Split Vision: The Politics of the Gaze in Seneca's Troades

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The violence associated with the end of the Trojan war provided ancient dramatists an excellent opportunity to explore anxieties about the reversal of fortune and fall from power.[1] In Seneca's Troades, the fall of Troy and the experiences of the Trojan women served as a setting where such anxieties could be displaced and examined. In this essay, I will investigate how the representation of female characters in this play illuminates a crisis in male subjectivity created by the anxiety of the senatorial class over its position in Rome's visual economy, and an attendant concern about corporeal vulnerability among those at the top of the social hierarchy. Troades manifests a self-conscious awareness of the pleasures and horrors of viewing violent spectacle occasioned by the destruction of a city and the accompanying reversal of fortune; however, this play specifically centers on women as victims and viewers of the aftermath of war while presenting an intra-textual male audience through which we can observe various reactions to these women. It is in this context that I am interested in exploring how the notion of a sado-masochistic dialectic may be useful for understanding the staging of violence and gender in Troades.[2]

Carlin Barton (1993.25) has argued that "The writers of the Neronian period, in particular, gloried in the violence they abhorred. They not only described but created scenes of violence against victims with whom they could simultaneously identify and sympathize. They were at once both victims and spectators." This observation is especially apt for understanding the dynamics of the gaze within Seneca's Troades. As I shall show, there are significant parallels between the Romans' simultaneous pleasure and horror in violent spectacle and the sado-masochistic dialectic elucidated by film theory.[3]

Early theory focused on film as an apparatus which encouraged spectators to identify with the omniscient transcendental gaze of the camera.[4] Subsequently, feminist film theorists argued that mainstream cinematic narrative positioned this gaze as male. Such readings were

produced through an emphasis on both the fetishistic and sadistic pleasure derived from viewing the image of the female body on screen.[5] Later, moving away from a sadistic male gaze paradigm, several theorists focused on the masochistic dynamics of film in relation to male subjectivity in crisis.[6] Kaja Silverman (1980) used Freud's observation that dreamers displace their fears and desires onto various surrogate figures to show how female characters can act on behalf of male viewers.[7] In a later article, she (1988.35) noted that Freud infers that "feminine masochism" is a particularly male disorder because the masculine subject is put in a typically feminine position.[8] Tania Modleski (1988) took Silverman's theory a step further and discussed how the male viewer participates in a sado-masochistic dialectic. She showed how the process of displacement enables us to understand how the male viewer simultaneously experiences and denies an identification with victimized female characters: "By acknowledging the importance of denial in the male spectator's response, we can take into account a crucial fact . . . the fact that the male finds it necessary to repress certain "feminine" aspects of himself, and to project these exclusively onto the woman, who does the suffering for both of them" (13). Carol Clover (1992) also used this notion of a sado-masochistic dialectic to discuss how the mechanism of displacement enables the male viewer simultaneously to experience and deny an identification with the female characters which abound in horror film. She has argued that in addition to the sadistic and voyeuristic pleasures the sight of a screaming, fleeing, dying woman on screen might provide a male viewer, the concept of female masochism can also show how the male viewer also has an investment in that suffering.

Film theory's recent interest in horror has emerged partly because of the victim-identified nature of the scopic pleasure offered to the audience. The masochistic pleasures provided by horror throw into doubt early theory's assumption that the cinematic apparatus was organized around a sadistic, controlling gaze.[9] Clover (1992.172-205) argues that there are two gazes in horror film: a "predatory, assaultive" or "phallic" gaze and the "reactive" or "feminine" gaze. The eye of horror may penetrate, but it is also penetrated.[10] Thus, the theory of a sado-masochistic dialectic indicates that the gaze is more complex, and subject positions more fluid,

than earlier film theory accounted for. This allows an oscillation of identification and a greater range of emotion for the viewer. It is within this context that I would like to explore how female characters presented in Troades may have offered multiple spectatorial positions for the senatorial male gaze. Tragedy, like horror, can be seen as "victim identified."[11] Although male victims certainly abound in Senecan tragedy, I would like to consider what may have been gained by presenting female characters as the central figures through which suffering takes place. In other words, what is the male senatorial stake in representing suffering as female in this play?

In Seneca's Troades, female suffering dominates the stage. By choosing Hecuba as the first character to appear, Seneca provides the audience an opportunity to experience the atrocities of war through women's eyes at the outset of the play.[12] Hecuba emerges and emphasizes the horrors she had to witness during the city's fall. In particular, she recounts having to endure the sight of Priam's gruesome murder (vidi execrandum regiae caedis nefas, 44).[13] After she leads the chorus in lamentation for the deaths of her husband and children, recalling the countless funerals she has witnessed, the messenger enters and tells of future sufferings Hecuba will have to endure. During the course of the play, her daughter and grandson will be brutally slaughtered while she and the surviving women will be divided up as slaves to the men who have destroyed their city. Here we see the eye not as a locus of power, but as a site of vulnerability, the eye of horror that is wounded by what it sees.[14] As Hecuba is told of Polyxena's fate, she emphasizes the powerless nature of her gaze:

> . . . dura et infelix age
> elabere anima, denique hoc unum mihi
> remitte funus. inrigat fletus genas
> imberque victo subitus e vultu cadit. (963-966)

. . . come on enduring and unhappy soul, slip away and finally relieve me from this one death. Tears wet my cheeks and a sudden shower falls from conquered eyes and face.

The use of "victo vultu" suggests that her eyes themselves are captives and hostage to the horrors that come with living in this time of loss. Only death can free them from the sight of yet another child's slaughter.

Hecuba not only emphasizes the Trojan women's position as victims and viewers of the aftermath of war, she also reveals a self-consciousness about their position as paradigmatic spectacles of suffering. In the first lines of the play, Hecuba directs the audience's gaze to herself:

Quicumque regno fidit et magna potens
dominatur aula nec leves metuit deos
animumque rebus credulum laetis dedit,
me videat . . . (1-4)

Whoever puts his faith in regal power and exercises ultimate authority in a great palace, nor fears capricious gods and gives his credulous spirit to prosperity, let him look on me . . .

As she draws attention to her position as the ultimate example of the changeable nature of fortune, she is conscious of the Greeks' eyes as they survey the ruins of Troy:

stat avidus irae victor et lentum Ilium
metitur oculis ac decem tandem ferus
ignoscit annis; horret afflictam quoque,
victamque quamvis videat, haut credit sibi

potuisse vinci. (22-26)

The victor stands eager for violence and measures tenacious Ilium with his eyes, and at last the savage conqueror forgives the ten years; he shudders at her in ruins and although he sees her conquered, he scarcely believe she could have been defeated.

Similarly, Andromache directs all eyes to herself as she laments all that is left of her family:

en intuere, turba quae simus super:
tumulus, puer, captiva . . . (507-508)

Look! See what sort of crowd we are that remains: a tomb, a boy, a captive woman . . .

She, too, is aware of her position as object of the Greek gaze. After she hears the warning that Ulysses is coming to take her son to his death, she knows she will have to put on a convincing act to keep him from detecting her fear. Indeed, when Ulysses arrives, he is suspicious that she might be lying when she tells him that the child is already dead. He tells himself "Scrutare matrem" (615), directing his gaze, as well as the audience's, to Andromache and looking for any sign that might betray her son's whereabouts. The use of scrutare here indicates an investigative, penetrating gaze. Ulysses tries to trap Andromache by outlining the horrors that await her son and then watching her reaction (607-704). As he continues to goad her, both he and the audience watch her become increasingly agitated as she tries to decide which course of action to take.[15] Thus, this play not only centers on women as victims and viewers of the aftermath of war, but also presents an internal male audience which responds to these women.

It is precisely this intra-textual audience which can give us clues to the ways the gaze was manifested in the extra-textual audience. The parallels between these two audiences is most explicitly drawn in the messenger's description of the site of Polyxena's sacrifice:[16]

> adversa cingit campus et clivo levi
> erecta medium vallis includens locum
> crescit theatri more. (1123-1125)

> A field encircles the opposite side and an elevated valley rises with a gentle slope, enclosing a space in the middle like a theater.

Seneca then goes on to describe the crowd's eagerness to view her death, indicating that there is compulsion and pleasure in viewing the horrific:

> concursus frequens
> implevit omne litus: hi classis moram
> hac morte solvi rentur, hi stirpem hostium
> gaudent recidi. magna pars vulgi levis
> odit scelus spectatque; nec Troes minus
> suum frequentant funus et pavidi metu
> partem ruentis ultimam Troiae vident. (1125-1131)

> The crowded gathering filled the whole shore: some think the fleet's delay will be brought to an end by this death, some take pleasure in the cutting back of the enemy's stock. A great part of the fickle mob hates the crime, but watches it anyway. The Trojans no less crowd their own funeral and, trembling with fear, watch the last part of the fall of Troy.

In this scene, Seneca presents a complex paradigm of spectatorship. By enumerating the different motives of different parts of the crowd, he indicates that the dynamics of the gaze are determined in part by individual reactions and motivations. Although both Greeks and Trojans flock to see her death, the nature of the experience is different for each spectator.[17] While the Greeks described at 1127-1128 can be seen as enjoying a sadistic pleasure in the death of the Other, the Trojans experience fear as they rush to view Polyxena's death. The masochistic nature of this compulsion to view such a painful sight is suggested by Andromache as she asks the messenger to recount the events in detail. Here she says that such great sorrows enjoy dwelling on total calamity (gaudet magnus aerumnas dolor /tractare totas. 1066-1067). The simultaneous existence, and intensity, of different types of visual pleasure is made even clearer in the messenger's description of the crowd's reaction to the death of Polyxena herself:

terror attonitos
tenet utrosque populos. ipsa deiectos gerit
vultus pudore, sed tamen fulgent genae
magisque solito splendet extremus decor,
ut esse Phoebi dulcius lumen solet
iamiam cadentis, astra cum repetunt vices
premiturque dubius nocte vicina dies.
stupet omne vulgus, et fere cuncti magis
peritura laudant. (1136-1144)

Terror holds both peoples in shock. She herself modestly casts down her gaze, yet her cheeks flush and her dying beauty shines more than usual, just as Phoebus' light shines sweeter as it sets, when the stars seek again their paths and the

wavering daylight is closely pursued by neighboring night. The whole crowd is stunned, and almost all praise more what is about to perish.

This description suggests fetishistic and voyeuristic aspects of the audience's gaze.[18] As Polyxena approaches the mound of Achilles she lowers her eyes and blushes, thus emphasizing her position as object of the gaze. Her beauty transfixes the crowd (stupet, 1143) and, for a moment, time seems suspended as the spectators are absorbed in the sight of her radiant cheeks.[19] The viewers' pleasure is heightened precisely because she is about to die (et fere cuncti magis / peritura laudant, 1143-1144). The fetishism only lasts a moment and quickly elides into sadistic voyeurism. This elision, reinforced by "magisque solito splendet extremus decor" and the sunset simile, indicates that the greatest delight for the spectators is in the instant just before Polyxena's death.

In the Natural Questions, there is an interesting parallel which can illuminate the assaultive, sadistic aspect of the gaze directed at Polyxena in Troades. In this philosophical treatise, Seneca describes dinner guests who devour the spectacle of a dying mullet. In the midst of castigating the excessive luxury seen at dinner parties, Seneca says that the value of presenting the guests with a dying mullet is not just a matter of ensuring freshness, but also of providing a colorful spectacle:

Parum videtur recens mullus, nisi qui in convivae manu moritur. Vitreis ollis inclusi afferuntur et observatur morientium color, quem in multas mutationes mors luctante spiritu vertit . . . "Nihil est," inquis, "mullo expirante formosius; ipsa colluctatione animae deficientis rubor primum, deinde pallor suffunditur, squamaeque variantur et in incertas facies inter vitam ac mortem coloris est vagatio." (N.Q. 3.17.2-18.1)

> A mullet does not seem fresh enough unless it dies in a guest's hand. They are brought out enclosed in glass jars and their color watched as they die. As they strive for breath, death variegates their color . . . "Nothing" you say " is more beautiful than a dying mullet; in its very death throes, first a red, then a pale tint is spread through it, and its scales become variously tinged, and between life and death there is a changing into indistinguishable shades."

Nothing is more beautiful than a dying mullet, but Polyxena, perhaps, comes close. Like the mullet, which becomes more brilliant as it dies and emits a bright light under its temples ("Vide quomodo exarserit rubor omni acrior minio! . . . Quam lucidum quiddam caeruleumque sub ipso tempore effulsit!", 3.18.5), Polyxena's cheeks flush and her beauty in death is compared to the last rays of the setting sun. Like Seneca's dinner guest, the audience of Polyxena's sacrifice also experiences an aesthetic enjoyment in the protracted moment of death. In both cases, the viewer's pleasure is amplified by the spectacular nature of the beauty each object provides just as it is about to die. The aggressive nature of the gaze is evident in the parallels between the diners' eyes and throats (. . . nec cenae causa occidi sed super cenam, cum multum in deliciis fuit et oculos ante quam gulam pavit!, 3.17.3). Here we see the concept of the devouring eye, an active aggressive gaze that delights in consuming violent spectacles. Seneca continues the comparison between watching and eating as he states that the diners are not content with their teeth, belly and mouth, but are also gluttonous with their eyes (oculis quoque gulosi sunt, 3.18.7).[20] In the sacrifice of Polyxena, the visual appetite of the audience is paralleled by Achilles' mound which eagerly consumes (bibit, 1164) her blood.[21]

While it is clear that there is a sadistic gaze which takes pleasure in the violent spectacle of Polyxena's death, a masochistic gaze is also presented in this scene. When the sword is raised, Polyxena too raises her eyes and stares down her killer as she faces the weapon and Pyrrhus head on:

. . . audax virago non tulit retro gradum;
conversa ad ictum stat truci vultu ferox. (1151-1152)

. . . the bold heroine did not retreat but, turning toward the blow, she stood courageous, with a fierce gaze.

At this point, Polyxena abandons the modesty that keeps her eyes cast down, and exhibits instead the aggressive gaze of a warrior facing death. As this audax virago behaves courageously, the soldiers are moved by her bravery and experience a masochistic pleasure:[22]

hos movet formae decus,
hos mollis aetas, hos vagae rerum vices;
movet animus omnes fortis et leto obvius.
Pyrrhum antecedit; omnium mentes tremunt,
mirantur ac miserantur. (1144-1148)

Her glorious beauty affects some; others her tender age; others the fickle turns of fortune; but all are moved by her courage and meeting with death. She goes in front of Pyrrhus; the minds of all tremble, wonder and pity simultaneously.

The masochistic nature of the gaze is indicated by the experience of fear (omnium mentes tremunt) which accompanies the viewers' pity (miserantur) and reveals an identification with the object of the gaze.[23] Thus, visual pleasure can oscillate between sadism and masochism within the same viewer.[24] While Polyxena is a young, virginal girl, the heroic nature of the way she faces death allows the soldiers to identify with her and prompts their feelings of pity (1145). On the other hand, her status as a bride to be sacrificed/married to Achilles' shade reinforces the feminine nature of her position and allows the soldiers to distance themselves from her.

Polyxena is presented as a transgendered figure, indicated by the description of her as virago, a word which fuses male and female.[25] According to Clover (1992.42-64), it is just this sort of transgendered nature of the object of the gaze that contributes to the functioning of the sado-masochistic dialectic in horror film. She shows how, through "the politics of displacement," the woman functions as a "congenial double," a vehicle through which the male viewer can "simultaneously experience forbidden desires and disavow them on the grounds that the visible character is, after all, a girl" (1992.18). While Polyxena cannot be read as a "final girl" in the same way that Clover describes the survivors of slasher films, nevertheless, the transgendered nature of her character allows for a similar sado-masochistic process of identification. The fact that a Senecan character who is killed off before the end of the play can function in a similar way to Clover's final girl merely points to cultural differences in the way encounters with death are viewed. Polyxena's sort of heroism suggests that the only power one has in a powerless position is to embrace death as one's own choice. The parallels between Polyxena's acceptance of her death, senatorial suicides, and gladiators' simultaneous status as infames and heroic figures, further reinforces the sado-masochistic elements enabled by her character.[26]

Similarly, Nicole Loraux (1987.59) suggests that it is precisely the moment of death that transforms the virgo into a virago by her courage in facing the death blow. In her analysis of virgin sacrifice in Greek and Roman tragedy, Loraux argues that by taking charge of their own deaths, these female characters display a free will that was traditionally the privilege of a male warrior (1987.42-48). In Seneca's play, the brave manner in which Polyxena faces her death is depicted as masculine in its heroism and thus affords the basis for a male masochistic identification with her. The circumstances of the sacrifice, however, call specifically for a female victim.[27] This need for a female victim, along with the description of voyeuristic pleasure in her death, indicates that there is also a sadistic male gaze operating in this scene. Thus, the sacrifice of Polyxena provides the audience (both intra and extra-textual) with a character that it could simultaneously identify with, yet distance itself from. If we use this passage as a paradigm for the dynamics of a specific kind of Roman gaze, we can see the female characters in Troades, like

those in horror film, may have served as sites for exploring male subjectivity in crisis, in this case senatorial male anxieties centering on issues of class and violence.

First century Roman audiences were fascinated with violent spectacle.[28] Not surprisingly, the staging of these events, and audiences' responses to them, is a theme throughout Seneca's work. His letters and essays also provide valuable insights into the dynamics of the gaze and the nature of visual pleasure presented in his plays.[29] Frequently, Seneca can be seen grappling with the issue of scopic desire and visual pleasure, particularly the delight in violent spectacle.[30] For example, he opens Epistle 7 with a confession (confitebor) to Lucilius of his own weakness:

> Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus quam in aliquo spectaculo desidere; tunc enim per voluptatem facilius vitia subrepunt. Quid me existimas dicere? Avarior redeo, ambitiosior, luxuriosior? Immo vero crudelior et inhumanior, quia inter homines fui. (7.2-3)

> Truly there is nothing so detrimental to good character than to sit at some spectacle; for then vices sneak up on us more easily through pleasure. What do you think I am saying? I return more greedy, more ambitious, more immoderate? Indeed, truly I am more cruel and inhuman because I have been in the midst of human beings.

The use of "voluptatem" is significant. While voluptas in the singular signifies sensual pleasure, the plural is often used of public spectacles.[31] Here Seneca is drawing a parallel between the two, indicating that visual pleasure was an integral part of public spectacle. In Epistle 88, he characterizes and classifies the arts, observing: "Ludicrae sunt quae ad voluptatem oculorum atque aurium tendunt" (88.22). Moreover, it is evident that Seneca considers this sort of enjoyment to be damaging both to individual character and to society.[32] In the De Clementia,

addressed to Nero, Seneca is critical of this sort of delight in violence, arguing that it breaks down the social order in its urge to create new ways of torturing and killing:[33]

> Hoc est, quare vel maxime abominanda sit saevitia, quod excedit fines primum solitos, deinde humanos, nova supplicia conquirit, ingenium advocat ut instrumenta excogitet per quae varietur atque extendatur dolor, delectatur malis hominum; tunc illi dirus animi morbus ad insaniam pervenit ultimam, cum crudelitas versa est in voluptatem et iam occidere hominem iuvat. (1.25.2)

> This is the reason why brutality is the greatest abomination, because it first transgresses all ordinary boundaries, and then all human bounds. It seeks out new suppliants, advocates ingenuity in order to invent devices by which suffering may be varied and extended, and delights in the disasters of men; then indeed the terrible disease of such a man's soul has come to the ultimate insanity, when cruelty is changed into pleasure and to kill a human being now is a source of delight.

In this passage, as in Epistle 7, it is the pleasure (voluptas) in viewing violence that is specifically damaging. Such criticisms about the sadistic dynamics of the gaze, however, are not just a matter of general concern for humanity and the morality of Rome, but also reflect an anxiety about the changing nature of the position of the senatorial class in the visual economy of the imperial period. This in turn mirrors a breakdown in the social order which affected the status of the senatorial class itself.

In ancient Rome, it was necessary for men of senatorial status to be in the public eye, and during the republic, members of this class were at the apex of the Roman visual economy.[34] As the empire became established, however, it became increasingly difficult for them to find their

place within this visual economy as the privileged position of the emperor as both subject and object of the gaze transformed the spectatorial politics of the senate, arena and theater.[35]

The importance of visual politics during the transition from republic to empire can be seen, for example, in the legislation surrounding the ludi. During the republican period, the ability to stage elaborate and expensive ludi was itself a visual manifestation of a person's wealth and status, but as the imperial period progressed, this role was usurped by emperors.[36] Under Augustus, restrictions on the frequency and lavishness of the games given by people other than the emperor were set in place. Nonetheless, elite spectators still held conspicuously privileged positions in the arena. Although Augustus restricted the public visibility of individual senators by limiting their ability to stage ludi, he also solidified the visual and social hierarchy within the spaces of the arena and theater. Augustus reinforced the earlier practice of assigning seating by order, reserving the front row of seats for the senatorial class, separating the soldiers from civilians, and confining women to the back rows (with the exception of the Vestal Virgins who had separate seats). He also strengthened dress codes as another visual marker of social divisions.[37] Catharine Edwards (1997.89) links Augustus' enforcement of seating arrangements to a solidification of social hierarchy which emphasized his own elevated position. Such measures illustrate the inter-relation between the visual economy and the construction of status.[38]

An equally significant dividing line in the hierarchy of the arena was that between the audience and the stage. Under Augustus, a senatorial decree was passed banning senators and equites from performing in stage plays and gladiatorial games.[39] Thus, senators were in visible positions of honor without being singled out as direct objects of the gaze. An analysis of this division between spectator and performer is important for understanding the politics of spectatorship and Roman attitudes toward the body. Edwards (1994.84) has argued that a major difference between elite and infames was that the bodies of infames were sold and exhibited for the pleasure of the public.[40] She also states that actors, gladiators and prostitutes were denied the rights of Roman citizenship as infames because they exhibited their bodies for financial gain and thus lacked the dignity required of the citizen's body: "And just as actors (along with gladiators

and prostitutes) resembled slaves in their lack of control over their own bodies, so they were assimilated to slaves by the law" (1994.84). Acting and gladiatorial combats were forms of objectifying the body, making it a spectacle -- like a mullet, or Polyxena -- staged for the visual consumption of others.

The seating arrangements, as well as the division between audience and arena, distinguished the elite both from the rest of the crowd and from the infames performing in the arena. The prominent seats of the elite made them conspicuous spectators and reflected their social status.[41] Their position in the public gaze, however, was mediated by the social organization of space in the arena. The elite exhibited their bodies, but only as spectators. Thus, they could be positive objects of the gaze in a way that the infames in the arena could not be.

This ability to retain one's status as a spectator and maintain some control over the way one's body was presented to the public gaze was crucial at a time when there was both a growing visual pleasure in violent spectacle and a change in the fabric of Rome's social hierarchy. Edwards (1997.73-74) has noted that one of the privileges of Roman citizenship was protection from corporal punishment;[42] however, during the transition from republic to empire, the immunity of elite bodies from bodily assault and mutilation began to erode. In her discussion of the decapitation of members of the senate during the proscriptions, Amy Richlin (1999. 196) states "By breaking the integrity of the citizen's body, the killers were assimilating that body to others more vulnerable." In a much less immediately violent way, when emperors forced members of the senatorial class to enter the arena and theater, they also blurred the division between elite and slave bodies.[43] In addition, when a citizen entered the arena or the stage he became infamis, losing his protection from corporeal punishment. Thus, discourses about emperors' violations of the lines between spectator and spectacle can be seen as symptomatic of the continued concern by the senatorial class about its increasing vulnerability to violence under the principate.

Anxiety about maintaining a visual economy that reinforced elite positions within the social hierarchy surfaces particularly in the criticisms of Neronian rule.[44] Tacitus and Suetonius

both present Nero as an emperor who disrupted the visual line between elite and infames by forcing the upper classes to appear on stage and in the arena. In the Annales, Tacitus criticizes Nero for pressuring Roman elites to "defile themselves" (polluantur) with stage performances (14.20). Suetonius adds the criticism that men and women of high rank performed during festivals, and that Nero made both senators and equites do battle in the arena.[45]

Additionally, Nero is represented as an emperor who destroyed the very divisions between spectator and spectacle. It is interesting that he manages to accomplish both as he takes the stage himself.[46] This, as Shadi Bartsch (1994.2-32) has demonstrated, reversed the roles of actor and spectator as Nero watched the senators' reactions to his performances. According to Dio's history, senators and others were continuously examined by Nero's gaze in the theater:[47]

> §throËnto d¢ ékrib«w ka‹ toÊtvn ka‹ t«n êllvn éeˆ pote ka‹ a ¶sodoi ka‹ a ¶jodoi tã te sxÆmata ka‹ tå neÊmata ka‹ tå §piboÆmata. (63.15.2)
>
> Constantly, then, the entrances, exits, gestures, signals and calls of the senators and others were scrutinized precisely.

Suetonius specifically discusses Nero's desires to make the audience perform while he is on stage.[48] In this account, Nero was so fascinated with the Alexandrians' rhythmic applause that he hired some of them to teach the equites this technique, paying the leaders four hundred gold pieces. In addition to making his audiences stage their applause, he further inverted the dynamics between spectators and performers by paying them. Suetonius adds that while Nero was in Greece, no one was allowed to leave the theater during Nero's recitals. [49] This made the audience prisoners and put them in a similar position to the infames who performed in the arena.

Tacitus contrasts the attitudes of the audiences at the quinquennial contest, who became used to the inverted dynamics of performance, with those from out of town who were outraged and could not keep up with the clapping (. . . neque aspectum illum tolerare neque labori

inhonesto sufficere, cum manibus nesciis fatiscerent, Annales 16.5). The newcomers' inability to perform was then punished by soldiers who were stationed along the blocks of seats to enforce compliance. Tacitus also notes that it was just as dangerous to avoid such spectacles as it was to perform incorrectly:

> Quippe gravior inerat metus, si spectaculo defuissent, multis palam et pluribus occultis, ut nomina ac vultus, alacritatem tristitiamque coeuntium scrutarentur. (Annales 16.5)
>
> For the fear was greater if they missed the spectacle, since there were many in the open, and more in secret, to note the names and expressions, the excitement and sadness, of those gathered.

In this depiction, Nero's gaze extends even beyond his own eyes by the use of spies planted both openly and secretly. Tacitus goes on to say that after hearing the spies' reports, Nero instantly punished the lower class people while he waited for a more opportune time to punish elite violators.[50] Thus, as the senatorial audience became actors, they also risked exposing themselves to the attendant lack of physical protection more traditional actors experienced.

Throughout the writings of the senatorial class, there is an anxiety about being the object of the emperor's gaze and the difficulty of retiring from the public eye.[51] According to Tacitus, avoiding the emperor's gaze by skipping senate meetings could also arouse suspicion and anger, and could be interpreted as a sign of contempt.[52] Seneca himself exemplifies the difficulties of being in the public eye and in the emperor's sights.[53] For example, in Epistle 14, Seneca writes about the fine line between avoiding dangerous men in power and provoking them by such avoidance:

> Idem facit sapiens; nocituram potentiam vitat, hoc primum cavens, ne vitare videatur. Pars enim securitatis et in hoc est, non ex professo eam petere, quia, quae quis fugit, damnat. (14.8)
>
> The wise man does the same [as a pilot avoiding a storm]; he avoids an authority which might harm, taking particular care not to seem to avoid it. For part of safety lies in this, not to seek safety expressly, because what one flees, one condemns.

In De Ira, Seneca characterizes Caligula's gaze itself as a form of torture:

> Torserat per omnia, quae in rerum natura tristissima sunt, fidiculis, talaribus, eculeo, igne, vultu suo (3.19.1)
>
> He had tortured them by means of all the grimmest devices which nature provides -- by the string, by the robe, by the rack, by fire, and by his own gaze

The visual aspect of the degradations senators had to suffer under the emperors is illustrated in a passage of Seneca's De Beneficiis. Here Caligula forces an elder, well respected senator to kiss his slippers in front of the other senators:

> Homo natus in hoc, ut mores liberae civitatis Persica servitute mutaret, parum iudicavit, si senator, senex, summis usus honoribus in conspectu principum supplex sibi eo more iacuisset, quo hostes victi hostibus iacuere; invenit aliquid infra genua, quo libertatem detruderet! Non hoc est rem publicam calcare . . . ? (2.12.2)

> This man, born to change the ways of a free state into Persian slavery, considered it to be of little importance if a senator, an old man, one who had held the highest offices, threw himself down as a suppliant in sight of the leading senators, in the same manner in which conquered enemies throw themselves at the feet of their foes; he discovered a way in which he could push freedom down lower than the knees! Is this not to trample on the republic . . . ?

It is not enough to make him kneel, but he has to kneel in full view of the other senators. He needs to be seen prostrating himself, making the act all the more shameful. The affect on the senator's status is demonstrated by Seneca's analogy to conquered enemies who must prostrate themselves. It is also evident that Seneca views this act against an individual as indicative of the general humiliation of the senatorial order.

With this in mind, I would like to examine how the representation of female characters in Troades functioned as a site for exploring the social aspects of the gaze and violent spectacle in the Neronian period. A change in social order, or reversal of fortune, is one of the major themes of Troades. If we use the messenger's report of the crowd's reactions to Polyxena's death as a paradigm for the dynamics of the gaze in a larger sense, we can see how women function in the play as a whole. As I discussed above, the reactions of the crowd at Polyxena's sacrifice oscillate between sadistic voyeurism and masochistic identification with her situation and the changeable nature of fortune. In light of the examination of the social situation in Rome, it can be seen that the intra-textual audience of Troades reflects a contemporary elite Roman audience which was predisposed to participate in spectacles of violence, disempowerment and survival. I believe it was precisely the opportunity to focus on women as survivors in an occupied, fallen city that appealed to Seneca. The women of Troy had lived to see the sack of their homeland and experience the social discord that followed. Therefore, they were chosen as characters through which the audience could experience the anxieties brought on by the endurance of violence and the reversal of fortune.

As we saw, the play opens with Hecuba directing the gaze to herself. She states: "non umquam tulit/ documenta fors maiora, quam fragili loco / starent superbi" (4-6). Seneca's departure from Euripides is worth noting.[54] Unlike the ghosts and gods opening Euripides' Hekabe and Trojan Women, someone living begins Seneca's play, someone who has watched the horror of the reversal of fortune and still has to live through it. It is significant that Hecuba constructs the audience as those who trust in sovereignty and prosperity (1-4). In her, they will see an exemplum, a person like themselves who has fallen. On one level, we can see that the audience is constructed as those who are at the top of the social hierarchy, those who put their faith in sovereignty. For them, this can be read as a cautionary tale.[55]

On another level, the play could also speak to those who might be suffering a change in fortune and can look to the female characters as an exemplum of how to endure such a fate. The women's fall in status from elite to slaves is noted as the lots are being chosen for them (57-62), and as they hear the outcome (974-990). Hecuba emphasizes the upheaval in social rank involved:

> Quis tam impotens ac durus et iniquae ferus
> sortitor urnae regibus reges dedit? (981-982)
>
> What reckless, hard, and cruel arbiter of the unfair urn has given royalty to kings?

Their fall in status is emphasized again as Hecuba contrasts her fate with Priam's (liber manes /vadit ad imos, nec feret umquam /victa Graium cervice iugum, 145-147). Throughout the play, it is clear that the fates of the survivors are worse than those of the dead, precisely because the living have to watch the final destruction of the city and experience the horrors of captivity. After the ritual mourning of Priam and Hector, Hecuba states that Priam's death should not be pitied. While she had to stand by and watch his death, he gladly accepted the sword(quod penitus actum

cum recepisset libens, 49).[56] He is happy precisely because he does not have to look upon his captors or be put on display as a war prize:

> non ille duos videt Atridas
> nec fallacem cernit Vlixem:
> non Argolici praeda triumphi
> subiecta feret colla tropaeis;
> non adsuetas ad sceptra manus
> post terga dabit currusque sequens
> Agamemnonios aurea dextra
> vincula gestans latis fiet
> pompa Mycenis. (148-156)

> He does not look on the Atridiae, nor see deceitful Ulysses: he will not, as spoils of Greek triumph, bear trophies on bowed neck, hands accustomed to the scepter will not be bound behind him, nor following Agamemnon's chariot, hands in gold fetters, will he become a parade in vast Mycenae.

Hecuba contrasts both her position as spectacle and as spectator with Priam's escape from this fate in death.[57] Although the mention of a triumphal parade is clearly an anachronism, it does draw attention to Roman thought and cultural practice.[58] The idea that death is a better fate than being displayed as part of a triumphal procession can also be seen in the representation of Cleopatra's death in Cassius Dio (51.13.1-2):

> . . . ka‹ §n §pimele□& aÈtØn §poie›to, ˜pvw o tå §pin□kia §pilamprÊn˙. toËtÒ te oÔn ÍpotopÆsasa, ka‹ mur□vn yanãtvn xalep teron aÈtÚ nom□sasa e‰nai,

ˆntvw te époyane›n §peyÊmhse, ka‹ pollå m¢n toË Ka□sarow, ˜pvw tropon tinå épÒlhtai, §de›to, pollå d¢ ka‹ aÈtØ §mhxançto. (51.13.1-2)

. . . and he treated her with special care, so she might make a brilliant spectacle at a triumph for him. But, having suspected this and considering this to be worse than a myriad of deaths, she truly longed to die, and not only begged Caesar many times that she might perish by one means or another, but also devised many plans herself.

However, as Hecuba emphasizes, neither subject nor object position is desirable. Being a spectator can also be a painful experience. Dio's depiction of the crowd's reaction to Arsinoë, Cleopatra's younger sister, as she is displayed as a captive in Caesar's celebration of triumph over Ptolemy is of particular interest.[59] According to Dio, the sight of Arsinoë aroused such pity among the Roman spectators that it prompted them to consider their own misfortunes:

. . . ka‹ ÉArsinÒh gunÆ te oÔsa ka‹ basil□w pote nomisye›sa ¶n te desmo›w, ˘ mhp pote ¶n ge tª ÑR m· §geg Ònei, Ùfye›sa pãmpolun o‰kton §n°bale, kék toÊtou §p‹ tª profãsei taÊtka‹ tå o ke›a pãyh parvdÊranto. (43.19.3-4)

. . . and Arsinoë, a woman and at one time considered queen, having been seen in chains, something which never had happened in Rome, aroused much pity and, with this as an excuse, they lamented their own misfortunes.

This is just the sort of masochistic gaze the Trojan women may have provoked in Seneca's audience. Although watching another's misfortunes might prompt a feeling of power and superiority, it could also remind the viewer of his own precarious position in society. Thus, the power dynamics of the gaze go beyond a simple subject/object dichotomy and are dependent on the social position of the viewer.

I have argued that the senatorial class saw the Neronian period as a time in which their status and safety were diminished. These adverse conditions were reflected in a re-negotiation of the elite's position in the visual economy of Rome, which was in turn mirrored in Seneca's criticisms of violent spectacle. So too, Troades textualizes historical concerns about class and violence. The play focuses on violence suffered in conjunction with a decrease in social status and a loss of authority. While the reversal of fortune is a common theme for tragedy in general,[60] nevertheless this Senecan play may have had an even stronger resonance for the Roman elite of the time, who could see in the fate of the Trojan women a change in status and a disempowerment that was akin to their own potential experience of imperial violence and humiliation.[61]

In his focus on women as the surviving victims of war, Seneca is able to examine how such victims endure the violence they are forced to suffer, the difficult choices those who survive have to make, and the horrors of those who have to stand by and watch powerlessly.[62] However, while the Trojan women's loss of status and physical security may have resonated with anxieties of the male senatorial class,[63] the plight of the female characters in Troades also reflects a distinctly female position. This allowed the male viewers simultaneously to identify with them and distance themselves from such identification, suggesting that the visual pleasure which the senatorial male may have experienced from viewing this play was derived from both sadistic and masochistic aspects of the gaze.

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[1] Fantham 1982.205 and Boyle 1997.91 comment on the fate of Troy as a common paradigm for the fall from power in Roman culture. Rabinowitz 1998.59 and Gregory 1991.86 note that this part of the Trojan myth provides Euripides an opportunity to address transitions from freedom to slavery and the disparity of power in the Greek world. For a discussion of Hecuba as the paradigmatic victim of the reversal of fortune in later antiquity and the Renaissance, see Mossman 1995.210-243.

[2] The question of performance has been perennially problematic for discussions of Senecan drama. While we may not be able to come to consensus on the specifics of presentation, we should consider these plays within the context of the Roman visual culture in which they were written. In fact, understanding this visual economy is essential for contextualizing the politics of the gaze in Senecan tragedy. For arguments supporting the proposition that Seneca's

plays were composed for the theater see Bieber 1939.397, Walker 1969, Ahl 1986.18-27, Sutton 1986, Rosenmeyer 1993, and Boyle 1997.9-12. Arguments for recitation and/or reading include Zwierlein 1966, Beare 1955.224-226, and Fantham 1982.34-49. I agree with Ahl 1986.26 and Boyle 1997.11 that the evidence for recitation does not discount the possibility that the plays could also have been performed in their entirety on stage.

[3] For a brief overview of film theory, see Williams 1995.1-5. Recently, classicists have begun to see how film theory may be useful for exploring the politics of representation in ancient culture. On the use of film theory in analyses of Classical drama, see Marsh 1992, Zweig 1992, Rabinowitz 1992 and 1993.159-162, and Robin 1993. Robin uses film theory to compare the female voice in Seneca's plays to that of classic cinema, arguing that it is "the site of hysteria and paranoia" (1993.107). She also compares the male voice-over in Hollywood film to Seneca's choruses of men as "the bearers of reason and clarity" (1993.117) who interpret the hysteria of female characters. On the use of film theory for analyses of other aspects of Greek and Roman visual culture, see Elsom 1992, Richlin 1992, Segal 1994, Fitzgerald 1995.140-168, Fredrick 1995, and 1997, Morales 1996, Brown 1997, Koloski-Ostrow 1997, Petersen 1997, Stewart 1997.13-14 and Greene 1998.67-92.

[4] See Oudart 1977-1978 and Baudry 1974-1975. Much of this came from the perception of similarities between the apparatus of the camera and Lacan's discussions 1978.67- 119 of a pre-existing, reifying gaze through which subjectivity is defined. For an overview of apparatus theory see Doane 1991.79- 90 and Jay 1993.435-491.

[5] Mulvey 1975.11-18, in her influential article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", discussed two ways that mainstream narrative cinema orchestrated a male gaze directed at representations of women, both organized around alleviating castration anxiety or the potential loss of power and status. Through fetishistic scopophilia, the male viewer gains visual pleasure by fetishizing the female body, disavowing castration and avoiding his own susceptibility to it. Through sadistic voyeurism, on the other hand, the male viewer's pleasure lies in ascertaining female guilt or lack and asserting control by punishing or forgiving her. Mulvey saw sadistic voyeurism in particular as the impetus for the narrative drive in mainstream cinema. See Fredrick 1995 for a lucid summary of Mulvey's two gazes, the contradictions between them, and illustrations from Roman wall painting.

[6] In addition to those mentioned here, see Silverman 1980 and Studlar 1988.

[7] Similarly, Clover 1992.8 notes that characters at variance with each other display a spectrum of potential identifications which appeal to different aspects of the viewer's psyche.

[8] Clover 1992.224 also suggests that feminine masochism explains why male viewers empathize with some female characters in horror film.

[9] Much of recent film theory, in fact, has questioned the notion of a fixed or singular identity. Several feminist film theorists such as Gledhill 1994, Mayne 1995 and Kaplan 1997 have also discussed how spectatorship is determined by both the individual and the cultural history of the viewer as well as the spectatorial relationships constructed by the camera. Gledhill 1994.121, for example, states that "subjects move in and out of different identities constructed by ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation and so on. Similarly, cultural products offer a range of often conflicting positions for identification." This departure from apparatus theory, which focused on viewer's interpellation into an identification with the presumably unifying gaze of the camera, makes more recent film theory even more adaptable to other genres of representation. Like film viewers, the dynamics of the gaze for theater spectators is influenced by their cultural and individual identities as well as the space of the theater itself.

[10] Here there are parallels between Clover's analysis of the eye as both a locus of power and a site of vulnerability in horror film and Barton's discussion 1993.91-95 of the same paradoxical nature of the eye as it is perceived in Roman culture. Morales 1996.200-206 also discusses the dual nature of spectatorship in her analysis of the effect of painted images of violence and pain on Roman viewers. Using Clover's terms "reactive" and "assaultive" gaze, Morales shows how the viewers of Parrhasius' art are depicted as both victims and consumers of his images.

[11] This can be seen in some of the earliest analyses of tragedy. Aristotle, for instance, states that pity and fear are the emotions essential to tragedy. He argues that while pity is aroused by undeserved misfortune, fear is evoked by the sufferings of someone just like ourselves (per‹ tÚn ˜moion, Poetics 1453a). Commenting on this passage, S.H. Butcher 1951.259 n.1 states: "the fact that fear is inspired by the sufferings of ı ˜moiow indicates that even tragic fear is in the last analysis traced back psychologically to a self-regarding instinct. The awakening of fear as distinct from mere pity depends on the close identification of the hero and ourselves." Another interesting parallel between horror and tragedy is the ritualistic and formulaic nature of each genre. Audiences of both genres know more or less what will happen, even before the performance starts. Clover 1992.11, speaking of horror, states: "This is a field in which there is in some sense no original, no real or right text, only variants; a world in which, therefore, the meaning of the individual example lies outside itself."

[12] Similarly, the first lines of the chorus emphasize the Trojan Women's long endurance of suffering:

> Non rude vulgus lacrimisque novum
> lugere iubes: hoc continuis
> egimus annis . . . (67-69)
>
> No inexperienced crowd, new to tears, do you bid to mourn; we have done this for unceasing years . . .

[13] Later in the play (409-425), Andromache also emphasizes the horrors she has lived through. She too stresses the position of women as viewers of violence as she expresses her fear that she will have to watch the horrible slaughter of her son if she is unable to protect him from Ulysses:

> poteris nefandae deditum mater neci
> videre? poteris celsa per fastigia
> missum rotari? (651-653)
>
> Will you, his mother, be able to see him given over to an unspeakable murder? Will you be able to watch him sent spinning over the high fortifications?

[14] On the "Eye of Horror," see Clover 1992.166-230. She states that "Horror privileges eyes because, more crucially than any other kind of cinema, it is about eyes. More particularly, it is about eyes watching horror." (1992.167). She suggests that the emphasis on the introjective gaze can be seen in the proliferation of images on video boxes which often show a woman's frightened eyes, or eyeballs which have been pierced or gouged out.
[15] Seneca frequently presents this sort of internal agonizing for the audience's gaze; see for example, Medea 893-977, Phaedra 99-128, 177-194, Agamemnon 131-144, 192-202, and Thyestes 267-286 and 920-969. Tarrant 1985.23 states that "the opportunity to portray human beings under extreme emotional pressure may in fact have been tragedy's strongest attraction for Seneca." Boyle 1997.24-31 discusses the use of asides as an indication that a greater degree of "psychological interiority" is present in Senecan drama than in Attic tragedy. For a discussion of the Roman interest in the moment of internal conflict as a theme for wall painting, see Bergmann 1996.
[16] For a discussion of lines 1124-1125 and their punctuation, see Fantham 1982.377-378. On the metatheatrical elements in this play, see Boyle 1997.118-122. Ahl 1986.22-23 also notes a parallel between the intra and extra-textual audience in this scene.
[17] Similarly, in an earlier scene, Seneca presents both the sadistic gaze of Ulysses as he tries to provoke Andromache into revealing the hiding place of her son and the more sympathetic gaze of Ulysses' men who are rebuked for being moved by a woman's tears:

> Cessatis et vos flebilis clamor movet
> furorque cassus feminae? iussa ocius
> peragite. (678-680)
>
> Do you do nothing, and does the tearful shout and useless rage of a woman move you? Carry out your orders quickly.

Unlike Ulysses, the soldiers are moved by watching Andromache's sufferings and need to be scolded into action. Again, we see that the dynamics of the gaze are determined by the nature of the spectator as well as the spectacle.
[18] For a discussion of the similarly fetishistic and sadistic nature of the gaze directed at Polyxena in Euripides' Hekabe, see Rabinowitz 1993.59-62.
[19] Mulvey 1975.14 and 18 argues that fetishistic scopophilia seems to stop the action and focus solely on the look.
[20] This metaphor of the insatiable, devouring eye can also be seen in St. Augustine's reference to a spectator at the games (Confessions 6.8). On the concept of a "torvus oculus" see Barton 1993.90. Morales 1996.206 also cites Seneca's mullet passage as an example of the aggressive, consuming gaze.
[21] For an interesting discussion on the equation of women and food and the analogous ways both are consumed at dinner parties in the Deipnosophistae of Athenaeus, see Henry 1992.
[22] The reaction of Ulysses' soldiers to Andromache at 678-680 also indicates that there is a possibility for men to be moved by viewing the sufferings of a woman (or female character); see note 17 above.
[23] Segal 1993.71 notes that "the female character in fifth century tragedy often serves as the field in which the male audience can act out its own emotions of grief, fear, anxiety about the body, or emotional control." The same can be said for the Trojan women in Seneca's play. Such identifications with female figures has also been linked to the social and political alienation of elite males during the transition from republic to empire. See Wyke 1989 and Skinner 1993.
[24] For a discussion of the oscillation between masculine and feminine subject positions in Ovid's audiences' see Richlin 1992.173-178.
[25] On the balance between masculine and feminine ideals in Euripides' description of Polyxena see Mossman 1995.161. The androgynous nature of female characters in Greek tragedy, and the feminine nature of tragic experience in general, is discussed at length by Zeitlin 1985.
[26] For a discussion of the arena as a locus for the demonstration of the power to overcome death see Wiedemann 1992.34-38. On gladiators' amor mortis as a paradigm for the senatorial class see Barton 1993.15-25 and 31-36. For this paradigm in the works of Seneca specifically see Epistles 30.8, 37.1-2, 70.19-27, 80.3, De Tranquillitate Animi 11.4-6, De Constantia Sapientis 16.2-3, and De Providentia 2.8-9.
[27] This is clearly indicated by the comparisons between the sacrifice and wedding at 195-196, 287-290, 361-365, 861-902 and 938-948.

[28] On the Roman's fascination with violence see Hopkins 1983, Coleman 1990, Brown 1992, Wiedemann 1992.83-90, Barton 1993, Bartsch 1994.50-60, Gunderson 1996, and Morales 1996.
[29] This is particularly true of his tragedies, where violence is not only part of the genre, but a reflection of, as well as upon, the visual culture of imperial Rome. In addition to Troades see especially Medea 992-994, 1001 and Thyestes 893-5 and 901-907. For discussions of violence in Senecan tragedy see, for example, Segal 1984, Ahl 1986.22-26, Sutton 1986.21-25 and 63-67, Robin 1993.106-107, and Boyle 1997.133-137.
[30] In addition to the passages discussed here, also see Epistles 7.3-5, 95.33, De Ira 2.5 and 3.18.3-4. In Epistle 69.3-4, Seneca states that the eye is particularly vulnerable to desire and pleasure.
[31] This is also noted by Edwards 1997.83, see especially the list of passages in her note 69.
[32] See Tertullian De Spectaculis 17 on men being defiled by what is seen through their eyes. For a discussion of the concern about the effect of violent spectacles in Christian writers see Wiedemann 1992.146-150.
[33] Seneca criticizes the use of violent spectacle to stage power throughout his philosophical writings. This is often connected to tyranny; see, for example, De Brevitate Vitae 13.6-7 regarding Pompey and De Ira 2.5.5 regarding Volesus. The most extreme example of the delight in novel forms of violence was the execution of condemned criminals during dramatic performances. Coleman 1990 indicates that these "fatal charades" occurred primarily during the reigns of Nero and Titus; also see Wiedemann 1992.83-90, Barton 1993.60-65 and Bartsch 1994.50-60. Additionally, Wiedemann 1992.76-77 notes that the state's right to import and execute condemned criminals from the provinces coincided with the development of lavish spectacles during the imperial period.
[34] See Hillard 1992.43 and Edwards 1993.150-153.
[35] See Talbert 1984.163-174 for a discussion of the diminishing role of the senate during the imperial period.
[36] In 57, the year he built the wooden amphitheater, Nero banned gladiatorial contests and all ludi in provinces. One explanation for this is that he did not want any challenge to his popularity as the provider of games. On how putting on games could boost one's status and political career see Wiedemann 1992.5-7 and 13-17, and Brown 1992. On the restrictions emperors placed on editors see Wiedemann 1992.8, 43. For an interesting discussion of how the visual politics of the games were reproduced in the mosaics of wealthy homes, see Brown 1992.
[37] On seating arrangements in the arena see Suetonius Augustus 44, Calpernius Siculus Eclogue 7.26-29, Tacitus Annales 15.32, Hopkins 1983.17-19, Rawson 1987, Zanker 1990.149-151, Wiedemann 1992.20, 26, and 131, and Edwards 1993.111-113. On dress codes, see Suetonius Augustus 44, and Wiedemann 1992.131 and 176.
[38] Zanker 1990.149-153 also mentions the creation of more rigid class distinctions under Augustus and discusses of the role of the theater in contributing to the consolidation of social order: "Even the architecture of the theater helped to inculcate and make visible the principles of social stratification . . . The network of arched passageways and staircases served not only to insure an easy flow of traffic in and out of the theater, but to separate the audience according to rank. Thus the 'better' sort needed to have no contact at all with the common folk, whose seats were at the very top" (151).
[39] Suetonius Augustus 43. Barton 1993.25-31, Gunderson 1996, and Edwards 1997.89 argue that there was an elite interest in participation despite these bans. They note that this voluntary debasement was one way of challenging the authority of the emperor. Yet, such behavior is represented as an aberration and an illegitimate means of self-promotion which confused the normative social barrier between spectators and performers.
[40] On the status of gladiators also see Wiedemann 1992.102-124 and Barton 1993.11-15.
[41] Wiedemann's comment 1992.20 on the ideology behind the elliptical shape of the amphitheaters is key: "A circular building implies the equality of all spectators (at least all those seated in each row); an ellipse makes most of the spectators face two specific points on the circumference, thus enabling attention to be drawn to the box of the presiding magistrate." On the importance of being the subject as well as the object of the gaze, see Seneca Epistle 94.69-71, Ovid Ars Amatoria 1.87-99, and Tertullian De Spectaculis 25 (Nemo denique in spectaculo ineundo prius cogitat nisi videri et videre.).
[42] For further discussion of the freedom from corporal punishment and impenetrability as a marker of Roman elite masculinity see Walters 1997.
[43] For a discussion of the affect of this on the representation of sexual violence in Roman elegy see Fredrick 1997.189-190.
[44] As scholars such as Rubiés 1994.35-40 have pointed out, the accounts of Nero are filtered down to us through the biased lens of senatorial writers. While the elite clearly had its own agenda in constructing representations of the emperor, this negative portrayal itself can be viewed as a sign of a strained relationship between Nero and the senatorial class.
[45] Nero 11-12. Also see Annales 14.14-15 and Juvenal 8.185-210 on the disgrace of senators performing on the stage and in the arena.
[46] Edwards 1994.87-88 notes that by appearing on stage, the emperor aligned himself with the most degraded members of the community. While this demonstrated his power to turn the social order upside down, Edwards indicates that it also set him up as an obvious target to be used as a negative paradigm for imperial behavior.
[47] Thus, Nero gave a specifically theatrical expression to the practice of surveillance already present in Tiberius' rule. While Tiberius rarely showed an interest in attending the theater (Suetonius Tiberius 47), sending delatores to various functions to keep an eye on the senators, Nero uses this very public position to scrutinize them himself. On the presence of delatores see Tacitus Annales 6.7, Seneca De Beneficiis 3.26-7, Macrobius Saturnalia 7.3.2-3, and Pliny's Epistles 1.15.4.

[48] Suetonius Nero 20.
[49] Suetonius Nero 23. Also see Tacitus Annales 16.5.
[50] Bartsch 1994.6-7 notes that recorded violations and punishments are few, suggesting that historians amplified or exaggerated the dangers of poor audience performance. However, as she later notes 1994.30, the senators' privileged seating positions close to the stage only put them within easy eye-sight of the emperor once he took the stage. This emphasis on their proximity to the emperor's gaze, along with the prevalence of this trope, indicates that a blur between spectator and spectacle did produce anxiety among the members of the senatorial class. Another way to read the lack of recorded violations is that this group did a good job of playing the part of enthusiastic audience members.
[51] On the controlling gaze of emperors also see Tacitus Agricola 45.2 and Epictetus 4.1.145.
[52] See Annales 14.12, 16.21-22, and 16.27 regarding Nero's anger at senators who missed meetings. On attendance at senate meetings see Talbert 1984.134-152. Even when the emperor was not physically present at the senate, an attendance record was kept so he would know who was absent (Talbert 1984.284).
[53] It is significant that Tacitus (Annales 14.52-56) places Seneca's demise within the context of Rome's visual economy, stating that Nero's advisors criticized the conspicuous nature of Seneca's wealth and power. Tacitus also suggests that it was Seneca's awareness that his highly visible position had bred envy among his detractors that prompted his attempt to return some of his estates to the emperor and retire from the public eye; however, this gesture came too late and Seneca was ultimately forced to commit suicide.
[54] For comparisons of Troades with Euripides' plays see Calder 1970, Wilson 1983.28-29 and Boyle 1997.89-90.
[55] In his debate with Pyrrhus over the sacrifice of Polyxena, Agamemnon himself points out the precariousness of power, particularly when one enforces it by violent means (258-266).
[56] Fantham 1982.216 notes that this is the verb used of a gladiator's acceptance of the death blow.
[57] On Hecuba as a potential spectacle also see the Chorus' remark at 858-860:

> Quod manet fatum donimusque quis te,
> aut quibus terris, Hecuba, videndam
> ducet?
>
> What fate and master awaits you, what lands will he lead you to, Hecuba, as an object to be displayed?

On death as a better fate than that the surviving women face, also see 142-164, 576-577, 969-71, 1168-1177.
[58] On the nature of Roman triumphs see Nicolet 1980.352-356.
[59] For a comparison of Octavian's triple triumph to the triumphs of Julius Caesar, see Gurval 1995.19-36.
[60] Aristotle's Poetics 1450a.
[61] While it may be difficult to distinguish the representations of the imperial period from the realities that existed, nevertheless such images are necessarily related to the historical circumstances and social anxieties of the period.
[62] Again, Seneca's departure from Euripides' Hekabe is significant in that he chooses not to stage Hecuba's vengeance against Polymestor. By omitting any reference to this, Seneca focuses solely on Hecuba as a victim.
[63] In De Beneficiis, Seneca uses the image of a recently conquered city as indicative of the atmosphere prevalent in his lifetime:

> Si tibi vitae nostrae vera imago succurret, videre videberis tibi captae cum maxime civitatis faciem, in qua omisso pudoris rectique respectu vires in concilio sunt velut signo ad permiscenda omnia dato. (7.27.1)
>
> If a true image of our life should appear before you, you would think you were seeing the appearance of a city just now captured, in which consideration for modesty and right had been lost and force is in power, as though the signal had been given for total chaos.