Introduction

In the Introduction to his *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* Slavoj Žižek offers what amounts to an *apologia* for taking a dispassionate approach to critical analysis of societal violence; by looking 'sideways' at the content we in certain ways highlight our own implicature in it: 'there is a sense in which a cold analysis of violence somehow reproduces and participates in its horror'.[1] While my own approach to the violence in Greek and Roman literature and culture is inherently dispassionate and academic, I do share similar concerns.[2] This is a book about the mistreatment of dead bodies. It's about both the physical abuse directed at enemy corpses and the denial, withholding, perversion, and distortion of funeral rites. These categories involve actions taken consciously against what I shall call the 'rights' owed to dead bodies by more or less universal Greco-Roman customs and standards: corporeal preservation or integrity, funeral ritual, familial and/or communal rites of mourning, the last kiss, the closing of the eyes; also (depending on wealth and status) commemoration, procession, ritual *laudationes* or panegyrics, and so on.[3] It's also a book about literature, about poetry, specifically the Latin epic poems of the early imperial period. But it was not composed in an insular literary vacuum. My writing has coincided with the brutally violent uprising of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL, IS, The Caliphate, Daesh, etc.), whose establishment and ascendancy in 2014 are inextricably linked to body and corpse abuses splashed worldwide across the Internet.[4] ISIS does not have anything close to a monopoly on modern violence, but their means and manner of

[1] Žižek (2008): 4.
[2] Cf. Evans and Giroux (2015): 40: 'Violence as a subject is seldom broached with ethical care or duty of thought in terms of its political or cultural merit.'
[3] See e.g. Toynbee (1971): 33–72, Hopkins (1983): 201–55, Garland (1985), Flower (1996): 91–127, Lindsay (2000): 161–9.
[4] The group's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the birth of the 'Islamic State' on 28 June 2014 from the pulpit of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, Iraq. In reality the jihadist militant organization has existed in various instantiations since it was founded as 'The Organisation of

disseminating *evidence* of body abuse deserves singular attention here upfront. Let me unpack this a bit more.

The terrorist group is most notorious for a series of snuff films – a fusion of ultra-violent global psychological warfare and mass-media propaganda tool[5] – of brutal decapitations beginning with American journalist James Foley in August 2014. Similar videos of escalating cruelty followed suit,[6] each made more disturbing by the amount of detail and attention paid to production and cinematography: ISIS employs hundreds of videographers and editors responsible for scripting, filming, cutting, and disseminating these films as well as publishing the monthly issue of *Dabiq*, the group's own propaganda magazine.[7] These are performative, spectacularized productions of corporeal mistreatment.

The awful 'artistic' stylization of *actual* body abuse puts my Latin epic material, always at least in part mitigated by time and space and refracted through a generic prism, into much higher relief. The abuses perpetrated by ISIS and its enemies in Iraq and Syria (ISIS' ultra-violence has had an infectious ricocheting effect on all sides of the recent civil wars) viscerally actualize and often mirror the *post mortem* violence contained in Greco-Roman epic's most brutal scenery. ISIS' forum-style Hudud Squares become public venues for decapitations, mutilations, corpse exposure, and heads on pikes;[8] the pick-up truck has replaced the chariot as gruesome vehicle for the dragging of corpses;[9] bodies are summarily dumped in the Tigris or Euphrates, or crucified, or hung from electricity poles, or left to suppurate in fields or by the side of the road as fodder for scavenging animals.[10]

Individual acts of grotesquery proliferate: Hezbollah Brigades fighters have uploaded videos to YouTube of playing 'bongos' with severed human heads; a militiaman whose *nom de guerre* is Abu Azrael ('Angel of Death') 'is shown cutting slices of charred human flesh from an upside-down corpse as though it were shawarma'.[11] The food analogy in Michael

Monotheism and Jihad' by Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2000; see Weiss and Hassan (2016): 1–22.

[5] Carr (2014); Weiss and Hassan (2016): 173–85; Georgy (2017). Evans and Giroux (2015): 226 call the filmic violence the 'psychological weaponization of imagery'.

[6] See Cottee (2015) on the 'demonic nature' of ISIS' exponentially horrific videographic terrorism campaign.

[7] Weiss and Hassan (2016): 173. Cf. Chulov (2016).

[8] Report by the United Nations commission: www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/27/syria-isis-war-crimes-united-nations-un; Weiss and Hassan (2016): xi, 180, 200, 209, 337.

[9] MacSwan (2016); Weiss and Hassan (2016): 247, 308.

[10] Weiss and Hassan (2016): 64, 81, 121, 252, 342; Dearden (2017); Georgy (2017).

[11] Weiss and Hassan (2016): 244.

Weiss and Hassan Hassan's frightening description might recall for epic audiences the brutal cannibalistic threats of Achilles and Hecuba in Homer's *Iliad* (22.345–7; 24.212–13) and the literal and wilful anthropophagous acts of Polyphemus and the Laestrygonians in the *Odyssey* (9.287–93; 10.116, 124; cf. Enn. *Ann.* 319–20 Skutsch; Ov. *Met.* 14.192–212, 233–8), Erichtho in Lucan's *Bellum ciuile* (6.549, 564–9), Tydeus in Statius' *Thebaid* (8.760–2), and Laevinus in Silius Italicus' *Punica* (6.47–53).

As Richard Spencer has noted, all implicit suggestion is shattered in the case of Independent Omar al-Farouq Brigade leader Khaled al-Hamad (aka Abu Sakkar) who in March 2013 was filmed biting the heart and liver he had cut from a Syrian regime soldier's corpse.[12] The video was circulated with enormous fanfare. Spencer cites Achilles' threat to Hector at *Iliad* 22.345–7 as one of the earliest and (probably) most famous literary comparanda: μή με κύον γούνων γουνάζεο μη δὲ τοκήων· | αἲ γάρ πως αὐτόν με μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνείη | ὤμ᾽ ἀποταμνόμενον κρέα ἔδμεναι, οἷα ἔοργας, 'do not beg me by my knees or parents, you dog. I wish that my might and heart would impel me to carve up your flesh and devour it, for what you've done.' Hecuba, I might add, will later deride Achilles as a 'raw flesh eater', a sub-human (24.207: ὠμηστής) for his savage behaviour on (and, by implication, off) the battlefield. Her anger degenerates into an amplified threat that she might be able to eat Achilles raw (212–13: τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἦπαρ ἔχοιμι | ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα). What Spencer doesn't mention is that al-Hamad's own boast in the video moments before his grisly act is nearly identical to Achilles', with the added component of the raw flesh eating from Hecuba's threat: 'I swear to God, you soldiers of Bashar [al-Assad], you dogs, we will eat from your hearts and livers.'[13]

The use of corpse mistreatment as a form of staged psychological warfare is not a modern phenomenon. In the same geographic territory as the heart of ISIS' self-proclaimed Caliphate in northern Syria and Iraq, the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911–612 BCE) deployed corpse abuse as a form of power-politics. Both the annalistic royal inscriptions and monuments punctuating the capital cities – especially during the bloody reign of Aššurbanipal (668–627 BCE) – betray a 'confection of gore' (both real and artistic) with mutilated, impaled, decapitated, and flayed bodies and limbs creating a public spectacle meant to terrorize subjects and enemies of the Assyrian imperial war machine.[14] Moving westwards, the panoply of heads adorning the Roman fora during various civil wars were not (simply) decorative: this was performative violence showcasing

[12] Spencer (2013). On ISIS and Iliadic violence generally see, briefly, Nicolson (2014).
[13] Bouckaert (2013) provides the translation.
[14] See Richardson (2007): 196–200; cf. Bleibtreu (1991), Bahrani (2008): 23–55.

the steep price paid by those declared (or deemed) *hostes* to the state or to a particular political cause. Only the heads of senators or elites were singled out for display: these were the most recognizable and carried the most visual and symbolic – and indeed monetary – value (App. *B Ciu*. 1.71; Dio Cass. 30–35 fr. 102.9).[15] Centuries later, Genghis Khan used catapults to hurl rotting corpses over siege walls as a form of psychological warfare, and after sacking Samarkand in 1220 he created a massive pyramid outside the city of severed citizens' heads 'as a signal to everyone that the Mongols meant business'.[16] The Byzantine Greek historian Chalcondyles (*Hist*. 9.104) records that upon seeing over 20,000 impaled Turks outside the Wallachian capital of Târgovişte in June 1462, the Ottoman king Mehmed II, overwhelmed by such an atrocious sight, decided not to attack Vlad the Impaler and his army. I could go on.

Spectacularized violence of this sort is intended to invoke audience gaze. But more disturbing is its ability to *attract* it. In her gripping book *Severed: A History of Heads Lost and Heads Found*, Frances Larson documents the simultaneous repulsion and allure of terrorist decapitation videos (from *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002 to more recent execution videos) and other graphic snuff films released by jihadist groups, through search-engine statistics, downloads, and mass-media attention.[17] Despite overwhelming revulsion in the face of acts perpetrated by the murderers, audiences appear to be captivated by the sick 'drama' of the videos. These films are for many, quite frankly, entertainment. Audience attraction to public executions has for centuries been definitively intoxicating, as Larson details.[18] What has changed in much more recent history is not interest in the spectacle, but a general sense of impropriety associated with it:

> [It] was not that the sights on the scaffold became unseemly, it was that the persistently enthralled spectators became something of an embarrassment, and also, perhaps, a threat to social order. Public executions came to an end, not because of the executions themselves but because of a widening gap between the sensibilities of spectators who came to see them and the definition of acceptable behaviour among the elite.[19]

Access to these videos via the Internet permits indiscretion and provides space: we have front row seats to a horror show we don't need to be 'on-set' to witness: the Internet mediates our gaze. Despite – or more accurately,

[15] See Jervis (2001): 133–5 on Marius and Cinna's display of the heads of elite rivals.
[16] Grayling (2017): 60. [17] Larson (2014): 77–84; also Larson (2015).
[18] Larson (2014): 84–108. [19] Larson (2014): 84–5.

because of – the graphic violence, many millions of viewers consciously tune in. The point here is that body-horror and violence are inherently alluring. We strangely 'enjoy' (in a frightening and self-defeating Kantian or Lacanian sense) the horrific images. But we should at least take the time to acknowledge our own captivation and our role in the grisly spectacle, both as wilful readers and viewers. It's a role with which the perpetrators of this perverse art-horror seem acutely *au fait.*

Lost amidst the tragic artistic and cultural casualties of ISIS' takeover and destruction of much of Palmyra's (Homs Governorate, Syria) ancient relics in the summer of 2015 was another video in which child-soldiers were made to line up twenty-five Assad regime soldiers and shoot them in the back of the head. What was the venue for this staged atrocity? The centre of the city's Roman theatre.[20] Over forty years ago terrorism expert Bryan Jenkins argued forcefully that at its core terrorism is theatre;[21] can we call this literally staged violence at Palmyra 'metatheatrical terrorism'? ISIS propaganda videos routinely splice pirated material from Hollywood blockbusters like *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003), *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006), *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* (2009) (etc.) with real-life footage of murder and terror.[22] More striking perhaps are scenes that explicitly re-create famous shots and motifs from action films (e.g. *The Hunger Games* (2012), *Sniper* (2014), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015)) and video games (*Halo*, the *Call of Duty* franchise, *Gears of War*),[23] granting them 'life' in a world that frighteningly blurs or collapses the distinction between reality and fiction. The aim is to appeal and appal, to traffic in horror by actualizing the stylized violence of Hollywood 'myth' that has otherwise always maintained a fictionalized distance.

Is this all that far from Rome's theatricalized 'fatal charades', wherein myth and mytho-history served as a baseline for painfully real 're-enactments' on the arena's bloody stage?[24] Similarly for Roman audiences, the appeal seems to rest on the 'violation of the theatrical by the actual', as Shadi Bartsch notes; the 'conflation' of fiction and reality adds 'a certain frisson to the experience of the spectators'.[25] The rupturing of the distinction between reality and fiction forms a more broadly pervasive facet of the 'political theatre' of the early imperial period, as Bartsch and others have argued.[26] Role-playing, something for which aristocratic Romans trained

[20] Weiss and Hassan (2016): 273.
[21] Jenkins (1974), cited in Cottee (2014); cf. Larson (2014): 83–4; Evans and Giroux (2015): 228–9.
[22] Bond (2017); Ma (2018). [23] Kang (2014); Parkin (2016); Bond (2017). [24] Coleman (1990).
[25] Bartsch (1994): 51. Cf. Fagan (2011): 235–7.
[26] E.g. Bartsch (1994); Boyle (2006): esp. 162–4, 176–88.

in declamation were acutely prepared, became a vital way of negotiating the complexities of living under *principes*. Sometimes the *princeps* 'acted out' atrocities on stage, as Nero seems to have done, playing mythic roles (Canace, Orestes, Oedipus, Hercules) that echoed the real-life violence he committed against his own family (Suet. *Ner.* 21.3).[27] The world of imperial Rome was suffused with actors and spectators, reality itself a 'spectacle' designed to be *viewed* (Sen. *Ot.* 5.3: *spectatores nos tantis rerum spectaculis*). The impact of this rupturing of the real into the imaginary, and the imaginary into the real, on the epic literature composed at this time is, as we shall see, pervasive.

Audience has a major role to play in the action, and authors (film and literary) know this and toy with our voyeuristic interest with varying levels of sadism. Our engagement with Rome's epic poetry is never as real as ISIS' video executions, of course. The poetic violence is fictionalized. But it isn't pure fiction, and I will stress repeatedly that corpse abuse in the Latin epics everywhere reflects and reacts upon the very real violence perpetrated in Rome from the end of the Republic through the early empire. Repeated allusions in the texts to actual violence and corpse mistreatment committed by Romans destabilizes the mythic or mytho-historic framework of the fictionalized epic world, blending fiction and reality in ways that nod to the inherent theatricality of the imperial socio-political system.

Although he invokes, generically, 'Medieval' (not Roman) violence in a *New York Times* article detailing the staggering production quality of ISIS' abhorrent videos, David Carr provocatively suggests that: 'Video beheadings are a triple death – murder and defilement in a public way – and YouTube becomes the pike on which the severed heads are displayed.'[28] There has been, as in Rome, no shortage of eager *spectatores*. Though the medium through which audiences experience this material provides an important detachment or distancing effect, the literary (or theatrical/filmic) façade must not blind us to the realities of body abuse across human history (and into the present); it must not blind us to our own capacity to strangely *enjoy* the abuses. As Larson aptly notes regarding the terrifying allure of severed heads: 'The dead human face is a siren: dangerous but irresistible.'[29]

[27] Boyle (2006): 184. [28] Carr (2014).
[29] Larson (2014): 8; cf. Kristeva (2012): 89: 'no one looks at a severed head except art lovers, voyeurs like you and me'.

'Viewing' Epic Corpses

As book 8 of Lucan's *Bellum ciuile* builds to a crescendo, with Pompey the Great's relentlessly foreshadowed death and mutilation fast approaching, the poet describes the paradoxical reaction of Pompey's wife Cornelia to what awaits her doomed husband. Cornelia and Pompey have only just arrived in Egypt after Pompey's devastating loss to Julius Caesar and his renegade army at the decisive battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly (48 BCE). They are greeted by the feigned hospitality of assassins sent by the boy-Pharaoh, Ptolemy XIII. This pretence fools no one. Cornelia levels protests at Pompey as he knowingly leaves the relative safety of his fleet for the tiny death-boat that will serve as the stage for his grisly murder and decapitation. Paralyzed, Cornelia fixes her gaze reluctantly upon him (*BC* 8.589–92):

> haec ubi frustra
> effudit, prima pendet tamen anxia puppe,
> attonitoque metu nec quoquam auertere uisus
> nec Magnum spectare potest.
>
> When she vainly poured out
> these words, still anxiously she hangs over the stern's edge,
> and, with thunderstruck with fear, she can neither turn away her gaze,
> nor look at Magnus.

This scene has received virtually no critical reaction from scholars[30] despite its almost kindred connection to an earlier moment of paradoxical paralysis that has been posited as a launching pad for recent debate about the 'competing voices' in Lucan's narrative. Before he describes the extreme horrors of the battle of Pharsalus between Pompey's Republican forces and Caesar's army, Lucan attempts to relegate his subject to darkness and to silence (7.552–6):

> hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinque,
> nullaque tantorum discat me uate malorum,
> quam multum bellis liceat ciuilibus, aetas.
> a potius pereant lacrimae pereantque querellae:
> quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, tacebo.
>
> Mind, flee this part of the war and abandon it in shadows,
> and let no age learn of such evils from me as a poet
> how much is permitted in civil wars.
> It's better that these tears and protests vanish:
> whatever you did in this battle, Rome, I'll keep quiet.

[30] Though see Rimell (2015): 244.

The events of the civil war's climax are too horrible to narrate, yet Lucan, by continuing his narrative, betrays his own obsession with its horrifying content as this *praeteritio* makes way immediately for a bizarre but detailed description of the battle that should not be described (the civil war is *nefas* and thus 'unspeakable'[31]). This is an *internal* struggle; Lucan's *mens* has replaced the traditional epic *Musa*.[32]

But the paradox here is a larger feature of Lucan's poetic programme, as Jamie Masters has articulated: 'In the struggle between Caesar and Pompey, then, lies the paradigm of Lucan's narrative technique: the conflict between the will to tell the story and the horror which shies from telling it.'[33] If Lucan's narratorial dilemma describes something like a distorted metapoetics of writing about epic *nefas*, then in Cornelia's frozen stare is to be found a programmatic metapoetic marker for a system of viewing or reading it. Her vision of the scene we are about to witness, presaged from the outset (and imbued with forewarning both intratextual and historical) as a *post mortem* mutilation, is the perspective through which we are invited to view the abuses we know will follow; the scene is 'focalized' through Cornelia.[34] Yet the outcome of this perspective alignment is unsettling. For Cornelia, the paradox proves too much: she faints (8.661–2) before Pompey's head is ultimately severed and thrust onto a pike. She cannot 'read' any further, but we must, with Lucan, go on.

This scene powerfully articulates both the difficulties involved in viewing/reading scenes of corpse mistreatment and the simultaneous allure and attraction to abuses that provoke horror and enjoyment. Cornelia's paralyzed reaction to viewing Pompey's decapitation (in effect, an execution) chillingly evokes the psychologizing explicit in the title of Larson's *CNN* article on the topic of viewer reactions to terrorist decapitation videos: 'ISIS beheadings: why we're too horrified to watch, too fascinated to turn away.' Cornelia cannot help but watch the tragedy unfolding before her eyes, she's paralyzed, until the inherent paradox conquers her and she simply passes out. We read on (or we don't), but like Lucan's Cornelia, as an audience for this cruelty we may find ourselves caught in what Noël Carroll calls the 'horror paradox':[35] we want to watch (or read) yet we feel the moral

[31] O'Higgins (1988): 217 n.28; Feeney (1991): 276–7; Martindale (1993): 72.
[32] Narducci (2002): 175.
[33] Masters (1992): 9, and further 147–8, 210–15. See also Henderson (1998): 185–6, O'Higgins (1988): 215–16, Feeney (1991): 277.
[34] The pioneering studies on focalization and classical literature are de Jong (1987) and Fowler (1990).
[35] Carroll (1990). Ganiban (2007): 49 invokes Carroll's work in his important study of horror and *nefas* in Statius' *Thebaid*.

implications of viewing something horrific, something almost always signalled to us by the narrator or other intratextual characters as unwatchable or unspeakable and, in the act of viewing, we become paralyzed by these incongruous emotional reactions.[36]

Philosophizing and theorizing (ancient and modern) have focused directly on the corpse as an instigator of paralyzing horror. Plato and Aristotle recognized a similar paradoxical phenomenon of the simultaneous attraction and aversion to rotting corpses. Plato describes the disturbing situation at *Republic* 439e–40a, where one Leontius is unable to pull his eyes away from corpses festering in the street despite his revulsion both at their sight and at his own inability to look away:

> ἀλλ', ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ποτὲ ἀκούσας τι† πιστεύω τούτῳ· ὡς ἄρα Λεόντιος ὁ Ἀγλαΐωνος ἀνιὼν ἐκ Πειραιῶς ὑπὸ τὸ βόρειον τεῖχος ἐκτός, αἰσθόμενος νεκροὺς παρὰ τῷ δημίῳ κειμένους, ἅμα μὲν ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμοῖ, ἅμα δὲ αὖ δυσχεραίνοι καὶ ἀποτρέποι ἑαυτόν, καὶ τέως μὲν μάχοιτό τε καὶ παρακαλύπτοιτο, κρατούμενος δ' οὖν ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, διελκύσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, προσδραμὼν πρὸς τοὺς νεκρούς, Ἴδοὺ ὑμῖν', ἔφη, 'ὦ κακοδαίμονες, ἐμπλήσθητε τοῦ καλοῦ θεάματος'.
>
> 'But', I said, 'I heard a story once, one which I believe, that Leontius the son of Aglaion, coming up from the Peiraeus under the outside of the north wall, noticing the dead bodies sprawled out by the public executioner, both desired to look at them, and simultaneously was unable to look, turning himself away, and that for a long time he struggled and covered his head; but conquered nonetheless by his desire, having opened his eyes wide, he ran up to the corpses and said, "there, you evil things, sate yourselves on the beautiful spectacle".'

His powerlessness to avert his gaze, caught between incompatible responses of desire (ἐπιθυμοῖ . . . ἐπιθυμίας) and disgust (δυσχεραίνοι), is so disturbing to him that Leontius curses his own eyes (ὦ κακοδαίμονες). Aristotle describes a similar reaction but as it applies to the *mimesis* of horrific images at *Poetics* 1448b10-12: ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς ὁρῶμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἠκριβωμένας χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες, οἷον θηρίων τε μορφὰς τῶν ἀτιμοτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν, 'we enjoy looking at the most precise images of things which are naturally painful for us to see, e.g. the forms of the most wretched animals and of corpses' (cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1371b4-10). Aristotle does not elaborate beyond stating that mimetic objects, no matter how horrific, are inherently (σύμφυτος) enjoyable to everyone (τὸ χαίρειν . . . πάντας)

[36] On gaze and vision in Greco-Roman epic see Lovatt's (2013) monumental study.

because imitation sparks learning and the pursuit of knowledge, both of which elicit pleasure.

For Julia Kristeva the corpse is the ultimate form of abjection which pulls and repels the viewer simultaneously: 'It is death infecting life',[37] and this at the same time 'beckons to us and ends up engulfing us'.[38] Though Kristeva doesn't cite him, in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Immanuel Kant had similarly articulated the troubling physico-pathemic reaction of viewers to images/scenes of extreme 'ugliness' (*Hässlichkeit*) that produce 'disgust' (*Ekel*), but a disgust that he argues is actively tied to an experience of 'enjoyment' (*Genuss*: tantamount to Lacanian/Kristevan *jouissance*).[39] The result is a corporeal petrifaction brought about by the opposite pull of these seemingly antithetical reactions. Slavoj Žižek sums up nicely: 'Do we not get here [in Kant] an echo of what Kristeva calls abject? The object of enjoyment is by definition *disgusting*, and what makes it disgusting is a weird superego injunction that appears to emanate from it, a call to enjoy it even if (and precisely because) we find it ugly and desperately try to resist being dragged into it.'[40] William Ian Miller's work on disgust identifies this same paradox (the corpse for Miller is a feature of the categorical 'uncanny'): 'we cannot avoid one of the most troubling aspects of the disgusting: it attracts as well as repels. The disgusting has an allure; it exerts a fascination which manifests itself in the difficulty of averting our eyes at a gory accident . . . or in the attraction of horror films.'[41] Disgust, according to Carolyn Korsmeyer, provokes a strange autonomic 'magnetism'.[42] The situation is not dissimilar to Augustine's famous story of his friend Alypius who is dragged against his will to the Colosseum only to be sucked into the intoxicating visual spectacle of bodily violence.[43] Despite his best efforts he eventually 'drinks in' the games with rabid brio and cannot pull his eyes away (*Conf.* 6.8.13): *ut enim uidit illum sanguinem, immanitatem simul ebibit et non se auertit, sed fixit aspectum et hauriebat furias et nesciebat, et delectabatur scelere certaminis et cruenta uoluptate inebriabatur*, 'for when he saw that blood, he gulped down the savagery and did not pull himself away, but he fixed his gaze and drank in the madness mindlessly, and was delighting in the wickedness of the contest and became drunk on cruel pleasure'.

Adriana Cavarero expands upon the notion of viewer paralysis when confronted with scenes of horror (the *Horrorism* of her book's title), by

[37] Kristeva (1982): 4. [38] Kristeva (1982): 4.
[39] Guyer (2000): 190–1, 203. See Parret (2009), Žižek (2016): 154–8. [40] Žižek (2016): 157.
[41] Miller (1997): 22 *et passim*. [42] Korsmeyer (2011): 113–35.
[43] Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 7. On the 'lure of the arena' see Coleman (1990): 57–9, Fagan (2011).