

The Poetics of Vision in Virgil's *Aeneid*

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In memoriam Daniel Thomas.

I. Introduction

Acts of vision can be profoundly expressive, of a character's inner state and of the relations between characters. This article will suggest that some acts of vision in Virgil's *Aeneid* are informed by ancient optical theory. In line with this suggestion, I will offer readings of well known passages under three overlapping headings: vision and knowledge; vision and erotic desire; and vision and power (especially on the battlefield). The paper is framed as a study of the interplay of ancient philosophy and poetry. Many of the motifs in Virgil's poetics of vision have their origin in the *Iliad*, but Virgil has received these motifs partly through a philosophical tradition that stretches from the pre-Socratic poet-philosophers through Plato and Aristotle to Cicero and Lucretius.¹ Virgil engages particularly closely with his epic forebears Homer and Lucretius when representing vision. The kernel of my analysis will be the language with which Virgil describes instances of vision, but I will also draw on a diverse body of modern scholarship on vision and visibility in ancient Classical culture, including studies of vision in the *Aeneid*. Much of this work uses the concept of the gaze as a hermeneutic principle, with all of the political and psychoanalytic associations which the term "gaze" has

I wish to thank those whose help has greatly improved this article: Peter Agócs, Jaś Elsner, Daniel Hadas, Philip Hardie, Duncan Kennedy, Helen Lovatt, Barney Taylor, Cliff Weber, and audiences in London, Manchester, Nottingham, and Edinburgh.

¹ Gale 1995 is seminal for our understanding of the interactions between myth, philosophy, and poetry.

accrued in cultural theory since John Berger's 1972 *Ways of Seeing* (a television documentary series subsequently published as a book), and Laura Mulvey's landmark 1975 paper, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."² Despite the obvious cultural gulf between Virgil and the present time, there is more than enough continuity between modern constructions of the gaze and ancient literary practice to warrant applying the modern paradigms fruitfully to vision in Virgil. I will conclude with some remarks on the relevance of Virgil's poetics of vision to the *Aeneid*'s Augustan context, which was itself a highly visual culture, a culture of spectacle.

II. Scholarly Context

Recent decades have seen a particular boom in studies of vision and visuality in the Classics, literary and material.³ Much of this attention has focussed on epic, addressing imagery, spectacle, ecphrasis, visualization by characters, and narrative manipulation of points of view.⁴ Recent studies of vision in the *Aeneid* have argued for the spectacular nature of some narrative sequences;⁵ the primacy of visual over verbal communication;⁶ the role of vision in the creation of sympathy between reader and character;⁷ the eroticized appearance of fallen warriors; the partiality of a character's view of national

² Berger 1972; Mulvey 1975. See e.g. Fredrick 2002; Morales 2004; Bartsch 2006; Lovatt 2013.

³ See Elsner 1996 and 2007; Barchiesi 2005; Hölscher 2004; Squire 2009 and 2011; Lovatt and Vout 2013; Blundell, Cairns, Craik, and Rabinowitz eds. 2013.

⁴ See Pöschl 1977; Conte 1986; Leigh 1997; Salzman-Mitchell 2005; Slatkin 2007; and Strauss Clay 2011. On ecphrasis in the *Aeneid* see especially Fowler 1990; Putnam 1998; Casali 2006; Elsner 2007:78–87.

⁵ Feldherr 1995 and 2002. In general on vision in Virgil see Thomas 2013 and Reed 2013.

⁶ Smith 2005.

⁷ Syed 2005, esp. Ch. 3 and 4.

identity;⁸ and extensive allusion to Lucretius in Virgil's poetics of vision.⁹ Helen Lovatt's recent monograph, *The Epic Gaze*, builds on all of this work to offer rich pickings on Greek and Roman epic from Homer to Nonnus.¹⁰ Where I aim to make a contribution is in the central use of ancient optical models, notably intromission and extramission, to analyze and interpret Virgil's language of vision.¹¹ A number of scholars have found a role for ancient optical theories in their analyses of literary representations of vision, particularly in Greek literature. Charles Mugler shows how Homer and tragedy sometimes inform and sometimes reflect ancient scientific thinking on light and vision; his reading integrates poetry and optics very closely.¹² Others have identified reflexes of intromission and extramission in love poetry and the Greek novel, often arguing, as I shall do here, for a correlation between the active agency or otherwise of the eye of the viewer and social protocols of viewing.¹³ Optical models have occasionally been glimpsed, though not extensively applied, in readings of vision in the *Aeneid*.¹⁴

III. Ancient Optics

⁸ Reed 2007.

⁹ Hardie 2009:153–179.

¹⁰ Lovatt 2013.

¹¹ See Stok 1987 for a detailed philological discussion of *oculus* and *lumina* (= eyes) in Virgil. For a discussion of the gaze in Virgil see Heuzé 1985:540–579.

¹² Mugler 1960.

¹³ See Hubbard 2002; Morales 2004:16–18, 29; D. L. Cairns 2005:138–139; Bartsch 2006:58–83, 136–152; on the 'evil eye' see Rakoczy 1996. For the use of ancient optics in the analysis of medieval and Renaissance art in theory and practice, see Nelson 2000 and Hendrix and Carman 2010.

¹⁴ Smith 2005:176 glances briefly at atomic models of vision and considers (172n163) Epicurean haptic vision in relation to the poem's final scene. Lovatt 2013:18–19, 310–311 surveys optical theory and connects intro- and extra-mission with active and passive visual protocols.

In this section I review ancient optical theories and explain how I believe Virgil engages with them. I aim to establish connections between poetic and scientific ways of understanding vision. Different thinkers, from the pre-Socratics to Ptolemy, accounted for the dynamics of vision in a variety of ways, constructing their theories from the four basic elements of light, space, colour, and movement, and positing different relationships between the eye, the mind, the object viewed, and the space between these physical elements.¹⁵ Galen gives a reductive but useful generalization: “A body that is seen does one of two things: either it sends something from itself to us and thereby gives an indication of its peculiar character, or, if it does not itself send something, it waits for some sensory power to come to it from us.”¹⁶ Galen zooms in here on the two main modalities of vision: intromission or the emanationist model, propounded by the Atomists and Epicureans, and extramission, which is usually found in combination with intromission.¹⁷ Extramission is attested for the fifth-century Pythagorean Alcmaeon of Croton, who held that it was clear that the eye contained within it fire, since fire flashed out of it if struck.¹⁸ Pure extramission is attested for the late-fifth/early-fourth-century Archytas of Tarentum, who maintained that rays come from the eyes.¹⁹ The theory recalls the fire in the eyes of Homeric gods and heroes, and may have been inspired by it.²⁰

Beyond Homer, the motif is widely attested in early Greek poetry, appearing in the

¹⁵ On ancient theories of vision see Van Hoorn 1972:42–71; Lindberg 1976:1–17; Simon 1998:21–56; and Smith 1999:24–49 with all the important sources in English translation. See Bartsch 2006:58–67 for an excellent overview with further references.

¹⁶ Galen *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 7.5.1, tr. De Lacy as cited by Lindberg 1976:219n59.

¹⁷ See Smith 1999:28–30 for the prevalence of composite theories.

¹⁸ Alcmaeon of Croton A5 DK = Theophr. *de sens.* 26: ὀφθαλμοῦς δὲ ὄραν διὰ τοῦ πέριξ ὕδατος. ὅτι δ’ ἔχει πῦρ, δῆλον εἶναι· πληγέντος γὰρ ἐκλάμπειν.

¹⁹ Archytas Phil. testimonia A 25 DK [Apul. *Apol.* 15], *ut alii philosophi disputant, radii nostri seu mediis oculis proliquati et lumini extrario mixti atque ita uniti, ut Plato [Tim. 46A] arbitratur, seu tantum oculis profecti sine ullo foris amminiculo, ut Archytas putat.*

²⁰ See Onians 1951:76–79 and Mugler 1960:49 for interaction and continuity between extramission theory and Homeric fire in the eyes.

Homeric hymns and in each of the three tragedians.²¹ Sometimes it is a matter of fire in the eyes, and sometimes vision is figured as a ray or a dart from the eyes.²² Fire in the eyes occurs in a fragment of Empedocles, who compares the eye to a lantern, shining forth its gleaming rays into the stormy night. Here are the first two lines:

ὥς δ' ὅτε τις πρόοδον νοέων ὠπλίσσατο λύχνον
χειμερίην διὰ νύκτα, πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο...

As when a man, planning a journey through the stormy night, gets ready a lantern, blaze of flaming fire ...²³

The fragment has a strong Homeric flavour.²⁴

A glint of the extramissionist theory may shine through the Latin use of *lumen* for the eye. This usage goes back at least as far as Lucretius, but it may be as old as Ennius.²⁵ It may also allude to the common idea of the sun as the all-seeing eye.²⁶ The materialist

²¹ See D. L. Cairns 2005:148n51; for Homer see Turkeltaub 2005.

²² E.g. *Od.* 4.150 ὀφθαλμῶν τε βολαί; *Soph. Aj.* 69–70, ἐγὼ γὰρ ὀμμάτων ἀποστρόφους | ἀνγὰς ἀπείρξω σὴν πρόσοψιν εἰσιδεῖν.

²³ Empedocles B84 DK [Aristotle, *De sensu* 2, 437b26–438a3]. Aristotle categorizes this fragment under extramission, though he tells us that Empedocles elsewhere propounded intromission.

²⁴ The closest Homeric line-end to πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο is σέλα πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο (*Il.* 8.563), but see πυρὸς μένος αἰθομένοιο at *Il.* 6.182; πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο at 10.246, 11.596, 13.673, 16.81, 18.1, 22.150, 19.39, 20.25; πυρὸς σέλας at 19.366. The inflections are Homerizing throughout; the syntax is paratactic throughout the fragment, and the epic τε is used; the fragment begins with ὥς δ' ὅτε τις; and the metre is Homeric; cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1447b on Empedocles and Homer.

²⁵ See *DRN* 3.364, 410 etc.; 3.364 alludes to Enn. *Ann.* 137 S, which juxtaposes *lumina* and *oculis*: *Postquam lumina sis oculis bonus Ancus reliquit*. See Harrison 1991 on *Aen.* 10.446–447, who sees the usage of *lumina* for eyes as an imitation of Homeric φάεα. See also *Cat.* 51.12, 64.86, 122, 188 etc.

²⁶ For the sun as the all-seeing eye see Blundell et al. 2013:15; and for possible play on *lumen* as eye, see Ennius *trag.* 235 M, *Iuppiter tuque adeo summe Sol qui omnis res inspicis | quique lumine tuo mare terram caelum contines*.

idea that all objects continually give off a rapidly moving stream of particles that (in optimal conditions) preserve the appearance of the object from which they emanated might at first sight seem an unprepossessing literary subject.²⁷ Nonetheless, Lucretius draws on the resources of poetry to cloak it in epic garb.²⁸ Most theorists of vision, however, believed in an interactionist model which combined intro- and extramission. The most often cited of these is Plato in the *Timaeus*, which was adapted into Latin by Cicero.²⁹

How does Virgil engage with and represent intromission, extramission, and the combined model? I argue that he did so partly by allusion to theorists of vision such as Lucretius, and partly by emphasizing the active-passive dynamics, especially involving eyes, in gazes and glances. It will become clear that I see Virgil using the two main optic modalities in poetically enlarged ways. First to intromission: the passage in *Aeneid* 10 in which Juno fashions a phantom Aeneas out of cloud to lure Turnus away from the fighting and delay his death is replete with Lucretian language (10.636–644):

tum dea nube caua tenuem sine uiribus umbram

in faciem Aeneae (uisu mirabile monstrum)

Dardaniis ornat telis, clipeumque iubasque

diuini adsimulat capitis, dat inania uerba,

dat sine mente sonum gressusque effingit euntis, 640

²⁷ Epicurus *Hdt.* 49–50. See Sedley 1998:39–42.

²⁸ Lucr. *DRN* 4.26–109.

²⁹ Plat. *Tim.* 45b–d, 67c–d. See Cic. *Tim.* 49, *sed si in splendore consedit, tum vel eadem species vel interdum inmutata redditur, cum ignis oculorum cum eo igne, qui est ob os offusus, se confudit et contulit.* See also Plat. *Theaet.* 156a–157b.

morte obita qualis fama est uolitare figuras
aut quae sopitos deludunt somnia sensus.
at primas laeta ante acies exsultat imago
inritatque uirum telis et uoce lacessit.

Then the goddess from hollow mist fashions a thin, strengthless phantom in the likeness of Aeneas, a monstrous marvel to behold, decks it with Dardan weapons, and counterfeits the shield and plumes on his godlike head, gives it unreal words, gives a voice without thought, and mimics his gait as he moves; like shapes that flit, it is said, after death or like dreams that mock the slumbering senses. But the phantom stalks exultant in front of the foremost ranks, provokes the foe with weapons, and with cries defies him.³⁰

Harrison notes many of the Lucretian echoes.³¹ The densest concentration does indeed come from Lucretius' exposition of the intromission theory at *DRN* 4.26–54, but there is also some allusion to other parts of *DRN* 4, notably the discussion of the chance occurrence of illusory visual films of fabled creatures at *DRN* 4.722–751. The phantom Aeneas dances before the battle lines, *at primas laeta ante acies exsultat imago* (643), but *acies* may have visual connotations here, as it is used in visual senses by Lucretius, Virgil, and others.³² Juno intervenes on the battlefield, making images which flit *ante*

³⁰ For Virgil I quote from Mynors 1972; Virgil translations are by Fairclough-Goold 1999 unless otherwise specified.

³¹ See Harrison 1991 on 641–642, to which I add some echoes: 636 *umbram* ~ 4.38 *umbras*; 636 *tenuem* ~ 4.42 *tenuis*; 639 *adsimulat* ~ 4.30, 50 etc. *simulacra*, 52 *similem*; 641 *uolitare* ~ 4.32 *volitant*, 38 *volitare*, 47 *volitent*; 641 *figuras* ~ 4.42 *figuras*; 642 *somnia* ~ 4.34 *in somnis*; 642 *deludunt* ~ 4.34–37 *terrificant ... ne reamur*; 643 *imago* ~ 4.52 *imago*; 636 *nubes* ~ 4.133 *nubes* forming illusory shapes; 636 *tenuem* ~ 4.726, 728 *tenvia*; 644 *uirum ... lacessit* ~ 4.729 *visumque lacessunt*, 731 *sensumque lacessunt*. At 10.639 *inania* evokes Lucretian *inane*.

³² *DRN* 4.238, 691, 718; *Aen.* 4.643, 6.788, 7.399, 12.558; cf. Catull. 63.56; Caes. *BG* 1.39.

acies. Typically, Virgil is using Lucretian language to express a distinctly un-Lucretian scenario.³³ With line 641, *morte obita qualis fama est uolitare figuras*, Virgil seems to allude to Lucretius' explanations of why we see visions of the dead in our dreams.³⁴ But he grafts the allusion onto an instance of divine intervention. To take a somewhat different example, in Venus' revelations of the warring gods at the sack of Troy, Athena is represented as gleaming, *effulgens* (2.615–616):

iam summas arces Tritonia, respice, Pallas
insedit nimbo effulgens et Gorgone saeua.

Now on the highest towers – turn and see – Tritonian Pallas is planted, gleaming with storm cloud and grim Gorgon.

Commentators tell us that this word may be a Virgilian coinage.³⁵ Clearly it looks back to the Homeric tradition of shining gods, but I suggest that in addition it takes after intromission on the basis that anyone who sees Venus will be the recipient of her effulgent emanation (note the preverb).³⁶

³³ Hardie 1986:157–241, esp.178–184. For Lucretius in the *Georgics* see Gale 2000.

³⁴ *DRN* 4.34–35 *cum saepe figuras | contuimur miras simulacraque luce carentum*. Virgil's *fama est* (10.641) may be an appeal to the poetic tradition; see Norden 1957 on *Aen.* 6.14 and Hardie 2012:572–529.

³⁵ See Horsfall 2008 ad loc.

³⁶ Lucretius uses *fulgur* (along with *lumen*) as an analogy for the speed of the material *simulacra* (4.189–190).

Turning now to extramission, there are many cases of blazing eyes in Virgil, belonging to gods, heroes, inbetweeners like Charon and Allecto, and monsters.³⁷ Undoubtedly these blazing eyes hark back to Homer, but I suggest they may also look to the theory of extramission. In this context it is tempting to see in Virgil's description of Charon's flaming eyes, *stant lumina flamma* (6.300), a reflection of Empedocles' lantern fragment, because of the juxtaposition of *lumina* and *flamma* in the context of vision. Apart from fire in the eyes or allusion to a proponent of extramission, Virgil's gazes may be informed by extramission in the use of certain phrases to express how a character casts his or her eyes over their field or object of vision. These phrases figure the viewer as the active agent of vision, and they combine a verb such as *ferre*, *referre*, *tenere*, *convertere*, *torquere*, *tendere*, *protendere*, *reicere*, *deicere*, or *conicere* with either *oculos*, *lumina*, or *aciem* as direct object.³⁸ The high number and variety of these structurally similar expressions show Virgil's peculiar fondness for them – many will be quoted in this paper – and most of them do not appear in Latin poetry before Virgil, for example *oculos uoluere*.³⁹ Now, one might argue that Virgil has calqued *oculos uoluere* or phrases like it on Homeric or other Greek poetry. Sure enough, in Homer we have instances of τρέπεν / τρέφεν ὅσσε φαεινῶ for a god (but not a mortal) adjusting their gaze;⁴⁰ and Antenor says in the *Teichoskopia* that Odysseus looked downwards and fixed his eyes on the ground, ὑπαὶ δὲ ἴδεσκε κατὰ χθονὸς ὄμματα πήξας.⁴¹ But these expressions are few and far between, and it is otherwise very rare for Homer to make the eye-noun a direct object of a

³⁷ *Geo.* 3.433 (snake); 4.451 (Proteus); *Aen.* 2.210 (snake), 2.405 (Cassandra), 5.277 (snakes), 5.648 (Iris-Beroe), 6.300 (Charon), 7.448–449 (Allecto), 9.110 (Turnus), 9.703 (Bitias), 9.731, 12.102, 670 (Turnus). See Horsfall 2000 on 7.448–449 and 2008 on 2.405.

³⁸ See Stok 1987:818–819 for these phrases.

³⁹ See Anderson 1971; Heuzé 1985:563–573; Horsfall 2000 on 7.251.

⁴⁰ Of Zeus at *Il.* 13.3, 13.7 and 16.645; of Athena at 21.415.

⁴¹ *Il.* 3.217.

verb in expressions of vision,⁴² Virgil does this frequently. In Virgil, the emphasis falls on the agency of the viewer, who controls his eyes and directs his gaze. This is analogous though not identical to classic extramission, an extrusion of rays from the eyes to gather information. Indeed, even in an intromissive system such as Lucretius' a viewer may tense their eyes to refine their vision (4.808–810), or direct their gaze as an expression of power (Epicurus at 1.66–67). Let us examine a specific example in Virgil. Just before the duel of Pallas and Turnus in book 10, Pallas rolls his eyes over Turnus' immense body, sizing him up from a distance (10.445–448):

at Rutulum abscessu iuuenis tum iussa superba
miratus stupet in Turno corpusque per ingens
lumina uoluit obitque truci procul omnia uisu...

But when the Rutulians retired, then the youth, marvelling at the haughty command, stands amazed at Turnus, throws his eyes over that giant frame, and with fierce glance scans all from afar...

The phrase “lumina uoluit” seems to allude to and be informed by the theory of extramission. As we shall discuss in greater detail shortly, it reflects Pallas' attempt to assert control over the challenging situation.

Finally, as Aeneas receives the divine armour from his mother, intro- and extramission

⁴² Blazing or shining eyes in the nominative case are frequent, e.g. *Il.* 1.200; the periphrasis for death, τὸν δὲ σκότος ὅσσε κάλυψε, occurs frequently.

are combined in this passage in *Aeneid* 8.615–623:

dixit, et amplexus nati Cytherea petiuit, 615
arma sub aduersa posuit radiantia quercu.
ille deae donis et tanto laetus honore
expleri nequit atque oculos per singula uoluit, 618
miraturque interque manus et bracchia uersat
terribilem cristis galeam flammasque uomentem, 620
fatiferumque ensem, loricam ex aere rigentem,
sanguineam, ingentem, qualis cum caerula nubes
solis inardescit radiis longeque refulget...

These were Cytherea's words.

She sought her son's embraces then set up
his glittering arms beneath a facing oak.
Aeneas cannot have enough; delighted
with these gifts of the goddess, this high honor,
his eyes rush on to everything, admiring;
with arm and hand he turns the helmet over,
tremendous with its crest and flood of flames,
the sword that deals out fate, the stiff brass corselet,
blood-red and huge as when a blue-gray cloud,
which rays of sun have kindled, glows far off... (tr. Mandelbaum)

First the armour gleams: in line 616 *radiantia*, and later in 623 the breastplate is likened to a shining cloud that *inardescit* and *refulget*. But in between these two, as Aeneas tries to take in the magnificent armour, and presumably to get the measure of the images, which are described in the remainder of the book, he too, in line 618, rolls his eyes over each detail.

I turn now to offer some readings of visually charged scenes which are informed by optical theory, some more obviously than others. My aim is to identify and interpret the interaction of poetic and philosophical models, focussing on the eye in instances of vision, and often considering active and passive dynamics. I am interested in the overlap between the three categories of example which I will discuss: vision and knowledge, vision and erotic desire, and vision and power.

IV. Vision and Knowledge

The connection between vision and knowledge is embedded in the Greek language, where to know is to have seen.⁴³ It finds early expression in Athena's removal of the *achlus* from Diomedes' eyes in *Iliad* 5, enabling him to distinguish between gods and mortals on the battlefield.⁴⁴ Some of the subtlest meditations on vision and knowledge are

⁴³ Cliff Weber draws my attention to the close connection between vision and knowledge in Indo-European languages generally, with reference to Sanskrit *veda* (knowledge), Greek *widein* (vision), Latin *videre* (vision), and German *wissen* (knowledge), all of which are cognate.

⁴⁴ *Il.* 5.127–128.

to be found in Sophocles' portrayals of Oedipus and Tiresias.⁴⁵ The Platonic tradition also worked fruitfully with the idea of vision as knowledge. The allegory of the cave in the *Republic* presents the outward movement from darkness to light as a metaphor for the transition from ignorance to enlightenment.⁴⁶ In the first *Alcibiades*, Socrates proposes using a mirror or the reflection in an eye to realise the 'know thyself' maxim, thus establishing vision as "a paradigm for self-knowledge."⁴⁷ In the second *Alcibiades* Socrates refers to Athena's removal of the *achlus* from Diomedes' eyes, and suggests that the mist must be removed from his interlocutor's eyes to elucidate his benighted soul.⁴⁸ Now, in Epicurean epistemology, sense perception is the bedrock of knowledge. Lucretius emphasizes this frequently, but follows Epicurus in ascribing a role to the intellect in interpreting the evidence of sense perception.⁴⁹ Within this framework, Lucretius capitalizes on the sense of vision, frequently using visual imagery as a didactic tool to explain the invisible, the sub-sensory.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, he gives his own twist on the illumination metaphor in formulaically repeated lines, asserting that it is *not* the light of day or the rays of the sun that will dispel mental terror and darkness, but *naturae species ratioque*, that is the observation of nature and reasoning about it.⁵¹

hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessesit

non radii solis neque lucida tela diei

discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque (1.146–148, 2.59–61, 3.91–93, 6.39–41)

⁴⁵ See Seale 1982, *passim*.

⁴⁶ *Rep.* VII 514a–520a.

⁴⁷ Morales 2004:14; [Plato] *Alcibiades* I 132e.

⁴⁸ [Plato] *Alcibiades* II 150d.

⁴⁹ See *DRN* 1.422–425, 4.380–387, 464–465, 478–479; Epicurus, *KD* 20 and *Hdt.* 50; Diog. Laert. 10.31; Bailey II 1228–1229. See Gale 1995:131.

⁵⁰ See West 1969; Schiesaro 1990; Conte 1994; Hardie 2009:154–156.

⁵¹ See Clay 1969 and Sedley 1998:37–38 on the phrase *naturae species ratioque*.

The fallibility of visual perception is on Virgil's mind as early as Corydon's *si numquam fallit imago* in the second *Eclogue* (2.27). With this epistemological background in mind, let us now turn to Venus' Lucretian revelations in books 1 and 2 of the *Aeneid*. The spectre of Venus as a Lucretian allegory of love hangs over *Aeneid* 1, where Venus machinates to arrange a loving welcome for Aeneas and is twice referred to as *genetrix*, the second word of the *De rerum natura*.⁵² Son meets disguised mother soon after his shipwreck, in a quasi incestuous reworking of the amour of Aphrodite and Anchises in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.⁵³ The scene leaves Aeneas frustrated, craving intimate comforts, primed to meet Dido. Venus has delivered a Euripidean-style tragic prologue.⁵⁴ This programmes much of the tragic patterning of the Carthage episode, including the themes of knowledge and perception, which are at the heart of the tragedy of Dido and of the disagreement between the couple over the status of their union. There is a visual and even theatrical self-consciousness about Venus' revelations of Dido's story (338 *Punica regna uides*; 365–366 *ingentia cernes / moenia*), which contains its own revelations from the ghost of Sychaeus (355–356 *crudelis aras traiectaue pectora ferro / nudauit, caecumque domus scelus omne retexit*). Literary models proliferate. The encounter is figured as didactic from both sides: Venus asks the men to show her if they have seen one of her sisters wandering about (321 *monstrate*), while Aeneas responds with a request for instruction as to where they have landed (332 *doceas*; cf. 382 *matre dea monstrante uiam*). But from an Epicurean perspective the encounter is doubly absurd: gods should

⁵² 1.590 *genetrix*, 689 *genetricis*; cf. *DRN* 1.1 *Aeneadam genetrix*.

⁵³ See Reckford 1995-6; Hardie 2006; Burbidge 2010; and Gladhill 2012 with further references. On the signs of the divine epiphany see Turkeltaub 2007, with further references.

⁵⁴ Harrison 1972-3 and Hardie 1997:322.

not intervene in mortal affairs, and it is futile to petition a god. The scenario is no less absurd than the beneficent interventions of Venus at the beginning of *De rerum natura*, and the poet's request to her for assistance in composing epic. Aeneas is immediately suspicious of Venus' disguise (327–328 *namque haud tibi uultus / mortalis*), but does not ultimately see through it until Venus reveals herself on departure (402–408):

Dixit, et auertens rosea cervice refulsit,
ambrosiaeque comae diuinum uertice odorem
spirauere, pedes uestis defluxit ad imos,
et uera incessu patuit dea. ille ubi matrem 405
adgnouit, tali fugientem est uoce secutus:
'Quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis
ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram
non datur ac ueras audire et reddere uoces?'

She spoke, and as she turned away, her roseate neck flashed bright. From her head her ambrosial tresses breathed celestial fragrance; down to her feet fell her raiment, and in her step she was revealed a very goddess. He knew her for his mother, and as she fled pursued her with these words: "Why, cruel like others, do you so often mock your son with vain phantoms? Why am I not allowed to clasp hand in hand and hear and utter words unfeigned?"

In Venus' gleaming we see the reflexes of intromission, though it is clear that the

epiphany works on senses beyond the visual. Venus actively controls who recognizes her, and Aeneas is the passive recipient of her effulgence, indignantly unsatisfied with the false appearances with which she dupes him. Aeneas' response marks his passivity, indicating that he desires a more robust touch than visual *simulacra* alone. But his reply also recalls Lucretius' characterization of how Venus dupes lovers with images (*DRN* 4.1101):

sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis
in this way Venus dupes lovers with images/films

The Lucretian allusion figures Aeneas as a would-be lover of Venus, sustaining the Oedipal dynamic in play. Venus retains control over who sees Aeneas as the narrative proceeds, cloaking him in a veil of dark air to render him invisible, allowing him to observe his Carthaginian surroundings as a *voyant invisible* and to take in, and impose his own interpretation on, the pictures on Dido's Temple to Juno. Venus has enabled him to ascertain in safety the attitude of his hosts, and it is only after Dido has declared her benevolence that Aeneas and Achates burn to exit the cloud. But Venus is still in control of who sees Aeneas, and how. The cloud parts, and Aeneas emerges shining with reflected light infused by his mother (586–591):

uix ea fatus erat, cum circumfusa repente
scindit se nubes et in aethera purgat apertum.
restitit Aeneas claraque in luce refulsit,

os umerosque deo similis; namque ipsa decoram
caesariem nato genetrix lumenque iuuentae 590
purpureum et laetos oculis adflarat honores:...

Scarce had he said this, when the encircling cloud suddenly parts and clears into open heaven. Aeneas stood forth, gleaming in the clear light, godlike in face and shoulders; for his mother herself had shed upon her son the beauty of flowing locks, with youth's ruddy bloom, and on his eyes a joyous lustre ...

Once again the scene looks back to Homer through Lucretius. It recalls the beginning of *Iliad* 5, in which Athena makes Diomedes resplendent, or *Iliad* 18, in which the same goddess decorates Achilles with a cloud of flame.⁵⁵ These martial rousings are ominous contexts to have evoked at the first meeting of Dido and Aeneas. There are a number of Lucretian echoes: we have noted *genetrix* (590), from the proem to *DRN* 1, but *circumfusa* (586) also recalls the embrace of Mars and Venus (*DRN* 1.39). The word *purgat* at 587 refers at *DRN* 4.341 to clarifying the eyes, purging them of dark air and scattering shadows. Aeneas emerges from the darkness as Epicurus raised his head from the shadows (*DRN* 3.1 *E tenebris*).⁵⁶ Resplendent with light, Aeneas' face shines, his eyes gleaming, and his appearance dumbfounds Dido (613). But Venus is still in control, since Aeneas' effulgence depends on her agency; it is she who has breathed *laetos honores* into his eyes, unlike in the case of phrases in which a character is in control of their own eyes.

⁵⁵ *Il.* 5.4–7, 18.203–208.

⁵⁶ For Lucretius, Epicurus was a god (5.8 *deus ille fuit, deus*), while Aeneas resembles one (1.589 *deo similis*).

This scene is very much in the reader's mind when Venus appears a book later, ultra-resplendent, to reveal a vision of the gods destroying Troy. Indeed Venus' removal of the mist from Aeneas' eyes looks back very directly to Athena's intervention with Diomedes in *Iliad* 5 and no doubt to its philosophical afterlife, placing us within a complex of epistemologically charged scenes of divine epiphany (589–593, 604–607, 621–623):

cum mihi se, non ante oculis tam clara, uidendam

obtulit et pura per noctem in luce refulsit 590

alma parens, confessa deam qualisque uideri

caelicolis et quanta solet, dextraque prehensum

continuit roseoque haec insuper addidit ore:

[...]

aspice (namque omnem, quae nunc obducta tuenti 604

mortalis hebetat uisus tibi et umida circum

caligat, nubem eripiam; tu ne qua parentis

iussa time neu praeceptis parere recusa):

[...]

dixerat et spissis noctis se condidit umbris. 621

apparent dirae facies inimicaque Troiae

numina magna deum.

When my gracious mother, never before so brilliant to behold, came before my eyes, in pure radiance gleaming through the night, manifesting her deity, in beauty and stature

such as she is wont to appear to the lords of heaven. She caught me by the hand and stayed me, and spoke these words besides with roseate lips: [...] Behold – for all the cloud, which now, drawn over your sight, dulls your mortal vision and with dank pall enshrouds you, I will tear away; fear no commands of your mother nor refuse to obey her counsels. [...] She spoke and vanished in the thick shades of night. Dread shapes come to view and, hating Troy, great presences divine.

The passage instantly recalls Venus' previous self-revelation in book 1, and the use of the word *praeceptis* (607) sustains the Lucretian didactic dynamics established there.⁵⁷ In a pattern that is now altogether familiar, the scene of Venus' revelation uses Lucretian language to represent a very unLucretian scene of divine epiphany, and divine involvement in the destruction of Troy.⁵⁸ Several words in 604–606 call into question the reliability of Aeneas' vision: *obducta, hebetat, umida, caligat*.⁵⁹ There is an obvious connection between Venus' revelatory agency and her status as intromissive or effulgent. She shines resplendent, *refulsit* (590), and presents herself to a passive Aeneas, to be seen by his eyes, *se, non ante oculis tam clara, uidendam / obtulit* (589–590). It is the visual and ocular texture of these scenes that reveals who holds the balance of power in the asymmetrical relations between Venus and Aeneas, and more generally between gods and mortals. While we began this section with vision and epistemology, we have strayed into

⁵⁷ *rosea ceruice* (1.402) ~ *roseoque...ore* (2.593); *refulsit* at 1.402 and 2.590; *nubes* (1.587) ~ *nubem* (2.606); *sese tulit obuia* (1.314) ~ *se...obtulit* (2.289f.); *non ante oculis tam clara* (2.589) might be Aeneas' direct comment on her appearance in disguise in book 1. Venus' *aspice* could echo Lucretius' *nonne vides*, even though the word occurs 20 times in Virgil; Lucretius himself does not use *aspice*.

⁵⁸ Cf. 2.591 *alma parens* with *DRN* 1.2 *alma* Venus; cf. 2.608 *auolsaque saxis | saxa* with *DRN* 4.140 *avulsaque saxa*; cf. 2.622–623 *apparent dirae facies inimicaque Troiae | numina magna deum* with *DRN* 3.18 *apparet diuum numen sedesque quietae*; cf. Hardie 1986:213n143. See Horsfall 2008 on 604–618, 622, 623.

⁵⁹ Cf. *caligare oculos* at *DRN* 3.156 of vision obscured by emotion.

vision and power, and touched on vision and erotic desire, to which we now turn more directly.

V. Vision and Desire

Erotic desire is often expressed by glances or rays darted between eyes: from Pelops to Hippodameia in a Sophoclean fragment; from Theoxenus to his lover in a fragment of Pindar; from the beloved in Plato's *Phaedrus* and in its echoes in Greek fiction; to the shooting glances in Hellenistic epigram and their Roman lyric and elegiac descendants.⁶⁰ Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* also make connections between vision and desire, but on the whole Virgil is more reticent on the subject of *amor* than the lighter genres which celebrate it.⁶¹ The love stories of Dido and Lavinia are subordinated to Roman teleology; and erotic motifs are displaced onto the poem's warriors, sometimes at the moment of their deaths, and sometimes in ways that echo the love story of Dido and Aeneas.⁶² In this section I will briefly review the visual touches in the infatuation of Dido before going on to demonstrate engagement with Lucretius' visual theory in Lavinia's blush, and in Turnus' responding look, which is both erotic and martial.

It has often been noted that Dido is presented as a kind of Epicurean whose love story has

⁶⁰ See Soph. fr. 474 R; Pi. fr. 123 SM; Pl., *Phaedr.* 255c–d; Mel., *AP* 12.101, 1–2; Prop. 1.1.1–4; Cat. 51.

⁶¹ Damon's *ut uidi, ut perii* at *Ecl.* 8.41; Orpheus' *respexit* at *Geo.* 4.491.

⁶² Gillis 1983:53–111; Heuzé 1985:170–178; Putnam 1985; Fowler 1987; Lyne 1989:150–152; Mitchell 1991:220–221; Oliensis 1997:308–309; Reed 2007:14–16, 41–42 and *passim*.

a strong Lucretian strand running through it.⁶³ Lucretius' anti-romantic stance makes his poem a suitable model for the inception of Dido and Aeneas' disastrous love affair.⁶⁴ The Venus-inspired infatuation does indeed echo the venereal delusions of Lucretius' love-fool, with whom Dido shares a hidden wound.⁶⁵ Dido is attracted at least as much to Aeneas' story as to his appearance, and when they are not in each others' company his words and appearance continue to haunt her in a way consistent with Lucretian theory.⁶⁶ Indeed, vision and words are often found together.⁶⁷ So too with Lavinia's blush in *Aeneid* 12: it is on *hearing* her mother's words that Lavinia blushes, but the description is intensely visual, and the sight causes Turnus to make eyes at her, *figitque in uirgine uultus* (70), another extramissive *iunctura* that is not found before Virgil. Here is the description of Lavinia's blush (*Aen.* 12.64–71):

accepit uocem lacrimis Lauinia matris
 flagrantis perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem 65
 subiecit rubor et calefacta per ora cucurrit.
 Indum sanguineo ueluti uiolauerit ostro
 si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa

⁶³ Hamilton 1993; Dyson 1996; Freer 2014:150–179.

⁶⁴ In the *Georgics* as well, Virgil is indebted to Lucretius' treatment of *amor*. See Gale 2000:96–100, 174–177.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Aen.* 1.687 *oscula dulcia figet* with *DRN* 4.1179 *miser oscula figit*; *Aen.* 1.691–694 *at Venus Ascanio placidam per membra quietem / inrigat, et fotum gremio dea tollit in altos / Idaliae lucos, ubi mollis amaracus illum / floribus et dulci adspirans complectitur umbra* with *DRN* 4.907–908 *Nunc quibus ille modis somnus per membra quietem / inriget* and *DRN* 4.1177–1179 – Lucretius' locked-out lover, *at lacrimans exclusus amator limina saepe / floribus et sertis operit postisque superbos / unguis amaracino*; Venus' instructions to Cupid at 1.676 *qua facere id possis, nostram nunc accipe mentem* echo Lucretius' didactic *accipe* (1.269; 4.722); cf. *Aen.* 4.2 *uulnus alit uenis et caeco carpitur igni* with *DRN* 4.1120 *usque adeo incerti tabescunt uolnere caeco*.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Aen.* 4.45, *haerent infixi pectore uultus / uerbaque nec placidam membris dat cura quietem* and 4.83–85 *illum absens absentem auditque uidetque* with *DRN* 4.1061–1062 *nam si abest quod ames, praesto simulacra tamen sunt / illius et nomen dulce observatur ad auras*.

⁶⁷ Lovatt 2013:3n4.

alba rosa, talis uirgo dabat ore colores.

illum turbat amor figitque in uirgine uultus; 70

ardet in arma magis paucisque adfatur Amatam:

At this, a flood of tears Lavinia shed;

A crimson blush her beauteous face o'erspread,

Varying her cheeks by turns with white and red.

The driving colors, never at a stay,

Run here and there, and flush, and fade away.

Delightful change! Thus Indian iv'ry shows,

Which with the bord'ring paint of purple glows;

Or lilies damask'd by the neighb'ring rose.

The lover gaz'd, and, burning with desire,

The more he look'd, the more he fed the fire:

Revenge, and jealous rage, and secret spite,

Roll in his breast, and rouse him to the fight.

Then fixing on the queen his ardent eyes,

Firm to his first intent, he thus replies (tr. Dryden)

For some scholars like R. O. A. M. Lyne, the blush speaks volumes, suggesting through imagery and intertextual clues what the narrative does not mention, that Lavinia is in love

with Turnus.⁶⁸ Criticism of this interpretation has not been lacking, most recently from Francis Cairns.⁶⁹ But I think that Lavinia's blush could indeed suggest mutual desire when read against Lucretius' account of blushing at *DRN* 4.1049–1057:

namque omnes plerumque cadunt in vulnus et illam
emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu, 1050
et si cominus est, hostem ruber occupat umor.
sic igitur Veneris qui telis accipit ictus,
sive puer membris muliebribus hunc iaculatur
seu mulier toto iactans e corpore amorem,
unde feritur, eo tendit gestitque coire 1055
et iacere umorem in corpus de corpore ductum;
namque voluptatem praesagit muta cupido.

For well-nigh each man falleth toward his wound,
And our blood spurts even toward the spot from whence
The stroke wherewith we are strook, and if indeed
The foe be close, the red jet reaches him.
Thus, one who gets a stroke from Venus' shafts-
Whether a boy with limbs effeminate
Assault him, or a woman darting love

⁶⁸ Lyne 1989:80–82; to summarize briefly, Lavinia is 'wounded' by allusion to the Iliadic model of the stained ivory simile, applied to the wounded Menelaus (*Il.* 4.141); *cui plurimus ignem / subiecit rubor* (66–67) implies she is on fire; 'wound' and 'fire' are the two most salient images applied to Dido's love.

⁶⁹ F. Cairns 2005.

From all her body- that one strains to get
Even to the thing whereby he's hit, and longs
To join with it and cast into its frame
The fluid drawn even from within its own.
For the mute craving doth presage delight. (tr. Leonard)

Lucretius' lover blushes in the face of his beloved (1049–1050). His love is a wound (4.1049 *vulnus*): the passage is riddled with *militia amoris*. The same image seeps into Lavinia's blush: first by means of the Iliadic simile of ivory-dyeing applied to Menelaus' blood-stained thigh at *Il.* 4.141–147, and secondly by Turnus' shooting stare, *figitque in uirgine uultus* (70), in which Tarrant detects martial language.⁷⁰ Lavinia weeps (64 *lacrimis*), arguably wounded by Amata's articulation of the presentiment of Turnus' death, as well as of her own. To turn to Lucretius' diagnosis of the physiology of desire, Lavinia's blood rushes (4.1050 *emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu*) to the source of her wound, to her face, where her organs of sight and hearing are situated, and (to turn back to Virgil) she blushes (12.66 *calecta per ora*). If the agent of her wounding is present, Lucretius' theory would have him flooded by her *umor* (4.1051 *et si comminus est, hostem ruber occupat umor*), and in Virgil indeed he is, where after Lavinia's *rubor* (66), *illum turbat amor* (70) corresponds to Lucretius' *hostem ruber occupat umor*. Even though Turnus and Lavinia do not exchange any words, there is a dialogue of the eyes between them. Silent Lavinia has been thought of as a *kôphon prosôpon* in the dramatic configuration of this scene,⁷¹ but her muteness could also be ascribed to Lucretius' theory

⁷⁰ Tarrant 2012:108, comparing it with 11.507 *oculos horrenda in uirgine fixit*, Turnus staring at Camilla.

⁷¹ Tarrant 2012:83.

of silent but lustful blushing, *namque voluptatem praesagit muta cupido* (4.1057). Lavinia's blush suggests that she is affected with desire, in Lucretian language, *mulier toto iactans e corpore amorem* (4.1054). This blush strikes a blow to Turnus, *hunc iaculatur* (4.1053). How might we expect him to respond? According to Lucretius, by straining to join himself to his beloved: *unde feritur, eo tendit gestitque coire / et iacere umorem in corpus de corpore ductum* (4.1055).⁷² He can only possess Lavinia and defy Amata's prediction of death by beating Aeneas, and so *ardet in arma magis* (70).⁷³ His gaze, *figitque in uirgine uultus* (70), reads like a Mulveyan objectifying look, martial as well as marital, and forging connections between the two. Primed by this encounter, Turnus proceeds into the action of book 12, though of course he will not come face to face with Aeneas until the end.

This section has taken us from vision and desire to vision and martial power. The visual association between *militia* and *amor* will lead into our third and final section, which will culminate in a reading of the end of the poem.

VI. Vision and Power

I suggested with reference to Aeneas' armour at 8.616–623 that shining objects could have intromissive status, in that their effulgent rays could enter the viewer's eyes. From Homer onwards a hero's armour can have psychological as well as aesthetic effect, and

⁷² According to Adams 1982:179 this is the first occurrence in extant Latin of *coire* with sexual signification. See Schiesaro 1990:86 for Lucretius' use of martial metaphors in erotic contexts.

⁷³ On Turnus' love for Lavinia and its implications see Formicula 2006:88–90.

this may apply to designs on a hero's shield as well as to the more widespread phenomenon of flashing metal.⁷⁴ As Achilles receives the divinely crafted armour from his mother, the Myrmidons tremble at the sight, and only Achilles has the courage to look at it (*Il.* 19.12–17):

Ὡς ἄρα φωνήσασα θεὰ κατὰ τεύχε' ἔθηκε
πρόσθεν Ἀχιλλῆος· τὰ δ' ἀνέβραχε δαίδαλα πάντα.
Μυρμιδόνας δ' ἄρα πάντας ἔλε τρόμος, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
ἄντην εισιδέειν, ἀλλ' ἔτρεσαν. αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
ὡς εἶδ', ὡς μιν μᾶλλον ἔδυ χόλος, ἐν δέ οἱ ὄσσε
δεινὸν ὑπὸ βλεφάρων ὡς εἰ σέλας ἐξεφάνθεν·

The goddess spoke so, and set down the armour on the ground
Before Achilleus, and all its elaboration clashed loudly.
Trembling took hold of all the Myrmidons.
None had the courage To look straight at it.
They were afraid of it. Only Achilleus
Looked, and as he looked the anger came harder upon him
And his eyes glittered terribly under his lids, like sunflare. (tr. Lattimore)

There is an obvious connection between the gleaming of the armour and the effect it has on onlookers; conversely, there is a correlation between Achilles' ability to look

⁷⁴ Griffin 1980:36–37; Hardie 1985:12; Mugler 1960:46, 52.

unflinchingly at the armour and the fire that shines in his own eyes, a sign of his *menos*.⁷⁵

The same complex of imagery is activated three books later: Achilles unmans Hector by brandishing the same flashing armour (*Il.* 22.131–137):

Ὡς ὄρμαινε μένων, ὃ δέ οἱ σχεδὸν ἦλθεν Ἀχιλλεὺς

ἴσος Ἐνυαλίῳ κορυθαῖκι πτολεμιστῆ

σειῶν Πηλιάδα μελίην κατὰ δεξιὸν ὤμον

δεινήν· ἀμφὶ δὲ χαλκὸς ἐλάμπετο εἵκελος ἀυγῆ

ἣ πυρὸς αἰθομένου ἢ ἡελίου ἀνιόντος.

135

Ἔκτορα δ', ὡς ἐνόησεν, ἔλε τρόμος· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτ' ἔτλη

αὔθι μένειν, ὀπίσω δὲ πύλας λίπε, βῆ δὲ φοβηθεῖς·

So he pondered, waiting, but Achilleus was closing upon him

In the likeness of the lord of battles, the helm-shining warrior,

And shaking from above his shoulder the dangerous Pelian

Ash spear, while the bronze that closed about him was shining

Like the flare of blazing fire or the sun in its rising.

And the shivers took hold of Hector when he saw him, and he could no longer

Stand his ground there, but left the gates behind, and fled, frightened. (tr. Lattimore)

Of all the poetic resources at Homer's disposal to express the disparity of martial prowess

⁷⁵ Whitman 1958:137–147 argues that battlefield fire in the eyes has destructive connotations, foreshadowing the doom of Troy, and that Achilles' fire outshines others' as the *Iliad* progresses.

between the two heroes, he deploys here the imagery of shining and visual perception.⁷⁶ It is on *seeing* Achilles and his flashing armour that Hector is put to flight, and we shall observe shortly how Virgil exploited the visual element of this scene in its intertextual replay, the duel of Aeneas and Turnus.

As I have argued, Virgil receives Homer's penetrative glances and assaultive effulgence through the intervening philosophical tradition. A case in point is Lucretius' Epicurus, who dares to raise his eyes in opposition to the monster Religio in the proem to *De rerum natura*.⁷⁷ Conte argues convincingly that this replays a moment in the *Iliad* in which Glaucus rebukes Hector for not daring to look Ajax in the eye.⁷⁸ Some of the philosophical intermediaries are specifically optic. In Empedocles' lantern fragment, in addition to a general similarity with Homeric expressions for blazing eyes and blazing armour, there is also the particular Homerizing phrase πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο (B84.2 DK). But there are also parallels between the assaultive effulgence of bright objects in epic narrative and the military language in which Lucretius figures vision as an assault on the eyes. Time and again Lucretius uses verbs such as *ferire* or *laccessere* to express how the material particles strike the eye to produce sensation, e.g. 4.216–217:

quare etiam atque etiam mitti fateare necessest

corpora quae feriant oculos visumque laccessant.

⁷⁶ ἐνόησεν (136) denotes primarily visual perception. For Euripides too, the shield of Achilles with its astral designs was formidably shiny, assailing the eyes of Hector; see *El.* 467–469 ἄστρων τ' αἰθέριοι χοροί, | Πλειάδες Ὑάδες, †Ἑκτορος | ὄμμασι† τροπαῖοι.

⁷⁷ 1.66–67 *primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra | est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra*; see Hardie 2009:164–169 for echoes of this scene in the *Aeneid*.

⁷⁸ Conte 1994:1; *Il.* 17.166–168 ἀλλὰ σύ γ' Αἴαντος μεγαλήτορος οὐκ ἐτάλασσας | στήμεναι ἄντα κατ' ὄσσε ἰδὼν δηῖων ἐν ἀϋτῆ, | οὐδ' ἰθὺς μαχέσασθαι, ἐπεὶ σέο φέρτερός ἐστι. For the hero's gaze averted in *aidōs* see Cairns 1993:98n151.

In the absence of Aeneas, Turnus manages to break into the Trojan camp. After he has killed Bitias, and shortly before killing Pandarus, a new light blazes from his eyes and from his armour, causing the Trojans to tremble (9.731–735):

continuo noua lux oculis effulsit et arma
horrendum sonuere, tremunt in uertice cristae
sanguineae clipeoque micantia fulmina mittit.
agnoscunt faciem inuisam atque immania membra
turbati subito Aeneadae.

Straightaway a new light flashed from Turnus' eyes and his armour rang terribly; the blood-red plumes quiver on his crest, and he shoots gleaming lightnings from his shield. In sudden dismay the sons of Aeneas recognize that hateful form and those giant limbs. (tr. Fairclough-Goold, slightly adapted)

Obviously Turnus' blazing eyes and 'assaultive gaze' may be traced directly back to Homer.⁸¹ But consideration of optical theory adds an extra dimension to our appreciation. In optical terms Turnus has both intromission (from his armour) and extramission (from his eyes) on his side. He is made the active agent of his own radiance in *micantia fulmina mittit*. At the same time, even though the subject of *effulsit* is *lux* rather than Turnus' eyes, one senses that the light signals Turnus' advantage.⁸² The Trojans, conversely, are passive, *turbati*, the same verb used in Lucretius' explanation of why the

⁸¹ See Lovatt 2013:311–327 for blazing eyes and the trope of the assaultive gaze.

⁸² See Hardie 1994:228–229 for Homeric models, and the alignment with Jupiter in *fulmina mittit*.

eye shuns bright objects (4.328 *turbantia composituras*). Virgil has reversed the order of tenor and vehicle that is found in the *De rerum natura*: while for Lucretius warfare was metaphor that illustrated the workings of vision, in Virgil the imagery of vision illuminates the narrative register of warfare. It is significant that this is Turnus' finest hour, when he achieves an *aristeia* after penetrating the Trojan camp. Comparably, Hector's eyes flash fire at the end of *Iliad* 12 after he has successfully breached the Greek camp (*Il* 12.465–466). But blazing eyes are no guarantee of ultimate victory. Indeed Bitias' eyes blazed just as Turnus dealt him the fatal blow.⁸³ In Ennius the blaze in eyes may be the last glints of life in the mortally wounded; in Lucretius they are a sign of anger; while elsewhere in Virgil they can signify great but insufficient prowess or impotent rage, as in the case of the bound Proteus or Cassandra.⁸⁴

Turnus' next martial exploit is his duel with Pallas in book 10. There is a marked “drama of vision”⁸⁵ between the two, but this is adumbrated by the imagery of light and vision which attends Pallas in book 8, culminating in the Pallas-Lucifer simile. Evander entrusts Pallas to Aeneas in rousing tones (8.514–519), but Aeneas and Achates repond to the commendation gloomily, with rumination and downcast eyes (520, *defixique ora tenebant*). Almost as if to encourage them, Venus intervenes by revealing the flashing armour in the sky (524 *fulgor*), even though Aeneas will not actually receive the armour until later. The assembled company look up to see the glinting armour (528–531):

⁸³ 9.703 *tum Bitian ardentem oculis [sternit]*.

⁸⁴ Enn. *Ann.* 484 S, *semianimesque micant oculi lucemque requirunt*; Lucr. *DRN* 3.288–289 *est etiam calor ille animo, quem sumit, in ira | cum fervescit et ex oculis micat acrius ardor*; Bitias: 9.703; Proteus: 4.451; Cassandra: 2.405.

⁸⁵ Gildenhard 2004:37, picked up by Hardie 2009:156 and in turn by Lovatt 2013:101.

arma inter nubem caeli in regione serena
per sudum rutilare uident et pulsa tonare.
obstipuerunt animis alii, sed Troius heros 530
agnouit sonitum et diuae promissa parentis.

In the serene expanse of the sky they see arms amid the clouds, gleaming red in the clear air and clashing in thunder. The rest stood aghast; but the Trojan hero knew the sound and the promise of his goddess mother.

As with Achilles and the Myrmidons in *Iliad* 19.12–17, quoted above, Aeneas' reaction is differentiated from that of his men, but the absence of jubilation is conspicuous, adding to the mood of despondency which surrounds Pallas. Later, as the Trojans and Arcadians ride out of Pallanteum, the frightened mothers look on from the walls. Pallas stands out among the shining squadron in the mothers' field of vision (587–593):

 ipse agmine Pallas
it medio chlamyde et pictis conspectus in armis,
qualis ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,
quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignis, 590
extulit os sacrum caelo tenebrasque resoluit.
stant pauidae in muris matres oculisque sequuntur
pulueream nubem et fulgentis aere cateruas.

Pallas himself rides at the column's centre, conspicuous in mantle and blazoned armour – just like the Morning Star, whom Venus loves above all the starry fires, when, bathed in Ocean's wave, he lifts up his sacred head in heaven and melts the darkness. On the walls mothers stand trembling, and follow with their eyes the dusty cloud and the squadrons gleaming with bronze.

The fearful mothers' following eyes direct the reader's attention to Pallas. In turn, Pallas' gleaming, far from assuring him victory, magnifies the pathos of his impending death. For Conte the Lucifer simile is a "paradigm of subsequent interpretation" that looks forward to Pallas' *aristeia* in book 10. As Pallas takes his leave of Evander, the atmosphere is "ominously heavy with death." The morning star is a symbol of "splendid but *ephemeral* beauty."⁸⁶ Pallas will burn brightly but briefly. Indeed together with his men he will later wreak carnage comparable to a forest fire (10.405–411).

As Juturna eventually steers Turnus towards Pallas, Turnus lays claim to the young warrior as his victim. He articulates a wish that Evander might be there to see Pallas die: *cuperem ipse parens spectator adesset* (443), "I might wish that his father himself were here to see." Turnus' wish to control Evander's gaze exemplifies the control of another person's gaze that is a powerful sign of dominance elsewhere in the *Aeneid*. Here, as Harrison notes, Turnus is aligned with Pyrrhus, who in book 2 inflicts the cruel sight of his son's death on Priam.⁸⁷ In book 10, however, Pallas himself is an equal participant in this "drama of vision," as he rolls his eyes over Turnus' immense body, a passage in

⁸⁶ Conte 1986:193 (emphasis original) cites Senfter 1979, who traces parallels in sepulchral iconography between Lucifer and the theme of ἀώρτα.

⁸⁷ 2.538–539 *qui nati coram me cernere letum | fecisti et patrios foedasti funere uultus*.

which we have already found reflexes of extramission (445–448):

at Rutulum abscessu iuuenis tum iussa superba
miratus stupet in Turno corpusque per ingens
lumina uoluit obitque truci procul omnia uisu ...

But when the Rutulians retired, then the youth, marvelling at the haughty command, stands amazed at Turnus, throws his eyes over that giant frame, and with fierce glance scans all from afar...

Pallas' prayer to Hercules matches Turnus' desire for ocular penetration (462–463.):

cernat semineci sibi me rapere arma cruenta
uictoremque ferant morientia lumina Turni.

May Turnus see me strip the bloody arms from his dying limbs, and may his glazing eyes endure a conqueror!

In Pallas's prayer, Turnus would be the unwilling eyewitness of his own demise (*cernat, ferant*). The essential point for Pallas in this envisioned scenario is the control of Turnus' gaze. In this regard it is significant that he imagines Turnus' eyes, *lumina*, observing him as victor, as elsewhere in the *Aeneid* eyes are the last body part over which a compromised subject exerts control. Cassandra raises her eyes to heaven in book 2

because her hands are tied.⁸⁸ Conversely, Turnus' eyes stiffen, *deriguere oculi* (7.447) – this *iunctura* seems to be another Virgilian coinage⁸⁹ – once Allecto has secured a complete hold over him. I refer to Argyle and Cook's anthropological study of the gaze in primates: "There is ample evidence that gaze is related to dominance in primates. [...] The significant point seems to be control of gaze (and other behaviour) rather than aversion. The higher status person can tell the lower status person where to look."⁹⁰ The ocular dynamic of Turnus and Pallas is replicated on the physical level of duelling. Although Pallas' spear pierces the rim of Turnus' shield (10.476–477), ultimately it grazes off his opponent's body and fails to penetrate him: *tandem etiam magno strinxit de corpore Turni* (10.478). In response, Turnus mockingly speculates as to whether his weapon will have more penetrative power: *aspice num mage sit nostrum penetrabile telum* (481). *Penetrabile* is here active in sense, and all the more strikingly so for being passive in form.⁹¹ Some scholars have detected subtle sexual undertones in Turnus' penetration of Pallas and in the duel more generally; perhaps the most convincing point in support of this view is the use of the word *intactum*, applied counterfactually to Pallas at 10.504.⁹² In point of fact, the bodies of young warriors, dead or dying, are often delicately described, graced with touches from love poetry, perhaps even eroticized.

⁸⁸ 2.405–406 *ad caelum tendens ardentia lumina frustra, / lumina, nam teneras arcebant uincola palmas*. Cf. the gagged Iphigeneia at Aesch. *Ag.* 240–241 ἔβαλλ' ἕκαστον θυτήρων ἀπ' ὄμματος βέλει φιλοϊκτῶ. Tragic characters experiencing Dionysian madness roll their eyes involuntarily: See Hercules at Eur. *HF* 868, διαστρόφους ἐλίσσει σῖγα γοργωπούς κόρας, and Agave at *Ba.* 1122–1123, διαστρόφους | κόρας ἐλίσσουσ'.

⁸⁹ Stok 1987:818.

⁹⁰ Argyle and Cook 1976:75, 77.

⁹¹ It is also active in its only other occurrence in Virgil, *Geo.* 1.93 *penetrabile frigus adurat*. Nonetheless, Servius finds the use of the active sense at *Aen.* 10.481 remarkable: "PENETRABILE pro 'penetrale' dicitur: nam quod penetrat 'penetrare' dicitur, quod autem penetratur 'penetrabile'."

⁹² 10. 503–505 *Turno tempus erit magno cum optauerit emptum / intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque / oderit*. See Gillis 1983:64–74; Mitchell 1991:227–230; as for Turnus' penetrative weapon, *telum* = 'penis' at *Priap.* 9.14; Mart. 11.78.6; see Adams 1982:17–20. The encounter begins with Pallas drawing his sword out of his *uagina* (475), which means 'vagina' at Pl. *Pseud.* 1181, with *machaera* ('dagger') standing in for 'penis.' For perspectives on the erotics of killing in the twentieth century see Bourke 1999.

Pallas' corpse in book 11 (39–41, 67–71) is among these. The motif of the warrior's beautiful body goes back to Homer,⁹³ but as Reed has shown, Virgil has also interwoven strands from Hellenistic poetry.⁹⁴ Ocular penetration coheres with the idea of sexual penetration. Turnus' *aspice* sustains the visual contest: *spectator ... cernat ... aspice*: "Now *you* look!" As we modulate from the death of Pallas to Aeneas' vengeful rampage, the visual emphasis continues, stretching the motif of eyesight from here to the end of the poem. Virgil describes the ecphrasis on Pallas' swordbelt, which will play a role in the poem's final scene, and narrates Aeneas' inner visions of the Arcadians' hospitality, which informs his decision to punish Turnus for Pallas' death.⁹⁵ Vision, violence and sexuality will remain intertwined throughout book 12, to which we now turn.

Of all major characters in the *Aeneid*, Turnus is most concerned with his image, and the rise and fall of his prowess in book 12 can be mapped with reference to visual motifs.⁹⁶ His decision to duel with Aeneas is motivated by the realisation that all eyes are upon him, *ut...uidet...se signari oculis* (12.1–3). Of course Homeric heroes frequently imagine how their actions might be judged by onlookers, but the language of Turnus' *aidôs* is more insistently visual than what we find in Homer.⁹⁷ Earlier we noted Turnus' ocular response to Lavinia's blush, *figitque in uirgine uultus* (12.70). This is followed by his preparing for the fray, fired up with sexual rivalry and battle lust as he addresses his spear (12.97–103):

⁹³ See Vernant 1991:50–74 esp. 62–64 with reference to Priam's words at *Il.* 22.71–73.

⁹⁴ Reed 2007, 32–33.

⁹⁵ 10.515–517 *Pallas, Euander, in ipsis / omnia sunt oculis, mensae quas aduena primas / tunc adiit, dextraeque datae.*

⁹⁶ See Tarrant 2012, *passim*, esp. on 12.3.

⁹⁷ See Redfield 1975:115–119 and Cairns 1993:68–74, 98 n. 151.

...da sternere corpus
 loricamque manu ualida lacerare reuulsam
 semiuiri Phrygis et foedare in puluere crinis
 uibratos calido ferro murraque madentis.⁷ 12.100
 his agitur furiis, totoque ardentis ab ore
scintillae absistunt, oculis micat acribus ignis, ...

... Grant me to lay low the body of the Phrygian eunuch, with strong hand to tear and
 rend away his corslet, and to defile in dust his locks, crisped with heated iron and
 drenched in myrrh!" Such is the frenzy driving him: from all his face shoot fiery sparks;
 his eager eyes flash flame ...

The passage furnishes a good example of the subtle connection between martial and
 sexual themes throughout book 12, centered on Lavinia as prize bride and vessel of
 Roman lineage.⁹⁸ Turnus' blazing eyes suggest extramissive fury and look back to the
 Homeric grandeur of his aristeia in book 9. But here he has no audience or spectator, and
 so his effulgent anger has no target to penetrate or overcome.⁹⁹ There is an often-noted
 contrast with his downcast gaze during the treaty scene a hundred lines later (12.216–
 221):

At uero Rutulis impar ea pugna uideri

⁹⁸ Gillis 1983:89.

⁹⁹ Seneca quotes the lines as an example of eyes ablaze in anger at *De ira* 3.3.4.

iamdudum et uario misceri pectora motu,
tum magis ut propius cernunt non uiribus aequos.
adiuuat incessu tacito progressus et aram
suppliciter uenerans demisso lumine Turnus 220
pubentesque genae et iuuenali in corpore pallor.

But to the Rutulians the battles had long seemed unequal, and their hearts, swayed to and fro, had long been in turmoil; all the more now, when they beheld the combatants at closer view in ill-matched strength. Turnus swells the unrest by advancing with noiseless tread and as a suppliant venerating the altar with downcast eye – swells it by his downy¹⁰⁰ cheeks and by the pallor of his youthful frame.

Turnus' weakness is focalized through the Rutulians' perspective (*Rutulis ...uideri ... cernunt*). In front of the assembled chiefs they are judging Turnus against Aeneas, who was not present in book 9. It is Turnus' downward and spark-free gaze, *demisso lumine*, that expresses his inferiority, giving the lie to his self-regarding performance during the arming scene.¹⁰¹

Turnus revels in being seen, but this also leaves him exposed to ocular attacks. Juturna notices the change in mood as the treaty is being struck and orchestrates its rupture.

Disguised as Metiscus, she spends the central portion of book 12 driving Turnus about in a chariot and keeping him safe from harm. It comes as something of a surprise, then,

¹⁰⁰ Fairclough-Goold translate the textual variant *tabentes* as “wasted.”

¹⁰¹ Reed 2007:44–72 argues that these lines and othes effeminize Turnus, adducing *inter alia* (p. 71) the echo of Lavinia at 11.480 *oculos deiecta decoros*.

when Turnus admits to her that he has seen through her disguise since the breach of the treaty (632 *o soror, et dudum agnoui*). Tarrant calls this “a remarkable admission, and a sign that T. is taking responsibility for his actions.”¹⁰² The admission also suggests, however, that Turnus has indulged in a self-preserving deception of his spectators all along. In a passage dense with visual language, he rehearses his resolve to face Aeneas, wishing to avoid the shame of being seen fleeing.¹⁰³ He is right of course that he is being watched. Saces’ reminder that he is the Latins’ last hope and that their eyes are upon him enacts a kind of ocular penetration (12.656–657 *in te ora Latini, | in te oculos referunt*). Hershkowitz has suggested that “Saces is almost giving Turnus the evil eye,”¹⁰⁴ but I would argue that the Latins’ look is more benevolent and longing, that with their eyes they are imploring him to defend them. Initially Turnus is dumbstruck, assailed by a confusing barrage of inner visions, *uaria confusus imagine rerum* (12.665), almost as if Saces had managed to plant images in his mind, evoking shame, madness, grief, fury, love, and courage. Hershkowitz parses this cocktail of feelings, describing the moment as a “truth-taking stare” or *Wahrnehmungsstarre*.¹⁰⁵ The return of some degree of mental clarity is figured with the light metaphor and a touch of Lucretian materialism (12.669–671):

ut primum discussae umbrae et lux reddita menti,

ardentis oculorum orbis ad moenia torsit

670

¹⁰² Tarrant 2012:250.

¹⁰³ 12.636–645 *an fratris miseri letum ut crudele uideres? [...] uidi oculos ante ipse meos me uoce uocantem | Murranum [...] occidit infelix ne nostrum dedecus Vffens | aspiceret; [...] terga dabo et Turnum fugientem haec terra uidebit?*

¹⁰⁴ Hershkowitz 1998:87.

¹⁰⁵ Hershkowitz 1998:90.

turbidus eque rotis magnam respexit ad urbem.

As soon as the shadows scattered and light dawned afresh on his mind, he turned his blazing eyes wrathfully upon the walls and from his chariot looked back upon the spacious city.

Lucretian models are in play here, and they encompass not only the theory of light and vision, its metaphorical extensions included, but also the theory of enlightenment.¹⁰⁶

Torquere is a forceful verb, and it implies some effort on Turnus' part to wrench his gaze (*oculorum orbis ... torsit*) from the chariot to the city. If the stiffening of his eyes in his encounter with Allecto signified complete subordination,¹⁰⁷ then his present ocular difficulties may suggest that he will be no match for Aeneas' fulminations.

When the two finally come face to face, Rutulians, Trojans and Italians turn to watch what will be a spectacle (705 *conuertere oculos*). After so much delay, Latinus is amazed that Aeneas and Turnus are finally fighting. In the line relating what Latinus sees, however— *inter se coiisse viros et cernere ferro* (709) — *coire* is a verb that can signify copulation, and *cernere*, an archaizing *simplex pro composito*, also happens to mean “look.” The final duel is intrinsically visual and perhaps contains sexual undertones as well, as Daniel Gillis has argued.¹⁰⁸ Not surprisingly, the finale has elicited many

¹⁰⁶ Tarrant 2012:260 finds several Lucretian models adapted here, notably *DRN* 4.316 *discutit umbras* of bright air scattering shadows, which facilitates seeing from a perspective of darkness; for *oculorum orbis* cf. *DRN* 3.410 *luminis orbem*; cf. the scattering of darkness as metaphor for mental illumination at *DRN* 1.146–148, 2.59–61, 3.91–93, 6.39–41.

¹⁰⁷ *Aen.* 7.447 *deriguere oculi*.

¹⁰⁸ *Coire* at *DRN* 4.1055, discussed above in relation to Lavinia's blush. On the archaism in *cernere* see Tarrant 2012 ad loc. Gillis 1983:92–111 pushes the case for phallic symbolism in the final duel.

αὐτὰρ ὁ Δαρδανίδην Πρίαμον θαύμαζεν Ἀχιλλεὺς
εἰσορώων ὄψιν τ' ἀγαθὴν καὶ μῦθον ἀκούων.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τάρπησαν ἐς ἀλλήλους ὀρόωντες...

But when they had put aside their desire for eating and drinking,
Priam, son of Dardanos, gazed upon Achilleus, wondering
at his size and beauty, for he seemed like an outright vision
of gods. Achilleus in turn gazed on Dardanian Priam
and wondered, as he saw his brave looks and listened to him talking.
But when they had taken their fill of gazing one on the other... (tr. Lattimore).

An extract from Michael Longley's version in "Ceasefire" is worth quoting, not least for
its erotic touch:

"When they had eaten together, it pleased them both
to stare at each other's beauty as lovers might,
Achilles built like a god, Priam good-looking still..."¹¹²

Another fatal erotic exchange of glances which may be in play is that between Achilles
and Penthesileia.¹¹³ Aeneas rolls his eyes and the action continues (938–949):

stetit acer in armis

¹¹² Longley 1995:39.

¹¹³ Exekias black-figure vase, British Museum GR 1836.2–24.127 (Vase B 210). Cf. Propertius 3.11.15–16
for Achilles falling in love with Penthesileia even as he kills her.

Aeneas uoluens oculos dextramque repressit;
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo 940
coeperat, infelix umero cum apparuit alto
balteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis
Pallantis pueri, uictum quem uulnere Turnus
strauerat atque umeris inimicum insigne gerebat.
ille, oculis postquam saeui monimenta doloris 945
exuiasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira
terribilis: ‘tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiari mihi? Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.

In deep suspense the Trojan seem'd to stand,
And, just prepar'd to strike, repress'd his hand.
He roll'd his eyes, and ev'ry moment felt
His manly soul with more compassion melt;
When, casting down a casual glance, he spied
The golden belt that glitter'd on his side,
The fatal spoils which haughty Turnus tore
From dying Pallas, and in triumph wore.
Then, rous'd anew to wrath, he loudly cries
(Flames, while he spoke, came flashing from his eyes)
“Traitor, dost thou, dost thou to grace pretend,

Clad, as thou art, in trophies of my friend?

To his sad soul a grateful off'ring go! (tr. Dryden)

There is a mixture of extramission and intromission in play: Aeneas exerts agency over his own gaze with *uoluens oculos* (939). The next visual cue is the intromissive effulgence from Pallas' swordbelt, *apparuit ... fulserunt* (941, 942). In circumstances more favourable to Turnus, this gleaming might have been expected to tilt the balance of scopic power in his favour, unbalancing the composure of Aeneas' eyes in line with Lucretian theory (cf. *DRN* 4.328 *turbantia composituras*), as Achilles' armour did to Hector. But the wearing of enemy spoils is always hazardous in the *Aeneid*.¹¹⁴ Since the swordbelt can only remind Aeneas that Turnus killed Pallas, there is a sense in which Turnus has failed to appropriate the swordbelt's power, which now acts independently of, and against, its wearer.¹¹⁵ Aeneas' control in the scopic duel is signalled by the change of subject in *ille* (945) and by another ocular expression which casts him as the nominative subject of the gaze, as he "drinks in" the scene with his eyes, *oculis ... hausit* (945–946). This certainly recalls Dido's curse, *hauriat hunc oculis ignem crudelis ab alto* (4.661),¹¹⁶ strongly evoking a context of erotic tragedy. But there may also be a Lucretian model in play. In *DRN* 4, lovers drink in the material films which emanate from their beloved (4.1097–1104):

ut bibere in somnis sitiens quom quaerit et umor

non datur, ardorem qui membris stinguere possit,

¹¹⁴ Hornsby 1966.

¹¹⁵ I owe this point to Philip Hardie.

¹¹⁶ See Pease 1935 ad loc. for other parallels; there is no exact parallel in the *Aeneid*.

sed laticum simulacra petit frustra que laborat
in medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans,
sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis,
nec satiari queunt spectando corpora coram
nec manibus quicquam teneris abradere membris
possunt errantes incerti corpore toto.

Just like in dreams when a thirsty man tries to drink and there's no water to cool the fire in his limbs, but he tries the images of water, striving in vain, and even though he's in the middle of a river and drinking, he's still thirsty, just so in love does Venus dupe lovers with images, nor can bodies, when present, satisfy the lover with looking, nor can they rub off anything from the lover's tender limbs with stroking, their hands wandering all over their lover's body. (tr. author)

Reading the scene through a Mulveyan lens, there is a sense in which Aeneas objectifies Turnus as a victim, *and* as an erotic object, while simultaneously identifying with him. This gives the scene a Narcissistic quality. Throughout book 12, both warriors have become progressively aligned to one another through structural patterning and the play of similes, and this reaches its apogee in the poem's last lines, with both playing the role of Pallas: Turnus, because he is dressed in Pallas' spoils, and Aeneas, because he assumes the role of Pallas in punishing Turnus.¹¹⁷ According to the Lucretian logic of *amor*, no matter how much simulacral effulgence Aeneas drinks in from Pallas' swordbelt, he can never be satisfied by mere looking, or even by touching or scraping, or stroking, or

¹¹⁷ Cf. Hardie 1993:19–34; Thomas 1998; Tarrant 2012:13–16.

rubbing. In the past he has failed to be satisfied by feeding on images.¹¹⁸ According to this bizarre logic, then, Aeneas kills Turnus in Narcissistic exasperation at his inability to satisfy the erotic thirst he feels for his ideal ego, represented by the Pallas-like aspect of Turnus.¹¹⁹ But this killing too has been foreseen by Lucretius' love theory (*DRN* 4.1079–1083):

quod petiere, premunt arte faciuntque dolorem
corporis et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis
osculaque adfigunt, quia non est pura voluptas
et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant laedere id ipsum,
quod cumque est, rabies unde illaec germina surgunt.

The lovers press hard on their beloved, causing bodily pain, and often they push their teeth into their lover's lips, and give crushing kisses, because the pleasure is not pure, and because there lurk secret goads which urge them to hurt whatever it is that gives rise to these germs of frenzy. (tr. author)

Yet each man kills the thing he loves, or at least tries to. This is the force of *condit* (950), a verb that looks back to *dum conderet urbem* at *Aeneid* 1.5. As Aeneas buries his sword beneath Turnus' breast, this burial mirrors his control of the gaze. His last Freudian thrust, foundational and generative, is the ultimate expression of extramission.

¹¹⁸ Cf. 1.646 *animum pictura pascit inani*; 8.618 *expleri nequit atque oculos per singula uoluit*.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Hardie 2002:150–163 for the Narcissus story in *Met.* 3 as a dramatization of Lucretian emanationist theory, where Lucretius' erotic thirst is important. Narcissus destroys what he loves: *Met.* 3.433 *quod amas, auertere, perdes*.

VII. Beyond the *Aeneid*

I have argued that Virgil uses optical models to represent instances of vision that are cast in a predominantly Homeric mode. Meaning arises from, and power relationships are expressed by, the interplay of intromissive and extramissive configurations of the eye. These power dynamics straddle the erotic and martial spheres and the knowledge gap between gods and mortals. But is Virgil's poetics of vision a purely aesthetic or literary phenomenon, or does it have a point of reference outside the text? As an aspect, however stylized, of human physiology, expressive eyes have an obvious point of reference in lived experience. Servius, however, would have us believe that the complex of imagery is intimately related to contemporary Roman history. On the shield of Aeneas at *Aeneid* 8.680, flames spout from Augustus' temples. Concerning this detail, Servius relates from Suetonius an anecdote about Augustus' fiery eyes, so fiery that nobody could look him in the eye. Augustus asked a certain knight why he averted his gaze after having seen him; "Because," said the knight, "I cannot bear the *fulmen* of your eyes."¹²⁰ Horace also refers to the expansive shining of the emperor's face;¹²¹ and elsewhere to the looming visage of a tyrant.¹²² The motif is applied to other powerful characters in Roman historiography. Livy's Hannibal reminds the Carthaginians of Hamilcar because of the vim and vigour that shines from his eyes.¹²³ Silius will later use this motif to describe Hannibal's ocular

¹²⁰ Cf. Suet. *DA* 79.2 and 94.4–6.

¹²¹ *Odes* 4.5.6–8 *instar veris enim voltus ubi tuus / adfulsit populo, gratior it dies / et soles melius nitent.*

¹²² *Odes* 3.3.3 *vultus instantis tyranni.*

¹²³ 21.4.2 *Hamilcarem iuuenem redditum sibi ueteres milites credere; eundem uigorem in uoltu uimque in*

(and *only* ocular) penetration of Rome.¹²⁴ Tiberius reputedly had very large eyes and could see in the dark, and even had fire in his eyes.¹²⁵ Drawing a connection between facial expression and the government, Tacitus views the glances of emperor and subjects as signs of the times in the reigns of Nero and Domitian.¹²⁶ Greek optic theory initially drew on poetic sources to explain natural phenomena. In turn, Virgil draws on poetry and optic theory, but perhaps occasionally with an eye on the historical context. The more imperial courtly life imitates epic scenarios, as happens increasingly in the high empire and in late antiquity,¹²⁷ the harder it becomes to distinguish between the epic rhetoric of power and real-life or historical description. The two mesh very closely in Virgil's poetics of vision.

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oculis, habitum oris lineamentaue intueri.

¹²⁴ Sil. *Pun.* 12.565–573.

¹²⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 68; Damianus *De opticis* 2.1.

¹²⁶ Tac. *Agr.* 45.

¹²⁷ See Rees 2013 for late-antique imperial spectacle imitating Latin epic.

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