeply moving representation', as Schlegel put it about the Greek chorus.[15] There are two implications of such a dramatic construction for the actual audience and readers:[16] either they remain in confusion and emotional disarray like the involved chorus or they realise, through the chorus as the didactic instrument of a negative example, that the rational response to tragedy would be to create distance and detachment, to avoid emotional involvement like that of the Senecan chorus.[17]

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tragedy, also has good things to say about the chorus *passim* (see esp. 445–6). Of the *Quellenforschung* on Seneca's chorus, esp. Spika 1890, Kapnukajas 1930, Cattin 1936, and Runchina 1960 provide useful material and parallels, but little interpretation. More recent studies include (in chronological order) Tarrant 1978, 221–8, Stevens 1992, Davis 1993, Castagna 1996, Hill 2000, Gärtner 2003, Schiesaro 2003, 164–76, and Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming). Cf. also the introductions to the commentaries on Seneca's tragedies.

[14] *Pace* Gärtner 2003, esp. 36, who finds that Seneca's choruses can be divided into two groups: ones that are allegedly contemplative in nature (in *Hercules Furens*, *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Oedipus*, and *Thyestes*) and those who are 'absorbed in their suffering' (in *Troades*, and to some extent, *Agamemnon*). I should make clear from the outset that I disagree with Gärtner's schematic classification; while there are certainly contemplative odes in Senecan tragedy that are somewhat removed from the tragic suffering in the plays, most of Gärtner's allegedly detached choruses (who, he says, are distanced because of their hailing from the relatively unendangered middling classes) are in fact not distanced at all: in the first ode of *Oedipus*, for instance, the chorus's use of earlier Latin literature does not aid them in creating distance from their tragic environment, as Gärtner assumes; rather, their *attempt* to create distance by means of literary allusion fails, and they keep identifying themselves closely with the tragic disaster of Thebes (cf. esp. their use of first-person plural forms and pronouns in *interimus*, 124, *labimur*, 125, *nostrum … malum*, 159). On this choral ode, see further chapter 2, section 2.6, 'The Second Chorus in *Troades*: Anxiety and Lucretian Rationalism'.

[15] Lohner 1966, 65 (see above, n. 1). In this area, my study has common ground with an unpublished doctoral thesis on Seneca's choral odes by Stevens 1992, who set out to demonstrate that Seneca's choruses are 'uninformed informers'. His study provides much of interest in the chapters that are focussed on analysis of Seneca's texts, especially on the role of the chorus in *Agamemnon* (187–293), but I found less pertinent some of the wider-ranging methodological and philosophical claims that populate the first three chapters of his study.

[16] That the reactions of the intended audience and readership may be prefigured in (and guided by) internal spectators' reactions would not be unique in the literature of Seneca's age: a similar construction can be found in Lucan. See Leigh 1997, 4 ('What is truly striking about the *Pharsalia* […] is the ready acknowledgement by the primary narrator that his readers may share some of the attitudes of his internal audience. […] The invitation to measure one's response against the burning enthusiasm for the spectacle of civil war displayed by Caesar and his men is a fundamental challenge to acknowledge any complicity with the system they represent').

[17] Such a didactic construction would not be alien to Seneca: in his philosophy, the best example is a whole treatise, the *De Clementia*. Addressed to Nero, this essay argues for mercy as a central

Senecan Tragedy and Earlier Latin Literature

Augustan poetry is the major model for Seneca's plays in numerous respects, as Tarrant has convincingly demonstrated in his seminal 1978 article.[18] My insistence on Seneca's engagement with Republican authors does not contradict this view – by now a scholarly commonplace – but rather complements it,[19] at the same time opening up a new window through which we can view Seneca's tragic poetics and place in Roman literary history.

Two aspects in particular – as yet underexplored in scholarship – are worth further emphasis. Firstly, Seneca's engagement with the Augustan triad Vergil, Horace, and Ovid often displays a type of reception that continues, or intensifies, features found in the earlier authors' own engagement with their Republican predecessors.[20] It is possible to see that Seneca's reception of earlier literature in the choral odes goes beyond the Augustans, in significant engagement with their Republican models themselves, especially Catullus and Lucretius. Like Vergil, for example, Seneca seems to read Catullus predominantly in a pessimistic manner, as a Roman poet of loss and decline, inverting and correcting moments of erotic pathos in a way similar to Vergil before him (see chapter 3). Secondly, even when Seneca alludes to and reworks Augustan poetry, he is often drawn to darker moments of decline and pessimism that he detects in those texts. In some choral odes, he shows one way

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component of a good ruler's behaviour – but in the course of doing so, it presents numerous negative examples, instances of merciless behaviour that, with some readers, could achieve an effect antithetical to the original didactic intention.

[18] Tarrant 1978. See now also Trinacty's 2014 monograph, and cf. the introductory sections and indices of all published commentaries on Seneca's tragedies. Numerous parallels with Augustan poetry in Seneca's tragedies have been noted at least since Delrius's 1576 commentary. Ovid in particular has emerged as Seneca's most favoured model: see e.g. Jakobi 1988, Schiesaro 2003, 70–138, Littlewood 2004, 259–301, Hinds 2011; for Vergil, see e.g. Putnam 1995/6 and Zissos 2009; for Horace, esp. Spika 1890, Canter 1925, 41–55, Littlewood 2016, and Stöckinger/Winter/Zanker 2017 (forthcoming).

[19] What concerns my thesis in this area has some affinity with the forceful plea by Newman 2011, 124: 'What in the end divides Republic from Empire is not "Alexandrianism" [...] The barrier is quite different, and is accurately remarked by Lucan (VII.385ff.) and, for that matter, by Tacitus (Ann. I.4). On one side, in the Republic, there is intellectual freedom (*libertas*), imaginative space (*audacia*). The future is still open. There is choice. On the other, there is Empire which, as conceived at Rome, tends to close the options. Those who experience a Golden Age have no excuse if delated for treacherously wanting to change it. This extraordinary discontinuity in Roman literature [...] needs more attention from literary historians. It is obscured by talk of a seamless Golden Age, by syllabuses which canonise and compartmentalise the authors at the very end of the Republic along with those of the Augustan period, to the neglect of others'.

[20] Cf. e.g. Henderson 1998, 112, 'Sorting out how the past, and its past, was to be told, lay at the heart of the politics of the Augustan present'. For further scholarship examining Augustan literature's engagement with the Republican past, see below, n. 40.

in which significant passages of Augustan poetry *can* be read: as the poetic and lyric fictions surrounding the principate, processing and at times smoothing over the ruptures of the Roman civil war at the end of the Republic. Seneca's reception of Horace can serve as a case study for this phenomenon (see chapter 4), and demonstrate the ways in which Seneca shows a preference in his chorus for alluding not to Horace's most august poems, but to those in which his lyrics can still be read as 'Republican' poetry, poetically dealing with memories of civil war.[21]

Senecan Allusion and Intertextuality

Both Seneca's Republican echoes and allusions in the choral odes and the choruses' lack of distance from the tragic action can be illustrated in an interpretation that examines Senecan tragedy's allusive texture and intertextual echoes. In Greek tragedy, scholars have suggested that a significant feature of the tragic chorus is the extent to which it is steeped in engagement with earlier poetry in other genres.[22] While the approach to Seneca's plays via the study of allusions and intertextual relationships with other texts has been identified as one of the master ways of interpreting Senecan drama,[23] there has been no thorough analysis of the Senecan chorus's particular intertextual nature and place in literary history. The present study aims not simply to contribute some better and lesser known Greek and Roman allusions and intertextualities that are negotiated in the dynamics of literary history;[24] rather, the aim of its intertextual reading of Seneca's choruses is to make a categorical difference to our understanding of his wider tragic practice. By studying Seneca's intertextual echoes and allusive technique in the choral odes – which is no less significant than, say, the role of intertextuality in the characterisation of Seneca's tragic

[21] An excellent non-Horatian example of this Senecan type of reception of Augustan poetry that is attuned to its 'Republican' moments, occurs in the third chorus in *Thyestes*. The lyric voice of this chorus is invaded by conspicuous civil-war memories, specifically recalling a moment from Vergil's first *Eclogue*: see below, chapter 4, section 4.2, 'Augustan Poetry and Civil War: Seneca Reading Vergil and Horace in the Third Chorus of *Thyestes*'.
[22] Cf. Herington 1985 and Swift 2010.
[23] Schiesaro 2003, 223 identifies the reason for this: 'The pervasive characteristic of Seneca's tragedies is their belatedness: they represent an anachronistic return to the past, a frustrated desire for lost forms mediated by an overwhelming and oppressive intertextual memory. Senecan tragedy validates its existence (and its novelty) by displaying total awareness of its epigonic nature and by laying bare its internal mechanisms'.
[24] See below for my distinction between 'allusion' and 'intertextuality'.

protagonists –[25] my study aims to make a contribution to relocating the choral odes at the heart of Seneca's plays.

What will emerge in my study is *one* interpretation of literary-historical relevance that uncovers underestimated elements in Seneca's tragic chorus. In creating plausibility in my readings, I will rely on a distinction between 'allusion', implying a conscious shaping by the author, and (Kristevan) 'intertextuality', which exists (independently) in the system of texts.[26] I agree with Hinds with regard to his reservations concerning 'philological fundamentalism',[27] and would like to emphasise that – particularly in everyday interpretative practice – 'allusion' and 'intertextuality' necessarily co-exist on a continuum, rather than constituting mutually exclusive options. I would nevertheless argue that there is no advantage in studies in intertextuality and allusion routinely talking about 'intertexts' if the scholars in question at the same time seem to hold on to an underlying assumption of the authors' conscious involvement in the creative process (even if the authors' names may be used metonymically).[28]

The major methodological concern of such an approach to allusion and intertextuality has not changed since Thomas's 1986 study, in which he points out that there is the crucial 'problem of determining when a reference is really a reference, and when it is merely an accidental confluence, inevitable between poets dealing with a shared or related language. In part the resolution of this problem lies in that most perilous quality of the mind, judgment'.[29] Thomas here uses the terminology of 'reference', a term that will be absent from my study; however, the issue of deciding whether to discuss a parallel (a neutral term) between two texts as a deliberate point of contact as shaped by the later author or as an instance of Kristevan intertextuality is a key consideration. In the present thesis, the parallels between Senecan tragedy and earlier texts that I

[25] On which see e.g. Trinacty 2014, 62–126.
[26] Building on the definition of 'intertextuality' by Kristeva 1967. See Fowler 1997 for a clear account of the differences between 'intertextuality' and 'allusion'.
[27] Hinds 1998, esp. 17–51. Cf. also Schiesaro 2003, 222, with n. 2.
[28] Others will no doubt judge differently. In addition to Hinds 1998, and the classic treatment by Fowler 1997, Lyne 1994 is a key contribution to the scholarly debate in the 1990s. On the role of authorial intention in studies of allusion (and intertextuality), Farrell 1991, 21–4 and Edmunds 2001, 39–62 are especially useful reading. A stimulating new angle that has the potential to energise the debate is the application of cognitive science to the study of allusion and intertextuality: these studies are perhaps not unlikely to restore the meaning-creating centre to the side of the author (or the recipient), counterbalancing purely (inter-)textual approaches as established in the wake of New Criticism and, especially, (Post-)Structuralism.
[29] Thomas 1986, 174.

discuss comprise instances belonging to both categories. In the former case, I will talk about 'allusion' and employ critical language that suggests Seneca's deliberate shaping of his language, metre, themes, and imagery to recall specific moments in earlier texts; in the latter case, I shall discuss 'intertextual dynamics' and talk about 'echoes'. If, building on the nature of the points of contact under examination, I have decided to leave the question open in some cases, I will talk about Seneca – or the texts – 'engaging' with each other/the earlier texts, to include the possibility of both Senecan allusion and intertextuality. In deciding whether it would be plausible and fruitful to analyse a parallel as an 'allusion', I pay attention to verbal similarities, thematic points of contact, and shared formal features (most notably, metre). If I argue for an allusion to be present, I do so by pointing to it being signalled by one or more of these features as contextual markers.[30] My language reveals that there is a strong involvement of my judgment as the reader and scholarly interpreter in this, which is why my study is also an example of reception studies. In analysing the various relationships between the texts under scrutiny, I will accordingly present *one* reading of Seneca's chorus, a reading that focuses on a particular series of elements of a shared literary tradition, of allusions, and of intertextualities. I am not claiming that the reading presented in the present study is the only viable way to read Seneca's chorus, or even the only way to read the Republican elements and the chorus's lack of detachment from the tragic action. I acknowledge that the extent to which Seneca's contemporary audience and readers – and readers of my study – would have picked up on the issues discussed in my interpretations would rely on their (shared) 'horizon of expectations'.[31]

At times, my study will ask what Seneca's contemporary recipients would have made of Senecan poetics and the points discussed in my interpretation. This is not to say that ancient responses should *per se* be given higher interpretive authority than, say, modern-day ones. In two areas of my study, however, – firstly, in the possibility of Seneca's texts resonating in their contemporary political environment and, secondly, in the effects of Seneca's use of metre – it will be crucial to try to consider likely contemporary recipients'

[30] Cf. Thomas's criteria at 1986, 174. Hinds 1998, 28–34 is an inspiring read on the tensions between 'philological security' created by contextual markers and the limits of interpretability.
[31] See esp. Jauss's chapter on 'The Poetic Text within the Change of Horizons of Reading' (1982, esp. 139–48).

expectations and responses. Such an attempt will aid the understanding of Seneca's – in these cases – *allusive* practice. In cases where I will argue for Senecan allusion to certain earlier authors and texts, an attempt is also made to establish the literary-historical plausibility of Seneca's familiarity with those predecessors.[32] The 'horizon of expectations' of Seneca's early imperial recipients, finally, would certainly have been one with a strong expectation of allusive practices in literature. It has been persuasively argued that, in a time of 'eager audiences and paranoid rulers',[33] people would have been ready to listen and read for allusive references which point beyond the surface meanings of speeches, plays, and other texts.[34]

Irrespective of my theoretical position and the terminology employed in each case study, the value of my readings of Seneca's chorus will, I hope, also lie in bringing out underestimated points of contact between Seneca's chorus and earlier Latin literature with Republican elements, points of contact and sustained engagement that could encourage people to look differently at some of the well-known scenes and odes of Seneca's tragedies.[35] At the same time, my study endeavours, when suitable, to 'see Seneca whole',[36] and compare features from Seneca's prose works. The study of allusion and intertextuality can thus also emerge as a means of tracing the accommodation and transformation of concepts in the history of ideas.

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[32] To that end in particular, I will bring in examples from across Seneca's works. On the essential similarity between Senecan intertextuality and allusive practices in his prose and poetry, see Trinacty 2014, 26–61.

[33] Bartsch 1994, 66.

[34] This feature is explored by Bartsch 1994, 63–97.

[35] Cf. Schiesaro 2003, 224: 'Intertextuality, at any rate, can never be a neutral operation in either its contents or in the dynamics of its perception. It will offer the well-read reader the pleasure of recognition, a chance to share with the author control over the text and its signification; or it may puzzle and disempower those who perceive it in an unfocused manner. It will be a way to activate pleasurable events (the very act of remembering can be pleasurable), or to recreate the painful experience of *nefas*; to encourage identification with the emotions provoked by the past, or to look at them with relief, anguish, hope or terror'.

[36] The study of Seneca's philosophy and poetry is often still too frostily separated (but see the attempt against this trend in Volk/Williams 2006); the most extreme fruits of this phenomenon have led to equally unpersuasive readings of Senecan drama on both ends of the spectrum, i.e. scholars trying to use Seneca's 'Stoicism' as the decoding key for everything in the tragedies on the one hand, and books such as Dingel 1974 on the other. Both approaches to Senecan drama have of course also unearthed much stimulating material in more nuanced studies (on the 'philosophy' side, see esp. Rosenmeyer 1989 and Nussbaum 1993 and 1997). In my study, chapter 2 features an attempt at an inclusive approach, with one of its core concerns being the intersection between poetry and philosophy.

The Senecan Chorus's Republican Echoes – and Seneca's Republicanism?

The chorus, arguably representing a voice of 'the people' as opposed to the mythological protagonists in the tragedies, steeped in monarchical and tyrannical structures, is also the preferred space for Seneca to engage with Rome's Republican past.[37] If one feature of the chorus in Greek tragedy was to speak for the 'popular collective', as Schlegel claimed in his characterisation,[38] Seneca has retained elements of this characteristic. In some of his choruses, the Republican elements are signalled by allusions to Roman Republican literature. Seneca's choral odes not only continue formal and poetic features of Roman Republican tragedy (see chapter 1), but also feature a pervasive stream of echoes of the Republican poets Lucretius (see chapter 2) and Catullus (see chapter 3). In engaging with moments of the Augustan Horace's *Odes*, there is a significant tendency to read Horace's poetry for his Republican memories, particularly echoes of the Republic-ending civil war (see chapter 4). My thesis is that, while the chorus in Seneca's tragedies still seems to carry traces of its Republican identity, which becomes visible in the engagement with Republican memories, those attempts at recalling a Republican past are usually silenced against the backdrop of the powerful evil-doers and tyrants in the plays (such as Atreus, Oedipus, or Medea) or against the mythological (and monarchical) subject-matter of war (such as in *Troades* and *Agamemnon*).

The engagement with Republican literature and the Republican past that I will demonstrate as a feature of Seneca's allusive technique in the tragic choral odes allows a contribution to another crucial research question: that of Seneca's own 'Republicanism'. This feature ought to be viewed together with the significant presence of Republican elements and echoes in other post-Augustan literature. The gap in scholarship with regard to Seneca's works, especially his tragedies, is striking. At a time when his nephew Lucan could write the major post-Augustan epic on the topic of Rome's Republic-ending 'Civil War', why

[37] While the reality behind the concept of 'the people' is necessarily more complex than the collective term may imply, there is still a sense in which the collective usage may be especially apt in Republican Rome: Cicero, in both his *Republic* and *De Officiis*, utilises such a collective character of 'the people' when he recommends that Roman citizens adopt the *persona civitatis* as a whole when they take up office: see *Rep*. 1.51 and *Off*. 1.85. As Wood 1988, 135–6 points out, for Cicero, the *civitas* is 'one person, whose likeness can be simulated by a single mask'. See further Schofield 1995, and Stacey 2014, 138–40 (who examines Seneca's *De Clementia*, in part a response to Cicero's *De Officiis*).

[38] See above, n. 10.

should Seneca not have been inspired by Republican memories and their potential for poetic creation in an age of quasi-tyrannical rule? Given the literary environment, is it not plausible to expect a contribution to an important contemporary field of discourse from one of the commanding intellectual figures of the time, peculiarly poised between art, philosophy, and politics?[39] Even if Seneca, in his tragedies, chose to engage more obviously with his more immediate Augustan predecessors Vergil, Horace, and Ovid, his engagement with Republican models, both later (Lucretius and Catullus) and earlier ones (Ennius and other Republican tragedians), would also continue the Augustans' own obsession with poetically coming to grips with their past, in a present created by civil war.[40] Moreover, the nature of Seneca's engagement with the Augustan poets reveals that he is often drawn to 'darker' moments: in his choral odes, there is a tendency to recall moments of Augustan poetry where the Augustans themselves processed memories of civil war. My study will be the first treatment to examine, in chosen case studies, the sustained presence of Republican allusions in Senecan tragedy, an inheritance that shows itself most strongly in Seneca's choruses.

Acknowledging such Senecan engagement with the Republican past would counterbalance the view expressed in Gowing's wider study of Republican memories in culture and literature during the empire.[41] Gowing has persuasively demonstrated the breadth of Republican memories in the early empire, and identified major peaks of the discourse under Tiberius and then, again, in post-Neronian times.[42] His stimulating book, however, features a treatment of the role of Seneca's engagement with the Republican past that is incomplete. To my mind, Gowing's discussion underestimates Seneca's use of the Republican past. His thesis is that, inferring from the *De Clementia* (and *De Beneficiis*), '[e]vidently, for Seneca there was little from the Republican past

[39] Griffin 1976 is the most comprehensive study of Seneca the 'Philosopher in Politics'. See also Stacey 2014, and below, n. 49.
[40] On the immediate influence of early Republican literature on the Roman cultural discourse, see now Feeney 2016, 179–98. Scholarship on the question of Augustan literature's engagement with its Republican (historical and literary) tradition is extensive; I have found particularly instructive: Barchiesi 1962, 38–70; Buchheit 1963, esp. 23–58; Habinek/Schiesaro 1997; Hinds 1998, 14–16 and 52–74; Oakley 1999, 13–72; Hardie 2002, esp. 50–54 and 150–63, and 2009, *passim*; Barchiesi 2008; Farrell/Nelis 2013; Goldschmidt 2013; Schiesaro 2014a.
[41] Gowing 2005.
[42] Gowing 2005, 28–66 and 109–31.

that warranted remembering',[43] and that there was 'a fundamental devaluation of Republican history in the Neronian period'.[44] This view crucially ignores Seneca's tragedies,[45] which, I will show, contain considerable engagement with Republican elements. An argument that overlooks Seneca's tragedies and has to single out Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* as an exception to the rule, i.e. fails to include the two major sets of poetry written during the reign of Nero, will struggle to convince from the perspective of cultural history. But even if one were to limit oneself to Seneca's prose works and the *Apocolocyntosis* (as Gowing does), the view that 'the Republic' does not figure largely (and is almost entirely absent during the reign of Nero) is not the only one to take. Gowing is surely right in arguing for an increase in Republican allusions in post-Neronian texts, such as Pliny's *Panegyricus*.[46] In his study of the Senecan *Epistles*, on the other hand, Gowing suggested that 'it must have some significance that Seneca seems to appeal less often to the Republic'.[47] However, it is far from clear that the mere number of allusions to Republican texts and a prominent *libertas* discourse is a sign of a text's and an author's deeper engagement with the Republican past. On the contrary, one may wish to emphasise that Republican allusions during a time when there are notably fewer – such as under Nero – need to be taken more seriously. In other words, the (relatively few and subtle) Republican allusions in Seneca, indicative of a residual discourse, are not unlikely to point to more Republican allegiance (and possibly even carry oppositional force) than the (numerous) Republican allusions in a text such as Pliny's *Panegyricus*, where the *libertas* and Republic elements have arguably already been fully incorporated into the dominant discourse of imperial propaganda.[48]

It is worth saying that my study of Seneca's engagement with Republican texts in his tragic choral odes does not necessarily imply any strong political or ideological allegiance to the Republic on Seneca's part. Nevertheless, it is worth

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[43] Gowing 2005, 68.
[44] Gowing 2005, 69.
[45] As well as Seneca's use of Cato as a favourite *exemplum*: see further below, with n. 52.
[46] On the *Panegyricus*, see Gowing 2005, 120–31, with Morford 1992. See further the contributions in Roche 2011, and cf. below, n. 48 and n. 665.
[47] Gowing 2005, 70.
[48] Even Pliny's panegyric, however, is not closed off to the possibility of being read for a level of meaning below the text's surface: see esp. the analysis by Connolly 2009, who argues that Pliny 'is not afraid that [his words] will be misinterpreted as flattery, lies, or subversion, but because he fears the significance of his lie will be lost. He comes not to praise Trajan, nor to bury him, but to imagine what limited freedom looks like' (278).

looking into some of Seneca's prose works here.[49] An intellectual and politician of Seneca's calibre, especially if largely subscribing to the Stoic school of thought, is unlikely not to take some stance on the issue of how to behave under a single ruler, and of how the ruling system of the principate relates to Rome's old Republic. While it is true that Seneca questions the value of Republican ideals for his own times at *Ben.* 2.20.2, his engagement with the question is significant in the first place.[50] Moreover, Seneca defends Stoics from the verdict of being 'revolutionaries' at *Ep.* 14.4 and 73.1. Seneca may not be a revolutionary Republican, but he is also not ruling out opposition. For Stoics, in general, keeping Republican echoes alive was vital:[51] the most prominent aspect of this shows in their veneration of Cato (as at Sen. *Ep.* 11.9–10).[52] It is not a coincidence that, in the Pisonian conspiracy of 65 AD that led to the deaths of both Seneca and Lucan, all but one of the named conspirators adhered to Stoic principles.[53] In Tacitus' retrospective account, Stoics figure prominently: in Tacitus' view, Thrasea Paetus was the most virtuous, and hero-like, of the Stoic opposition, and it is clear that Tacitus includes the notion of the possibility of a revolution among virtuous opposition (see Tac. *Ann.* 16.21–2; cf. esp. the key words *nova instituta* and *libertas*). These are all examples on the political level. But there is a broader cultural discourse, and we ought to pay close attention to literature and poetry. This is true especially since dissent under monarchical rulers tends to be expressed in an highly allusive manner.[54] As MacMullen put it, '[c]riticism (in contrast to opposition) therefore preferred the written word, and spoke in code'.[55]

Having said that, it is in the choruses that most of Seneca's allusions to the Republican past can be found – crucially, they are silenced in the main

[49] For a fuller treatment, see Griffin 1976, 182–201 (and, also important for Seneca's attitude to Republican elements, 202–21 on the principate).
[50] See MacMullen 1966, 32, with n. 36.
[51] MacMullen 1966, 53 describes the situation like this, 'Why philosophy and subversion went together (as they undeniably did), the answer so far seems to be that Stoicism in particular sharpened the impulse and the courage to say what one felt, without supplying any specific political program. It made missionaries, but missionaries with very little more than the vague idea that men – other men – could be roused to revolution, or the emperor recalled to an antique virtue'.
[52] Gowing emphasises what Seneca does *not* use Cato for: 'While it is true that Seneca admires Cato, nowhere does he admire him for opposition to Caesar' (79). For further references on Seneca's use of Cato, see Gowing 2005, 79, n. 24.
[53] See MacMullen 1966, 54.
[54] See esp. Bartsch 1994.
[55] MacMullen 1966, 36.

action of the plays in which they occur. It would have been up to the contemporary recipients to decide about their force; they could choose to side with the victorious protagonists of the tragedies, who wield the dominant discourse, and silence or ignore the Republican intrusions; or they could choose to remember those moments of Republicanism expressed by the choruses – be they from the world of early Roman Republican drama, the detached philosophy of Lucretius, the detached love poetry of Catullus, or the civil-war poetry of Horace – and think about their relevance for their lives under the early imperial principate. Such an allusive construction, to be sure, could potentially appeal to the silently subversive politician and philosopher as much as to the monarchical ruler.

Overview of Chapters

As I have pointed out, I will trace the literary-historical dynamics of Seneca's chorus by focussing on different areas: in each of them, I will employ a slightly different focus. In chapter 1, I will use a comparative approach, interpreting the choric fragments from Republican tragedy and some passages from Seneca's choruses. The major aim of this approach is not to claim specific Senecan allusions to certain Republican choruses (although this will sometimes be possible, despite the challenge of our fragmentary evidence of Republican tragedy) – rather, I present a comparative approach through which a reader schooled in Senecan tragedy might encounter the Republican choral fragments. In some sense, this will show us how 'Senecan' previous Roman tragedy is.[56] In chapters 2 and 3, which examine the Lucretian and Catullan presences in Seneca's chorus, my reading will not only be comparative: here, I usually rely on verbal allusions combined with other markers of potential allusive engagement, most notably shared themes, both philosophical and lyric. In chapter 4, finally, which examines Seneca's relationship with Horace's *Odes*, my approach often entails arguing for conscious Senecan shaping of lines in his choruses so as to engage with Horace. Here, my analysis will often rely on an interaction between verbal and metrical allusions, each capable of serving as allusive markers. The combination of verbal and metrical allusion will be, I shall argue, of special

[56] But, starting from the most comprehensive dramatic evidence we have, Seneca's plays, also makes sense from a more conservative literary-historical perspective: Ribbeck 1875, e.g., ordered the fragments of Accius' *Atreus* on the basis of Seneca's plot in *Thyestes* when suitable.

importance in Seneca's polymetric odes, where individual metrical cola signal debt not only to certain Horatian metres but also to specific lines in that metre. While the four chapters of my study will thus privilege Senecan engagement with individual traditions and predecessors (chapter 1: Republican tragedy; chapter 2: Lucretius; chapter 3: Catullus; chapter 4: Horace), it will often be necessary to read these allusive and intertextual relationships with an eye to other literary presences. As I shall demonstrate in chapter 3, for example, Seneca's reception of Catullus is at times combined with that of Lucretius, Vergil, and Ovid.

By approaching the Senecan chorus's relationship to its literary past in this manner one can see several ways in which Seneca's tragic lyrics grapple with their status as lyric poetry that may also serve didactic ends. In chapter 1, the chorus in Republican tragedy is shown to exhibit a certain type of involved spectatorship: these tragedies that are, like Seneca's, often based on the tyrannical political backdrops of famous Greek tragic myths, exploit the dramatic possibilities of tyrannical power structures. The chorus plays its part: rather than a distanced group that could provide guidance for extra-dramatic spectators, the Republican chorus is one character among all the others in the plays. This shows especially in the discourse of uncertainty that it engages in, a quest for knowledge about the tragic world around them that exposes them as possessing no higher epistemic authority. On a formal level, the level of sounds, another 'Senecan' feature of the Republican chorus emerges: there is evidence to suggest that there was a strong tradition of recitatives in place of sung choral odes, a feature that is fully exploited in Seneca's later stichic odes.[57]

Chapter 2 brings out another level of the anxieties the choruses express in the face of their tragic environments. In Seneca's tragedies, the chorus tends to display one of two coping mechanisms: strong identification with the tragic fates of the other characters as expressed through their involved spectatorship of the tragic action, or a peculiar type of choral uncertainty that is pushed to Senecan extremes of complete ignorance about what is happening around them. In the choruses in which Seneca focuses on their status of 'virtual' spectators of the tragic action, significant engagement with Lucretius emerges. The Epicurean

[57] Which may have been written with the strong possibility of recitation in mind: see, e.g., Brink 1971, 254–5, and cf. further below, chapter 1. On the question of the performance contexts of Senecan tragedy, cf. above, n. 5.

poet-philosopher aimed to rid people of their fears of death in his didactic epic *De Rerum Natura* [*DRN*]. A professed iconoclast, Lucretius, promoting the Epicurean belief in the reliability of the senses, also cautions against the dangers of illusions. At the beginning of *DRN* 2, moreover, the wise philosopher, free of all irrational fears, is placed on a safe vantage point, and is able to watch a scene of storm and shipwreck at sea unperturbed. These Lucretian moments are important hall-marks in Seneca's tragic reception. In his chorus in *Troades*, Seneca inverts moments of Lucretius' Epicurean comfort. For the Trojan women, despite their recalling lines from the second Lucretian proem, a situation of distanced spectatorship and Epicurean tranquillity is unimaginable in midst of their tragic disaster. At another moment, the members of the chorus in *Agamemnon*, again displaying a conspicuous focus on the visual, would even wish for a situation in which they can console themselves with the illusions Lucretius warned against. All they have is tragic disaster.

Chapter 3 considers a series of Senecan engagements with the Republican Catullus. Seneca's reception of Catullus emphasises moments in his predecessor's poetry that express a pessimistic view of human progress, such as that encountered in Catullus 64. These allusions occur in *Medea*, where Seneca's chorus is ultimately despondent in the face of the triumph of evil. The other major thread of Catullan allusions is to Catullus' famous love poetry. In these cases, Seneca's reception is characterized by a manner according to which moments of optimism, such as epithalamian joy, are inverted to suit the tragic environments.

In chapter 4, finally, Horace's *Odes* will be uncovered as not only Seneca's most important formal model for his choral lyrics (which helps to explain Seneca's choice of cola in the somewhat curious polymetric odes), but also a significant further source of expressing the chorus's non-detached anxieties. In Seneca's tragic world, as in the case of Seneca's reception of Catullus, positive moments taken from Horace are inverted. Seneca has turned Horace's promised lands into wastelands, his august sounds into dark silences. Perhaps most significantly, the chorus's recalling of moments from Horace's *Odes* favours moments in which the Augustan poet himself processed his own troubled past, Rome's Republican civil war. For Seneca, Horace's poems are civil-war poetry.

CHAPTER 1

Republican Uncertainties.
Seneca and the Chorus in Roman Republican Tragedy

De choro dico quem veteres philosophi noverant: in commissionibus nostris plus cantorum est quam in theatris olim spectatorum fuit. Cum omnes vias ordo canentium implevit et cavea aeneatoribus cincta est et ex pulpito omne tibiarum genus organorumque consonuit, fit concentus ex dissonis. Talem animum esse nostrum volo: multae in illo artes, multa praecepta sint, multarum aetatum exempla, sed in unum conspirata.

(Sen. *Ep*. 84.9–10)

1.1 Introduction

The study of Roman tragedy is fraught with the difficulties of a rather awkward situation of transmission. The only substantial corpus of tragedies that has come down to us in full, Seneca's, practically marks the end of a tradition which is some three centuries old. Of the body of tragedy before him, we only know approximately 1,650 lines, with substantial amounts and stretches of text from Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius.[58] On the positive side, the tragic fragments have begun to receive considerable scholarly attention.[59] The chorus, however, has rarely been the object of focused study.[60] This may not be very surprising given the uncertainties surrounding the attribution of lyric fragments to their respective *sedes* in the tragic scripts.

Starting from the textual evidence we have, I will trace four aspects of the Republican choral songs that deserve due attention since they are shared throughout the body of Roman tragedy and taken up – and developed further – in Seneca's plays, our most comprehensive example of a Roman tragic practice. My study will, firstly, demonstrate how some of the Roman Republican authors included contemporary material in their plays, which were probably as rich intertextually as the major Greek tragedies.[61] At the same time, Roman tragedy should not only be understood by looking back: some of the poetic decisions

[58] See the overview at Hose 1999, 116.
[59] See the survey in Manuwald 2003. Boyle 2006 and Manuwald 2011 are important monograph treatments. Of older studies, Ribbeck 1875 is still useful. Republican tragedy is also well served by substantial commentaries: to Jocelyn's Ennius (1967) can now be added Dangel's Accius (1995), Schierl's Pacuvius (2006), and Spaltenstein's Naevius (2014).
[60] But see Hose 1999, who provides some groundwork for the study of the Republican chorus. He demonstrates how the Roman chorus, generally speaking, no longer had the role of presenting a source of reflection that would transcend the plot.
[61] See the representative examples of dramatic intertextuality, with discussion of generic crossovers, at Manuwald 2011, 309–20.

taken by the Republican dramatists, most notably Naevius, Ennius, and Accius, would shape Roman dramatic poetic texture to such an extent that their traces can clearly be seen in Seneca's sophisticated exploitation of the same or similar forms, themes, and poetic gestures. This becomes apparent, secondly, when one considers the inclusion of genuinely philosophical questions and tenets in drama, common to both the Republican poets and Seneca, each time with a shared penchant for including such material not primarily in the dialogic parts, but rather in the choral odes and *cantica* of the plays. Thirdly, one crucial formal continuity throughout Roman tragedy is that of recitative and stichic choruses, a clear contrast with the abundance of sung lyric and strophic choruses of classical Greek tragedy. This is a development that has been noted to stretch from the later Euripides, through New Comedy and Hellenistic tragedy,[62] to Plautus, and reached its apex in Seneca's plays, which feature almost exclusively stichic choral odes.[63] As far as Roman comedy goes, it has been shown how the Roman authors would convert songs in their Greek models into non-sung recitatives.[64] It will, however, lie beyond the scope of my study to analyse the continuities, metrical and otherwise, between Roman comedy and Seneca's plays.[65] The major uncertainties in any literary-historical sketch lie with Roman Republican and Augustan tragic practice. My study will provide a review of the approximately 80 lines that were probably part of choral odes in Republican tragedies, paying particular attention to those more substantial fragments that allow some assessment of a stichic or non-stichic character. Finally, there is another shared interest in the psychology and dramatic possibilities of uncertainty: from Ennius onwards, the chorus is often made to share in the perplexities of the plays and is not granted any higher (narrative) authority.

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[62] The fragments of Hellenistic tragedy are now brought together in Kotlińska-Toma 2015. In her 2014 thesis on the chorus in fourth-century Athenian drama, Jackson has recently challenged the common narrative of 'decline' about the chorus's function in post-fifth-century Greek drama.

[63] This is not to say, of course, that Republican Roman tragedy and comedy featured no music. On the contrary, music played an important role, especially in comedy (Deufert 2014 provides a good discussion of this feature). In Seneca, the sapphic *Med.* 579–669 is the only properly stanzaic ode.

[64] The Roman comedians would compensate for the lack of music brought about by their pruning of choral songs by widely integrating sung parts accompanied by music into their plays where the Greek originals had spoken verses only. See again Deufert 2014.

[65] On Plautus' and Terence's use of metre, see the essential edition by Questa 1995, and Questa 2007 (a study of Plautus' and Terence's metrical practices). The stichic system in Plautus' *cantica* emerges e.g. from the detailed study by Braun 1970.

The latter feature is crucial with regard to the role of the tragic chorus as 'virtual' spectators, Schlegel's view that is mentioned at the outset of my study. If, as Schlegel claimed, the Greek chorus provided the antidote to tragedy's shocking effects on audiences' emotions and guidance towards 'contemplation',[66] the Roman Republican chorus would not fulfil that function any more. The choruses' role of intratextual spectators does not seem to be that of 'idealised spectators'. Rather, the choruses are as immersed in the tragic action as all the other characters, a feature to be exploited in Seneca's later choral practice.[67] While scholarship on the Greek chorus has of course advanced to positions that aim to correct and adapt Schlegel's influential characterisation, this does not in itself affect the usefulness of Schlegel's characterisation as a schematic foil against which Seneca's practice can be thrown into relief.[68] Perhaps most significantly for present purposes, Gould argued against Schlegel's (and Vernant's) view,[69] pointing out a number of complications. According to him, the notion of the 'collective experience' expressed through the chorus is misleading since, from the point of view of social history, the chorus by and large represented a marginal group.[70] For instance, Gould argues that '[t]he tragic chorus is characteristically composed of old men, women, slaves, and foreigners (the last often non-Greeks as well as non-Athenians)'.[71] Gould's caution against reductionism is certainly worth taking into account (and see below for a consideration of features of the Greek chorus in comparison with what is happening in some fragments from Roman tragedy).[72] For a literary reading of Seneca's chorus, however, Gould's points, largely concerned with the social production and reception contexts of Athenian Greek tragedy, would make little – if any – difference. In particular, Gould's major concern with the marginal status of the Greek tragic chorus is almost inapplicable to Seneca's tragedies: at those times at which his choruses are clearly identifiable, they are

[66] See above, n. 1.
[67] The interpretation of Hose 1999 points into this direction; his view is summarised at Manuwald 2011, 74.
[68] I would thus disagree with Gould 1996, 217, for whom especially Schlegel's 'notions of "the ideal spectator" [note that Schlegel had in fact talked about 'idealised' spectators: see above, n. 1] and "the poet's voice"' were 'never very fruitful'.
[69] See Vernant/Vidal-Naquet 1981 and the account of Vernant's model by Longo 1990, who insists, above all, on the chorus's role as 'representatives of the collective citizenbody' (17); cited by Gould 1996, 219.
[70] Gould 1996, 219–20.
[71] Gould 1996, 220.
[72] See below, section 1.5, 'The Role of the Chorus in Uncertainties and Ambiguities in Greek Tragedy'.

not representing marginal groups, but important collectives within the dramatic action. Perhaps most notably, the chorus in *Thyestes* is conspicuously Romanized and can be read to represent a group of Roman citizens, who, even using anachronistic references to *Quirites* (*Thy*. 396), transcend the mythic plot.[73] Bearing in mind Schlegel's view of the Greek chorus as a 'popular collective' and as 'idealised spectators' – albeit as a schematic approximation – still makes for a useful foil against which some features of the Roman chorus's immersion in the tragic action can be conceptualised.

1.2 Republican Tragedy and Seneca?

The relationship between the Republican tragic poets and Seneca is still a live scholarly debate. As Richard Tarrant has made plausible, Seneca was familiar with earlier dramatic traditions (most notably Hellenistic drama) especially through the lens of later, most importantly Augustan, tragedians.[74] Friedrich Leo had argued that Seneca's scorn for Ennius and Republican archaisms in general (which is preserved most vividly at Gellius 12.2.11) was such that Republican tragedy could not possibly have had any influence on Seneca's plays.[75] On the other end of the spectrum, Ribbeck, famous for his monumental work on the Republican fragments, did not have the slightest doubt that Seneca knew earlier Roman tragedy, even going so far as to order the Accian fragments on the basis of Seneca's plot when suitable (for reconstruction, Seneca's *Thyestes* served as a model for Accius' *Atreus*).[76] The few references to the Republican tragedians that exist in Seneca's prose œuvre are either of a proverbial character and/or mediated through Cicero, a fact that is also

[73] See further below, chapter 4, at the opening of section 4.2, 'Augustan Poetry and Civil War: Seneca Reading Vergil and Horace in the Third Chorus of *Thyestes*', with n. 531.

[74] Seneca is likely to have inherited the practices of Hellenistic drama 'from earlier writers of tragedy, rather than himself imposing techniques of New Comedy directly onto fifth-century models' (Tarrant 1978, 255).

[75] Leo 1912, 26: 'In der Zeit des Claudius und Nero steigert sich diese Entwicklung auf ihren Höhepunkt, die alte Litteratur fällt in fast völlige Vergessenheit. Seneca verfaßt seine Tragödien nach den griechischen Originalen, ohne die römischen Bearbeitungen auch nur zu kennen; die Verse der altrömischen Tragödie, die er in seinen prosaischen Schriften citirt, stammen sämtlich aus dritter Hand'. See also Leo 1897a, 510, and the dissertation by Leo's pupil, Strauss 1887, esp. 16–20.

[76] Ribbeck's views (see e.g. Ribbeck 1875, 607, 'Nur des Atreus gedenkt Seneca, der doch gewiss auch die anderen Werke studiert hat') may well have been due to the editor's zeal to constitute a readable Accian text – but they should not be discarded too quickly: some of the similarities between Seneca's *Thyestes* and Accius' *Atreus* are strong. See below, esp. n. 122. There also seem to be echoes in Senecan tragedy of individual plays by Pacuvius, Ennius, and even Livius: see discussion below.

emphasised by Giancarlo Mazzoli in his important study *Seneca e la poesia*: however, Mazzoli all the same believes in a certain Republican influence on Seneca.[77]

Mazzoli's view is also shared in the present study;[78] it is a reasonable position because, firstly, Seneca's general scorn for the Republican poets in his non-dramatic works does not constitute conclusive evidence for his non-engagement with them in his plays.[79] Quite the reverse: one could argue that this is a particularity of poetic *aemulatio*, or of a Bloomian 'anxiety of influence' on Seneca's part.[80] Not only are writers who criticise their forebears likely to know those authors' works well enough – they also raise the stakes of competition by singling out the most prominent models in theory, at the same time trying to outdo them in their very own spheres in practice. Thus, Seneca would engage with the Republican poets and their style in theory (an engagement that does not always consist in outright rejection), and outdo them in practice. Secondly, some of the cases in which Seneca allegedly pours scorn on the Republican poets need to be given closer attention, with a view to what their actual evidential value is for Seneca's alleged non-engagement with Republican authors.

In the case of Seneca's relationship to Ennius, we can learn more from a much-cited section in Gellius (12.2.1–14) than the fact that Seneca was not in favour of Ennian style and archaisms. In fact, it seems to me to be pushing interpretation too far in the wrong direction if scholars use the Senecan criticism preserved by Gellius to argue against Seneca's engagement with

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[77] Mazzoli's chapter (Mazzoli 1970, 188–98) stands as the most comprehensive treatment of the influence of the Roman Republican poets on Seneca. See also the earlier study of Krókowski 1952 (who, after a general introduction, focuses on Accius' *Atreus* and Seneca's *Thyestes*) and Nicolini 1934. De Rosalia 1981 and Blänsdorf 2008 make a strong case for Seneca's engagement with Accius. Davis 2015, discussing the engagement with contemporary political discourses throughout Roman tragedy, especially in Accius and Seneca, also seems to assume Senecan engagement with the Republican writers. On Seneca's practice of citing Ennian passages also quoted in Cicero see esp. Mazzoli 1970, 191, and below for a review of Seneca's Ennian quotations.

[78] See also e.g. Rosenmeyer 1989, 5: 'Seneca's debt to the republican dramatists, and also his desire to rival the ancient Greeks, may currently be underestimated. Quotations from and references to tragedy are so rare in his prose work that no comparative inferences can be drawn with assurance'.

[79] We may note from the outset that, more widely, Seneca's criticism of others does not imply non-engagement: his sharp intellectualism and eclectic manner allow him, for instance, happily to ascribe 'absurdities' and mistakes even to other Stoics (see *Nat.* 4.1, 5.4, 6.1, and cf. 7.21–2, with Hutchinson 1993, 42–3) – this is to stress his own intellectual independence, but surely with a careful awareness of these other writers' works.

[80] See Bloom 1973.

Ennius and the Republican poets. Three aspects are worthy of note. The first one is a general caution regarding Gellius' account: his is not a neutral presentation. One significant sentence showing this, Gellius 12.2.2, has been rendered into English (for instance in the Loeb translation) as 'I myself do not feel called upon to criticize and pass judgment upon his talents in general',[81] and thus may seem like Gellius' statement of objectivity. This is, however, not what Gellius is saying in the Latin: what *mihi de omni eius ingenio deque omni scripto iudicium censuramque facere non necessum est* really means in this context can be paraphrased as 'It is not necessary for me to give explicit judgment … [since the examples I have picked will speak for themselves]'. Indeed, the selection of examples from Seneca serves Gellius well in presenting him as 'very stupid' (*insulsissimus*, 12.2.6), 'a trifler' (*homo nugator*, 12.2.7), and a writer one becomes weary of quoting (*iam verborum Senecae piget*, 12.2.11). Secondly, even in the passages cited by Gellius, the Ennian features singled out by Seneca for criticism turn out to be linguistic quibbles, marginal queries only. The major thrust of Seneca's criticism is not directed at Ennius in particular, but at archaisms in general. This becomes clear in the passages cited at Gellius 12.2.7–10, in which Seneca explains why Cicero (whom he tends to dislike)[82] and even Vergil (one of his favourites) had to incorporate archaisms into their works to suit the tastes of their times. In the same passage, we also see Seneca engaging with actual Ennian subject-matter, characterising Vergil's Ennianisms as *duros … versus et enormes et aliquid supra mensuram trahentis* (12.2.10). This is the third – and probably most crucial – observation to be taken away from the section in Gellius: when it comes to actual engagement with Ennius' poetry (rather than a mere discussion of the value of archaising Ennian quotations), Seneca displays considerable knowledge of Ennius' poetic style as well as interpretative skill, identifying Ennian lines as 'harsh, irregular and somewhat beyond the proper length'.[83] It thus transpires that Seneca knows Ennius better than often assumed (an assumption which is, in turn, based partly on the Gellius passage above).[84]

[81] Rolfe 1948–61.
[82] But not necessarily in terms of style: see Winterbottom 1982, 243.
[83] This important point is also made by Deufert 2002, 181, who refers to Norden 1915, 153, n. 1.
[84] Seneca even wrote verses that could themselves easily be dubbed 'Ennian': the point is attractively made already by Carlsson 1926, 59–60 (see there for examples of Seneca's 'Ennianisms').

One reason why the assessment of influence on Seneca's tragedies is difficult with regard to Ennius and Naevius may be their predominant status as epic – not tragic – poets in Seneca's day. Both Ennius and Naevius essentially seem to have fallen out of the canon of tragic poets by the first century AD. While they are still mentioned by Horace, they are absent from the catalogues of tragic poets in Velleius Paterculus and Quintilian. This must partly be due to their dominant classification as epic poets. In Seneca's prose writings, his critique of Ennian style and some verbal quotations are preserved. It is essential to note that Seneca does not restrict himself to quotations from Ennius' epic, but also quotes lines from Ennius' tragedies.[85] It is possible that all of the Ennian citations in Seneca are mediated via Cicero. The trochaic septenarius *ego cum genui cum morituros sciui et ei rei sustuli* (Enn. *scen.* 312 Vahlen = 319 Warmington = *adesp.* 58 Schauer), cited in Seneca's *Consolatio ad Polybium* (*Dial.* 11.11.2) and probably taken from Ennius' *Telamo*,[86] also occurs at *Tusc.* 3.28 and 58. Another instance is the proverbial characterisation of Fabius (*cunctando restituit rem*) at Sen. *Ben.* 4.27.2, taken from Enn. *Ann.* 12.363,[87] which is also employed at *Off.* 1.24.84. In Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, where he is remarkably free of genre restrictions, one Ennian citation comes from the *Annals* (*Apoc.* 12.3, *pulchre cordatus homo*, with Enn. *Ann.* 331 Vahlen, *egregie cordatus homo*), and mediation via Cicero is possible again: cf. *Rep.* 1.30 (*'egregie cordatus homo, catus Aelius Sextus', qui egregie cordatus et catus fuit et ab Ennio dictus est*). The other citation, another trochaic septenarius, is taken from Ennius' *Iphigenia* (Enn. *scen.* 244 Vahlen = 187 Jocelyn = 82 Manuwald): *quod est ante pedes nemo spectat, caeli scrutantur plagas*. It occurs at *Apoc.* 8.3, *caeli scrutatur plagas* (where the verb is singular because Claudius is the subject in Seneca's allusive version of the phrase), and seems to have appealed to Cicero too (*Rep.* 1.18.30 and *Div.* 2.13.30).[88] In the case of Naevius, there is only one quotation in all of Seneca's prose, at *Ep.* 102.16 (*Cum tragicus ille*

[85] The Ennian verbal influence on Seneca is discussed by Mazzoli 1970, 189–94: I have been helped considerably by his treatment.
[86] The TrRF relegate the fragment to the *fragmenta adespota* (fr. 58). Fronto's and Jerome's attribution of the lines or of a similar proverb may, however, point towards a *Telamo* as the origin of our line (see Schauer 2012, 229–30). But Jocelyn 1967, 394 is right in pointing out that the lines may equally well have belonged into Pacuvius' *Teucer*. One may add that Seneca displays knowledge of the Pacuvian *Teucer* at another point of his œuvre, at *Ag.* 482–7.
[87] See the brief note at Griffin 2013, 249.
[88] For the testimonia, see the TrRF *ad loc.* (Manuwald 2012, 167–72). Note, furthermore, that the Ennian periphrasis *caeli plagas* is also used by Seneca at *Oed.* 972. Before him, it is used by Varro (*Men.* 233) and Ovid (*Met.* 11.518).

apud nos ait magnificum esse 'laudari a laudato viro', laude digno ait), where he quotes a trochaic septenarius from Naevius' *Hector proficiscens*: *Laetus sum laudari me abs te, pater, a laudato viro* (fr. 17 Ribbeck = 17 Warmington = 14 Schauer). Once more, the phrase has a proverbial character, and may have been mediated via Cicero (cf. *Tusc.* 4.67: *Aliter enim Naevianus ille gaudet Hector: 'Laetus sum laudari me abs te, pater, a laudato viro', aliter ille apud Trabeam:* ...).[89]

Does the scarcity of verbatim quotations from Ennius and Naevius indicate that Seneca had no deeper knowledge of Ennian and Naevian tragedy? I suggest that this would not be a cogent conclusion. Following the same reasoning, an argument *ex silentio*, we would also have to assume that Seneca did not know and engage with the Augustan dramatists, Ovid and Varius in particular, since their dramas are likewise not cited in his prose writings. These have, however, been rightly considered important precedents for Seneca's tragic practice.[90] Rather, we may note the general scarcity of quotations from drama in Seneca's prose: in addition to the few Republican fragments discussed here, Seneca quotes lines from Greek tragedy on only three occasions.[91] All the same, he wrote tragedies himself. It is from internal evidence coming from the tragedies themselves that we can evaluate any influence of the Republican poets on Seneca. His critique of Ennian language usage, then, could be taken as the theoretical engagement of the practitioner with his forebear. If we can assume a knowledge of Ennian style, it is also not unreasonable to suppose that he would have engaged with other aspects of the earlier poet's writings. One passage from the Senecan *Thyestes* is particularly close to an Ennian precursor:

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[89] Cf. also Cic. *Fam.* 5.12.7 and 15.6.1 (as noted by Schauer 2012, 86, *in apparatu ad loc.*).

[90] See again Tarrant 1978. The Ovidian influence on Seneca's tragedies is pervasive and well documented (see esp. Jakobi 1988; Schiesaro 2003, 70–138; Littlewood 2004, 259–301; Hinds 2011) – Ovid's own *Medea* must have been important. Leigh 1996 suggests with some confidence that Varius' *Thyestes* functioned as a model for Seneca's play: the major point of contact is, in Leigh's words, that they are both outstanding examples of a tragic discourse which 'engage[s] with the idea of the tyrant and presuppose[s] an ideological connection between the cannibalistic violation of commensality and the disastrous appetites which tyrants display' (Leigh 1996, 186, with n. 58).

[91] Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 49.12 (*nam ut ait ille tragicus 'veritatis simplex oratio est'*) with Eur. *Phoen.* 469 (ἁπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφυ). Sen. *Ep.* 115.14 (*sine me vocari pessimum, ut dives vocer*) preserves in Latin the first line of *trag. graec. frg. adesp.* 181 Nauck: ἔα με κερδαίνοντα κεκλῆσθαι κακόν (cf. also *trag. graec. frg. adesp.* 461 Nauck, with Nauck's Greek retroversion of 3 lines of Seneca's Latin translation of the original Greek). The last five verses given at Sen. *Ep.* 115.14 are explicitly identified by Seneca as *versus in tragoedia Euripidis pronuntiati* (*Ep.* 115.15); he attributes them to Euripides' *Bellerophon*, probably erroneously: see the notes *ad loc.* at Nauck 1889, 457 and Reynolds 1965, 491.

Sat. Ubi non est pudor
nec cura iuris sanctitas pietas fides,
instabile regnum est.
Atr. Sanctitas pietas fides
priuata bona sunt; qua iuuat reges eant.
(Sen. *Thy*. 215–18)

Compare Ennius' lines of uncertain metre and origin, transmitted at Cic. *Rep*. 1.49 and *Off*. 1.26: *nulla sancta societas nec fides regni est* (Enn. *scen*. 404–5 Vahlen = 320 Jocelyn = 150 Manuwald). Whether or not the Ennian lines come from the play of the same title as Seneca's, Ennius' *Thyestes*,[92] the verbal similarities between the passages are striking.[93] Seneca is quoting from a context that is concerned with a central topic of his whole play: the right way of government and the psychology of tyranny. This is typical of Seneca's practice: his few verbal quotations from Accius discussed below also go to the heart of the concerns of the tragedy they are enriching. Note, moreover, how the Ennian citation in the *Thyestes* is accompanied by an element of uncertainty in the attendant's speech (*instabile regnum*, 218), which mirrors Ennius' own interest in the psychology and tragic possibilities of uncertainty.[94]

Seneca's noted general scorn for the Republican poets in his non-dramatic works does not constitute conclusive evidence for his non-engagement with Accius either, the latest and most famous Republican tragedian. Seneca mentions Accius alongside his favourite target for criticism, Ennius, in *Epistle* 58:

> Non id ago nunc hac diligentia ut ostendam quantum tempus apud grammaticum perdiderim, sed ut ex hoc intellegas quantum apud Ennium et Accium verborum situs occupaverit, cum apud hunc quoque [sc. Vergilium], qui cotidie excutitur, aliqua nobis subducta sint.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 58.5)

Note that Seneca is not simply criticising Accius (and Ennius) for their archaisms here, as has often been observed by scholars. Rather, Seneca is, more generally, deploring some inadequacies of the Latin language in this letter (cf. the opening: *Quanta verborum nobis paupertas, immo egestas sit, numquam magis quam hodierno die intellexi*, 58.1), an epistolary sketch of metaphysics: hence, Seneca particularly deplores the Latin deficiency of not being able to

[92] This is suggested e.g. by Leo 1913, 187, n. 2, and La Penna 1979b, 66–7.
[93] The parallel is noted by Manuwald 2012, 291, *in apparatu ad loc.*
[94] Generally speaking, *certum/incertum* is a favourite opposition in Roman drama, with the realm of the *certum* being reserved for the gods, while humans are usually caught in the complexities of the *incertum*. See further Hardie 1994, 93, *ad Aen*. 9.95–7.

form exact equivalents for Greek *οὐσία* (see 58.6) and *τὸ ὄν* (58.7).[95] The discussion of archaisms, in the course of which Accius is mentioned, occurs at the beginning of the letter, where Seneca is setting up the scene for his language critique, which will then lead on to the bulk of his letter on 'being'.[96] The mention of Ennian and Accian words that have become archaisms by Seneca's day is placed next to examples taken from Vergil, and the point is that it should not be surprising that words fashionable in Ennius' and Accius' time should have become 'rusty' in Seneca's own day, given that even words from the relatively recent and much-read Vergil could seem far removed (*cum apud hunc quoque* [i.e. Vergilium]*, qui cotidie excutitur, aliqua nobis subducta sint*, 58.5). If my reading of *Epistle* 58 is correct, Seneca's mention of Accius and Ennius is not to be taken primarily as criticism of their style and register; otherwise we would have to see criticism of Vergil's usage as well, the poet whom Seneca quotes and alludes to frequently, approvingly, and creatively, both in his prose and in his tragedies.[97] On the contrary, it is the point here that Seneca takes the view that the development of words falling out of use and becoming archaisms is to be deplored, since it increases the *verborum paupertas* (58.1) of Latin.

At the same time, tragic subject-matter famously tackled by Accius also appealed to Seneca, author of *Troades*, *Phoenissae*, *Medea*, *Agamemnon*, and *Thyestes*, all of which have some notable antecedent among Accius' plays. Thus Seneca not only emulated the most famous Greek subjects and plays,[98] but also

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[95] The convenience of a substantival infinitive to the philosopher also explains Seneca's repeated attempt to use it in Latin, which has been described as 'one of the most prominent features of the Senecan style' (Summers 1910, lxiv–lxv). See e.g. Sen. *Ep*. 51.9 (*quae sit libertas quaeris? nulli servire*) and 54.7 (*eici est inde expelli unde* …). On the problem of the poverty of Latin vocabulary as compared to Greek, see further Setaioli 1988, esp. 17. Fögen 2000 discusses the *topos* of language critique, as developed by Latin native speakers, but does not include Seneca. The motif of *egestas Latinitatis* connects Seneca with Lucretius: apart from Sen. *Ep*. 58, the motif is prominently expressed at Lucr. 1.136–9. (On Seneca's wider engagement with Lucretius, see further chapter 2.)

[96] See Armisen-Marchetti 2014, 218–33 for an overview over Seneca's 'Stoic ontology'.

[97] In Seneca's prose writings, Vergil is the author quoted most; as James Ker summarises in his brief review of Vergilian quotations, Seneca finds in Vergil 'the kind of truth that emerges through the sublime poet's insights into specific kinds of human situations' (Ker 2015, 114). In her 1983 thesis, Batinski provides a more comprehensive study of the role of Vergilian quotations in Seneca's prose writings. See also Motto/Clark 1993.

[98] In his review of Tarrant 1976a, Herington 1978, 273 points out that all of Seneca's themes and titles, except *Hercules Furens* and *Thyestes*, were part of a canon of fifth-century Greek tragedies in the ancient school curriculum (seven plays each by Aeschylus and Sophocles, ten by Euripides); hence, Herington concludes, Seneca, certainly familiar with the milestones of Greek tragedy himself, could also have expected his recipients to share some acquaintance with Greek tragedy.

included the milestones of earlier Roman tragedy.[99] In this, Seneca also emulates the ambition of Accius before him, who already self-consciously placed himself in a Roman tradition.[100] Indeed, it would be very surprising if Seneca, at the very least in his subject-matter competing with major pieces in both the Greek and the Roman tradition, should not have engaged with Accius' output, the poet who was still considered *the* Roman tragedian by influential voices only one generation before him.[101] Velleius Paterculus famously writes that *in Accio circaque eum Romana tragoedia est* (Vell. Pat. 1.17).[102] Knowledge of Accius' tragedies is still widespread at Seneca's time, as becomes clear from the preface of Columella, Seneca's contemporary, who, like Seneca himself, may be said to have contributed to a literary revival that encompassed the totality of Augustan genres: alongside Lucan's epic (emulating, most prominently, Vergil's foundational epic of Augustan Rome), (arguably) Calpurnius Siculus' bucolic poetry (echoing Vergil's *Eclogues*),[103] Caesius Bassus' and Seneca's lyrics (echoing Horace's lyric poetry: see chapter 4),[104] Columella produced *De Re Rustica*, at least in its georgic subject-matter recalling the Vergilian *Georgics*.[105] Columella's verse book 10, written in dactylic hexameters, is particularly close in its engagement with the Vergilian precedent.[106] At the same time, however, Columella grants pride of place to Accius, placing him on a par with Vergil in the preface to the whole work:

> Summum enim culmen adfectantes satis honeste uel in secundo fastigio conspiciemur. An Latiae Musae non solos adytis suis Accium et Vergilium recepere sed eorum et proximis et procul a secundis sacras concessere sedes?
> (Col. 1.*praef*.30)

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[99] See Hutchinson 2013, 21–2.
[100] Cf. e.g. Boyle 2006, 255–6, n. 12, '*Achilles*, *Aegisthus*, *Alcimeo*, *Andromeda*, *Armorum Iudicium*, *Athamas*, *Atreus*, *Clytaemestra*, *Hecuba*, *Medea*, *Stasiastae* or *Tropaeum Liberi*, *Telephus*, *Tereus* have intertexts in the plays of Livius, Naevius, Ennius or Pacuvius'.
[101] See also Tarrant 1985, 17.
[102] As De Rosalia 1981, 224 emphasises, Seneca was part of an era 'in cui pure c'era qualcuno che affermava: *in Accio circaque eum Romana tragoedia est* (*est*, si badi, non *fuit* !)'.
[103] In his 1854 study, in which he separated Calpurnius' seven from Nemesianus' four bucolic poems, Haupt confidently asserted that Calpurnius Siculus was a Neronian poet (a view also taken by e.g. Momigliano 1944, 97–9, and Townend 1980). But cf. Champlin 1978 and Armstrong 1986 for suggestions of later dates. For the most recent discussion and a Neronian advocate, see Karakasis 2016, 1–3.
[104] Lucan's lyrics in his *Medea* – if it existed – and the *Silvae*, both attested as part of Lucan's œuvre by Vacca, though not clearly alluded to in the catalogue of Lucan's works at Stat. *Silv*. 2.7.52–80, would have been prominent examples of this too.
[105] On 'Neronian Classicism' see Mayer 1983 and Ahl 1984, 40–124. The Neronian literary revival is also discussed in Sullivan 1985, esp. 19–73, who reads the Neronian works predominantly as political literature.
[106] On Columella's use of Vergil, see Dumont 2008.

Columella self-consciously marks out his own place in literary history as post-Republican as well as post-Augustan. Another of Seneca's contemporaries, Persius, in his work engaging with and emulating the satirical Lucilius and Horace, also mentions Accius – as an object of ridicule alongside another Republican tragedian, Pacuvius:[107]

> 'est nunc Brisaei quem uenosus liber Acci,
> sunt quos Pacuuiusque et uerrucosa moretur
> Antiopa aerumnis cor luctificabile fulta?'
> (Pers. 1.76–8)

Is it therefore likely that Seneca, even writing in the same genre as Accius, should have overlooked his forebear, whose works seemed to be still readily known to his literary contemporaries? At the very least, it is a plausible working hypothesis that Seneca is likely to have known both Ennius and Accius.[108] In the case of Ennius, this hypothesis can be built on a literary-historical argument as well as Seneca's own critical and allusive engagement with the earlier poet; as for Accius, we have only examined literary-historical considerations.[109] Is there also clear Senecan engagement with (elements from) Accius' œuvre?

In the first book of *De Ira* (*Dial.* 3.20.4), Seneca cites the famous proverbial *oderint dum metuant*, taken from Accius' *Atreus* (fr. 203–4 Ribbeck = 168 Warmington).[110] Again, the phrase is also cited in Cicero.[111] While such citation of a proverb, also found at Sen. *Cl.* 1.12.4 and 2.2.2, is not necessarily indicative of deep first-hand knowledge of Accian tragedy on Seneca's part, it is important to note that the content of the quotation goes to the heart of Seneca's concerns, both in the prose works and the tragedies:[112] it is a famous line

[107] Whether these lines are to be interpreted as uttered by the speaker or the interlocutor of the satire, and whether they are consequently sharp criticism or ironic approval (see Bramble 1974, 174–9) – it is important to note that Persius' lines stand in a discourse that continues Lucilius' criticism of Accius and Pacuvius (for the relevant passages, see Kißel 1990, 209).
[108] This is in addition to the obvious point that they shared writing in the same genre in the same language, with Seneca necessarily continuing to contribute to the development of tragic diction that was shaped by Ennius and Accius before him: see Pratt 1982, 27.
[109] Carlsson 1926, 59–62 already puts forward this literary-historical argument.
[110] The phrase is what one may call a prototypical tragic proverb; its Roman heritage goes back to Ennius' *quem metuunt oderunt; quem quisque odit periisse expetit* (Enn. *scen.* fr. 402 Vahlen = 348 Jocelyn = 163 Manuwald).
[111] On the relevance of the quotation *oderint dum metuant* at Cic. *Phil.* 1.33–4, see Leigh 1996, 178–9.
[112] For a Senecan prose passage concerned with the tyranny discourse (outside the *De Clementia*), cf. *De Ira* 2.33 (Sen. *Dial.* 4.33), where Caligula is characterised in a way rather similar to the tyrannic Atreus in *Thyestes*: see the discussion by Davis 2015, 163–7. Schofield 2015 provides a good brief discussion of Seneca's views on monarchy.

connected in Roman minds with tyranny,[113] its political ramifications, and the way in which it can become the topic of poetic discourse.[114] It may come as no surprise, then, that the Accian tyrant's words are exceeded by Seneca's Atreus in *Thyestes*, where he declaims: *maximum hoc regni bonum est*, | *quod facta domini cogitur populus sui* | *tam ferre quam laudare* (205–7); the Senecan Atreus' subjects 'are to be coerced,' Tarrant aptly paraphrases, 'not merely into acquiescence, but into praise'.[115] The dramatic character, Atreus, exceeds the *dictum* of his earlier Accian instantiation, and the later poet emulates his famous predecessor.

Seneca's most substantial quotation from Republican tragedy, however, occurs in *Epistle* 80. The lines (see below) are of uncertain origin, but their subject-matter and tone make it quite possible that they are taken from Accius' famous *Atreus*. The quotation is not mediated via Cicero.[116] While we do not know the original context of the lines Seneca incorporates into his letter, we can still acknowledge that he does not quote them with disdain for their archaic nature. Letter 80 is concerned with contrasting the peaceful life of the mind with several troubling *adiaphora*, all the things from everyday life that do not pertain to virtue and are thus indifferent for the true Stoic.[117] From the beginning, the letter is pervaded by theatrical language, and the image of the 'play of life' is central. Seneca is concerned here with the deceptions of everyday life, which all lead to us playing the allotted parts in our life badly. Unlike people who, much like actors, play many different insignificant roles in their lives, and in particular hanker after the body's training and pleasures, the Stoic *sapiens* only plays his one, true role in life (a concept which is also developed by Seneca in theatrical imagery in *Epistle* 120). At 80.7, the citation from drama is not a mere rhetorical prop at an uncritical stage in the argument. Rather, the quotation from tragedy occurs when the Stoic discourse about life as a spectacle of *adiaphora* has already been set up, and the actors in mime or tragedy speaking the lines that Seneca quotes at *Ep*. 80.7.12–14 serve as a significant

[113] Cicero cites the Accian line twice – once in the context of 'evil' (*improbi*) citizens at *Planc.* 102.11, and once cautioning Antony about the fate tyrants are to expect at Rome (*Phil.* 1.34.2): see further above, n. 111, and Davis 2015, 155–6. Caligula, moreover, is recorded to have been fond of Atreus' proverb (Suet. *Cal.* 30.1).
[114] This point is emphasised by Krókowski 1952, 128–30.
[115] Tarrant 1985, 121, *ad loc.*
[116] Tarrant 1978, 257, n. 182 concedes that this instance at *Ep*. 80.7 is certainly significant.
[117] On which see SVF I, 191–6, 230–2, 559–62; SVF III, 71, 117–58. Cf. Barney 2003 on the relation (and tension) between the *adiaphora* and other Stoic doctrines.

illustration in themselves: they are mere servants wearing changing masks and playing changing roles. The content of the lines, however, is crucial as well:

> en impero Argis; regna mihi liquit Pelops,
> qua ponto ab Helles atque ab Ionio mari
> urgetur Isthmos,[118]
> (= Trag. Rom. frg. inc. 104–6 Ribbeck = 97 Schauer)

Similarly, compare the subsequent quotation from tragedy at *Ep*. 80.8.17:

> quod nisi quieris, Menelae, hac dextra occides.
> (= Trag. Rom. frg. inc. 28 Ribbeck = 98 Schauer)

These iambic senarii depict the troubled tyrant, far from being at peace with himself, but always unsteady and molested by fears. The theme is close to the heart of the concerns of Seneca's own dramatic works, most prominently in *Thyestes* and *Oedipus*.[119] Whether or not the first quotation comes from Accius' *Atreus*,[120] Seneca here certainly displays poetic sensibility as well as knowledge of a noticeable piece of Roman tragic practice before him, one that would most likely have been known to his correspondent Lucilius (and his contemporary readers).[121] To put it briefly: when Seneca has a reason for including lines from drama, he will do so. It is the poet-philosopher's sensibility for the *aptum* that has prevented him from quoting more often from the dramatic tradition before him in his prose writings, rather than a generalised disdain for all things older than Augustan poetry. Here, in *Ep*. 80, Seneca is more than ready to enrich his letter with tragic lines that go to the core of his Stoic concerns, both in the present letter and on a wider scale.

In the tragedies, there is also some evidence of Seneca's Accian inheritance. The Senecan tragedy that most clearly reveals its Accian traces is *Thyestes*, where the Republican fragments allow us to see strong similarities of thought between Accius' and Seneca's dramatic treatments, even if the plots seem to have differed.[122] The striking parallels between central scenes in

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[118] I am not printing Reynolds' *urguetur*.

[119] Cf. also Hecuba's opening speech in *Troades* on the dangers and fears of the rich and powerful, with specific reference to Troy (see *Tro*. 1–66).

[120] For this view, see Ribbeck 1875, 627. Mueller 1893 thinks the lines come from Varius' *Thyestes*.

[121] The lines are also quoted by subsequent readers: cf. Quint. *Inst*. 9.4.140. On the literary form of the *Epistulae morales* see Wilson 2001.

[122] Unfortunately, the desperate situation of transmission does not allow us to appreciate fully the relationship between Accius' *Atreus* and Seneca's *Thyestes*; we may speculate with some confidence (following Mazzoli 1970, 194–5) that the author of a *Thyestes* could not possibly have overlooked an *Atreus* of the most famous Roman tragedian before him. De Rosalia 1981 traces the verbal parallels and other points of contact; Blänsdorf 2008, reiterating the main points, also makes a strong case for Accian influence on Seneca (and suggests knowledge on

Thyestes and Ovid's Tereus episode in the *Metamorphoses* do not necessarily mean that there was no direct Accian influence on Seneca's play. Seneca's direct engagement with the Ovidian model would be complemented by his emulation of Accius' *Atreus*.[123] Several verbal parallels between Seneca's *Thyestes* and Accius' play are striking; some occur at very prominent moments. The Senecan Atreus, for instance, first enters the stage with a rhetoric rich in superlatives, a cluster of words that lacks a model in Ovid but strongly recalls Accian precedent:[124]

> Ignave, iners, eneruis et (quod maximum
> probrum tyranno rebus in summis reor)
> inulte, …
> (Sen. *Thy*. 176–8)

Atreus reclaims words that were already assigned to him in Accius' play (semantic points of contact highlighted through different types of underlining):[125]

> quod re in summa summum esse arbitror
> periclum
> (fr. 206 Ribbeck = 170–1 Warmington)

But reclaiming words is not enough for a Senecan tyrant-artist. Atreus, this turbulent character defined by anger at himself from the start, seems initially overwhelmed by a numbing fear of not being able to achieve acts of adequate magnitude. The Senecan Atreus' restlessness is due, in part, to his literary belatedness.[126] What is pointedly brought out in his first words on stage, recipients of Roman tragedy know, is the character's own version of 'anxiety of influence': he comes (too?) late (emphasised in his utterance of the repeated *post* at 178: *post tot scelera, post fratris dolos*). As Seidensticker has brought out well, Seneca's characters as well as the poet himself are driven by a desire of

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Seneca's part of Republican drama in general). Cf. also Runchina 1960, 279–88, and Boyle 2017, lxxiv, n. 157. On the structure of Accius' *Atreus* see Tarrant 1985, 41–3, with Zwierlein 1983b.

[123] Since Jakobi 1988, 152–3 has convincingly demonstrated the plausibility of Seneca's direct engagement with Ovid's Tereus and Procne episode (cf. also Tarrant 2002), Bömer's position (Bömer 1976, 117–18) that Accius' *Atreus* is the common core of both Ovid and Seneca has lost some attraction. Direct Accian influence on Seneca's *Thyestes* is nevertheless not only possible (see Jakobi 1988, 152, n. 331, with Zwierlein 1983b, 124, n. 6) but quite likely (an account of the parallels is given by Cipriani 1978; see also De Rosalia 1981 and Blänsdorf 2008).

[124] Procne's monologue at Ov. *Met*. 6.611–18, which Jakobi 1988, 157 plausibly considered Seneca's main model for Atreus' entrance monologue, does not have the Accian superlatives.

[125] Allusion noted by Tarrant 1985, 117, *ad loc*.

[126] It is worthy of note in this context that the adjectives introducing Atreus – *ignauus*, *iners*, and *eneruis* – all carry connotations in terms of style and are used in ancient literary criticism: see further Schiesaro 2003, 131–2.

– or obsession with – achieving 'more' than their predecessors.[127] Atreus' inadequacy and inner turmoil at the beginning can partly be explained through the dynamics of literary history. His preceding instantiation, Accius' Atreus, to which Seneca unmistakably alludes here, is already at the rhetorical highpoint: the Accian superlatives can only be repeated, not exceeded.

This is not the only echo of Accius' *Atreus* in Seneca's play – a significant one coming from an Accian chorus will be discussed in more detail below, in the analysis of Accius' choric fragments and their potential significance for Senecan drama. Moreover, there seem to have been, as Tarrant notes, clear similarities of plot between Seneca's *Agamemnon* and Accius' *Clytemestra*.[128] While this is plausible, the similarity between those two plots must remain open to intelligent guesswork. An example of Accian reception where we *can* observe verbal and thematic parallels occurs in Seneca's *Medea*. The lines at *Med.* 20–1 (*per urbes erret ignotas egens | exul pavens invisus incerti laris*) seem to me to be echoing two Accian fragments: (I) *Nunc per terras vagus extorris | regno exturbatus, mari …* (Acc. fr. 333–4 Ribbeck = 327–8 Warmington, from the *Eurysaces*) and (II) a line from the Accian *Medea sive Argonautae*, closer to Seneca's own subject-matter, *exul inter hostes expes expers desertus vagus* (Acc. fr. 415 Ribbeck = 407 Warmington).[129] The echoes are, I would suggest, not only significant because they both point to a similar interest in the use of alliteration (Accius II: *exul … expes expers*, Seneca: *egens | exul*) and adjective clusters (Accius II: *expes expers desertus uagus*, Seneca: *ignotas egens | … pavens invisus incerti …*), but also because Seneca, if deliberately alluding to Accius, would have his Medea evoke two earlier exiled mythic characters from the Roman dramatic tradition, Eurysaces (about whose banishment we know little) and, more importantly, Jason. The echo of the line from the Accian *Medea sive Argonautae* would add force to Medea's horrified *augurium* in Seneca's version, since it carries with it a reminder of Medea's relentless hatred. Her earlier Accian instantiation had already threatened Jason with exile – but only as a hypothetical proleptic scenario, in a play that could be considered a prequel to Seneca's: Accius' *Medea* most likely dealt with the Argonautic adventures

[127] Seidensticker 1985.
[128] See Tarrant 1976a, 13.
[129] See De Rosalia 1981, 238–9.

described at Apollonius Rhodius 4.303ff.,[130] rather than the later episode of Medea's revenge for Jason's disloyalty. This time, in the Senecan *Medea*, Medea's threat echoing the Accian line not only highlights that Seneca's play can be read as a natural continuation of Accius', but also that, in this play (unlike in his Roman[131] predecessor's), Medea's threat carries real force. Moreover, the focus on uncertainty and erring (Accius I: *per terras uagus*; *extorris*; Accius II: *exul*; *desertus uagus*; Seneca: *per urbes erret ignotas*; *exul pavens*; *incerti laris*), here in the depiction of the horror of exile,[132] again emerges as a shared favourite of both Republican and Senecan dramatic poetics. Without being overly speculative, it is fair to say that we would be able to appreciate considerably more links of thought and structure between Seneca's and Accius' plays if we had more of the Accian tragic corpus.[133]

The remaining major Republican tragedians, Livius Andronicus, the earliest, and Pacuvius, often referred to together with the slightly later Accius, are not cited in Seneca's prose writings (with the possible exception of one line, mentioned above, which is either from Ennius' *Telamo* or Pacuvius' *Teucer*). Nevertheless, Seneca seems to have known and engaged with some of their most famous tragic scripts.[134] Especially instructive are the similarities between Seneca's *Agamemnon* and Livius' *Aegisthus*.[135] Already the first in the order of Livian fragments is clearly alluded to in Seneca's play. These lines must have been included in a back-story account of how the Greeks returned from Troy, preserved for us at Nonius 512.31:

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[130] See e.g. Warmington 1936, 456–7.

[131] The Senecan line draws attention to its own Romanness: the Accian echo is accompanied by the use of *laris*. I consider this literary-historical scenario (Seneca's text echoing – or even alluding to – Accius') more likely than Apoll. Rhod. 4.381–2 being the common source of independent Accian and Senecan adaptations/translations.

[132] Cf. my discussion of this feature of Medea's character below: chapter 3, section 3.6, 'Sounds of Exoticism: Medea Maenad and Catullus 63'.

[133] Apart from several Accian allusions, echoes, and calques in Seneca's *Thyestes* (as discussed by De Rosalia 1982), Sen. *Med.* 176 (*Fortuna opes auferre, non animum potest*) and Acc. *Teleph.* fr. 619–20 Ribbeck = 625–6 Warmington (*… nam si a me regnum Fortuna atque opes | eripere quivit, at virtutem non quiit*) are also worthy of comparison.

[134] Livius Andronicus' works were still available in libraries even a century after Seneca, as Gellius attests at Gell. 18.9 (where he quotes from a Livius manuscript that he, as he reports, found in the library at Patrae).

[135] Already noted by Ribbeck 1875, 28–30, but often not given due attention by later (Senecan) scholars. But cf. the brief acknowledgments of the parallel passages at Warmington 1936, 2–6, *ad loc.*, Waszink 1972, 892, Tarrant 1976a, 13–14, and Schauer 2012, 41, *ad loc.*

Nam ut Pergama
accensa et praeda per participes aequiter
partita est,
(Andr. *trag*. 2–4 Warmington = 9 Schauer)

Compare the Livian lines with the beginning of the messenger's account about the same Trojan back story in Seneca's *Agamemnon*. Eurybates begins his messenger speech proper at line 421 like this (verbal points of contact with Livius again highlighted through various types of underlining):

Ut Pergamum omne Dorica cecidit face,
diuisa praeda est, maria properantes petunt.
(Sen. *Ag*. 421–2)

If Livius' lines occurred at the beginning of an account given by a character with narrative authority within the play (such as a messenger),[136] the Senecan allusion would be even more prominent, signalling the inheritance by similar placement in his play. If Livius, moreover, included the lines towards the beginning of the play, as our conventional ordering of the extant fragments from the *Aegisthus* would have it, Seneca would be appropriating lines which were rather memorable. Beginnings of poems and plays are prominent spaces for signalling intertextual debts, allusion and emulation, and conversely, the alluding poet often chooses to engage with lines from the very beginning of the relevant models and precursors.[137] Note, moreover, how the Senecan allusion to Livius' lines also picks up on the Republican poet's language: the Livian plosive alliteration (*praeda per participes aequiter | partita est*) is observed and developed in the Senecan Eurybates' utterance (*diuisa praeda est, maria properantes petunt*).[138]

Apart from verbal borrowings and direct quotations, it is also important not to lose sight of more general – but highly relevant – features that are shared between the Republican tragedians and Seneca. Four aspects, highlighted above, will be the focus of the remainder of the present study.[139] Firstly, the

[136] As argued by Sanford 1922/3.
[137] In Seneca's reception of Horace, for instance, even the opening metre of the Horatian collection of *Odes* carries allusive force: see chapter 4, section 4.6, 'Horatian Sounds, Republican Echoes: Seneca's Reception of *Odes* 3.3 in the Third Chorus of *Agamemnon*', with n. 589.
[138] Seneca's engagement with Rome's oldest tragedian can be corroborated further: see Warmington 1936, 2–6, *ad loc.* for the other parallels between these fragments from Livius' *Aegisthus* and Seneca's *Agamemnon*.
[139] It would also be interesting to study the linguistic continuities in the Roman dramatic language from its Republican beginnings to Seneca, an undertaking that would lie beyond the scope of the present study. There is evidence to suggest, however, that the continuities,

fragments of the Republican tragedians, Accius in particular, display a conscious use of rhetoric not unlike Seneca's. Often deprecatorily dubbed merely 'rhetorical', Senecan tragedy's mobilising of rhetoric for poetic effect turns out to be more rooted in the Roman dramatic tradition than often assumed – it reveals continuities that go beyond the tradition of declamatory schools,[140] Ovid, and the other Augustans. Secondly, the role of philosophical discourses in Republican drama is developed further in Seneca. Especially Pacuvius is important for this development. Thirdly, Republican drama, and Ennius in particular, established a significant formal feature, stichic metrical arrangements, that are shared in Seneca's tragedies, features that may facilitate recitation and reading of the tragic scripts. Finally, there is an interest in a discourse of tragic uncertainty from Ennius onwards, and the Republican dramatists – just as Seneca would do – seem to have included the chorus as a character within the play in the perplexities of the plot, not granting it a higher authorial viewpoint. With a specific view to this feature, it will be instructive to come back to Schlegel's view of the Greek chorus as 'idealised spectators' mentioned at the outset of the present study, and to introduce further complexities by comparing some relevant passages from the Greek tragic chorus. The similarities between the Republican tragic fragments and Seneca are present *in nuce* in the highly condensed lyrics of choral odes. My study will now turn to the fragments of these.

1.3 The Chorus in Livius Andronicus: Stichic Use of Metre

Seneca's choral odes stand out for one formal feature in particular: 'la rinuncia a una strutturazione tipica della lirica corale, la responsione strofica'.[141] Seneca's

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especially in terms of shared lexis, would be striking. I just single out one example from the third choral ode of *Medea*, the second 'Argonautic Ode', where one may expect – and indeed finds – considerable engagement with Lucretius, Catullus 64, and Horace, *Odes* 1.3 (on this see below, chapter 3, section 3.5, 'The Reception of Catullus in the Argonautic Odes in Medea: Metrical Form, Boundaries, and Innovation'). Nevertheless, Seneca chooses to make use of the archaic *diui ueniam precamur*, with *diui* (vocative plural) being very rare, but significantly used at Enn. *Ann.* 208 Vahlen, and *ueniam* being very common in both Plautus and Terence.

[140] There are a number of older studies that list the similarities between contemporary declamation and Seneca's works: Rolland 1906, Preisendanz 1908, Summers 1910, xxxi–xli. Cf. also esp. Setaioli 1985, 814–17. A comprehensive modern literary study of the role of elements from declamatory rhetoric in Seneca's works is still missing (but cf. the thesis by Anemodouris 2013, who, however, links the elements from declamation with a notion of 'ludism', and limits his study to Seneca's use of declamatory rhetoric for the purposes of characterisation). Winterbottom 1982 provides an interesting study of the similarities between Ciceronian and 'Silver Age' rhetoric.

[141] Mazzoli 1996, 7.

stichic use of lyric metres that are otherwise clearly established in stanzaic use by the important Horatian precedent is very striking. Moreover, the stichic lyric metres of the choral odes seem particularly unusual, and even rather limited, when compared to the elaborately strophic practice of Greek classical tragedy. But how does Seneca's practice compare with the use of lyric metres in Republican tragedy?

As it happens, what we find at the end of the tradition, the stichic practice of Seneca, is paralleled in what is left to us of the very beginning of the tradition of Roman tragic choruses. Probably the oldest surviving fragment from a chorus of Roman tragedy is one of four lines tentatively attributed by Terentianus Maurus to an *Ino* of Livius Andronicus (GLK 6.383):[142]

> Et iam purpureo suras include cothurno,
> balteus et revocet volucres in pectore sinus,
> pressaque iam gravida crepitent tibi terga pharetra,
> derige odorisequos ad certa cubilia canes.
> (Andr. *trag*. 41a–d Warmington = 16 Schauer)

Whether or not Maurus' attribution is right,[143] it is clear that these dactylic lines belong to a chorus's hymn to Diana. The choice of the stichic dactylic hexameter for a choral ode is significant, and not only provides a contrast with Livius' own epic practice of composing in Saturnians, but also deviates from Greek tragic practice, where hexameters used stichically are rare.[144] The Latin usage probably points to an early place of this fragment in the history of Roman choruses,[145] where a genuinely hexameter genre – here a hymn to Diana – might not have been adapted to suit tragic conventions and metres, but rather been included in its original form.[146] Roman audiences at the time were most likely not used to listening to songs in Latin that would feature the metrical complexity of most of Greek drama, including strophic responsion. Instead, the earliest Roman tragic poets, such as the writer of the lines above, could have

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[142] Terentianus Maurus distances himself from confident attribution: he speaks of *tale docimen* (cf. also *puto*): *Livius ille vetus Graio cognomine suae | inserit Inoni versus, puto, tale docimen: praemisso heroo subiungit namque miuron, | hymnum quando chorus festo canit ore Triviae*.

[143] For a report of the discussion see Schauer 2012, 52, *in apparatu ad loc*.

[144] See West 1982, 98 and 128. Herington 1985, 119 sees three main reasons for the scarcity of hexameters in tragic production: it is a metre far removed from ordinary speech; the composition would have to be in a rather artificial language; and tragic hexameters could offer nothing new, considering contemporary rhapsode performances of epic.

[145] See Waszink 1972, esp. 874.

[146] It is also possible that the hymn is Livius' original composition. This view is defended by Schenkl 1894.

composed choral odes that differed from the spoken metre of tragedy but at the same time would be familiar to their Roman audience. The Latin hexameter would have been known from hymns and was the established metre of Greek hymns to divinities, but was otherwise just in its birth-pangs at Rome, and not yet the clearly established metre of epic. It was a metre that poets were still experimenting with in the Latin language. The closest parallels to such use of hexameters in tragedy occur much earlier, on the Greek side, in Aeschylus' *Athamas*, and much later, on the Latin side, in Seneca's *Oedipus*. Waszink suggests that the fragments of the Aeschylean *Athamas* show an unusual use of the dactylic hexameter in the lyric passages,[147] and, since this play could have dealt with the same mythological story as the probably Livian *Ino*, the use of the hexameter in our passage may be not accidental. In Seneca's later use, the dactylic hexameter features in a full-scale hymn to Bacchus (*Oed*. 403–508), framing the ode (403–4 and 503–8) and providing a structural means of division (429–31, 445–8, and 467–71). Seneca also makes use of the dactylic hexameter at *Oed*. 233–8, when Creo quotes the words of the Delphic oracle, and at the closure of the first ode in *Medea* (110–15), echoing Catullus 62, as I shall argue in a later section of this study.[148]

As pointed out, the common use of the hexameter for hymns could have been known to a Roman audience from Greek precedent already in early Republican times, but it might also have been drawn from pre-literary Latin hymnic practice.[149] This is necessarily open to considerable speculation. What we can say, however, is that, in the inclusion of non-tragic metres, the earliest Roman drama did not differ from the major Greek tradition: as demonstrated most recently in Swift's study,[150] drama had always been a genre open to fashionable and new material, amalgamating non-dramatic forms and techniques, most notably in the inclusion of many types of previously non-dramatic lyric metres.

[147] See Waszink 1972, 899.
[148] See chapter 3, section 3.4, 'Love Inverted (II): The First Chorus in *Medea*'.
[149] See Schmidt 1989 and below, n. 156.
[150] Swift 2010. See also Herington 1985, esp. 111–24 on 'tragic' and 'pretragic' metres. He pointedly summarises that 'early [sc. Greek] tragedy, metrically speaking, was like a crucible, ever on the boil, into which had been stirred, by the mid fifth century, almost every metrical element known to the pretragic tradition of poetry' (125).

1.4 The Chorus in Naevius: Bacchus and Uncertainty

The few fragments from Naevius' tragedies that are likely to come from choruses also illustrate how the earliest Roman tragic choruses domesticated popular contemporary material. In total, five probable Naevian choric fragments have come down to us. In these cases, metrical considerations are secondary since the description of the lines is highly controversial and, given their brief nature, it is impossible to tell whether they come from stichic or non-stichic odes. There is one line from an *Iphigenia*,

> … trionum hic moderator rusticus.
> (Naev. *trag*. 20 Warmington = *inc*. 51 Schauer),

and four from a *Lycurgus*:

(1) Pergite
thyrsigerae Bacchae [modo] Bacchico cum schemate.
(Naev. *trag*. 33–4 Warmington = 32 Schauer)

(2) suavisonum melos
(Naev. *trag*. 35 Warmington = 31 Schauer)

(3) Ignotae iteris sumus, tute scis.
(Naev. *trag*. 36 Warmington = 25 Schauer)

(4) ut in venatu vitulantis ex suis
locis nos mittant poenis decoratas feris.
(Naev. *trag*. 37–8 Warmington = 20 Schauer)

The four fragments from *Lycurgus* must have come from the context of a chorus of Bacchants, and constitute early evidence for the popularity of Bacchic choral odes in Roman tragedy.[151] For us, a Bacchic tradition in the choral songs of Roman tragedy stretches from the above fragments in Naevius to Accius' *Bacchae*, where five fragments of a song of Bacchanals are preserved (Acc. *trag*. 204–5, 206, 207–8, and 209 Warmington), to the fully fledged Bacchic odes in Seneca's *Oedipus*. In Naevius' day, Bacchus would have featured prominently in the contemporary political landscape, which witnessed the emergence and spread of Bacchic cult practices and ideas. Shortly after Naevius' death, things came to a head with the events of 186 BC. The *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* was issued in that year, putting a violent end to a powerful spread of the cult.[152] Naevius' inclusion of Bacchic material in his plays is

[151] See further Schiesaro 2016.
[152] The senatorial decree is preserved as CIL i², II.1, 581. Livy 39.8–19 provides the fullest account of the spread of the scandalous Bacchic orgies at Rome, and the subsequent destruction of the cult. See further Riedl 2012, and Ermann 1999, 7–32 for the legal perspective.

indicative of the way in which drama was shaped by, and in turn helped shape, wider cultural discourses.[153] In this case, a religious fashion, the Bacchus cult, became a highly politicised discourse that was able to engage with core questions about Roman identity, and could not have been overlooked by a poet composing tragedies. Greek tragedy not only included political terms, but there is also a sense in which it commented on contemporary politics.[154] Some of the force of (especially early) Roman Republican tragedy comes from precisely this ability of drama to comment on topical political issues in an allusive manner.[155]

Whether or not Warmington's ordering of lines is correct, it is clear that fragment (1) must have occurred at the very beginning of (or just before) the choral ode. Most likely, it was spoken by a person who possesses some authority over the chorus, asking the chorus members to start their song: the chorus leader or Bacchus himself have been put forward as suggestions. Those who argue for Bacchus as the speaker of these lines prefer to regard the lines as dactylic and read, with Bergk's emendation, *pergite thyrsigerae modo Bacchiaco cum schemate*. Such early use of the hexameter in Naevius would indeed be possible, as is suggested by the early, probably Livian fragment discussed above. It may, however, be more straightforward to read Ribbeck's text, also adopted by Warmington: *Pergite | thyrsigerae Bacchae Bacchico cum schemate*, an unproblematic iambic senarius after the deletion of *modo*, which can easily be explained as a gloss on *schemate*. The choice of iambic senarius, if Naevius', would then be significant: instead of a chorus immediately commencing with lyric song, we would get a spoken exhortation by the chorus leader. The other fragments, most likely belonging to the same choral ode, confirm such a choice of metre: fragment (2) above must be the ending of a iambic senarius (or, perhaps, according to Ribbeck, of a trochaic septenarius), (3) would be most easily explained as the beginning of a iambic senarius, and the two lines of (4) are certainly iambic senarii as well. In what we expect to be a

[153] See further Flower 2000 (with earlier literature on the topic at 23, n. 2) on the Bacchanalian cult in second-century BC Rome and its role for Roman drama at the time.
[154] On the 'vagueness' of this engagement with politics see esp. Easterling 1997a, and cf. also Easterling 1997b.
[155] Of course, such a historical-political perspective provided by Roman tragedies, which deal with Greek myths and are adaptations of Greek models, would be less direct than the engagement with topical issues in Roman *praetextae*: see Manuwald 2011, 135, with La Penna 1979a. At the same time, however, it is probably not only 'a general "Roman perspective' that has determined the choice of particular myths or versions of myths' (Manuwald 2011, 135), as examples such as the inclusion of Bacchic material in the Naevian fragments above suggests.

Bacchic choral song, then, Naevius seems to have written in iambic senarii, clearly to be spoken by individual members of the chorus, probably by their leader. There is some possibility of lines featuring trochaic septenarii, a metre that was not sung either, but usually recited. This would be quite a striking finding, since sung lyric would traditionally make sense in Bacchic contexts, given the influential Euripidean precedent and perhaps Italic Bacchic cult songs.[156] Nevertheless, Naevius seems to have preferred a chorus that speaks and recites. While we cannot be absolutely confident about this, since we have so little of Naevius' tragedies and the preservation of iambic lines may have been favoured over the more complex lyric metres in a situation of transmission that mostly relied on memory quotation,[157] this is still the only observation we can draw from his tragic choric practice as we have it. In spite of all the uncertainties, Schauer did justice to this fact in his recent edition of Naevius' tragedies, and printed only lines in spoken (iambic senarii) or recited metres (iambic octonarii and trochaic septenarii).

Despite the scarcity of transmission, it is significant to see that already the Naevian fragments feature themes that would be fully exploited by Seneca later on. Two aspects are particularly important. Note, first, how already in Naevius' ode, Bacchus is the god associated with ambiguity and uncertainty, and thus reflects the god known from the Greek Dionysian tradition.[158] Two of the four Naevian choric fragments are concerned with the chorus's uncertainty. Fragment (3) contrasts the chorus's lack of knowledge about their surroundings (*ignotae iteris sumus*) with the knowledge that they suppose another character, directly addressed, should possess (*tute scis*). This may be part of a wider epistemological crisis of the Bacchic chorus, a type of uncertainty that is poetically transformed into typically Bacchic, wandering movement as

[156] On the possible connection of an Italic, pre-Livian performance culture and early Roman drama see Schmidt 1989. Our most detailed source on the origins of the Roman *ludi scaenici* is Liv. 7.2.1–4. See the comprehensive survey (with a selection from the extensive bibliography on the topic) at Oakley 1998, 40–58, and the summary on the emergence of 'dramatic forms in Italy' and 'dramatic literature' in early Rome in Manuwald 2011, 26–40, with further references. Although answers must ultimately remain speculative in this area, see esp. Vogt-Spira 1996 on the thorny question of the origins of Rome's literature and why 'literary drama' emerged when it did. See also Schiesaro 2005, 271.

[157] The same situation can be observed in the reception and later citation of Greek tragedy: the lyrics are much less frequently cited than the spoken parts of tragedy. Karanasiou 2001, 29 provides a distribution of 11 % (choral lyrics being cited 922 times by later authors writing in Greek) vs 89 % (bits from spoken parts of the tragedies being cited 7741 times by later authors writing in Greek).

[158] See Hunter 2006, 43–50.

expressed in fragment (4). It may point towards a crisis of knowledge of the chorus that undermines its authority as a narrative feature.[159]

1.5 The Role of the Chorus in Uncertainties and Ambiguities in Greek Tragedy

Such a type of uncertainty of the chorus would be quite different from the sort of tragic ambiguity exhibited, for instance, in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. It is nevertheless instructive to consider a few instances of the use of ambiguity and uncertainty in Greek tragic practice. The Aeschylean *Agamemnon* has been studied as one of the richest examples of a play that mobilises numerous ambiguities and makes dramatic use of uncertainty.[160] In Aeschylus' play, the chorus – by and large – functions as a means of guiding the audience towards the right interpretation that helps to unveil the ironic levels of meaning and the threats inherent in some of the tragic characters' ambiguous statements. A good example of this is discussed by Vernant:[161] 'When greeting Agamemnon on the threshold of his palace, Clytemnestra makes use of this language with a double register. In the ears of the husband it has the pleasant ring of a pledge of love and conjugal fidelity; for the chorus it is already equivocal and they sense some threat within it, while the spectator can see its full sinister quality because he can decode in it the death plot that she has hatched against her husband'.[162] In the *Agamemnon*, there is a clear divide between those who are in the inner circle of knowledge and those who are outwitted. The latter category includes all characters except for Clytemnestra, the former can sometimes include the chorus, but usually includes the audience, who have the information to be able to understand Clytemnestra's duplicity in the course of the play.

While the chorus thus sometimes contributes towards disentangling ambiguities and the scheming protagonist's duplicitous rhetoric, it is certainly not in charge of the plot of this tragedy. Rather, Clytemnestra, one of the most striking and accomplished scheming villainesses in literature, takes the lead –

[159] The way in which the Greek tragedians established – and undercut – the chorus's authority can be studied from Mastronarde's consideration of Euripides' practice: see Mastronarde 2010, esp. 88–121. As Stanford 1939, 175 rightly notes, 'Euripides also shows a greater tendency to make ambiguity the *motif* of whole scenes, especially in *ἀναγνώρισις* passages'. He refers to Eur. *Heracles* 710ff., *I.T.* 766–92, *Ion* 517ff. and 1283–1311, and *El.* 998–1146.
[160] See esp. Stanford 1939, 137–62.
[161] Vernant 1981b.
[162] Vernant 1981b, 88.

the chorus, for example, is not in a position that would be detached enough to answer a challenge for directness by the rhetorically superior Clytemnestra. At 613–14, she tells the unwitting Herald that 'such is [her] boast, and since it is full of truth, there is nothing shameful – for a noble lady – in [her] proclaiming it aloud' (*τοιόσδ᾽ ὁ κόμπος· τῆς <δ'> ἀληθείας γέμων | οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν*).[163] Rather than dispelling the ambiguity of her words, the chorus contributes to the game of ambiguity, and it almost seems as if the choral response is mimicking the villain's game: *αὕτη μὲν οὕτως εἶπε, μανθάνοντί σοι | τοροῖσιν ἑρμηνεῦσιν εὐπρεπῆ λόγον* (615–16), replies the chorus – or rather, the chorus leader. This phrasing has caused considerable problems of understanding among readers and scholars,[164] but the wording may be deliberately ambiguous: *μανθάνοντί σοι* could be taken to mean either 'if you understand it' or 'for you who understand it'. Moreover, *εὐπρεπῆ*[165] may mean either 'in a seemly manner' or 'in a specious manner',[166] and Stanford thus explains that 'the Chorus shirks the challenge, answering ambiguous phrases by ambiguous phrase'.[167] At another point, we get a further good example of the chorus's doubts, again expressed by the chorus leader, this time contrasted with superior Clytemnestra speaking with laconic clarity: at lines 261–3, the chorus, exhibiting a lack of knowledge about the situation, expresses its uncertainty and 'quavering doubts'[168] by their leader approaching Clytemnestra with a very unconfident question: *σὺ δ᾽ εἴ τι κεδνὸν εἴτε μὴ πεπυσμένη | εὐαγγέλοισιν ἐλπίσιν θυηπολεῖς, | κλύοιμ᾽ ἂν εὔφρων· οὐδὲ σιγώσῃ φθόνος*. Clytemnestra seems to make a point of her possessing more knowledge about the true state of affairs than the chorus, dispelling the chorus's uncertainty with a swift and concise reply: *πεύσῃ*

[163] The text of Aeschylus is here taken, together with the English translation, from Fraenkel 1950, who includes Headlam's addition, and follows Hermann's attribution of the lines to Clytemnestra: without these two lines, Clytemnestra's speech would be lacking a strong conclusion, but with them 'Clytemnestra concludes her speech with a *dixi* of an individual colouring' (Fraenkel 1950, 305, *ad loc.*). See detailed discussion at Fraenkel 1950, 305–7, *ad loc.*
[164] In his OCT, Page puts the whole phrase from *εἶπε* to *εὐπρεπῆ* (he prints *εὐπρεπῶς*) between obeli. Fraenkel admits, '[a]fter vain attempts I made my escape from the maze of proposals for the interpretation of *μανθάνοντί* …' (Fraenkel 1950, 307, *ad loc.*).
[165] This is Auratus' emendation: see again Fraenkel 1950, 307, *ad loc.*
[166] See Fraenkel 1950, 308, *ad loc.*, 'a secondary meaning is also intended in this sentence so packed with innuendo, … an undertone … of the "speciosum", the deceptively convincing … If this is so, the expression is ambiguous, though not more so than the whole sentence'.
[167] Stanford 1939, 151.
[168] Phrase taken from Stanford 1939, 161.

δὲ χάρμα μεῖζον ἐλπίδος κλύειν· | Πριάμου γὰρ ᾑρήκασιν Ἀργεῖοι πόλιν (266–7). The chorus, shocked and captivated by the news, picks up on the first sound of the first and last words of Clytemnestra's answer (Πριάμου … πόλιν), and reply in alliterative and anxious excitement, πῶς φής; πέφευγε τοὖπος ἐξ ἀπιστίας (268). The chorus cannot believe the news – it is still not really in the inner circle of knowledge. During the stichomythic exchange with Clytemnestra in the following,[169] as Fraenkel points out, they are still stuck with the *p*-alliteration (πότερα δ' ὀνείρων φάσματ' εὐπιθῆ σέβεις, 274; ἐπίανέν τις ἄπτερος φάτις, 276; ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις, 278).[170]

This is one example of a character knowing more than the chorus who is in serious doubt about the state of affairs, but one should bear in mind that it may be significant that this type of uncertainty is voiced by the chorus leader in exchange with another character rather than by the whole chorus speaking or singing as a group. On the other hand, we have also seen another type of ambiguity that the chorus helps to resolve: ambiguous word choice and double entendres that leave room for various interpretations, with one of them usually being sinister and, as becomes clear to the audience, the right one in the further development of the respective tragic plots. The kind of uncertainty displayed in some of the Roman Republican fragments discussed in the present chapter seems different, perhaps more similar to the scene above where the chorus leader knows less than the tragic character. This may also be part of the reason why the chorus is, by and large, more enveloped in the uncertainties and ambiguities of the play in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*,[171] where the chorus is part of the tragic crisis of knowledge: already Aristotle prescribed the involvement of

[169] On the technique and function of stichomythia see esp. Jens 1955 and, for Seneca in comparison with Greek practice, Seidensticker 1969, an excellent study.

[170] Fraenkel 1950, 149, *ad loc*., with remarks about the pronunciation of φ as an aspirated mute, rather than a spirant, at n. 2. While I would follow Fraenkel's interpretation of the *p*-alliteration underpinning, on the phonetic level, the chorus's state of shock in this case, some caution with regard to spotting alliteration in Greek is generally in order: see Fehling 1969, 78–80.

[171] In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, characters on the whole – including the chorus – seem more subject to a general confusion and type of ambiguity that they are no master of. This is very different from the Aeschylean Clytemnestra who wields ambiguity as a rhetorical weapon, sometimes having the chorus – or their leader – caught up in her ambiguities, but sometimes allowing the chorus to emerge as a voice pointing to the true nature of the deliberate uncertainties created by Clytemnestra. Discussion of this phenonemon and its nuances (variously referred to as uncertainty, ambiguity, and vagueness) in Sophocles' play lies beyond the scope of my study: cf. further Stanford 1939, 163–73, and Budelmann 2000, esp. 50–7, 109–30, 185–7, and his chapter on the chorus (195–272). Cf. also below, n. 221.

the chorus as an actor in the action (as part of a 'syn-agōn'), a feature that, to him, is present in Sophoclean tragedy, and handled markedly differently by Euripides.[172] As we shall see below, this tendency is further developed in Roman tragedy.[173] Moreover, in several of the Roman Republican fragments, it seems as if the chorus, also when it sings as a group, is *not* helping the audience with any further knowledge about what is happening. This is the case in the Bacchic fragments from Naevius above,[174] where it may in part be explained by the context of ritualistic Bacchic frenzy. It will be encountered again in further choric fragments to be discussed below.

1.6 Bacchic Uncertainties and Seneca: A Preliminary Summary

The type of uncertainty that, I suggested, is present in some of the fragments from the Roman Republican chorus, where the chorus does not know more – or knows less – than other characters, failing to provide any guidance for the audience, is most strikingly made use of in Seneca's practice. The Naevian choral singers of the choric fragments discussed above are Bacchus' servants who rejoice in their dislocation. The same chorus describes its own song or some of its effects as 'sweet melody', which may be read as metapoetic comment. This is the second aspect to highlight, both in Naevius and the fragments from Accius' *Bacchae*, where the chorus also describes its frenzied song as 'sweet melody'.[175] In both Naevius and Accius, erring and uncertain movement and comments about the quality of song seem to appear in close proximity. The lines and phrases from both Naevius and Accius may point towards a poetics that delights in uncertainty, a feature that we will also come across in some of the Ennian fragments below.

It can be demonstrated how Seneca exploits the possibilities of both Bacchic poetics and epistemological crises in his unstable dramatic realms, most

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[172] Arist. *Po.* 1456[a]25–29: *καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἕνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόριον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ' ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ. τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τὰ ᾀδόμενα οὐδὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ μύθου ἢ ἄλλης τραγῳδίας ἐστίν* (text: Kassel 1965). Gardiner 1987 traces this feature of Sophocles' chorus in great detail. The chorus's involvement in the action as an actor creates an interesting tension with its role as intradramatic spectators emphasised by Schlegel (see above, introduction of my study, esp. n. 1).

[173] Cf. Hose 1999.

[174] Where it is clearly the whole group of the chorus who is uncertain about their surroundings: note the use of the imperative plural in passage (1) above, and the plural form of the chorus speaking about themselves in passage (4), *ignotae iteris sumus*.

[175] Where *melos* is neuter in contrast to Naevius' usage of *melos* as masculine, a circumstance that has preserved the lines at Non. 213.10.

notably in *Oedipus*.[176] A Senecan chorus that describes maenadic frenzy in terms of erratic movement occurs in his *Medea*. The fourth choral ode (*Med.* 849–78) provides an impressive account of Medea's manic frenzy. One of the striking features of her state as a 'maenad' in the chorus's anxious description is her erratic, aimless movement as a vivid expression of her inner turmoil (*praeceps*, 850; *quatiens*, 855; *huc fert pedes et illuc*, 862).[177] The Senecan poetic expression of mental instability stands in a long poetic tradition, specifically in tragic drama, that describes crises of knowledge and of mental clarity in spatial terms through erring and wandering. This tradition includes examples from Greek tragedy, but also, significantly, the lines from the Bacchic chorus in Naevius' *Lycurgus* discussed above.

1.7 The Chorus in Ennius: Recitatives and Uncertainty

Some of the most substantial surviving choric fragments are from Ennius' plays. They are instructive both in terms of their metrical form and because they seem to contribute to a similar discourse of uncertainty. While the anapaestic dimeter from an *Andromacha*, *rapit ex alto naues ueliuolas* (Enn. *scen.* 79 Vahlen = 111 Jocelyn = 33 Manuwald) does not allow for much interpretation,[178] and the probably trochaic line from *Medea*, *utinam ne umquam, Mede<a> Co<lch>is,*[179] *cupido corde pedem extulisses* (Enn. *scen.* 244 Jocelyn = 99 Manuwald), may or may not have been part of a choral ode,[180] the other surviving fragments that were most likely part of choruses are more promising objects of investigation.

Let us begin with the shortest fragment that could have been part of a choral ode, Enn. *scen.* 348 Vahlen = 300 Jocelyn = 133 Manuwald: *quemnam te esse dicam qui tarda in senectute*. This fragment comes, as Cicero – full of praise for lines like this – confirms (Cic. *Orat.* 183), from a *cantus* of Ennius' *Thyestes*. The line, which scans as a hypermetrical bacchiac tetrameter, comes

[176] What Tarrant 1985, 47, esp. n. 161 notes with regard to *Thyestes*, a conspicuous prominence of verbs of erring and wandering that is linked to a 'disjointed' dramatic world, is true for most of Seneca's plays.
[177] I provide a detailed analysis of this ode and its engagement with Catullus 63 in chapter 3, section 3.6, 'Sounds of Exoticism: Medea Maenad and Catullus 63'.
[178] For this line to work as a anapaestic dimeter, *naues* needs to be scanned as a monosyllable: see Jocelyn 1967, 261, who compares Pl. *Bac.* 797 and *Men.* 344.
[179] With Manuwald, I am printing Lipsius' conjecture to make sense of Jocelyn's *locus desperatus*: see Manuwald 2012, 215–16, *ad loc.*
[180] See Jocelyn 1967, 381, *ad loc.* for a discussion of where this fragment belongs in the play.

as close to prose as possible, Cicero says. What we have here is not only evidence of Ennian lines from a *cantus* feeling like prose to Cicero (*quae, nisi cum tibicen accessit, orationis sunt solutae simillima*, *Orat*. 183), but also most likely a fragment from a stichic arrangement: while bacchiacs are, as Jocelyn notes, not necessarily arranged in stichic manner only,[181] an ode set out *kata stichon* would make most sense, considering the context in the Ciceronian passage. Cicero quotes the Ennian line precisely because it strikes him as similar to prose, a view that would have been encouraged if the line had originally been part of a stichic arrangement in Ennius; in fact, for Cicero the line would be 'pure prose' were one to remove the music (the singing, *cantus*, and the flute-player, *tibicen*). Rather than being part of a sung ode (which are, as we will see, very scarce in Ennius if we can believe our textual evidence), the fragment (Enn. *scen*. 300 Jocelyn) could have formed part of a sung part performed by an actor, accompanied by music, as would be the case especially in moments of particular emotional intensity. Following Jocelyn and others, one could read the line as a question put to a servant by Atreus.[182]

An Ennian choric fragment longer than one line that is clearly from a chorus is preserved from his *Medea*. While the arrangement of lines is especially contentious here, I print Jocelyn's text, essentially as established by Leo:

> Iuppiter tuque adeo summe Sol qui res omnis inspicis
> quique tuo lumine mare terram caelum contines
> inspice hoc facinus prius quam fit. prohibessis scelus.
> (Enn. *scen*. 234–6 Jocelyn = 95 Manuwald)

The stichic nature of such an arrangement of long lines, three consecutive trochaic septenarii, is so obvious that it has exercised scholars considerably. In an attempt to produce something that looks more like sung lyric, Strzelecki instead arranged the lines as one cretic trimeter followed by five catalectic trochaic dimeters.[183] The above colometry is, however, superior to other

[181] Jocelyn 1967, 423, *ad loc*.
[182] See Jocelyn 1967, 416 (with further discussion and references). Jocelyn sees the answer to Atreus' question preserved at Cic. *Tusc*. 3.26 (Enn. *scen*. 291–5 Jocelyn), which will not be discussed here. The fragment may have formed part of a spoken dialogue between a character (most likely Thyestes) and some *hospites* (most likely a chorus, or their leader): see Jocelyn 1967, 415–16, but the attribution is difficult. The TrRF delegate the lines to the *adespota* (see fr. 22, 55, and 56).
[183] Strzelecki's text (see 1952, 55–6) runs thus:

> Iuppiter tuque adeo, summe Sol,
> qui res omnis inspicis
> quique tuo lumine mare
> terram caelum contines

proposed arrangements since it respects the Ennian units of thought and rhetoric most naturally. As Jocelyn notes *ad loc.*, 'units of verse in republican drama, particularly in the early period, tend markedly to coincide with units of rhetoric'.[184] Respecting the Ennian rhetoric should take precedence over the wish to produce something even slightly comparable to the passage's famous precedent, the Euripidean dochmiac song at *Med.* 1251–70, which marks the climax of the action. The fifth Euripidean stasimon contains a dramatic appeal to divinities in the strophe, and an emotionally heightened address to Medea in the antistrophe. The strophe is particularly relevant as a model for the Ennian lines:

> ἰὼ Γᾶ τε καὶ παμφαὴς
> ἀκτὶς Ἁλίου, κατίδετ' ἴδετε τὰν
> ὀλομέναν γυναῖκα, πρὶν φοινίαν
> τέκνοις προσβαλεῖν χέρ' αὐτοκτόνον·
> σᾶς γὰρ χρυσέας ἀπὸ γονᾶς
> ἔβλαστεν, θεοῦ δ' αἷμα <χαμαὶ> πίτνειν
> φόβος ὑπ' ἀνέρων.
> ἀλλά νιν, ὦ φάος διογενές, κατειρ-
> γε κατάπαυσον ἔξελ' οἴκων τάλαι-
> νάν φονίαν τ' Ἐρινυν <ὑπαλάστορον>.[185]
> (Eur. *Med.* 1251–60)

Ennius matches the main grammatical features of the Euripidean ode, and the address to Sol may be read as an indication of time that could be as crucial in Ennius' as in Euripides' treatment. A *Medea* in the Euripidean tradition must be the paradigmatic play of observed *unitas temporis*: it is a drama in which the plot and tension are of necessity framed within the limits of the one day of delay granted to Medea.[186] At the same time, however, Ennius thoroughly adapts the Greek model to his Roman context: not only does he do so, as Jocelyn emphasises, on the level of content (in his substitution of Jupiter for Gaia and the replacement of traditional Greek religious beliefs with philosophical

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> inspice hoc facinus prius
> quam fit: prohibesseis scelus.

[184] Jocelyn 1967, 370.

[185] I give the text with Hermann's *χαμαὶ* in 1256 (following Diggle's placement before, rather than after, *πίτνειν*) and Page's conjecture for the vexed *locus desperatus* at 1260, which is unattested Greek, but at least produces good sense.

[186] On the unity of time in Graeco-Roman drama, see Schwindt 1994, esp. 89–99 on the management of dramatic time in the Euripidean and the Senecan *Medea*.

meditations),[187] but also on the level of metrical form. This is a significant finding: where Euripides makes use of the typical strophes of Greek choral lyric, Ennius has stichic septenarii in their stead. Where Euripides has a sung choral prayer at the emotionally heightened point at which Medea is going off the stage to kill her children, Ennius relies on a stichic ode to be performed in a recitative.

The last Ennian choric fragment to consider is also our largest surviving piece, and no less difficult in the right arrangement of lines than the *Medea* fragment.[188] In Ennius' *Iphigenia*, a chorus of soldiers has the following lines, preserved for us at Gellius 19.10.12, who explicitly states that the lines are *choro inscripti*:[189]

> otio qui nescit uti <cum otium est, in otio> 1
> plus negoti habet quam cum est negotium in negotio.
> nam cui, quod agat, institutum est <n>on ullo negotio
> id agit, <id> studet, ibi mentem atque animum delectat suum;
> otioso in otio animus nescit quid velit. 5
> hoc idem est; em neque domi nunc nos nec militiae sumus:
> imus huc, hinc illuc; cum illuc ventum est, ire illinc lubet.
> incerte errat animus, praeterpropter vitam vivitur.
> (Enn. *scen.* fr. 234–41 Vahlen = 195–202 Jocelyn = 84 Manuwald)

If the above colometry were accepted, as I am inclined to do,[190] Ennius again deploys trochaic septenarii, long verses to be recited (probably by the chorus leader or individuals from the chorus) rather than sung.[191] Leo confidently asserted that Ennius' choruses did not sing but the leader of the chorus or

[187] See Jocelyn 1967, 370–1, *ad loc.*, and Hose 1999, 125–6.
[188] See the extensive textual apparatus *ad loc.* at Manuwald 2012, 177–81.
[189] I give Manuwald's text, with Skutsch's suggestion (1953, 196) in line 1 (but adapting it to Manuwald's normalised spelling of *cum*), which produces a neat trochaic septenarius. *non ullo negotio* in line 3, accepted by Manuwald as well as Vahlen and Warmington, is Hermann's conjecture.
[190] The constitution of trochaic septenarii, which has emerged as the scholarly consensus (see Skutsch 1953, 197, and the overview at Manuwald 2012, 181, *in apparatu ad loc.*), seems to me much more likely to be right than Crusius's (1929, 114–16) and Strzelecki's (1952, 58–9) attempts at defending a strophic *canticum* here.
[191] Another interesting, but disputed, case may be Enn. *scen.* 279 Vahlen = 244 Jocelyn = 99 Manuwald, which I would read with Manuwald as a trochaic octonarius: *utinam ne umquam, Medea Colchis, cupido corde pedem extulisses*. The line has been attractively assigned to a chorus by e.g. Bergk 1835, 71 and Strzelecki 1952, 57, who, however, both construct other lyric metres (Bergk: choriambics; Strzelecki: acatalectic anapaestic quaternarii). The text printed by Manuwald is probably right: it incorporates Lipsius' early emendation *Mede<a> Colchis* and gives *extulisses* rather than *extetulisses* (despite Buecheler's reading of this line as anapaestic, as endorsed by Skutsch 1953, 197: 'lieber … anapästisch lesen als in kümmerlichen Trochäen'). This would not mean that the line, a trochaic octonarius, cannot have been part of a chorus, but rather that Ennius, if the lines were part of a chorus, again relied on long verses to be recited rather than sung (on the distinction between sung and recited metres see below, n. 232).

individual chorus members would give recitatives instead.[192] However far one wants to takes this view, it needs to be acknowledged that, in the most substantial surviving series of choric lines from Republican tragedy, we come across stichic, and most likely recitative, practice.[193] What is certain is that there is a strong tradition of stichic use of lyric metres in Ennius. Song rather seems to have featured in sung parts by actors, verses transformed from lines spoken in the Greek originals and models.[194] It is this recitative tradition, built on the use of stichic metres, that looks ahead to Seneca's use of metre in his choral odes.

Ennius' fragment from the soldiers' chorus allows some more insight into a poetics of the Roman tragic chorus.[195] It displays features that are particularly relevant if read with an eye (and ear) to Seneca's later reception. While a comparative approach of reading the Ennian lines through Seneca can yield literary-historical insights into shared dramatic techniques in its own right, Seneca's reception may well be understood literally in this case: that Seneca actually read the famous Ennian chorus on *otium* is not only suggested by his general interest in the topic. In fact, there are, as has recently been pointed out, clear points of contact between the *De Otio* and Ennius' soldiers' chorus in *Iphigenia*.[196]

The Ennian chorus comments on its own wandering and uncertain movement in a manner that is not dissimilar to the chorus from Naevius'

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[192] 'Die Reste sind reich genug, um mit Bestimmtheit sagen zu dürfen, daß Ennius statt den Chor Lieder singen zu lassen den Chorführer oder einzelne Choreuten Reden halten ließ' (Leo 1913, 193). This important view is also endorsed by Hose 1999, 124–5.

[193] Boyle 2006, 29 seems to me to be rather ambiguous when he says that, following Livius, 'Naevius, Ennius and the rest were to continue the musical emphasis and retain the chorus'. For all I can deduce from the textual evidence and testimonies, Ennius' plays may of course have featured music, but this does not follow from his retaining the chorus. Music accompanied monodies and other sung parts by actors (and perhaps some choruses as well), but the choral fragments we have do not support 'musical emphasis' brought about by the chorus. As Deufert 2014, 489 accurately summarises, 'the nature of the Roman stage and other pragmatic conditions forced the Roman tragedians to discard or prune the choral songs of their Greek originals or transform them into spoken or recitative verse. This loss of music was compensated for by changing the spoken verse of the original to song'.

[194] On this development see the overview by Gentili 1979, 15–41. One example of the opposite development, i.e. a Latin dramatist turning what was a recitative in the Greek original into a lyric *canticum*, arguably occurs in comedy, in Caecilius' *Plocium*: Questa 1974, 131–2 analyses Caecilius Statius, fr. 142–57 Ribbeck as such a lyric transformation of Menander's recitative original. Note, however, that Gellius, who preserved the Caecilian fragment (Gell. 2.23.9), criticises the Caecilian attempt as inferior to its Greek original.

[195] Faller 2000 writes about the way in which this chorus is placed in a conspicuously Roman tradition.

[196] See Baldarelli 2011, who shows the linguistic and thematic similarities, which I would endorse in principle, despite Faller 2000, 216 (who points to the undeniable differences between Seneca's later philosophical discourse and the Ennian lines).

Lycurgus above. In a performance, the repeated deictic gestures (temporal: *nunc*, and spatial: *imus huc, hinc illuc; cum illuc ventum est, ire illinc lubet*), mostly expressing agitated movement, would give the recitative a spatial dimension which it would otherwise be lacking. Again, the wandering and erring is not restricted to physical movement – even in a setting of *otium*, the chorus members' minds are also erring (*incerte errat animus*). As in Naevius' Bacchic fragments and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, this note of uncertainty in a chorus's utterance may point to a dissolution of the chorus's narrative authority within the play. The soldiers of the chorus are not so much concerned with a little philosophical discourse *de otio*, debating the difference between *otium otiosum* and *otium negotiosum*, but caught in uncertainty and perplexity on how to act and what to do.[197] For Ennius, an interest in the psychology of uncertainty has been noted,[198] and this would neatly be accompanied by his undercutting of the chorus's authority. It may be in Ennius that we find the Roman germ of what would become a guiding principle for the creation of the disjointed and uncertain dramatic realms of Senecan drama, where the prominence of erring not only pertains to physical movement,[199] but also to pervasive elements of uncertainty expressed by the tragic characters. In Seneca, moreover, a sense of the chorus's authority being dissolved, a feature that one could also encounter already in Greek tragedy,[200] is taken further: at times, the Senecan chorus is utterly ignorant of the dramatic reality, providing no authorial guidance, but more anxiety.[201]

1.8 The Chorus in Pacuvius: Knowledge and Uncertainty

A discourse of tragic uncertainty, as seen in the Ennian fragments above, also involves the chorus in Pacuvius.[202] Some indication of the chorus's struggle to

[197] The point is well made by Büchner 1973, who compares Lucr. 3.1058 for a description of a similar state of mind.
[198] See above, n. 94.
[199] See e.g. Tarrant 1985, 47, esp. 161.
[200] See above, especially section 1.5, 'The Role of the Chorus in Uncertainties and Ambiguities in Greek Tragedy'.
[201] An example identified in scholarship is the second choral ode in *Troades*, allegedly a distanced philosophical take on the problem of death, while the chorus otherwise displays uncertainty and anxiety in the dramatic action (see Zwierlein 1966, 76–80, and Kugelmeier 2001, with further references). For a more detailed analysis of this ode in *Troades*, see below, chapter 2. Another case in point is the fourth choral ode in *Thyestes*, which enters on stage horrified, and completely ignorant of the previous messenger's account (see Volk 2006).
[202] In one fragment from *Dulorestes*, transmitted by Nonius, who comments on *crepera* = *dubia* (Non. 20 L.), a chorus seems to attempt to advise someone to stand firm in uncertainty, in a

understand is present in the *Antiopa*. Consider the following dialogue between Amphion and a chorus of *Attici*:

A. quadrupes tardigrada agrestis humilis aspera,
brevi capite cervice anguina aspectu truci,
eviscerata inanima cum animali sono.
Ch. non intellegimus, nisi aperte dixeris:
ita saeptuose dictio | abs te datur,
quod coniectura sapiens aegre contuit.[203]
A. testudo.
(fr. 3 Schierl = 2–8 Ribbeck)

This is a crisis of knowledge that is quite different from the uncertainty expressed at times, as we have seen, by choruses in Ennius and Seneca, but seems similar to the chorus's doubts about what is happening to the tragic protagonists that is expressed, as we have seen, at points in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. The Pacuvian chorus's inability to solve the riddle introduces (or continues) an element of undercutting the chorus's authority. The device of a dramatic character not being able to solve a riddle is of course taken to the plot-driving extreme in plays on the Oedipus theme, most notably the Senecan version.[204]

The chorus's restricted knowledge also comes across at one instance in the Pacuvian *Medus*:

caelitum camilla, expectata advenis: salve hospita!
(fr. 174 Schierl = 232 Ribbeck)

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sententia-like manner (fr. 99 Schierl = 128 Ribbeck): *non decet animum aegritudine in re crepera confici*. This trochaic septenarius may, however, not have belonged into a chorus: attribution to Orestes (see Ribbeck, e.g.) seems equally likely to me (see the report of scholarly views at Schierl 2006, 260, *ad loc.*). I will thus not give the fragment much weight in my discussion of Pacuvius' use of the chorus.

[203] Note that lines 5 and 6 of this fragment are not transmitted with the others at Cic. *Div*. 2.133. They are given only by Nonius (250 L.), who attributes them, according to the MSS evidence, to Livius, not Pacuvius. Most editors, however, print the lines within the Pacuvian *testudo* fragment (they build on the evidence of one manuscript, now lost, which Scriverius reports to have inspected, which gives Pacuvius instead of Nonius: see Schierl 2006, 108, *ad loc.*). But cf. Mette 1964, 49.

[204] On the tension between certainty and uncertainty in Greek drama, see esp. Vernant 1981a and 1981b, and cf. esp. on Sophocles Budelmann 2000, 10–12, and *passim*. Vernant 1981a, 13–14 suggests that this tension and ambiguity is what makes tragedy tragedy: 'even in Aeschylus, it [i.e. tragedy] never provides a solution which could eliminate the conflicts either by reconciling them or stepping beyong the oppositions. And this tension which is never totally accepted nor entirely obliterated makes tragedy into a questioning to which there can be no answers'. For the classic treatment of ambiguity/-ies in Greek rhetorical theory and literature (poetry only), see Stanford 1939, esp. 137–179 on tragedy (he discusses examples from Aesch. *Ag*., Soph. *OR*, and Eur. *Bacch*.). On the plot-driving force of uncertainty in Seneca's *Oedipus*, see the comprehensive study of the '*dubius* motif' in the play by Curley 1986, 91–100, and cf. Allendorf 2013, 107–10.

The line would make sense in the context of a chorus: perhaps it is one that warmly addresses Medea, who is disguised as Diana's priestess.[205] Note that the speaker, while recognising Medea's closeness to the divine (*caelitum camilla*) does not have any deeper insight. At least in this line, the chorus does not seem to have access to a higher narrative authority about the unfolding of the dramatic plot; it is unaware of Medea's real identity as well as her allegiance to a particular god.[206] While any wider claims here necessarily need to be prefaced with a note of caution because of the situation of transmission, one may still want to attempt to draw some broader lines of affinity between Pacuvius and Seneca: restricted knowledge of the chorus, which may lead to it being caught up in the perplexities of the plot as much as the other characters in the play and the audience members, could emerge as one feature shared between some of Pacuvius' and Seneca's choruses.

Reading the Pacuvian choric fragments through Seneca, however, reveals another important aspect, probably the key point of contact in the two poets' practice. Both Pacuvius and Seneca seem to display a preference for expressing philosophical positions within choral odes. Approaching Pacuvius' chorus through the reception of subsequent readers is very instructive in this regard: we can see how philosophical takes on the Pacuvian chorus have exercised considerable influence. The best[207] example of this is a substantial fragment from *Niptra*, featuring the chorus in an exchange with Ulixes:

Ul. pedetemptim ac sedato nisu
ne succussu arripiat maior
dolor <...>
Ch. tu quoque, Ulixes, quamquam graviter
cernimus ictum, nimis paene animo es
molli, qui consuetus in armis
aevom agere <...>
Ul. retinete! tenete! opprimit ulcus.
nudate! heu, miserum me, excrucior.
operite! abscedite! iam iam <me>
mittite! nam attrectatu et quassu
saevum amplificatis dolorem.
(fr. 199 Schierl = 256–67 Ribbeck)

[205] E.g. Warmington 1936, 257.
[206] Noted by Schierl 2006, 369, *ad loc.*
[207] Another 'philosophising' Pacuvian chorus is restricted to merely giving advice on practical conduct, and thus less interesting for present purposes: in *Atalanta*, fr. 57 Schierl, a speaker (probably the chorus leader, speaking for the whole chorus, as indicated by the plural in *nos*: see Schierl *ad loc.*, with further references) says that people do well in obeying the orders of their king: *... omnes, qui tamquam nos serviunt | sub regno, callent <domiti imperium> metuere*.

This Pacuvian lamentation scene in the *Niptra* has precedents in the description of the poisoned Herakles at Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 971–1045 and the wounded Hippolytos in Euripides' play (1342–88). In a comparative analysis of these scenes and Pacuvius' version, Schierl makes the important observation that, in the Greek plays, the chorus only seems to have a marginal function, merely commenting on the scene – in Pacuvius, however, '[ermahnt] der Chor den Helden im Moment der Schwäche zu der Standhaftigkeit, die er in der Schlußszene zeigt'.[208] Pacuvius' chorus is not just a by-stander, but a philosophical voice, influencing the main protagonist in the scene. It is only this philosophical-pedagogic intervention of the chorus that can explain Cicero's interpretation of the lamentation scene. According to him, the whole scene in Pacuvius 'is better than Sophocles' precisely because the hero's lamenting is moderate (*modice*): *intelligit poeta prudens ferendi doloris consuetudinem esse non contemnendam magistram* (Cic. *Tusc.* 2.49).[209] This, however, does not show at all in Ulixes' own utterances, who declaims in pathos-laden emotionality (note especially the cluster of imperatives, the emphatic particle *heu* with *me miserum*, and the *geminatio* of *iam*). All the same, for Cicero, this reading of the Pacuvian passage must have been so evident that he even used the passage to back up his argument on how pain can be borne by the strength of reason. Cicero's reception of the passage must have been guided by the chorus's voice, which he takes to be the poet's (*intelligit poeta*): in Pacuvius' lamentation scene, it is only the chorus that introduces the typically Roman element of (Stoic?) moderation.[210]

Before moving on to Accius, it is worth recapitulating the two major findings gained from analysis of the few surviving Pacuvian choric fragments.[211]

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[208] Schierl 2006, 399.

[209] Cicero's comparison of Pacuvius with Sophocles here is also important evidence of the extent to which Roman tragedies should be understood as 'translations' of Greek models: Cicero's assessment of the superior quality of the Pacuvian version would only make sense if there was a considerable degree of freedom in adapting the Greek tragedians in Latin for Roman contexts. Translation not only ensured, according to Hunter 1985, 14–15, that ordinary people could understand Greek drama but also meant that Rome adopted a 'mark of civilisation and status'.

[210] This is brought out well in Schierl's discussion: 'In der Klageszene selbst beruht der von Cicero beschriebene Eindruck hingegen weniger auf den gemäßigten Klagen des Odysseus als auf dem Eingriff des ihn ermahnenden Chores' (398). Cf. also Baier 2000, 292–3.

[211] The other Pacuvian fragments that could plausibly have been part of choruses, not discussed in detail here, are: *Periboea*, fr. 221 Schierl (= 309–10 Ribbeck), lines of uncertain metre that describe someone approaching the holy area of Bacchus (see Schierl 2006, 456, *ad loc.*); *Teucer*, fr. 245 Schierl (= 322–3 Ribbeck), *nos illum interea <proliciendo> propitiaturos facul | remur*, where the plural and choice of the iambic octonarius point to a recitative chorus piece; *Teucer*, fr. 254 Schierl (= 324 Ribbeck), *nam Teucrum regi sapsa res restibiliet*, where the speaker,

In an article on the role of the chorus in Roman Republican tragedy, Hose pointed towards a development in which the chorus in Republican tragedy is increasingly involved as an actor in the dramatic action.[212] One may add – in particular with a view to Seneca – that this feature is an essential step towards a chorus that is as ignorant and wavering as some other characters within the plays, while authorial control is (re)assigned, not to the chorus, but to the evil protagonists (such as Seneca's Atreus). Traces of this role of the chorus may already be present in the Pacuvian fragments, perhaps continuing a tragic Ennian poetics and responding to Greek precedent in Sophocles' practice.[213] Moreover, we have seen how the chorus can be a space for negotiating philosophical questions, with the tragic chorus being a favoured space where Republican drama and contemporary philosophy meet.[214] In a striking example from Pacuvius' *Niptra*, we have seen how the reading of one recipient – Cicero – was shaped by the chorus's philosophical voice.[215] This philosophical voice of the chorus, potentially influencing recipients as well as other dramatic characters, also features in several odes in Senecan tragedy.[216]

1.9 The Chorus in Accius

The largest number of choric fragments – as well as the most substantial body of fragments from Republican tragedy – survive from Accius' plays. One still ought to be careful with generalisations, since even in Accius, the choric fragments amount to no more than 5% of the surviving lines. Within the surviving fragments, the metrical diagnosis is obvious: verses in metres to be spoken and

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perhaps the chorus leader (e.g. Warmington 1936, 299, *ad loc.*, Schierl 2006, 513, *ad loc.*) expects a reconciliation between Teucer and Telamo. Fr. 169 Schierl (= 224 Ribbeck), *diversi circumspicimus, horror percipit*, a iambic senarius, may well have belonged, as Schierl rightly points out, to any group (as well as the chorus) in the play.

[212] See Hose 1999, esp. 129

[213] See above, n. 172.

[214] On some links between Republican tragedy and philosophy, see Star 2015, 256–9, who discusses a series of occurrences of the famous Accian line *oderint, dum metuant* as an example of the interconnections between Roman philosophy and tragedy. It would be interesting – but beyond the scope of the present study – to study in more detail the links between Roman comedy and contemporary philosophy: see e.g. the interconnections suggested by Hunter 1985, 147–51 (a section, though, that is largely focused on Greek New Comedy).

[215] On the wider philosophical, possibly didactic, relevance of the Pacuvian *Niptra*, see Baier 2000.

[216] See Davis 1993, 125–83. See below, chapter 2, for a detailed analysis of Seneca's engagement with Lucretian philosophical moments, mobilised in the chorus of *Troades* to gesture towards the failure of a certain type of philosophy in the tragic realm.

recited clearly outweigh the 'properly' lyric, sung metres.[217] For Seneca, Accius seems to have been the most important Roman precursor, and scholars have rightly pointed to the affinities in the use of rhetoric in both Accius' and Seneca's plays.[218] I have argued above for Seneca's acute awareness of his Accian inheritance, a view corroborated by not only literary-historical plausibility but also some clear allusions to Accius' *Atreus* in Seneca's play on the same subject, the *Thyestes*. It will now be useful to pay closer attention to some central Accian fragments. In doing so, I will, firstly, bring out how Accius, too, developed the motif of tragic uncertainty, later to reach its apex in Senecan drama. Secondly, there is a shared interest in giving prominence to sound effects in both Accian and Senecan choruses. Moreover, the few choric fragments that we have allow us to see that Accius was also aware of the chorus's function as a vehicle for expressing philosophical positions. Finally, we shall see some continuation in the metrical practice of Accius and Seneca.

1.9.1 Introducing Accian Rhetoric: Sounds and Uncertainty

The showpiece speech of the prologue-speaker at the opening of Accius' *Medea sive Argonautae* (preserved at Cic. *N.D.* 2.89), though not from a chorus, is worth considering first of all. As one of our most substantial fragments, these lines are most valuable for learning about Accian poetics:

... tanta moles labitur
fremibunda ex alto ingenti sonitu et spiritu;
prae se undas uoluit, uortices ui suscitat;
ruit prolapsa, pelagus respergit, reflat.
ita dum interruptum credas nimbum uoluier,
dum quod sublime uentis expulsum rapi
saxum aut procellis, uel globosos turbines
existere ictos undis concursantibus;
nisi quas terrestres pontus strages conciet;
aut forte Triton, fuscina euertens specus
subter radices penitus, undanti in freto
molem ex profundo saxeam ad caelum eruit.
sicut citati atque alacres rostris perfremunt
delphini ...
... Siluani melo
consimilem ad aures cantum et auditum refert.

[217] See Dangel 1995, 71–2, who gives the following distribution based on her constitution of the text: 47 % ia6, 31.2 % tr7, 8.7 % an4, 4% ia8, 0.6 % tr8, 0.6 % cr4, 0.6 % da4, 0.3 % ia4, 0.3 % an7, and 6.7 % verses of uncertain scansion. For a full discussion of Accius' use of metre, see Barabino 1980.
[218] See e.g. Boyle 2006, 115.

(fr. 391–406 Ribbeck = 381–96 Warmington)

What Accius has placed in this programmatic passage at the beginning of *Medea sive Argonautae* ties in with the discourse of uncertainty in which the tragic characters are entangled. Boyle, in commenting on the Accian shepherd's rhetorical astonishment at catching sight of the first ship, the Argo, reads these lines convincingly as an instance where 'bombast has dramatic function and dramatic effect'.[219] The Accian shepherd's rhetoric belies this consistently in the use of the device of 'multiple explanations', used to great effect not only in (didactic) epic,[220] but also, disturbingly, to undercut the authority of speakers in tragedy. In Roman tragedy, this type of uncertainty about their surroundings and the world the characters are forced to inhabit, includes (as we have seen in Ennius, Naevius, and, to some extent, Pacuvius) even the chorus. Examples in Senecan drama are common, but compare the first ode in *Thyestes*:

> Argos de superis si quis Achaicum
> Pisaeasque domos curribus inclitas,
> Isthmi si quis amat regna Corinthii,
> et portus geminos et mare dissidens,
> si quis Taygeti conspicuas niues …
> (Sen. *Thy*. 122–6)

Here, as Schiesaro points out, 'the very beginning of the ode is characterized by a vein of hesitation and uncertainty which is evident in the repetition of hypothetical statements […]. In these lines the chorus displays not only scepticism on the existence of a divine protection for Argos in particular, but also doubts about the possibility of knowing even very basic facts such as the existence of protecting gods'.[221] Such affinities between Accian and Senecan poetics are worth noting: while the Senecan focus on uncertainty may owe something to other, generic and aesthetic, considerations, there is also a discernible continuity within the Roman tradition of tragedy. The feature is

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[219] Boyle 2006, 115.

[220] See the discussion of 'Lucretian multiple explanations and their reception in Latin didactic and epic' in Hardie 2009, 231–63, who writes about the Lucretian phenomenon of multiple explanations as applied in Vergil, Ovid, Lucan, and Statius (237–63). Whereas the technique is part of philosophical reasoning in the Lucretian contexts, the multiple options offered in the Accian (and later Senecan) tragic realm serve different ends, causing or continuing levels of confusion.

[221] Schiesaro 2003, 164. For very similar rhetoric, I would compare the second stasimon of Sophocles' *OR* (863–910), where the chorus comes to grips with the question of why and how it should make itself heard in a situation in which, as it ultimately states, 'the divine is gone' (ἔρρει δὲ *τὰ θεῖα*). Like the Senecan chorus's, their rhetoric of dissolution features an accumulation of conditionals (εἰ is repeated six times); but Budelmann 2000, 222 emphasises that '[d]issolution is only a threat. Possibly ('if …') it will happen, possibly not. There is still room for action'.

pervasive and can be found within choruses as much as outside them, but this would not have hindered Seneca in picking up on the feature in earlier tragic authors.

In his analysis of the Accian shepherd's speech, Boyle also comments on its style and rhetoric: this is 'a baroque description, [with] heavy and mannered alliteration, elaborate, shifting similes, polysyllabic diction, asyndetic structures, a translingual pun (behind *perfremunt*, 'humming', lies the Greek *bremein*, used of both speech and music) – the shepherd's helpless astonishment [is] reflected in astonished and astonishing language'.[222] I would, however, not endorse Boyle's further inclusion of the above passage in a set of texts that are used to evidence a Roman dramatic world that 'was as visual as it was aural':[223] here, it seems very aural. While Roman theatre in general certainly relied on both visual and aural effects, note that the prominent Accian 'metatheatrical'[224] passage puts careful emphasis on sound effects rather than visual effects. It describes sounds, not sights (*sonitu*, 2, and *aures cantum et auditum refert*, 16, frame the passage as Cicero preserved it), even when there would have been ample opportunity to focus on the visual elements (note, in particular, how dolphins are described as 'humming', *perfremunt*).

1.9.2 The Accian Chorus's Sounds

Such a focus on sonic effects is also in evidence in one of the surviving chorus fragments from Accius' *Phinidae*, which contains the following lines:

> hac ubi curuo litore latratu
> unda sub undis labunda sonit
> ...
> simul et circum magna sonantibus
> excita saxis suauisona echo
> crepitu clangente cachinnat.
> (fr. 569–73 Ribbeck = 573–7 Warmington)

The focus on sounds is striking in this description of water tumbling against the shore and rocks, expressed in anapaestic dimeters probably recited by a chorus composed of the Argo's mariners. The sounds are not only described on the level of content, with words that are themselves onomatopoeic (*latratu*, *sonit*, *sonantibus*, and *cachinnat*); the lines are also heavily mimetic in the use of

[222] Boyle 2006, 116–17.
[223] Boyle 2006, 119.
[224] See Erasmo 2004, 46–7.

alliteration, mirroring the water's sounds. Alliteration of liquids is accompanied by dark *u*-vowels in the first half, sibilant *s*-alliteration with clacking *c*-alliteration in the second, mimicking, on the level of sound, the water clashing against rocks. Such a focus on sounds would be most memorable in a kind of performance – including recitation and loud reading – but does not necessarily rely on stage performance. Similar is the sonic prominence in another Accian chorus fragment, taken from *Atreus*. Note the striking alliteration in these mimetic lines:

> Sed quid tonitru turbida toruo
> concussa repente aequora caeli
> sensimus sonere?
> (fr. 223–5 Ribbeck = 183–5 Warmington)

We can see how Seneca engages with this Accian precedent, in one example where Seneca's reception picks up on content as much as on the sound effects. Note that the Senecan reception is not hindered by a separation of dialogic parts (vs *cantica*) vs choruses. In *Thyestes*, Seneca assigns to Thyestes the words which belonged to the chorus in Accius' *Atreus*. Compare Sen. *Thy*. 992–3, *quid hoc? magis magisque concussi labant | conuexa caeli*, with Accius' *Sed quid tonitru turbida torvo | concussa repente aequora caeli | sensimus sonere?*.[225] In a play on the same subject, such a similar description of the same situation of cosmic disruption is an ideal space for intertextuality. Conscious Senecan allusion is likely: Seneca's line not only delights as much in alliteration as does the Accian precedent – both mimicking, on the level of poetic form, the thundering content of the lines – but Seneca's alliteration in *concussi … conuexa caeli* strikes one as a corrective improvement on the Accian *concussa … aequora caeli*. Note that the last item of the Senecan *c*-alliteration (*conuexa caeli*) has also been moved to the beginning of a new line, where Accius had an *s*-alliteration (*sensimus sonere*). More widely, Senecan tragedy features instances of striking alliterations that go beyond what one would find in

[225] On this passage, see also Rosalia 1981, esp. 234–5. As far as I can see, the parallel between the Accian and Senecan passages was first noted by Schreiner 1909, 21. While Schreiner's focus is on the relationship between Seneca's plays and Greek tragedy, he nevertheless discusses the possibility of Republican influence on Seneca and notes, ' … Nur gegen die Ansicht, welche die alte römische Tragödie als Quelle für Seneca grundsätzlich ausschließt, sollte Einspruch erhoben werden' (23). While the methodological focus of Schreiner's source study (which underestimates the poetic independence of the later poet: cf. the title of his study) is outdated, his opposition to Leo's and Strauss's views (see above, n. 75), which were to become the dominant position, seems plausible to me.

Augustan poetry and should probably be seen as deliberately archaising.[226] If Seneca alludes to his dramatic predecessor at *Thy*. 992–3, he also reassigns the lines of Accius' chorus to Thyestes. Where Accius has the chorus comment on the cosmic disruption (the storm and thunder perceived by the chorus are attendant on the flight of the Sun at the face of the crime), Seneca's Thyestes, following the chorus's reaction to the cosmic chaos in the fourth choral ode, is also given an opportunity to speak about the sympathetic reactions of the cosmos to the unspeakable deed. For Seneca, as was also the case for the Republican dramatists before him, different potential performance contexts did not pose a hindrance to allusion: just as the Republican poets sometimes transformed the complex sung lyric of their Greek precedents into lines to be spoken or recited, Seneca would adapt lines from an Accian chorus to the spoken dialogue parts in his play. Such an allusive technique, not restricted by considerations of close metrical imitation or taking into account similar contexts of performance, may have been encouraged by the later poet encountering the earlier plays not in performance, but in reading the tragic scripts. This suggestion is also corroborated in Seneca's wider allusive practice, particularly in his engagement with Horace (to be discussed in the last chapter of my study).[227]

1.9.3 Fragments of the Natural World and Beyond

The Accian description of thunder reveals another aspect, a shared field of interest of Accius and Seneca: in the few lines we have, Accius' description places emphasis on natural phenomena rather than mythical paradigms, which may be due to an interest in natural philosophy.[228] Other Accian chorus fragments reveal some interest in other philosophical and theological questions, a discourse continuing Pacuvius and looking forward to Seneca.

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[226] Good examples include Sen. *Phoen*. 159 (*effringe corpus corque tot scelerum capax*; if accepted without printing Heinsius's conjecture *pectus* for *corpus*), with which one should compare Pl. *Mil*. 617 (*meumque cor corpusque cruciat*) and Pac. *trag*. fr. 207 Schierl (*lapit cor cura, aerumna corpus conficit*); *Med*. 362–3 (*maiusque mari Medea malum, | merces …*); *Tro*. 1109–10 (*… quis tuos artus teget | tumuloque tradet*); and, especially, *Tro*. 694–5 (*preces placidus pias patiensque recipe*). In his discussion of the last passage, Carlsson 1926, 58 rightly compares lines such Enn. *ann*. fr. 9 Vahlen (*quae cava corpore caeruleo cortina receptat*).

[227] See chapter 4, esp. section 4.3, 'Metre, Meaning, and Reception Contexts: Preliminaries for Seneca's Horatian Reception'.

[228] See Rüpke 2002, esp. 263.

There is one instance where the chorus in Accius gives us an idea of the range of the poet's theological apparatus. In the *Alcmeo*, a chorus has the following anapaestic dimeters:

> quod di in terram infernam penitus
> depressum altis clausere specis.
> (fr. 62–3 Ribbeck = 24–5 Warmington)

In this fragment, we see the tragic interest in the transgression of boundaries between the under and upper worlds. In Roman tragedy, the chthonic realms and forces must have been latent from the beginning following Greek precedent, and let loose earlier than in the literary history of epic.[229] In Roman epic, *katabasis* is of course a key feature, made prominent through Vergil, *Aeneid* 6 – but the high-point of chthonic contamination of the higher realms is reached no sooner than in Statius' *Thebaid*, where the celestial gods are to be supplanted by the forces of the underworld.[230] In tragedy, Seneca's use of transgression between under and upper worlds could build on, and in turn transgress, an apparatus of familiar scenes of chthonic transgressions and forces, not only from Greek, but also Roman precedent. The above chorus fragment from Accius is part of the same poetic discourse as Seneca's fury in *Thyestes*.[231] This fury, for instance, most importantly a later instantiation of the Vergilian Allecto, is at the origin of the dramatic construction, putting the whole play in motion.

Apart from this general observation, Accius' choric fragments do not allow more observations about the choruses' (or the poet's) theology proper. There are, however, fragments that point to a practice of including meditations on fortune or Fortune within the space of choral odes. One example occurs in the *Medea sive Argonautae*. Theme and metre (anapaestic dimeter) make attribution to a chorus likely:

> Fors dominatur, neque uita ulli
> Propria in uita est.
> (fr. 422–3 Ribbeck = 411–12 Warmington)

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[229] As one can infer from Cic. *Sex. Rosc.* 67 and *Pis.* 46, Republican tragedy seems to have featured scenes involving furies from the underworld: see Jocelyn 1967, 192–3. They will have owed much to Greek precedent, including the furies in Aeschylus' *Choephoroe* and *Eumenides*, and Euripides' *Orestes*.

[230] See Kroll's influential dualistic reading of the poem (Kroll 1932, esp. 450), with Feeney 1991, 350–2.

[231] For references to the transgression and contamination of the lower and the upper realms in Senecan tragedy, see the opening scenes of *Ag.* and *Thy.*, and cf. *Ag.* 756, *Oed.* 395ff., and *Tro.* 198–9.

At another moment, *fors* and *fortuna* are again invoked as options that, for the speaker, have explanatory force. Consider the following anapaestic dimeters from the *Astyanax*, which would make sense in the mouth of a chorus:[232]

> … itera, in
> quibus partibus (namque audire uolo,
> si est quem exopto) et quo captus modo,
> Fortunane an forte repertus? …
> (fr. 179–82 Ribbeck = 139–42 Warmington)

In Seneca, the choral odes are clearly the space in which to negotiate the Roman discourse about *fortuna*: odes on the mutability of fortune are a 'hall-mark of Senecan tragedy'.[233] Often there is a link between fortune and kingship, such as in the first ode in *Agamemnon*.[234] The motif of fortune as initiating some tragic disaster is a favourite device in the Senecan choruses' reasoning: it is used prominently, for instance, in the second and third chorus in *Thyestes*, and in the first and second ode in *Hercules Furens*. The fortune discourse in the second ode in this play, concerned with Hercules' labours, is particularly close in phrasing to the Republican tradition. Consider the ode's opening lines:

> O Fortuna uiris inuida fortibus,
> quam non aequa bonis praemia diuidis
> (Sen. *Her. F.* 524–5)

Seneca here transforms the *topos*, found commonly in Republican drama, of reproaching Fortune in general terms, and suggests something more concrete. In his chorus, the proverbial *fortes Fortuna adiuuat*, which has an Ennian pedigree (cf. Enn. *Ann.* 233 Skutsch: *fortibus est Fortuna viris data*), is

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[232] Against Warmington 1936, 373, *ad loc.* ('Ulysses speaks'): although attribution is difficult here, Ulysses would at least have to 'sing', since the lines are most plausibly explained as anapaestic dimeters, a sung metre. The ancient evidence for sung vs non-sung metres is discussed in detail by Moore 2008; see also the brief overview by De Melo 2011, xciv–xcvii. Building on the evidence of Donatus *de com.* 8.9, one assumes that all sung passages were accompanied by music, and according to ps.-Marius Victorinus (GLK 6.2.2), all verses apart from iambic senarii were sung. Scholarship, however, generally distinguishes between two types of 'sung' metres: those used in recitatives and those that were 'properly' sung: the long verses (i.e. trochaic septenarii, iambic septenarii and octonarii) were recited, all other verses (apart from the spoken verses in iambic senarii) sung.

[233] Tarrant 1976a, 181. Seneca's 'mutability odes' are the second ode in *Her. F.* (524–91), a significant section in the third ode of *Phaed.* (978–88), the fourth ode of the same play (1123–55), the short but famous choral intervention at *Oed.* 980–97, and the third ode of *Thy.* (546–622; on the Horatian inheritance of this ode see further chapter 4 below).

[234] Cf. also the (Horatian-coloured: cf. esp. with *Odes* 3.3) first ode of *Thyestes* (336–403).

inverted: the concrete reproach is that Fortune deliberately chooses to favour those who do not deserve it, and envies people who are industrious.[235]

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter suggests that Seneca, far from being uncritically dismissive of the Republican poets Livius Andronicus, Ennius, Naevius, Pacuvius, and Accius, was aware of his Roman literary heritage in the tragic genre. His engagement with the early Republican poets in the prose writings, especially his remarks about Ennius, needed a more nuanced consideration: while Seneca, for instance, criticises Ennian archaisms, this cannot, I have shown, be taken as evidence for his non-engagement with Ennius and the other Republican dramatists in practice. On the contrary – and even despite the fragmentary state of Republican tragedy – one can see clear Senecan allusions to passages of Republican tragedy in his own plays, such as in *Agamemnon*.

Having established a literary-historical plausibility of common ground between Seneca and his Republican tragic predecessors, the present chapter has examined the extant lyric fragments that could have been part of choruses in Republican tragedies. It is worth reiterating a note of caution: the conclusions presented here are, to a large extent, drawn from a small body of fragmentary evidence; if more lines from Republican tragedy and its choruses in particular were preserved, some of my conclusions could either be corroborated, or would have to be revised.[236] In the choric fragments under scrutiny, however, four features can be highlighted. These are also continued to some extent in Seneca's own use of the chorus. Firstly, the earliest Roman tragedians already incorporated topical issues and poetic forms that were fashionable at their time into the texture of their plays, a generic practice not unlike that of the Greek tragedians. Secondly, choruses could have been the favoured spaces for including philosophical issues in the plays. This feature is, as far as one can tell, important from the earliest Roman poet Ennius onwards, and has particularly prominent examples in the Republican dramatist Pacuvius' and Seneca's own

[235] As pointed out by Fitch 1987a, 256, *ad loc*., who also compares Seneca's own similar sentiments at *Ep*. 118.4 and *Dial*. 11.3.3. Stat. *Theb*. 10.384–5 (*invida Fata piis et Fors ingentibus ausis | rara comes*) could well allude to the Senecan version of reproaching Fortune.
[236] It would be worthwhile to test the results of this chapter against the practice in Roman comedy, especially Plautus' *cantica*. This plausible avenue of research lies beyond the scope of the present thesis (but for references to Plautus' use of metre, cf. above, n. 65).

plays. Thirdly, my study has suggested continuities in Seneca's stichic and recitative use of metre – a practice strikingly different from that of Greek tragedy – and earlier Roman Republican drama. Finally, I have examined how the chorus emerges as a mere character in the Republican tragedies, increasingly having no higher narrative authority and furthering a tragic discourse of uncertainty. This discourse, I have argued, is indicative of the Roman tragedians' interest in the psychology and dramatic possibilities of uncertainty, a tendency that is crystallised in Seneca's practice.

We shall see that the pervasive element of tragic uncertainty that involves the chorus as well as the other tragic characters is a key feature in Seneca's Republican series of allusions in his choruses. The chorus's uncertainty (and their increasing involvement as characters in the action of the plays,[237] as traced already by Hose) means that the chorus loses distance from the tragic action. Pushed to the extreme, such a lack of distance and detachment would mean that the Roman tragic chorus's role cannot be one of representing 'idealised spectators' who 'ease the impression of a deeply unsettling or deeply moving representation'.[238] In Seneca, the development of a chorus without detachment from the tragic action gains a peculiar inflection: where the Republican elements of the Greek chorus, in Schlegel's view, would make it a voice of the people against the monarchical and tyrannical structures inherent in the heroic myths presented in the tragic plots, Seneca's chorus's attempts at Republicanism would be bound to fail due to their lack of distance and detachment from their pathological tragic environment. The role of allusions to Roman Republican literature is crucial in this Senecan construction: the next chapter shall examine the role of Lucretius and (failed) Epicurean detachment in Seneca's choruses.

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[237] Most of the remaining fragments that could have been part of Accius' chorus (and are not treated in the present chapter) show the chorus involved the tragic action, engaging with the other characters in the plays: a fragment in dactylic dimeters from *Antigona* (fr. 140–1 Ribbeck = 91–2 Warmington) shows the chorus rousing the guard: *Heus, uigiles, properate, expergite* | *pectora tarda sopore, exsurgite!*. At what is probably the opening of the *Philocteta* (fr. 520–4 Ribbeck = 522–6 Warmington), the chorus seems to address Ulysses, in the longest surviving anapaestic fragment from Accius (a sung metre: see above, n. 232): *Inclute, parua prodite patria,* | *nomine celebri claroque potens* | *pectore, Achiuis classibus ductor,* | *grauis Dardaniis gentibus ultor,* | *Laertiade!*. In the *Tereus*, a member – probably the leader – of the chorus, speaking the long lines of iambic octonarii in recitative, could be addressing another character: *Set nisi clam<aris> regem auferre ab regina occupo* | *puerum* (652–3 Warmington; I give the text with Bothe's *clamaris*, already reported by Warmington as *fortasse recte*).

[238] See above, n. 1.

CHAPTER 2

Tragic Spectatorship, Inversions, and Didacticism? Lucretian Presences in Seneca's Chorus

aliud autem est meminisse, aliud scire. Meminisse est rem commissam memoriae custodire; at contra scire est et sua facere quaeque nec ad exemplar pendere et totiens respicere ad magistrum.

(Sen. *Ep*. 33.8)

quaedam enim, mi Lucili, nulla effugere uirtus potest

(Sen. *Ep*. 57.3)

2.1 Introduction

Seneca demonstrates on every page that his knowledge of earlier literature and philosophical debate is immense. 'Like Lucretius and Cicero, the only Roman writers with whom he deserves to be compared,' Rosenmeyer summarises, 'he has made the thinking of his sources and his teachers his own'.[239] In particular, Epicurean influence on the Senecan œuvre is hard to overstate.[240] In the *Epistles*, for instance, Epicurus is the second-most quoted author, surpassed only by Seneca's favourite, Vergil.[241] Epicurus' letters have convincingly been argued to be a model (both literary and didactic) for Seneca's *Epistles*.[242] Seneca's engagement with Epicurean maxims and positions in his philosophical writings, by and large written from the perspective of a Stoic, does not always consist in outright rejection.[243] Setaioli's study in his *Seneca e i greci. Citazioni e traduzioni nelle opere filosofiche* remains the most comprehensive account of Epicurean echoes in Seneca's philosophical writings.[244] The major Roman Epicurean poet and philosopher, Lucretius, is clearly known to Seneca;[245] he

[239] Rosenmeyer 1989, 6.

[240] See the summarising treatment by Graver 2016. For further references, Wildberger 2014, 431, n. 1. Erler 2009 gives a summary of the wider context of Epicureanism in the Roman empire.

[241] Cf. Sen. *Ep*. 12.11: *'Epicurus' inquis 'dixit: quid tibi cum alieno?' Quod verum est meum est; perseverabo Epicurum tibi ingerere*. On Seneca's use of Vergilian quotations in the philosophical writings, see esp. Ker 2015.

[242] See esp. Inwood 2007. See also Gatzemeier 2013, 80–3, and Wildberger 2014.

[243] See esp. Graver 2016 on Seneca's inclusion of what he considers true Epicurean insights about the phenomena of human experience. Probably the most striking endorsement of Epicurus in Seneca's philosophical writings occurs in *De Vita Beata* (Sen. *Dial*. 7.13.1–2).

[244] Setaioli 1988, 171–248. See also Mazzoli 1970, 206–7.

[245] Lucretius is quoted explicitly at Sen. *Ep*. 95.11 (*DRN* 1.54–7), 106.8 (*DRN* 1.304), 110.6 (*DRN* 2.55–6), 86.5 (*DRN* 3.1034), *Dial*. 9.2.14 (*DRN* 3.1068, in close proximity of *spectaculum*: see below on the link between Seneca's reception of Lucretius and the dramatic elements he found in his predecessor), and *Nat*. 4b.3.4 (*DRN* 1.313). See further Butterfield 2013, 49–50, who

even chooses 'Lucretius' – alongside Cato and Cicero – when he posits three common Roman names in *Epistle* 58.[246] The mention of Lucretius illustrates that the name must still have meant something to Seneca's contemporary recipients.[247]

Scholarly contributions, however, that assess Seneca's engagement with Lucretius are scarce.[248] For the tragedies, Schiesaro has pointed to broader implications of a poetics of sublimity, shared in Lucretius and Seneca, albeit for different ends.[249] In the *Natural Questions*, Seneca's scientific work of similar ambition as Lucretius' undertaking in *De Rerum Natura*, Seneca shares several features with his Epicurean forebear.[250] Most importantly, they have in common the superior detached outlook of the philosopher, trying to allay superstitious fears in people by means of rational explanations gained from close observation of nature.[251] We can see this very clearly in *Naturales Quaestiones* 6, the book on earthquakes, where Seneca closely engages with Lucretian material and aesthetics.[252] In a study of some of the Epicurean influences in Seneca's philosophy, moreover, Schiesaro has re-affirmed that '[a] general study of the Epicurean elements in the tragedies is missing'.[253]

In Senecan tragedy, the chorus is the preferred space for Lucretian presences. While philosophically-inspired comments are also expressed in some

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suggests that 'Seneca himself, learned, influential and active in Rome, certainly had access to a full manuscript of the work [i.e. Lucretius'], presumably his own copy, with each book in its individual roll (although he provided no book references' (50).

[246] See *Epist*. 58.12, with Mazzoli 1970, 206–9.

[247] See Gatzemeier 2013, 59, with n. 65.

[248] See now esp. Gatzemeier 2013, 59–80, on Seneca's use of Lucretius in the prose writings. I have some reservations, however, about Gatzemeier's view that 'Lukrez für Seneca in erster Linie der *Dichter* ist und er nur implizit auf den *Philosophen* Lukrez verweist' (80; italics in the original). This conclusion is based on a too rigid distinction between 'poetry' and 'philosophy', which is particularly unhelpful with regard to Lucretius and Seneca, both poets and philosophers, both interested precisely in the question of how to negotiate the intersection between philosophy and poetry. As shall become clear in the present chapter, I would label Seneca's engagement with Lucretius in the tragedies philosophical as well as poetic.

[249] On the role of the sublime in Senecan tragedy, see Schiesaro 2003, 127–32, and cf. further Michel 1969, Mazzoli 1990, and Gunderson 2015. According to Schiesaro 2015, the difference between Lucretius and Seneca's philosophy in their employment of sublimity as an aesthetic and cognitive tool lies in the fact that, for Lucretius, the 'sublime is first and foremost an etiological strategy, a cognitive tool for apprehending natural causes that has a liberating and exhilarating effect' (249); in Seneca's Stoic use, on the other hand, Schiesaro argues, the sublime functions differently, since 'the search for causes is proleptically voided of any true epistemic value, because all the causes, in their apparent variety, depend on and resolve into one, the decrees of Fate' (250). On Lucretian and Senecan causation, see further Althoff 2005.

[250] On a wider Epicurean influence in the *Natural Questions*, see Graver 1999.

[251] See e.g. Berno 2015a, 82–3, and Williams 2012, 215.

[252] On Seneca's engagement with Lucretius in *Natural Questions* 6, see De Vivo 1992, esp. 82–105, and Williams 2012, 214–25 and 246–57.

[253] Schiesaro 2015, 251.

of the dialogic parts, especially in many brief *sententiae*, the choral odes provide the necessary space for extended philosophical reasoning.[254] Tracing the literary historical and philosophical relationship between the Senecan odes and Lucretius, my analysis in the following will consist of four case studies of significant engagement. I will begin with an analysis of the fourth choral ode of *Troades*, where Seneca reworks, and criticises, moments of Epicurean detachment in the Trojan women's echoing of the proem of *De Rerum Natura* 2. Secondly, I will demonstrate how the opening of Lucretius' second book has influenced the Senecan œuvre more widely, and discuss several examples from the *Epistles*. As in the Senecan chorus, Lucretian presences in Seneca's non-tragic writings are accompanied by a focus on sensory perception, especially seeing. This focus, thirdly, is also retained in the third choral song of *Agamemnon*, an ode that combines Senecan allusion to Horace and Lucretius.[255] Finally, I will argue that the second chorus of *Troades* – the Senecan ode that, in its allegedly rational philosophising, has previously been read as standing out most jarringly from its dramatic environment – is a sophisticated Senecan construction that can only be understood by recognising its allusive engagement with earlier Latin literature, especially Lucretius. Seneca, in this chorus, presents a perversion of the Lucretian lesson of detachment, demonstrating the ineffectiveness of Lucretius' rationalising didacticism in real tragic situations. The Senecan engagement with Lucretius can be read on two levels: both Seneca and Seneca's chorus are 'readers' of Lucretius. By presenting his chorus as recipients of Lucretius' Epicurean philosophy for whom the rationalised Epicureanism has not worked, the reader Seneca can in turn express his authorial criticism of Lucretius and Epicureanism. Both the chorus's and Seneca's 'readings' could guide our own reception as extra-dramatic recipients, and need to be given attention in studies of allusion and intertextuality.

The present chapter will enable us to see that Seneca's noted tendency to be a pessimistic and subversive reader of Augustan poetry is also true of his reception of Lucretius.[256] Moreover, as my analysis of chosen passages will

[254] See Seidensticker 1969, 180–99 for an excellent discussion of Seneca's *sententia*-style in the tragedies, and cf. also Rosenmeyer 1989, 28–36, who confirms that the choruses ('the choral essays') are 'often the dramatic equivalents of Seneca's philosophical writings' (29).
[255] On Horace's (and Seneca's) 'Epicureanism', see esp. Grilli 1998.
[256] For a detailed account of Seneca's (pessimistic) reception of Horace, see below, chapter 4.

demonstrate for the first time, Seneca's reception of earlier Roman literature is guided by his tragic poetics. This shows, firstly, in the foregrounding of moments of spectacle and the visual paradigm in moments of philosophical reasoning. Moreover, Seneca's tragic poetics involves clashes of perspectives and world-views that are unresolved in the plays: his reception of Lucretian philosophy, and the way in which the chorus – as a character in the play – fails to implement the philosophical advice from the Lucretian didactic poem, are key ingredients in this tragic construction. My conclusion to the chapter will explore the wider-reaching impacts of this for our reading of Senecan tragedy.

2.2 The Fourth Chorus in *Troades*: Watching Disaster

The fourth chorus in *Troades* (1009–55) is a good example of sustained Senecan engagement with Lucretian material. The Lucretian influence is noted in the introduction to Keulen's commentary on the ode,[257] building on Wilson's brief evaluation according to which 'the imagery of stormy seas, the subject of pleasure in the presence of distress, the contrast between the one and the many, and the rhetorical structure of the Latin all recall the opening of Lucretius' second Book'.[258] This merits more careful consideration.

In the course of the act preceding this ode, the major female protagonists are assigned to their lot and new Greek masters. The chorus, having to leave its native Troy behind, provides some philosophical reflection on how people deal with their miseries, in answer to Hecuba's preceding prayer for revenge.[259] The chorus provides a more generalised – and philosophised – stance on what Hecuba desperately wishes upon her Greek captors: she may be assigned to Ulysses as her master, Hecuba says, but stormy seas will follow her (see esp. her prayer at 1006–8).[260] The chorus takes up this imagery of stormy seas and maritime destruction and will use it for more abstract reflection: one is

[257] Keulen 2001, 475. See also Boyle 1994, 220, *ad* 1009–12 ('The passage owes something to the famous opening lines of Lucr. *DRN* 2').
[258] Wilson 1983, 53.
[259] The chorus responding to – or repeating – statements made by characters in the dialogic parts is already Greek practice. A case in point is found in Aesch. *Ag.*: 'Was Klytaimestra z.B. dem schlafenden Erinyenchor zuruft, wiederholt dieser singend fast wörtlich' (cf. 111–12 with 147, 135–6 with 155–6, and 306 with 332–3): Kranz 1933, 166.
[260] These storms during the Greeks' voyage home are described in detail in another Senecan play, in the report of Eurybates at *Ag*. 460ff.

reminded of the famous opening scene of *DRN* 2.[261] The chorus's opening lines also respond to the Lucretian precedent in their rhetorical structure. The following overview highlights verbal and structural points of contact:[262]

Lucr. *DRN* 2.1–39	Sen. *Tro.* 1009–33, 39–40, 53–5
Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,	**Dulce** maerenti populus dolentum,
e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;	**dulce** lamentis resonare gentes;
non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,	lenius luctus lacrimaeque mordent,
sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.	turba quas fletu similis frequentat.
suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri	semper a semper dolor est malignus:
per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli.	gaudet in multos sua fata mitti
sed nil **dulcius** est bene quam munita tenere	seque non solum placuisse poenae.
edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,	ferre quam sortem patiuntur omnes
despicere unde queas alios passimque videre	nemo recusat.
errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,	Nemo se credet miserum, licet sit:
certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,	tolle felices;[263] remouete multo
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore	diuites auro, remouete centum
ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.	rura qui scindunt opulenta bubus:
o miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca!	pauperi surgent animi iacentes –
qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periclis	est miser nemo nisi comparatus.
degitur hoc aevi quodcumquest! nonne videre	**Dulce** in immensis posito ruinis,
nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi utqui	Neminem laetos habuisse uultus:
corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mensque fruatur	Ille deplorat queriturque fatum,

[261] The proem to *DRN* 2 still enjoyed veritable allusive currency in Seneca's day. Another prominent recall of it arguably occurs at the beginning of another Neronian oeuvre. Persius' first *Satire* begins thus: *O curas hominum! o quantum est in rebus inane!* (1.1), possibly merging allusion to *DRN* 2.14 (*o miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca!*) with the unmistakable Lucretian tag *est in rebus inane* (*DRN* 1.330; see also 1.382, 399, 511, 569, 655, 658, 660, 843, and 5.365). Hendrickson 1928 gives a fuller analysis of this Lucretian echo in Persius' *Satire*. Note, however, that the situation is complicated by a scholion that reports that Persius' first line is taken from Lucilius: see in detail Kißel 1990, 109–12, *ad loc*. There is also Lucretian reception in Lucan: on the visual paradigm in Lucan, cf. Earnshaw 2013, who suggests that some visual elements in the Lucanian epic (particularly in the dream of Pompey at the beginning of the third book) may be crucial elements of Lucan's Lucretian reception (on which see, for more detail, Esposito 1996). According to Hardie 2009, *passim*, but esp. 154, vision, such as featured in the opening of *DRN* 2, is one of the major areas in which Lucretius' Epicurean poem has influenced later writers.

[262] Emboldening shows the structuring force of the forms of *dulcis* and *suavis* in Lucretius and Seneca, other (verbal) parallels are pointed out by the same type of underlining in both the Lucretius and the Seneca passages.

[263] Madvig's reordering of the lines by exchanging 1018a and 1019a (*tolle felices: miserum, licet sit, | nemo se credet; remouete multo*) is adopted e.g. by Fantham, since 'the imperative standing for a conditional clause should precede its apodosis in this figure' (Fantham 1982, 360, *ad loc.*). Fantham refers to two pertinent examples, at Sen. *Ep.* 66.22 and *Ben.* 3.29.5 (the instance at *Ben.* 4.18.4 is slightly different since the imperative and the future verb are connected by *et*), but, as Reeve and Zwierlein point out (see Zwierlein 1986, 109, *ad loc.*), Seneca's usage at *Ep.* 42.4, 90.16, and 95.23 shows that he was perfectly happy with placing the apodosis first, and the imperative second. The transmitted reading should thus be retained, as it is by Zwierlein.

iucundo sensu cura semota curaque?
Ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca videmus
esse opus omnino, quae demant cumque dolorem,
delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint;
gratius interdum neque natura ipsa requirit,
si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes
[…]
Quapropter quoniam nil nostro in corpore gazae
proficiunt neque nobilitas nec gloria regni,
quod superest, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum;

qui secans fluctum rate singulari
nudus in portus cecidit petitos;
aequior casum tulit et procellas,
mille qui ponto pariter carinas
obrui uidit tabulaque litus
naufraga spargi,[264] mare cum coactis
fluctibus Corus prohibet reuerti.
[…]
Et uir et Pyrrha, mare cum uiderent,
et nihil praeter mare cum uiderent
[…]
'Ilium est illic ubi fumus alte
Serpit in caelum nebulaeque turpes.'
Troes hoc signo patriam uidebunt.

The first element marking Seneca's engagement with the second Lucretian proem is found in the anaphora of *dulce* (at 1009 and 1010; *dulce* also at the onset of 1024) plus infinitives, which mirrors the Lucretian repetition of *suave* (plus infinitives) at the onsets of *DRN* 2.1 and 2.6. If Seneca alluded to Lucretius, however, the choice of *dulce* over *suave* may seem puzzling: why would Seneca have replaced the Lucretian anaphoric *suave* with *dulce*? First of all, the Senecan choice of *dulce* may have been assisted by the Lucretian use of the comparative of the same adjective in the further development of the opening scene (*sed nil dulcius est*, 2.7). Moreover, as Axelson notes, there is a difference in diachronic and stylistic distribution. After Vergil's *Georgics*, the adjective *suavis*/*-e* is avoided both in poetry and polished prose.[265] But another point

[264] I retain A's *spargi* (not giving Giardina's and Axelson's *sterni*, preferred by Zwierlein in the OCT). Unlike its synonym *sterni*, *spargi* effectively contributes to the line's sonic effects, with its accumulation of *a*-sounds (*naufraga spargi, mare cum coactis*). Moreover, *spargere* is idiomatic in shipwreck scenes: I suggest that the post-Senecan Silius Italicus, most likely familiar with Senecan tragedy, provides the closest parallel of relevant usage at *Pun.* 10.321–5 (the passage may well be reminiscent of the Senecan storm scene: apart from *spargere*, note Silius' use of a participial verb of seeing, *conspecta*, 322, and *miseri*, 325): *sic Lagea ratis, uasto uelut insula ponto | conspecta, illisit scopulis ubi nubifer Eurus, | naufragium spargens operit freta, iamque per undas | et transtra et mali laceroque aplustria uelo | ac miseri fluitant reuomentes aquora nautae* (this parallel, not noted before, is closer to the Senecan usage than Hor. *Odes* 3.17.10–11 and Lucr. 1.274, adduced by Giardina and Zwierlein in defence of *sterni*: see Zwierlein 1983, 109, *ad loc.*). E's *terris* entails serious problems (see Zwierlein 1966, 207, where he had argued for A's *spargi*), and should probably be explained as a gloss, rather than as a corruption of the proposed *sterni*. As a gloss, *terris* could equally well have explicated a line containing *spargi* and *sterni*; despite its graphemic similarity, E's *terris* is thus no strong argument in favour of the conjectured *sterni*.

[265] See Axelson 1945, 35–7. The fact that there are clusters of more common usage in such authors as Vitruvius and Petronius, Axelson further suggests, may point to it being of a stylistically inferior quality ('vulgär'); but note its frequency in Cicero (see esp. *Tusc.* 2.17, where

needs to be put forward: Seneca routinely describes Epicurean *εὐδαιμονία* as *dulcis* in Latin.[266] Another major – and post-Senecan – instance of reception of *DRN* 2 is of further help: at *Theb*. 2.729–31 (in the context of Tydeus promising the erection of a temple for Athena), Statius writes, *Ionias qua despectare procellas | dulce sit*. The Lucretian presence in this passage is easily recognisable: this is a scene where Athena's temple, safely placed, will look down on storms in serenity (cf. especially *DRN* 2.7–9: *sed nil dulcius est bene munita tenere | edita doctrina sapientum templa serena, | despicere unde queas* ...),[267] and the Statian usage of *despectare* seems to merge the Lucretian *spectare* (2.2) and *despicere* (2.9). Just as Seneca does, Statius uses *dulcis* rather than the Lucretian *suavis*, the prominent first word of the second book of *DRN*. Despite the regularity with which *dulcis* (rather than *suavis*) appears in Latin in post-Vergilian poetry,[268] I would suggest that the Lucretian moment in Statius is mediated through our passage in the Senecan choral ode in *Troades*: apart from *dulcis*, consider especially Statius' use of *procellae*, echoing the Senecan chorus's *procellae* of line 1029.[269]

What are the factors underlying the Senecan reception of the opening of the second book of *De Rerum Natura* in the ode in *Troades*? Apart from the philosophical theme and sea imagery, one further aspect is crucial: here and elsewhere, I argue, Seneca's reading of earlier Latin literature shows preference for a text that carries in itself the germ of dramatisation and tragedy. Within Senecan dramatic poetics, previous 'tragic' moments of poetry are restored to the tragic realm. As becomes clear from an excellent observation made by Fowler, the opening of *DRN* 2 provides a setting of dramatic spectatorship: *spectare* is used by Lucretius 'not just [to mean] "watch", but with a suggestion

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Cicero uses *suavis* in his rejection of the Epicurean theory of pain, and cf. the further passages at Epicur. fr. 601 Usener).

[266] See Sen. *Epist*. 66.18, where he renders Epicurus' words (*dulce est et ad me nihil pertinet*), and 67.15 (*Audi Epicurum, dicet et 'dulce est'*): cf. Epicur. fr. 601 Usener.

[267] The moment at *Theb*. 2.729–31 refers back to *Theb*. 2.105–6, where Laius promises to Eteocles that a Ionian storm will come upon Tydeus.

[268] See above, n. 265.

[269] While the parallel between Lucretius and Statius is noted by Fowler for comparative purposes in his discussion of the Lucretian use of *spectare*, the literary-historical nexus between the famous Lucretian scene and Seneca's as well as Statius' reception has not been posited before.

of "be a spectator at", watch a *spectaculum* (cf. Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *C.* 1.28.17 *spectacula*), be a *θεατής* in the arena or a *θέατρον*'.[270]

While the Senecan chorus does not use *spectare*, the visual focus is retained but delayed, spilling over into the other major, non-Lucretian allusion in this ode, an extended engagement with an episode from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Note how, in the Senecan depiction of 'Pyrrha and her husband' (*et vir et Pyrrha*, 1039), the focus on vision is emphasised (*et uir et Pyrrha, mare cum uiderent, | et nihil praeter mare cum uiderent*, 1039–40) – while human vision is no central concern in the famous Ovidian model. In fact, in the account in *Metamorphoses* 1, it is usually the gods who are granted vision, not Deucalion and Pyrrha:[271] at *Met.* 1.324–6 (lines that served as Seneca's model in terms of content as well as form),[272] it is Jupiter who sees (*Iuppiter, ut liquidis stagnare paludibus orbem | et superesse uirum de tot modo milibus unum | et superesse uidet de tot modo milibus unam*, 324–6).[273] At *Met.* 1.366, at the end of the account, the ones who 'see' are still the gods, even in Deucalion's own parenthetical re-affirmation (*nunc genus in nobis restat mortale duobus | (sic uisum superis) hominumque exempla manemus*, 365–6). In the Ovidian epic realm, it is the gods who oversee the universe, whereas, in Lucretius, it is up to the human subject to see into the nature of things. As a general rule, this absence of the gods' interest in human affairs is a crucial point of contact between the Lucretian cosmos and Seneca's tragic one. Unlike the human couple in the Ovidian episode, Seneca's tragic actors are granted vision, but, as we shall see, the contexts of the tragedies in which they have to act blur their vision, so that they are unable to attain a type of Lucretian insight into the nature of things and their own state of affairs.

Seneca's insistence on seeing and watching is of course particularly appropriate in a tragedy, even more so in the mouth of the chorus of Trojan

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[270] Fowler 2002, 37, *ad loc.*

[271] The only instance of Deucalion seeing something in the whole account, at *Met.* 1.348, is belated, immediately following the end of the flood (*Redditus orbis erat; quem postquam uidit inanem … Deucalion … ita Pyrrham adfatur …*).

[272] The allusion is noted by Spika 1890, 14 and Jakobi 1988, 36–7, who also comments on Seneca's word order mirroring Ovid's. As becomes clear from the examples adduced by Wills 1996, both anaphora and epiphora are strong formal markers of allusion (line-initial anaphora: 397–414; epiphora: 418–26; on their allusive force, see further 15–41).

[273] Note, furthermore, that the Senecan allusion to *Met.* 1.324–5 helps to throw into relief the focus of this choral ode: where, in Ovid, prominence is given to *uirum* and *uidet*, each framed by anaphora and epiphora, the Senecan version repeats *mare* in the middle of the lines – it is 'the sea' that Seneca's 'Pyrrha and her man' see.

women, who are watching the action like an intra-dramatic audience. Seeing and watching not only indicate Seneca's Lucretian reception, but also carry specific significance within this tragedy. First of all, the focus on seeing creates coherence within the choral ode, creating a link between the watching of the shipwreck at 1030–2 and Pyrrha and her husband's looking at the sea and nothingness at 1039–41. As is pointed out at the close of the ode, these two instances of watching disaster turn out to be typological models for the Trojan women's own present ruin: seeing fallen Troy (*'Ilium est illic, ubi fumus alte | serpit in caelum nebulaeque turpes.' | Troes hoc signo patriam uidebunt*, 1053–5). Secondly, the chorus's insistence on 'seeing' the disasters recalls other key moments in the play, notably its beginning. In her opening speech, Hecuba outlines the unstable position of the powerful who proudly trust their wealth and military valour, placing conspicuous emphasis on 'watching': whoever believes in the unshakeability and fortune of the mighty, she admonishes, 'should watch [her] and Troy' (*me uideat et te, Troia*, 4).[274] But the role of 'spectating' is of a wider importance in this play. Especially worthy of note is the last act, immediately following the choral ode under discussion. As has been convincingly argued,[275] the focus on 'watching' and tragic spectatorship is most relevant there and gains metapoetic currency. The chorus's visual focus, setting itself up as an intra-dramatic audience, prepares for the 'theatrical' setting of the last act.[276]

But, in the opening scene of *DRN* 2, the sense of dramatic 'spectating' is not the only moment that would have appealed to Seneca's tragic reception. Fowler rightly points out that the whole topic of seeing the pain of others – and feeling some pleasure at the sight – is unmistakably tragic.[277] The theme, Fowler

[274] Might, as Fantham 1982, 203–4 adumbrates, Hecuba's opening speech already introduce the first Lucretian echoes into the play? From the start, the divine is replaced by the human perspective, a feature shared with the Lucretian didactic epic universe. In her speech, Hecuba could be read as providing an amplification of the actions and situations presented as antithetical to the Epicurean tranquillity put forward in the opening of *DRN* 2.

[275] See Shelton 2000, Schiesaro 2003, 235–43, and Kirichenko 2013, 94–100.

[276] Cf. especially the messenger's description of the *locus* of Astyanax's killing, a proper stage with a crowd as audience (*Tro*. 1075–8 and 1086–7); cf. further the account of Polyxena's death, with a striking focus on the theatricality of the scene, esp. *aduersa cingit campus et cliuo leui | erecta medium uallis includens locum | crescit theatri more. concursus frequens | impleuit omne litus* (1023–5). Cf. also the audience's reactions at 1128–9, 1136–7, and 1147–8 (if 1147 is to be retained: Zwierlein 1976, 188–9 argues that the line should be excluded since Polyxena would have to follow Pyrrhus, and not precede him as given in the line, *Pyrrhum antecedit*).

[277] I would also compare *DRN* 3.55–6, for the same sense of 'tragic spectatorship': *quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periclis | convenit adversisque in rebus noscere qui sit*. In tragedy, a different type of pleasure gained from watching the pain of others is also common: that of a non-

explains, 'arises particularly in connection with the pleasures of art, especially tragic drama'. [278]

With a view to Seneca's lines, I suggest that we must compare especially a brief reply of Euripides' chorus in *Troades* to Hekabe. Apart from the Lucretian passage, the Euripidean lines are probably the closest precedent for Seneca's own opening to the fourth chorus in his *Troades*. There, the suffering individual gains solace from seeing other characters also endure trouble and disaster:[279]

> ὡς ἡδὺ δάκρυα τοῖς κακῶς πεπραγόσιν
> θρήνων τ' ὀδυρμοὶ μοῦσά θ' ἣ λύπας ἔχει.
> (Eur. *Tro*. 608–9)

As in Euripides, Seneca's chorus responds to Hecuba; as in Euripides, they respond by presenting a philosophical commonplace. But whereas the chorus in Euripides are only granted two lines in this exchange, the Senecan version is amplified: in Seneca, unlike in Euripides, the chorus is actually given the chance of presenting their 'sweet' dirge,[280] which is absent at this point in the Euripidean *Troades*. But Seneca's Trojan women are given this opportunity only to disappoint expectations: the Senecan chorus transposes both the Lucretian philosophical and the Euripidean outlook to Seneca's bleaker tragic vista. For Seneca's chorus of Trojan women, it turns out, neither their song nor their hypothesising about watching other people's misery is 'sweet' – they are too caught up in their own misery, and their song is nothing more than a vain attempt to achieve comfort in view of their tragic situation.

Crucially, the Trojan women are not watching the pain of others from a safe vantage point. Where the Lucretian onlooker stands on firm ground, the Senecan text specifies no vantage point for the Trojan women. If anything, they imagine the events at sea as focalized through those who suffer shipwreck, as themselves being in the middle of the disaster. The Trojan women end where they began and no amount of singing or philosophising can wrench them from

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involved spectator enjoying the pain and devastation their enemies are going through. In Seneca, a memorable example of this *Schadenfreude* is Atreus' pleasure at watching Thyestes realise that he has eaten his own sons in *Thyestes*.

[278] Fowler 2002, 38, *ad loc*., referring to Timocles *Dionysiazousai* fr. 3 K = *PCG* 7.6, esp. 5–7 and 17–19.

[279] The parallel is noted by Keulen 2001, 476, *ad loc*. Calder 1970 discusses Seneca's wider engagement with his Euripidean models in *Troades*.

[280] See Marx 1932, 16, who comments on the function of the sapphic metre here: it gives this ode (as well as the previous one in the play) a sense of lamenting.

this place: the destruction of Troy, expressed in a bleak image evoking death (*Tro*. 1053–5).

2.3 The Lucretian Fourth Chorus in *Troades*: Inversion and Didacticism?

We have seen that, for the chorus in *Troades*, the Lucretian image of serenely looking from the shore at a sea storm, perhaps effectively didactic for other readers of Lucretius in their theoretical engagement, is presented as the Trojan women's only, grim reality: for people such as the members of this Senecan chorus, Seneca suggests in his allusive inversion, Lucretius' teaching about Epicurean tranquillity has failed.[281] The Trojan women, grounded in the tragic reality of their everyday life, one that is on the brink of disaster, do not have the privilege of attaining Lucretius' Epicurean tranquillity.[282] This is true as far as the dramatic characters' knowledge is concerned.

On the level of the effects the Senecan construction may have on extra-dramatic recipients, however, a different picture could emerge – one for which Seneca's engagement with the Lucretian model is of importance. The Senecan composition suggests that, where the Lucretian didactic of the form we find in the opening of *DRN* 2 may fail (such as in the case of the reading presented by the chorus of Trojan women), Seneca's own dramatic construction may be more effective. For this interpretation of Seneca's dramatic ode, we need to return to the strong notion of spectatorship presented in this choral ode, which is, as we have seen, in line with the importance of vision and 'spectating' elsewhere in the play, especially in the last act, directly following the chorus under discussion. As emerges from my study, the fourth chorus, as much as the fourth act, where scholars have already noted this feature, can be seen as encouraging a form of 'critical spectatorship'.[283] If read as part of a didactic impetus,[284] this Senecan

[281] In the Trojan women's involved commentary on the theoretical Lucretian position, Seneca pre-empts scholarly readings that find 'Lucretian comfort selfish and anything but humanitarian' (Nichols 1976, 62).
[282] In addition to their tragic setting, the Trojan women are also defined by their social setting: unlike the Lucretian observer, a solitary individual looking at strangers, the Trojan women imagine a scenario featuring their own involvement.
[283] See Nussbaum 1993, esp. 240: 'the Stoics hope to construct a spectator who is vigilant rather than immersed, critical rather than trustful'. Nussbaum counts Seneca among those Stoics who believe that emotions have a character of judgments, and hence would write poetry that, in some form or other, aims to educate.
[284] There is no direct didactic addressee in the tragic chorus, but the introduction of the notion of spectatorship and the use of imperatives is not dissimilar to the didactic set-up where second-

composition would be a further development, and improvement on, the earlier Lucretian didactic method at the opening of *DRN* 2. Developing Nussbaum's notion,[285] Schiesaro, in his interpretation of the last act of *Troades*, has suggested this as one possible reading of the Senecan construction: '[b]y watching watchers watch [...] the audience is naturally invited to acquire a critical distance from the very act of watching. [...] Furthermore, both Trojans and Greeks are watching real events, not a mimesis of those events. Thus, *a fortiori*, spectators should infer that they can avoid being completely overwhelmed by emotions mediated by a mimetic representation'.[286] The type of critical detachment which the second Lucretian proem may fail to inspire in its readers, as Seneca suggests in his chorus of Trojan women, would thus be offered to the recipients of Seneca's play. This would be *one* viable reaction to reading or watching the *Troades*, a response that could be elicited especially in recipients who understand the function of the Lucretian allusions in this choral ode. There are, however, as Schiesaro points out in the further development of his interpretation,[287] other factors throughout the play that complicate such a didactic reading: within the play, the chorus is not the only audience, but there are also other Trojans, the messenger, and the Greeks. Crucially, their reactions to watching the various spectacles are at odds, and the voice of the chorus does not necessarily emerge as the higher narrative authority, since the individual choral odes seem openly to contradict, indeed undermine each other. The diverse voices and perspectives in the play, at odds with the chorus as much as contradicting each other, create a multi-layered construction that does not provide guidance towards one right reaction on the part of recipients.[288] I will come back to this issue in some more detail below, in an analysis of the second choral ode in *Troades*, evaluating its Lucretian echoes and role within the play.

As we have seen, it is only through a reading of the Lucretian presences in the fourth choral ode of *Troades* that the ode's full import becomes discernible. The chorus's anti-Lucretian take also functions as an answer to Hecuba's

person address is used: spectatorship and metatheatricality serve as the analogue of the imagined didactic dialogue (which, for Servius, is a *sine qua non* of the didactic genre). Cf. further on this issue the important volume Schiesaro/Mitsis/Strauss Clay 1994.

[285] Such a didactic reading does not necessarily involve the medical model Nussbaum has favoured; see Nussbaum 2009, esp. 484–510 on 'therapy of desire', and 439–83 for her reading of the Senecan *Medea*.

[286] Schiesaro 2003, 240.

[287] Schiesaro 2003, 240–1.

[288] See Schiesaro 2003, 241.

preceding prayer. The Trojan women provide an amplified version of their own misery, but also of Hecuba's wish for revenge: Hecuba had already intimated that there will not be any *quies* | *tranquilla* for the sea (994–5). The phrase *quies tranquilla* is a signifier of Lucretian allusion.[289] A similar phrase, *aeterna quies*, occurs next to a 'tranquil harbour' (*portus … placidus*) and another 'storm' (*procella*) at a further prominent moment of Lucretian reception in Seneca's odes. In the third choral song of *Agamemnon* (589–658), a chorus that engages in an elaborate negotiation of the question of how to face death, it is again the proem of *DRN* 2 that provides the allusive backdrop. Before drawing closer attention to this chorus in *Agamemnon*, it will be worthwhile to compare the way in which Seneca's reception of the opening of Lucretius' second proem has informed his philosophical works.

2.4 Seneca Reading Lucretius: the Opening of *DRN* 2 in Seneca's Philosophical Writings

As we have seen, Seneca's tragic reception in the philosophising fourth chorus of *Troades* confirms the opening of *DRN* 2 as one of the most dramatic moments of the *De Rerum Natura*.[290] In his own prose writings, Seneca quotes from the prologue of *DRN* 2 (and critiques the Lucretian Epicurean position) in *Letter* 110. The quotation is clearly marked as Lucretian by explicit reference in an emphatic vocative following the citation (*Sed falsum est, Lucreti*, 110.7),[291] and also subtly prepared for in the preceding context: note that the immediate context of the quotation is enriched by Seneca's echoing of Lucretian language and a strong focus on seeing, not only due to the (Stoic) philosopher's epistemological interest, but probably also reminiscent of the same visual emphasis in the Lucretian prologue:

> Sed quare istuc malum adstringo? Non est quod quicquam timendum putes: vana sunt ista quae nos movent, quae attonitos habent. Nemo nostrum quid veri esset excussit, sed metum alter alteri tradidit; nemo ausus est ad id quo perturbabatur accedere et naturam ac bonum timoris

[289] For *tranquillus* see *DRN* 1.31, 6.78, 2.1093, 5.12, 3.293; *quies* occurs fifteen times in Lucretius (cf. esp. *secura quies* at 3.211).
[290] Far from being opposed to inclusion of dramatic elements, the *De Rerum Natura* is alive to the dramatic and theatrical tradition: the poem engages carefully with specific examples from tragic myth. The Lucretian reception of drama cannot be classified too schematically, nor can it be explained by applying the concept of 'demythologization' (on which see Gale 1994, esp. 164–8 and 185–9) to all instances: see Taylor 2016.
[291] Cf. also Costa 1988, 223, *ad loc.*, 'S. characteristically goes one better [i.e. than Lucretius] and suggests that our darkness, as well as our fears, is self-induced'.

> sui nosse. Itaque res falsa et inanis habet adhuc fidem quia non coargitur. Tanti putemus oculos intendere: iam apparebit quam brevia, quam incerta, quam tuta timeantur. Talis est animorum nostrorum confusio qualis Lucretio visa est:
>
> nam veluti pueri trepidant atque omnia caecis
> in tenebris metuunt, ita nos in luce timemus. [= *DRN* 2.55–6]
>
> Quid ergo? non omni puero stultiores sumus qui in luce timemus? Sed falsum est, Lucreti, non timemus in luce: omnia nobis fecimus tenebras. Nihil videmus, nec quid noceat nec quid expediat; tota vita incursitamus nec ob hoc resistimus aut circumspectius pedem ponimus. Vides autem quam sit furiosa res in tenebris impetus.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 110.5–7,
> with my highlighting of Lucretian language and expressions of seeing)

Letter 110, which points out the true richness of leading a sane life, with a mind that rejects groundless fears, is a context in which Epicurean presences do not come as a surprise. Seneca not only quotes from the opening of Lucretius *DRN* 2, but also creates a focus on visuality, in verbs of seeing (*oculos intendere*; *apparebit*; *visa est*; *videmus*; *vides*) and other words that retain the visual focus (esp. *lux* vs *tenebrae*; *circumspectius*). The quotation from the opening of *DRN* 2 is carefully prepared for, and the proem's serene outlook (which is emphasised, as we have seen, in a visual focus) has influenced the Senecan description of the illusory nature of fears at 110.5–7: again, we see that the Senecan engagement with Lucretius extends beyond mere verbal quotation.

Another presence of the proem of *DRN* 2, also retaining the visual emphasis, has been detected in *Letter* 118.[292] Here, the initial visual emphasis is followed by the philosopher's freedom from honours and riches, in a similar structure of thought to that of the second Lucretian proem. It is again worthy of note that allusion to the opening of *DRN* 2 would occur towards the beginning of a new book of letters (book 20). The Lucretian presence is arguably strongest in 118.4:

> Quanto hic maiore gaudio fruitur qui non praetoria aut consularia comitia securus intuetur, sed magna illa in quibus alii honores anniversarios petunt, alii perpetuas potestates, alii bellorum eventus prosperos triumphosque, alii divitias, alii matrimonia ac liberos, alii salutem suam suorumque! Quanti animi res est solum nihil petere, nulli supplicare, et dicere, 'nihil mihi tecum, fortuna; non facio mei tibi copiam. Scio apud te Catones repelli, Vatinios fieri. Nihil rogo.' Hoc est privatam facere fortunam.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 118.4)

[292] Inwood 2007a, 309, *ad loc*. notes the allusion to the opening of *DRN* 2.

Further echoes of the Lucretian prologue to *DRN* 2 are present in *Epistle* 119 (continuing the Epicurean substratum of the preceding letter, cited above), where the themes of self-sufficiency and the few needs nature demands provide a clearly Epicurean background to the presence of the proem of *DRN* 2,[293] and in the preface to Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* 1.[294]

A further moment of Seneca's engagement with Lucretius' second proem could be suggested in *Epistle* 56. The relationship here, however, would rely much more on similar spatial conceptions than verbal allusion and a shared emphasis on sight. In *Letter* 56, Seneca has rented an upper apartment in the centre of Baiae, which overlooks a crowded and noisy bath house. If allusion to the second Lucretian proem were recognised, the apartment would acquire the characteristics of a detached space for the philosopher just as the philosopher's safe vantage point at the beginning of *DRN* 2. Seneca would thus recreate the Lucretian setting – but in a parodic manner. Moreover, the visual element that connects the safe place of the *sapiens* with the spectacle below in the second Lucretian proem would be replaced in Seneca with another field of sensory perception, the acoustic: through the hectic noise of everyday life.[295]

I would further argue for influence of the second Lucretian proem on *Epistle* 53.[296] The allusion in 53, I suggest, would be of particular importance for the purposes of the present chapter: it would show Seneca, as a Stoic, employing allusion to the Lucretian moment in a way very similar to the re-contextualisation of the proem of *DRN* 2 in the tragic realm in *Troades*. Just as the Trojan women are not the ones granted serene vision from the shore, but, in their imagination, thrust into the middle of disaster and impending sea storm, the Stoic voice of *Letter* 53 also opposes the Epicurean perspective. The intertextual background of Seneca's shipwreck scene in this letter includes strong Epicurean echoes: whether or nor Seneca would have been aware of it,

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[293] Inwood, granting that the theme of self-sufficiency may be shared by Stoics and Epicureans, confirms that 'for the most part of the present letter [i.e. 119] the atmosphere is more Epicurean'; he further identifies the 'evident' influence of the opening of *DRN* 2 on this letter: see Inwood 2007a, 316.

[294] Fowler 2002, 122, *ad loc.* compares *DRN* 2.42 to Sen. *Nat.* 1, *praef.* 10. It should be noted, however, that *Nat.* 1 may not have been the opening book: it is not unlikely that the correct original numbering of books was 3, 4a, 4b, 5, 6, 7, 1, 2. See the arguments set out by Hine 1981, 4–23.

[295] See Rimell 2015, 163–6.

[296] For an overview of shipwreck scenes in Greek and Roman texts see *RE* 2 (1923), s.v. 'Schiffbruch'. Berno 2015b, 294–5 discusses Seneca's use of the shipwreck imagery in letter 53, and provides a wider discussion of the motif in Lucretius, Cicero, Horace, Seneca, and Petronius. See also Dunsch 2013.

his letter is in intertextual dialogue with Epicurus' own shipwreck letter (alluded to by Plutarch: see fr. 189 Usener).[297] Even though *verbal* parallels with Lucretius are slight (but cf. Seneca's *mari languido*),[298] the shared context contributes to a strong Lucretian presence in the first, mock-epic half of the letter (53.1–7), leading up to Seneca's pronouncement on the superior value of dedicating oneself solely to the study of philosophy (53.8) – the shared *telos* of this letter and the Lucretian proem. Note how the Senecan letter also follows the same broad structural movement as the Lucretian proem, moving from a visual beginning to philosophical reflection:

> … Solvi mari languido; erat sine dubio caelum grave sordidis nubibus, quae fere aut in aquam aut in ventum resolvuntur, sed putavi tam pauca milia a Parthenope tua usque Puteolos subripi posse, quamvis dubio et impendente caelo. Itaque quo celerius evaderem, protinus per altum ad Nesida derexi praecisurus omnes sinus. Cum iam eo processissem ut mea nihil interesset utrum irem an redirem, primum aequalitas illa quae me corruperat periit; nondum erat tempestas, sed iam inclinatio maris ac subinde crebrior fluctus. Coepi gubernatorem rogare ut me in aliquo litore exponeret: aiebat ille aspera esse et importuosa nec quicquam se aeque in tempestate timere quam terram. Peius autem vexabar quam ut mihi periculum succurreret; […]
> Quae putas me passum dum per aspera erepo, dum viam quaero, dum facio? Intellexi non immerito nautis terram timeri. Incredibilia sunt quae tulerim, cum me ferre non possem: illud scito, Ulixem non fuisse tam irato mari natum ut ubique naufragia faceret: nausiator erat.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 53.1–4)

> Sola autem nos philosophia excitabit, sola somnum excutiet gravem: illi te totum dedica. Dignus illa es, illa digna te est: ite in complexum alter alterius.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 53.8)

Again, we also find that the echoes from the beginning are restated at the end of the letter, where Seneca, in diction that is more generally martial and epic (which concludes the echoes of epic in this letter),[299] seems specifically to recall another moment of the proem of *DRN* 2. Allusion to the Epicurean Lucretius at the close of the letter would be in line with Seneca's established pattern of ending some of his letters with quotations from Epicurus.[300] While Lucretius' narrator suggests the 'sweetness' that can be gained from serenely looking on at warfare, Seneca's Stoic position – with the philosopher as much *munitus* as in

[297] For further context, see Clay 1973, on Diogenes Oenanda, New Fragment 7.
[298] Cf. Ronnick 1995.
[299] See esp. the *Aeneid* quotations (*Aen*. 6.3 and 3.277) at 53.3, and the *exemplum* of Odysseus in 53.4.
[300] See Wildberger 2014.

Lucretius (cf. *DRN* 2.7–8: *sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere | edita doctrina sapientum templa serena*) – urges him to enter the 'battle' of philosophy, as a matter of life and death:

> Incredibilis philosophiae vis est ad omnem fortuitam vim retundendam. Nullum telum in corpore eius sedet; munita est, solida; quaedam defetigat et velut levia tela laxo sinu eludit, quaedam discutit et in eum usque qui miserat respuit.
> (Sen. *Ep*. 53.12)

The engagement with Lucretius in *Epistle* 53 would be significant:[301] while the Lucretian poet-philosopher looks on from the shore, Seneca puts himself in the boat (and onto the battlefield), showing that Stoicism confronts important questions, such as how to deal with our human weaknesses, with direct involvement.[302] While Epicureans are happy to perceive, free from ills, without action, Seneca suggests, his Stoic position makes him face everyday ills head-on, especially for others whom he cares about.[303]

It is this Stoic view that is also put to the test in the fourth chorus of *Troades*. Seneca's chorus shares the correction of the Lucretian model with the position put forward in *Letter* 53: the opening of *DRN* 2 is exposed as providing a naïve outlook.[304] But the chorus of Trojan women's position is even more negative, perhaps suggesting that, for them, the Stoic position of being in the

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[301] Note further the engagement with Lucretius in the subsequent letter, *Ep*. 54, where Seneca's argument against the fear of death (*Mors est non esse. Id quale sit iam scio: hoc erit post me quod ante me fuit*, 54.4) seems to make use of Lucr. 3.823–43 and 3.972–7. Cf. also *Ep*. 77.11. See also my discussion of the second chorus of *Troades* in the main text below, where another moment of Seneca's engagement with that Lucretian passage can be found.

[302] I would suggest a link here with Seneca's emphasis, in *De Clementia*, on the Stoic *sapiens* offering practical help to people in misery (without himself being mentally affected). One of the cases of distress specified is suffering shipwreck: *cetera omnia quae, qui miserentur, volo facere, libens et altus animo faciet; succurret alienis lacrimis, non accedet; dabit manum naufrago, exuli hospitium, egenti stipem* (*Cl*. 2.6.2). This practical help is to be given despite the fact that ἔλεος, for the Stoic, is a vice (cf. Seneca's affirmation of this at *Cl*. 2.5.4, preceding the passage just cited). While, as Fowler points out, Epicurus 'makes a similar point in *Vat*. 66 *συμπαθῶμεν τοῖς φίλοις οὐ θρηνοῦντες ἀλλὰ φροντίζοντες*', we must note that, unlike in the case of Seneca's Stoic *sapiens*, the Epicurean rule only applies 'in terms of the distress of *our friends*' (Fowler 2002, 41, my emphasis).

[303] On the difference between the Lucretian and Senecan view, see also Solimano 1991, 77, esp. n. 122. A further good point of comparison is the figure of Cato in Lucan, who is 'fearful for all and untroubled for himself' (*cunctisque timentem | securumque sui*, Luc. 2.240–1). Leigh 1997, 28–30 suggests a link between Lucan's moments of disengaged observation, the Stoic view expressed by Seneca at *Nat*. 6.32.4 (where, again, watching a sea storm is one of the scenarios imagined), its caricature at Sen. *Ep*. 74.22, and the prominent moment of detachment in the opening lines of *DRN* 2.

[304] Cf. e.g. Rumpf 2003, 234, who points out that the detachment expressed in the proem of *DRN* 2 is corrected by Lucretius himself at the end of the book: 'Dieses Buch selbst schließt nicht im Ton der Distanzierung, sondern in dem der Identifikation, des Sich-Mit-Einbegreifens in das Schicksal der Welt'.

middle of tragic disaster and overcoming it is void too. In the following, I will discuss further allusions to philosophical moments in the third chorus of *Agamemnon*, again revealing the extent to which the Senecan chorus is unable to be detached from its tragic environment.

2.5 The Third Chorus in *Agamemnon*: Spectatorship and Illusion

This chorus (*Ag*. 589–658) reminisces about the disasters of Troy. Its topic, the identity of the chorus (Trojan women), and the subsequent response it elicits from a character in the play (Cassandra: *Cohibete lacrimas omne quas tempus petet,* | *Troades*, 659–60), which is not common in Greek practice, align this choral ode closely with the second ode in *Troades*.[305] The chorus, in addressing the question of how to face death, sets itself up from the beginning as a conspicuously Epicurean meditation. It is, as we shall see, reminiscent of both Horace's noted Epicureanism and Lucretian moments.[306] My analysis will address Seneca's reception of Horace in this ode below,[307] but will focus for now on the ways in which again the proem of *DRN* 2 functions as an allusive backdrop to Seneca's chorus. Consider the beginning of the ode:

> Heu quam dulce malum mortalibus additum
> uitae dirus amor, cum pateat malis
> effugium et miseros libera mors uocet,
> portus aeterna placidus quiete.
> nullus hunc terror nec impotentis
> procella Fortunae mouet aut iniqui
> flamma Tonantis.
> pax alta nullos ciuium coetus
> timet aut minaces uictoris iras,
> non maria asperis insana Coris,
> non acies feras puluereamue nubem
> motam barbaricis equitum cateruis,
> non urbe cum tota populos cadentis
> hostica muros populante flamma
> indomitumque bellum.
> Solus seruitium perrumpet omne
> contemptor leuium deorum,
> qui uultus Acherontis atri,

[305] Despite Tarrant 1976a, 295, who claims *ad Ag*. 659ff. (concerning Cassandra's remarks on the preceding chorus) that '[t]here is nothing similar elsewhere in Seneca', although he mentions *Tro*. 409–10 (and *Med*. 116).
[306] On Horace's Epicurean view of death, see Fish 1998. For Horace's engagement with Lucretius in particular, see Weingaertner 1876, Rehmann 1969, and Hardie 2009, 180–224.
[307] See chapter 4, section 4.4, 'Horatian Sounds, Republican Echoes: Seneca's Reception of *Odes* 3.3 in the Third Chorus of *Agamemnon*'.

qui Styga tristem non tristis uidet
audetque uitae ponere finem:
par ille regi, par superis erit.
o quam miserum est nescire mori!
Vidimus patriam ruentem
nocte funesta …
(Sen. *Ag*. 589–612)

Horace, *Odes* 3.3 provides an important allusive reference point for this Senecan chorus. Again, we can see how the opening of an ode functions as a space of significant allusion: *iniqui* | *flamma Tonantis* (594–5), *ciuium coetus* (596), *minaces uictoris iras* (597), and *maria asperis insana Coris* (598) have exact equivalents in the opening of the Horatian poem.[308] The focus of my study for now will be on the Epicurean elements the chorus utilises and the way the ode is informed by Lucretius as well as Horace. In terms of theme and structure, it is again the proem to Lucretius' second book that provides a most instructive point of comparison.

The line *effugium et miseros libera mors uocet,* | *portus aeterna placidus quiete* stands out as a very Epicurean moment in the opening of the ode.[309] It exceeds Horace's Epicureanism in *Odes* 3.3, where limiting one's desires is linked with a Stoic concept of *virtus* in the opening of the poem. The Senecan phrase enriches the initial Horatian atmosphere of the ode by rehearsing a well-known Lucretian image of tranquillity, as elaborated upon at the beginning of book 2 of *De Rerum Natura*. Here in Seneca, imagery and a particular way of thinking go hand in hand; a clear *philosophical* moment in this ode (of Epicurean tranquillity) has been prompted by the *poetic* imagery of 'the sea'. This is a connection that is also found in Seneca's own philosophical writings.[310] But note how the sea imagery plays a very different role from its use

[308] The actual *verbal* allusions are slight, but Tarrant 1976a, 288, *ad* 596ff. neatly lists the correspondences ([Hor.] *ciuium ardor* = [Sen.] *ciuium coetus*; *uultum instantis tyranni* = *minaces uictoris iras*; *Auster, dux inquieti turbidus Hadriae* = *maria asperis insana Coris*; *fulminantis magna manus Iouis* = *iniqui flamma Tonantis*). See also Trinacty 2014, 146–9 (who, does, however, not add anything new to the discussion of Seneca's Horatian allusions).

[309] Seneca uses the image of the harbour of death also at *Dial*. 7.19.1. *Quies* used euphemistically of death is common; cf. especially *Aen*. 7.598–9, a previously unnoted intertext of the Senecan line (*nam mihi parta quies omnisque in limine portus* | *funere felici spolior*, with Horsfall 1999, 389, *ad loc*.; Housman's endorsements, noted by Horsfall, for the corrections *somnique* for *omnisque* and *postus* for *portus* are surely to be rejected here: they would get rid of the very appropriate and common image of the 'harbour of death'). It may be not coincidental that, in the *Aeneid*, the line is Latinus', describing his own death: arguably, he functions as a Vergilian Priam-figure, which would create a meaningful point of contact for the chorus of Trojan women in *Agamemnon*.

[310] To the effect that, in Seneca, philosophical problems often receive a 'literary' solution, which relies on images and metaphors: see further Armisen-Marchetti 1989.

in Lucretius. Whereas in the opening scene of *DRN* 2 there is a spectator who watches a turbulent sea and ship-wreck from a serene vantage point, in Seneca, the sea is calm and the chorus of Trojan women's tranquillity only seems to be possible after death: *libera mors* is the only solution that would enable them to attain their sort of Epicurean tranquillity.

But the Senecan chorus's engagement with the Horatian and Lucretian models extends beyond their general shared interest in the question of death and sea imagery. In the remainder of my study of this chorus, I will suggest that Seneca also enriches his chorus by drawing on resonances from an established ancient philosophical discourse about sensory perception and the nature of knowledge.

In a context of Epicurean philosophising, the prominence given in this ode to sensory perception, especially sight, gains relevance. Such a focus carries Epicurean resonance: Epicurus himself argued for the infallibility of the senses, and Lucretius expounds the Epicurean argument at *DRN* 4.469–521.[311] As in the case of the chorus in *Troades* above, the Senecan engagement with Epicurean philosophy is accompanied by an unmistakable foregrounding of visuality in the chorus's language, even functioning as a structural element in the chorus's exposition: *qui uultus Acherontis atri, | qui Styga tristem non tristis uidet* (606–7);[312] *Vidimus patriam ruentem* (611); *Vidimus simulata dona* (625); *uidimus ignes* (648). Note how the visual paradigm is preferred to such an extent that even sound effects can only appear 'silent': the sound of 'moved shields' strikes the chorus's ears as 'silent murmur' (*tacitumque murmur percussit aures*, 634). The visual focus, then, culminates in the chorus's autopsy of Priam's killing at the close of the ode: *uidi, uidi senis in iugulo | telum Pyrrhi uix exiguo | sanguine tingui* (656–8).[313] The chorus's uses of *uidere*, while

[311] Epicurus' position is given at D. L. 10.31: *ἐν τοίνυν τῷ Κανόνι λέγων ἐστὶν ὁ Ἐπίκουρος κριτήρια τῆς ἀληθείας εἶναι τὰς αἰσθήσεις καὶ προλήψεις καὶ τὰ πάθη, οἱ δ' Ἐπικούρειοι καὶ τὰς φανταστικὰς ἐπιβολὰς τῆς διανοίας. λέγει δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἡρόδοτον ἐπιτομῇ καὶ ἐν ταῖς Κυρίαις δόξαις. 'πᾶσα γάρ,' φησίν, 'αἴσθησις ἄλογός ἐστι καὶ μνήμης οὐδεμιᾶς δεκτική· οὔτε γὰρ ὑφ' αὑτῆς κινεῖται οὔτε ὑφ' ἑτέρου κινηθεῖσα δύναταί τι προσθεῖναι ἢ ἀφελεῖν· οὐδὲ ἔστι τὸ δυνάμενον αὐτὰς διελέγξαι* (text: Dorandi 2013).

[312] Seneca's account at *Ag*. 607–8 is also similar to Lucretius' at *DRN* 3.25–30. Note especially the shared visual emphasis (in Lucretius: *apparent*, 25; *dispiciantur*, 26; *manifesta patens*, 30).

[313] For comparable uses of *uidi*, see Tarrant 1976a, 294, *ad Ag*. 656. Note how the geminated *uidi* here disambiguates the uses of *uidere* in this chorus: while all the other occurrences of *uidere* could be understood as oscillating between 'to see' and 'to bear the sight of', this instance requires *uidere* to be taken in the latter sense: for this sense, see *OLD* s.v. 5, with Reinhardt 2016, 65.

creating structural coherence, may be said to increase in factual urgency: at 611, *uidere* is used with an accusative plus present participle construction (*uidimus patriam ruentem*), which indicates an action in process; at 625, the construction has changed to *uidere* plus a noun phrase (noun accompanied by a perfect participle: *simulata dona*), which emphasises the observed object as a irrevocable fact, and, similarly, *uidere* goes with a factual noun at 648 (*ignes*); at 656–8, finally, the construction of *uidere* has moved to the opposite end of the spectrum from where it started in 611 – now the Senecan use is *uidere* plus infinitive, which places emphasis on the factual nature of the deed, presenting the action as a finished whole that happened in the past.[314] This Senecan choice of grammar underpins the chorus's increasing desperation at the disaster of their home town.

I would further suggest that the Senecan ode, within its focus on visuality, is intertextual with prominent Lucretian moments in the debate of the validity of sensory perception and a theory of knowledge. Read within such an intertextual discourse, the chorus's very opening line, *Heu quam dulce malum mortalibus <u>additum</u>*, may echo the Lucretian passage about the delusions of dreams at *DRN* 4.453–68, where dream images are mistaken for reality itself. Lucretius clarifies that it is the mind that draws erroneous inferences – it 'adds' false opinions:

> … quoniam pars horum maxima fallit
> propter opinatus animi quos addimus ipsi,
> pro visis ut sint quae non sunt sensibu' visa.
> (Lucr. 4.464–6)

If the Senecan chorus's first line (*Heu quam dulce malum mortalibus <u>additum</u>* | *uitae dirus amor, Ag*. 589–90) were read together with the intertext of the famous Lucretian stance in mind, it could be interpreted as a Senecan inversion. If recipients allowed the Lucretian intertext to be present, the Senecan chorus's initial attempt at producing philosophical comfort would seem unnatural and emerge as a vain attempt: thus, the chorus's love of 'sweet evil' (*dulce malum*) can be seen as an erroneous inference – or, recalling the Lucretian language, and 'added' opinion (*additum*).

The sustained visual focus throughout the ode, moreover, may have further relevance if read against the Lucretian discussion of sensory perception

[314] On the use of verbs of perception with the present active participle vs their use with an accusative plus infinitive construction, see Kühner-Stegmann I, 703–4.4.

and illusion. Seneca's engagement with the Lucretian model would be signalled by the Epicurean atmosphere in the opening of the ode. But the Senecan construction is not in favour of the chorus: while the chorus uses the language of illusion and sensory deception, such as in *simulata* (*Ag*. 625) and *falsus Achilles* (*Ag*. 618), the illusions it refers to are clearly in the past. In the ode, the Trojan women may perhaps wish for a situation in which the illusions that brought about their ruin could be explained as mere erroneous inferences. Instead, what they *have* seen (cf. the emphatic repetition of *uidi* at 656), it is clear to the audience, is grim reality, not allowing for much interpretation any more – the Lucretian disillusionment is not a comfort for this chorus. This may be another Senecan commentary on the uselessness of Epicurean philosophy for the actors in his tragic universe. Theirs is not the comfort of Epicurean tranquillity while still alive; they do not even have the comfort of illusions.

2.6 The Second Chorus in *Troades*: Anxiety and Lucretian Rationalism

A Senecan chorus's philosophical position on death is more extensively developed in the second ode of *Troades* (371–408), the other discernibly Lucretian chorus of that play.[315] The chorus's development of thought in the ode, in reply to their own questions at the beginning, provides a stark contrast with the rest of the play: the rationalised, philosophical stance on the question of death that it sets out to develop is at variance with the other convictions and narratives presented in *Troades*, which are based on the characters' – and the play's – background in Homeric mythical epic. As scholars have noted, this chorus not only contradicts the views on death and afterlife held by other characters in the play as well as the one put forward in the first chorus;[316] it also seems especially paradoxical next to the appearance of Achilles' ghost in the second act.[317] The content of the chorus's utterance is clearly philosophical –

[315] See Fantham 1982, 262–71, in her comments *ad loc*., and Boyle 1994, 172, who singles out Hor. *Odes* 3.30 and Lucr. *DRN* 3 as the most significant sources of allusion for this ode.
[316] Owen 1970, 125, for instance, summarises the first choral ode with this headline: 'The joys of Elysium and the Fortunate Dead'.
[317] Developing the criticisms of Friedrich 1934, 121 and others, Zwierlein 1966, 78 and 88–9 made one of the strongest statements about Seneca's contradictory construction in *Troades*: as he puts it, this ode 'steht völlig losgelöst als in sich geschlossene philosophische Betrachtung' (88) and, in its contradiction of the chorus's earlier position, could not have been understood by an audience (89). On the clash between the assumptions of this choral ode and the rest of the play, see also Fantham 1982, 262–3, with Owen 1970, and the analysis by Kugelmeier 2001.

presenting such a rationalised picture about what happens and does not happen after death that it creates a clash with the mythic subject-matter and tradition, where the existence of the underworld and an afterlife for heroes is assumed as a matter-of-course. The form of the chorus's philosophical utterance, however, belies its decidedly *poetic* pedigree: the realm of Greek Homeric myth has here been displaced – instead, we get the Senecan canon of the major Roman 'poets of death'. The allusions and echoes in this ode are not a random collection: they cluster around Roman elegy, the genre that perhaps most obsessively revolves around anxieties about death,[318] a Horatian Ode that includes discussion of death in poetic form (*Odes* 3.30),[319] and the Epicurean poetry of Lucretius. The last has provided significant material for the Senecan ode.

In the following, I will briefly discuss the conflation of allusions at the beginning of the ode in order to show how they play a significant role in Seneca's technique of establishing this chorus's inefficiency as a philosophical voice. I will then focus on the specifically Lucretian echoes and allusions in the ode, and argue that they not only carry significance in preparing for the third act, as Fantham has shown,[320] but also allow us to understand more deeply the role of the chorus in the whole of this play. As a corollary of my study of this ode's Lucretian presences, I will further suggest that there are problems with a view that considers the chorus's position here as a rational and detached philosophical stance.[321] This chorus does not present a position superior to the other viewpoints in the play, and, as I will argue below, should better be understood as a destabilizing narrative tool, in dialogue with the other odes in the play, especially the other Lucretian one (discussed above).

2.6.1 Death: Elegiac and Lyric Echoes

The first few lines of this chorus are a remarkable echo-chamber of Roman elegiac and lyric poetry:

Verum est an timidos fabula decipit

[318] See esp. Papanghelis 1987.
[319] See e.g. Levin 1968 and Rubino 1985.
[320] 'There is one way in which this ode is specially apposite. In the act that follows, Andromache reports a vision of Hector, which she tries to obey [...] She accepts the validity of the vision and hopes until the very end of this long scene for rescue from the dead. Despite the reality of Achilles' intervention, quoted by Andromache herself at 806, this ode will condition the listener to interpret her dream, not as a beneficial intervention of the dead, but only as a product of her weary heart' (Fantham 1982, 263).
[321] Against e.g. Zwierlein 1966, 78 ('kühle, sachliche Erörterung') and Kugelmeier 2001, 28–9.

umbras corporibus uiuere conditis,
cum coniunx oculis imposuit manum
supremusque dies solibus obstitit
et tristis cineres urna coercuit?
non prodest animam tradere funeri,
sed restat miseris uiuere longius?
an toti morimur nullaque pars manet
nostri, cum profugo spiritus halitu
immixtus nebulis cessit in aera
et nudum tetigit subdita fax latus?
(*Tro*. 371–81)

In a mode of shock, the chorus, instead of asking the questions in a manner as cool and rational as its Epicurean-inspired answers will be, commences with a series of disjunctive questions, containing several echoes of earlier Latin literature on the topic of death.[322] The chorus embarks on its anxious search for certainty and truth (their first word being *verum*) about the question of death by adding ever more moments and words that the chorus (and audience) members may have learnt in their canon of literature about the topic.[323] This construction of a question followed by an unconfident, rather lengthy answer is thrown into a relief as a deliberate Senecan construction of expressing the chorus's anxiety by a comparison with the rhetoric in Seneca's own prose. A case in point occurs in the opening of *Epistle* 28,[324] where Seneca introduces questions, uses quotation

[322] Seneca's technique in this ode, of deploying multiple allusions to earlier literary moments connected to the topic of death, can be considered the poetic equivalent of the type of paraenetic eclecticism that is also displayed in his philosophical writings (on which see e.g. Hadot 1969). A key text in this regard on the topic of death is the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Axiochos*, in which Kleinias asks Socrates to support his father Axiochos in his last hours of life by removing his fear of death. The view Socrates presents first is Epicurean: death is of no concern to us since it means total annihilation of our sensation and hence of all possible suffering; death is annihilation and there is nothing after it (see esp. *Ax*. 365d–e and 369b). But Axiochos is not persuaded by this view and rejects it in no unclear terms as 'superficial' (369d1). Unlike in Seneca's chorus, however, Axiochos is not left with the Epicurean position that failed to help him – Socrates offers another option, the Platonic stance about the immortality of the soul, which proves more persuasive (the argument unfolds from 369e3 to 369a14). See further Lohmar 2012 (and, on the dialogue's links with moments of the praise of death in earlier Greek literature, Nesselrath 2012, 123–6).

[323] The rational textual critic, then, initially objects to what can be argued to be an unnecessary accumulation: Zwierlein first argued for deletion of 374 (see Zwierlein 1976, 185–7), but changed his mind for his OCT (see Zwierlein 1986, 92–3, *ad loc*.).

[324] The first two paragraphs of the Senecan letter run thus (with my underlining of the controlled Senecan *sententiae*): *Hoc tibi soli putas accidisse et admiraris quasi rem novam quod peregrinatione tam longa et tot locorum varietatibus non discussisti tristitiam gravitatemque mentis? Animum debes mutare, non caelum. Licet vastum traieceris mare, licet, ut ait Vergilius noster, 'terraeque urbesque recedant', sequentur te quocumque perveneris vitia. Hoc idem querenti cuidam Socrates ait, 'Quid miraris nihil tibi peregrinationes prodesse, cum te circumferas? Premit te eadem causa quae expulit'. Quid terrarum iuvare novitas potest? Quid cognitio urbium aut locorum? In inritum cedit ista iactatio. Quaeris quare te fuga ista non adiuvet? tecum fugis. Onus animi deponendum est: non ante tibi ullus placebit locus* (Sen. *Ep*. 28.1–2).

of earlier authors (Vergil) in a controlled manner, and then answers in brief *sententia* style, in the typical manner of the Stoic philosopher.[325] This is very different from the opening of the ode of *Troades*.

In the opening of the ode, echoes of Tibullus and Propertius are followed by an allusion to Horace.[326] At *Tro*. 373–6, the Trojan women single out the ultimate moments of corporeal existence: the women's weeping and the moment of the cremation of the body. This is a notably elegiac focus, also elaborated on, for instance, at Tibullus 1.1.59–66 and Prop. 2.13.17–36.[327] By incorporating this moment, a *topos* from Roman elegy, the Senecan chorus clings to the very last point of corporeal existence, trying to avoid – if only for the moment – further thoughts about the nothingness that may await people after the annihilation of their bodies.

But the chorus's opening lines betray more moments of not letting go in the face of death: lines 378–81 recall poetic predecessors that specifically assume a continued existence after corporeal death. Among the intertextual presences from elegy is a combined echo of Propertius 4.7 and 4.11. The opening of Propertius 4.11 in particular is remarkable for its extraordinary cluster of images of death.[328] At *Tro*. 381, the chorus's *et nudum tetigit subdita fax latus* may recall, as Fantham suggests,[329] Prop. 4.7.8 (*et lateri uestis adusta fuit*) and Prop. 4.11.9–10 (*cum subdita nostrum | detraheret lecto fax inimica caput*). Crucially, the original contexts of both echoes would work against the argument that the chorus will unfold in the following: the Propertian echoes are from elegies which imagine precisely scenarios in which there is *not* nothingness after death. In both Propertius 4.7 and 4.11, the imagined deaths of the respective women are combined with their speaking from the grave: Cynthia's ghost in 4.7,[330] and the dead Cornelia in 4.11. Another echo, from a famous Horatian ode,

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[325] Seneca gives the theoretical justification for using brief *sententiae* in letter 94: short *sententiae* are able to cut through to people's souls (see 94.27–9). Cf. *Ep*. 33.6 on the usefulness of short maxims for novices (*rudibus adhuc*): *facilius enim singula insidunt circumscripta et carminis modo inclusa*. On Seneca's *sententia* style in the tragedies, see Seidensticker 1969, 180–99.

[326] Another intertext is Catullus 5: in the use of *soles* and describing the last moment of life, *Tro*. 374 (*supremusque dies solibus obstitit*) has some similarity with Catull. 5.4–5 (*soles occidere et redire possunt, | nobis cum semel occidit breuis lux*); but I would be more hesitant than Fantham is in positing *allusion* for this echo: see Fantham 1982, 265, *ad loc*.

[327] Noted by Fantham 1982, 264, *ad loc.*

[328] See Heyworth 2007, 502, *ad* 4.11.1–8.

[329] Fantham 1982, 264.

[330] It may be of further significance that Cynthia – unlike the tragic characters mentioned in 4.7, such as Clytaemestra and the Cretan Pasiphae (see Prop. 4.7.57–8) – is imagined as speaking

similarly works against the chorus's subsequent argument that there is nothing after death. As has been noted, *Tro.* 378–9 (*an toti morimur nullaque pars manet | nostri*) is closely modelled on Horace's *non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei …* (*Odes* 3.30.6).[331] In *Odes* 3.30, a way of living on after death is precisely the point of the poem: the Horatian poet-speaker achieves his own immortality. It has been argued that Seneca inverts the original Horatian message here.[332] This is a possible interpretation of the allusion to Horace, but it may be less relevant for first-time recipients of the play, who, at the point of the chorus's speaking, may recognise the allusion to Horace, and, with it, may be encouraged to think of the original context of *Odes* 3.30 – but they are not yet aware of the chorus's subsequent elaboration of an Epicurean stance, according to which there is nothing after death. Thus they might not be able to recognise a Senecan inversion of the original Horace at this point. It is plausible that one of the impacts of the allusion to *Odes* 3.30 and its context, in line with the chorus's earlier belief in a mythical afterlife for heroes (as expressed in the first chorus), lies in undermining the chorus's subsequent attempt at Epicurean philosophising. Put differently: if recipients recognize the Senecan allusions and intertextual echoes at the beginning of the choral ode (Horace as well as Propertius) and bring the original contexts to bear on the ode of the Trojan women, they are subtly prepared for the chorus's subsequent *inane* attempts at rehearsing Lucretian phrases about the nothingness of death. The allusions to poetic precursors that suggest the exact opposite of the position they are about to explore in some detail betray the chorus's desperate clinging to their previous stance in the first choral ode, one that assumes life after death, based on Greek heroic myth. The present ode is a good example in which the analysis of the allusions and intertextual echoes helps in understanding the impact of the whole ode in the play: as we shall see, this ode is never a superior detached philosophical discourse.

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from the Elysian fields, an image of comfort (elaborated at 4.7.60–70; for the Homeric origin of the Propertian description of Elysium, see Fedeli 1965, 199, *ad loc.*) that may have aided the Trojan women's recollection of the Propertian precedent. See further Hutchinson 2006, 181–3, *ad loc.*

[331] The Senecan allusion to the Horatian ode may be strengthened by the shared metre, both lyrics being in the lesser asclepiad. See chapter 4 for a more comprehensive study of the meaning of metre in the study of Seneca's reception of Horace. The allusion is noted by Boyle 1994, 172, *ad loc.*, and Fantham 1982, 265, *ad loc.*

[332] See Boyle 1994, 172, and Trinacty 2014, 150–4.

2.6.2 Lucretian Presences in the Chorus

After the echoes of lyric and elegy, the chorus, in Seneca's creative conflation, is made to move away from morbid elegy, via Horace, to Lucretius. The chorus thus sets out to develop a more philosophical stance, aided by the Lucretian language and imagery, a precedent that enables the chorus to embark on its philosophical discourse in poetic form. The first clear verbal echoes of Lucretius occur at *Tro*. 379–80: the soul escaping into air like vapour (… *profugo spiritus halitu | immixtus nebulis cessit in aera*, 379–80) evokes lines from Lucretius' account of the material nature of the soul in the third book of *DRN*: compare especially *et nebula ac fumus quoniam discedit in auras, | crede animam quoque diffundi …* (*DRN* 3.435–7) and *ergo dissolui quoque convenit omnem animai | naturam, ceu fumus, in altas aeris auras* (*DRN* 3.455–6).[333] This allusion helps the chorus of Trojan women to ease into their foray into rationalising, Epicurean philosophy: the pedigree of their first allusion to Epicurean philosophy, of the soul being dissipated like vapour rising into the air, goes back to the epic imagery of Homeric myth, even though the direction is inverted: at *Iliad* 23.100–1, the 'spirit went beneath the earth like vapour', *ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἠΰτε καπνὸς | ὤχετο*.[334] The first chorus of *Troades* had relied on its belief in such mythic afterlife of heroes. The Senecan echoing of Lucretius' rationalising view of death in the present ode,[335] then, creates a clash with the first chorus.

The chorus finally arrives at a confident pronouncement of an Epicurean creed, *post mortem nihil est ipsaque mors nihil* (397) – a clear allusion to the Lucretian position (and especially *DRN* 3.830, *Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum*), and easily recognisable as Epicurean: Jerome also cites the line as a significant Epicurean dictum, *manducet et bibat … qui cum Epicuro dicit: post mortem nihil est et mors ipsa nihil est*.[336] Epicurean physics is further

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[333] The allusion is noted e.g. by Fantham 1982, 266, *ad loc*., Boyle 1994, 174, *ad loc*., and Keulen 2001, 274, *ad loc*.

[334] See Bailey 1947, 1071, *ad DRN* 3.436.

[335] In Lucretius' poem, the primary concern of the poet-philosopher, in line with Epicurean teaching, is to allay the fear of death in readers (according to Epicurus, it is primarily the fear of death that stands between us and a happy life: see esp. Epic. *Ep. ad Men*. 125, where this fear is described as *τὸ φρικωδέστατον τῶν κακῶν*). The second part of *DRN* 3 in particular is concerned with the complexities of this question.

[336] Noted by Zwierlein 1993, *ad loc*. Epicurus expresses the thought of the nothingness of death like this: *ὁ θάνατος οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· τὸ γὰρ διαλυθὲν ἀναισθητεῖ· τὸ δ' ἀναισθητοῦν οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς*

alluded to: at 401, the description of death as *individuus* accords well with the chorus's Epicureanism. As becomes clear from Cic. *Fin.* 1.17 (*atomos … id est corpora individua propter soliditatem*), the chorus's *indiuiduus* is the readily recognisable translation of the *atomos* of Epicurean physics. Seneca uses it himself for talking about the atoms at *de Otio* 5.6 (*individua sint per quae struitur omne quod natum futurumque est, an continua eorum materia sit et per totum mutabilis, Dial.* 8.5.6).[337]

This is in close proximity to further Lucretian allusions. Note Seneca's use of *chaos* (400). While the term is famously absent from Lucretius' lexicon, the Senecan use here, unlike other instances in the tragedies, where the word essentially means 'underworld' (such as *Thy.* 832), is closest to an instance in the philosophical writings: at *Epist.* 72.9, *chaos* is used in the context of a description of the Epicurean void.[338] This meaning of *chaos* is very pertinent given the immediate context in the chorus, with its Epicurean-inspired emphasis on things being 'void' and 'inane': note especially the *rumores uacui* and *uerba inania*. The latter occur in close proximity to another Lucretian allusion: the nightmares the chorus addresses at the end of their ode.[339] The chorus's 'nightmares' – which, I would argue, recall the Lucretian discussion of the delusion of dreams at *DRN* 4.453–68 – then lead to the chorus's final attempt at formulating their Epicurean comfort in a nutshell: *quaeris quo iaceas post obitum loco? | quo non nata iacent* (407–8) is an a close re-phrasing of *DRN* 3.867–9, *nec miserum fieri qui non est posse neque hilum | differre an nullo fuerit iam tempore natus*. It is only at the end of the ode that the chorus seems to have managed to overcome the initial sense of scepticism: at the beginning it was the chorus who asked the questions, at the end the chorus seems able to put a question into the mouth of an imagined interlocutor (*quaeris …*).

(*κυρία δόξα* II, 139.6–7 Usener). Jerome's reference to Epicurus may be owed to Tertullian as an intermediary (Tert. *anim.* 42.2): see Lausberg 1970, 163–7, esp. 165–7.

337 Passage noted by Fantham 1982, 270, *ad loc.*, and Keulen 2001, 284, *ad loc.*

338 On Seneca's use of the term *chaos*, see Berno 2003, 104, n. 155. The Senecan use of chaos in a wider sense, i.e. the depiction of unorderliness and disjointed realms in the physical world and in the lives of humans, owes much to the precedent of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: see Tarrant 2002.

339 The chorus's nightmares also prepare for Andromache's dream at 438–60, a striking moment at which the chorus's view on nothingness after death is clashes with the dramatic action, the appearance of Achilles' ghost (also the content of Talthybius' earlier report at 164–202).

But does the chorus's presentation of Lucretian-Epicurean philosophy really sound like comfort in the mouth of the Trojan women? A few aspects are troubling. Apart from the initial conflation of sources, the focus of the chorus's reception is telling: while trying to rise above their tragic surroundings, it speaks, essentially, about chaos, nihilism, rumours, and nightmares.[340] This choice of topics, even though viewed through an attempted Epicurean perspective, betrays that the chorus's anxiety has only been momentarily suppressed, not entirely allayed by rational argument. Epicurean rationalism cannot allay the chorus's anxieties, Seneca suggests, because what is frightening *is* powerful. A similar Senecan depiction of a chorus can be seen in the third chorus in *Thyestes*, where as Tarrant has aptly noted, 'words 'denoting "fear" and "dread" recur with almost obsessive regularity throughout, suggesting that anxiety has been suppressed rather than allayed'.[341] Thus, while Seneca himself includes the Lucretian argument against the fear of death in his own philosophical writings,[342] in the mouth of the Trojan women *quaeris quo iaceas post obitum loco? | quo non nata iacent* sounds more like desperation that, even after death, one cannot rely on the assumption that there will be a good place (as had been the chorus's previous belief, based on mythology).

Andromache's immediate reaction to the chorus corroborates the plausibility of this reading: she asks, *quid, maesta Phrygiae turba, laceratis comas | miserumque tunsae pectus effuso genas | fletu rigatis?* (409–11). This is most easily understood as an address to the immediately preceding chorus (referred to as *maesta Phrygiae turba*).[343] Andromache's questioning of the tears and wailing of the band of women would hardly be understandable if the preceding ode were the calm and rational philosophical discourse it has been turned into by scholars.[344] Instead, the attempt at re-hashing the Lucretian-

[340] This is, in itself, not an un-Lucretian phenomenon: Lucretius similarly evokes the terrors of the unenlightened in his didactic revelation of their vanity. In the Senecan chorus, however, the Lucretian rationalising argument is absent; their rhetoric is apodeictic, and gives prominence to the recurrence of the terrors, rather than the rationalised explanations. This contributes to a sense of the chorus not being as philosophically detached as they are trying to be. See further main text below.

[341] Tarrant 1985, 169.

[342] See above, n. 301.

[343] Against Hill 2000, 584, and Heil 2013, 154–5.

[344] If one wants to take the ode as an entirely 'rational' and 'cool' discourse (as does Zwierlein 1966, 78), one is then consequently forced to detect inconsistency in Andromache's reaction (since the chorus could hardly have been in tears: see Zwierlein 1966, 89) – it is more plausible to read the ode differently, and at least acknowledge, with Boyle 1994, 177, that 'nihilism does not remove the facts of loss or the imperatives of grief, ever present to the Trojan women'.

Epicurean philosophical position on death should be read as another of the chorus's unsuccessful attempts to achieve some comfort in the face of their tragedy: but neither the mythological comfort of the first ode nor the attempted rationalized view of the second one releases the Trojan women from their anxiety, as Andromache's reaction demonstrates. As in the case of the fourth chorus of the same play – or of Seneca's Medea 'having read Euripides' *Medea*':[345] it is clear that this chorus has read Lucretius. Once more, however, Seneca inverts the Lucretian precedent and shows how the Lucretian didactic has failed, offering no alternative that could work better in the context of the Trojan women's tragic world.[346]

2.7 Destabilization through the Chorus in *Troades*

We can understand the Senecan construction better by considering all the choruses of *Troades* in totality. A useful attempt at systematizing the interpretation of Seneca's choruses is Bishop's suggestion, in his 1964 dissertation, of an 'odic line' and a 'dramatic line' running parallel to each other throughout Seneca's plays.[347] Bishop's concept provides a window onto the Senecan 'narrative lines' of allusion to earlier Latin literature, in this case the Lucretian allusions in *Troades*. While one ought to be careful with readings that try to impose unity on a Senecan dramatic construction of disunity and juxtaposition,[348] my reading, focussed as it is on Seneca's (anti-)Lucretian series of allusions and echoes in the development of the chorus in this play, helps to see the literary and – if there is any – philosophical development within the choral odes.

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[345] This is Wilamowitz' much-cited *dictum* about Seneca's Medea: Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1926, 180.

[346] Comparison with the argumentative structure in the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochos*, where, as we have seen (see above, n. 322), Axiochos (and readers) are led away from the Epicurean attempt at allaying the fears about death to the Platonic argument that is presented as more effective, reveals an essential difference with Seneca's ode: his chorus, while not being able to rise above its fears about annihilation via their Lucretian-Epicurean phrases, does not have a viable, more effective other option either.

[347] Bishop 1964, 43–4. For *Troades*, Bishop's approach is endorsed e.g. by Kugelmeier 2001, esp. 45–6.

[348] Such as Steidle 1968. But, as should be clear by now, I agree with Steidle about his reservations concerning Zwierlein's interpretation of the second ode in *Troades* as a superior rational position: Steidle rightly points out that the chorus's discourse about nothingness after death is not a '"kühle, sachliche Erörterung" [Zwierlein 1966, 78], die eine endgültige Meinung aussprechen soll' (Steidle 1968, 58, n. 85).

What thus emerges is that, in this play, the 'odic line' has no higher narrative authority, but creates destabilization. There is a first, mythic chorus assuming an afterlife for heroes, a second one clinging to a vain attempt, in their despair, to present a rationalised Lucretian position, followed, again, by one mythic and one failed rationalised attempt: while the third ode expresses the chorus's displacement and anxiety and creates destabilization in its erratic catalogue of places, plucked out of Homer in no discernible order,[349] the fourth chorus provides, as we have seen, a failed attempt to attain Lucretian tranquillity. Within this 'odic line' of destabilization, the Lucretian echoes and allusions play a prominent role: if we compare the first Lucretian ode (chorus II) with the second one (chorus IV), we see how the chorus self-destroys its own narrative authority intra-dramatically – the chorus's mis-reading of Lucretius' proem to *DRN* 2 in the fourth ode confirms our initial suspicions about the second ode: the view there was not quite detached and 'rational' either. Rather, it is one developed in the desperate re-employment of phrases, an inane attempt to grasp some Epicurean-Lucretian comfort in the face of death – ultimately, in this tragedy, in vain.[350]

For Seneca's Trojan women, the Lucretian didactic has not worked: the first Lucretian ode (chorus II) is ultimately a symptom of their despair, the second Lucretian one (chorus IV) presents a similarly empty attempt to achieve detachment from a disastrous situation. What remains, as a result, is bleakness: in the second chorus, the rationalised view of death is pitted against the mythological belief in an afterlife expressed previously, but in the Senecan construction, a solution is not given, nor is it indeed desired. In the fourth chorus, another attempt to achieve Epicurean tranquillity fails.

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[349] The third ode in *Troades* (814–60) is a close engagement with the Homeric catalogue of ships at *Iliad* 2.494–759 (see Fantham 1982, 324–6, with further references, plus her comments *ad loc.*), but it oscillates between unknown places and the Homeric names. The erratic listing of topography, in no particular order, creates the opposite effect to the Homeric catalogue of ships, where the sounds of place names aid the memory of the bard as much as the audience in recognising a topography familiar to them. In Seneca, by contrast, the alternation between what is clearly known to be real and what is very obscure creates confusion. The Senecan construction poses a riddle to recipients, who, in turn, are caught up in a confusion not dissimilar to that of the chorus of Trojan women, who are lost in their speculations on directions and destinations where they might be taken. On this ode, see further Davis 1993, 243–8.

[350] This reading of the second ode of *Troades* accords well with the interpretation first advanced, as far as I can see, by Lindskog 1897, 42–3: as he suggests attractively, this ode is a dirge, and the chorus, in their despair, present the view that there is no hope for something good even after death.

2.8 Conclusion

If the chorus is to provide guidance for an audience, in *Troades*, it only guides them towards a Senecan poetics that works via the creation of confusion and uncertainty. There are, I would suggest, two ways of interpreting Seneca's handling of the chorus in this play. Either we take the diametrically opposed positions about death (chorus II at odds with chorus I), the further geographical destabilization in the Graecising chorus III, and the Senecan perversion of Lucretius' Epicurean detachment in chorus IV as part of a deliberate Senecan tragic strategy of creating confusion and uncertainty, or we choose to foreground a didactic impetus. The latter fully emerges only if one recognises Seneca's engagement, in *Troades*, with Lucretius: on such a reading, Seneca, through his chorus, would caution his recipients against the extremes of both Epicureanism's excessive rationalism and irrational Greek mythology. Whichever reading of the two suggested we favour eventually, either is enriched – perhaps only fully understandable – by Seneca's engagement with Lucretius that I have examined in the present chapter.

Seneca's use of Lucretius to infuse the language of his choruses and his perversion of features of the original Lucretian didactic, gesturing towards the failure of Lucretian Epicureanism in certain tragic situations, may also have some political resonance. A key feature of Lucretius' poetry (which it shares with the author discussed in the next chapter, Catullus) is its withdrawal from the political environment: this feature of 'turning away from history to an inner world' – in the case of Lucretius – 'of philosophical truth and enlightenment' can be understood as the Republican poet-philosopher's response to the dire political crisis at the end of Republic.[351] Such a reading would have appealed to Seneca in depicting his choruses as powerless characters in the tragic worlds they are forced to inhabit. Unlike in Lucretius, and as we shall see, to some extent, in Catullus, the choruses' attempts at withdrawal and detachment fail. But this type of Senecan inversion of earlier texts – with the chorus, a group of citizens, representing a collective and yet incorporating allusions to a sort of literature of the inner world (such as the didactic philosophy of Lucretius and

[351] See Hardie 2009, 17, who notes at n. 9 that '[t]he pressure of history on Lucretius in making this choice will be more acute if Hutchinson 2001 is correct in redating the *De Rerum Natura* to 49 or 48 BC'.

the lyric poetry of Catullus) and their failure at so doing – will be at the heart of my discussion of Seneca's reception of Catullus in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3.

Inversion and Innovation.
Seneca's Catullan Reception

Et paucorum versuum liber est et quidem laudandus atque utilis: annales Tanusii scis quam ponderosi sint et quid vocentur. Hoc est vita quorundam longa, et quod Tanusii sequitur annales. Num quid feliciorem iudicas eum qui summo die muneris quam eum qui medio occiditur? … Mors per omnis it; qui occidit consequitur occisum. Minimum est de quo sollicitissime agitur.

(Sen. *Ep*. 94.11–12)[352]

3.1 Introduction

Seneca's engagement with his Republican predecessors is not restricted to the tragedians and Lucretius. The poet who may appear – at least to us due to the situation of transmission – as the other 'Republican giant',[353] Catullus, provides rich material for comparison in Seneca's works. Seneca's reception of both Catullus and Lucretius is not only interesting from our modern-day literary-historical perspective: Seneca would share – and continue in practice – the views of Rome's own biographers and imperial historians. For Cornelius Nepos, Catullus and Lucretius were 'the most skilful' poets of his age.[354] In Velleius Paterculus' view of Roman literary history, one generation before Seneca the Younger, Lucretius and Catullus (together with Varro) are singled out as the hallmark poets of Rome's late Republic.[355]

In turning from Seneca's reception of Lucretius to his engagement with Catullus, my study also traces his tragic choral lyrics' remarkable generic

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[352] In his OCT *ad loc*., Reynolds 1965 notes a Senecan allusion to Catullus 36.1.

[353] Thus Gillespie/Hardie 2007, 1.

[354] See Nep. *Att*. 12.4: *Idem L. Iulium Calidum, quem post Lucretii Catullique mortem multo elegantissimum poetam nostram tulisse aetatem vere videor posse contendere, neque minus virum bonum optimisque artibus eruditum; …* (edition: Winstedt 1904), with Gatzemeier 2013, 46–9.

[355] Vell. 2.36.2: *auctoresque carminum Varronem ac Lucretium neque ullo in suscepti operis sui genere minorem Catullum* (edition: Walsh 1998). Velleius' pairing of the three is interesting: Varro, most plausibly to be identified as Varro Atacinus (see Schöb 1908, 92–100), was the author of a panegyric epic *Bellum Sequanicum*, and could be seen as a system-supporting figure, whom someone like Velleius, writing history for the emperor, might have quite liked to mention to counterbalance the less system-supporting Lucretius and Catullus. Varro's output also included a four-book Latin version of the Apollonian *Argonautica*, the didactic *Chorographia*, and the *Ephemeris* (a Latin version of [parts of] Aratus' *Phainomena*), all of which seemed to have enjoyed long-standing reception by later Latin authors. The affinity between Varro's and Lucretius' works was felt by several later writers, and they are thus mentioned together by Ovid (*Am*. 1.15.21–4), Statius (*Silv*. 2.7.76–7), Quintilian (*Inst*. 1.4.4), and Lactantius (*Inst*. 2.12.4). On Velleius' own interest in emphasising the simultaneity, both geographical and temporal, of literary talent, see Schwindt 2000, 139–52, esp. 151–2.

inclusivity: the Senecan chorus, as we have seen in the case studies in the previous chapters, continue and rework philosophical moments as well as previous lyric poetry. In chapter 1, I examined the Republican tragedians' interest in the possibilities of their choral lyrics and the inclusion of philosophical discourse. These fields of interest – lyric and philosophy – are significant for Seneca's chorus as well: from the reception of philosophy and didactic that we saw in the Senecan take on Lucretius in chapter 2, my study now moves back into the generically more straightforwardly lyric territory of Catullus' poetry and Seneca's reception of it in his tragic chorus. Guided by Seneca's focus in reading Catullus, my analysis in the following will focus on examples from *Oedipus* and *Medea*.

Seneca's reception of Catullus ties in not only with the view of cultural historians such as Velleius. His reception also continues a line of Catullan reception in Augustan poetry.[356] While, as Tarrant has made plausible in his seminal article, Augustan poetry is the most important model for Seneca's tragedies,[357] Seneca also engaged with earlier literature, both Greek and Roman. His reception of these pre-Augustan texts is in fruitful dialogue with the way those authors were received by the Augustan poets themselves. A case in point is Vergil's reception of Catullus. Vergil displays a predilection for a particular group of Catullan poems: the sapphic poem 11, the *carmina maiora* 61–8 (with particular prominence of 64), and 101. Vergil's way of negotiating allusions to these poems in his works has allowed scholars plausibly to construct 'Vergil's Catullus', a pessimistic version in which the Neoteric poet emerges as 'a poet of loss (potential or actual), grief, abandonment, and even death'.[358] One result of my analysis in the present chapter is to reveal the way in which Seneca reads Catullus. As emerges from the Senecan choral odes, Seneca's Catullan reception is similar to Vergil's: like his Augustan predecessor, he privileges moments of

[356] On Vergil's reception of Catullus see Putnam 1995/6 and esp. Lyne 1994, an influential article in which he famously abandons the term 'allusion' in favour of 'intertextuality' and traces some important instances of Catullan and Lucretian intertextuality in Vergil. For points of contact between Augustan poetry and Catullus, see further the comparative and intertextual readings by Crabbe 1977, Conte 1986, 57–69, Putnam 2006, Myers 2012, Nelis 2012, and Trimble 2013. On Catullus' wider afterlife, see e.g. the (methodologically slightly dated, but interesting) essays by Harrington 1924 and Weinreich 1969, 62–76.

[357] Tarrant 1978.

[358] Nappa 2007, 394. Vergil's treatment of the Ariadne myth in particular serves Nappa as an example of Vergil's pessimistic reworking of Catullus: 'His Ariadne [...] recurs throughout Vergil's poems, epitomizing for him abandonment and the disillusioned outrage that grips us when we realize a promise has been broken' (394).

loss and pessimism detected in Catullus' poems – but, more so than Vergil, he also inverts moments of joy and optimism.[359] One particular type of Seneca's Catullan inversions that goes beyond what one can find in Vergil, it will emerge, consists in an allusive pose of correction, depersonalising Catullan individual moments of heightened pathos and personal love to express the tragic suffering of collective groups represented by the Senecan choruses.

Catullus' poetry, however, not only exerted creative influence on Vergil and the other Augustan poets. His poetry is also known to Seneca's contemporaries and later authors: in addition to Velleius' endorsement, one finds direct citation of Catullus in Pliny the Younger,[360] Pliny the Elder, Quintilian, and extensive reception in Martial.[361] On the less explicit – but perhaps deeper – level of literary allusion and aesthetic similarity, it is especially Catullus' poem 64 that initiated significant reception in epic poetry – especially in Seneca's own day, in his nephew Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.[362] While Seneca never mentions Catullus explicitly, his father, Seneca the Elder, mentions both Catullus and his Neoteric colleague Calvus in the *Controversiae*, including what is a subtle response to Catullus' poem 53.[363] Seneca the Younger only mentions one of the two, Calvus, in *Epistle* 94, including a direct quotation. Catullus' poetry is cited at Sen. *Apoc.* 11.6 (Catullus 3.12), and there is a likely allusion to Catullus 36.1 at Sen. *Ep.* 93.11.[364] The presence of this Catullan allusion in letter 93 would strengthen the Neoteric subtext running through the two neighbouring letters, with Calvus being mentioned in 94. These are all the Catullan allusions and citations that have been found in Seneca's prose works: Mazzoli argued that the relative lack of Senecan engagement with Catullus may be due to Seneca's antipathy for (or at least apathy towards) lyric poetry.[365] While Mazzoli's explanation would be similar to that accounting for Seneca's

[359] 'Inversion' and 'perversion' have persuasively been identified as a crucial way in which Neronian literature and culture responded to their Greek and Roman models: see esp. Castagna/Vogt-Spira 2002.
[360] On which see Roller 1998.
[361] On Martial's reception of Catullus see Swann 1994 and Fedeli 2004; an extensive list of possible parallels appears already in Paukstadt 1876.
[362] Zetzel 1980 suggests that Lucan 6.400–1 is an imitation of Catullus 64.1–2. For the broader implications of Catullan intertextuality in Lucan, see esp. O'Hara 2007, who argues that, inter alia, the multiple perspectives in Catullus 64 provided an influential model for the polyphony in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. See also Ambühl 2015, 165–77.
[363] On which see in detail Hawkins 2012.
[364] The passage is given at the opening of the present chapter. Zeyl 1978 argues for a further allusion to Catullus at *De Beneficiis* 1.3.1.
[365] See Mazzoli 1970, 209–10.

relative avoidance of citations from drama in prose (discussed in chapter 1), it would of course only be true as far as Seneca's prose writings are concerned. The citation, in the *Apocolocyntosis*, of Catullus 3.12, a line not cited directly anywhere else in classical Latin apart from its inclusion in a late epigram from the Antonine age,[366] shows Seneca's knowledge of Catullus – and his readiness to cite him when genre and topic are suitable.[367] As in the case of quotations from drama, Seneca is hesitant to cite from lyric poetry in his letters and dialogues; but one ought not to forget Seneca's own lyrics in the choruses of the tragedies. The widespread scholarly practice of accepting quotations in prose as, by and large, evidencing a more secure engagement with earlier authors and texts than imitation or emulation in poetry should be rethought: as in the case of Lucretius in the previous chapter, we shall see in the present study that there are instances of significant engagement with Catullus in Seneca's poetry. It is in the choral lyrics in the tragedies that his most extensive and fruitful reception of Catullus can be found.

My analysis in the following will allow Seneca's reception of Catullus to emerge in two thematic areas. Firstly, the Senecan chorus uses Catullan phrases and formal features in talking about the problem of love, its success and failure. Through the chorus's inclusion of Catullan precedent Seneca emulates his lyric forebear, for example, in the first chorus in *Oedipus*, which is framed by echoes of the sapphic Catullus 11 and 51. This Senecan engagement with Catullus, I will argue, is a good example of his being drawn to pessimistic moments in his reading of earlier Latin literature. Seneca's reception of Catullus 51 also provides a fitting language for the eulogy of the groom in the first chorus of *Medea*. In this ode, Catullus 61 and 62, Rome's most famous epithalamian poems, also figure as pervasive allusive presences. These Catullan poems, with their atmosphere dominated by nuptial excitement, are read in a pessimistic manner and adapted to Seneca's tragic poetics. In addition to the area of love and its failure, I further argue that Catullus is a significant allusive presence in Senecan choral odes in contexts of transgression. In the last part of this chapter, I will show how Catullus 64 is part of an intertextual web of echoes of earlier Latin poetry that provides Seneca's chorus with a language for talking about humans transgressing the boundaries of nature in *Medea*. My analysis of Seneca's

[366] CIL XIV 3565 A 11 = Anth. lat. II 2.1504.11: see Roncali 1990, 32, *ad loc.*
[367] Note that diction and thought of the Catullan line are also echoed at *Her. F.* 864–6.

reception of Catullus 64 will not only suggest that the Catullan short epic was a key text in the Roman literary canon for Seneca, but also trace another significant intertextual dynamic: Seneca's literary intervention in the intertextual mix between Lucretius and Catullus prefigures scholarly concerns with the relationship between the two Republicans and their historical compositional contexts.[368] In his engagement with both Lucretius and Catullus, Seneca would be continuing in his own distinctive way the formative influence the two late Republican authors had on the works of the Augustan classics. Moreover, Seneca's reception of Catullus would have a further layer of significance if read against the backdrop of Rome's civil war at the end of the Republic, a dark context for which moments from Catullus are mobilised by Seneca's contemporary Lucan as well as his Augustan predecessors (especially Vergil):[369] what may have been a more general poetic pose in Catullus (such as the mention of Pharsalus in poem 64)[370] would gain a further inflection in the post-Actium Augustan poets, and yet another layer of meaning in the post-Augustan realm of Senecan drama.

3.2 Love Inverted (I): The First Chorus in *Oedipus*

In the prologue of Seneca's *Oedipus*, which prepares for the setting of the play's central crisis of knowledge by the liminal atmosphere between darkness and light at the beginning of the play,[371] the protagonist paints a picture of a Thebes devastated by the fated plague. We learn about the play's back story in rich

[368] On the relationship between Catullus 64 and Lucretius see, e.g., Gale 2007, 69–70 (who regards Lucretius as the 'source text'). See further below, n. 370.
[369] See Nelis 2012, 12–16 and esp. 19–26.
[370] It is, however, not impossible that Catullus 64 was written or published later than traditionally assumed: Wheeler 1934, 89–90 speculates about a date in 47 BC, Newman 1990, 180–1 and 217–24 emphasises the possibility of civil-war contexts for Catullus' poetry. On Catullus' choice of the wedding venue 'Pharsalus' (Catull. 64.37), which occurs here for the first time in extant Latin poetry, see also Ambühl 2015, 166–8, who finds a date in 48 BC attractive. All one can probably say with certainty is that 'line 37 would suit but does not demand a date after Pharsalus' (Hutchinson 2003, 210, n. 17). If, furthermore, Hutchinson 2001 were right in dating the composition of Lucretius' *DRN* to 49 BC (or later), a similar late date for Catullus 64 would create interesting repercussions for the interpretation of the relationship between these two poems (on the points of contact between Lucretius and Catullus 64, see Munro 1886, vol. 2, 179–80, *ad* Lucr. 3.57, and Hutchinson 2001, 156–7, who provides references to further relevant scholarship on the question at n. 18).
[371] See Mastronarde 2008, 222–3. On the way in which the Senecan opening prepares the atmosphere for the play to unfold see Paratore 1956, esp. 114–16. As Töchterle 1994, 138 points out, the darkness at the beginning of the play is also 'im Sinne stoischer Sympatheia zugleich Symptom des Pestübels und der inneren Seelenlage seines Verursachers'.

expository detail.[372] In Oedipus' final words in the prologue, he alludes to Creon's return to Thebes, expressing a desperate hope for an answer from the oracle in Delphi (*una iam superest salus, | si quam salutis Phoebus ostendat uiam*, 108–9). In this situation of waiting,[373] the chorus – unusually for a Senecan play – is allowed to identify itself.[374] The chorus members self-identify as a group of Thebans, a 'people of unconquered lineage' (*stirpis inuictae genus*, 124), and elaborate on the city's disaster that Oedipus described at the beginning; 'his solitary perspective,' as Boyle puts it, 'becomes collective'.[375] The chorus's self-identification that insists on their genealogical belonging (124) is particularly effective in binding them together as a collective since it makes Oedipus, having returned to his father's city from Corinth, still seem as an outsider – at least from the perspective of people for whom it is important that they truly belong to the ancient Theban *genus*. The collective character of this chorus's voice is important when it comes to considering the role of echoes of the highly personalized and self-reflective Republican Catullus throughout the song – I will come back to this point in some more detail below.

The first choral ode continues the description of the plague, which started in Oedipus' speech in the prologue (in total, the plague description extends from lines 37 to 201). In any interpretation that is interested in Senecan intertextuality and the tragedies' relationship with earlier literature, this description, and especially the chorus's part in it, can be considered a key example of Senecan allusive technique;[376] at least since Delrius' rich 1576

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[372] Töchterle is right to point out that Seneca front-loads his play by mentioning more facts than Sophocles: Töchterle 1994, 137. Moreover, the expository function of the prologue in Sophocles is somewhat less clear because of its dialogic character. While the Euripidean prologue, generally, is more straightforwardly expository and starts with a monologue (see in detail Erbse 1984, *passim*), Seneca's version is still markedly different: as Töchterle notes, Seneca immediately provides a full tragic picture of the situation and has the dramatic action begin almost immediately (Töchterle 1994, 136, with further references).

[373] Seneca thus makes full use of a liminal situation: in Sophocles' *OT*, by contrast, the first ode occurs *after* Creon's return from Delphi.

[374] The only other Senecan chorus to self-identify itself is the first one in *Troades* (cf. that ode's opening lines).

[375] Boyle 2011, 143.

[376] Most recently, Trinacty 2014, in his study of the Senecan reception of Augustan poetry, has shown that Seneca's engagement with earlier poetry is characterised by a technique of merging allusions to different models in one passage, a technique he refers to as 'contamination'. For possible limitations of using the terminology of 'contamination' for such intertextual and allusive relationships, see Hinds 1998, 141–2: Hinds explains that the modern usage of *contaminatio* misrepresents ancient usage, and is perhaps too rigid to account for the dynamics of allusive and intertextual relationships.

commentary,[377] scholars have noted the remarkable abundance of intertextual echoes and allusions in Seneca's plague description.[378] Lucretian and Ovidian echoes and parallels have emerged as probably the most prominent elements in the background of Seneca's version, but subtexts from Vergil, Manilius, and Thucydides have also been found.[379] In this echo chamber of earlier literature – plague descriptions being an intertextual space *par excellence* –[380] the presence of further, Catullan subtexts that are not directly connected to descriptions of plagues or disasters in the Senecan ode may initially seem surprising. Yet, Seneca's recall of Catullus is, as Boyle notes,[381] particularly close, and, as we shall see, serves a significant purpose in the literary and dramatic texture of the Senecan chorus. The opening of the ode (*Oed*. 110–23) runs thus:

> Occidis, Cadmi generosa proles,
> urbe cum tota; uiduas colonis
> respicis terras, miseranda Thebe.
> carpitur leto tuus ille, Bacche,
> miles, extremos comes usque ad Indos,
> ausus Eois equitare campis
> figere et mundo tua signa primo:
> cinnami siluis Arabas beatos
> uidit et uersas equitis sagittas,
> terga fallacis metuenda Parthi;
> litus intrauit pelagi rubentis:
> promit hinc ortus aperitque lucem
> Phoebus et flamma propiore nudos
> inficit Indos.
> (Sen. *Oed*. 110–23)

Compare Catullus 11, which is worth citing in full:

> Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli,
> siue in extremos penetrabit Indos,
> litus ut longe resonante Eoa
> tunditur unda,

[377] 'Elegans pestis descriptio valde elaborata et plena imitationis' (Delrius 1576, *ad Oed*. 36).
[378] See esp. Cattin 1963, 42–51, Pisi 1989, 45–69, and Schmitz 1993, 25–35. Staley 2014, 10 suggests that Seneca's plague description is indicative of his wider tragic technique in yet another sense: he argues that 'the plague has a metatheatrical dimension, that it serves here as a mark of tragedy's supposed origins and of its demise in imperial Rome', recalling a link between 'drama' and 'plague': 'Livy's famous description (7.2) of the origins of drama at Rome may be read as a later adaptation of this link between tragedy and plague. In 365 B.C. a *pestilentia ingens* ("a huge plague") broke out at Rome; to appease the anger of the gods, *ludi scaenici* ("theatrical festivals") were introduced. What began as dances evolved by the time of Livius Andronicus into plays with a plot'.
[379] See e.g. Jakobi 1988, 90–8.
[380] See Hutchinson 2013, 210–19.
[381] Boyle 2011, 145, *ad* 110–23; the allusion is also noted by Töchterle 1994, 223, *ad* 114ff., and had already been studied (as noted by Töchterle) in more detail by Plisca 1973.

siue in Hyrcanos Arabasue molles,
seu Sacas[382] sagittiferosue Parthos,
siue quae septemgeminus colorat
aequora Nilus,

siue trans altas gradietur Alpes,
Caesaris uisens monimenta magni,
Gallicum Rhenum horribile aequor ulti-
mosque Britannos,[383]

omnia haec, quaecumque feret uoluntas
caelitum, temptare simul parati,
pauca nuntiate meae puellae
non bona dicta.

cum suis uiuat ualeatque moechis,
quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,
nullum amans uere, sed identidem omnium
ilia rumpens;

nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,
qui illius culpa cecidit uelut prati
ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
tactus aratro est.
(Catullus 11)

In a lyric poem that is composed in sapphic hendecasyllables, is published after Catullus, and starts with a vocative, the opening of Catullus 11 is a strong presence in the intertextual background: the opening vocative of the Catullan poem (*Furi et Aureli*, 1) is the beginning of what is probably the most memorable extended vocative phrase in Latin literature, to be concluded only with the main (imperative) verb *nuntiate* in line 15. Seneca's first ode in *Oedipus* is, like much of Catullus 11, in sapphic hendecasyllables: it is written in what looks like an extended and more dynamic version of Catullus' proper sapphic stanza, with the Senecan hendecasyllables being interspersed with adonei at 123, 132, and 144. Like Catullus 11, Seneca's ode also starts with an

[382] Following Goold 1983, I give the usual spelling *Sacas* (cf. e.g. Curtius 7.46, Mela 3.59, and Plin. *Nat*. 6.50), as given in the 1472 Catullan *editio princeps*, printed by Wendelin of Speyer in Venice, in place of the *Sagas* printed in the OCT. *Sagas* can be easily explained as an error of assimilation to the contiguous *sagittiferosue*.
[383] While this is of no consequence for my reading of the poem, I should at least record my suspicion, agreeing with many other scholars, that there is something amiss with the text in lines 11–12: Mynors (the text I have given) includes Haupt's conjecture *horribile aequor*, which corrects the transmitted *horribilesque ultimosque* (which cannot be the correct reading, since it would be a syllable short). Other conjectures include the plausible suggestion by McKie 1984, 74, *Gallicum Rhenum, horribiles vitro ultimosque Britannos*.

extended apostrophe, but the Senecan way of emulating the Catullan precedent is not by placing more subordinate clauses and appositions in between the opening vocative and the main verb(s); rather, the Senecan ode exceeds Catullus 11 in having three separate vocatives: *Cadmis generosa proles* (110), *miseranda Thebe* (112), and *Bacche* (113). The points of contact between the Senecan ode and Catullus 11 are not restricted to shared metre and vocative opening: after the initial apostrophe, there are several verbal echoes that make Senecan allusion to the Catullan poem very likely.

The Senecan allusive construction in this ode would thus first create some intertextual expectation with readers by recalling Catullus 11 more elusively in the use of metre and vocatives, and then corroborate the readers' suspicion when they encounter the verbal allusions that closely echo the Catullan geography in the following lines. The Senecan chorus's vista of geography owes its elements to an engagement with the Catullan poem: compare Seneca's mention of the *Eoi … campi* (115) with Catullus' mention of the *Eoa … unda* (3–4); the shared use of *litus* (*Oed.* 120 and Catullus 11.3); Seneca's *extremos comes usque ad Indos* (114) with Catullus' *comites Catulli | siue in extremos penetrabit Indos* (1–2); and Seneca's *Arabas beatos | uidit et uersas equitis sagittas, | terga fallacis metuenda Parthi* (117–19) with Catullus' *siue in Hyrcanos Arabasue molles, | seu Sacas sagittiferosue Parthos* (5–6). On closer inspection, as Plisca has shown,[384] Seneca's *aemulatio* in *Oed.* 116–21 can be seen to follow an alternating pattern of expansion and compression of the Catullan precedent: *Oed.* 116 (the *Eoi campi*) is a compression of Catullus 11.3–4 (*litus ut longe resonante Eoa | tunditur unda*); *Oed.* 117 (*figere et mundo tua signa primo*) appears to be an expansion of the Catullan model (while dropping any reference to the Hyrcani); *Oed.* 118 (*cinnami siluis Arabas beatos*) is at once a compression and expansion of the Catullan 11.5–6 (*Arabasue molles, | seu Sacas*) in omitting the Saci but (in addition to changing the – possibly more eroticised – *molles* to *beati*) also introducing the new element of the *cinnami silvae*; *Oed.* 119–20 (*uidit et uersas equitis sagittas, | terga fallacis metuenda Parthi*) are a striking expansion of the Parthians' feature that in Catullus is expressed by one adjective, *sagittiferi* (11.6); in *Oed.* 121, then, Seneca achieves the opposite, by compressing two Catullan lines of colour description (*siue quae*

[384] Plisca 1973, 52.

septemgeminus colorat | *aequora Nilus*, 11.7–8) into one adjective, *rubens* (*Oed*. 121). The Senecan rhetoric of allusive expansion and compression is one way in which his poetry mirrors the content: expansion and compression are ways in which the post-Augustan poet engages with the geography inherited from his Republican predecessor.[385] The pattern of parallels can be corroborated even further: the lines share not only the sapphic metre but also the rhyming at the close of the opening stanzas:[386] Seneca uses the rhyme of the agreeing *nudos* (122) and *Indos* (123) to bind the last word of the final sapphic line to the adonic, providing pleasing aesthetic closure, and Catullus does the same at the close of his first sapphic stanza, rhyming *Eoa* (2) with *unda* (3). The cumulative weight of allusive evidence is heavy and could serve as 'proof' of Seneca's engagement with the Neoteric poet that is as good as any allusion or quotation that could have been found in the prose. To some recipients, the opening of Seneca's ode may almost seem like a pastiche – but the Catullan allusions can also draw attention to further levels of meaning. Boyle suggests one, claiming that Seneca 'wants some members of his audience to see beneath the chorus's opening sapphics the paradigm of personal devastation wrought by sex'.[387] This is a possible subtext in the opening of the ode, and Boyle would argue that his reading is further strengthened by the ode's ending; but one may caution that the opening of Catullus 11 that Seneca alludes to is predominantly concerned with providing a geographical catalogue – where the presence of the erotic is allusive at best. Or is Seneca's allusion to the opening of Catullus 11 evoking the poem in its entirety, especially elements from its ending? Boyle does not discuss this prerequisite for his claim; the possibility may be worth examining in some more detail.

If the Senecan ode closely follows the Catullan precedent on the level of sounds and words, it is even more interesting to see how it transforms its model when it comes to sight and visuality. Once readers have recognised the clear Catullan environment in the opening of the Senecan ode, they may also be attuned to another element pointing to Catullus, in a common allusive technique: as has been noted, and we have also seen above, Seneca's allusions to earlier poetry, while recalling specific moments, often gain further levels of

[385] For an interesting analysis of the Senecan manipulation of poetic space in the tragedies, exemplified in a reading of *Medea*, see Rimell 2012.
[386] Noted by Boyle 2011, 148, *ad loc*.
[387] Boyle 2011, 145.

meaning if the broader contexts of the source texts are brought into play. Moreover, we have seen how intertextual readings and poets' allusive practices often favour the openings and closures of poems for their engagement.[388] Take, for instance, Horace's reception of Lucretius at the close as well as at the beginning of the Roman Odes,[389] and in Seneca's case, his reworking of the opening of the second Lucretian proem in both his philosophical writings and the *Troades*. A similar allusive technique is discernible in the opening of the first ode in *Oedipus*. Seneca has taken an element from the last stanza of the Catullan poem and transformed it in a striking inversion at the beginning of his chorus: where, towards the end of Catullus 11, the poem's intrafictional addressee (the *puella*) is told, in a confident jussive, not to 'look back at his love' (*meum respectet … amorem*, 11.21) any more, Seneca's chorus uses a cognate Latin verb, *respicere*, to describe personified Thebes' 'looking at' its own disaster. In Seneca's ode, the Catullan acoustic element in *resonans* (11.3) is replaced by the tragic visual paradigm, *respicere* (*Oed.* 112), continued by *uidere* (118). The close proximity, shared in Seneca and Catullus, of agricultural vocabulary (underlined in the Latin below) further suggests that the Senecan use of *respicere* may be an echo of the Catullan *respectare* as part of a deliberate structural inversion: Seneca's Thebes is to 'watch countries devoid of farmers' (*uiduas <u>colonis</u> | respicis <u>terras</u>*, 111–12) while the Catullan poet-speaker had said that his mistress 'may no longer look, as before, at [his] love, which by her fault has dropped like a flower on the field's edge, when it has been touched by a plough passing by' (*nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem, | qui illius culpa cecidit uelut <u>prati</u> | <u>ultimi</u> <u>flos</u>, praetereunte postquam | tactus <u>aratro</u> est*, 11.22–4).[390] The Catullan agricultural image of the flower 'touched' by a plough

[388] Cf., for another good Neronian example, Lucan's allusion to the opening of Catullus 64 at Lucan 6.400–1 (suggested by Zetzel 1980). On Horace's 'motto' technique of echoing openings, see Cavarzere 1996.

[389] See Reinhardt 2009, esp. 166–7. There is some uncertainty whether the Roman Odes, certainly forming a distinct group (see e.g. Santirocco 1986, 110–22; Heinze 1960, 190–204 discusses important questions concerning the unity), were in fact meant to be divided as they are now in most editions. They are in the same metre (change of metre, according to Heyworth 1995, 144, being 'the principle by which Horatian odes should be divided'; but cf. Hutchinson 2008, 135, n. 13) and can be read as one coherent poem without much force. Pomponius Porphyrio, the earliest and most important ancient commentator on Horace that we have (probably from the third century: see Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, xlvii–xlix; text: Holder 1894), read *Odes* 3.1–6 as one poem. See Heyworth 1995, 140–4, who makes the argument for the unity of *Odes* 3.1–6. Cf. Nisbet/Rudd 2004, xx–xxi and Syndikus 2001, vol. 2, 3–6 for the opposite view and some discussion (with further references). With this cautionary note in mind, I shall nevertheless follow the established practice of speaking about the 'Roman Odes'.

[390] On the image, see further Celentano 1991.

may have appealed to Seneca especially because it had already asserted its allusive presence in the Augustan canon of poetry: the lines are already reappropriated in Vergil's *Aeneid*, for which Catullus 11 as a whole is an important intertext.[391] In book 9, the description of Euryalus' death gains force through a reworking of the closing image of Catullus 11, as the limbs of dead Euryalus spread blood and his neck collapses 'as when a purple flower, cut down by a plough, droops and dies' (*Aen*. 9.435–6).[392]

Seneca's allusive transformation of Catullus 11, merging allusion to the poem's opening with an inversion of elements from its close, has not been noted before; but it would be a significant allusive move on Seneca's part. Once more, we would see Seneca adapting the atmosphere of a prominent earlier poem to his tragic realm: the poetic setting of the Catullus 11, predominantly focused on a tension between the exteriority of the opening's geographical catalogue and the interiority of the paradigm of personal devastation through love in the second part,[393] is given a new perspective in Seneca's tragic ode. Restoring the Catullan *respectare* to its literal meaning, Seneca's use of *respicere* would be adding to the Sapphic – and Catullan – sounds in the catalogue in the opening lines of his lyrics an element of visuality and spectatorship that suits the new tragic environment. Seneca's Theban chorus, themselves the victims as well as the spectators of the plague that has come over their home town, may be instilling an element of spectatorship into the scene in an attempt to emphasise their distance from what is happening. If, as we saw in the previous chapter, the chorus of Trojan women echoed a moment of detached Lucretian spectatorship in *Troades* only to accentuate their own involvement in the disaster, this Theban chorus's attempt at creating distance via the introduction of a spectator is equally doomed to fail. While Lefèvre is right in identifying the chorus's attempt to position itself at a distance from the tragic action,[394] his conclusion

[391] See Putnam 1995/6, esp. 86–92 for the Vergilian reception of Catullus 11. The flower is also paired with the plough by Catullus in one of his *epithalamia*: cf. poem 62.39–41, with the analysis by Fitzgerald 1995, 179–80.
[392] The allusion is well noted in Vergilian scholarship; see e.g. Putnam 1995/6, 91. Note that Seneca makes use of Vergil's Nisus and Euryalus episode at *Ep*. 21.5 (which features direct quotation of *Aen*. 9.446–9).
[393] In both of which, it has been claimed, Catullus emerges as a marginalised figure with no place at the centre of things: see Konstan 2000, esp. 14 ('in this center of empire, Catullus represents himself as having no place. The final image, in which Catullus compares Lesbia to a plough and himself to a flower at the edge of the field, expresses his sense of marginality, of pertaining to the periphery rather than the core.').
[394] See Lefèvre 1980, esp. 302.

that this chorus speaks like a detached observer is, to my mind, contradicted by an employment of verbs and pronouns that brings across anxious involvement throughout the ode: the chorus moves from the apostrophe at the beginning to *interimus* (124) and *labimur* (125), to *nostrum … malum* (159), to the pathetic outcry *O dira noui facies leti | grauior leto* (180–1).

The end of the plague description at the close of the ode leads the chorus to a grisly in-depth exploration of the sufferings of humans because of the plague – and back to a further Catullan allusion. The sense of sight is not the only thing that is affected for those beset by the plague:[395]

> O dira noui facies leti
> grauior leto:
> piger ignauos alligat artus
> languor, et aegro rubor in uultu,
> maculaeque cutem sparsere leues.
> tum uapor ipsam corporis arcem
> flammeus urit
> multoque genas sanguine tendit,
> oculique rigent, resonant aures
> stillatque niger naris aduncae
> cruor et uenas rumpit hiantes;
> intima creber uiscera quassat
> gemitus stridens
> et sacer ignis pascitur artus.
> (Sen. *Oed*. 180–92)

As noted, the chorus's account of the Theban plague as a whole stands in a rich tradition of plague descriptions. The above lines, in particular, can also serve as an example of Seneca's combined reception of both Catullus and Lucretius.[396] By using the language of two authors of Republican Rome to describe plague-infested Thebes, the Theban chorus could be 'hold[ing] up a mirror to imperial Rome'.[397] If the Theban chorus deliberately ended with echoes of Catullus' famous Sappho translation, it would, Boyle suggests, end on a markedly erotic note: according to him, 'this eroticism of the macabre is not accidental', with Seneca '"book-end[ing]" his plague chorus with overt allusions to Catullus' sapphic "book-ends" (11 and 51)'.[398] The allusion to Catullus 51 is perhaps less

[395] For possible arguments against Zwierlein's ordering of lines, which follows Richter's transposition (see Zwierlein 1994, *in apparatu ad loc.*), see Töchterle 1994, 249, *ad loc.*: Töchterle concedes, however, that Zwierlein's ordering of lines creates coherence between syntax and lines, which is I follow Richter's and Zwierlein's transposition.
[396] For other possible intertexts and allusions (esp. Vergil) in this passage, see Töchterle 1994, 249–53, *ad loc.*
[397] Boyle 2011, 148, *ad* 124–5.
[398] Boyle 2011, 158.

'overt' than Boyle suggests, but it is true that lines 188–9 are similar to Catullus 51.9–11, especially in the order of the symptoms: as Töchterle notes,[399] Seneca's order of moving from *artus* (182), to acoustic effects (*resonant*, 187),[400] to a direct mention of 'ears' has precedent in Catullus' description of the symptoms of love sickness at Catullus 51.9–11: … *tenuis sub artus | flamma demanat, sonitu suopte | tintinant aures*. As noted above with reference to the allusions to Catullus 11 in the opening of the Senecan chorus, Boyle's interpretation would again emphasise that the erotic connotations that the Catullan subtext would introduce are fitting in a play whose tragic disaster was initiated by the protagonist's sexual transgression. I would like to explore the possibility of a different reading of Seneca's reception of Catullus here. In the following, I shall suggest that Seneca's reading of Catullus is one in which the original Catullan atmosphere of eroticism is corrected by a technique of deeroticising and depersonalisation.

Such a depersonalising reception of the subjectively and erotically charged Catullan precedent would be a particular type of Seneca's wider engagement with earlier literature by means of inversion.[401] On such a reading, Seneca's engagement with Catullus 11 and 51 in the 'Plague Ode' in *Oedipus* would not merely bring out sexual connotations that may be apposite in a play on a myth that contains an element of sexual deviance and attendant catastrophe. In the case of Seneca's allusion to Catullus 11 in the opening lines of his chorus, based on formal features and the recall of the earlier poem's geographical catalogue, I have expressed above some scepticism about an

[399] Töchterle 1994, 251, *ad loc*.
[400] Tinnitus is not given as a plague symptom in Thucydides (see Töchterle 1994, 252), but is introduced by Lucretius (*DRN* 6.1185).
[401] A Senecan reception of Catullus that is guided by an allusive technique of correction or inversion would have good precedent in Augustan poetry: a case in point is Horace's reception of Catullus in *Epode* 17, which features a dialogue between the unnamed speaker and the witch Canidia. In the course of the poem, the speaker asks Canidia to release him from the effects her witchcraft has had on him. At Hor. *Epode* 17.40–1 (… *tu pudica, tu proba*) there is, as Newman 2011, 121 notes, a strong verbal echo of Catullus 42.24 (*pudica et proba, redde codicillos*). In the Catullan poem, the ironic speaker takes back some earlier abuse with which he had offended the unnamed girl, but in the Horatian iambic, Canidia is set on revenge. At the same time, Newman suggests, the very next line (*Epode* 17.41, *perambulabis astra sidus aureum*), recalls the use of *perambulare* in another Catullan poem, in which the Catullan speaker assails Caesar's trusted lieutenant Mamurra (see 29.6–8). If recognised, Horace's allusion to Catullus 29 could be interpreted in one of two ways: he would either be inverting what is a moment of political cricitism in Catullus 29 to suit the new context of an erotic fight with Canidia (this is suggested by Newman 2011, 277), or he would be including an allusive gesture at the possibility of a political interpretation of *Epode* 17, in a moment that adumbrates that the poem may have further levels of meaning than the erotic quarrel on its surface level.

interpretation such as Boyle's, which sees 'beneath the chorus's opening sapphics the paradigm of personal devastation wrought by sex'.[402] Rather, I have suggested that Seneca, in this allusive construction, restores the high *pathos* that the Catullan speaker employs in preparing to speak about the failure of his love relationship to what Seneca suggests it the more fitting realm of tragic drama. At the same time, the Catullan personal tone becomes depersonalised in the mouth of a collective of citizens, the Theban chorus. In the case of Seneca's possible engagement with moments of Catullus 51 in the chorus's take on the Theban plague, such a Senecan reading of Catullus could come to the fore again. While Catullus 51 is undoubtedly an erotic poem, this memorable subjective quality would make the Senecan corrective inversion only all the more remarkable:[403] symptoms that are exaggerated through the focus of the Catullan lover-speaker of poem 51 (esp. Catull. 51.9–12) are restored to a moment of truly tragic suffering (esp. *Med.* 180–92). From the perspective of literary history, Seneca's ode would thus restore the symptoms from the sapphic realm to a realm of higher pathos, recalling Sappho's own Homeric models.[404] To my mind, regarding Seneca's reception of Catullus 51 in this case as an inversion of the model's context is more attractive than seeing an evocation of the Sapphic-Catullan eroticism (the Boylean 'eroticism of the macabre').[405]

There is, in effect, no extant Graeco-Roman play on the Oedipus theme in which 'sex' plays a role as prominent as seems implied in Boyle's comment on the recall of Catullus 11 in the opening of the ode,[406] or which would strengthen Boyle's erotic interpretation of the possible echo of Catullus 51 in the chorus's plague description. What we do have, however, is a play – Seneca's – in which tension between the *subjective* failures and troubles of one individual wreak havoc on the whole *collective* community, one reason why the Senecan depersonalising correction of Catullus' lyrics is especially apposite.

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[402] Boyle 2011, 145.
[403] Such a Senecan reception strategy would be all the more relevant since Catullus 51 is itself already a prime example of the tension – and arising poetic possibilities – between the subjectivism of the experience and the objectivisim of the description of the physical symptoms. The situation is made even more interesting by the tensions in Catullus 51 between representing the subjective experience and the literary anxiety of influence as well as the highly constrained form; on the relationship between Sappho fr. 31 and Catullus 51, see e.g. Wills 1967 and Vine 1992.
[404] On the blend of novelty and Homeric elements in the Sappho poem, see Page 1955, 29–30.
[405] Cf. Boyle 2011, 157–8.
[406] See above, with n. 402.

3.3 The Self and the Tragic Collective

Such a Senecan technique of 'depersonalisation' in reading Catullus would go to the heart of another concern of Senecan tragic poetics. Reading Seneca together with Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot emphasised 'self-dramatization' as crucial for Senecan poetics.[407] Studies of this feature and of 'self-construction' in Seneca's tragedies have, however, mostly been focused on the individual tragic characters – not the chorus. Fitch and McElduff, for example, analyse the ways of self-identification and tragic self-development in Senecan tragedy as neurotic and destructive processes that the tragic characters undergo.[408] Their study is focussed mainly on Oedipus, Phaedra, Medea, and Hercules. It is striking that they talk about a chorus only once – and in this case, the chorus in *Troades*, they identify the chorus's relatively straightforward self-identification as an exception to the rule of Senecan personal self-destruction.[409] Fitch and McElduff plausibly suggest that the difference in the handling of the issue of self-identification of this chorus of Trojan women has got to do with the fact that 'although the play is concerned with the tragic destruction of th[e] Trojan identity, destruction here comes from the outside, rather than from the very process of self-identification'.[410] I would suggest, however, that the difference Fitch and McElduff have identified with regard to the chorus's self-identification in *Troades* also has got to do with a more basic – but no less interesting – distinction: that between tragic characters acting as individuals and the chorus as a collective.

It is worth returning to Boyle's remark about the 'collective voice' of the Theban chorus and the question of how the Catullan allusions work within this framework. There is a tension between the chorus's collective voice and the Catullan allusions: Catullus – and poems 11 and 51, the poems that provide intertextual echoes both at the beginning and at the close of the first ode of *Oedipus*, are excellent examples of this – is a poet of self-exploration; different

[407] Eliot 1927. On the role of the self in Senecan drama see Fitch/McElduff 2008, with reference to Gill 1987 (who provides an instructive analysis of the differences between a Euripidean and a Senecan scene in their respective *Medeas*). See further Bartsch/Wray 2009, a volume from which a number of complications about talking about the 'self' in Seneca emerge. On the way in which Seneca's tragic conception may differ from his philosophical stance, see Schiesaro 2009b, where he analyses three versions of the 'denial of the self' in Senecan drama (Medea, Atreus, and Thyestes), and shows that the tragedies express a conception of the self that includes irrational dimensions (see esp. 221).
[408] Fitch/McElduff 2008.
[409] Fitch/McElduff 2008, 177.
[410] Fitch/McElduff 2008, 177–8.

perspectives and voices in his lyric poems, just as the objects described, circle around the subjectivity of individuals, usually the poet-speaker's.[411] The Neoteric poet's lyric programme is often fashioned as one of emotional self-exploration and self-dramatization.[412] More generally, one may say that the character of lyric poetry, especially its common subjective thrust and inward-turn,[413] is often in tension with the collective character of choruses; part of the particular attraction of tragic choral lyrics lies in their unique position in exploring the tension created by this formal dichotomy in their nature.[414] In the first ode of *Oedipus*, the Catullan echoes play a key role in filling the space of this tension with content. They allow the Senecan chorus to mobilise the language of one suffering individual to describe a collective disaster that has come upon the whole city.

It is worth reiterating, then, that Seneca's choice of Catullus 11 and 51, reveals more about his reception of Catullus: like Vergil before him, he transposes moments of pathos in Catullus' erotic contexts – the farewell to Lesbia in poem 11 and the love sickness in 51 – to tragic settings. If Vergil, for instance, in using the lines from Catullus 66 where queen Berenice's lock is bewailing her departure from her mistress's head in order to be catasterised (*invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi*, 66.39), appropriates a Catullan melodramatic gesture for Aeneas' painful looking back to his departure from Carthage (*inuitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi*, *Aen*. 6.460) – as readers of the *Aeneid* know, a more fitting scenario for the lines since there is real loss through Dido's suicide –, Seneca's reading of Catullus is a similar correction of the Neoteric poet. Vergil's earlier corrective reception of Catullus had even employed the same poem that Seneca is drawn to: as mentioned above, Vergil reappropriated lines from Catullus 11. Like Seneca, he adapted the sense of pathos at losing one's beloved that is expressed in the striking image of the flower cut down by a plough at the close of Catullus 11 to a more tragic scenario,

[411] The space in which this is done within Horace's lyrics, e.g., has been identified as the *angulus*, a space of poetic enclosure: see esp. Traina 1985, 16–18, and Rimell 2015, 82–101.
[412] See e.g. Fitzgerald 1995, *passim*, and Möller 2008.
[413] On this constitutive feature of lyric poetry see e.g. Johnson 1982, 1–23, who sets out from T. S. Eliot's attempt at defining 'lyric' poetry as the genre in which the poet expresses 'his own thoughts and sentiments to himself or to no one' (before he pleads for abandoning the term altogether), and then examines the proportion of personal pronouns in Catullus and what they can tell us about the (subjective) nature of lyric.
[414] See further Budelmann 2000 and Gagné/Hopman 2013.

a scene of real loss, the young Euryalus' death in *Aeneid* 9.[415] Loss and its attendant poetic pathos is truly at home, the Vergilian and Senecan receptions seem to suggest, where there is tragic and epic death, not love in sapphic lyrics.

3.4 Love Inverted (II): The First Chorus in *Medea*

Catullus 11 and 51 are not the only poems on love and its power that are transformed in the Senecan chorus. Seneca's *Medea*, a play at least as replete with the disasters attendant on the deceptions and failures of love as *Oedipus*, features instances of significant Catullan reception.

The first ode in *Medea* (56–115),[416] a hymn in minor asclepiads, glyconics, and dactylic hexameters to celebrate Jason's marriage to Creusa, has a significant Catullan subtext, featuring intertextual presences from three of Catullus' *carmina maiora* where 'marriage' is a central theme: the two wedding poems, 61 and 62, and the Catullan epic 64; with the exception of the pherecratean at the end of the stanza, which features in Catullus 61, the metres of the three Catullan poems are also used in Seneca's ode (glyconics at *Oed*. 75–92 and dactylic hexameters at 110–15). Following Medea's opening speech in the prologue, which she had started as a prayer to 'gods of marriage' (*di coniugales*, 1) and ended as a manifesto of her decision to avenge herself on her husband by means of a crime (*rumpe iam segnes moras: | quae scelere parta est, scelere linquenda est domus*, 54–5), the chorus opens thus:

> Ad regum thalamos numine prospero
> qui caelum superi quique regunt fretum
> adsint cum populis rite fauentibus.
> (Sen. *Med*. 56–8)

The ode marks itself out generically from its outset: in the use of *thalamos*, Seneca indicates that this song will be an *epithalamium*.[417] But the generic self-labelling is not restricted to the ode's opening: the concluding lines contain a reference to Fescennine verse (*Med*. 113). In the Roman tradition, Fescennine verse seems to have been fused with the Greek *epithalamium* in a new literary

[415] Cf. Catullus 11.22–4 (*nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem, | qui illius culpa cecidit uelut prati | ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam | tactus aratro est*) with Verg. *Aen*. 9.433–7 (*volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus | it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit: | purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro | languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo | demisere caput pluvia cum forte gravantur*).

[416] On this choral song, see Hine 1989 and Davis 1993, 189–95.

[417] I use *epithalamium*, but would not uphold a firm distinction between *epithalamion* and *hymenaios*. In ancient terminology, the two do not seem to be used of separate genres: for a summary of the question, see Swift 2010, 242–3, with Muth 1954.

form.[418] Moreover, as Delrius noted, but scholarship afterwards has overlooked, both generic references are also markers of Seneca's Catullan inheritance: the Senecan chorus's *festa dicax fundat conuicia fescenninus, | soluat turba iocos* (*Med.* 113–14) should be read with Catullus' *Fescennina iocatio* (Catull. 61.120),[419] and the chorus's allusion to divine presence at the beginning of their song (*Ad regum thalamos numine prospero | qui caelum superi quique regunt fretum | adsint cum populis rite fauentibus*, *Med.* 56–8) recalls the similar context of Peleus and Thetis' wedding, mirroring the manner in which it is depicted in Catullus 64 (*praesentes namque ante domos inuisere castas | heroum, et sese mortali ostendere coetu, | caelicolae nondum spreta pietate solebant*, 64.384–6).

These generic and allusive markers framing the ode facilitate recipients' recognition of a possible Catullan subtext running through the entirety of this chorus. What we have here is a good example of how the pragmatics of allusion works, and how the place of texts in the dynamics of literary history is negotiated: once recipients have noticed the Catullan atmosphere of both genre and setting, they may be attuned to – perhaps even expect – the presence of some engagement with the famous Catullan precedent. Or, more precisely: if recipients, in reading and re-reading the Senecan chorus, have understood the generic marker and allusions at the beginning – *thalamos* providing more information than necessary in pointing to the genre of the epithalamium, the first three lines in which the presence of divinities is requested echoing the lines from Catullus 64, and *Fescenninus* referencing a Roman literary tradition with previous reception in Catullus – they will be attuned to further such allusions throughout the ode.

For instance, they may notice a distant Catullan echo at *Med.* 90–4. The lines could be taken at face value, as a mere conventional element of a nuptial song, but could also be read, as Delrius suggests, with Catullan precedent in mind.[420] In such a reading, the description of the woman's beauty at *Med.* 90–4 (*Sic, sic, caelicolae, precor, | uincat femina coniuges, | uir longe superet uiros. | Haec cum femineo constitit in choro, | unius facies praenitet omnibus*) would resonate with Catullus 61.81–5 (*... non tibi Au- | runculeia periculum est, | ne*

[418] See Williams 1958, 16–17.
[419] See also Kapnukajas 1930, 104.
[420] Delrius 1576, 109, *ad Med.* 91.

qua femina pulchrior | clarum ab Oceano diem | uiderit venientem. | talis in vario solet | divitis domini hortulo | stare flos hyacinthinus). Recipients who are put in mind of Catullus as the Senecan ode progresses – such as Delrius – could notice how Seneca's ode shares several subtle elements with the lines from Catullus 61: both poems praise a woman surpassing all other women in beauty, both invest her with a sense of shining and light, and both emphasise her 'standing' in some crowd, which throws her extraordinariness into relief. Another distant echo may be found in the temporal movement towards the closing of the day in both Catullus 61 and the Senecan ode: whereas the Catullan poem specifies the time of day as evening just before the passage praising the woman's beauty (*abit dies*, 61.89), the Senecan chorus explicates and amplifies the temporal sequence by referring to sunshine, the end of the day, and the night (*Med*. 95–8), but inverts the Catullan order in mentioning the time sequence only after the praise of female beauty. The Catullan resonances could arguably contain further elements. In a eulogy at *Med*. 82–8, the groom is notably said to be fairer than Bacchus (as well as Apollo, Castor, and Pollux), a hubristic notion that draws recipients' attention to the description. In the specific context of comparing a loved one's beauty to gods, two famous lyric models may be especially evoked. In Catullus 51, the loved one is initially only said to be equal to the gods, following the original Sappho that Catullus was rendering in Latin: compare Catullus 51.1 (*Ille mi par esse deo videtur*) with the opening line of Sappho fr. 31 Voigt (*φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν*). But already the second line of Catullus 51 ventures somewhat further,[421] enlarging upon and surpassing Sappho's more cautious gesture at hubris: *ille, si fas est, superare divos* (Catull. 51.2). The Senecan chorus continues the Catullan *hubris* – but not without further significance: as Littlewood points out, the passage is marked out by deep intratextual irony, since, in this play, there will only be one new divinity: Medea.[422] More generally, the evocation of Catullus 51 at this point, with its postulation of the dangers of 'triangular' love,[423] would be relevant in the wider context of Seneca's play, and could function as an allusive gesture towards the destructive triangle Medea – Jason – Creusa.

[421] But note the cautious conditional *si fas est*.
[422] Littlewood 2004, 204, 'eulogy not only prefaces disaster but proves deeply ironic: it is Medea who will be divine'.
[423] Harrison 2001 suggests that Catullus 51 evokes a subtext of the triangle Menelaos – Helen – Paris.

Whether or not these Catullan echoes are noticed – and how strongly or subtly they resound – will depend on the recipients and their respective 'horizons of expectations';[424] not noticing them will mean a loss of pragmatic meaning, created either by the intertextual dynamics of literary history or the conscious Senecan deployment of allusion, but not a lack of understanding. One could argue, however, that the number of possible Catullan echoes in the ode so far, within the specific context of a wedding song, suggests a considerable weight of *allusive* proof, i.e. we may say that Seneca deliberately alluded to certain Catullan moments in order to convey further levels of meaning. The Senecan engagement with the Catullan precedent can be read in this way; the possibility of deliberate Senecan allusion becomes especially strengthened by further structural patterns and the coincidence of meaningful verbal and metrical Catullan presences.

Let us look at the formal features of the ode: in the first part, *Med*. 56–74, the chorus prays in asclepiads that a good marriage be performed under the auspices of 'divine support' (*numine prospero*, 56) and in the gods' presence (*superi … | adsint*, 57–8). In the whole ode, Seneca combines the lesser asclepiadic line with glyconics, performing an experimental change in established Horatian lyric practice:[425] the first passage in asclepiads (56–74) is followed by glyconics (75–92), after which the asclepiads return (93–109).[426] Unlike Horace, who combines the two lyric lines in a responsive manner of alternation in the stanzaic form of the fourth asclepiad, where a glyconic line is twice followed by a dodecasyllabic asclepiad, Seneca makes different use of the combination, dedicating uninterrupted sections of his ode to each. Thus, he fully exploits the possibilities of association of the two lyric metres: while the opening section's lesser asclepiadic lines are suitably long and balanced for the chorus's entry and 'stately processional song',[427] the change to glyconics in 75–92 indicates the move away from hymnic invocation of the gods to essentially epithalamian subject-matter (praise for the bride and groom). The glyconic metre recalls the metre of the most famous Roman *epithalamium*, Catullus

[424] Term introduced by Jauss: see esp. 'The Poetic Text within the Change of Horizons of Reading' in Jauss 1982, 139–48.
[425] On Seneca's reception of Horatian metrical practice, see in detail below, chapter 4.
[426] See Boyle 2014, 136.
[427] Boyle 2014, 136.

61.[428] Note also that Catullus 61, plausibly Seneca's metrical model, is already invested with a 'conjunction of discordant emotions',[429] a mixture that is developed and pushed further in the wedding hymn in Seneca's *Medea*, where, as the recipients know, the chorus's joy and any auspiciousness are strikingly inappropriate.

Another formal feature marks this ode as Senecan engagement with Catullan precedent: the twofold division of the Senecan wedding song, which alternates between praise for Creusa and Jason, continues the Catullan pattern of dividing *epithalamia* into two sections; Catullus 61 has two parts, with the speaker calling upon *integrae uirgines* (36–7) and *pueri* (114). The 'male' section of the poem addresses the groom and the 'female' one the bride. The alternation is more systematically employed in Catullus 62, where the two choirs, composed of male youngsters (*iuuenes*, 1) and virgin girls (*innuptae*, 6) respectively, engage in an amoebean contest where the girls take the bride's and the boys the groom's part. The division in the Senecan *epithalamium* is, however, less straightforward: Bentley's suggestion of assigning lines 75–81 to the women, 82–92 to the men, and 93–106 to the women has not found many advocates, since, unlike in the Catullan model, the lines would be divided unequally between men and women.[430] Those who imagine *Medea* as a staged play have, however, generally accepted that this chorus must have been made up of both men and women, following the Catullan model.[431] I harbour scepticism whether Seneca's choice of metre and continuation of Catullan precedent can provide us with any conclusive evidence about performance contexts; rather, I would suggest that, first and foremost, it exposes the dynamics of a conspicuously *literary* Roman lyric tradition.

At Seneca's time, lyric poetry was not choral lyric:[432] the poem alluded to in the choice of the glyconic metre, Catullus 61, is already, it could be argued,

[428] Catullus 61 has stanzas composed of four glyconics followed by one pherecrateus. For the praise of the bride there, see 61.86–95; for the groom, 61.196–200. See Hine 2000, 125–6, *ad loc.*
[429] Hutchinson 1988, 309, n. 65.
[430] Bentley's assignation of lines (Hedicke 1899) also overrules the changes in metre; one might have tried to assign 75–92 to the women singers and 93–109 to the men, thus staying in keeping with the clear metrical division.
[431] See e.g. Davis 1993, 50–1.
[432] See e.g. Rossi 2009 (on Horace).

decidedly non-sung, featuring the poetic voice of the Catullan speaker only.[433] If Seneca follows Catullus, the most important literary Roman wedding song before him, why should we not assume a similar setting for the Senecan hymn? It is certainly possible that the whole ode *Med*. 56–115 is recited by one or more alternating speakers, and not performed as a song by one or more choirs. Nowhere in the ode does the text require or even indicate that it must be spoken or sung by more than one person. In fact, there is some evidence to the contrary: at line 90 (*sic, sic, caelicolae, precor*) we get a first-person singular verb that would be most easily understood as uttered by a single reciter (or, if performed on stage, one member of the chorus, probably their leader). While 'the use of singular verb forms,' as Boyle explains, 'does not necessarily mean that these lines are spoken by a single member of the chorus',[434] we can be at least equally confident that singular verb forms do not mean that there is more than one speaker. In fact, some of the other instances of choric singular forms standing in for plurals in Senecan tragedy occur in odes that are arguably also non-choral in their character.[435] *Tro*. 115 (*non sum solito contenta sono*), for instance, occurs in a passage where the chorus is engaged in dialogue with Hecuba and the lines are most likely recited by one member of the female chorus who represents the voice of the whole group: the singular at 115 is followed by the associative plural *flemus* in the subsequent line (*Hectora flemus*). Similarly, the chorus – or one member of it – is engaged in dialogue at *Ag*. 694 (*miseris colendos maxime superos putem*), speaking to Cassandra.

It is worthy of note, moreover, that the first-person references at *Oed*. 882 (*Fata si liceat mihi*) and *Ag*. 656 (*uidi, uidi*) occur in very Horatian odes.[436] While *Ag*. 656 is difficult to judge because the singular is preceded and complicated by *uidimus* in the same chorus (625), the instance of the singular at *Oed*. 882 enhances the Horatian character of the passage, and could be part of Seneca's reception of Horace. This is very similar to *Med*. 90 above. The emphatic singular pronouns at *Her*. *F*. 197 occur in a very Horatian ode within the structure of a priamel (*alius curru sublimis eat:* | *me mea tellus lare secreto*

[433] But cf. Wiseman 1985, who considers Catullus 61–3 (and 34) poems intended for choral performance.
[434] Boyle 2014, 145, *ad loc*.
[435] See Fitch 1987a, 181, *ad Her*. *F*. 196 for the passages.
[436] For the ode in *Oedipus*, praising *aurea mediocritas*, *Odes* 2.10 is the most important precursor. On the engagement with Horace, esp. *Odes* 3.3, in *Ag*. 589–658 see above. Both odes will be subject of more detailed study in my next chapter.

| *tutoque tegat*, 196–7),[437] a favourite *locus* of Horatian intertextuality recalling the opening poem of Horace's *Odes*: the whole Senecan choral ode would, again, make sense as a *literary* lyric engagement with the non-choral Augustan precedent. These first-person singulars also occur, just like at *Thy*. 393–403 (*me dulcis saturet quies*, 393), in passages of heightened personal emotion, where the chorus longs for an Horatian-style existence in peace and solitariness.[438]

This point should be further considered against the backdrop of Greek tragedians' practice. Boyle points out that 'in Greek tragic choral lyric singular and plural forms are used interchangeably'.[439] By and large this is true, but upon closer inspection some tendencies can be observed. The differences from Seneca's practice are instructive. Kaimio sees four main reasons why first-person singular forms can be used of the chorus as a whole: to express emotions, more naturally filtered through an individual rather than a group; to express sensory perception; in passages where the chorus gives a narrative; and in passages where the chorus offers reflection. The fourth category comes closest to what I have argued to be predominantly the case in Seneca's odes: an affinity with the mode of speaking in lyric poetry outside dramatic poetry.[440] Kranz further pointed out that the final strophes of Greek tragic choral odes often express individual opinions or wishes of the chorus, not unlike the poet-speaker in non-dramatic lyric poetry expressing a 'personal' attitude at the end of the poem.[441] As becomes clear from Kranz' and Kaimio's discussions, this tendency is particularly visible in Sophocles' practice, a fact that accords with Kaimio's overall statistical result: in Sophocles' plays, the use of first-person singular forms in the choral lyrics is 'overwhelmingly predominant'.[442] Comparing the distributions, it is obvious that in Seneca's odes the use of first-person singular forms is much rarer than in the Greek tragic chorus. One the

[437] More on this ode in the next chapter of my study.
[438] See Tarrant 1985, 147, *ad* 393, 'It can hardly be accidental that the subject … is the longing for a peaceful, inconspicuous existence'. Tarrant also points to the priamel-like element at *Thy*. 393, and compares Hor. *Odes* 1.1.29 and 1.7.10. For possible Epicurean overtones in *dulcis … quies*, preparing for *leni perfruat otio* at 395, see Boyle 2017, 243, *ad loc.*, and see further my discussion of Epicurean and Lucretian presences in Seneca above, chapter 2.
[439] Boyle 2011, 313, *ad* 882.
[440] See Kaimio 1970, 92–103, esp. 92.
[441] See Kranz, 120 ff.
[442] Kaimio 1970, 243, with the statistics at 251: in Sophocles' lyric choral parts, first-person singular forms appear every ten lines, as opposed to first-person plural forms only appearing every 96 lines. The contrast is far more expressive than in Aeschylus, where we find first-person singular forms every 11 lines, but first-person plural forms every 49 lines.

one hand, this underlines the collective nature of the Senecan chorus, an entity that is usually set up against the evils and disasters of the Senecan tragic realms, a collective nature that is also underpinned by various allusions to the Republican tradition by means of which Seneca establishes his chorus as an intradramatic voice – however ineffective – against the tyrants and overbearing protagonists in the plays. Secondly, the relatively rare use of singular forms in Seneca's practice shows that his use creates much more pointed effects than, overall, that in the Greek tragedians. While Kaimio illustrates some tendencies, her study nevertheless demonstrates how, at least outside Sophocles, the use of singular and plural forms is hard to classify according to guiding principles. In the few cases throughout the tragedies in which Seneca has his choruses use singular forms to refer to themselves, the choice seems deliberate, pointed, and can be explained plausibly in each case. Often, an affinity with the earlier Roman lyric tradition – Horace in particular – seems to be a guiding principle. It is possible that the original Senecan reception and performance contexts that are quite unlike those of Greek tragedy – possibly recitation, subsequent reading, and, if at all, smaller stage settings – would have privileged such Senecan engagement with previous literary lyric. In sum, the use of a singular verb or pronoun can be regarded as one of the features by which Seneca marks out some of his odes as continuing and developing his literary lyric precedent at Rome, Catullus' and Horace's lyrics.[443] Its occurrence at the conspicuously Catullan moment in *Medea* may be not accidental and we should not be too quick to assume a sung choral ode, especially given the strong tradition of recitative choral odes in Roman tragedy, pointed to in the first chapter of my study.

Towards the end of the Senecan ode, the *iuuenes* addressed at *Med.* 107–8 in a prominent deictic apostrophe (*… iuuenes, ludite iurgio, | hinc illinc, iuuenes, mittite carmina*) not only function as a forward-looking closure of the asclepiadic section, but are, significantly, also part of an allusive strategy self-consciously marking the position of this ode as post-Catullan. The extent of the allusion to Catullus 62 at this point has not been fully appreciated. In Seneca's ode, the apostrophised *iuuenes* lead on to the closing part of the ode, six

[443] It is worth reiterating that, in this respect, Seneca's choral odes are very close to the generic inclusivity identified in the choral lyrics of Greek tragedy, which respond to and rework various elements of previous non-tragic lyric genres: see Herington 1985 and Swift 2010.

hexameter lines. The choice of metre is crucial in announcing the Catullan inheritance: Catullus 62 is also in hexameters. While Catullus finishes his first wedding song, poem 61, with a stanza spoken to the *uirgines*, the second – hexameter – *epithalamium*, poem 62, starts with a prominent apostrophe to the *iuuenes*, who, in Seneca, are moved to the end of the preceding section. At the beginning of the hexameter part, Seneca's calls upon 'the son of Lyaeus' (110) – Hymen, the god invoked in the refrain of Catullus 62, *Hymen o Hymenaee, Hymen ades o Hymenaee* (62.5; 10; 19; 25; 31; 38; 48; <58b>; 66),[444] one of the most memorable features of that poem. One further marker of the allusive nexus is worthy of note: the immediacy of time is expressed in Seneca's ode by *iam tempus erat* (111). While this phrase has rightly been identified as a conspicuously Roman lyric component, the noted link to the opening of Horace's Cleopatra Ode (*Odes* 1.37.1–4)[445] is accompanied by an as-yet unnoticed Catullan reminiscence: *surgere iam tempus, iam pinguis linquere mensas, | iam ueniet uirgo, iam dicetur hymenaeus* (Catull. 62.3–4). As we have seen in the case of the reception of Catullus 11 in the ode in *Oedipus*, Seneca is not always the poet of excess, trying to outdo his poetic predecessors in size and number. Senecan lyrics can also compress what is found in previous lyric moments. Here, they condense the Catullan excited and impatient conglomeration of markers of temporal deixis into one single *iam tempus erat*. Seneca's pruning of Catullus' epithalamian excitement is hardly coincidental: this is, we are reminded, the wedding song for Jason and Creusa.

Seneca's reception of the Catullan epithalamian poems is, we have seen, characterised by a tendency to invert the original atmospheres of the poems to suit the tragic environments of his plays. This is one mode in Seneca's pessimistic reception of his Republican predecessor. In the Argonautic Odes in *Medea*, however, we find another variety of Seneca's pessimistic reading of earlier literature. In both odes, the Senecan literary construction responds to

444 Cf. also the refrain of poem 61, *o Hymenaee Hymen | o Hymen Hymenaee* (61.4–5, 39–40, 49–50, 59–60); *io Hymen Hymenaee io, | io Hymen Hymenaee* (61.117–18, 137–8, 142–3, 147–8, 152–3, 157–8, 162–3, 167–8, 172–3, 177–8, 182–3). The refrain recalls Theocritus' wedding song for Helen (Ὑμὴν ὦ Ὑμέναιε, 18.19) and the repeated *ὑμήναον* of Sappho, fr. 111 L–P.

445 The link to *Odes* 1.37 is noted by Boyle 2014, 151, *ad loc.*, and already by Fyfe 1983, 92, n. 7. If Feldherr 2010 is right in his reading of *Odes* 1.37, Seneca's Horatian reception here may have been encouraged by a 'Dionysiac poetics' and the memory of Rome's civil war present in the Horatian ode. Both evocations would be fitting in the context of the ode in *Oedipus*, and the phenomenon would tie in with Seneca's reading of Horace as a markedly post-civil-war poet elsewhere: for a detailed analysis of this phenomenon, see below, chapter 4. On Horace's 'Dionysiac' or 'Bacchic poetics', see further Schiesaro 2009a (with further references).

what can already be seen as pessimistic elements in the Catullan poem, Catullus 64. Seneca's reading of Catullus 64 would thus anticipate modern scholars' views of the Catullan epic. We shall see, moreover, that, in the case of Catullus 64, Seneca's engagement with the Republican tradition privileges a poem that was used for dealing poetically with civil-war memories already before Seneca. Seneca's predilection for engaging with earlier poems that lend themselves to pessimistic readings and carry memories of war and civil war, which often continues – and pushes further – pessimistic readings by the Augustan poets, is a literary-historical tendency that will emerge as a key feature of the manner in which Seneca reads earlier poetry more widely: this type of reception is also present in Seneca's engagement with Horace's *Odes*, as I shall argue in the next chapter of my study.

3.5 The Reception of Catullus in the Argonautic Odes in *Medea*: Metrical Form, Boundaries, and Innovation

Seneca's second and third choral odes in *Medea* are thematically closely linked poems that have the story of the Argonauts as their major subject, which is why they are usually referred to as 'Argonautic Odes'.[446] They are powerful poetry of reflection. Both their content and form strongly recall earlier Greek and, especially, Roman poetry.[447] The second chorus in *Medea* (301–79), the so-called first Argonautic Ode, describes the Argonauts' journey, the first sea voyage, links the invention of seafaring with the end of the age of human morality, and describes the punishments that the Argonauts had to suffer. Medea is pointedly given as the worst of these. As a result of the transgression, the chorus concludes, the whole world is 'now' out of joint. The third chorus, which is the second Argonautic Ode (579–669), the only 'stanzaic' ode in

[446] For Biondi 1984, 87, they function as 'una sorta di tragedia nella tragedia'.

[447] In addition to Catullus 64, Horace, *Odes* 1.3 is a pervasive background presence in both Argonautic Odes (the first Argonautic Ode in particular includes several overt allusions to Horace: see main text below). As Boyle notes, the voyage of the Argo, while mentioned in Euripides' *Medea* (at the very opening of the play), is not given a detailed narrative or choral ode in Euripides; the topic as Seneca treats it is a conspicuously Roman literary trope known from Catullus, Vergil, Tibullus, Horace, and Ovid: see Boyle 2014, lxxxvi. However, Roman poems such as Catullus 64 are clearly engaging with Greek precedent: the opening of Catullus 64, e.g., seems to recall the beginning of Euripides' Greek *Medea* (Eur. *Med.* 1–6) as well as Ennius' Roman *Medea* (Enn. *scen.* 208–11 Jocelyn: note that Catullus 'follows Ennius' 'correction' of Euripides' *hysteron-proteron* time sequence': see Trimble 2010, 14, *ad loc.*), and also echoes Apollonios Rhodios (cf. esp. 1.536–58 and 2.1277–9: see e.g. Syndikus 1990, 119). Seneca, too, will have known Euripides' *Medea*; in his Argonautic Odes, he displays engagement with the opening of the Euripidean play: see the close analysis by Hutchinson 2013, 189–91.

Senecan drama, makes Medea the starting point, elaborating on her hate. The chorus then picks up on its earlier account of the Argonauts' punishment,[448] explicitly linking their transgression of natural laws and their committing a crime (stealing the Golden Fleece). The chorus's catalogue of the punished Argonauts is concluded by a prayer that Jason be spared. What unites the two odes is not only the theme of seafaring and its attendant dangers but also the odes' macrocosmic relevance, emerging from a pessimistic view of human innovation. Innovation, in the Senecan chorus's view, has been made possible through transgressing the preordained laws of nature, and the result is a world in which boundaries no longer hold. The invention of navigation is one sign of the end of the Golden Age, which is invoked by the first Argonautic chorus as a backdrop. The chorus's concern with the implosion of boundaries not only pertains to the intradramatic realm, but also has obvious resonance in the geography of early imperial Rome, as becomes clear in the anachronistic geographical vista at the end of the second chorus where time and place merge with the audience's reality (cf. *Med*. 364–80).[449] The monster Medea is just one incarnation of the results of human transgressions, albeit a horrifying one, 'an evil worse than the sea, merited prize of the first ship' (*maiusque mari Medea malum | merces prima digna carina*, 362–3). The theme of boundary-transgression that is discussed in the context of sailing in the first Argonautic Ode is pushed further in the second one, where transgressive adventuring is explicitly identified as a crime against natural laws.

In the following, I will analyse the ways in which Seneca's two odes in *Medea* respond to Catullus 64, a poem that, for some readers (including Roman poets) who give particular prominence to the poem's ending, mobilises a similarly pessimistic view of human history.[450] Before considering the thematic

[448] The numerous points of contact between the two odes become immediately evident from the numerous repetitions: see the table at Biondi 1984, 174.

[449] The future vista at *Med*. 375–9 became famous in the history of Senecan reception after Columbus, rendering Seneca '*fatidicus*': see Damsté 1918.

[450] Bramble 1970 is excellent in teasing out latent pessimism and ambiguities prefiguring the ending of Catullus 64 at other moments in the poem. Among ancient readers, Ovid, for instance, responds to Catullus' description of the increasing evil of man at the close of Catullus 64 (384–408) by including this type of Catullan pessimism in his account of man's decline in the Age of Iron in the *Metamorphoses* (1.127–50). In particular, Myers 2012, 250 persuasively connects 'Catullus' pessimistic view of man's moral decline at the end of Poem 64, which focuses on the breakdown in familial relations (64.399–402) … with *Met*. 1.144–8'. See further Myers 2012, 249–54.This is one Augustan reception of Catullus 64 that is attuned to the pessimistic outlook of the poem; other poets have been drawn to the same features. Vergil is a case in point: see esp.

points of contact, verbal allusions, and their wider literary-historical relevance, I shall start with an analysis of the Senecan use of metre in the second Argonautic Ode. In the subsequent discussion, we shall see again how the Senecan lyrics simultaneously engage with other models, most notably Horace, *Odes* 1.3 and the concept of boundaries in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*.

3.5.1 Catullan Metrical Form in the Second Argonautic Ode

The only stanzaic arrangement in Senecan tragedy, the third chorus of *Medea* (579–669) features seven regular sapphic stanzas (essentially as known from Horace's practice) followed, rather unusually, by seven enlarged sapphic stanzas. This is the only example of Horatian-style sapphic stanzas being employed in a tragic choral ode, and Seneca's only example of such stanzaic composition.[451] Henderson, teasing out the rhetorical possibilities of Senecan amplification in his important analysis of the Senecan ode, felt that 'there is something Horatian in this lyric which helps make of it a poem',[452] and that Seneca was responding to Horace's technique of polarity, in 'some first-century anticipation of David West'.[453] So far so good, but what exactly is it that makes *Medea*'s second Argonautic Ode Horatian? Are there, furthermore, any other traces of metrical and poetic inheritance, pointing to the sapphic practice of other poets than Horace, such as to the use of sapphics in Catullus?

Morgan argues that sapphics 'had the status of one of the lightest forms available to a lyric poet'.[454] This view, however, only accounts for a certain set (albeit a large one) of the poems written in sapphics. In particular, it does not account for the use of sapphics in such poems as Horace, *Odes* 1.2 and 1.12, and in tragic choral odes; this is especially true of the third chorus in Seneca's *Medea*, an ode that certainly has something to do with love and love gone wrong, but at the same time is far from suited for the use of a 'light' metre. The

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Nelis 2012, 19–26 (but cf. Trimble 2013, who argues that Vergil, in *Eclogue* 4, while recognising the pessimism of the close of Catullus 64, provides a more optimistic outlook).

[451] But cf. Dale 1968, 141–2. Sapphics are employed stichically by Seneca at *Her. F.* 830–74; *Tro.* 1009–55 (with one closing adonic at 1017); *Phaed.* 274–324, 736–52 (with two adonics, at 740 and 752), 1149–53; *Oed.* 110–53 (with three adonics, at 123, 132, and 144), 416–28 (with a closing adonic); *Thy.* 546–622 (with an adonic closing the ode). From Bishop 1968, 204, it becomes clear that Seneca's use of minor sapphics evades easy classification ('The underlying unity seems to be the idea of an external power, a power outside men and their own wills, which brings pressure, events, changes of one kind or another to bear on man, the dramatis personae, the situation').

[452] Henderson 1983, 111.

[453] Henderson 1983, 96.

[454] Morgan 2010, 183.

place of sapphic stanzas in this choral ode in *Medea* is worth some more attention generally, especially considering a Senecan practice that could have facilitated reception contexts of recitation (as suggested in chapter 1). It is worth reiterating (with Morgan) that, in Hellenistic poetry, sapphics were unlikely choices precisely because of the 'turning of lyric metres to recitative purposes'.[455] Is Seneca merely a poet showing off, in a 'token use' not dissimilar to Statius' use of sapphics in *Silvae* 4.7, next to hendecasyllables in 4.9 and alcaics in 4.5, in an otherwise hexametrical collection? Incidentally, Statius would use exactly those metres also favoured – and perhaps reinvigorated – by his forebear in post-Catullan and post-Horatian times, Seneca. Are those metres employed by Seneca and Statius, to put it bluntly, ones that were easier to write in and would facilitate both composition and reception? After all, one could argue that the metres used by Seneca mirror neither the lyric complexity in Greek tragic and non-tragic precedent nor Horace's elaborate forms. While we certainly have to bear this in mind, opinions about the comparative value of Seneca's use of lyric metre if viewed against Greek precedent do not suffice as adequate explanations for Seneca's practice. Even if one were to grant a higher degree of simplicity to Seneca's compositions, one would still have to account for the fact that he is also a poet capable of highly unusual, complex, and allusively meaningful polymetric composition (to be examined in more detail in the next chapter). His use of the sapphic form as evidenced in this choral ode in *Medea* should perhaps be considered intriguing experimentation rather than token use of a convenient metrical form.

I would like to suggest that Seneca's use of sapphics is relevant for a reading of the ode in at least two important ways. These aspects are concerned with the *ethos* associated with the metre. Firstly, the use of sapphics provides Seneca with a metre that fittingly evokes strong female passions.[456] If sapphics had come to embody two associative qualities by the time they were used by the Roman lyric poets, a more effeminate version pointing back to Sappho and a more forceful one following the masculine precedent of Alkaios, it would be here, in Seneca's sapphic system, that the two associations blend – in describing Medea's anger, a character that has strong associations of masculinity.[457] If,

[455] Morgan 2010, 184.
[456] See Morgan 2010, 195, n. 36.
[457] On Medea and gender see above, n. 514.

secondly, traces of the likely Eastern origins of the sapphic metre could still be felt by Roman recipients,[458] Seneca comes to exploit them fully as a means to evoke connotations of exoticism. The use of sapphics here would then accompany the vista of non-Roman foreign geography at the borders of the empire provided in the ode. A similar link between the sapphic stanza and a vista of non-domestic geography as the backdrop to the betrayal of love is, as we have seen, employed in Catullus 11.

Catullan precedent is, however, important for this ode not only because of Seneca's metrical practice. Already the closural adonic of the first Senecan stanza, *ardet et odit* (582), probably to be understood as a 'terse paradoxical expression' as well as an intensifying hendiadys, strongly echoes the memorable Catullan opening words poem 85, *odi et amo*. If this is the first allusive marker to Catullus, the literary inheritance comes to the fore at *Med*. 599, where the emphatically placed *ausus*, here applied to Phaethon, points back to the first Argonautic Ode, where it characterises the first sailor (*ausus*, 318). This intratextual link, and the general theme of marine transgression by humans, serves to evoke the standard Roman poem on the topic, Catullus 64. The subtle echo would be immediately corroborated in the next line (600), where Theseus' characteristic Catullan epithet, *immemor* (cf. Catull. 64.58 and 135),[459] is reapplied to Phaethon: *immemor metae … paternae*.[460] Seneca's outlook, however, would exceed any pessimism that may be present in the Catullan model: correcting the Catullan version about human transgression, which is followed in Catullus 64 by a propitious wedding, the Senecan version is recited at the exact moment at which a marriage, the bond between two humans, has been broken.[461]

On the formal level, Catullus 11 is perhaps Seneca's closest model. Boyle notes 'Catullus' self-consciously aggressive, even transgressive, employment' of sapphics in poem 11 and aptly links it to Seneca's depiction of the theme of 'marital implosion' in the Senecan ode.[462] But Seneca goes one step further than Catullus. While Catullus's use in poem 11 may be ironic and in pointed contrast

[458] See West 1982, 29–34 on the likely Indo-European origins of the sapphic stanza.
[459] On this characteristic of Theseus see in detail Trimble 2010, 105–6.
[460] Noted by Boyle 2014, 279, *ad loc*. On the role of the personal memory of characters in such literary re-applications, see Armstrong 2006, 31–70.
[461] See Biondi 1984, 152: 'il mito argonautico catulliano infatti è "ideologicamente" opposto a quello senecano'.
[462] Boyle 2014, 271.

to the sapphics in poem 51, Seneca not only inherits the general idea of turning sapphics on their head, but manipulates the traditional form even further, breaking asunder and enlarging a system that could formally not be more closed off. Seneca transgresses the usual form of the regular sapphic stanza, which is constituted by strict synapheia and the strong closural force of the adonic,[463] by enhancing four-line-stanzas to nine lines in the second half of the ode. His transgression on the level of metrical form throws into relief the crucial topic of his ode, the human transgression in breaking the bonds of nature.

3.5.2 Boundary-Breaking: Echoes of Horace, *Odes* 1.3 and Lucretius in the First Argonautic Ode

Seneca's language of boundary-breaking in the Argonautic Odes in *Medea* finds models not only in Catullus 64: there is also Senecan engagement with Lucretian and Horatian precedent. This is especially relevant in the first Argonautic Ode. It turns out that Lucretius' Epicurean detachment and the focus on visual perception – attractive as an allusive counter-model for Seneca's non-detached tragic choruses in *Troades* and *Agamemnon*, as we have seen in the previous chapter of my study – is not the only area in which Seneca's choral odes engage with the Lucretian scientific-didactic poem. In addition, Horace, *Odes* 1.3, a *propemptikon* for Horace's friend Vergil setting out on a sea-journey to Greece, features a significant section on the perils of sea-faring and famous human transgressions, and is another major model for Seneca's odes.[464] Both shared theme and verbal parallels make Seneca's allusion to the Horatian ode likely.[465] If this allusion were recognised as such, the literary-historical account could be straightforward enough. But the situation is complicated by the potential co-presence of the other, pre-Horatian echoes: Catullus, whose poem 64 begins with a memorable section on the first ship, the Argo, and Lucretius, whose interest in the boundaries of nature, and their transgression, would have

[463] The strong closural force of the adonic regularly throws the fourth line of the sapphic stanza into particular prominence: cf. Wilkinson 1963, 106–7, and Zwierlein 1983a, 199.
[464] First noted by Spika 1890, 16. Seneca's engagement with Horace is pertinent not least since Horace, *Odes* 1.3.21–4 is the most important precedent that transfers the *impietas* of transgressing nature's boundaries explicitly to sea-faring: see Kiessling/Heinze 1960, 24, *ad loc*. On the role of *Odes* 1.3 in Seneca's 'poetics of transgression' in the Argonautic Odes, see now esp. Littlewood 2016, 373–7.
[465] Note, perhaps most obviously, the recall of Horace's line-initial *audax* (*Odes* 1.3.25 and 27) in the Senecan line-initial *audax* (318) and *ausus* (318) plus *audax* in 346. All possible allusions to and echoes of Horace, *Odes* 1.3 are provided by Boyle 2014, 209–29 and 272–95, *ad loc.*

been of thematic importance for Seneca.[466] The possibility of Seneca's combined reception of Horace and Lucretius is of significant interest for understanding the Senecan allusive technique and the role of Catullus 64 within it.

It is worthy of note at this point that Horace, *Odes* 1.3 itself has been read to make use of Lucretian vocabulary.[467] The last section of Lucretius' first proem has emerged as the most important Lucretian intertext for the Horatian ode.[468] In this famous passage, Lucretius depicts his philosophical master Epicurus' victory over *religio*:

> Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret
> in terris oppressa gravi sub religione,
> quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat
> horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,
> primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra
> est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra;
> quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
> murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem
> inritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta
> naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.
> ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra
> processit longe flammantia moenia mundi
> atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,
> unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,
> quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique
> qua nam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.
> quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
> opteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.
> (Lucr. 1.62–79)

Note that the Lucretian passage contains both the notions of audacity and emphatic primacy (*primum …* | *… ausus primusque*, Lucr. 1.66–7) that are invoked at the opening of Seneca's first Argonautic Ode in talking about the venture of the first sailor (*Audax nimium qui freta primus*, *Med.* 301).[469] But if Horace, *Odes* 1.3 was the key model for Seneca's 'Argonautic Odes', the presence of Lucretian vocabulary in the Senecan odes might be plausibly explained by the presence of these Lucretian elements already in Horace's poem. Horace, *Odes* 1.3 also contains both notions, audacity (*audax omnia perpeti* | *genus humana ruit per vetitum nefas.* | *Audax …*, 1.3.25–7) and primacy (*qui fragilem truci* | *commisit pelago ratem* | *primus …*, 1.3.10–12), even attributing them to the

[466] Seneca's 'Lucretian echoes' in the Argonautic Odes are now explored in detail by Stöckinger/Winter/Zanker (MS).
[467] Hardie 2009, 202–5, with Dionigi 1997, 20.
[468] Hardie 2009, 204.
[469] Noted by Biondi 1984, 89–90.

sea-farer. Thus, one could analyse this as a straightforward example of Senecan allusion to the Horatian poem, which had in turn engaged with Lucretius, or refer to this phenomenon as a 'window reference' to the earlier Lucretius via Horace. However, it is worthy of note that Thomas called the engagement with a preceding text 'window reference' only if it 'consists of the very close adaptation of a model, noticeably interrupted in order to allow reference back to the source of that model: the intermediate model thus serves as a sort of window onto the ultimate source, whose version is otherwise not visible'.[470] The last bit is an especially relevant part of Thomas's definition. It means that describing the Senecan engagement with both Horace, *Odes* 1.3 and Lucretius as an instance of 'window reference' may not be the most precise way of talking about Seneca's reception of earlier literature in this case: it seems as if Seneca has gone back behind his Augustan model Horace, and continued Horace's own reading of Lucretius. Crucially, Seneca employs language that seems to have come directly from the Lucretian passage in *DRN* 1, specific words that are conspicuously absent from the possible Horatian intermediary, and thus makes the earlier Lucretius 'visible', to echo Thomas's words. Note the Senecan use of *claustra* (*Med.* 342 and Lucr. 1.71) and *terminus*, 'law of nature', a Lucretian key term (*Med.* 369 and Lucr. 1.77).[471] While, in the Senecan ode at *Med.* 369, the literal meaning of *terminus*, 'boundary stone', seems to be the surface meaning, Lucretian reminiscence would bring the connotation 'law of nature' to the fore: this would be strengthened by the co-presence of *foedera mundi* in Seneca's odes (*Med.* 335 and 606). While *foedera* is not an uncommon word in Latin, the context of transgressing the boundaries of nature could evoke Lucretian backgrounds for some recipients.[472] While the surface meaning of *foedera* may have seemed straightforward enough on a first reading, Seneca's choice of words here is an instance of a word's connotation becoming meaningful in the allusive context. The Lucretian resonance would, if recognised, subtly invert the original idea in Lucretius: in the ode in *Medea*, the 'boundaries' are moved by the first

[470] Thomas 1986, 188.
[471] The point is made by Stöckinger/Winter/Zanker (MS). In Lucretius, *terminus* occurs not only in the praise of Epicurus, but also at 1.596, 2.1087, 5.90, and 6.70.
[472] Boyle 2014, 217, *ad* 335–9 notes that the idea of the 'laws of nature', 'though essentially absent from Greek literature and science (Lehoux 2012: 57)', is quite common 'in Roman prose and verse from the late Republic onwards'. This may well be due to an influence of Lucretius, who developed the notion of *foedera naturai*/*naturae foedera*: see *DRN* 1.586, 2.302, 5.310, 5.924, and 6.906–7. On *foedera naturai*, and the reception of the concept in other Latin authors, see further Gladhill 2016, 69–96.

ship (*Terminus omnis motus*, 369). The ship and the first sailors transgress the laws of nature that had been described as fixed earlier in the chorus (the *foedera mundi*, 335). If read against the Lucretian precedent, their transgression breaks precisely those laws the understanding of which was the prize of Epicurus' victory over *religio* in the Lucretian proem.

3.5.3 Echoes of Catullus 64 in the First Argonautic Ode

We have seen Catullan elements in the structure and metrical form of the second Argonautic Ode and considered the possibility of combined Senecan reception of predecessors other than Catullus 64 in the first Argonautic Ode, in an intertextual web that includes Horace, *Odes* 1.3 and verbal echoes of concepts important in Lucretius' *DRN*. It is worthwhile going through the Catullan echoes in the first Argonautic Ode, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dense Senecan intertextuality in this ode. The following text highlights moments of intertextuality that feature in the subsequent discussion:

> Audax nimium qui freta primus 301
> rate tam fragili perfida rupit
> terrasque suas posterga uidens
> animam leuibus credidit auris,
> dubioque secans aequora cursu
> potuit tenui fidere ligno
> inter uitae mortisque uices
> nimium gracili limite ducto.
>
> [...]
>
> Candida nostri saecula patres 329
> uidere procul fraude remota.
> sua quisque piger litora tangens
> patrioque senex factus in aruo,
> paruo diues nisi quas tulerat
> natale solum non norat opes.
> Bene dissaepti foedera mundi
> traxit in unum Thessala pinus
> iussitque pati uerbera pontum
> partemque metus fieri nostri
> mare sepositum.
>
> [...]
>
> Quod fuit huius pretium cursus? 361
> aurea pellis

maiusque mari Medea malum,
merces prima digna carina.
Nunc iam cessit pontus et omnes
patitur leges:
non Palladia compacta manu
regum referens inclita remos
quaeritur Argo –
(Sen. *Med*. 301–8; 329–39; 361–7)

We have seen how the Senecan evocation of the notions of audacity and primacy in the first line is in intertextual dialogue with Lucretius as well as Horace, *Odes* 1.3. This intertextual web also includes Catullus 64, a notable echo not least since it comes from the memorable opening lines of the Catullan short epic: *ausi sunt vada salsa cita decurrere puppi* (Catull. 64.6).[473] If the Catullan intertext in the shared thematic context in the first line were noticed by recipients, they would be introduced to a Catullan subtext that is continued throughout the ode: it would not be implausible to assume some recipients' intertextual expectation of further Catullan echoes in what follows. These echoes would reverberate together with the other intertexts introduced from the outset, especially the Horace and Lucretius.[474] In this intertextually charged Lucretian and Catullan atmosphere, it is relevant that the Senecan ode specifies early on the courageous sea-farer's act of looking back to the land, *terrasque suas posterga uidens* (*Med*. 303). We have seen in the previous chapter how Seneca engages with notions of visuality and spectatorship as recalling a prominent moment from the second proem of Lucretius' *DRN*, where an observer, safely placed on the shore, watches a ship wrecking at sea in the distance. In Catullus 64, scholars have made much of various viewer perspectives and the way in which the poem directs its characters' – and readers' – gaze.[475] Perhaps most relevantly with regard to the setting in the Senecan ode, one recalls Ariadne, in the long *ekphrasis* in the poem, standing abandoned on the shore of Naxos, watching Theseus leave on a ship in the distance.[476] Both these moments of spectatorship

[473] See Biondi 1984, 88, *ad loc*.
[474] Another notable intertext at the opening of the Senecan ode is Ov. *Am*. 2.11.1–2, *prima malas docuit mirantibus aequoris undis | Peliaco pinus vertice caesa vias* (as noted by Biondi 1984, 89, *ad loc*.), a passage that is, however, already an overt polemical engagement with the opening of Catullus 64.
[475] On the notion and role of the gaze in Catullus 64, see esp. Fitzgerald 1995, 140–68.
[476] It is important to note that Ariadne, gazing after departing Theseus, is herself being gazed at since she is part of an artwork, which is, in turn, described in the Catullan *ekphrasis*: see Fitzgerald 1995, 149 ('In the figure of Ariadne, the desiring gaze itself becomes an object of visual satisfaction, displayed on the female body that exposes itself in its preoccupation with gazing.'). Laird 1993, 29 brings out the prominence of the visual paradigm at this moment in

are in turn recalled by Vergil in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, where Dido sees Aeneas and the Trojans depart.[477] Seneca's passage inserts itself into this intertextual discourse of spectatorship. Crucially, however, the perspective is inverted. The first sea-farer of the Senecan chorus is not looking out over the sea – neither in a detached manner like the Lucretian philosopher, nor longingly and abandoned like the Catullan Ariadne, nor devastated and broken-hearted like the Vergilian Dido. His perspective is directed backwards, towards the land;[478] his desire, the chorus knows in its privileged retrospect, must have been never to have left the land, never to have brought back 'the Golden Fleece and that evil worse than the sea, Medea' (*aurea pellis | maiusque mari Medea malum, Med.* 361–2), as the chorus later asserts. The inversion of perspective is thrown into relief if the intertextual web containing the earlier 'observers' – the Lucretian philosopher, the Catullan Ariadne, and Vergil's Dido – is recognised as the backdrop of Seneca's opening.

The visual paradigm is continued in Seneca's ode in lines 329–30 (*Candida nostri saecula patres | uidere procul fraude remota*), opening a passage in which the Catullan subtext reverberates strongly. Seneca's use of *uidere*, prominently placed at the onset of the line, forges an antithetical connection between 'the forefathers' here seeing 'bright eras with crime and deceit far away' with the the first sailor's 'seeing his own land behind him' in the opening line of the ode. This intratextual reference within the ode underpins the juxtaposition between ancient moral probity and its end brought about by seafaring. In this context, it is likely that the Senecan lines also allude to Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, where the myth of the 'Golden Age' – the Senecan *candida … saecula* (*Med.* 329) – is conspicuously also linked to a mention of the Argonautic voyage (see Verg. *Ecl.* 4.34–5: *alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae uehat Argo | delectas heroas*). Senecan allusion to Vergil's famous *Eclogue* would be further strengthened, Boyle notes, by Seneca's choice of *fraus* in the same context (*Med.* 330), recalling 'Virgil's employment of the word to denote the "primal deceit" (*priscae fraudis*) of Prometheus (*Ecl.* 4.31)'.[479] If this

Catullus 64 from yet another angle, suggesting that 'Ariadne may be dwelling on the fact that she cannot be heard or addressed because she is in a picture'.

[477] See Verg. *Aen.* 4.408–11, a passage that is thrown into prominence not least through the Vergilian narrator's direct apostrophe to Dido. See further Smith 2005, 112–14.

[478] Comparison with the opposite desire of the ships is instructive: compare their personification at *Ag.* 575, … *iam timent terram rates | et maria malunt*.

[479] Boyle 2014, 214–15, *ad loc.*

Senecan allusion were recognized, recipients could be put in mind of Vergil's own allusive construction in *Eclogue* 4, and be engaged in a good example of a 'window reference'.

Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* had itself featured significant engagement with Catullus 64. Towards the end of the poem, *Eclogue* 4 contains a clear verbal reference to Catullus 64: *Ecl.* 4.46–7 (*'talia saecla' suis dixerunt 'currite' fusis | concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae*) recalls the Catullan refrain *currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi* (which occurs at Catull. 64.327 = 333, 337, 342, 347, 352, 356, 361, 365, 371, 375, [378], and 381). As Trimble argued in her intertextual reading of the two poems, 'Virgil is putting Catullus himself firmly into the past as part of Roman literary history and as a writer "of his time". This means that Catullus' mythical epic poem, which looked only backwards in history and saw the present as the result of unremitting decline, can be characterized as exemplifying an out-of-date way of looking at the world'.[480] In the Senecan ode, the Catullan subtext that is possibly evoked at *Med.* 329–30 is continued in – and recipients' recognition of Seneca's window reference to Catullus 64 via Verg. *Ecl.* 4 would be aided by – Seneca's use of *Thessala pinus* to refer to the Argo at line 336 (and not, for instance, *Thessalica trabs*, as at *Ag.* 120). This use of *pinus* is meaningful as it could put recipients in mind of its prominent occurrence to refer to the Argo as the last word of the opening line of Catullus 64: *Peliaco quondam prognatae vertice pinus | dicuntur liquidas Neptuni nasse per undas* (Catull. 64.1–2).[481] If recognized, the Senecan combined engagement with Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* and Catullus 64 would add a layer of typically Senecan literary-historical comment to the chorus's song.

Seneca might have agreed with Trimble's reading of the role of Catullus 64 in Vergil's *Eclogue* – and exposed the Vergilian optimism as naïve and impracticable in his post-Augustan tragic context: the Senecan chorus may recall the peace and moral probity of their forefathers' age, but it does not have the privilege of an optimistic Vergilian-like prophecy at the end of the poem – rather, the chorus is violently thrust back into its own present: *Nunc iam cessit pontus et omnes | patitur leges* (*Med.* 364–5).[482] Boyle notes well that '[t]he

[480] Trimble 2013, 276.
[481] A use of *pinus* which, in turn, had already been picked up by Ovid – again, at the very opening of a poem: see *Am.* 2.11.1–2.
[482] Thus, the Senecan reception of Catullus 64, possibly inverting Vergil's earlier reception in *Ecl.* 4, is in tune with earlier – and later – pessimistic readings of that poem: see above, n. 450.

Chorus suddenly switch to the present age (allegedly of the Chorus but really that of the audience), in which the whole world has been opened up through navigation and nothing is in "its former place"'.[483] This Senecan technique prepares recipients for the anachronistic vista of Roman geography in the subsequent catalogue of dangerous *loci* at the borders of the empire. At the exact moment when the ode switches to the audience's present, however, the chorus is made to recall a further Catullan detail: the allusion to Pallas' hand helping build the Argo continues the tradition included at Catull. 64.8–10, where the goddess herself is at work: *diva quibus retinens in summis urbibus arces | ipsa levi fecit volitantem flamine currum, | pinea coniungens inflexae texta carinae*. This detail, alluding to the Roman precedent of Catullus 64, creates a noticeable clash with what could be expected from the Greek tradition of the myth in which, importantly, Argus is mentioned as the builder.[484] This clash will put contemporary recipients in mind of their Roman poetry and as such the Senecan allusion to the account in Catullus 64 plays a part in announcing the ode's sudden switch to the present time. On the surface level, this is the age of the chorus, but it is clear the chorus's *nunc* will have created clear identifications with the audience's own time. Conspicuously, the Senecan ode ends with a pessimistic 'prophecy' rather unlike the one at the end of Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* – and similar to the pessimism detected at the end of Catullus 64:[485] for Seneca's chorus, the Argonautic marine transgression will ultimately bring about a dystopian 'globalized' world in which 'the bonds of things' (*Med*. 376) will be out of joint.

To sum up: while Horace, *Odes* 1.3 has been identified as the most persistent model in both theme and verbal recall in scholarly commentaries, it is impossible to disentangle all the echoes of earlier Latin poetry in this chorus; Lucretius, Catullus 64, and Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* have emerged as further significant intertexts. Crucially, however, the Augustan models are all themselves already in dialogue with their Republican precursors Catullus 64 and Lucretius, and the Senecan intertextual web of echoes can be plausibly explained by him going back to the Republican models themselves (as in the case of Lucretius above) as well as through the notion of 'window reference'.

[483] Boyle 2014, 208.
[484] See Apoll. Rhod. 1.18–19 and 111–12: noted by Boyle 2014, 226, *ad loc*.
[485] See Catull.64.384–408, with n. 450 above.

What is important is, once more, to acknowledge the way in which Seneca's reception of these earlier texts is not restricted to the Augustan models, but reaches back to Rome's late Republican literature. Moreover, Seneca's reception of these texts is decidedly pessimistic.

There is one aspect about Seneca's reception of earlier literature in this Argonautic Ode, specifically of Catullus 64, that could merit some more attention. Adapting a key question that Nelis asked about Catullus' reception of earlier poetry, we may ask – perhaps with even more vehemence – about Seneca's reading of Catullus 64: when Seneca read Catullus (and, say, Republican tragedy, Lucretius, and the Augustan poets),

> did he appreciate in their poetry only the experiments in narrative form, obedience to certain metrical rules, their artful choice of erudite vocabulary, attention to questions of euphony and structure, the use of obscure myths and complex intertextual allusion to earlier poetry? Or did he also see that their poetry, even when it seemed only to recount stories from the distant world of Greek myth, actually dealt in various ways with the realities … of politics and morality, of national identity and, in the broadest sense, of the course of … history?[486]

Is Seneca, one could ask, hinting at the possibility of a political reading of Horace, *Odes* 1.3 and Catullus 64 as well as his own ode – by means such as the use of anachronism as a marker at the end of the ode? For some recipients, the anachronistic marker at the end of chorus, the other echoes of Catullus 64 in the ode, and the geographical framework at the ode's close (which references potential military dangers for the Romans at *Med*. 373–4, in the north-west – in the mention of the rivers *Albis* and *Rhenum* – and, crucially, the east – in the mention of the river *Araxes*, and the peoples of India and Persia) may facilitate recall of another element of Catullus 64:[487] its striking location of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis at Pharsalus (see Catull. 64.37). Crucially, *Pharsalia* is mentioned for the first time in Latin at this point in the Catullan epic, which has made the poem very open to reception post 48 BC as civil-war poetry.[488] Thessaly, the region where Pharsalus is located, is of course important since the pines that provided the material for the Argo hail from the Thessalian Mount

[486] Nelis 2012, 13.
[487] Might it be not coincidental that Seneca chooses 'Tethys' as the personification of the sea at the close of his ode (*Med*. 377), thus concluding the echoes of Catullus 64 in this chorus by subtly recalling the Thetis of Catullus 64?
[488] See above, n. 370, on the question of when Catullus 64 was written. 'Pharsalus' signifying the civil wars that followed is a common conflation in Latin poetry: see Verg. *Georg*. 1.489–92, Ov. *Met*. 15.823–4, Man. 1.907–14, and Luc. 1.680.

Pelion.[489] Some moments of Seneca's ode could thus be read to be continuing a line of reception of Catullus 64 that utilised the pessimistic moments in the Catullan epic for civil-war poetry.[490] Re-read with the benefit of knowing the ode's ending that, in its anachronism, gestures towards the recipients' political and historical situation, the ode could then gain further inflections, and continue the dark civil-war reception of Catullus 64 in Augustan poetry. There may only be a very subtle hint licensing such a reading focus for the Senecan ode here, but we shall see in the next chapter of my study how Seneca's engagement with another set of texts, Horace's *Odes*, is in part shaped by this feature: this is literature that *can* be read in a pessimistic manner – as civil-war poetry.

3.6 Sounds of Exoticism: Medea Maenad and Catullus 63

In addition to the wedding song (chorus I) and the two Argonautic Odes (choruses II and III), there is one more choral ode in *Medea* – and again the Senecan engagement with Catullus is pervasive and meaningful. The fatal dangers that Medea's disappointed love and her anger pose, which the chorus elaborated on in the Argonautic Odes, are described most graphically in the play's last ode. The deserted wife's anger of the beginning of the third chorus has now turned into Medea's manic frenzy.[491] What was described in the more abstract terms of imagery and metaphor before is now turned into an extraordinarily rapid account of physical symptoms and (in)actions: in the fourth chorus's description, Medea's love (*amor saeuus*, 850) and anger (*ira*, 853) have her caught in a dangerously precarious state between violence and swiftness on the one hand (*praeceps … rapitur*, 850–1; *uultus citatus*, 853; *caput feroci | quatiens superba motu | regi minatur*, 854–6) and inability to move on the other (*riget*, 854); her complexion alternates between bloody, fiery redness and pallor (*cruenta*, 849; *pallor fugat ruborem*, 859; *nullum uagante*

[489] As is emphasised in the openings of both Euripides' and Ennius' *Medea* (*ἐν νάπαισι Πηλίου*, Eur. *Med.* 3, and *in nemore Pelio*, Enn. *scen.* 208 Jocelyn). See Vogt-Spira 2000, 268–72 on the Euripidean and Ennian versions, and further Hutchinson 2013, 188–93 for the interrelations between the Euripidean, Ennian, and Senecan *Medea*s. On the use of Thessaly in Latin poetry, see esp. Ambühl 2016.

[490] See above, n. 450, with further references.

[491] Nussbaum 1997 discusses the excesses of Medea's passions in detail. On the beginning of the fourth chorus, Nussbaum remarks, 'What we have here is a love that has itself, while still being love, turned murderous' (233).

forma | *seruat diu colorem*, 860–1);[492] and her erratic, aimless movement is a vivid expression of her inner turmoil (*praeceps*, 850; *quatiens*, 855; *huc fert pedes et illuc*, 862).[493] Medea is inextricably caught between the destructive forces of anger and love (*Frenare nescit iras* | *Medea, non amores*, 866–7): the chorus's identification of her as the *cruenta maenas* in the ode's opening line and the description of her manic frenzy elaborates on the Nurse's account of Medea's madness earlier in the play, demonstrating the inefficacy of the Nurse's advice (*Alumna, celerem quo rapis tectis pedem?* | *resiste et iras comprime ac retine impetum.* | *Incerta qualis entheos gressus tulit* | *cum iam recepto maenas insanit deo*, 380–3). The whole chorus runs thus:

> Quonam cruenta maenas
> praeceps amore saevo
> rapitur? quod impotenti
> facinus parat furore?
> uultus citatus ira
> riget, et caput feroci
> quatiens superba motu
> regi minatur ultro.
> quis credat exulem?
>
> Flagrant genae rubentes,
> pallor fugat ruborem,
> nullum uagante forma
> seruat diu colorem.
> huc fert pedes et illuc,
> ut tigris orba natis
> cursu furente lustrat
> Gangeticum nemus.
>
> Frenare nescit iras
> Medea, non amores;
> nunc ira amorque causam
> iunxere: quid sequetur?
> quando efferet Pelasgis

[492] Seneca uses the juxtaposition of words that are semantically antithetical for characterisation also elsewhere; in *Medea*, cf. Tiphys, *palluit audax*, at 346. Medea is rather 'flushing' with anger than 'blushing' with shame: on the psychological mechanisms behind flushing, blushing, and going pale, see Crozier 2006, esp. 134–52. For relevant literary depictions, it is worth comparing, with Costa 1973, 149, *ad loc.*, the alternating redness and pallor as symptoms of Medea's overwhelming emotions at Ap. Rhod. 3.297–8, *ἀπαλὰς δὲ μετετρωπᾶτο παρειὰς* | *ἐς χλόον, ἄλλοτ' ἔρευθος, ἀκηδείῃσι νόοιο* (describing Medea's first love for Jason); cf. also the similar description of the phenomenon at Hor. *Odes* 1.13.5–6, *tum nec mens mihi color* | *certa sede manet*.

[493] It is worthy of note that this feature and Seneca's phrasing (*huc fert pedes et illuc*, 862) is similar to one of the two surviving fragments of Ovid's *Medea*, preserved at Sen. *Suas*. 3.7 (text: Winterbottom 1974): *feror huc illuc, uae, plena deo* (= fr. 2 Ribbeck). In the Ovidian scene, Medea herself is describing her frenzied movement.

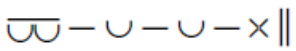
nefanda Colchis aruis
gressum, metuque soluet
regnum simulque reges?
Nunc, Phoebe, mitte currus
nullo morante loco,
nox condat alma lucem,
mergat diem timendum
dux noctis Hesperus.
(*Med.* 849–78)

What contributes most to the sense of disorientation and rushing that comes across in this chorus is the ode's remarkable form. For one, it is extremely short and it almost seems as if the chorus's voice had finally reached a state where they want it all to end – after Medea's madness has run its course, there is no need for any further reflection.[494] Moreover, it is as if Medea's preceding song had such an impressive impact on the chorus that the chorus members can only express themselves in similarly short lines,[495] which strongly contribute to the sense of swiftness. A similar sense of erratic frenzy and uncertain movement is characteristic of odes with cultic associations and Seneca's ode may be compared with not only several Greek examples but also striking lines from Roman Republican tragedy, as we have seen in chapter 1.[496] A closer consideration of the Senecan ode's metre, however, a peculiar pattern that has elicited scholarly controversy, reveals much more than a general sense of speed: we shall see that Seneca's use of metre here is also a literary-historical statement. This ode is a prime example of Seneca's allusive technique relying on an intriguing interaction between metrical, verbal, and thematic allusions. In the following, I shall first discuss the ode's metrical structure and then argue that this chorus, in its metre, general outlook, and verbal details, is a close engagement with Catullus 63 (the Attis poem), which features a sense of frenzied exoticism no less disturbing than Medea's. Seneca's last chorus in *Medea* relies on the Catullan precedent to inscribe Medea's rage into a literary canon of cultic frenzy. Unlike in the previous examples, Seneca's reception of Catullus here is no inversion of the model's poetics: rather, the Senecan ode

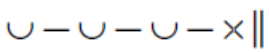
494 This ties in with a similar arrangement in *Thyestes*, where the fourth chorus is different in its outlook from the other three: the chorus's rhetoric is finally assimilated to the tragic world it is forced to inhabit, and it no longer provides any confident alternative views: see Davis 1989, esp. 431–5.
495 For another example of a Senecan character mimicking the form and style of the play's evil protagonist, cf. the messenger in *Thyestes*, whose rhetoric, in the course of his report, becomes more and more like Atreus': see Tarrant 1985, 180, and Littlewood 2004, 214 and 238–9.
496 See chapter 1, section 1.4, 'The Chorus in Naevius: Bacchus and Uncertainty'.

continues – perhaps intensifies – the earlier poem's erratic atmosphere and poetic gestures towards frenzy. At the same time, Seneca's intervention in literary history reinstates the topic of manic frenzy in tragedy from the realm of Catullus' non-dramatic lyric, responding to Catullus' own engagement with the (Greek) dramatic tradition.[497] The results, however, of Attis' and Medea's frenzied states turn out to be quite different.

The description of Seneca's metre in this chorus is controversial;[498] Häuptli recently reconsidered the ode's metrical structure.[499] The Senecan ode falls into three stanzas, each of which is concluded by a (shorter) clausula. The longer lines scan like this:



In the overwhelming majority (22 lines) the first element is long; only four lines (all of which are in the first stanza) start with a double short. The three clausulae (at 857, 864, and 878) scan like this:



On Leo's reading, the lines are anacreontics (with a contracted first element) plus the shortened clausulae.[500] The anacreontic is a metre closely related to the ionic dimeter (*ionicus a minore*), and ionic associations would be fitting for the ode's subject-matter since the metre carries associations of exoticism and cultic revelry.[501] A case in point is the use of ionics in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where three choruses feature ionics – they even trump the traditional use of anapaests in the *parodos*. Häuptli also compares the use of ionic dimeters in the third chorus of the Euripidean satyr play *Kyklops*, where seven ionic dimeters are each followed by clausulae (in this case, the clausulae are extended, rather than shortened). As

[497] The key intertext here must surely be a *Bacchae* play, either Euripides' or Accius'. Hutchinson 1988, 312, n. 72 suggests that '[i]n general the *Bacchae* of Accius may be a more important model than the *Bacchae* of Euripides'. Harrison 2005, 13 argues that Attis' ecstatic journey from Greece to Asia 'is an inversion of the journeys of devotees of gods who travel from Asia Minor to the great cities of Greece' (cf. Eur. *Bacchae* 64–8). Moreover, Attis' first speech (Catullus 63.12–26) has several echoes of the *parodos* of the Euripidean *Bacchae* (see Harrison 2005, 16, and the discussion of further possible echoes at 17–18). Metrically, the third ode of Euripides' satyr play *Kyklops* is also similar to the Senecan lines: see main text below.

[498] Cf. Zwierlein 1994 in his metrical conspectus ('iamb. dim. cat. cum tribus clausulis') and Costa 1973, 148, *ad loc.*, with Leo 1878, 136.

[499] Häuptli 2002. In what follows, I shall summarise some of the scholarly debate, and the material from Häuptli's article.

[500] Leo 1878, 136.

[501] See West 1982, 124–7.

in Seneca's ode, Häuptli points out,[502] the metre there occurs in an atmosphere of exaltation: in the Euripidean ode, the chorus is mimicking Polyphemus' exalted state of drunkenness. If Seneca's longer lines can be described as anacreontics, it is worth returning to the metre of Catullus 63: Häuptli was the first to make a link between Catullus 63 and the fourth chorus in *Medea*, a fruitful connection both in terms of content and metrical form.[503] Reading Seneca's chorus with Catullus is the best way to understand the Senecan metrical construction. Crucially, the metre of Catullus 63, usually referred to as galliambics following the terminology of the second-century AD metrician Hephaestion,[504] can be read as a double catalectic anacreontic:

$$\cup\cup-\cup,-\cup--|\cup\cup-\cup,\overline{\cup\cup}\cup\times\|$$

This description brings the Catullan and Senecan metres in close alignment. However, the Catullan precedent can teach us more about Seneca's metre: Häuptli's main point is the intriguing suggestion that the last long line of each of Seneca's three stanzas combines with each clausula to form perfectly recognisable galliambics (with long first elements):

$$--\cup-\cup--\ \text{plus}\ --\cup-\cup\times.$$

Thus, *regi minatur ultro.* | *quis credat exulem?* (*Med.* 856–7), *cursu furente lustrat* | *Gangeticum nemus* (*Med.* 864–5), *and mergat diem timendum* | *dux noctis Hesperus* (*Med.* 877–8) all scan:

$$--\cup-\cup--|--\cup-\cup\times\|$$

This is a galliambic line whose exact form is mirrored at Catullus 63.73 (*iam iam dolet quod egi, iam iamque paenitet*).[505] This metrical analysis persuasively suggests Catullan echoes at the end of each of Seneca's stanzas, which would provide extra closure. The metrical allusions would also serve to evoke precisely

[502] Häuptli 2002, 319.
[503] Häuptli 2002, building on the metrical observation by Crusius 1992, 99 (who had already pointed out that the clausulae can be read as the second half of a galliambic line). See also Zanobi 2014, 97–100 (essentially an abbreviated English translation of Häuptli's article).
[504] See Hephaestion 12.3 (p. 38 Consbruch). On this passage see further Wilamowitz 1879 (who posits the existence of Greek galliambic hymns in the Hellenistic period based on the lines quoted by Hephaestion), Mulroy 1976 (arguing against Wilamowitz's position), Hutchinson 1988, 310–11, and Nauta 2005. See also Dale 2007.
[505] Häuptli 2002, 324, with Crusius 1992, 99. It may be too subtle to suggest that the content of this Catullan line ('Now, now my deed gives me pain, now, now it gives me regret') highlights the very point of difference between Catullus' Attis and Seneca's Medea: her deed will not cause her any regrets.

that Roman poem whose theme and atmosphere are most pertinent to the present ode.

If recipients noticed the Catullan echo in the Senecan use of metre, the Catullan atmosphere would be corroborated in the close recall of words and striking parallels. Häuptli identifies several persuasive points of contact between Catullus 63 and the Senecan ode in three areas:[506] fast and erratic movement (Catullus 63: *citato pede*, 2; *citatis erroribus*, 18; *volitare vaga cohors*, 25; *citatis tripudiis*, 26; *citus properante pede*, 30; *rapidae properipedem*, 34; *fugiens citus abiit*, 42; Sen. *Med.*: *praeceps rapitur*, 850–1; *huc fert pedes et illuc*, 862; *feroci motu*, 854–5; *cursu furente,* 864), shaking movement (Catullus 63: *capita iaciunt*, 23; *quate iubam*, 83; Sen. *Med.*: *caput quatiens*, 854–5), and the depiction of rage and anger (Catullus 63: *stimulatus furenti rabie*, 4; *vagus animi*, 4;[507] *furibunda*, 31 and 54; *rabidus furor*, 38; *rapida rabie*, 44; *animo aestuante*, 47; *rabie fera*, 57; *furor*, 92; *incitatos*, 93; *rabidos*, 93; *ferox*, 78; *furor*, 78; *furoris ictu*, 79; Sen. *Med.*: *amore saeuo*, 850; *impotenti furore*, 851–2; *citatus ira*, 853; *feroci motu*, 854–5; *cursu furente*, 864; *frenare nescit iras*, 866; *ira*, 868). Even though the shared context of cultic frenzy may have favoured independent similar phrasings, Häuptli's quantitative evidence, if taken together with the galliambic echo in Seneca's ode, creates some plausibility for Seneca's conscious engagement with Catullus 63. Even Medea herself is made to share in the characterisation of Catullus' Attis: a striking precursor of Medea's description as *cruenta maenas*, emasculated Attis had referred to him-/herself as *ego maenas* (Catull. 63.69). All in all, Catullus 63 should be considered an important allusive reference for the last ode in *Medea* – but, while Häuptli pursued his analysis in order to explain the ode's metre and Zanobi employed Häuptli's findings in order to argue for pantomimic elements in the Senecan ode,[508] scholars have not acknowledged the deeper thematic affinities between the two lyric poems and the literary-historical implications of Seneca's engagement with the Catullan model. Again, Seneca's

[506] Häuptli 2002, 325.

[507] I follow Harrison's text (2005a) in adopting Parthenius' *vagus animi*, which is a good emendation of the non-sensical transmitted *amnis*. Lachmann's *animis*, however, is plausible too.

[508] Zanobi 2014, 97–100, with 25–9 on her account of the possibility of reading Catullus 63 as pantomime (already suggested by Newman 1990, 343–66, and briefly in Häuptli 2002, 313, 'Wir "sehen" die Titelfigur zu Beginn des dritten Aktes … und vor dem finalen Akt … als Pantomimin'). The *Medea* commentaries do not acknowledge the parallels between Catullus 63 and the Senecan ode.

reception would be drawn to poems that carry within themselves moments of tragedy and dramatisation.[509]

Both the Medea and Attis from myth and the Catullan and Senecan versions share several features that extend beyond an undoubted (but rather vague) sense of exoticism and Easternness. Seneca's Medea is an Attis figure in the same way as Catullus' Attis is a Medea figure; where Catullus creates Attis with the Euripidean Medea in the intertextual background, Seneca looks to Catullus' Attis for his characterisation of Medea, and at the same time restores her to the tragic genre. Note first, how Seneca's Medea, linked throughout the play with fire and water imagery, is associated with sea imagery especially in the choral odes.[510] While the Argonautic Odes make the connection explicit, the fourth chorus relies on its engagement with Catullus 63 to continue the associations of water and journeying across the sea: in alluding to Catullus 63, that poem's setting and first line are also evoked.[511] Catullus 63 starts by referring to the displaced Attis' journey across the sea from Asia, and then moves into a description of frenzied and erratic behaviour:

> Super alta vectus Attis celeri rate maria,
> Phrygium ut nemus citato cupide pede tetigit,
> adiitque opaca silvis redimita loca deae,
> stimulatus ibi furenti rabie, vagus animi,
> ...
> (Catullus 63.1–4)

While Catullus describes the background and setting of the dramatic scene in detail, the Senecan chorus can rely on the play's setting already being sufficiently established at this point in the tragedy. The sea-journeying and its cosmic repercussions – the former referenced in the first line in Catullus –

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[509] Thomson 1997, 374 confidently speaks about Catullus 63 as 'clearly in essence a tragedy', agreeing with Guillemin 1949. The tension between Thomson's 'clearly' and 'in essence' may reflect the scholarly unease with classifying the genre of the poem, although the poem's dramatic elements in the use of direct speech and in expressing emotions and actions in a kinetic manner should to my mind be beyond doubt. See further Fantuzzi/Hunter 2004, 477–85, who also discuss the affinities between Catullus 63 and 64, links that may have facilitated the Senecan reception of both poems. Hardie 2012, 225–9 suggests some links between Catullus 63 and 64 and their, at times, combined reception in Vergil's *Aeneid*.

[510] On Medea's association with sea imagery already in Euripides, see e.g. Boedeker 1997, 130. Seneca's Medea asserts her divine power over the elements (including the sea) at 166–7, *Medea superest: hic mare et terras uides | ferrumque et ignes et deos et fulmina*; on the possible role of Stoic *krasis* of fire and water in this and other passages in the tragedies, see Rosenmeyer 1989, 113–35. Medea's link with *mare* is particularly emphasised in the play through the alliterative force of *Medea ... mare*: cf. esp. *Med.* 362, *maiusque mari Medea malum*.

[511] The poem's opening line serves as its quasi-title; it is cited, for instance, by both Marius Victorinus (*ars gramm.* p. 154 K.) and Terentianus Maurus (*de metris* 2900, p. 411 K.) as the paradigm for the galliambic metre.

occupied the space of two entire choral odes in Seneca's *Medea*. In the fourth chorus, the Catullan subtext, introduced, as we have seen, by the verbal allusion in *cruenta maenas* (*Med*. 849; cf. Catullus 63.69) and the shared description of frenzy, and corroborated in the metrical echo of the Catullan galliambics at the end of each Senecan stanza, is enough to evoke sea imagery as a backdrop to Medea's fiery rage and frenzy.

The sea imagery and theme of journeying are particularly significant to both Attis and Medea because they are both displaced characters: their erratic movement and wandering, described in similar terms in Catullus 63 and the Senecan ode, are not just expressions of their cultic frenzy (predominantly in the case of Attis) and their excess of emotions (predominantly in the case of Medea). Rather, they are a way of poetically depicting their deeper dividedness. Through their erratic movement and behaviour, these characters are – the recipients are made to understand – not only identified as exiles, displaced from their original contexts (cf. the chorus's comment *quis credat exulem?*, *Med*. 857), but also shown to be in a transitional state when it comes to their core identities, a feature continued from the Greek tradition.[512] In both Catullus' and Seneca's handling of their respective myths, their protagonist's transgressive behaviour is inextricably linked to gender(ed) conflicts: both Attis' and Medea's male features are taken away. While Attis emasculates himself,[513] Medea, 'a manlike and active female' already in her Euripidean version,[514] has lost her manlike position of power through Jason's betrayal and is plotting her revenge to regain it. Both characters, however, move through the process of emasculation to very different results: while Attis ends up as the eternal *famula* (Catull. 63.90) of the 'great goddess' Cybele, Medea will be no less than a divinity herself by the end of this play. In the *Medea*, Seneca inverts what is found in the Catullan precedent. The Senecan lines are not on a frenzied servant

[512] Cf. Attis' striking paradoxical comment on his own dividedness, *ego mei pars* (Catull. 63.69) with Medea's eventual *Medea nunc sum* (Sen. *Med*. 910). On Medea's self-division, both Euripidean and Senecan, see further Gill 1987. For the Senecan Medea as a calculated plotter who employs irrationality deliberately, see Schiesaro 2009b, 228–34.

[513] Attis' gender fluidity may already be indicated in his/her very name in Catullus: see Harrison 2005, 12–13, who points out that 'Atthis' can be a female name and mean 'woman from Attica'. Seneca would have been aware of the latter connotation: cf. 'the choruses of Athenian women', *Atthidum … choris*, referred to at *Phaed*. 106.

[514] Harrison 2005, 18. On Medea's 'masculine' features in Euripides, see further Boedeker 1997, esp. 134–7. In Pindar's *Fourth Pythian*, first performed 31 years before Euripides' play, Medea had still emerged as a paragon of femininity; in O'Higgins' reading of *Pythian* 4, Medea 'appears both exceptional and typical of all females' (O'Higgins 1997, 103).

of Mater Magna,[515] who had, presumably, been unfaithful towards his parents, but on the frenzied *magna mater* Medea, who perverts the pattern: she kills her children in response to Jason's infidelity towards her.[516] In the end, the chorus's horrors, in part expressed via the Catullan precedent, are exceeded. While employing a fitting model in Catullus 63, the chorus ultimately gets Medea's identification wrong: she is not just another Attis or *cruenta maenas*. Rather, she is a *magna mater* indeed: a mother even that, in her manic revenge, has achieved 'more' – *maius* – than all other mothers possibly could.[517] Seneca's Medea is not a mere victim of irrationality; rather, '"irrationality" is a weapon she wields with poise and sophistication, clear intent and strategy'.[518] She has become a danger larger than life and – specifically – larger than the literary echoes of the Republican Catullus. Unlike the Catullan Attis, she herself will turn into a divinity, riding off in a dragon chariot.[519]

3.7 Conclusion

A series of Senecan engagements with the Republican Catullus has emerged. It allows us to see how choral patterns in the tragedy are underpinned by the organisation of the Catullan allusions and intertextual presences. Seneca's first and last odes in the play are choruses focused on individuals and have been argued to draw on the Catullan poems with a decided focus on similar individuals, the epithalamian 61 and 62, and the frenzied Attis of 63. If the Catullan background of Seneca's wedding song in *Medea* (the first ode) is recognized, recipients will gain a further indication of Seneca's reception of earlier Latin poetry: Seneca's reception is characterized by a manner according to which past moments of optimism, such as epithalamian joy, are inverted to suit their new tragic environments. These odes on individuals, the first and fourth chorus, frame the choruses in the play's centre, the Argonautic Odes, with their movement that extends from the fates of individuals to the universal

[515] For an overview of Attis' status in myth and cultic practice before Catullus 63, see Bremmer 2005.
[516] Throughout Seneca's play, the pairing *mater* – *Medea* is significant: see Traina 1979 and Segal 1982.
[517] On the '*maius*' motif as Seneca's compositional guiding principle in *Medea*, see Seidensticker 1985.
[518] Schiesaro 2009b, 228. Cf. also Schiesaro's overall psychoanalytical assessment of *Medea* as a whole as 'a wish fulfilled, a compulsion satisfied against the requirements of logic and reality' (231).
[519] Cf. Mater Magna's lion chariot at Catullus 63.74–7.

plane. In the first Argonautic Ode in particular, Catullus 64, which moves to a similarly universal outlook, emerged as the most relevant Catullan intertext. As I have suggested, Seneca's reception of Catullus in *Medea* aids him in expressing a pessimistic view of human progress, one that is fitting for Seneca's chorus, ultimately despondent in the face of the triumph of evil in the *Medea*.

In the following chapter, I shall examine Seneca's reading of Rome's other major lyric poet, Horace. We shall see that the Senecan reception displays similar reading strategies – continuing and developing detected darker moments of pessimism and inverting moments of optimism. While we may move from the Republican Neoteric poetry of Catullus to the august lyrics of Horace, we shall see that, for Seneca, Horace's *Odes* can still be read as 'Republican' poetry: it is the echoes and memories of Rome's Republic-ending civil-war which are explored in Horace's *Odes* that appeal to Seneca and the chorus in the world of his post-Augustan tragedies.

CHAPTER 4

Moments of Tragedy and Civil War. Seneca's Horatian Lyrics

ubi accessere numeri et egregium sensum adstrinxere certi pedes, eadem illa sententia uelut lacerto excussiore torquetur

(Sen. *Ep*. 108.10)

Maximum indicium est malae mentis fluctuatio et inter simulationem virtutum amoremque vitiorum adsidua iactatio. … Homines multi tales sunt qualem hunc describit Horatius Flaccus, numquam eundem, ne similem quidem sibi; adeo in diversum aberrat.

(Sen. *Ep*. 120.20–1)[520]

4.1 Introduction

In addition to some verbal quotations from the Horatian *Satires* in Seneca's *Epistles*,[521] Horace's *Odes* have long been noted to be the most important formal model for Seneca's choral odes in the tragedies.[522] Needless to say, the adequate description of Seneca's use of metre, especially of his anapaests and the colometry in the polymetric odes, has played a vital role in establishing the text of the tragedies.[523] This chapter focuses on Seneca's tragic reception of Horace's *Odes* in close case studies of chosen examples. Given Horace's formative influence on the use of the established Greek lyric metres in Latin,[524] any lyric poetry written in Latin after Horace must be conspicuously Horatian. Seneca's tragic use of lyric metres (apart from the anapaests and the polymetric odes,

[520] The passage left out in this quotation is Seneca quoting from Horace's *Satires*, Hor. *S*. 1.3.11–17: see further below, n. 521.

[521] See Sen. *Ep*. 86.13 (Hor. *S*. 1.2.27 = 1.4.92), *Ep*. 119.13 (Hor. *S*. 1.2.114–16), *Ep*. 120.20 (Hor. *S*. 1.3.11–17).

[522] See the groundbreaking study by Friedrich Leo (1878), vital for the description of Seneca's colometry in general. Note, however, that Leo underestimated the value of the A tradition (see Carlsson 1926, with Axelson 1967, 7–25, and Tarrant 1976a, 52–94). The polymetric odes are discussed at Leo 1878, 110–34 (on Seneca's polymetrics, see also main text below, at the beginning of section 4.4, 'Horatian Sounds, Republican Echoes: Seneca's Reception of *Odes* 3.3 in the Third Chorus of *Agamemnon*'). See also the clear account by Tarrant 1976a, 372 (with further references).

[523] For the authoritative account, see Zwierlein 1983a, 182–202, who focuses on the anapaestic colometry. On Seneca's anapaests see now also Danckaert 2013, who provides substantial data about Senecan anapaestic practice (but unpersuasive conclusions); he gives a summary of the scholarly debate at 164–71. See Tarrant 1976a, 372–81 for the polymetric odes in *Agamemnon*. On the polymetric odes in general, see Bußfeld 1935, especially 41–5 for a useful overview of the metrical combinations used by Seneca.

[524] See esp. Heinze's foundational study of Horace's metres (Heinze 1960), and Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, xxxviii–xlvi.

Seneca's tragedies have choral odes in the first asclepiad, in glyconics, in sapphics, and one in catalectic iambic dimeters with three *clausulae*)[525] is at the centre of the later poet's literary engagement with the Roman lyric tradition, most notably Horace.[526] Metre is as much a semiotic unit to be taken seriously in literary studies as are words, images and figures of thought.[527] This is especially true in analyses with an interest in allusion and intertextuality. My chapter will thus pay close attention to those moments where Seneca's engagement with Horace combines verbal or thematic allusion with metrical allusion. My study does not, however, attempt to give a mere technical description of Seneca's handling of Horace's lyric metres.

Most significantly, the present chapter will examine how Seneca's Horatian reception reveals the way in which Seneca read earlier Latin literature. Seneca's choruses include moments at which the Augustan poets had themselves recalled their literary and historical past. These echoes often lend themselves to be read as 'darker' crevices of Augustan poetry, and it has thus been suggested that Seneca was, for instance, the first pessimistic reader of Vergil.[528] In the choral odes, Seneca's use of the Roman literary past not only displays this predilection for reading his predecessors pessimistically. As we have seen in the case of Catullus, he also inverts – or corrects – moments of optimism to suit his tragic poetics. This is also true of Seneca's reception of Horace.[529] What is more, however, the Senecan engagement with Horace reveals a more specific type of pessimistic reception: one that includes echoes of the

[525] There are also lines in dactylic hexameters, and some lyric metres used outside the choral odes. See Zwierlein's OCT *conspectus* (1993, 464–9).
[526] For the relationship between Seneca and Roman Republican tragic lyrics, see chapter 1, for Seneca's engagement with Catullus, see chapter 3.
[527] Fussell 1979 provides three ways in which metre 'means': (1) as the 'primary convention of artifice in poetry', distinguishing it from ordinary language; (2) as a commentary on its own form, meaningfully 'varying from itself'; (3) by association 'with certain kinds of statements and feelings'. See the discussion by Morgan 2010, 4–7, who is predominantly concerned with the third way of meaning in his study. For Seneca's choral odes, it will be most profitable to view Seneca's practice with Fussell's second and third categories in mind, though these categories are in no way mutually exclusive in any case.
[528] See Putnam 1995, 246–85, who concludes, 'Virgil not only offered Seneca the *exempla* of heroes yielding to unbridled violence but the lexical means by which he could texture so intensely the unleashing of tragic destructiveness. Seneca's "reading" of the *Aeneid* follows in the line of superbly differentiated acceptances of the epic by Propertius, Horace, and Ovid. His is a more partial as well as, appropriately, a more passionate critique than those his predecessors advance. It construes as all embracing for humanity what is only the *Aeneid*'s final truth: that political heroes in action base their lives on violence, not forgiveness, that history is germinated by individual emotionality, not collective restraint' (279).
[529] And it is a wider tendency to be observed in Neronian literature and culture: see e.g. the contributions in Castagna/Vogt-Spira 2002.

Republican past and civil war. In what follows, I shall trace this Horatian stream of allusion in Seneca's odes in case studies of choral odes in *Thyestes*, *Oedipus*, *Agamemnon*, and *Hercules Furens*. Ultimately, however, the Republican undercurrent in the chorus's voice is silenced by the play's evil protagonists or against the backdrop of the tragic settings, and can be read as another – ultimately, failed – attempt by the chorus's voice to create some detachment from the tyrannical tragic environments which it is forced to inhabit.

4.2 Augustan Poetry and Civil War: Seneca Reading Vergil and Horace in the Third Chorus of *Thyestes*

The way Seneca's chorus engages with Augustan poetry can be best introduced by examining one pertinent choral ode in its entirety. An excellent example is the third chorus in *Thyestes*. This ode, firstly, advertises its Romanness through anachronistic references to contemporary imperial Rome that stand out in the Mycenaean environment of the Greek myth in which the play is set. This is perhaps most obvious in the chorus's allusion to a practice according to which a ruler endorsed by Jupiter bestows diadems on client kings (599), and in its explicitly Roman and imperial geographical references (602–3), with the Parthians a constant threat on the margins of their Roman world. Elsewhere in this play, the tragic characters display their thoroughly Roman frame of reference in their use of *Lares* (264) and *Penates* (775). The chorus, in the second ode,[530] even speaks about *Quirites* (396).[531] Secondly, the ode reveals how Seneca's reception of the Augustans is drawn to Republican memories, to echoes of Rome's Republic-ending civil war in Vergil, Horace, and Ovid. While reading *Thyestes* as a mere political allegory would superficially narrow down its layers of meaning and underestimate the literary and dramatic dynamics at work, it is fair to say that the play, staging a tyrant at a time when, effectively, a

[530] This chorus contains another excellent example of Seneca's pessimistic reception of Vergil. The so-called 'kingship ode', in praise of the ideal king, features significant engagement with Verg. *Georg*. 2.490–8. Tarrant convincingly argues that Seneca's 'response mutes the Vergilian tone of triumph: fear and passion are not decisively "ground underfoot" (*subiecit pedibus*), but "put off" or "laid aside" (*posuit* 348), suggesting a burden or encumbrance gratefully escaped. Most revealing of all, fate (i.e., death) is not overcome but willingly met (367 *occurrit … libens*). Seneca's final answer to the question of kingship is a characteristic paradox that owes nothing to Vergil: true dominion lies in the acceptance of powerlessness, in the readiness to die' (Tarrant 1985, 138).

[531] On the Roman world of *Thyestes*, see further Tarrant 1995. Cf. also the earlier (source) study by Steele 1922 and the (historical) study by Hadas 1939.

sole ruler was in charge of Rome,[532] does not sidestep the strong possibility of inviting recipients to reflect on politics and specifically the nature of tyranny.[533] The second and third choral odes in the play, in particular, encourage reflection on the nature of politics – in a specifically Roman discourse that, here, also includes memories of Rome's own civil war.[534] At the same time, we can observe a chorus that is overcome by the dramatic action, and does not display any distance from it: the third chorus, apparently fooled by Atreus' ploy, starts from an initial position of hesitant joy about the reconciliation of Atreus and Thyestes, only to become darker and darker in its language 'until at last the Messenger's report seems a natural extension of the chorus's own thoughts'.[535]

After the opening lines of the ode, an expression of incredulity at the apparent reconciliation of the royal brothers, the chorus moves to praise of the value of *pietas* in various forms (549–59). This is the first section of the ode to introduce the topic of civil war explicitly: as Tarrant notes, it seems as if the chorus of Mycenaean citizens, in this ode, 'presuppose that Mycenae was poised to repel an armed attack by Thyestes and his supporters'.[536] The civil war theme continues, in a somewhat more allusive vein, in the chorus's following phrases that summarise Mycenae's recent danger and apparent present rescue: while the chorus emphasises Mycenae's rescue from danger, the theme of civil war is corroborated further by allusive presences in the background, through Seneca's reception of memories of civil war in Vergil and Horace. The presence of dark undertones in this section of the ode ties in with a wider phenomenon in the chorus's language that Tarrant identified: '[a]t no point [...] does Seneca's Chorus abandon itself entirely to happiness; words denoting "fear" and "dread"

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[532] *Thyestes* is probably one of Seneca's latest plays; apart from the *Phoenissae*, which may well be as late as *Thyestes* (as becomes plausible from Fitch 1981), 'the order in the *codex Etruscus* [i.e. *Her. F.*, *Tro.*, *Phoen.*, *Med.*, *Phaed.*, *Oed.*, *Ag.*, *Thy.*, *Her. O.*] could be chronological' (Nisbet 1990, 108). *Thyestes* thus may well have been written in the early 60s, under Nero; but in the absence of decisive evidence, any dates suggested for Seneca's tragedies can at best enjoy the status of plausible hypotheses (see e.g. Tarrant 1985, 10–13). Whether *Thyestes* was written under Nero, Claudius, or even Caligula does not make an essential difference to my argument about the autocratic background against which this play – and Seneca's other tragedies – can resonate.

[533] See below, n. 545.

[534] As Davis 2015, 167, concludes his analysis of Seneca's engagement with 'the political tradition' in *Thyestes*, 'given the play's relationship to the Roman tragic tradition and its connections with Seneca's own reflections on politics and philosophy [on which see further above in the present thesis, esp. nn. 17 and 112], connections made explicit in the second and third choral odes, it is difficult to avoid reading *Thyestes* as, among other things, a reflection on the nature of politics in late Julio-Claudian Rome'.

[535] Tarrant 1985, 168.

[536] Tarrant 1985, 170, *ad loc.*

recur with almost obsessive regularity throughout, suggesting that anxiety has been suppressed rather than allayed'.[537] Let us have a closer look at the way in which Seneca's engagement with Horace and Vergil contributes to this. The most relevant section of the ode runs thus:

> Otium tanto subitum e tumultu
> quis deus fecit? modo per Mycenas
> arma ciuilis crepuere belli:
> pallidae natos tenuere matres;
> uxor armato timuit marito,
> cum manum inuitus sequeretur ensis,
> sordidus pacis uitio quietae;
> ille labentes renouare muros,
> hic situ quassas stabilire turres,
> ferreis portas cohibere claustris
> ille certabat, pauidusque pinnis
> anxiae noctis uigil incubabat:
> peior est bello timor ipse belli.
> Iam minae saeui cecidere ferri,
> iam silet murmur graue classicorum,
> iam tacet stridor litui strepentis:
> alta pax urbi reuocata laetae est.
> (Sen. *Thy*. 560–76)

In a *Thyestes* play, which may by its very choice of topic evoke earlier Roman plays with political overtones,[538] and, as we have seen, advertises its distinctive Romanness through several elements, especially various anachronistic references, Roman civil-war allusions are particularly noticeable. The chorus, despite its initial positivity, is at a loss about what is happening in this tragedy. It is, furthermore, not aware of what Seneca's language, which includes clear allusions to echoes of civil war in earlier Latin poets, is doing. When the chorus expresses its uncertainty about the gods (*Otium tanto subitum e tumultu | quis deus fecit?*), it is also clearly recalling a line from the opening of Vergil's first *Eclogue* (*deus nobis haec otia fecit*, 1.6).[539] Vergil's positive statement is, characteristically, turned into an uncertain question. But next to the chorus's subsequent *arma ciuilis crepuere belli* (562), the chorus's question about which god offers respite from the situation it is caught in is immediately thrust back into the civil-war context. As Tarrant well remarks, 'Seneca makes explicit a

[537] Tarrant 1985, 168–9. See also Hill 2000, 578–9.
[538] Varius' *Thyestes* may be a case in point: 'in particular the possibility that he [Varius] presented the *cena Thyestea* as a negative example illustrating the consequences of civil strife should not be discarded' (thus Tarrant 1976b, 150, in his review of Lefèvre 1976). Cf. also Leigh 1996 and Davis 2015.
[539] A simultaneous allusion to Catullus 51.15–16, as suggested by Boyle 2017, 298, *ad loc*., seems to be less clear; if present, it would contribute to 'signal[ling] aspects of the dramatic action'.

connection that remains below the surface of Vergil's poem'.[540] The Senecan reception also picks up on an evasiveness, long noted by readers of the Vergilian poem,[541] in Tityrus' answer to his interlocutor Meliboeus' question about the identity of the god who 'made this peace' (*Ecl.* 1.6) for him: Tityrus answered by talking about Rome and, crucially, provides *libertas* (*Ecl.* 1.27) as his reason for wanting to see Rome. *Libertas* not only means 'freedom', but, in Vergil's day, 'had acquired a current significance: it was the slogan of Octavian and his party'.[542] What is key about the Senecan reception of *Eclogue* 1 is not merely that it is one instance of Seneca's pessimistic reading of Vergil (which it certainly is): crucially, Seneca reads Augustan poetry for its memories of the Republic-ending civil war. The civil-war context in the Senecan ode is corroborated by the use of the motif of rusty weapons in the immediate context, thrust into prominence through striking personification of the 'unwilling sword' (565–6: *cum manum inuitus sequeretur ensis, | sordidus pacis uitio quietae*), an image which (without personification) also occurs at Lucan 1.243 in the context of Rome's civil war.[543] In two earlier passages in Vergil (*Georgics* 1.493–5) and Tibullus (1.10.49–50), the rusty weapons had signalled the absence of war, 'as welcome signs of peace'.[544] Once more, Seneca's reception inverts what he found in his Augustan predecessors to suit the context of civil war and continuous warfare. In Seneca's post-Augustan tragedy, peace is not an option. The implication of the allusive construction in this chorus – a regression to the time before the Roman empire to the end of the Republic in civil war – need not be read as a political comment on Seneca's contemporary Rome, but the possibility of it resonating strongly in Seneca's political environment ought not to be discarded too easily.[545]

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[540] Tarrant 1985, 171, *ad loc.* Boyle 2017, 298, *ad loc.* calls *Eclogue* 1 'Virgil's civil-war poem' – but as Tarrant had seen, part of the point of the Senecan allusion lies in uncovering a layer of meaning ('civil war') which is only hinted at in the opening of *Eclogue* 1; the Vergilian poem is not *per se* a straightforward 'civil-war poem'.

[541] Cf. Servius, *ad Ecl.* 1.9 (quoted by Clausen 1994, 30, n. 5): *quaeritur, cur de Caesare interrogatus, Romam describat. et aut simplicitate utitur rustica, ut ordinem narrationis plenum non teneat, sed per longas ambages ad interrogata descendat* (text: Thilo 1887).

[542] Clausen 1994, 31, with Syme 1939, 154–5.

[543] For further occurrences of the 'disused weapons' motif, see Murgatroyd 1980, 292, *ad* Tib. 1.10.49–50.

[544] Tarrant 1985, 171, *ad loc.*

[545] In addition to several possibly subversive Neronian resonances, Seneca's Atreus may well allude to Caligula – '[w]hat does seem clear is that Seneca's portrait of Atreus draws some of its unique conviction from Seneca's first-hand observation of absolute power' (Tarrant 1985, 48). On possible political resonances of Seneca's tragedies in imperial Rome, see also Henry 1985, esp. 157–76. Cf. now also Davis 2015.

In the further development of this chorus in *Thyestes*, there are more allusions that contribute to Seneca's evocation of Rome's civil war. In lines 573–6, several verbal allusions to Horace, *Odes* 2.1 are unmistakable:[546] the triple *iam* (*Odes* 2.1.17, 18, 19; *Thy*. 573, 574, 575); *murmur* (*Odes* 2.1.17; *Thy*. 574); genitive plural of 'war-trumpets' (*cornuum* at *Odes* 2.1.17; *classicorum* at *Thy*. 574); 'strident clarions' (*litui strepunt* at *Odes* 2.1.18; *stridor litui strepentis* at *Thy*. 575). While this choral ode, as we have seen, begins with a sense of surprised relief at the reconciliation of the royal brothers, one of its most striking features throughout is the loss of excitement and an accompanying sense of resignation, which unfolds through the unbroken monotony of the sapphic hendecasyllables. Given the chorus's apparent resignation, then, the Horatian lyrics at 573–6 seem to occur with marked sonic prominence. The anaphora of *iam* gives the passage its sense of immediacy, creating a sense of lyric 'nowness' about the event. The lines, describing the sounds of war, also stand out in an ode that otherwise tries hard to give an impression of being calm and controlled. What is one to make of it? Is Seneca's audience to share in the excitement expressed in these lines, rejoicing that peace has returned to the city? Not quite. Seneca's *enargeia* is mimesis of a second – or rather, third, or even higher – degree: in addition to the verbal allusions, Seneca's lines are mimicking Horace's textual sounds, which in turn mimic Asinius Pollio's, and so on. But this re-presentation of Horace's lines is crucial here. While civil war breaks into the poem in Horace, who makes no attempt at containing it and its sounds before the last stanza, the Senecan chorus attempts to silence the sounds: *iam silet murmur grave classicorum*, | *iam tacet stridor litui strepentis* (574–5). The chorus's attempt, however, is a failure, and with the Horatian allusion, they bring back the sounds of civil war – sounds that demand expression. The point here is that, paradoxically, the sounds that the chorus is trying to silence are in fact only given their power through the chorus's very song. The Senecan chorus's sounds, despite their attempt at silencing, even exceed the Horatian precedent in onomatopoeia: the alliterative Senecan *stridor litui strepentis* has replaced the (mere) *litui strepunt* of the Horatian poem.

[546] The parallels are noted by Spika 1890, 1–2, and Tarrant 1985, 172, *ad loc*. Boyle 2017, 300, *ad loc*. notes that '[a]gain Seneca links his mythic subject to contemporary Rome, prime paradigm of civil conflict'.

The allusion to Horace, I suggest, collaborates in the irony of this ode, which is sung by a chorus that, as we have seen, does not quite express what it feels and desires to express. With these lines, the chorus not only 'recalls' 'deep peace' but, through the Horatian echoes of *Odes* 2.1, again rather disturbing textual traces that accompany Seneca's Vergilian reception. *Odes* 2.1 is a poem in which the Horatian poetic texture seems to go back before the peace announcements of such poems as *Odes* 1.2. Instead, *Odes* 2.1 returns, in the meditation on and re-presentation of Pollio's work, to the civil wars – in a notably tragic manner.[547] It is only consistent, then, that in the Senecan ode in the *Thyestes* the closing adonic should lend its closural force to the unsettling *turbine uersat* – and not to a reassuring *te duce, Caesar* (as in the sapphic *Odes* 1.2).

4.3 Metre, Meaning, and Reception Contexts: Preliminaries for Seneca's Reception of Horace

Why should metre matter in focusing on the allusive dynamics between Seneca's chorus and Horatian poetry? Can the use of lyric metre in tragic choral lyrics, in particular, function as a marker of allusion to earlier lyric poetry? We have discussed instances of Seneca engaging with the use of sapphics in Catullus 11 and his mirroring of the use of hexameters in recalling Catullus 62 in the wedding hymn in *Medea*.[548] In Roman drama outside Seneca, however, our evidence of metre signalling allusion is scarce, which must in part be due to the fragmentary state of Republican drama (but cf. chapter 1). It will thus be useful to compare briefly the practice in Greek tragic choral lyric. As transpires from Swift's recent study of the relationship between the Greek tragic chorus and other non-tragic forms of lyric poetry, examples of generic interaction being signalled by the use of metre are relatively rare.[549] It is important to note, however, that there are a few clear instances where the Greek tragedians' use of metre reinforces other allusive markers: for example, Euripides can underpin his use of epinician language with dactylo-epitrite metre (*Andr.* 766–801, *El.* 860–5, *Med.* 410–45) and his use of paeanic language with a metre associated

[547] See Harrison 2017, 45–6; 49, *ad* 2.1.5; and 57, *ad* 2.1.34–6.
[548] See above, chapter 3, sections 3.2, 'Love Inverted (I): The First Chorus in *Oedipus*', and 3.4, 'Love Inverted (II): The First Chorus in *Medea*'.
[549] Swift 2010, *passim*, and index, s.v. 'metre'.

with religious song (e.g. *Ion* 125–7).[550] This shows that the Greek tragedians were aware of the allusive force of metre in distinctly pointing to generic models.

Seneca's tragic use of lyric metres, as we shall see below, shows him to be at least equally attuned to allusively expressive uses of metre. On a wider level, the Romans were certainly aware of the expressive effects of metre. In studies of 'intertexts' and, more precisely,– 'allusion' (since the metrical shaping of lines would require the conscious craftsmanship of the authors in question), we probably need to give closer attention to the sounds of poetry, which may be obscured by our contemporary readerly practice, with its overwhelming focus on the visual experience. Unlike us, ancient readers would read aloud, even when on their own.[551] Moreover, for ancient readers metre and sound were among the most obvious forms of allusive practice in poetry. The fact that ancient audiences were able to appreciate metrical subtleties becomes clear from a number of examples. Horace, *Ars Poetica* 263 (*Non quivis videt immodulata poemata iudex*) is a case in point: Horace clearly meant recipients to appreciate the metrical joke in a line that, containing no middle caesura, is as *immodulatus* as can be.[552] Ancient rhetoricians and grammarians were aware of the semiotic possibilities of metre. One of Seneca's contemporaries, Caesius Bassus, who, according to Quintilian, was the only Roman lyric poet worth reading besides Horace, is particularly relevant as a source for contemporary

[550] See Swift 2010, 369.

[551] Reading in antiquity often constituted a type of 'private recitation': see Kenney 1982, 12. The evidence for *silent* reading in antiquity is discussed by Knox 1968. Silent reading seems to have been the exception rather than the rule; even the use of *lectores* was much more widespread (see Starr 1991). Burnyeat 1997 discusses the evidence of passages from Ptolemy and Plotinus that equate reading silently and concentrating hard, thus showing that some ancients were used to reading silently. For an overview of the question in scholarship, see Johnson 2010, 4–9, who then goes on to discuss further ramifications in his book, moving the focus to the broader question of 'reading culture'. See also, on the Greek practice, Vatri 2012.

[552] See e.g. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1921, 9. Another case in point is the satirists' practice from Lucilius to Juvenal, who deliberately break metrical conventions when also transgressing on the level of content, or achieve effects by the dichotomy of the base language and the highly formalised metrical form (see Morgan 2010, 4 and 310–45). In prose, too, writers as late as Tacitus would have expected their readers to comprehend metrical allusions such as at the very beginning of the *Annals* (*Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere*), where the archaising hexameter clearly points to Ennius' great foundational epic poem of the same title as Tacitus' annalistic undertaking (against Goodyear 1972, *ad loc.*). The flaws of the hexameter, which seems to Goodyear 'so faulty indeed that it may not have been felt to be a hexameter at all', are in fact noted features of the Ennian hexameter: a four-syllabic word at the end of a line, and the *hephthemimeres* as the only caesura. On the significance of metre and rhythm in Tacitus see e.g. Kloss 2009, a case study of Tacitus' sophisticated practice in *Annals* 3.55.

readers' abilities to appreciate and analyse metrical subtleties.[553] Quintilian, moreover, who cites examples from tragedy, comments on the use of short and long syllables, saying that shorts produce *celeritas*, longs add to *gravitas* (Quint. *Inst*. 9.4.139–41).[554]

Horace is well noted as the master of Roman metre and rhythm. Let us look at one example from a poem that recalls the thematic concern of the present chapter, a passage from a dark poem, *Epode* 16, whose interpretation is famously contentious.[555] The poem announces to the Romans that the continued civil wars will destroy the state. The best course of action would be, the poem sets out, to abandon their homeland and make for the Happy Isles. In the middle of the poem, however, we find ourselves in an imagined idyllic landscape, with an abundance of water: 'and from high hills the streamlet lightly leaps with sounding footfall', … *montibus altis | levis crepante lympha desilit pede*, writes Horace in *Epode* 16.[556] Note how he uses the sound of his poetry to mimic the sound of water: in the repetition of liquids (*altis | levis… lympha desilit*), the accumulation of front (so-called 'bright') vowels (*altis | levis crepante lympha desilit pede*), and the rhythm and speed of the line (Porphyrio writes, *sonus versus imitatur et velocitatem et strepitum aquae currentis*).[557] The sonic mimesis is put into relief by the poet's self-conscious use of *pes*, 'foot', of course referencing the metrical form of the line ('metrical feet') as well as the anthropomorphic water.[558] What is more, the Horatian line also fuses the description of sound – the sonic effects of the line, which include its metre as well as its content, the sound of swift streams – with the description of a place, the idyllic space of hills whence water flows.

Seneca's mastery of rhythm and expressive metrical effects shows not least in his anapaestic sections, as demonstrated in Fitch's study.[559] To illustrate

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[553] See Quint. *Inst*. 10.1.96. Caesius Bassus is also the addressee of Pers. 6, and one of the most significant ancient theorists to argue that all metres derive from a selection of prototypical basic metres (see Leo 1889, with the modifications of Leonhardt 1989). What Bassus describes as a theorist of metre, Seneca, it can be argued, achieved as a practitioner in his plays, especially in the experimental arrangement of cola in the polymetric odes.

[554] See Hutchinson 2013, 157.

[555] The bibliography provided by Setaioli 1981, 1744–62 gives an idea about the scope of scholarship on the poem.

[556] Hor. *Epod*. 16.47–8.

[557] See Porphyrio (Holder 1894), *ad loc*.

[558] Self-conscious use of *pes* is common, and goes back to the very beginning of Latin poetry: cf. e.g. the hexameter with which Ennius most likely opened his *Annals*: *Musae quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympum* (*Ann*. fr. 1 Skutsch).

[559] Fitch 1987b, esp. 77–85.

this, it is worthwhile to consider some of the examples Fitch provides. In the Senecan lines below, the conglomeration of longs – which create a spondaic rhythm out of the anapaests (spondees underlined below) – serves to express slowness (as at *Thy*. 873: see 1 below), the motionlessness of cold winter (*Phaed*. 966–7: 2 below), and heaviness (*Phaed*. 973–4: 3 below):[560]

(1) custosque sui tardus plaustri – – ⏑ ⏑ – – – – –

(2) ut nunc canae frigora brumae – – – – – ⏑ ⏑ – –
nudent silvas, – – – –

(3) sub quo vasti pondera mundi – – – – – ⏑ ⏑ – –
librata suos ducunt orbes. – – ⏑ ⏑ – – – – –

Conversely, Seneca's use of short syllables – especially his use of multiple anapaests in anapaestic lines – can express the lightness of a nightingale's song, as at *Ag*. 672 (containing no spondees: see excerpt 4 below). Often, they can create a sense of speed, as at *Oed*. 755–8 (see 5 below), where one should note how the anapaests in the lines correspond with the speed of Actaeon's anxious flight, whereas woods, mountains, and valleys are spondaic in their bulk (*silvas*; *montes*; *saltus*):[561]

(4) Ityn in varios modulata sonos ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ –

(5) praeceps silvas montesque fugit – – – – – – – ⏑ ⏑ –
citus Actaeon agilique magis ⏑ ⏑ – – – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ –
pede per saltus ac saxa vagus ⏑ ⏑ – – – – – – ⏑ ⏑ –
metuit motas zephyris plumas ⏑ ⏑ – – – ⏑ ⏑ – – –

The semiotics of metre, of what metre can mean, also raises questions about the pragmatics of reception, of how metrical compositions are received and made sense of by audiences, listeners, or readers. At Rome, as some scholars have argued, poetry was written for recitation.[562] It was, however, also written for reading. While we know of many significant forms of recitation,[563] the Latin

[560] The examples are selected from Fitch 1987b, 77–8.

[561] These and more examples are given in Fitch 1987b, 81–2 (I follow Zwierlein's colometry).

[562] See Kenney 1982, 3: 'nearly all the books discussed in this history [i.e. the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*] were written to be listened to'; but cf. the persuasive arguments by Parker 2009 (see below, n. 563). On the important practice of *recitatio* in small circles see, in addition to Kenney 1982, esp. 11–12, the material collected by Funaioli 1914. The practice of Roman (semi-)public recitation was probably started by Asinius Pollio (see Sen. *Con*. 4 *praef*. 2).

[563] Including readings arranged by professionals, readings to rather private audiences, and readings by the authors themselves (see also above, n. 562). Perhaps most famously, we have

poets themselves – or rather, their lyric personae in the poems – speak about having acquired their knowledge of previous Greek and Roman poetry predominantly through reading.[564] When it comes to Horace's and Seneca's lyrics, a comment by Cicero about his preferred reception contexts of lyric poetry is worthy of note: according to him, 'one can derive more pleasure from reading lyric poetry than from hearing it'.[565] At the time of Pliny the Younger, 'the reading of these [i.e. lyric poems] is customary'.[566] What might be – and has been – posed as a dichotomy involving two mutually exclusive options can be resolved by drawing a clear distinction: while 'recitation' is the answer to the question of the first reception, 'reading' is the answer to the question of the subsequent circulation and influence of poetry.[567] Poets who have themselves encountered earlier poets in reading are unlikely to write only with recitation in mind. My analysis in the following will mainly trace those points of contact between Seneca's and Horace's lyrics that would be most easily noticeable to readers. I should reiterate here that, in ancient reading practices, sound effects would come out strongly, since Roman readers favoured reading aloud even when in private.[568] My insistence on the reading and re-reading of Senecan drama also coincides with Lowrie's attractive view on the reception contexts of Horace's *Odes*: as she argues (and exemplifies in detailed case studies), the *Odes* invoke the idea of repeated 'performance' as a symbol for repeated reading.[569]

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testimony of Vergil having read the *Georgics* and some books of the *Aeneid* to the imperial family: see e.g. Serv. A. 4.323 and 6.861. See further Parker 2009, 201–6.

[564] Important examples include Horace reading (or, the Horatian speaker claiming to read) the scripts of Old Comedy (see Hor. *S.* 1.10.18) and Lucilius (Hor. *S.* 1.10.56), and Catullus (or, the Catullan speaker) needing a library to compose poetry (see Catul. 68.33). Examples adduced by Parker 2009, 212.

[565] Cic. *Tusc.* 5.116: *multo maiorem percipi posse legendis iis* [sc. *cantibus*] *quam audiendis voluptatem*. But, then again, he reportedly did not have the time – or desire – to do so: cf. Sen. *Ep.* 49.5: *Negat Cicero, si duplicetur sibi aetas, habiturum se tempus, quo legat lyricos*.

[566] Plin. *Ep.* 7.17.1–3, esp. 3: *At horum* [sc. *lyricorum*] *recitatio usu iam recepta est.*

[567] See Parker 2009, 206–15.

[568] Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 5.116 (see above, n. 565) on the superiority of reading lyric poetry over listening to it. According to Fantham 1982, 34–49, esp. 48–9, moreover, Seneca does not differ from the forms of publication of, say, Ovid or Vergil.

[569] See Lowrie 2009, 63–97, with a discussion of the implications of the term 'performance' at 64–71. Cf. also Stevens 1999, 305, concluding his study of Seneca's engagement with Horace, *Odes* 2.19: 'No audience could catch all such allusions at a live hearing, but there is no reason that a Senecan ode should not have been intended, like an Horatian ode, to repay frequent re-reading'.

4.4 Horatian Sounds, Republican Echoes: Seneca's Reception of Horace, *Odes* 3.3 in the Third Chorus of *Agamemnon*

The third choral song in *Agamemnon* (589–658) is one striking instance of a Senecan ode where the reworking of Horatian poetics pertains to the rearrangement of metrical cola taken from Horace as well as to content and imagery. The intertextual relationship and the interplay between verbal, thematic, and metrical allusion is particularly interesting due to the polymetric form of this choral song. Seneca's polymetrics are a remarkable achievement of metrical experimentation unparalleled in extant Latin before him. According to this striking method of composition, Seneca seems to divide the Horatian metrical forms into their individual cola (so that an alcaic such as *odi profanum vulgus et arceo* is understood to be made up of the independent units *odi profanum* and *vulgus et arceo*).[570] Seneca then could arrange such cola in various ways, or add to them cola derived from other Horatian metres (such as sapphics or asclepiads).[571] Leo was the first to show that Horatian cola are to be expected as the usual baseline in Seneca's practice.[572] This basic finding is vital for interpretation: wherever Seneca's lines divert from the 'ideal' Horatian line or colon, they stand out metrically and should be given close attention in our reading. This is, as we shall see, also the case in the opening of the third chorus of *Agamemnon*. First, however, it will be necessary to establish some broader thematic affinities between the Senecan ode and the Horatian poem it alludes to.

The third chorus in *Agamemnon* reminisces about the disasters of Troy and engages in an elaborate discussion of the question of how to face death.[573] The Horatian poem that is most important for understanding Seneca's arrangement at *Ag*. 589–658 is *Odes* 3.3.[574] The Horatian cycle of *Odes* 3.1–6, a group of alcaic poems that has been considered an organic formal and thematic

[570] See above, nn. 522 and 523.
[571] This practice is associated with the theory expounded by Seneca's contemporary Caesius Bassus: see above, n. 553.
[572] See Bußfeld 1935, 6: Seneca's intention was not primarily to produce pure Horatian lines, but to produce new ones based on the Horatian cola.
[573] Thus setting itself up from the beginning as a conspicuously Epicurean meditation, one that is reminiscent of Horace's own noted Epicureanism: on Horace's Epicurean view of death, see Fish 1998.
[574] See the analysis by Stevens 1992, 244–51, who reads Seneca's ode as 'a complete inversion' (246) of the Horatian ode.

whole from very early on in the history of its reception,[575] is one of Seneca's favourites in the tragedies. The range of topics explored in the markedly post-civil-war Roman Odes is clearly relevant to concerns of Senecan drama.[576] While the vicious downward spiral at the end of the Roman Odes may not yet be teleologically fixed – there is still the possibility of change –, the poetic cycle of decay initiated in Horace receives its dark closure in Seneca's texts.

In engaging with moments from *Odes* 3.1–6, the Senecan ode enters an intertextual dialogue of transition and (dis)continuity of significant political and, again, Republican purport. A key backdrop for the way Rome is presented in *Odes* 3.1–6 is the Horatian depiction of Troy, in many ways epitomising the source of all the corruption that has swept to Rome from the East. In Vergil's *Aeneid*, Troy predominantly figures as Rome's holy ancestral city, and the ktistic epic accordingly presents the relationship between Troy and Rome as one of (albeit painful) transition and continuity. For Horace, on the other hand, Rome's salvation lies in turning away from Troy, and his narrative of decay, as Klingner points out well, thus emphasises rupture rather than continuity.[577] The Horatian poems can be read, as Klingner argues, as a commentary on the Republic-ending civil war: *Odes* 3.1–6 may be post-Actium, after the victory over Antony and Cleopatra, and one may thus assume that the threat and evil of civil war are over and averted for the foreseeable future – but the battles and ruptures of the civil war themselves, the Horatian voice suggests, were not the worst dangers Rome had to face. What is most dangerous to Rome's Republican identity is the internal decay of Roman values, a moral deterioration under Eastern influences that could lead to the civil war in the first place.[578]

As we shall see, the Senecan choral ode in *Agamemnon*, elaborating on the theme of death and humans' antagonism towards the gods, engages with *Odes* 3.3 in a moment of recalling the ruptures of its precedent.[579] In part, the

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[575] On the question of the unity of the Roman Odes, see above, n. 389.
[576] A detailed analysis of the Roman Odes is provided by Lowrie 1997, 224–65.
[577] See Klingner 1952, 132.
[578] This is essentially Klingner's reading of the political purport of *Odes* 3.1–6: 'Aber die Schlacht bei Aktium ist doch gewonnen und die von Osten drohende Gefahr abgewendet und vorbei. Gewiß, doch diese überstandene Gefahr (V. 13 ff.) nimmt das Gedicht ebenso wie die vorangegangenen beiden Niederlagen im Kampf mit den Parthern (V. 9 ff.) nur als warnende Zeichen. Das Eigentliche, worauf sie deuten, nämlich der innere Verfall, der Rom in Bürgerkrieg gestürzt und geschwächt und den Feinden zur Beute zu machen gedroht hat, ist für den Sprechenden noch ebenso gefährlich wie vor dem Siege' (Klingner 1952, 135).
[579] Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming) argues that while 'Horace is describing an upright man of firm purpose', Seneca lends the passage 'darker colouring': 'In Seneca the antecedent of *hunc* in 593

engagement with the Horatian ode should be read as a characteristic Senecan reading of earlier literature: as a commentary on the Roman past, with a conspicuous emphasis of utilising the mythopoetic building block 'Troy'. Throughout *Agamemnon*, as transpires from a recent article by Schiesaro, the most persistent narrative stream of allusive engagement is with previous epic texts: what Seneca is doing, Schiesaro argues, is 'offer[ing] an original take on the characters and events of the war at Troy from a tragic angle, focusing on the theme of repetition-as-reversal and exploiting an unusual, fragmented dramatic structure to highlight the faultlines of epic narrative'.[580] In the following, we shall see how the allusions to Horace, *Odes* 3.3 – incidentally, one of the Horatian odes that features most epic colouring and themes – contribute to this Senecan mode of mobilising the historical and literary past in his tragic poetics.[581]

Overt thematic links to Horace in the opening of the Senecan ode – the Trojan background, the theme of death, and the relationship between the ruler and the ruled – coincide with a metrical announcement of poetic inheritance. The ode begins thus:

> Heu quam dulce malum mortalibus additum
> vitae dirus amor, cum pateat malis
> effugium et miseros libera mors vocet,
> portus aeterna placidus quiete.
> nullus hunc terror nec impotentis
> procella Fortunae movet aut iniqui
> flamma Tonantis.
> (Sen. *Ag*. 589–95)

While alcaics, the metre of Horace's Roman Odes, only enter later, the ode begins with a line that has reminded scholars of Horace's lesser asclepiad: following Leo's description, Tarrant and Zwierlein describe the metre as an

is not explicit (a fact that caused some editors to rearrange the lines or to posit a lacuna), but both the preceding lines and the conclusion of the passage strongly suggest that it is the man who willingly ends his life. Another difference concerns the characterization of Jupiter. In both texts he is the Thunderer, but Horace associates him with other forces of nature while Seneca couples him with "uncontrolled Fortune" and adds the hostile adjective *iniquus*. [...] I suggest that we can see here a counterpart to the breakdown in harmonious relations between human authority figures and those over whom they have power'.

[580] Schiesaro 2014b, 30.

[581] The epic elements in *Odes* 3.3 include, perhaps most obviously, Juno's long speech at lines 18–68. On epic elements in *Odes* 3.3 see further Harrison 2011, 184–8.

asclepiad plus a long syllable (– – – ⏑⏑ – ⏓ – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ –).[582] This analysis would, however, posit a phenomenon in Seneca's polymetrics that is unparalleled elsewhere in his practice. The only other instance that could perhaps be explained by the addition of a single element inside a metrical entity appears at *Oed.* 412, which Zwierlein describes as either 'dim. troch. catal. + sapph. 1' or 'sapph. 1 + sapph. 1 immissa voce iambica'.[583] However, this would not obviously be inside a metrical entity (syllables can be added at the start of an aeolic colon, cf. e.g. *Oed.* 729, *Ag.* 594). Furthermore, Zwierlein indicates his own doubt over his second suggestion by putting it in brackets; his first solution seems more economical. Perhaps one needs to look for a different metrical description of *Ag.* 589 as well, one that does not posit the addition of a syllable somewhere in the middle of the metre.

Ag. 589, then, could be analysed as a version of the metre of Sappho's second book, which is: x x – ⏑⏑ – ⏑⏑ – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ –.[584] If viewed against this metrical precedent, Seneca can be seen to follow Sappho's metre; he substitutes two shorts for a long (highlighted in bold in the following scansion), a relatively common phenomenon in his metrical practice: – – – ⏑⏑ – ⏓ – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ –. An abbreviated version of this metre occurs, for instance, at Sappho fr. 130.1–2 Voigt, lines that even feature verbal points of contact with Seneca's opening line: Ἔρος δηὖτέ μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει, | γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον.[585] Aligning the analysis of *Ag.* 589 with the metre of Sappho's second book, if accepted, would avoid positing the addition of a long syllable in the middle of Horace's established lesser asclepiad.

While this description of *Ag.* 589 would take us further away from Horatian precedent, it perhaps ought to be noted that Seneca's polymetrics go beyond what we find in Horace in any case: while Seneca usually works with metrical cola that are established in their use in Latin by Horace, his aim does

[582] See Zwierlein's OCT *conspectus* (1993), 468, with Tarrant 1976, 373. See also Bußfeld 1935, 26, who identifies the dactylic rhythm of the line, and argues that it is marked as an asclepiad 'durch die Sperrung von *malum* und *additum*'.
[583] Zwierlein 1993, 467.
[584] I owe this observation (and the link with Sappho fr. 130) to Professor Hutchinson.
[585] As Professor Hutchinson points out, one can compare *dulce malum* (589) with γλυκύπικρον, and *amor* (590) with Ἔρος. The metre of Sappho fr. 130 Voigt can be described as a glyconic expanded by repetition of a dactyl (gl^{d}); on this metre, see e.g. Snell 1982, 45–6, and West 1982, 32. The metrician Hephaestion preserves these Sapphic lines at *Ench.* 7.7 (p. 23 Consbruch) as an example of what he calls an acatalectic aeolic dactylic tetrameter.

not seem to be to create Horatian lines, but to compose lines in new metres.[586] This compositional practice of combining easily identifiable cola into new forms of lyric metres brings Seneca in alignment not only with metricians such as his contemporary Caesius Bassus but also with the practice of the Greek aeolic poets.[587] The metrical analysis of *Ag*. 589 (as well as *Oed*. 412) may remind us that the Greek aeolic tradition can sometimes provide good models against which (some of) Seneca's polymetric lines can be profitably viewed. The focus of my analysis in what follows, however, will return to Seneca's engagement with Horace, specifically the way Seneca uses Horatian metrical cola to convey meaning in the subsequent lines of the third ode in *Agamemnon*.[588]

After the first line, Seneca's ode continues in a clearly Horatian vein in the use of asclepiads. This is the stichic metre that opens the Horatian collection of *carmina* and thus functions as a strong marker of Horatian presence when it is used in the opening lines of a Senecan ode.[589] While the second line of the Senecan chorus is a pure (and perfectly Horatian) asclepiad (*vitae dirus amor, cum pateat malis*, *Ag*. 590), the divergences from Horatian practice in the asclepiadic lines draw attention to themselves. One may note that the metrical form of 591 gestures towards its own content, with the double shorts substituting the conventionally long second element (*effugium et miseros libera mors vocet*). *Effugium*, 'flight', is swift: in the line, it is accelerated by the double shorts that stand out in a position where one would expect the long element. After depicting the desperation that *vitae dirus amor* produces in humans and the swift escape from troubles offered by *libera mors*, line 592 continues the chorus's train of thought: once one has rushed into death, fleeing all the evils of this world, there is 'a tranquil harbour of eternal calm' (*portus aeterna placidus quiete*).[590]

At this point in the ode, the change in metre accompanies the change in topic and tone: the sense of calm is disturbed in the following lines (*Ag*. 593–5)

[586] As Bußfeld 1935 made clear: see above, n. 572.
[587] On Caesius Bassus see above, n. 553. On the combination of cola in the 'aeolic tradition' see e.g. West 1982, 29–34.
[588] Marx 1932 was the first to study the relation between metrical form and function of Seneca's choral metres. Although not all of the generalisations in his synoptic article are persuasive, Bishop 1968 remains useful.
[589] Also note the first line of the next choral song in the *Agamemnon* (the other polymetric ode in the play), which also starts with a (pure) asclepiadic verse.
[590] This is probably the most Epicurean moment in the ode. Seneca here exceeds Horace's Epicureanism in *Odes* 3.3, where limiting one's desires is, as noted above, linked with a concept of *virtus*, which has been associated with Stoicism.

by being set against the backdrop of imagined threats and terrors. At the same time, the pure sapphic line is disturbed: it is turned, by *detractio*, into – ⏑ – – – ⏑ – ⏑ – – (*nullus hunc terror nec impotentis*) in 593, and, by *adiectio*, into ⏑ – ⏑ – – – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ – – (*procella Fortunae movet aut iniqui*) in 594. The adonic (595) lends its closural force to the rather unsettling *flamma Tonantis*.[591] The following line (*Ag*. 596) contains the first clear verbal echo (and one of the very few) of *Odes* 3.3, the poem that provides an allusive backdrop against which Seneca's ode can be read. After the display of Horatian cola in the metrical experiment of *Ag*. 589–95, the metre of the alcaic *Odes* 3.3 makes a conspicuous appearance in 596, which is made up of the first half of an alcaic (*pax alta nullos*: – – ⏑ – –) and the first half of a sapphic line (*civium coetus*: – ⏑ – – –). The alcaic beginning of the line can be read as Seneca's signpost of the metre of Horace's Roman Odes. Given the thematic and structural similarity of the preceding lines to the first two stanzas of *Odes* 3.3, the alcaic colon in the first half of the Senecan line clearly points to Horace, and prepares us to hear his *civium* (*Odes* 3.3.2) reverberate in Seneca's use of the same word in the second half of *Ag*. 596: *pax alta nullos civium coetus*.

Once more, Seneca's Horatian reception revisits a Horatian moment of civil-war reminiscence. The opening of *Odes* 3.3 as a whole is replete with political implications. Of all possible verbal allusions to the Horatian poem, Seneca chooses *cives* (used in the same case as in Horace, genitive plural), recalling the precise moment in which *Odes* 3.3 struggles with a Republican memory. As Fowler saw, Horace, in the opening of *Odes* 3.3, performs a move similar to a stance that the poet had earlier expressed at Hor. *Ep*. 1.6.1–8:[592] the Horatian poem means 'to point the reader away from the Boss to the Great and Good of the Roman Republican tradition, but it doesn't work. One can of course stress that the Great Man is resistant to this sort of thing: I have no doubt that many would have seen Augustus in the opening of *Odes* 3.3'.[593] The Senecan reception picks up precisely on the uneasy political implications of the Horatian opening: in Seneca's ode, there is an explicit Republican yearning in the Trojan

[591] The colometry of E is clearly right: see Bußfeld 1935, 27.
[592] Where, as Fowler 1995, 259 puts it, one can see Epicureanism and Stoicism coming together: 'The Epicurean will be happy(-ish) in a moderate dictatorship, but she will not want to be boss, nor will she admire the king'.
[593] Fowler 1995, 259.

women[594] recalling the Horatian *civium*, but their set-up in their context leaves little room for ambiguity. For this chorus, the identity and debate about their ruler and their highest god is not a matter of debate any more – as the role of the ruler alluded to in the first lines of *Odes* 3.3 may still have been, as evidenced by the scholarly reception:[595] the Senecan ode makes clear that there is no hope in good rulers and that divine providence is not realistically possible. In the chorus's characterization of Jupiter, it retains the Horatian characterization of the highest of the gods as 'the Thunderer', but Seneca – unlike Horace – adds the clearly negative adjective *iniquus* (594), and links him with *impotens … Fortuna* (593–4). We see that Seneca makes his chorus recall a Republican moment from the Horatian precedent, but at the same time, in subtly but significantly changing the contextual divine parameters, suggests the impossibility of stability in a Republican set-up and of a strong good god providing safety. In the post-Augustan context, the chorus's voice, one of contemporary relevance reaching beyond the mythic subject-matter of their play, may suggest that tyrants have gone mad, and, by association, the highest of the gods, originator and emblem of such hierarchies, is to blame as well.[596]

4.5 Horatian Sounds and Civil War: Seneca's Reception of *Odes* 1.2 and 2.1 in the Cadmus Ode in *Oedipus*

Further examples of metrical and verbal allusions to Horace enriching each other occur in the *Oedipus*, in another ode that expresses choral anxieties and anger at the divine: in the polymetric section of the 'Cadmus Ode' (709–63). This mythic ode, in which the Theban chorus attempts to provide an aetiology for the plague that has come upon its city, focuses on Cadmus, the founder of Thebes. The chorus pins down the gods' unceasing anger against Thebes, past and present, as the cause of the current disaster. The indebtedness of this choral ode to earlier texts, most notably the Cadmus and Actaeon story in Ovid's

[594] The chorus's entrance is explicitly announced, and their identity specified by Clytemnestra: *Sed ecce, turba tristis incomptae comas | Iliades adsunt* (586–7).
[595] See e.g. Syndikus 2001, vol. 2, 36–40, with further references.
[596] Note that the chorus goes on to praise the *contemptor leuium deorum*, a point well made by Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming), 15, who compares 'the pejorative force' of the term *contemptor* when it is used of Mezentius at Verg. *Aen*. 7.648 and of Pentheus at Ov. *Met*. 3.514.

Metamorphoses (3.1–252) and Euripides' *Phoenissae*, has been explored.[597] But the intertextual web of this song also contains significant Horatian elements. At the exact point where Seneca's ode moves on to a new section – of 'new monsters' – an older, Horatian line that had cautioned against 'new monsters' is recalled:

> Tempore ex illo noua monstra semper
> protulit tellus: …
> (Sen. *Oed*. 724–5)

Compare *Odes* 1.2.5–6: *terruit gentis, grave ne rediret | saeculum Pyrrhae nova monstra questae*. The verbal Horatian echo is once more signalled by means of metrical allusion. In line 724, the Senecan polymetric song switches to a sapphic line, precisely the metre of the Horatian poem that is invoked as a backdrop by the verbal allusion as well; despite mere metrical necessity, it may be meaningful that *nova monstra* occupies the same position in Seneca's line as it does at *Odes* 1.2.6. Allusion to Horace's famous poem would add point to the Senecan lines, and again, a Senecan chorus would be engaging with a Horatian poem that deals with the civil-war theme: while *Odes* 1.2 is an attempt at containing chaos and the evil of civil war within the boundaries of the poetic realm, there is no limit to the plague and evil perceived by the Theban chorus in Seneca's play. While Horace, after the all the anxious cascades of questions and remembered troubles of the poem, closes with the assuring *te duce, Caesar* (1.2.52), the Senecan ode engages in a cycle of evils that cannot be controlled, starting from the *ueteres deum | irae* (711–12) only to end with Diana's anger, *nimium saeui diua pudoris* (763).[598] Where Horace has the reassuring closing adonic *te duce, Caesar*, the Senecan ode ends with anapaestic lines, in a pitiable mode of unceasing lament.[599] The Senecan *noua monstra* at 724, then, are a literary commentary on the Horatian *nova monstra* at *Odes* 1.2.6, monsters that, following the poetic logic of the poem, should not return after 'the father … has terrified the city by striking the sacred citadel with his fiery hand' (*Odes*

[597] See Boyle 2011, 275–6 for these and further intertexts, and Jakobi 1988, esp. 111–20 for an exploration of Seneca's Ovidian models. Hinds 2011 is excellent in uncovering Seneca's Thebes as an Ovidian intertextual space; see esp. 10–13 on the 'Cadmus Ode'.
[598] See Boyle 2011, 275.
[599] For which cf. *Oed*. 154–9, with Boyle 2011, 151, *ad loc*. Boyle compares the anapaestic lament 'in both Attic tragedy (e.g. Eur. *Tro*. 98–229) and Seneca (*Tro*. 67–163, *HF* 1054–1137, *Ag*. 664–92)'. Bishop 1968, 202 finds 'lamentation over death and destruction' to be one of the three typical anapaestic subjects treated in Seneca's choral odes, and concludes that Seneca's anapaests 'convey the instability of human affairs' (209). On formal lament in the Greek tradition see Alexiou 1974.

1.2.2–4).[600] In the realm of Senecan tragedy, they do return. While the Senecan 'new monsters' are specified in the following lines as referring to Mars' serpent and the Spartoi (see 743) within the mythic space of the play, a political interpretation could also view Seneca's *noua monstra* as a comment on Seneca's and the play's contemporary Rome:[601] in the conspicuously post-Augustan intertextual space of the 'Cadmus Ode', Senecan tragedy has the Horatian pre-Augustan monsters of civil war return – only in a worse, uncontrollable form.

In the same choral song, the chorus describes the evils gathering for civil war (*civile nefas*, 748). After mention of the first *monstrum*, a hissing 'serpent risen from the deepest valleys' (*anguis imis vallibus editus*, 726), the next evil is portrayed in an Horatian manner:

> aut feta tellus impio partu
> effudit arma:
> sonuit reflexo classicum cornu
> lituusque adunco stridulos cantus
> elisit aere
> (*Oed*. 731–4)

As in the case of the third chorus of *Thyestes* discussed above, we are in the middle of an impending civil-war situation, and the Senecan poetics is enriched by recalling civil-war memories in Horace. The Senecan weapons and their sounds cannot belie their Horatian pedigree – they seem to have come immediately from Horace's 'Pollio Ode':[602]

> iam nunc minaci murmure cornuum
> perstringis auris, iam litui strepunt,
> iam fulgor armorum fugacis
> terret equos equitumque vultus.
> (Hor. *Odes* 2.1.17–20)

Seneca's use of alcaic cola (– – ⏑ – –: *aut feta tellus*, 730; *effudit arma*, 731b; *elisit aere*, 734) again points to the metre of the Horatian model, *Odes* 2.1: while the alcaic cola here do not coincide with verbal allusion, they nevertheless function as signposts of Seneca's literary inheritance,[603] especially in a passage where metre and sound are crucially important. Particularly striking is the

[600] Translation: Rudd 2004.
[601] On the play's possible resonances in Julio-Claudian Rome, see Töchterle 1994, 47–8, with further references, and Boyle 2011, lxxi–lxxiii.
[602] See e.g. Spika 1890, 30 and Canter 1925, 54. Jakobi 1988, 118 does not consider this instance a Horatian reminiscence, since the topic is too common; I argue that the Senecan passage also points to Horace by means of the alcaic cola and the reworked focus on sounds: conscious engagement with Horace at *Oed*. 731–4 is not unlikely.
[603] As demonstrated above, Seneca uses the same practice at *Ag*. 596.

emphasis on war sounds in Seneca's lines.[604] Seneca's masterly command of metre is especially significant in a passage with a pronounced focus on the effects of rhythm and sound. At the exact points where the Senecan chorus sings about a 'winding' horn and 'curved' brass trumpet, the poet has also inverted the cola of the sapphic line. What usually constitutes the first half of the sapphic line is exchanged with the second half in 732 and 733: might this be read as mimicking, on the level of form, the sound that issues from the inverted and curved instruments? The original Horatian appeal to sensory perception at *Odes* 2.1.17–20 is one feature that Seneca is drawn to in his reception. This may have been encouraged by the context of tragedy that is evoked in the original Horatian arrangement: crucially, *Odes* 2.1 functions as a commentary on the poem's famous dedicatee's literary output – most relevantly, Pollio's tragedies.[605] In a sustained mode of temporal deixis engaging all senses in the *enargeia* of war, the Horatian lines are restored to the context of tragedy in Seneca's play and adapted to the Theban pre-war situation. The chorus picks up on the most prominent sense to which Horace appeals in his synaesthetic description – hearing – in order to explore the sounds of war. At the same time, the earthy note in Horace's account, where we see (or, rather, hear)[606] the

[604] This deviates from the cognate accounts in Apollonios Rhodios and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: see Jakobi 1988, 118. Boyle 2011, 283, *ad loc.* also notes that the 'focus on the noise of battle is absent from the Ovidian narrative' [i.e. from the one at *Met.* 3.3–130]. While sound effects are absent on the content level in this Ovidian passage, note nevertheless how Ovid characteristically relies on sound effects for the recipients: note e.g. the effect of the *s*-alliteration at *Met.* 3.111, merged with the visual emphasis on the content level (*surgere signa solent primum ostendere vultus*). Sounds are also remarkably present through their very absence, in the *mutua vulnera* (*Met.* 3.123 and 7.141).

[605] On Horace's lyric re-presentation of Pollio's 'tragical history' and on lyric 'here getting into the mindset of tragedy', see Henderson 1998, esp. 121–2. Sallmann 1987 examines the way in which the tension between different genres constitutes the poem; according to him, 'die Exkursion in die gefährdende Welt der Geschichte [wird] durch die Gegenwart der lyrischen Muse glücklich überstanden' (84). The way in which *Odes* 2.1 combines allusions to historiography, most notably Pollio's own *Histories*, and echoes of Greek tragedies is discussed by Harrison 2017, *ad loc.* The tragic echoes include the reference to the Muse of tragedy at 2.1.9 and the metaphor of dicing at 2.1.6, 'several times used in Greek tragedy for the aleatory operations of fate and the gods in the context of war' (Harrison 2017, *ad loc.*, with comparable passages). The mention of the 'Attic buskin' at *Odes* 2.1.11–12 in turn echoes the 'Sophoclean buskin' in Vergil's praise of Pollio at *Ecl.* 8.10. On the role of synaesthesia in Sophoclean tragedy, see Segal 1977.

[606] I remain unconvinced by Bentley's famous conjecture *videre*, adopted by Shackleton Bailey 2001 and Nisbet/Hubbard 1978 instead of the MSS reading *audire* at *Odes* 2.1.17: *audire magnos iam uideor duces*. While the slight metrical licence that changing to *videre* would involve (Horace does not normally have an opening short syllable in his alcaics) could be acceptable, the change, more importantly, underestimates the synaesthetic thrust of the whole passage, which effectively creates *enargeia*, as noted already by Porphyrio: *Iam, inquit, videor videre et audire ea quae historia refert: per quod significat, vi eloquentiae Pollionem certamen speciosum in relatione pugnarum inducere* (Porphyrio, *ad* 17, text: Holder 1894). Note that

generals 'dirty with no inglorious dust' (*duces* | *non indecoro pulvere sordidos*, 2.1.21–2), may have acquired significance in Seneca's chorus, and turned into the autochthonous origin of war, 'pour[ing] forth weapons' (731b).[607] In the pessimistic view of Seneca's Theban chorus, nothing, not even earth and dust, can be without involvement in the present disaster: even they are made to collaborate in the evil of civil war, infected, and, as *feta… impio partu* (731), cast as the source of its monstrous progeny.

In a rather different context, but one that expresses the possibility of madness, Horace also links synaesthesia and spatial description: *auditis? an me ludit amabilis* | *insania? audire et videor pios* | *errare per lucos* (*Odes* 3.4.5–7). Synaesthesia, both Horatian and Senecan, seems to be a privileged mode in which mental and moral madness, most notably in civil war situations, can be depicted poetically. In sum, the Senecan 'Cadmus Ode' in *Oedipus* is a sophisticated allusive construction that comments on the possibility of civil strife within the tragic space of the play through engagement with memories of the civil war in Horace's *Odes*. *Odes* 1.2 and 2.1 are thus read in Seneca's reception for their darker moments, and their tragic potential. Notwithstanding the possibility of political resonances of such Senecan engagement for his contemporary audiences, it will be profitable to broaden the present study somewhat into a further direction: in the following, I shall explore features in the Horatian poems themselves that allow them to be read in a 'tragic manner'. Put differently, I will perform the experiment of reading Horace through Seneca, and begin with *Odes* 2.1, the poem that seems to be key to 'Seneca's Horace', as we have seen from the examples in choruses from both *Thyestes* and *Oedipus*.

4.6 Reading Horace through Seneca: Civil War and the Tragic

Reading Horace, *Odes* 2.1 through the lens of Seneca's tragic reception lets us appreciate a further level of meaning in the Horatian poem. *Odes* 2.1 – poetry

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Porphyrio speaks about *uidere et audire* (my emphasis). With e.g. Heinze/Kiessling 1960, Lowrie 1997, 182–3, esp. n. 71, and Harrison 2017, *ad loc.*, I would retain the apt *audire*, and point to Horace's own synaesthesia at *Odes* 3.10.5–8 ('hearing' the process of water/snow turning to ice) and Verg. *Aen.* 2.705–6 (the brightness of the flames is 'heard'). On synaesthesia in Latin literature more generally, see Catrein 2003. For the combination *audire… videor*, see Pl. *Aul.* 811: *uocem hic loquentis modo mi audire uisus sum*, and cf. the close link between 'seeming' and 'hearing' at the (syntactically slightly different) *Odes* 3.4.5–7 (cited above).

[607] Descriptions very similar to (and most likely influenced by) the Senecan passage are found at Luc. 1.237–8 and 7.475.

against the backdrop of civil war – can thus emerge as one informed by a tragic poetics. Scholars have fruitfully applied René Girard's theory of tragedy to the interpretation of Roman poetry that processes civil-war memories; a case in point is Bowditch's reading of *Odes* 2.1.[608] While Bowditch makes ample use of Girard's definition of tragedy as the 'mimesis of sacrifice', she does not seem to give equal prominence to what Girard calls the 'sacrificial crisis'. Central to Girard's thinking, the sacrificial crisis describes a collapse of the *sensus communis* of a society, a dissolution of a cultural system that is ultimately born of the individuals' unsated desires. The destruction of a society's *sensus communis* is epitomized in a situation of civil war. A dissolution of order is, however, also typically tragic: there can be tragic clashes, arising from clear-cut oppositions (as is even more common in epic), or the creation of zones of blurring. The latter phenomenon has often been observed for Seneca's plays: blurring occurs through the dissociation of characters from their own selves,[609] dissolution and transgression of boundaries,[610] and the creation of zones of hesitation and wandering, central to Senecan poetics.[611] Horace, *Odes* 2.1 also features a considerable number of oppositions, potential candidates for tragic clashes. Among the most apparent ones are the oppositions between terms and concepts and the beginning and end of the poem: the *ludus* of the beginning (3) turns into the *ioci* of the Cean dirge (37–8), the *modi* of war (2) into the *modi* of music (40), and the *grande munus* (11) of being a tragedian is echoed, albeit only under the attempted erasure of cautioning against *retractatio*, in the *munera neniae* (38). Sallmann emphasises more potentially tragic oppositions already in the first stanzas of the ode.[612] The oppositions spanning the whole poem are, however, more subtle than clear-cut clashes; rather, I would describe them as a blurring of oppositions: for the significant ones, it is even the exact same words and terms that are used to express opposing concepts, with the later instantiations still carrying the traces from the beginning of the poem: *modus* and *munus*. Might this blurring of oppositions be viewed through the Girardian

[608] See Bowditch 2001, esp. 64–95 on *Odes* 2.1 and 2.13 (on her reading, also a tragic poem). Building on Girard's theory (for the groundwork, see Girard 1972; English introduction to his work by Fleming 2004) that tragedy functions as a mimesis of sacrifice, Bowditch develops a reading of Horace focussed through the lens of ritualistic expiation, 'which takes place in the context of a tragic view of history and the "purifying" potential of catharsis' (69).
[609] See esp. Fitch/McElduff 2002.
[610] See esp. Schiesaro 2003.
[611] See Tarrant 1985, 47, esp. n. 161, and Allendorf 2013.
[612] See Sallmann 1987, 87.

lens of tragic dissolution? There is more existential blurring: whose voice are we listening to in this poem? Lowrie says in her analysis of the poem that one cannot know for sure whether recipients are actually hearing (or reading) Horace's or Pollio's tragic voice.[613] For the most part, the voice of the Horatian *uates* seems dissolved and unrecognisably merged with the tragic voice of Pollio.

This tragic dissolution is accompanied by the use of typically tragic rhetoric in the poem, such as in the series of questions in stanzas 8 and 9:

> quis non Latino sanguine pinguior
> campus sepulcris impia proelia
> testatur auditumque Medis
> Hesperiae sonitum ruinae?
>
> qui gurges aut quae flumina lugubris
> ignara belli? quod mare Dauniae
> non decoloravere caedes?
> quae caret ora cruore nostro?
> (Hor. *Odes* 2.1.29–35)

The series of anxious questions opening up a vista of geography is a feature particularly common in tragedy. A case in point is the anxious and disoriented cascade of questions the Senecan messenger in *Thyestes* is made to utter, providing disorientation rather than orientation.[614] Similar also is Horace's own tragic mode in *Odes* 3.27, a poem in which the *deus ex machina* epiphany of Venus towards the end is by no means the only tragic element.[615] In this ode, as Harrison has pointed out, Europa's rhetoric displays several tragic topics and features.[616] Her disoriented questions following geographical displacement are a case in point:

> unde quo veni? levis una mors est
> virginum culpae. vigilansne ploro
> turpe commissum an vitiis carentem
> ludit imago
>
> vana, quae porta fugiens eburna
> somnium ducit? meliusne fluctus
> ire per longos fuit an recentis
> carpere flores?

[613] See Lowrie 1997, esp. 177–82.
[614] See Tarrant 1985, 180–1, *ad loc.*
[615] See Fraenkel 1957, 194: 'Aphrodite enters the stage and delivers the concluding speech as a true *θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς*'. Harrison 1988 provides the fullest discussion of the tragic framing of the myth, antecedents, and rhetorical features of *Odes* 3.27.
[616] See Harrison 1988, esp. 430–2.

(Hor. *Odes* 3.27.37–44)

Crucially, though, the tragic character of the heroine's speech may serve as a means of parody in this poem. There is one other Horatian ode in which such potentially parodic function of the tragic mode comes to the fore. Again, a comparative reading of the Horatian ode and a Senecan chorus will let the tragic elements in Horace's construction emerge.

Odes 1.16 has been read biographically, sparking off investigations in a quasi-novelistic love story between Horace and his Tyndaris, the addressee of the subsequent *Odes* 1.17. Indeed, there is an old manuscript tradition, on the authority of the ancient Horatian commentator Porphyrio's reading, of putting 1.16 and 1.17, both in alcaics, under the common heading *ad Tyndariden*.[617] More influentially, *O matre pulchra* has been read as a palinode engaging with the precedent of Stesichorus (e.g. Syndikus).[618] Nisbet and Hubbard emphasise that the poem is 'for the most part a little discourse *de ira*'. In his reading of the poem as a palinode, Syndikus highlights the literary character of the poem and its significance for Horatian poetics, which is developed in conscious engagement with – and correction of – the Catullan mode in poem 36:[619] unlike Catullus, who resists his *puella*'s condition for reconciliation (her demand that he burn his invectives), the Horatian poet, Syndikus argues, offers the annihilation of his own earlier iambics to his (*matre pulchra*) *filia pulchrior*: this also has generic implications, indicating a poetic move away from *iambos* to 'higher' lyric poetry.[620] This gesture is also mirrored in the way the ode unfolds, starting in a familiar and colloquial way and moving on to a higher tone involving mythical *exempla*.

I will argue that dramatic elements pervade this poem from the start:

O matre pulchra filia pulchrior,
quem criminosis cumque voles modum
pones iambis, sive flamma
sive mari libet Hadriano.
(Hor. *Odes* 1.16.1–4)

While the link to Stesichorus at the beginning of the poem has rightly been noted (building on Ps.-Acro's early judgment),[621] this literary-historical nexus

[617] See Heinze/Kiessling 1960, 81.
[618] Syndikus 2001, vol. 1, 178–9.
[619] See also Citroni 1995, 288–9.
[620] Syndikus 2001, vol. 1, 177–8.
[621] Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, 204, *ad loc.*

should not be over-emphasised. Nisbet and Hubbard note that the first line may be a typical Horatian motto, 'perfectly suited to Helen, daughter of Leda', and thus modelled on the Stesichorean precedent:[622] tradition has it that Stesichorus had written a poem as an attack on Helen, for which the poet was punished with blindness by the gods. Only after his writing the corrective palinode, in praise of Helen's beauty, was his sight restored. The poem is alluded to in Horace's own œuvre overtly at *Epodes* 17.42–4 (*infamis Helenae Castor offensus vicem | fraterque magni Castoris victi prece | adempta vati reddidere lumina*). There may, however, be another intertextual resonance at the beginning of *Odes* 1.16 that would give a further inflection to the 'motto' – and interpretation – of the whole poem.

The closest Latin parallel for the ode's first line, *O matre pulchra filia pulchrior* ('O daughter more lovely than your lovely mother'), occurs in a fragment from Ennian tragedy. Line 34 of fr. 17 Jocelyn, to be placed in Ennius' play *Alexander*, is spoken by Cassandra, addressing Hecuba: *mater, optumatum multo mulier melior mulierum* ('O mother, woman better far than the best women'). The line is heavily alliterative and memorable. If the Horatian line alluded to Ennius', the relationship between the two texts would be aptly described as one of contrast-imitation: the Horatian speaker's utterance inverts Cassandra's. Horatian allusion is made more likely by the fact that the two texts would have in common a mythical, extratextual allusive reference point, the beautiful Helen of Troy, both the subject of Stesichorus' poems and central in the mythic subject-matter of Ennius' *Alexander*, the most famous Roman play about the Trojan hero Paris. To a reader of the Horatian collection, Helen would also have been present, as already Kiessling-Heinze rightly note, from the 'Iliadic' *Odes* 1.15.[623] Thus, the first line of *Odes* 1.16 would not only engage with the Stesichorean precedent (his poems on Helen), but also add another allusive reference to the myth, via Cassandra's line in Ennius' *Alexander*. It may not be a coincidence that the Horatian poet-speaker inverts the words used by Cassandra in Ennius' play: crucially, Cassandra is the frenzied prophetess, amongst other things prophesying the disaster that is to follow on beautiful Helen's arrival in Troy. In *Odes* 1.16, a poem that – in high pathos and mythical *exempla* befitting the tragic genre – will go on to explore the madness and anger of a woman, the

[622] Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, 204, *ad loc.*
[623] See Heinze/Kiessling 1960, 81.

allusive evocation of both a famous Roman tragedy (Ennius' *Alexander*) and the frenzy of a female *uates* figure (Cassandra) would add point to the noted engagement with the Stesichorean model, and make for a very sophisticated Horatian 'motto' line.

There is some more evidence that Cassandra's lines in Ennius' *Alexander* provide more than a random thread in the web of Roman intertextualities. Their reception by other readers also highlights the role of madness, of a specific female *furor*. Note that the lines are preserved for us by Cicero in the *De Divinatione* in a passage that deals with prophetic insight gained through inspiration. The inspired state is one of 'frenzy', *furor*:

> Inest igitur in animis praesagitio extrinsecus iniecta atque inclusa divinitus. ea si exarsit acrius, furor appellatur, cum a corpore animus abstractus divino instinctu concitatur.
>
> 'Sed quid oculis rapere visa est derepente ardentibus?
> ubi illa paulo ante sapiens virginali modestia?'[624]
> 'Mater, optumatum multo mulier melior mulierum,
> missa sum superstitiosis hariolationibus;
> [...]
>
> O poema tenerum et moratum atque molle. Sed hoc minus ad rem.
> (Cic. *Div*. 1.66)

The shared Ennian quotation/allusion in a similar context is not a coincidence, and at the very least illuminates the importance and memorability of the Ennian scene from *Alexander*. If one believes Roman poetic compositional techniques to be not dissimilar to scholarly endeavour, one may want to go even one step further: if Horace knew the famous Ciceronian passage at Cic. *Div*. 1.66, he may have agreed with him about the 'soft' character of the Ennian lines (*poema tenerum et moratum atque molle*). By introducing the allusive line into his own poem, Horace would thus not only invoke a major frenzied female figure from tragedy, but also subtly contrast the 'softness' of the first line with the poet-speaker's earlier 'scurrilous invectives' (*criminosi … iambi*, 2–3) now to be despised for the sake of the *matre pulchra filia pulchrior* (1).

The first cue of an element from tragedy, the Ennian allusion at the beginning, would be the first building block in a poetic architecture that is pervaded by what one could call the tragic mode. The speech act with which the poem sets itself up, initiating an imagined dialogue, points to the dramatic character of the poem: the colloquial features at the beginning of *Odes* 1.16

[624] These two lines are recited by either the chorus leader or Hecuba in Ennius' *Alexander*: see Jocelyn 1967, 207 (who favours assignation to the chorus leader).

include the emphatic lyric address (vocative plus the pathetic *O*)[625] and the repeated second person address in *voles* (2) and *pones* (3). In particular, the second-person future verb standing in for the imperative is a colloquial feature. Such a 'dramatic' gesture of setting a colloquial scene at the opening of a lyric poem has been argued to set the tone in a way similar to dramatic monologue or dialogue on stage, and it builds tension for the tragic mode to enter a lyric poem. Note how, in the Horace, the first hint of dialogue and dramatisation is followed by opening up the tension between fire and water, *sive flamma | sive mari libet Hadriano* (4–5). This polar opposition is a tragic favourite, and it is no coincidence that Horace's scene here was to be picked up by Rome's major tragedian, Seneca. In the third choral song of Seneca's *Medea*, which is Horatian in several important ways (not least because it is the only stanzaic sapphic ode in the Senecan corpus), the chorus begins their terrified song with its views about the dreadful and potentially lethal power of an angry wife's hatred:

> Nulla uis flammae tumidiue uenti
> tanta, nec teli metuenda torti,
> quanta cum coniunx uiduata taedis
> ardet et odit –
>
> Non ubi hibernos nebulosus imbres
> Auster aduexit properatque torrens
> Hister et iunctos uetat esse pontes
> ac uagus errat –
>
> Non ubi impellit Rhodanus profundum,
> aut ubi in riuos niuibus solutis
> sole iam forti medioque uere
> tabuit Haemus.
>
> caecus est ignis stimulatus ira
> nec regi curat patiturue frenos
> aut timet mortem: cupit ire in ipsos
> obuius enses.
> (Sen. *Med*. 579–94)

The first four stanzas of the choral song provide a series of analogies between the force of Medea's anger and that of destructive natural phenomena. The first two forces are fire and water. Note how Seneca's technique of amplification –

[625] Not normally used with Latin vocatives, *o* is much more common in elevated or pathetic style. It is frequently found in epic and tragedy. See Boyle 2014, 278, *ad Med*. 595–8. According to Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, the Horatian usage may be 'grandiloquent' (4, *ad* 1.1.1–2), 'emotional' (68, *ad* 1.4.14), 'heroic' (106, *ad* 1.7.26), and express 'a Greek note' (120, *ad* 1.9.8: see here for N/H's discussion of the feature) or 'an elevated note appropriate to prayers' (364, *ad* 1.32.13).

the poetic technique that, as Henderson has demonstrated,[626] governs the texture of this whole song – also shows in his expansion of the brief Horatian gesture of polar opposition: where the Horatian ode gives *flamma* and *mare* the space of two consecutive lines, the Senecan chorus devotes two full stanzas to the tragic opposition, and elaborates on them also in stanzas 3 and 4. The Senecan ode goes on to depict anger, in a full-scale poetic discourse *de ira*. It becomes clear that Horace, *Odes* 1.16 is an important intertext.[627] Seneca's engagement with *Odes* 1.16 may have been encouraged by his detecting the original Horatian tragic mode.

Let us go back to the tragic elements there. If the first Horatian stanza opened by recalling earlier Roman instances of prophetic and divinely inspired frenzy (the Ennian Cassandra and the context of inspired *furor* in the Ciceronian passage from *De Divinatione* that quotes the Ennian lines), the poem proceeds with a self-correction: no, anger is even more dangerous and violent than frenzy. Two stanzas full of rhetorical hyperbole and pathetic speech *ex negativo* emphasise the force of 'grim anger', the *tristes … irae* (9), as would be appropriate for moments of high pathos, such as in tragedy, tragic epic, and elegy.[628] The mode of speaking *ex negativo*, with several phrase-initial *non*, is paralleled in both *Odes* 1.16 and the ode in Seneca's *Medea*. Note further that the divinities and frenzy-inducing figures and activities mentioned in the second stanza of 1.16 (lines 5–8) can all be linked to a sense of dramatic performance. But we also should pay attention to another focus of these stanzas: the Horatian lines place a strong focus on sound effects – they vividly invoke a scene of performance, if not tragedy on stage than at least some sort of cultic proto-dramatic activity. More tragic colouring follows in the way the Horatian Jupiter is fashioned: usually most strongly associated with epic, especially when invoked alongside tempest and ship-wreck, the god is given a tragic tinge here: Horace's Jupiter is *ruens*, Greek *καταιβάτης*, and Nisbet and Hubbard rightly point to *Pr.* 359 (*καταιβάτης κεραυνὸς ἐκπνέων φλόγα*) as the closest parallel for this Jovian instantiation. This translingual echo of tragic Zeus's trait from

[626] Henderson 1983.
[627] Noted e.g. by Boyle 2014, 275, *ad loc.*
[628] On the rhetorical force of phrase-initial *non* in Latin, see Guillemin 1941, esp. 107: he detects a slight preference for the construction in elegiac contexts. For *tristes irae* cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 2.14.

Aeschylus'[629] *Prometheus Bound* also provides a sophisticated allusive transition to the first of Horace's mythological prototypes cited in the next stanza, Prometheus.

But not only Prometheus here is the subject of a famous tragedy. For a Roman audience, the tragic pedigree of Thyestes, Horace's second mythological *exemplum*, is even more obvious.[630] Even before the powerful Senecan treatment, the story of Atreus and Thyestes would have been one of the most popular tragic Roman subjects, and particularly so for Horace's contemporaries; Ennius wrote a popular *Thyestes*, Accius a much-received Atreus, and Horace's colleague Varius had recently produced a *Thyestes* in 29 B.C.[631] In *Odes* 1.6, the other Horatian ode that includes mention of the Atreus–Thyestes story in a catalogue of topics the lyric poet must deny himself,[632] the link to Varius the tragedian is most obvious as well. There, *saevam Pelopis domum* in line 8 must allude to the recent and famous Varian *Thyestes*.[633] After the cautioning *exempla* from the realm of tragedy, the poet-speaker of *Odes* 1.16 goes into direct address: 'control your emotions', *compesce mentem* (22). The poem suddenly returns to its frame, and it is only now that the gap between the reality of things and the way they seem to be becomes clear. In Commager's words, Horace has 'graft[ed] domestic skirmish onto the stable dimension of [I should add, 'tragic'] myth in order that we may measure the gap between them'.[634]

This clash, an alienating effect for any first-time recipient of this poem, is properly 'tragic' (in a sense that is not necessarily linked to the genre of tragedy). The tragic mode turns out to have served the poet as a means to his parodic end. If one, moreover, chooses to read the Horatian collection consecutively, *Odes* 1.15, often read as a parodying of epic in high lyric form,[635] would be followed by a poem, *Odes* 1.16, that uses the tragic mode for parodic intent. One last Horatian note may, on this interpretation, be read as a meta-

[629] The play may well have been written by a later writer: see esp. the persuasive arguments set out by Griffith 1977 and West 1979 (both with further references to earlier scholarship on the question).
[630] See Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, 211, *ad loc.*, for further discussion of the difficulty in Horace's version of the story.
[631] On possible political resonances of this play, see above, n. 538.
[632] On Horatian *recusatio*, see D'Anna 1979/80 and Lyne 1995, 31–9. See Cucchiarelli 2001, 71–9 for the use of the technique in the *Satires*.
[633] See Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, 86, *ad loc.* Note, incidentally, how in both 1.6 and 1.16 a rather prosaic *stomachus*, on the whole a rather un-lyric word, which represents the seat of bad temper, provides an apposite transition to the Atreus–Thyestes theme.
[634] Commager 1962, 138.
[635] See Lowrie 1997, 129 (with further references).

poetic comment. The *tristia* of the poem's end, which the poet-speaker is keen to revoke and replace with gentler tones (*mitibus*, 25), could refer not only to earlier poetic compositions of harsh anger, especially his youthful invectives; *tristia* also revokes the *tristes irae* of line 9, and could attempt – by association with the rhetoric used to describe the style of tragedy[636] – to nullify, in vain, the tragic mode of the whole preceding poem. This tragic mode of *Odes* 1.16 comes to the fore especially for readers who allow their reception of Senecan tragedy to influence their reading of earlier poetry as well. Or, from the perspective of chronological literary history, we have seen another instance of Seneca reworking moments from the tradition of earlier Latin poetry that carry within themselves the germ of the tragic and their own dramatisation.

At the same time, some of Horace's poems of civil war are confirmed as poems of Republican memories and poems of potential political purport by recognising their tragic features, elements that are thrown into relief if read, as we have attempted, through Seneca's eyes. In the following, my study will be concerned with further moments of Seneca's Horatian reception, corroborating further the subtle way in which Seneca, in his choruses, is drawn to Horace's memories of the Republic-ending civil war. In the process, we shall raise another important question: that of the hierarchy of allusions (and intertexts) in literary history. It will be necessary to consider how different allusions and intertextualities – and possible reasons for their existence, be they political, connected to a tragic poetics already discernible in the model texts, or the recalling of civil-war memories – work together or against each other, and what happens if readers do or do not notice the allusive engagement posited.

4.7 Sounds, Eastern Exoticism, and Republican Echoes: Seneca's Reception of Horace, *Odes* 1.12 and 3.24 in *Hercules Furens*

In the second choral ode of Seneca' *Hercules Furens*, a major achievement of Seneca's *melopoeia* on a formal level, allusive engagement is signalled by sound effects. As seen above, the asclepiadic metre, especially after its use as Horace's 'programmatic' metre (that of *Odes* 1.1), can work as a significant allusive signpost to Horace. In the second chorus of *Hercules Furens*, it seems to carry

[636] Closest to Horace in the use of *tristis* to refer to tragedy is Porphyrio, who writes, commenting on *paulum severae Musa tragoediae | desit theatris* (*Odes* 2.1.9–10): *Quoniam, inquit, haec scribere destinasti, parce tantisper tragico stilo. Seueram autem tragoediam merito dicit, quod tristia fere sint argumenta tragoediarum*.

even more weight, as a means of domesticating Euripidean material for the Roman world of Senecan tragedy.[637] What for Horace was still an essentially Greek metre is made fully Roman through Seneca's reception: at Seneca's stage in literary history, his fusion of metrical and verbal recall of Horace can rely on Horace's previous intervention. But it is only through the later poet's use and reception that the asclepiad carries weight as a truly Roman metre.

The content of this chorus is concerned with some of Hercules' labours. As Fitch rightly emphasises, a crucial function of this ode is to illustrate a Stoic message: to show through 'a context of barren landscapes, silence, stillness, and death' how a troublesome life such as Hercules' is not truly virtuous, but a 'death-in-life'.[638] The use of earlier literature and its allusive force in adding crucial, ominous layers of meaning to this ode has been noted.[639] Perhaps most significantly, the surface level of the text makes clear that the chorus wishes to view Orpheus' return from the underworld as positive precedent, a good *exemplum* (569–89) for the possibility of Hercules' own return from the realm of death. However, the Ovidian and Vergilian intertexts, marked by clear verbal allusions to these precedents,[640] run counter to the chorus's optimism: if recipients know Vergil's and Ovid's accounts of the Orpheus myth, they will be familiar with its tragic outcome from the start (cf. the brief allusion to the ultimately unsuccessful Herculean *katabasis* in *perdidit* at *Her. F.* 588–9), and will see behind the chorus's optimistic refashioning an ominous undertone that is very relevant in the further course of the plot of this tragedy – 'Orpheus did not in any real sense overcome the realm of death. He appeared to have rescued Eurydice, but shortly thereafter destroyed her in error; the parallel with what will happen to H[ercules] and his family is too close to be missed'.[641] Seneca's local verbal allusions evoking the wider contexts and implications of the texts

[637] The second ode of *Her. F.* is in many ways similar to the second chorus of Euripides' *Herakles*: see Fitch 1987a, 256–7. The Euripidean (and Ovidian) pedigree of this choral song is well documented in Kapnukajas 1930, 29–30, and his comments *ad loc.* See further Billerbeck 1999, 11–23 for a schematic synopsis of Euripides' and Seneca's play. Note that Seneca's chorus differs from the Euripidean account in at least two significant aspects: in Seneca, the apostrophised *Fortuna … non aequa* (524–5) is the driving force, not Zeus; where the Euripidean chorus doubts that Herakles will ever return from the underworld, the Senecan chorus, positive about Hercules' successes in all the most difficult labours that are singled out from the myth in this ode, strongly believes in the success of his chthonic transgression as well (which is also an appropriate preparation for Hercules' subsequent entry on stage).
[638] Fitch 1987a, 253.
[639] See, again, Fitch 1987a, 253.
[640] See Jakobi 1988, 9.
[641] Fitch 1987a, 253.

alluded to is a familiar feature in the allusive and intertextual dynamics in Senecan tragedy.[642] In this chorus, as we shall see in the following, it is also relevant for Seneca's engagement with two of Horace's *Odes*.

Unlike in the first chorus, one of those Senecan odes whose Horatian inheritance is most obviously recognisable in the ode's formal features,[643] Horatian verbal presences in the second ode are scarce. But the noted Horatian allusions in the ode include those to *Odes* 1.12 and 3.24, two poems that are concerned to some extent with the relationship between the ruler and the ruled and lend themselves to political (re-)interpretation. Let us first consider the Senecan allusion to *Odes* 3.24, which occurs earlier than the allusion to *Odes* 1.12. In the Senecan chorus's *ekphrasis* of Scythia,[644] *Her. F.* 533 (*intravit Scythiae multivagas domos*) engages with Horace, *Odes* 3.24.9–11 (*campestres melius Scythae, | quorum plaustra vagas rite tradunt domos | vivunt*).[645] The Senecan striking neologism *multivagus* occurs at a significant point, placing emphasis on the dangerous instability of exotic countries. In the Senecan realm, it is not important to distinguish between the time and place in which the 'erring wandering' (*uagus*) occurs: unlike Lucretius' and Vergil's geographically or temporally specific *montivagus* and *noctivagus*, Seneca just has *multivagus*. The Senecan neologism points to the ubiquitousness of wavering in this tragedy.[646] The allusion to the *vagae domus* of *Odes* 3.24, perhaps subtly continued in the deictic gestures (*illic*) at the starts of *Her. F.* 537 and 550 (which, if taken together with the earlier allusion, may echo the same deictic gesture at *Odes* 3.24.17), evokes Horace's Roman vision of exoticism in the Senecan chorus's *ekphrasis* of the Amazons' country.

Asclepiadic metre and local allusion to Horace collaborate in the domestication of the 'Other' in the Roman poetic imagination. For Said, the 'Other' (in the following phrasing, specifically the 'Orient' in its nineteenth-century French representation) can be 'an exotic yet especially attractive

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642 Cf. e.g. Trinacty 2014, *passim*.
643 See Spika 1890, 1–2. Apart from verbal presences, note especially the use of the *priamel* structure (*alium – alius – me*) at Her. *F.* 192–8, reminiscent of *Odes* 1.1.
644 The section is also in dialogue with the Ovidian description of winter in Scythia in *Trist.* 3.10: see Kapnukajas 1930, 41–2, and Jakobi 1988, 9, *ad* 533–41.
645 The parallel between the Horace and Seneca is noted by Kapnukajas 1930, 35, Fitch 1987a, 259, *ad loc.*, Jakobi 1988, 9, and Billerbeck 1999, 385, *ad loc.*
646 *Vagari*, *vagus*, and other expressions of wavering or erring movement are favourites of Seneca's, and constitute the appropriate physical reaction of the characters (and inanimate objects) to a poetic world in which everything is disjointed: see Tarrant 1985, 47, esp. n. 161.

reality'.[647] In the Senecan lines in the *Hercules Furens*, the exoticism of the mythic material is 'Romanised' through the Horatian allusion and the asclepiadic metre. At the same time, the gesture of poetic domestication may adumbrate a political and moral statement that is not unlike the one encountered in the use of the Roman Odes in the third choral ode of the *Agamemnon*:[648] again, Seneca revisits an Horatian poem with political purport,[649] concerned with the aftermath of civil war, one that highlights the depravity and extravagance of post-civil-war Rome, even at the cost of praising as morally superior such peoples as the Scythians and the Getae. In the Senecan ode, nothing is to be found any more even in Horace's promised lands: the Scythian lands lack waves and sounds (cf. 536–7: *et mutis tacitum litoribus mare.* | *illic dura carent aequora fluctibus*). There is a conspicuous absence of sound in this typically Senecan depiction of a desperate place. In the realms of Senecan drama, the Horatian positive fantasy of a *Gegenwelt* far away has been turned into a wasteland.

Another Horatian allusion in this chorus, to *Odes* 1.12, also contributes to a discourse of a Senecan pessimistic reception of Horace. The chorus's version of Orpheus' *katabasis*, while clearly indebted to the accounts in Vergil's *Georgics* (4.467–503) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10.11–63), echoes Horace, *Odes* 1.12 early on. The Senecan chorus's account of the Orpheus myth begins thus:

> Immites potuit flectere cantibus
> umbrarum dominos et prece supplici
> Orpheus, Eurydicen dum repetit suam.
> quae siluas et aues saxaque traxerat
> ars, quae praebuerat fluminibus moras,
> ad cuius sonitum constituerant ferae,
> mulcet non solitis uocibus inferos,
> et surdis resonat clarius in locis.
> (Sen. *Her. F.* 569–76)

The first three stanzas of Horace, *Odes* 1.12 run thus:

> Quem virum aut heroa lyra vel acri
> tibia sumis celebrare, Clio?

[647] Said 1995, 170. For a brief account of Roman Republican responses to ethnic 'others', see Syed 2005, esp. 362–6 for attitudes towards the Greeks (on which see in detail Petrochilos 1974).
[648] Indeed, *Odes* 3.24 'has much in common with the so-called Roman Odes': see Nisbet/Rudd 2004, 271–3.
[649] Cf. e.g. Pöschl 1996/7, 238 ('Die Ode enthält ein politisches Programm. Sie ist ein politisches Manifest in der Form eines Katalogs von Mißständen.'), and Labate 2013, 208–11.

quem deum? cuius recinet iocosa
nomen imago

aut in umbrosis Heliconis oris
aut super Pindo gelidove in Haemo,
unde vocalem temere insecutae
Orphea silvae,

arte materna rapidos morantem
fluminum lapsus celerisque ventos,
blandum et auritas fidibus canoris
ducere quercus?
(Hor. *Odes* 1.12.1–12)

Both poems, it is worth highlighting, draw attention to their own status as poems, to their performability, and to their intertextual nature. Both the Horatian and Senecan lines do this, firstly, by talking about repetition:[650] note how Orpheus' rescue of Eurydice is described with *repetere* (*repetit*, 571) and, even more obviously, his song with *resonare* (*resonat*, 576); Horace had *recinere* (*recinet*, 3).[651] In a gesture of emulation, furthermore, Seneca's Orpheus is to sing again *surdis … clarius in locis* (576), perhaps best understood (at least as much as it is a topographical clarification) as a hopeful intertextual remark on improving on the situation and fate of the Vergilian, Ovidian, and Horatian Orpheus. Secondly, both the Horatian and the Senecan lines enter a metapoetic discourse: when the Senecan chorus sings about Orpheus' *ars* in verse-initial position (573), it not only recalls, as commentators have noted,[652] the Horatian *ars materna* (1.12.9), but also points recipients to the poetic texture of the chorus's own song.[653]

Senecan tragedy comes after – in this case, not only after the Greek lyric models the Horatian model emulated, but also after the Augustan poets themselves: the chorus's metapoetic language here is a good example of the sort of engagement with the literary past that Schiesaro identifies as one of the

[650] On the role of repetitive gestures in intertextual dynamics, see e.g. Schiesaro 2003, 31–6, who discusses the intertextually charged and highly metadramatic first speech of the fury in *Thyestes*.
[651] On the way in which *Odes* 1.12 advertises its own intertextuality and 'sources', see esp. Schmidt 1984 and Hardie 2003 (especially on Pindar). On Horace's wider engagement with Pindar, see e.g. Feeney 1993 and D'Angour 2012. Cf. also Lowrie 1995.
[652] Fitch 1987a, 269, *ad loc.* (who says that *ars* 'perhaps comes from Hor. *Carm.* 1.12.9f.', but cautions that 'the similarity is not remarkable'), and Billerbeck 1999, 396, *ad loc.*
[653] Further Horatian vocabulary may be found in Seneca's inclusion of the idea that Orpheus' music delays rivers: cf. *praebuerat fluminibus moras* (*Her. F.* 573) with *rivos celeris morari* (*Odes* 3.11.14), the same idea expressed by Horace in another poem on the same context (the parallel is noted by Billerbeck 1999, 397, *ad loc.*).

hallmarks of Senecan drama, which 'validates its existence (and its novelty) by displaying total awareness of its epigonic nature and by laying bare its internal mechanisms'.[654] In addition to the echo of the Horatian *ars* in the Senecan account of Orpheus, another parallel can be found in the shared atmosphere of 'shadows': but where the Horatian shades are features of a *locus* congenial to poetic composition (*Odes* 1.12.5: *in umbrosis Heliconis oris*), the Senecan deployment of this metapoetically loaded feature[655] is reappropriated to an inverted setting, describing the realm of death whose masters Orpheus is trying to manipulate by his song (*Her. F.* 569–70: *Immites potuit flectere cantibus | umbrarum dominos*). These points of contact may be all the more relevant given that an earlier instantiation of the Senecan play's eponymous hero, Hercules, also occupies a prominent spot in the list of heroes in the Horatian poem, leading the triad of deified *heroes* (1.12.25: *dicam et Alciden*). If recipients noticed these local allusions to and echoes of *Odes* 1.12 (following the earlier allusion to *Odes* 3.24), they could again be put in mind of the wider context of the famous Horatian poem. As in the case of *Odes* 3.24 above, *Odes* 1.12 is an Horatian ode of considerable political purport: markedly post-civil war, the poem charts a list of *exempla* from Rome's earliest years and the Republican past, and ends on a (possibly) reassuring (at least to the ruling system) note of imperial power.[656] The issue is complex and merits some closer consideration below.

Let us, first, however, take a step back and ask what one local allusion to Horace in the chorus's account of Orpheus could contribute if the Senecan version seems mostly indebted to Vergil and Ovid. What we have here can serve as a good case study in how one is to interpret the hierarchy of allusions (and intertexts) in literary history. We can see not only how the Senecan poetics blends allusions to several predecessors in the ode, but also how the most subtle engagement – the presence of Horace – yet adds a most significant layer of meaning, continuing the earlier evocation of an Horatian poem, *Odes* 3.24, that

[654] Schiesaro 2003, 223. On the Senecan chorus's awareness of its own literariness see, most recently, Kirichenko 2013, 249–79, but esp. 260–4.
[655] Again, this could be read as a metapoetic remark, at least in the Senecan lyrics, given that *umbrae*, at least since Vergil's *Eclogues*, are marked out as providing congenial *loci* for poetic composition: see esp. Smith 1965 and Gagliardi 2007.
[656] On a different reading of *Odes* 1.12, one that allows some darker notes already to be present in the Horatian poem, including in the role of Augustus, see below, with n. 663, and cf. e.g. Feeney 2009, 62, n. 47 on the poem's openness to such interpretations: 'by the end of the poem it is by no means certain to which category Augustus belongs'.

is concerned with the Roman Republican past. On the surface level, it certainly seems as if the Republican memory that is evoked only indirectly via the allusion to Horace is oppressed – suppressed – by the Augustan versions by Vergil and Ovid looming larger. Significantly, however, the Horatian allusion and traces of Republican memory connected with the two Horatian odes are still noticeable, and some recipients will gain a completely new window onto what is going on in this choral ode by recognising it.

Put differently, the subtlety of an allusion does not make it unimportant. Rather, this is where its very force and political as well as literary-historical attraction may be found. It is true, however, that the relative subtlety of echoes and allusions such as the Horatian one in the present ode – possibly coming with an evocation of its Republican echoes and post-civil-war character – is one reason why Republican memories in Seneca have, by and large, been overlooked in scholarship. It is one reason, for example, why Gowing could, as we have seen above,[657] argue that Republican memories are nowhere to be found in Seneca, especially not in his Neronian works. Gowing then argued that Republican memories return and loom larger again in later texts such as Pliny's *Panegyricus*. But may it not be a very worthwhile critical endeavour to trace those moments of residual discourse that, though subtle and allusive, are still recognisable in Neronian literature, especially in Seneca's works? I would argue that those allusions and echoes are highly relevant since they stand out against the backdrop of what Gowing identifies as the dominant discourse.[658] The Senecan engagement with Horatian memories in the second ode in *Hercules Furens* could be read as such an example. While the web of the ode's intertextual connections is complex, and allusions to the Euripidean model, to Vergil's and Ovid's Orpheus abound, we could still see how the Senecan ode, highly conscious of its own intertextual and belated status, also engages with two Horatian moments. Both may be subtle moments of allusive engagement, but in both cases the engagement is meaningful: if the contexts of these

[657] See introduction, section 'The Senecan Chorus's Republican Echoes – and Seneca's Republicanism?'.

[658] Without wanting to undermine the stimulating contribution of Gowing's book, I would caution that Gowing's classification of Republican echoes in Neronian literature ought to be taken with a grain of salt: if one has to single out Lucan and Petronius as exceptions and does not consider Seneca's tragedies at (as does Gowing 2005: see above, introduction, section 'The Senecan Chorus's Republican Echoes – and Seneca's Republicanism?'), the strong thesis about the relative absence of Republican echoes in the Neronian age may need to be adapted.

Horatian poems were remembered, the Senecan ode would gain an entirely new inflection. Echoes of the Republican past would again be allowed into the experience of reading Seneca's post-Augustan drama. This would be a typically Senecan, pessimistic reading, which would throw into relief the difference with Horace: one way in which the Horatian lyrics *can* be read is as quasi-panegyric poetry, reassuring fictions surrounding the principate.[659] Labate, to give one example, views *Odes* 1.12 as a celebration of Augustus as 'the equivalent on earth of Jupiter, the ruler of the universe [...], emphasiz[ing] the organic connection between the *princeps* and the whole history of Rome'.[660]

In a similar vein, Tarrant recently argued that Senecan tragedy responds to a certain Horatian manner of portraying the ruler as close, but subordinate, to the gods.[661] Tarrant identifies this hierarchical subordination at the close of *Odes* 1.12 (51–2: *tu* [i.e. Iuppiter] *secundo* | *Caesare regnes*; and 57–8: *te minor laetum reget* [i.e. Caesar] *aequus orbem*; | *tu gravi curru quaties Olympum*) and in the opening and close of the Roman Odes (3.1.5–6: *regum timendorum in proprios greges,* | *reges in ipsos imperium est Iouis*; 3.6.5–8: *dis te minorem quod geris, imperas;* | *hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.* | *di multa neglecti dederunt* | *Hesperiae mala luctuosae*). He makes plausible that these are Horatian poems that were apposite for a pessimistic Senecan reception that inverts the Horatian model. In *Thyestes*, for instance, Tarrant argues that 'Atreus provides the strongest possible contrast' with the Horatian model: Atreus 'first dismisses the gods and shortly afterwards wishes that he could drag them against their will to witness Thyestes' cannibal feast (885–95)'.[662] On the other hand, however, one could argue on the basis of such allusions as to *Odes* 1.12 in the second chorus of *Hercules Furens* that the Senecan reception, rather than inverting what is found in the Augustan predecessor, brings out a line of thought that, arguably, already finds its germ in the original Horatian poetics: a recollection of the Republic.[663] In *Odes* 1.12, the Republican memories pervade

[659] This is the way in which Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming) tends to read Seneca's reception of *Odes* 1.12.
[660] Labate 2013, 210–11.
[661] Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming).
[662] Tarrant 2017 (forthcoming), 12.
[663] Thus agreeing with the way in which Newman 2011, 297–302 reads *Odes* 1.12. Newman 2011, 302 is quite Senecan in his reading, suggesting that 'doomed Theron' (the despot of Sicilian Akragas, who is the addressee of Pindar's memorable second *Olympian*, which served as a model for the opening of Horace's poem: see above, n. 651), whose regime was to collapse in 472, four years after commissioning the Pindaric epinician, may be 'a portent of a doomed

the whole poem, but are most notable in the long *exempla*-list of heroic figures from the Republic.[664] Not all readers will have picked up on this Republican (and potentially subversive) element in Horace, but the poem's openness to such a reading will have made it attractive for Seneca's pessimistic reception in his post-Augustan tragedies. At the same time, Seneca would himself be employing a very un-panegyrical,[665] indirect route of passing his type of literary-historical-cum-political comment. Both interpretations of Seneca's Horatian reception here seem to me to be attractive interpretative possibilities – what is most important for the purposes of my study is acknowledging, as both interpretations would, that Seneca's reception of the Horatian poem has once more singled out a poem that contains Republican memories and is indicative of a wider Senecan pessimistic strategy of reading earlier Latin literature.

4.8 Conclusion

We have seen that Seneca's tragic reception of Horace's *Odes* privileges darker moments in the poetry of his Augustan predecessor, memories of the Republican civil war that are fitting for the Senecan chorus's settings. If Seneca's engagement with Lucretius privileged the visual paradigm, his reception of Horace adds another element in the synaesthetic experience of his allusive dynamics: the chorus's sounds. While the choruses may sound like Horace's *Odes*, they are unable to rise to the heights of the Augustan poet-speaker's lyric detachment, a position from which he could provide the poetry for a model of civic engagement that relied on trust in an ultimately benevolent ruler (compare

Augustus, dead Marcellus of a Julio-Claudian line that would peter out less than a century later with that second Augustus, Nero'.

[664] There is some uncertainty whether Cato should be retained in the list; arguably, a reference to Cato's suicide seems dubious in a list of *exempla* from the very early Republic. For discussion and possible conjectures, see Heyworth 1984, Brown 1991, and Harrison 2014, 80–1. Perhaps Cato should be retained and the Horatian mention could be explained as part of a subtle chiastic arrangement (with potentially subversive purport). According to this, Cato would mirror Tarquinius: Tarquinius was not a hero (from a Republican point of view), but a hero (as a ruler: cf. Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, 156, in their note on *superbos … fasces*, '[i]n tradition at least, Rome under the last Tarquin rose to a dazzling and premature hegemony that it took her long to recover after the expulsion of the kings. The extent of his empire was something a Roman could take pride in'), in a similar way in which Cato was not a hero (arguably for the contemporary ruler, Augustus), but a hero (from the Republican point of view).

[665] Cf. the open (and rather blunt) inclusion of Republican allusions in Pliny's *Panegyricus*, mentioned above: this type of 'Republicanism', different from Seneca's, is openly integrated into imperial propaganda, heralding *libertas reddita* (*Pan.* 58.3) under Trajan. See in detail Morford 1992 for a reconsideration of Pliny's speech, with Gowing 2005, 120–31.

Odes 1.2).[666] Just as the chorus in *Troades* did not have the privilege of attaining the Epicurean tranquillity promoted in Seneca's Lucretian model, the chorus in other plays, as we have seen in the present chapter, do not have the privilege of an Horatian positive attitude towards any continuation of Republican Rome. If Seneca, in his Lucretian allusions, gestured towards the failure of Epicureanism, and inverted Catullan love lyrics to suit the post-Augustan tragic environments, his Horatian reception would gesture towards the contemporary non-viability of Horace's (political) outlook in his plays.[667] The Horatian failure would be this: as Seneca shows in his choral odes, Horace's poetry (the civil-war poems in particular) *can* be read as the reassuring contrived fictions surrounding the principate.

[666] This may be complicated, however, by book 4 of the *Odes*: while the cycle of decline, e.g., that is initiated in the Roman Odes is still viewed as open-ended at the close of *Odes* 3.6, it arguably receives its dark closure in *Odes* 4.15, as Hardie 2009, 196 argues.
[667] See Reinhardt 2009 for a nuanced account of the difficulty of this terminology in talking about Horace's poetry.

EPILOGUE

Summary

'Non-idealised' spectators, no distance from the dramatic action, no guidance towards contemplation for their audiences: the present study has told a story of Seneca's tragic chorus that hints at his pessimistic readings in earlier Latin literature. Unlike the Greek chorus in the tragedies of the Athenian democracy, Seneca's chorus is unable to maintain a strong collective voice that is capable of standing up to the tyrants in the tragedies. This important feature in Seneca's use of the chorus can only be recognised if we realise what the poet has done with the literary tradition before him.

In building on Roman Republican precedent, Seneca focuses on the destabilizing moments from Republican tragedy, especially the chorus's increasing involvement in the tragic action. In alluding to Lucretius and moments of Epicurean tranquillity in the choral odes, Seneca suggests the impracticability and ultimate failure of Epicureanism at times when disaster strikes – what is painful really *is* painful, and no amount of attempted detachment can wrench people from that place. In his reception of Catullus in the chorus, earlier poetic moments are re-written and adapted to his tragic poetics. In Seneca's reception, Catullus' epithalamian moments are inverted, and poem 64 is read for its expression of a pessimistic view of human progress, fitting for Seneca's chorus, ultimately despondent in the face of the triumph of evil in *Medea*. Catullus' Attis poem, moreover, has provided a significant Roman foil against which Medea's eventual maenadic frenzy could be depicted. In recalling moments from Horace's *Odes*, finally, the Senecan tragic poetics in the chorus favours moments that remember Rome's Republic-ending civil war. At other instances, we have seen, the positivity and unshakeable belief in a benign ruler such as that expressed in Horace, *Odes* 1.2 are unmasked as a naïve political outlook: one that, through Seneca's belated viewpoint, can be seen to have stood the test neither of time nor of literary history.

After Seneca

One feature of Seneca's reception of earlier literature that has emerged from my study is the significance of moments from Republican texts in Seneca's chorus and a Senecan tendency to read Horace's *Odes* for the Republican memories of

civil war processed there. The chorus's Republicanism is pushed to a new level in one of the early receptions of Senecan tragedy, the thoroughly Roman historical play *Octavia*.[668] The *Octavia*, featuring Nero, Octavia, Poppaea, Seneca, and one (or two) Roman chorus(es),[669] is pervaded by Republican elements throughout.[670] Perhaps most obviously, the Republican echoes are allowed into the play via the use of historical *exempla*, explicitly linking the play's imperial politics with strife and conflict during Rome's Republic: there are Lucretia (*Oct*. 300–3) and Verginia (295–9), the Gracchi (882–6), Julius Caesar (498–502), and Octavian and Antony (477–81 and 503–29). The chorus's role is crucial in negotiating the Republican allusions and echoes throughout the play. In a chapter in her recent study, entitled 'Citizens of Discord', Ginsberg plausibly argues that *Octavia*'s choruses, who recall different versions of the Republic and draw different conclusions for their imperial present, 'implicitly remin[d] us of the plurality of models for investigating civil strife and the plurality of ways of waging civil war throughout Rome's long history'.[671] Unlike in Seneca, the choruses in *Octavia* parade their Republicanism.[672] At this point in (literary) history,[673] it is possible to include obvious and large-scale Republican elements, perhaps as part of what Herington called the 'elegy'-like mode of the *Octavia*, lamenting the 'tragic experience' that was the early Empire.[674] What has not been adequately noted is the development of and continuity with Seneca's practice. My study of Republican elements in Seneca's chorus allows us to see that the use of the

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668 On the question of classifying *Octavia*'s genre ('*praetexta*' or 'tragedy'), see in detail Manuwald 2001, 259–339, with brief overviews of relevant scholarship at n. 3 and n. 163.

669 Two odes of *Octavia* actively think about causing a *bellum civile* at Rome, two odes present more system-supporting positions: this dichotomy has led scholars to 'distinguish a "primary," "Republican" chorus of Roman citizens, who are the play's true heroes, from a "secondary" chorus of obsequious "courtiers"' (Ginsberg 2017, 142, with an overview of scholarship at n. 3). However, I find it difficult to agree with assigning 'primary' and 'secondary' status to these choruses, and would prefer viewing them (in a manner similar to the competing voices of the chorus in Seneca's *Troades*, for instance) as equally important choruses of Roman citizens: see also Manuwald 2001, 296.

670 See now esp. Ginsberg 2017. For the role of imperial echoes in the *Octavia*, see Buckley 2012, with further references.

671 Ginsberg 2017, 179.

672 For a detailed analysis of the chorus's Republican elements and their significance, see Ginsberg 2017, 142–79. See also Manuwald 2001, 323–39.

673 Several post-Neronian dates have been put forward: for the scholarly positions, see Manuwald 2001, 337, n. 167, and Ginsberg 2017, 183, n. 6. Despite some studies that still posit the opposite, it should be absolutely clear that Seneca was not the author of the *Octavia*: see Zwierlein 1980, 715–17, and Ferri 2003, 31–50.

674 Herington 1961, 29. The direct political significance of the chorus's involvement and statements continues a clear feature of Roman Republican *fabulae praetextae*: see Manuwald 2001, 333–4, with n. 161.

chorus in *Octavia* is not in all respects 'a decisive break with Senecan practice'.[675] Rather, it could be considered a distillation of what a keen reader of Senecan tragedy, the author of the *Octavia*, already found in essence in Seneca's plays. Of course, the Republican presences in Seneca's chorus and in *Octavia*'s chorus are different in scope: there is a clear development.[676] In the end, however, the chorus in *Octavia*, while having the last word, ends up as failed in their attempts of providing viable alternative worldviews and changes in the dramatic plot as Seneca's choruses. In their last line (*Oct.* 982), the Roman citizens of the chorus despair at the tragic hero Nero's victory,[677] in a manner that is reminiscent of Seneca's tragic world, ruled by the likes of Atreus and Medea: *civis gaudet Roma cruore*.

[675] Thus Ginsberg 2017, 141.
[676] From the perspective of literary history (and to recall Gowing 2005, as discussed in the introduction), the development from the allusive nature of Republican presences in Seneca's chorus to the pervasive presence in *Octavia* is similar to the wider development from a more subtle and allusive presence of Republicanism in Neronian times to a more large-scale inclusion of Republican elements after Nero.
[677] The generalising use of *Roma* in the play's last line suggests that the chorus's 'final indictment of Rome' is not only to be understood 'in terms of Nero's crimes within the play', but rather as expressing 'a timeless truth about the Roman people, their leaders, and the ubiquitousness presence of strife … throughout Roman history' (Ginsberg 2017, 176).

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