

2012

# The Source of Morality for Virgil's "Aeneid"

Tamilyn H. Mulvaney

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The Source of Morality for Virgil's *Aeneid*

by

Tamilyn H. Mulvaney

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through Philosophy  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at the  
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2012

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to determine which philosophical school, either Epicurean or Stoic, Virgil's *Aeneid* more accurately reflects. Explored are the characters of Anchises, Dido and Aeneas; the portrayal of piety, justice, emotions and anger and; the philosophical issues of freedom of will, Fate and the composition of the cosmos. In conclusion, the presence of freedom of will afforded to human characters within this work and the distinction made by Virgil between Jupiter and Fate, lead to the conclusion that it is unlikely that this is a Stoic work. Also, this thesis argues that Virgil's presentation of piety, justice, emotion and anger are consistent with an Epicurean conception of these characteristics. Therefore, if the *Aeneid* can be attributed influence from either philosophical school of thought, it lends itself much more readily to an Epicurean reading.

## DEDICATION

This work, representing a year of my life, is dedicated to all those who supported me during this time. More specifically to Len and Pat Mulvaney, my loving parents, who never thought I would get this far and are thrilled that I did. To my older brother, Eric Mulvaney, who is finally willing to acknowledge that I just might be smarter than him, at least in some areas. To Michael Lewis, who was nice enough to avoid me for long periods of time while I got my work done and dealt with my frustrations and anger during this process. Also, to Chris, David, Cate, Mark and so many of my other friends, who were sure that I could finish this project, even when I wasn't.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their invaluable help I need to acknowledge Dr. Christopher Tindale and Dr. Max Nelson, who both found time in their busy schedules to read my work over and over again. They helped clarify my thoughts and kept me honest regarding the historical record. Also, Dr. Leo Groarke, who found the time to work with me on this project and aimed me toward further research angles for the future.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

When first approaching this project, I was most concerned with how to extract the essence of a philosophical viewpoint from a poem. It is not that entertainment does not automatically influence us, all media does, but it is not simple to articulate the influence that media has on us. Witness H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, Orwell's *1984*, Edmund H. North's *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, or J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*: each of these works changed the course of our cultural history. The question remains as to how these works affected us. If we were forced to articulate the changes in our cultural thought, without in-depth study, most of us could merely offer explanations on how these works opened different avenues for cultural development, new imaginative attitudes for exploration. However, it is also true that these works led to social and political reform, scientific exploration, historical investigation and, as a result, our worldview has been altered by these changes. Does this mean that these works changed our ethical character? Yes and no. The purpose of these works was that of imaginative exploration of possible 'what ifs'. They were not undertaken with the explicit purpose of altering our thinking in a particular way. They aimed at expansion, not direction, of thought.

Not to imply that Virgil's work is generically similar to the above mentioned, but they all did change the fundamental worldviews of their readers. In contrast to these modern works, which were written mainly for creative reasons, Virgil<sup>1</sup> wrote his work *Aeneid* with the explicit intention of directing moral, religious and political thought. Generally speaking, it was believed that this was the role of poetry in his day. In the words of Horace:

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<sup>1</sup> There are two spellings of the short form of Vergilius' name, Vergil and Virgil. In this paper, I will be utilizing the 'Virgil' spelling of the author's name, whereas other writers may use the alternative spelling in their works.

The mind of a poet is seldom avaricious: he loves verse, that's his bent: at fires, disasters, runaway slaves: he smiles: he never plots to defraud his business partner, or some young ward: he lives on pulse vegetables, and coarse bread: a poor and reluctant soldier he still serves the State, if you grant small things may serve great ends. The poet moulds the lisping, tender lips of childhood, turning the ear even then from coarse expression, quickly shaping thought with his kindly precepts, tempering envy, and cruelty, and anger. He tells of good deeds, instructs the rising age through famous precedents, comforts the poor and ill. How would innocent boys, unmarried girls, have learnt their hymns, if the Muse hadn't granted them a bard? (Horace's *Epistula* 2.1.119-133)

This is just one source that shows us how, in ancient times, the poet was considered a teacher of many things, particularly morality and cosmology. More specifically, Virgil's role, as a poet, was to aid in legitimizing the position of the First Citizen Augustus, more simply understood as the Emperor, reinstating religious practices and reviving traditional moral character in a Rome that had been shaken by years of civil war and governmental instability<sup>2</sup>.

First, it is important to place Virgil within his historical and political context. Publius Vergilius Maro was born in 70BC near Mantua (in a small village called Andes), part of the province called Cisalpine Gaul<sup>3</sup>. This area was made a military province in 89BC by Pompey Strabo (father of Pompey the Great), but its inhabitants were denied the status of Roman citizenship because he had despised their Gaulish roots. This prejudice was problematic throughout Italy as the provinces vied for citizenship. This was how Caesar wooed Cisalpine Gaul, by offering them universal citizenship in 49BC, and possibly why Virgil's view of Italy was that of a unified Empire (Toll, pp.36-42). One could also conjecture that this peaceful and

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<sup>2</sup> This 'role' should not merely be taken for granted. This assumption is based upon both Virgil's association with Maecenas, Augustus' close friend and propagandist, as well as Virgil's redefinition of the poet as '*vates*'. In *Ecl.* 7. 28 Virgil uses this term to denote the poet as inspired with an assumed social role as 'master of the truth', blurring the lines between poet and prophet (Fowler and Fowler).

<sup>3</sup> All information regarding the facts of Virgil's life and surrounding historical facts are provided by Levi, pp.13-24, unless otherwise specified.

ideal vision of Rome contributed to Virgil's depiction of the history of Rome and its height being when the gates of Mars were closed finally by Augustus (Toll, pp.36-42)<sup>4</sup>.

When Virgil was twenty the senate withdrew their support of Julius Caesar and civil war ensued. In the following years, Caesar chased Pompey and his successors out of Italy, then Northern Greece, followed him to Egypt where Pompey was assassinated, had a torrid affair with Cleopatra, then continued to fight Crassus and the rest of those who opposed him through Africa, Pontus and, at last, Spain. Caesar proceeded to appoint himself dictator for life and made his partner Mark Antony priest of his cult. He was assassinated in the theatre of Pompey where the senate met in 44BC. In the years that followed, 42-41 BC, more than one hundred senators and two-thousand *equites* (members of the equestrian class) died in the assorted wars and purges.

Thus Virgil wrote in the wake of civil war. He was commissioned by Augustus, through Maecenas, Augustus' propagandist, as part of a literary campaign to restore traditional values, religious reverence and virtue to the Republic (Lewis and Reinhold, p.573)<sup>5</sup>. This is not to claim that Virgil should be equated with Augustus' propagandist, merely noted that he was commissioned by him. Augustus was working toward a stable Rome. He championed the military class as he maintained the legitimacy of the upper class. He saw that presenting himself as a dictator, as his adopted father had, would likely result in mutiny, revolution or assassination. In order to prevent this, he needed to please all of the classes. This involved providing land to his retired legions, allowing the senate to maintain their dignified status with the pretence of having a say in the workings of government and offering entertainment to the common citizens.

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<sup>4</sup> This is speculation, which is pointed out in detail in Toll's article, however, it is not important for the discussion within this paper, merely noted.

<sup>5</sup> To be fair, this is not expressed explicitly on this page, merely that Maecenas was both Virgil's patron as well as being Augustus' propagandist. The conjecture has been made that the desire was for Virgil to compose his work with certain Augustus friendly approaches in mind. This should not, however, blur the ethical messages portrayed within the work.

A large part of Augustus' program included the revival of tradition. Recent history had seen Roman fighting Roman, a government official killed at a meeting of the senate, fear and disorder throughout the land. In order to return stability to the government and social structure to the Republic, Augustus had to set the example, ethically, for all to follow. He had a very specific view of how Rome should be, as evidenced by his persecution of the mutinous Brutus and Cassius, his law banning adultery, his reverence for peace and his careful manipulation of law to maintain his authority while never establishing himself as sole dictator<sup>6</sup>.

Traditional Roman morality has always been viewed as being Stoic, however it is difficult to have a truly Stoic hero and, though many have made the argument that Aeneas is, it is still unclear whether Virgil agreed with Stoic philosophy. In short, a martial epic with a stoic hero would not be martial because soldiers/guardians must fight, kill and get angry when they have cause. Augustus himself, before settling into his role, was savage toward his enemies, actions that are inconsistent with a Stoic approach. Virgil was not writing a Stoic epic, he wrote a Roman epic, which many have been interpreted as being Stoic because that was believed to be the Roman *ideal*, but larger-than-life characters and real heroes are not wholly Stoic. The question remains how Stoic our hero is or if Aeneas is a non-Stoic *Roman* hero, an Epicurean hero – close to being Stoic, but real enough in emotional breadth to be believed.

Virgil's contribution to the reordering of Rome was threefold<sup>7</sup>: establish the legitimacy of the prominent families in Rome, particularly the divinity of Augustus; reinstate the authority and importance of traditional reverence and ritual - orthopraxy; and revive Roman pride and morality. In other words: political, religious and ethical reform. This is implicit within the

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that not all of these reforms were put into place by Augustus during Virgil's lifetime.

<sup>7</sup> The sort of messages have been identified within the text do not imply that this was Virgil's explicit purpose or that he was told what and how to accomplish these goals. His work does, however, maintain the above mentioned traditions.

*Aeneid* itself, spouted from the mouth of Jupiter when he tells Venus about the fate of her son, Aeneas, and his descendants;

From this noble line shall be born the Trojan Caesar, who shall extend his empire to the ocean, his glory to the stars, a Julius, name descended from great Iulus! Him, in days to come, shall you, anxious no more, welcome to heaven, laden with Eastern spoils; he, too, shall be invoked in vows. Then wars shall cease and savage ages soften; hoary Faith and Vesta, Quirinus with his brother Remus, shall give laws. The gates of war, grim with iron and close-fitting bars, shall be closed; within, impious Rage, sitting on savage arms, his hands fast bound behind with a hundred brazen knots, shall roar in the ghastliness of blood-stained lips (Maro 2006, pp.281-283 (1.286-296)).

Here Jupiter is describing the coming of Julius Caesar, his legacy and deification. After him, there will be no more war - this is the time of Augustus - and there will be a return of law and order to the Roman world. Part of this return to order necessarily involves the revival of traditional Roman values where violence would not take place at a senate meeting and civil war would not transpire, as Romans are united as one. This passage establishes the legitimacy of the prominent families in Rome, particularly the divinity of Augustus through Caesar, emphasizes the importance of traditional orthopraxy through the mention of vows and commonly honoured household deities and, in this way, attempts to revive traditional Roman morality through reverence of law, order and justice.

This is the political environment in which Virgil wrote. This is not to say that he was a mouthpiece for Augustan propaganda or morality. As a poet, a teacher and an educated Roman, Virgil wrote his epic with a purpose that appears to coincide, more-or-less, with that of Augustus, though it does not copy it. Disruption of the Republic was not in anyone's best interests and the return to more stable times was a desire held by many. Virgil wrote his epic to inspire Roman pride in their history, their traditions and their noble/moral heritage.

My focus here will be on the source of Virgil's ethics. More specifically, I aim to determine which philosophical school, either Epicurean or Stoic, this work of literature more accurately reflects. My investigation will focus on three characters as they are presented within the *Aeneid*: Anchises, Dido and Aeneas. I will approach these characters from two directions. I will evaluate the characters as they are presented with an eye for the influence of a philosophical structure, be it Stoic or Epicurean. I will pay close attention to instances within the text which explicitly or implicitly outline Virgil's cosmology for comparison to that of the Stoic and Epicurean schools. At the same time, I will be speculating as to Virgil's own intentions using historical, literary and political ideas from his day, as well as we know them. Here I am hoping to illuminate the possible reasons why Virgil deviated from the traditional depiction of a character or event or why he chose to present psychological or environmental events the way he did.

In my first section, based loosely upon the character of Anchises and upon the knowledge he offers, I will discuss how the virtue of piety is presented with regard to this character. I will show that piety in the *Aeneid* is not presented as obedience to Fate, but rather as a willingness to follow the will of the gods – however that may be interpreted. This is an orthopraxic obedience, consistent with Roman tradition and thus all philosophical schools. However the Stoic definition of virtue is obedience to Fate, not simply to the will of the gods. This shows that the conception of piety presented here is inconsistent with Stoic ideals. Next I will show that there is evidence within the text that Fate is not presented as being synonymous with Jupiter, which clarifies the distinction between following Fate's decrees and the will of the gods. This is also inconsistent with Stoic ideals, however it is perfectly in line with Epicurean views regarding Fate and determinism. Then I will discuss the cosmological structure presented within the *Aeneid* by

Anchises. He earns himself a privileged place in Elysium and thus has access to privileged knowledge of the cosmos. This section will deal with the use of gods as allegory as it is also consistent with an Epicurean understanding of the cosmos and their depiction in epic. It is important to keep in mind during this investigation the difference between orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The former, holding proper religious *belief*, meant little to the Romans whereas the latter, proper religious *practice*, was paramount to their culture<sup>8</sup>. I will show that, despite many arguments for a Stoic interpretation of the cosmology presented, there is evidence to show that what is seen is inconsistent with Stoic ideals. In addition, I will briefly touch on the cosmos presented by Lucretius in his *On the Nature of the Universe* in order to show that his theory is not averse to that which is presented by Virgil. It is important in this section to consider that Virgil was not writing a piece of philosophical doctrine and thus his cosmology comes across much less clearly than is optimal, as it is flavoured by literary licence and the desire to keep things consistent with his literary predecessors and tradition. Also, Virgil's cosmology is not detailed and thus the description offered is vague and it is difficult to get a clear view of it. What is clear however is that it is consistent with an Epicurean worldview, but not with that of a Stoic.

Next, my examination of Dido's character gives an insight into Virgil's presentation of justice. Also, my investigation of Dido's actions reveals a rift between divine will and morality. In the past, it has been claimed that, for Virgil, religion and morality are inseparable<sup>9</sup>; however my investigation will show that this is not the case. Virgil is not using the gods to show what is morally correct, he is using characters to do this. I will show that what Dido did was in fact

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<sup>8</sup> This can be shown by studying Roman diplomatic strategies or more simply by comparing Cicero's speeches prepared for the Senate to those meant for the public – the former being presentations of rational arguments, the latter utilizing omens and prophecies to convince the public. However, proving this point is outside of the purview of this paper.

<sup>9</sup> See Thornton 1976, p.2. She argues that religion and morality are inseparable since ethical values are always expressed in relation to the divine. However, Plato's opinion of Homer (*Rep.* 378c-e) shows that for the ancients this connection was likely a matter of allegory usage, not a correlation between the will of the gods and what is morally correct.



presented as wrong, though there are strong ties within the work that make one believe the legitimacy of her relationship with Aeneas. Though not coerced into her actions, Dido falls in line with the will of Juno and Venus, makes the wrong choice and is held responsible for her wrong actions. This section focuses on Virgil's position on freewill and determinism, showing that Fate, as it is depicted here, is not completely inevitable but allows for an amount of choice on the part of the human characters. I will show this by examining decisions made by the characters and their influences, particularly the decisions made by Dido to show that she made choices for which she was ultimately held responsible. This is more consistent with Epicurean determinism than with that of the Stoics.

My last discussion will focus on the character of Aeneas. I will show that he exemplifies both piety and justice and thus should be considered a moral character. Next, I will look at the emotions expressed by this, the main character, focusing on his expressions of anger. Based upon the not unfounded assumption that Aeneas should be assumed to be a virtuous character, I will show that his expressions of emotion are inconsistent with the definitions of such expressions offered in Stoicism. Also, I will show that though he has often been condemned within a Stoic framework, his character is better suited to an Epicurean model and need no longer be dubbed immoral.

I will attempt to bring these conclusions together in order to show that, based upon the characters and forces analysed within this paper, the philosophical school that most closely resembles the ethical and cosmological structure espoused in the *Aeneid* is Epicureanism. This is shown through the following: the presence of a freedom of will among the human characters; the non-equation of Fate with Jupiter as the supreme god; the absence of proof that thwarting Fate was considered a vice or futile; and the analysis of the characters' expressions of justifiable, if

not healthy, emotions in a public and, at times, violent manner. All of which lends me to conclude that this piece, if it can be attributed any particular line of thought, should be considered Epicurean in nature.

## CHAPTER II: ANCHISES

### Plot Summary of Character

Anchises is Aeneas' father. The entire poem takes place after his death and, because of this, we mostly learn about his character in Aeneas' retelling of his trials before his shipwreck on the shores of Libya. The character of Anchises features predominately in books three and four. He also plays a large part in book six when Aeneas finds him in the Underworld and his father informs him of the nature of the cosmos and explains to him the possible future of the Roman line.

During his dinner party with the queen of Carthage, Aeneas tells the story of how Troy fell to the Greeks and of his tribulations since then. In his retelling, when Aeneas finally realizes that his fighting against the Greeks is not only futile but to the detriment of his family and his destiny, he returns home to collect his family and flee burning Troy. His wife and son are more than willing to accompany him away from the city, but his father refuses to leave. Anchises argues that he is too old to flee the city and takes a stance insisting that he will not leave his home. In response to his refusal, Aeneas decides that he too cannot leave and prepares to take up battle against the enemy once again. Then, with his wife begging him not to leave her behind, they witness an omen from the gods. His son Ascanius' hair begins to harmlessly burn before their eyes. Interpreting this omen, in his role as *paterfamilias*, Anchises prays to the gods to affirm their desire. Hearing thunder to his left and seeing a shooting star, he takes this as a sign of the gods' desire for him to follow his son out of the city and, without questioning or delaying any further, pious Anchises resolves to do their will. Aeneas carries his father upon his back and holds his son by the hand as they work their way through the falling city. Anchises is entrusted

with carrying the country's household gods and Creusa, Aeneas' wife, follows behind them. She gets lost in the fray and dies without making it out of the city with the rest of them.

Anchises, being the male head of the household, even though his son is an adult, is consulted on all major decisions in Aeneas' journey. It is on his word that Aeneas sets sail from the shores of Asia Minor.

The Trojans travel to Delos to consult Apollo's priest. The prophet gives them the following advice:

Long-suffering sons of Dardanus, the land which bore you first from your parent stock shall welcome you back to her fruitful bosom. Seek out your ancient mother. There the house of Aeneas shall lord it over all lands, even his children's children and their race that shall be born of them (Maro 2006, p.379 (3.94-98)).

Thus, they are told to seek out the origin of their race. Anchises, again in his role as *paterfamilias*, interprets this advice and directs Aeneas and his Trojans toward the island of Crete with the following words:

'Hear, princes, and learn your hopes. In mid-ocean lies Crete, the island of great Jove, where is Mount Ida, and the cradle of our race. There men dwell in a hundred great cities, a realm most fertile, whence our earliest ancestor Teucer, if I recall the tale aright, first sailed to the Rhoetean shores, and chose a site for his kingdom. Not yet had Ilium and the towers of Pergamus been reared; men dwelt in the low valleys. Hence came the Mother who haunts Cybelus, the Corybantian cymbals and the grove of Ida; hence came the faithful silence of her mysteries, and yoked lions submitted to our lady's chariot. Come then, and let us follow where the gods' bidding leads, let us appease the winds and seek the realm of Cnosus! Nor is it a long run thither: if only Jupiter be gracious, the third dawn shall anchor our fleet on the Cretan coast' (Maro 2006, pp.379-381 (3.103-117)).

Unfortunately, as soon as the Trojans settle on Crete, they are set upon by pestilence and drought that wastes their bodies and kills their crops. Anchises advises his son to return to Delos in order to ask the priest of the god's will. Before they are able to do so, however, Aeneas has a dream in which his country's gods (the Phrygian Penates) animate and inform him that his father

was mistaken in his interpretation of Apollo's prophecy and the intention of their founding a city on Crete. They explain to Aeneas that the Trojan line is descended from not only Teucer, but also Dardanus and Iasius, who came from Italy.

Waking, Aeneas is redirected, he speaks once again to his father and Anchises admits his mistake. He recalls a prophecy made by the Trojan Cassandra<sup>10</sup>, in which their race would make their way to Italian lands, but admits that he had never believed her. Pious Anchises yields to the will of the gods and encourages their travel toward Italy.

During their travels, the Trojans put in at the island of the Harpies<sup>11</sup>. When the foul women steal the refugees' food, the men attack them in force. One of the Harpies proclaims a prophecy. She tells the Trojans that though they would make it to the Italian shores they would have to face wars and, before they were able to attain their peace in those lands, they would be set upon by such hunger that they would be forced to eat their own plates. Upon hearing this tale of their future, pious Anchises prays to the gods begging that they turn aside the Harpies' curse. After his plea, he orders the Trojans to sail from the ill-omened island.

When first the crew spy Italy, Anchises prays to the gods for their swift travel. They are on the east side of Italy, not where they are destined to land, but they pull into port for rest. On the shore, they see four pure white steeds. Anchises, again in his role as head of the household and an elder, interprets this omen in the following way:

‘Tis war you bring, land of our reception; for war are horses armed, war these herds portend. But yet,’ he cries, ‘those same steeds at times are wont to come under the chariot and beneath the yoke to bear the bit in concord; there is hope also for peace!’ (Maro 2006, p.409 (3.539-543))

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<sup>10</sup> Cassandra was adored by Apollo, whom she denied, and was given the gift of true prophecy along with the curse that she would never be believed by anyone.

<sup>11</sup> Harpies are described in the following way: “Maiden faces have these birds, foulest filth they drop, clawed hands are theirs, and faces ever gaunt with hunger...” (Maro 2006, p.387 (3.216-218)).

While passing around Sicily, Anchises warns the sailors away from the dangers of Charybdis and they end up landing on the coast of the Cyclopes to avoid being sucked under the water by the turbulent current. On the shore, they are approached by a Greek left behind by Odysseus' band and he tells the story of how he was forgotten in the rush of his companions to flee the dreaded Polyphemus. Wary of all Greeks, the Trojans hesitate, and it is Anchises who offers the man his hand, granting him clemency and freeing him from the horrible monsters. The Trojans flee, taking the Greek with them, escaping the wrath of the one-eyed giants.

Unfortunately, the elderly man does not live to see their arrival upon Italian soil, as he dies in Sicily during their travels. Then, when the Trojans take rest in Sicily again, after having gone to Libya, the Trojan women set fire to their ships in protest of further travelling. The shade of Anchises comes to his son with advice. He tells Aeneas to heed Nautes' advice to leave the old, the women and all those not interested in seeking glory on Sicily under Acestes' rule to found a city there. Anchises warns his son that he will have to subdue a hard race of men when he finally arrives at Italy and thus he should only take the fit and the bold with him to the Italian shore. Before he makes his final journey to Italy though, Anchises asks his son to seek him out through the halls of Dis, in the Underworld, more specifically in Elysium. He advises him to seek the Sibyl and promises to teach him of the future of his people.

Finding his way into the Underworld, with the help of the Sibyl, Aeneas finds his father Anchises observing a gathering of souls along Lethe's bank. After they greet one another, Aeneas inquires of his father the meaning of the gathering of the souls along the bank. Anchises responds:

'Spirits they are, to whom second bodies are owed by Fate, and at the water of Lethe's stream they drink the soothing draught of long forgetfulness' (Maro 2006, p. 583 (6.713-715)).

He elaborates further upon the workings of the cosmos at 6.724-751 – which will be discussed in detail below. After his explanation, Anchises takes Aeneas for a closer look at the spirits who are returning to the world above, pointing out those that will be born of his line and expounding their virtues and destinies. He notes Caesar, made divine, and Augustus, son of a god, who will establish a golden age in Italy and expand the empire beyond its limits. He points out all those of exceeding goodness and strength of arm, those who have brought order or sacrificed for the good of their country. Also, he praises those who craft beautiful statues, perform rhetoric with eloquence and observe the movements of the universe. “[Y]ou, Roman, be sure to rule the world (be these your arts), to crown peace with justice, *to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud*” (*parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*) (Maro 2006, p.593 (6.853)). After Anchises has enlivened his son with enthusiasm regarding his future glory, he warns him of the battles he must face upon reaching Italy and the troubles he must face to forge his destiny. With this knowledge Aeneas leaves the Underworld.

## ANCHISES

### Character Description and Piety

Anchises is Aeneas' father and the oldest living male of their familial line. As such, his position and role is that of the *paterfamilias*. As male head of the household, Anchises is in charge of making all of the decisions. This is why, when he decides to remain in burning Troy, Aeneas has no right to force him to leave. Also, in this role, he interprets the will of the gods, the prophecies, and administers sacred rites. These are his roles until his death, at which point Aeneas becomes male head of the household. This transition is shown clearly in the epithets. Anchises is called 'father Anchises' at 3.475, 525, 539 and 588; however he dies at the very end of Aeneas' telling of his trials in book three and said book ends 'Thus father Aeneas,... taught the story of his wanderings' (Maro 2006, p.421 (3.716-717)).

Anchises is considered to be a pious character. Piety is understood as obeisance to the will of the gods, which Anchises shows on many occasions throughout this work. However it appears that on many occasions his interpretation of said will is mistaken. The clearest example of this is when he instructs the refugees to settle on Crete. However, this misinterpretation does not make him any less pious, since he is still *willing* and *attempting* to do what the gods desire of him. There is a contrast to be made here with the character of Aeneas, who is also often dubbed 'pious'. As Nicolas Moseley points out in his article 'Pius Aeneas', "Virgil applies to Aeneas the epithet *pius* fifteen times in the narrative" (Moseley, p.387)<sup>12</sup>. Aeneas is often explicitly told the will of the gods, however he also strays from what they desire to fulfil his own desires – for example his relationship with queen Dido. Piety is also attributed by Aeneas to Dido due to her

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<sup>12</sup> It is noted that in epic poetry epithets are often fixed to a character as '*pius*' is to Aeneas, however, as Moseley points out, Virgil is careful to only use this epithet when it applies to the action that the character is performing, unlike Homer (Moseley, pp.390-391).



response upon hearing the plight of Aeneas and his men at 1.597-605. Piety, then, is not necessarily *doing* what the gods will immediately and without reason, it appears to be more of a willingness to follow the desire of the gods that makes a person pious and doing what is rationally deemed to be favourable to the gods – i.e. offering hospitality, loyalty to one’s family and keeping one’s oaths, etc. Let us not here conflate the will of the gods with that of Fate. I find that Virgil makes a distinction between the two, which will be discussed further on. For now it is enough to say that the anthropomorphic gods represented within this text are such that one should obey and worship them properly in order to be considered a pious character. This should not at this point, however, be confused with a Stoic notion of complacently following the will of Fate. Also worth noting is that each of the above mentioned characters are explicitly shown performing proper ritual and sacrifice in detail, expressing their orthopraxic piety in worshiping the gods with proper reverence. The importance of orthopraxic traditions and its distinction from orthodoxic belief will be dealt with in further detail below.

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### Jupiter and Fate in the *Aeneid*

Neither Stoicism nor Epicureanism hold to a belief in anthropomorphic gods. It could be argued then that the presentation of anthropomorphic gods in the *Aeneid* implies that Virgil is not presenting a philosophy akin to the above mentioned schools. However, the venue through which Virgil is working makes the inclusion of anthropomorphic gods necessary. The inclusion of the gods within the narrative hearkens back to Homer and ancient epic as a whole. It was also necessary for Virgil to include gods in his story, since it takes place at a time within the mythology of his culture when gods were thought to have been closer to men. The *Aeneid* is a continuation of the Trojan War myth, which involves the interventions of anthropomorphic gods. The representation of forces of nature, psychological changes and random chance as actions of divine will add to the narrative and make the story larger than life. This section will focus on his presentation of the gods in an attempt to determine whether Virgil's is consistent with a Stoic or an Epicurean presentation. First, I will explain the demythification of events in epic, as explained in Robert Coleman's article 'The Gods in the 'Aeneid'' in order to further clarify the necessity and utility of anthropomorphic divinity as an allegorical device. This section will introduce many ideas that will of necessity be passed over quickly and deferred to a much larger section devoted to them explicitly, but I believe it is important to make mention here of the use of gods as an allegorical device and its importance before further discussion of the cosmos. Next I will discuss Agathe Thornton's approach in her book *The Living Universe* in order to show that her presentation of a Stoic interpretation of Virgil's cosmos stands on weak ground. I will also look at Mark Edwards' article 'The Expression of Stoic Ideas in the 'Aeneid'' in order to show

that his analysis of word usage without consideration of context fails to prove that the work holds to Stoic values. Arguing for an Epicurean interpretation are Robert Coleman in his ‘The Gods in the ‘Aeneid’” and Tenney Frank in his article ‘Epicurean Determinism in the Aeneid’. I will show how the latter interpretation of Virgil’s cosmos is more suited to what is presented in the actual text.

The interventions of the gods in the decisions of the characters can be explained as contributory to the narrative by means of conferring status to the deeds of the characters or explaining psychological events, all of which were detailed in Robert Coleman’s article ‘The Gods in the ‘Aeneid’’. In this article he outlines the exterior and interior interventions of the gods in the lives of the characters and their journey and demystifies their involvement based upon the traditional use of the gods as a device in ancient epic (Coleman, p.143). As Coleman points out, there is a distinction made between popular religion/piety, “which in ancient as in modern times attributed favour, hostility, anger to its gods”, the *fabulae poetarum* and the theology of the philosopher (Coleman, p.144). In the latter, Coleman claims that there is no room for “any of the multifarious rituals that abounded in Roman religion and were the basis of the contractual *pax deorum* on which the prosperity of Rome depended” (Coleman, p.144). Epicurus, however, encouraged upholding religious ritual, even if the Epicurean beliefs regarding the attributes of the gods were different from popular religion (Summers, p.32). In the *Aeneid*, Virgil brings together the divine intervention of earlier epic and the religious practice current in Augustan times (Coleman, p.144).

As to divine intervention, the gods intervene in the human world in two ways: one is through manipulation of the external world – i.e. storms, plagues and drought – and the second is through influencing the internal states and reactions of the characters (Coleman, p.144). A

reader might be aware that natural forces are simply that, however within a heroic context the events are expected to be brought to new heights of importance; Aeneas is not an ordinary person or character, he is an epic hero, and therefore the luck or misfortune that he suffers must be as epic as he (Coleman, p.144).

Interventions on the psychological/motivational level – dreams, visions, prophecies and oracles – are not direct, as Virgil does not allow his gods to take as direct an approach as was taken in Homeric epic. The fact that Virgil’s gods are less directly involved – i.e. they do not take action during battles – shows that it is likely that the poet did not intend for them to be taken as literal. Their interventions, not being direct, can be demythologized as was the case already in Euripidean tragedy (Coleman, p.145). However, Coleman is not satisfied with the portrayal of Virgilian divinity as “redundant metaphors of psychological events”, instead he searches for a new role in which to put these divine interventions (Coleman, p.145). In examining the interventions of the gods and the actions which take place after those interventions, Coleman concludes that the role played by Virgilian gods is to supplement a human explanation for actions which he dubs ‘out of character’ (Coleman, pp.151-162). He points mainly to the actions of three characters to support this thesis: Aeneas, Turnus, Aeneas’ enemy, and Dido. It may be the case that these three characters exhibited behaviours that one might describe as ‘out of character’, however I believe that it can be shown that these behaviours need not be attributed to divine intervention but can also be demystified as psychological phenomena understandable from that character within that situation. Dido was a woman in love who wanted an heir and was convinced by her sister, as well as by the loving arms of a man, that what she was doing was fine. She may be described as an *akratic* character, but doing something even though you know it is wrong is not an action which needs to be ascribed to the intervention of divinity. Turnus’

character was never established as virtuous, so any lapses in his character could be perfectly in-line with the way that he was as a person<sup>13</sup>. Also, his reactions were to feelings of betrayal, dishonour and indignation, which are all perfectly understandable, if not overly noble, reasons for reactions of anger. Aeneas, whose character has been well established, has a tendency to react with justifiable anger when he feels that either his homeland or one of his friends/relatives has been wrongfully harmed. These events will be shown in much greater detail when discussion of these characters emerges, however for now it is enough to state that I believe Coleman was correct that the gods play an allegorical role in the *Aeneid*, that the traditional Roman way that rites were performed was stressed and that there is a clear distinction between Fate and the anthropomorphic gods represented within the text.<sup>14</sup> Where I disagree with Coleman is making the gods fill-ins for unexplainable psychological events. I believe that there is enough ancient work upon personality types and presentations of emotions – particularly anger – that we need not view these behaviours as ‘out of character’ and having been caused by divine intervention. His conclusion assumes the absence of freedom of will – in the minimalistic Epicurean sense of choice – which is a conclusion I believe is not supported by the text.<sup>15</sup> If the characters possess freedom of will, they have the ability to act ‘out of character’ and have these actions be completely explained by external stressors and extenuating, hopeful or difficult circumstances.

Now that we have established both the necessity of anthropomorphic gods and their function within the text, we are able to evaluate the distinction made between Virgil’s presentation of Jupiter and that of Fate. While in the Underworld, Anchises describes the entirety of the universe as being infused with *spiritus*. Agathe Thornton in her book *The Living*

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<sup>13</sup> Turnus’ character is discussed briefly below in the section on Aeneas.

<sup>14</sup> This is a point that is not to be discussed here but will be of great importance later in this paper.

<sup>15</sup> Freedom of will is dealt with in great detail in the section below regarding Dido’s character.

*Universe* interprets this *spiritus* as a singular being, one mind – in the intelligent sense - which permeates all, whom she identifies as Jupiter. “The power that ultimately binds together the manifold of this cosmos is Jupiter pervading the whole as the ‘cosmic god’ or ruling the whole as the ‘supreme god’” (Thornton, p.xi). She argues that Jupiter’s will is omnipotent and therefore no one, god or man, is able to thwart his desire. Thornton herself identifies many instances where Jupiter has made a decree and the other gods plot against him, most notably Juno, and also where human choice has managed to forestall his plans – i.e. Aeneas’ stay in Carthage. An example of this, noted by Thornton, occurs at the very beginning of the story, when Juno convinces Aeolus to release the winds and sink the Trojan ships. At this stage in the narrative, Aeneas is on his way from Sicily to Italy, what should have been an easy sail, and wrathful Juno plots to disrupt their journey. Thornton explains that “[h]ere Jupiter is ultimately in control. But this does not mean that everything must ineluctably go according to his will all the time” (Thornton, p.78). She explains that, because Jupiter *allowed* Aeolus to accept orders from the queen of the gods as well as from himself, he is still in control of this situation and takes back that control through his brother when Neptune calms the waters (Thornton, p.78). She uses the same ‘argument from influence’ throughout to explain how Jupiter is always in control, whether he is aware of his influence within the narrative or not – as he is not aware of Juno’s plans or of Neptune’s interference. This is a convenient but ultimately unconvincing argument. It is difficult to see how one could argue that someone’s lack of control and awareness proves their control.

Coleman describes Jupiter as “a divine superintendent of Fate who is not wholly self-directing but needs on occasion to be activated by human information and entreaty” (Coleman, p.164). Seeing freedom of will in the gods and characters should not lead one to conclude that

Jupiter's will is ultimate. If Juno is able to act against Jupiter on countless occasions, if Aeneas is able to put off his destiny in order to spend time in the arms of a loving woman, if Venus is able to orchestrate Aeneas and Dido's love, then I fail to see how all of these instances prove Jupiter's ultimate will. One could argue, and in fact Thornton does, that when all is said and done, destiny does work out the way it was prophesized to, however it would be presumptuous to assume that this is the will of *Jupiter* playing out. It is important to note that "[t]o the Stoic, *fatum* is a synonym of providence whose popular name is Zeus. The Epicurean also accepts *fatum* as governing the universe, but it is not teleological, and Zeus is not identified with it but is, like man, subordinated to it" (Frank, p.119). So, Thornton is clearly arguing for a Stoic interpretation of Virgil's cosmology.

When considering Jupiter as the source of ultimate control, it seems that not only can other beings thwart his plans, or at least divert them, but also it is hinted at that there is something outside of him to which he yields. At 1.261-2, Jupiter refers to Fate as an entity outside of himself when he is assuring Venus of the fortunate future of her son: "*volvens fatorum arcana movebo*" (I will unroll the secrets of the fates)<sup>16</sup>. As Robert Coleman explains, "although Jupiter administers the operations of Fate, the fates cannot be understood as emanating from him" (Coleman, p.157). This non-anthropomorphic force or divinity, Fate, has no representation within the text, but seems to have a map outlined for Jupiter to consult.

The most telling lines regarding the relationship between Jupiter and Fate occur in book ten when Jupiter states "I forbade Italy to clash in war with Troy. What feud is this, in face of my command?" (Maro 2000, p.173 (10.8-9)). Clearly, the actions that are taking place are not in accordance with Jupiter's will. He does not desire a confrontation between the Italians and the Trojans, but one has been orchestrated anyway and will occur. After stating these words, Jupiter

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<sup>16</sup> This is my translation.

begins a fight between the gods in council, at the end of which he claims his neutrality and states, “Jupiter is king over all alike; the fates shall find their way” (Maro 2000, p.181 (10.112-113)). The first part of this statement is simple enough to interpret: as king of the gods, he is the king everywhere, regardless of which side prevails in the ensuing battle Jupiter will retain his sacrifices and still be worshipped properly by the victor, which is the main concern of gods – generally speaking. The second part can be interpreted, as it is by Thornton, as Jupiter granting freedom of will to the human world for a set period of time, or as a general statement of Jupiter’s inability to interfere in what was already decreed, not by himself, to happen. Thornton explains this passage as what “seems to be a special dispensation by Jupiter himself, the highest god” (Thornton, p.72). However, as was shown at 10.8-9, Jupiter’s will is not in concord with the decrees of Fate, though he is bound to them. “For the war must have been fated – the implications of Jupiter’s own words in 1.261-3 is clear enough – and yet it is equally clearly contrary to the god’s wishes” (Coleman, p.157). In this case, it is more likely that Jupiter is not offering human freedom, but making a decree of his own non-involvement, to no longer help *fatum* work itself out, as what *is* going to happen is not identical with what he would like to happen.

Fate, in whatever manifestation, *has* knowledge or *is* knowledge of the future of Aeneas’ line<sup>17</sup>. Jupiter unfolds this story to Venus in order to assure her that her son is destined for greatness. Everything that Jupiter does is in line with what is concealed in the workings of Fate. Also, this information is not exclusive to Jupiter; Juno also knows of the fate of her beloved Carthage at the hands of the Romans. She strives to change what is going to happen, but fails to do so. Whatever entity or power Fate is or has, it is beyond the gods represented in this work to thwart. In book 1.22-3, Juno knows what fate her Carthage is to suffer and knows fear, and in

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<sup>17</sup> Fate is not an anthropomorphic being in Virgil’s work, yet the definitions of Fate other than that are unclear.



book 5.796-7 Venus acknowledges the superior power of Fate, thus it is not only Jupiter who has knowledge of *fatum* and is in some way bound to the events that are foretold.

This raises the question of how rigid the workings of Fate are. Coleman states that “though the broad outline of events is certainly laid down, their detailed course and tempo are not” (Coleman, p.159). As will be shown in the next section regarding the decisions of Dido, there *is* a measure of freedom in the choices of the human individual. It is clear, from what was shown above, that the gods have no means by which to circumvent Fate, however, this does not prove that humans do not have this ability. What is shown in the section regarding the actions of Dido implies that it is possible for humans to choose to go against their *fatum*, most notably her untimely death. She commits suicide and dies before her fated time, which is made clear within the text. Also, the actions of Anchises speak toward the interpretation that things could have happened differently. At first he chose to remain in Troy while it was falling. The gods sent him a sign – actually two signs – in order to convince him to leave the city. Anchises is presented as being a pious character and thus always attempts to follow the will of the gods to the best of his ability, but even at this he is often mistaken in his interpretations of the portents given him and fails to do what is asked of him. This shows that, not only are humans free, but that they are virtuous even when they fail to follow the will of the gods, as long as they attempt to do so. The most telling proof of this is, once again, Dido’s untimely death. This was not the will of the gods, and was not destined by Fate – if it had been so, then the gods would have been prepared for her death and Iris would have been ready to carry her into the Underworld. As a human, being unaware of the design of Fate, she was able to act against what was destined and not be punished for *this* action. The fact that her suicide is not viewed by that author as morally incorrect is best shown by looking at her position within the Underworld, in the neutral zone, not

being cleansed for her immoral actions and also not suffering with those who regret having committed suicide. She may regret her actions with regard to her passion for Aeneas, but she does not regret her final action in taking her own life and, though it is against Fate, she is not punished for it. This will be discussed further in the next section.

The Stoic and Epicurean ideas of Fate are similar, but different in a few aspects. One difference is that the Stoic believes that Fate is inevitable and that virtue lies in conforming to the decrees of Fate instead of fighting against your fate – this would include complying with the will of the gods, given that Jupiter is synonymous with Fate for a Stoic (Frank, p.119). Thornton describes the actions of both characters and gods as ‘evil’ if they are in disobedience to Fate<sup>18</sup>, however this interpretation of an action as being immoral is not consistent with the remainder of the text. Actions that go against Fate are not portrayed as ‘evil’ whereas certain actions and creatures that are in line with the workings of Fate are portrayed as evil. Rumour, a divinity of slander and superstition who revels in corrupting the images of others, alerts Iarbas of the stay of Aeneas in Carthage which ultimately leads to Jupiter convincing Aeneas to continue on his journey. This action is in line with *fatum*, however one cannot argue that Rumour is depicted as anything other than a vile creature within the narrative of the book. Another simple example is that of the snakes of Neptune that kill Laocoon when he attempts to warn the Trojans of the Greek deception (Maro 2006, p.331 (2.199-227)). The continuation of this deception allows for the events that follow, which again are in line with *fatum*, however the depiction of the snakes does not lend itself to the belief that one should take their actions as right or good. To cite more human examples, the suicide of Dido is not portrayed as ‘wrong’, merely tragic. One does not view the Trojans’ decision to settle on Crete as ‘wrong’, or Anchises’ reasoning for desiring to

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<sup>18</sup> An example of this is her description of the actions of Juno in book one when she states that “[t]he cause of Juno’s fear and anger is, then, an affection which, instead of being overruled by obedience to destiny, stubbornly pursues its own aspirations. Her anger is one of disobedience and rebellion and, therefore, evil” (Thornton 1976, p.78).

remain in Troy, or Aeneas' desire to tarry in the arms of the woman he loves. None of these instances are portrayed as immoral or unreasonable within the text. If they were, then the reader would not be made to feel pity for the mourning old man as he laments the loss of his homeland and Dido's tragedy would not be as great for the reader if they were made to believe that her affair with Aeneas was tawdry and wanton. The pathos of the piece and the empathy created for these characters and their needs does not depict them as 'evil' or immoral characters merely because their desire was not in line with what Fate decreed. Thus, it does not seem that within the text there is a link between what is in accordance with Fate and what is considered virtuous.

Thornton's is clearly a Stoic – or one may argue a Christian – interpretation of Virgil's conception of Fate and its relation to the cosmos, however this does not seem to hold within the text. Virgil clearly does present a conception of Fate, but not as an anthropomorphic being and certainly not as identifiable with Jupiter. Also, a trespass against the will of Fate is not shown to be an immoral action.

Mark Edwards, in his article 'The Expression of Stoic Ideas in the "Aeneid"', points out Virgil's 'conscious' adoption of Stoic phrasing as evidence of a Stoic conception of Fate. The idea of Fate that Edwards is attempting to prove exists within the text seems to be akin to that which is presented by Chrysippus, likening Fate to a cart to which we, as a dog, are tied, which we can follow willingly or begrudgingly (Edwards, p.152). He points out many instances where the concept of 'following one's fate' is utilized within the text, however I believe that the context of these phrases also needs to be taken into account. The examples Edwards first offers are as follows (Edwards, p.152):

- 1) *data fata secutus* (1.382)
- 2) *quo fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur* (5.709)
- 3) *quo duces et quo dura vocat fortuna, sequamur* (12.677)
- 4) *divom ducunt qua iussa, sequatur* (3.114)

5) *et quamcumque viam dederit fortuna, sequatur* (10.49)

6) *qua rima, inquit, fortuna salutis monstrat iter, quaque ostendit se dextra, sequamur* (2.387-8)

7) *quoque vocat, vertamus iter* (5.22-3)

First, it is important to note that all of the above mentioned examples, even seeing as they are just an offered sample, are voiced by human characters – with the exception of Venus’ plea in book ten, which will be dealt with separately.

The first example offered is uttered by Aeneas in lamentation of his unfortunate situation being driven by a storm to the shores of Libya. He is explaining his current situation to his mother in disguise and states that he has come here “following the fates declared, my goddess-mother pointing me the way” (Maro 2006, p.289 (1.382)). In this passage, Aeneas is complaining about his current situation, lamenting what ‘Fate’ has done to him. However, his situation is not the working of Fate. His shipwreck is due to the working of Juno and her hatred for the Trojans. Thus, even if the claim is made that Aeneas is espousing a Stoic conception of Fate, not only is he incorrect with his attribution of Fate working its will on him, which it is clearly not in this instance, it is also clear that he is doing so in such a way to curse the forces that are beyond his control for what they have done to him – this also implies that there is a distinction between what is and what is not within his control.

The second example offered by Edwards occurs in book five after the Trojan women burn the fleet and Aeneas is tormented with thoughts of giving up on his journey and settling in Sicily, believing, in his despair, that he has lost the support of his companions. Nautes comforts Aeneas at this moment, advising him as follows: “Let us go, goddess-born, where the Fates, in their ebb and flow, draw us” (Maro 2006, p.521 (5.709)). Once again, this concept of ‘following Fate’ is espoused by a human character and is uttered in a time of distress. Also, the situation to

which they are responding is again not the product of Fate, but the result of Juno's interference. It appears that all of the ebbs observed with regard to Aeneas' travels have nothing to do with Fate, but rather other interventions by gods attempting to hinder his journey – with the exception of the battle against the Italians in book twelve, which has been fated to happen, though potentially it could have not taken place if Aeneas had not chosen to complete his venture to Italy. It appears more and more that Aeneas' acquiescence to the will of Fate is against the will of the gods, or at least one god, and thus this decision brings him misfortune. It is also interesting to note that Bowra cites the two instances above as times when our main character falls short of being a virtuous Stoic (Bowra, pp.13-14). So, the two times that Aeneas laments his fate, though his plight has nothing to do with Fate, are both examples of Stoic word usage and examples of our hero not standing up to his presumed Stoic character.

The third example occurs in book twelve when Turnus is taking a stand against his sister in his determination to fight Aeneas. "Now, my sister, now Fate triumphs: cease to hinder; where God and cruel fortune call, let us follow!" (Maro 2000, p.349 (12.676-677)). At this point, Turnus is on his way to his own death. Also, this event is not explicitly expressed as being necessary to the 'plan' that Fate has set. It is obvious that the battle between the Italians and the Trojans must be fought, but Turnus' particular vendetta against Aeneas is one of personal vengeance – for which Turnus twice pledged his life to the gods and twice takes back that pledge continually seeking personal satisfaction for perceived slights. Turnus' anger and his determination to face Aeneas in battle will be discussed further in the section on Aeneas, however it is sufficient to say here that Turnus' use of Fate is as a tool to further his own plans for revenge, not as a sort of compliance with what he believes must be done to appease Fate.

The fourth example is uttered by Anchises when he falsely interprets the words of a prophet and aims their journey toward Crete, also not the direction Fate would desire. The sixth is spoken by Coroebus during their battle within Troy as it is retold in book two and is used to convince his companions to don Greek armour in order to deceive their enemies and protect Troy. Again, this is a case where this action, the protection of Troy, is not the will of Fate, as it would prevent the rest of Aeneas' travels. The seventh example is uttered by Palinurus when the weather is unfriendly toward the Trojan voyage from Carthage to Italy. He argues that "[s]ince Fortune is victor, let us follow and turn our course wither she calls" (Maro 2006, p.473 (5.22-23)). Aeneas too notices that the wind is not favourable to their course and acquiesces; however, though the speech is akin to 'following Fate', this does not seem to be an example where one might claim that they are doing something which Fate decreed. It seems more so that the weather is simply not beneficial to sailing and they are forced to change their course, which may be why '*fortuna*' is used here instead of '*fata*'<sup>19</sup>.

The fifth example, which I skipped in the brief overview of the last paragraph, is different from the rest of the examples offered in that these words are spoken by a goddess, namely by Venus. At this point during the council of the gods, she seems confused. Jupiter had repeatedly assured her regarding the positive future of her son and his offspring, but now she sees that things are happening that are not a part of Jupiter's decree. She points out a few instances in which the other gods, mainly Juno, have, in an attempt to thwart Fate, tortured her son and led her to believe that his demise was imminent. Here she pleads for the life of her grandson Ascanius, assuming that Aeneas will likely be killed and pushes aside her concern for him allowing that he "follow wherever Fortune points out a path" (Maro 2000, p.177 (10.49)).

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<sup>19</sup> There is no indication to my knowledge that there are different uses for '*Fata*' versus '*Fortuna*', however within these examples alone there is room to argue that there may be a distinction to be made. It is, however, outside of the purview of this paper.

Putting aside for the moment Venus' portrayal as an overly worried mother who seems to put little faith in the assurances of Jupiter, it is important to note that not only does Venus point out instances where the will of Jupiter was thwarted, she also leaves things to '*fortuna*,' not '*fata*'. It seems that, since this eventuality was not explicitly decreed by the gods, or even foretold to them – though it seems that all were aware that there was an impending battle to be fought at Italy – there is an element of chance in this encounter, acknowledged by the gods. In the other instances mentioned, the human characters lamented their situations, blamed forces beyond their control or invoked Fate to do as their desires directed them; however in this instance, it appears that Venus is truly unaware of the outcome of this situation, as they all seem to be. It is also worth noting that it is shortly after Venus finishes her plea that Jupiter simply assures them both that “Jupiter is king over all alike; the fates shall find their way” (Maro 2000, p.181 (10.112-113)). This is one of the quotes that Thornton used as evidence of Jupiter's identity as Fate; however, as it has been shown, this is more likely an expression of him washing his hands of further influencing what is to happen between these two forces, in order to allow Fate to play out as it will.

Edwards also points out instances where it appears that fortune follows the Trojans, instead of the other way around. The best example given of this occurs in book eight at line 15 when the question is posed, and not answered, as to whether fortune attends Aeneas in his quest to conquer Italy. Importantly, this instance occurs within the narrative, not spoken by any character, god or human<sup>20</sup>. It is obvious during the meeting of the gods in book ten that this question is unanswered for them as well. This further strengthens the idea that Fate is not as rigid as the Stoic conception implies, these characters are not merely dragged along. Also, most

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<sup>20</sup> It would also be interesting to note that 'fortune' in the translation consulted is also not capitalised, however when copying out Latin with the appropriate breaks and such, capitalisation is left to the transcriber's discretion, as it does not exist within the original text since, in fact, all letters are capitilized. In this way, there is no way of knowing whether this was meant to represent an anthropomorphic god or merely fortune as it is more or less understood today.

of the occurrences attributed to Fate were truly the work of one of the gods. It appears then that if Fate is playing a role, it is way behind the scenes and seems to involve more of a broad outline of a possible path, rather than a road map which people have no choice but to follow.

Edwards disagrees with this interpretation; he believes that Virgil is “intending to convey not only that Aeneas is embarked upon extensive travels enjoined upon him by Fate but also that he, like all mankind, is making his laborious way through a life which has been foreordained” (Edwards, p.154). However, the examples he cites here are, for instance, when Aeneas is making his way through the Underworld and after his encounter with Dido he “toils along the way that offered itself” (Maro 2006, p.565 (6.477)) or again when Venus advises Aeneas to “[o]nly go forward and where the path leads you, direct your steps” (Maro 2006, p.291 (1.401)) or again when a seer advises him to “[y]ield not to ills, but go forth all the bolder to face them as far as your destiny will allow” (Maro 2006, p.539 (6.95-96)). The first example implies that there was but one way to travel through the Underworld, only one safe way which avoids Tartarus, also the only way by which Aeneas would be able to reach his goal. The latter two are spoken by a divinity or a prophetess and are offered as advice and encouragement, not unlike the comforting speech offered by Nautes earlier, when Aeneas is in need of guidance. To Edwards, this implies that Fate for Virgil implies a lack of freedom of will, no choice or alternative action on the part of the human characters. However, this could merely imply that there is a direction which others may desire him to follow – or perhaps, as in the first example, only one which is reasonable – not necessarily that he has no will of his own to travel in a different direction.

Epicureans also believe in Fate, or determinism, in this way, however they include in their philosophy the ‘swerve’ which allows humans to have an element of freedom (Frank, p.119) (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, pp.44-45 (2.251-293)). I believe that this



freedom has been shown within the text, at least at the human level and will be further argued in the section concerning Dido. As Frank points out, if Virgil's philosophy were Stoic, then his Jupiter would be omnipotent and omniscient.<sup>21</sup> Jupiter would also be the source of Fate and Virgil's characters would be without any independent will of their own, which is not the case within the text (Frank, p.119).

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<sup>21</sup> It is proven that he is not all-knowing when he needs to be told by Iarbas of Aeneas' luxurious stay in Carthage, (Maro 2006, p.437 (4.206-221)).

## ANCHISES

### Anchises' Description of the Cosmos and its Purpose in the Narrative

Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis  
lucentemque globum lunae Titaniaque astra  
spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus  
mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.  
inde hominum pecundumque genus vitaeque volantum  
et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequore pontus.  
igneus est ollis vigor et caelestis origo  
seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant  
terrenique hebetant artus moribundaque membra.  
hinc metuunt cupiuntque, dolent graudentque, neque auras  
dispiciunt clausae tenebris et carcere caeco.  
quin et supremo cum lumine vita relinquit,  
non tamen omne malum miseris nec funditus omnes  
corporeae excedunt pestes, penitusque necesse est  
multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris.  
ergo exercentur poenis veterumque malorum  
supplicia expendunt. aliae panduntur inanes  
suspendae ad ventos, aliis sub gurgite vasto  
infectum eluitur scelus aut exuritur igni,  
donec longa dies perfecto temporis orbe  
concretam exemit labem, purumque relinquit  
aetherium sensum atque aurai simplicis ignem:  
quisque suos patimur manis. exinde per amplum.  
mittimus Elysium et pauci laeta arva tenemus.  
has omnis, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,  
Lethaeum ad fluvium deus evocat agmine magno,  
scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant  
rursus, et incipiant in corpora velle reverti.'

'First, know that heaven and earth and the watery plains, the moon's bright sphere and Titan's star, a spirit within sustains; in all the limbs mind moves the mass and mingles with the mighty frame. Thence spring the races of man and beast, the life of winged creatures, and the monsters that ocean bears beneath his marble surface. Fiery is the vigour and divine the source of those seeds of life, so far as harmful bodies clog them not, or earthly limbs and frames born but to die. Hence their fears and desires, their griefs and joys; nor do they discern the heavenly light, penned as they are in the gloom of their dark dungeon. Still more! When life's last ray has fled, the wretches are not entirely freed from all evil and all plagues of the body; and it needs must be that many a taint, long ingrained, should in wondrous wise become deeply rooted in their being. Therefore are they schooled

with punishments, and pay penance for bygone sins. Some are hung stretched out to the empty winds; from others the stain of guilt is washed away under swirling floods or burned out by fire till length of days, when time's cycle is complete, has removed the inbred taint and leaves unsoiled the ethereal sense and pure flame of spirit: each of us undergoes his own purgatory. Then we are sent to spacious Elysium, a few of us to possess the blissful fields. All these that you see, when they have rolled time's wheel through a thousand years, the god summons in vast throng to Lethe's river, so that, their memories effaced, they may once more revisit the vault above and conceive the desire of return to the body' (Maro 2006, p.583-585 (6.724-751)).

In this passage, Anchises explains that the entirety of the physical realm is suffused by a divine spirit and one mind<sup>22</sup> animates the universe like the limbs of a body. It is from this spirit that all creatures stem. This force which animates is fiery or heated<sup>23</sup> and permeates all. While humans are confined within the finite physical body which we inhabit, we experience physical needs and desires, fears and troubles, which do not trouble the divine within us or without<sup>24</sup> but do leave a taint on that spirit. When we die, we need to be purged of these troubles, desires and moral trespasses, all evils of the body. Each individual's purgatorial trials are different, catered to the effect the needs of their flesh had upon the spirit within them. Then they are left to wander in Elysium, free of these burdens. After a thousand years, they gather around Lethe's stream, drink the water and forget in order to be reborn<sup>25</sup> into the physical realm once again, those "to whom second bodies are owed by Fate" (Maro 2006, p.583 (6.713-714)).

This mythology has been likened to that found within Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, in both of which characters encounter one of their dead who informs them of both the nature of the

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<sup>22</sup> Note here that *mens* can also be translated as 'soul' or 'heart'. This spirit animates, but this does not necessarily mean that intelligence need be attributed to this animating force.

<sup>23</sup> The spirit which gives life is heat, which, as is pointed out further down, is one of the attributes Lucretius concludes must be possessed by the spirit.

<sup>24</sup> This reminds the reader of a question raised at 1.11; "*tantaene animis caelestibus irae?*" which asks the question 'Is divine spirit able to/capable of having so much rage/passion?' After this question is posed the reasons for Juno's anger are given, however here we see that divinity cannot be impassioned or troubled, which is consistent with an Epicurean stance on the gods.

<sup>25</sup> This is consistent with Plato's theory of anamnesis.

cosmos and their future and also discloses a wider revelation with the intention of “encouraging the exercise of political and martial virtue” (Hardie, p.75). However, with the exception of these superficial similarities and the ideas of reincarnation, the abhorrence of the physical body and its wanton desires, the two works are surprisingly different. Though the intention to encourage virtue appears true in both cases, the approach is vastly different.

Cicero condemns suicide as a trespass of duty (Cicero, *Somnium Scipionis*, p.13, 7(6.15)). Virgil’s portrayal of suicide however, as seen in the case of Dido’s death, appears as a noble act, one which, for her, seemed to be the best course of action, one which ensured the security of her people. There seemed to be no stigma attached to her choice, only a general feeling of sadness for her tragedy. In addition to this, the souls of those who have committed suicide are kept in a neutral place, not tortured in Tartarus. Virgil describes these as “sad souls who in innocence wrought their own death and, loathing the light, flung away their lives” (Maro 2006, p.563 (6.434-436)). This does not lend one to the conclusion that Virgil viewed suicide as an immoral act, more likely merely a regrettable one.

Also, Cicero goes into great detail regarding the planets and their divine features, whereas that appears absent within Virgil’s cosmology. This may be interpreted as a difference of opinion, or merely viewed as an unimportant topic for Virgil’s purposes at this stage in the narrative. Virgil also does not mention the Sun as the organizing principle of the universe or define his ‘permeating spirit’ as the prime mover. He also does not, as does Cicero, downplay human ambition as futile in the grand scheme of things, as this would undermine the second part of Anchises’ speech, which is crafted to motivate Aeneas by describing the wonderful future his people will have to delight in if he chooses to follow his present course. Therefore, one *could* argue that there are certain similarities between the two texts, however to claim that these are

enough to “suggest that Virgil drew directly on Cicero” (Hardie, p.75) seems to me to be a bit of a stretch. It appears that most of the commonalities mentioned above are common to the tradition of philosophical thought and belief, stemming from Aristotle’s conception of the ‘prime mover’<sup>26</sup> and Plato’s desire to submit the desires of the flesh to rationality<sup>27</sup> and the reincarnation of the soul<sup>28</sup>.

As to Virgil’s purpose in this passage, he first presents the nature of the universe, then moves to particulars; this strategy is dubbed ‘the cosmic setting’ (Hardie, p.66). Hardie characterizes the cosmic setting as establishing a relationship between particulars – events, people, etc. – and the general order of the universe thus attributing to the particulars more significance and structure than they would otherwise have (Hardie, pp.66-68)<sup>29</sup>. The cosmic setting can be used in two ways: the first is to allow the significance and grandeur of the whole to emphasize the importance of the parts; the second is to use the gravity of the larger picture to make the particular seem utterly insignificant (Hardie, p.68). Virgil’s objective here is obviously the former. Emphasizing our place within the universe, in the way in which it is done here by Anchises, is meant to show Aeneas how important his journey is to the future. Aeneas, unlike Scipio, does not conclude that he should end his life in order to enter Elysium faster; he concludes that his place within the universe is privileged, his family of great importance and his journey is epic.

I have shown, in the previous section regarding the presentation of Fate, that Virgil’s cosmology is not consistent or compatible with that of the Stoics. I have already shown that the

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<sup>26</sup> Presented in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, pp.1693-1694 (12.1071b30-1072a20).

<sup>27</sup> Discussed in Plato’s *Republic*, pp.1073-1075 (4.441e-444a). Also Plato discusses the evils of the flesh in more detail in Plato’s *Phaedo*, pp.57-58 (66b-d)).

<sup>28</sup> Expressed within Plato’s concept of *anamnesis*, hypothesized within Plato’s *Meno*, p.886 (86a-c) and developed further within Plato’s *Phaedo*.

<sup>29</sup> Also, worth note is that this same attribution of significance is pointed out by Robert Coleman with regard to Virgil’s use of allegorical gods.

Epicurean conception of Fate is consistent with that presented in the *Aeneid* and I will now take a closer look at the cosmology presented by Anchises in order to compare it to that of the Epicureans. The first stumbling block when comparing Virgil's cosmology with an Epicurean's, such as Lucretius, is attempting to separate what is a literary device – such as anthropomorphic gods – and what is actually part of the philosophy being represented. We know that the concept of reincarnation is not supported by Lucretius, it is however by Ennius – Virgil's literary predecessor – as well as by Plato, as was shown above. Aeneas' trip into the Underworld had a precedent in Homer, when Odysseus visits the world of the dead. Though not supported by Epicurean philosophy, the concept of an afterlife is supported by the myth that Virgil is continuing. Also, as noted above, if not for the concept of reincarnation then Aeneas would not be able to point to a gathering of souls around Lethe's stream and prompt Anchises' overview of Roman heroes thus inspiring Aeneas in his journey. In this way, Aeneas' journey to the Underworld and his subsequent revelations further the plot. It could be argued that this was not necessary to further the narrative, but these devices are available to the poet in his desire to entertain. What I believe is the most important part of this adventure is the large part of this journey that is devoted to describing individuals being cleansed for their moral crimes and Anchises' description of the universe as being suffused by a divine spirit. The first part is an interesting insight into what is deemed worthy of the soul's punishment, while the second may be a clue to Virgil's cosmology.

First, I will explain one particular element of Aeneas' trip to the Underworld in terms of Roman tradition, which places these elements outside of philosophy. Aeneas encounters souls gathered along the bank of the river Styx (Maro 2006, p.555 (6.305-316)). They flock toward Charon, the ferryman, in hopes to cross into the next world, however “[h]e may not carry them

over the dreadful banks and hoarse-voiced waters until their bones have found a resting place. A hundred years they roam and flit about these shores; then only are they admitted and revisit the longed-for pools” (Maro 2006, p.555 (6.327-330)). This passage stresses the importance of proper treatment of the dead as “[c]orrect disposal of the dead was always a crucial element in easing the soul of the deceased into the next world”, the manner of which, in Virgil’s time for those who could afford it, was cremation and placement into a tomb, either private or in a group (Morris 2003).

The first regions of the Underworld that Aeneas encounters are those where souls are kept who are *not* worthy of punishment, these are the ‘farthest fields’ or the neutral regions of the Underworld. Here he encounters those that died in infancy, those who committed suicide, those wounded by love and those who were renowned in war (Maro 2006, pp.563-571 (6.426-478)). Most importantly here is where those who committed suicide, acting against Fate, are held, but they are not punished for this action, they are not condemned to Tartarus, merely held in this spot regretful of their choice, “those sad souls who in innocence wrought their own death” (Maro 2006, p.563 (6.434-436)). Another interesting point is that this is not where he encounters Dido: she is in the ‘Mourning Fields’ for those undone by love (Maro 2006, p.563 (6.440-444)). In both of these instances, it shows that suicide is not deemed by Virgil to be a punishable crime or a vice of the soul. Thus, we must conclude that defying Fate is not presented by Virgil to be immoral.

Aeneas is not allowed to enter Tartarus, however the prophetess tells him about those who are punished there. “Here were they who in lifetime hated their brethren, or smoke a sire, and entangled a client in wrong; or who brooded in solitude over wealth they had won, nor set aside a portion for their kin – the largest number this; who were slain for adultery; or who

followed the standard of treason, and feared not to break allegiance with their lords – all these, immured, await their doom” (Maro 2006, p.575 (6.608-614)). Here she describes vices of greed, adultery, injustice and crimes against one’s kin and country<sup>30</sup>. Also, a “loud voice bears witness amid the gloom: ‘Be warned; learn ye to be just and not to slight the gods!’” (Maro 2006, p.575 (6.619-620)). Here there is a connection to be made between justice and piety and the crimes of treason, oath breaking, adultery, harm against one’s family and greed at the detriment of others. We will later see that, as presented by Virgil, justice involves a fairness of mutual contract to maintain security, law and order, all of which preclude acts of treason and oath breaking. We shall also see that piety is presented not only in relation to the gods, but also with respect to one’s family and friends.

Virtues – of piety, of justice, of fidelity and loyalty to one’s country – will be dealt with in further detail in the final section on Aeneas, however what is important here is that this section, Aeneas’ trip into the Underworld, can be seen as a literary device utilized to show what is virtuous and vicious, a venue through which to allow Anchises to expound to his son the nature of the cosmos and his importance within it – as well as, at the same time, glorifying the heroes of the Roman past. It need not be taken literally to accomplish these things.

Moving on to Virgil’s cosmology as it is presented within the text, we first have the concept of the universe being suffused by a divine spirit. Lucretius states that “[n]othing is ever created by divine power out of nothing” (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.13 (1.143-154)). This leads him into his explanation of atomic theory; it does not however preclude the concept of these things being permeated with a divine spirit, it merely speaks against a sui generis beginning of all things. He also holds that “[n]ature resolves everything into its

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<sup>30</sup> These immoral actions are also dealt with by Lucretius: greed (3.58-70), blind lust (3.58-70), trespasses against one’s kin, friends and country (3.70 – 81). However, he claims that all of these acts of immorality are the result of a fear of death.



component atoms and never reduces anything to nothing... nature obviously does not allow anything to perish till it has encountered a force that shatters it with a blow or creeps into chinks and unknits it” (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.15 (1.215-225)). In these lines, he attributes a certain orderliness to nature, not necessarily an intelligent or anthropomorphic design, but certainly a scientific certainty which attributes to nature a perpetually ordered quality. Again, he posits that “[i]f throughout this bygone eternity there have persisted bodies from which the universe has been perpetually renewed, they must certainly be possessed of immortality” (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.16 (1.232-240)). Thus, he admits an eternal and ordered quality within nature and the universe in general.

This need not bespeak of divinity, however in his treatment of Epicurus at the beginning of book three he reveals his stance on the gods rather clearly. He describes the habitation of the gods as being undisturbed and untroubled, that “nothing at any time cankers their peace of mind” (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.67 (3.23-24)). He denies any sort of Underworld, which was already acknowledged previously. However, belief in the divine is clear in his statement that he is “seized with a divine delight and a shuddering awe that by your [Epicurus’] power nature stands thus unveiled and made manifest in every part” (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.67 (3.26-28)). Lucretius appears to worship his predecessor as a divinity of sorts, while acknowledging that he was at one point merely a man. Lucretius obviously holds to a belief in the divine, however he does not hold that the gods can be moved by emotions or human troubles. In this way, as in many others, he follows the beliefs of Epicurus, who also held a belief in non-anthropomorphic, imperishable and blessed divinity (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 123-4, 76-7).

Lucretius maintains a materialist stance on the mind – as being merely another part of the body – however he also holds that there is ‘vital spirit’ within us (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.70 (3.117)). He explains that it is mainly due to wind and heat that life remains within the body and concludes that animation is due to a ‘vital breath and heat’ that leaves the body when we die (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, p.70 (3.120-130)). When he argues that the mind and the spirit are connected and concludes that they must then both be composed of matter (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, pp.70-71 (3.135-176)), this leads to the conclusion that this same matter<sup>31</sup> exists both inside and outside of the body, since it is not destroyed when the body dies but, like all things, turned back into nature (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, pp.77-78 (3.417-445)). Lucretius also posits that these atoms alone do not bring life – which makes sense if they exist in all things – but must be combined with another element within what is animate to create life – this element remains nameless (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, pp.72-73 (3.231-257)).

Within the body, the spirit is the animating force, however when not contained within the body, these spirit atoms diffuse and return to nature. As nature is the paradigm of order, for Lucretius, nothing within her domain is superfluous. These spirit atoms suffuse the entirety of nature, when they are not contained within a body. Since Virgil does not contribute any intelligence or will to his concept of the divine spirit which suffuses the universe, these two concepts are entirely compatible. All that is said of Virgil’s permeating spirit is that it ‘sustains’, animates and lends order (Maro 2006, p.583 (6.724-729)). For Lucretius, nature is perfectly orderly and the universe is immortal, because nothing can be truly destroyed. If spirit atoms are part of nature, as they must be because all atoms are, then they do add to the order of nature,

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<sup>31</sup> The details with which he describes this particular matter are irrelevant other than to note that its atoms are both compliant to the order of nature and immortal like all other atoms.

otherwise they would be superfluous. They are also immortal, as all atoms are. Virgil points out his permeating spirit and the creation and order of nature, while Lucretius deals with both nature and the spirit separately while attributing an order to nature that nearly resembles intention. Either way, it is enough to say that these two theories are compatible. This is not to say that Virgil derived this concept from Lucretius, but I merely point out that the two ideas are not contradictory. It is important to reiterate, however, that Lucretius does not maintain that the spirit survives the death of the body, merely that the spirit atoms do so, and they do not maintain their current configuration nor do they enter a new body and become reincarnated (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, pp.82-83 (3.633-670)).

## ANCHISES

### Conclusion

In this section we have seen first that piety is not portrayed as obeying Fate, but rather as the willingness to obey the will of the gods as it is interpreted by humans. Next we saw that Jupiter and Fate are not synonymous, as they are for the Stoics, and thus following the will of the gods is not the same as following a prescribed Fate; and defying Fate is not the same as defying the gods and is therefore not impious or immoral. We have also seen that attempts to utilize word usage to prove links between Stoic ideas and the *Aeneid* failed when context – both historical and textual – are taken into account. Therefore, given the separation of Jupiter and Fate and the lack of punishment for defiance of Fate, it has been shown that these aspects are inconsistent with a Stoic worldview. When comparing Virgil's cosmology with that of Lucretius, while allowing for poetic licence, it has been shown that they are not inconsistent with one another. Also, Epicureans do not hold that Fate is synonymous with Jupiter, another point that holds with the presentation within the text. This will be examined further with the examination of freedom of will in the next section.

## CHAPTER III: DIDO

### Plot Summary of Character

Dido is one of the main characters in Virgil's *Aeneid*. She is the queen of Carthage, a place of refuge for Aeneas during his travels. She first appears in book one and dies at the end of book four with a brief appearance in book six when Aeneas visits the Underworld. In book one, Juno, goddess of fidelity and wife of Jupiter, strives to disrupt Aeneas' travels and prevent him from reaching Latium, Italy. Acting out of rage and jealousy, she contrives to shipwreck the Trojan refugees. Aeneas and half his fleet crash on the coast of Libya. During his search for information about the people he is now confronted with, Aeneas runs into his mother, Venus, disguised as a maiden huntress. When asked, she divulges to him Dido's back-story and the history of the people of Carthage, a Tyrian colony. The story Venus tells Aeneas is of a queen of impeccable moral character, one who would rather die than break her vow to her dead husband and betray his memory. However, these words are not that of Virgil himself. The entire story is told by Venus, backed by her intention of forging a connection between the queen and her son in order to guarantee his safety while in Carthage. However this had already been done by Jupiter; he had sent Mercury to smooth the way for the Trojans in their attempt to solicit a friendly reception and help from the Carthaginians. Venus goes beyond these simple means and continuously intervenes in their interpersonal relationship. This should be remembered when considering Dido's character. Also important to remember is that this entire back-story is based on a pre-established mythical figure, and it is likely that her story was meant to be invoked in the reader's mind<sup>32</sup>. This is further evidenced when Dido herself is called "Elissa" within the text;

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<sup>32</sup> The mythological figure in reference here is that of Elissa, sister of Pygmalion of Tyre. Her story is recounted in many places, but only fully by Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus (retold through Junianus Justinus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century). The

Aeneas calls her by this name at 4.335; Dido invokes the gods of “dying Elissa” in her lamentations at 4.610; and she is dubbed Elissa in the beginning narrative at 5.3.

Dido was the sister of Pygmalion, the king of Tyre. She was married to a wealthy man named Sychaeus whom her brother killed out of greed. Pygmalion hid this truth from her with many deceptions until one night Sychaeus appeared to her and told her about her brother’s betrayal. Sychaeus told Dido where he had hidden his treasure and instructed her to flee Tyre. Taking her deceased husband’s treasure, Dido led her followers out of Tyre. Arriving in Libya, Dido petitioned King Iarbas for land to settle on and built Carthage on said land.

At this point, we are returned to the present and back to a narrative told in Virgil’s voice once more. Now Dido is the queen of a budding town, which Aeneas approaches veiled by Venus. When he arrives at her court, he remains veiled while he listens to another petition from the remainder of the Trojan fleet, believed to have been lost in the storm. There is very clear imagery at this point: in Aeneas’ first impressions of Dido, of the queen as a virginal figure of moral virtue. Despite the obvious knowledge that she is a widow, Dido is portrayed thus and so is even more attractive to Aeneas as he watches and listens from behind Venus’ cloud. As was arranged by Jupiter, Dido graciously accepts the Trojan’s supplication, agreeing to house them on her land, feed them like a proper hostess, aid them in rebuilding their fleet and help them search for their lost prince, Aeneas. She also offers them a place to remain, adding the strength of their men to her own, further solidifying her position in Libya, which is one of her permeating goals throughout the story, security of her position for her people. The Trojans inform her that they desperately desire to find their leader and his son and further their quest, or failing that return to a nearby Trojan colony.

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details of her story are unimportant here, though deviations will be noted from time to time. The largest deviation is that Aeneas is not mentioned in her story, rather she commits suicide instead of breaking her vow to her dead husband and marrying Iarbas (a character change that is vital to the telling of the story by Virgil).

Moved by Dido's acceptance and the recovery of his brethren, Aeneas reveals himself at last and accepts her offer of hospitality. When he speaks and the veil is removed, Aeneas is beautified by Venus, tempting Dido into a romantic attraction to the hero. This godly intervention is made all the more blatant when Venus replaces Ascanius, Aeneas' son, with her other son Cupid, instructing him to use his art to cause Dido to fall in love with the prince. This Cupid accomplishes by attracting her with his divine beauty and, while seated in her lap, he poisons her with love. The hostess throws a feast for her guests and Aeneas provides the traditional guest gifts to the queen.

The next two books consist of Aeneas' story about the battle of Troy, its fall and his subsequent travels before his shipwreck on Dido's shore. Back in the present narrative, in book four, the queen falls passionately in love with Aeneas. In this she appears emotionally undone by the gods. She seeks the counsel of her sister, Anna, and explains her moral conflict. She had been continuously loyal to the vow she had made to her first husband, now dead, but the effect that Aeneas has on her is weakening her will to maintain that loyalty. Anna counsels her to forget her deceased husband, to marry Aeneas, have his children and in this way further her own happiness and the stability of her throne. Dido, desiring this as well, relents to her sister's counsel and decides to allow herself to love Aeneas.

This is the point at which Dido, having been shot by love's arrow and allowing herself to be sanguine regarding her future, is compared to a deer shot with an arrow at 4.68-73. The imagery is that of a wandering shepherd having unknowingly wounded the deer, who will eventually die of her injuries. Dido being compared to a harmless woodland animal can provoke the impression that she is helpless, however, this does not occur until she has willingly given into her love. The decision was hers to make. It is clear by her conversation with her sister Anna that

Dido could have chosen to fight against her love for Aeneas, choosing to die rather than break her vow to her dead husband<sup>33</sup>, but she chooses not to. The relevance of this analogy will be discussed in detail further down, but for now it is sufficient to state that the placement of the analogy, being on Crete, has been a matter of huge debate among classicists for decades. I suggest that the setting of this analogy is meant to invoke the island's relation to the goddess Cybele, which is established in book two, and her role as not only Aeneas' ancestress but also her position as a fertility goddess. Being linked to a fertility goddess, this simile can be taken as analogous to the wandering of a maidens' procession, taking place before her first marriage. Since this is not Dido's first marriage, the analogy is, for her, a mock stand-in for this tradition. This will be argued more fully further down.

Juno's next attempt to thwart Aeneas' journey to Rome involves an intended deception of Venus. She convinces the goddess to arrange a symbolic 'marriage' between Aeneas and Dido in order to waylay him in Carthage. Venus accepts her offer and their plans are set. The goddesses conspire to get Aeneas and Dido into a cave together to weather out a storm; the choice of what they do with their time together is left up to them.

Dido and Aeneas go hunting together in the woods. Before leaving her bedchambers, Dido's character has a pronounced hesitation. This pause has been the topic of much literature, as it stalls the momentum of the poem. For Dido's character, this pause represents a maiden's hesitation at the threshold of her new life as a wife and a complete woman, leaving the safety and shelter of her 'virginal' life. Again, it is known that Dido is a widow and not a maiden, but the imagery of this thread continues. This is another point where Dido makes a choice: she chooses to leave her life as a widow and continue to court her love for Aeneas. Upon joining the group, Dido sees Aeneas, who is once again beautified by Venus, intensifying her attraction even

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<sup>33</sup> As the historical figure Elissa in fact did, or so tradition had it.



further. Dido herself is outfitted similarly to a virgin huntress, the manner of her dress being comparable to that of Penthesilea (Segal, pp.3-4), which is mentioned in book one immediately preceding the analogy in which Dido is compared to Diana. During their hunt, a storm breaks up the party and, as was planned by the conspiring goddesses, Dido and Aeneas take shelter in a common cave. There their love is consummated and their 'marriage' vows symbolically sealed.

Then Rumour takes flight and spreads the tale of how the queen is living luxuriously, having taken a foreign lord. Word reaches king Iarbas, a rejected suitor of Dido and Jupiter's son by a nymph, and the king invokes his father complaining about his insult by the queen. Jupiter, noticing the state of Aeneas' restfulness, sends Mercury to convince Aeneas to move on, reminding him of his obligation to his family and to Rome. Jupiter offers reasons to convince Aeneas to leave his love; he does not order him to do so, as if the mortal would automatically fold to the will of a god. Aeneas' resolve to leave is immediate, his choice made, but he is hesitant of how to approach the queen regarding his departure.

Dido learns of his plans and her emotional response is compared to the inflamed raving of a Bacchant. This comparison is similar to, but markedly different from her roaming upon accepting her love for Aeneas. At 4.300 she is described as 'saevit inops animi', 'raving without rational recourse', she has very clearly gone mad and 'incensa', 'set to fire/burning'. This is her first negative emotional response. Previously she was running around her city in a hopeful joy; none of that hope remains when she realizes that her former reputation has been slandered and she does not get to keep that which she willingly sacrificed it for. She realizes that choosing a foreign lord over her neighbouring suitors was enough of an insult to endanger the security of herself and her citizens.

Dido quickly confronts Aeneas. He swears that he made no marriage vow and was never deceitful in his appreciation of her hospitality or the time they had spent together. Noticing the firmness of his resolve, Dido makes all attempts to convince him to remain with her, even just a little longer, but to no avail. She convinces her sister, Anna, to build a pyre and gather materials under the pretence of preparing for a spell intended to either bind her lover closer to herself or dispel him. She decides to take her own life, rather than live with the shame of her broken vow and at 4.469-473 she is compared to both Pentheus and Orestes in their madness<sup>34</sup>. In the case of Pentheus, he is deceived by the gods, plotted against. Orestes breaks a familial vow and pays for that trespass. These two comparisons together tell us that the gods have done Dido wrong by influencing her emotional state the way they did, but having made the choices that she did, she will pay for her wrong decision, in this case, with her life. At each stage, Dido does make choices, implying that she could have done otherwise.

Mercury visits Aeneas once more, at the instruction of Jupiter, and urges his departure, warning him of the backlash he will suffer if he remains any longer. Aeneas departs in the middle of the night, leaving Dido to wake to the sudden realization of his absence. In response, she rages about sending her fleet after them to kill her enemies, but realizing that is irrational, pulls herself back. This is the momentary peak of her madness, which is short lived and results in no action carried out. From this point, Dido seems clear headed once again, seeming to have pulled herself out of her rage in order to make a rational decision to commit suicide rather than live with the ruination of her reputation and the repercussions of her actions for her city. She makes all of the necessary arrangements and, upon the pyre that she implored her sister build for her, she kills herself with Aeneas' sword in the bed that she and her lover had shared. She offers

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<sup>34</sup> Pentheus was killed by his own mother in the throes of Bacchic frenzy. Orestes kills his mother, avenging his father's death by her hands and is haunted by the furies for spilling familial blood.

a speech that is essentially her own obituary and sacrifices herself with a curse on Aeneas, his offspring and the Roman people to always be at war with her own. Juno, witnessing her untimely death, sends for Iris to cut off Dido's life, allowing her to die, and spirit her away to the underworld.

## DIDO

### Character Description and Justice

When we are first presented with the character of Dido, she is described as follows: “[S]uch was Dido, so moved she joyously through their midst, pressing on the work of her rising kingdom. Then at the door of the goddess, beneath the temple’s central dome, girt with arms and high enthroned, she took her seat. Laws and ordinances she gave to her people; their tasks she adjusted in equal shares or assigned by lot” (Maro 2006, p.297 (1.503-508)). Thus, working in the traditional position of a male, she is seen as performing her queenly duties justly. “She is depicted, in her dealings with her own people and the Trojan refugees, displaying in a ‘kingly’ way virtues such as justice, piety and humanity” (Gill, p.441). Justice, as it is depicted here and pointed out by Ilioneus, a Trojan representative, consists of putting “the curb of justice on haughty tribes” (Maro 2006, p.299 (1.523)), establishing an order that is socially advantageous to the security of all and also dealing fairly with others. This is the behaviour for which she is praised so highly upon our first introduction to her. As Victor A. Estevez points out in his article ‘Queen and City: Three Similes in *Aeneid* IV’, as Dido falls into distracted love with Aeneas, her city begins to fall apart without her excellent guidance. The end of Dido’s tragedy culminates with her suicide.

A scream rises to the lofty roof; Rumour riots through the stricken city. The palace rings with lamentation, with sobbing and women’s shrieks, and heaven echoes with loud wails – as though all Carthage or ancient Tyre were falling before the inrushing foe, and fierce flames were rolling over the roofs of men, over the roofs of gods (Maro 2006, pp.467-469 (4.665-671)).

Two things are made clear here, that justice is something that is not only a desirable and beneficial trait in and for an individual, but also necessary for a city to be secure and orderly,

making it part of Dido's duty to provide said justice to her citizens. While she is performing her 'duty' to her city, she is seen as "a woman who is totally in command of herself and her kingdom" (Coleman, p.155). Justice, as a virtue, can also be revealed within Aeneas' character, as when he attempts the founding of a city on Crete his first duties are to build security with walls and provide his people with laws (Maro 2006, p.381 (3.133-137)).

Dido shows fairness in assigning duties to her people, as seen above, attempting to make the work equal by drawing lots. Aeneas' fairness and willingness to perform his duty to his companions can easily be seen in his actions upon first landing on Libyan shores, which is to hunt down seven stags, one for each of his ships, in order to feed his men (Maro 2006, p.275 (1.184-194)). Aeneas' character will be discussed in further detail below.

This initial portrayal of the queen is why the subsequent actions and decisions she makes are open to so much debate regarding her character, her influences and her responsibility, all of which will be dealt with below.

## DIDO

### Legitimacy, Correctness and Freedom of Will

Virgil went to great lengths to legitimize the relationship between Dido and Aeneas. Virgil needed to make their union believable in that the reader needed to accept the changes he made to Dido's moral character (straying from her story as the steadfast queen that would rather die than break her vow to her dead husband). However, with the underlying thread of moral incorrectness, he also made a clear commentary on Augustus' partner Antony's illegitimate relations with Cleopatra and his denial of his duty to return to Rome. His affair with Cleopatra was not a legitimate marriage, seeing as Antony was already married to Augustus' sister, and he should have, like Aeneas, acknowledged his duty to Rome and left his queen in order to tend to the welfare of his Empire<sup>35</sup>. Virgil needed to, at the same time, justify his corruption of the queen's mythically moral character and exemplify the right actions with respect to loyalty to one's country and peoples.

The string of legitimacy for the union of Aeneas and Dido is much clearer than the subtle hints offered implying that in fact the marriage is not so. Also, the conclusion, Dido's self-sacrificial suicide, lends itself to the belief that her decisions up to that point were wrong morally. Since the 'marriage' was the will of the gods, being the plan of Juno and Venus and blessed by them, this distinction draws a line between divine will and morality. If the gods have orchestrated a plan to lead a mortal down a particular path and the mortal, following their prescribed path, is in fact acting immorally, this means that the gods willed something immoral. This means that they are not themselves perfect or benevolent in their decisions and therefore are not the seat of moral consciousness leaving this center outside of the divine. Humans, therefore,

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<sup>35</sup> This comparison is outlined in Bertman, 2000.

must look to somewhere aside from the gods for moral guidance. This is not to say that *piety* is not a positive quality, as it clearly is within the text: the gods are still to be worshipped for their superiority and authority over man, they merely cannot be the center of moral conscience for mortals. Piety, as seen in the section on Anchises, is the willingness to follow the will of the gods as it is interpreted by humans. However, Anchises interpreted prophecies, omens and signs, Aeneas receives messages from Jupiter intended to rationally convince him of a certain path, Dido's situation is manipulated by the gods. She is not interpreting signs or being given reasons and has no way of knowing what consequences her choices will have. She is not being made aware of the gods' will and choosing to follow, she is merely responding to her situation in the best way she can.

Next I will illuminate the various ways in which Virgil sets up the supposed 'marriage' of Aeneas and Dido and outline the subtle hints within the text that the actions undertaken by Dido were in fact viewed within the text as immoral, regardless of the will of the gods involved. Although on the surface we are led to view their union as correct, lawfully and morally, and though it is blessed by some of the gods, morally speaking the decisions that Dido made were wrong<sup>36</sup> and her assumption that their union was official was incorrect. The reader can see how everything would appear correct to Dido as she is contemplating her relationship with Aeneas; however, as soon as her decision to join with him is consummated, it becomes clear in the narrative that her decisions were in fact not correct and also that on some level she was aware of this as well. At the same time, I will show that Dido's will was her own, since as she contemplates decisions throughout the story, her will was not simply at the whim of the gods.

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<sup>36</sup> What appears to make her decisions morally flawed is the fact that she pursues her pleasure under the veil of an attempt to secure her city but instead she puts her people in danger by angering her neighbouring suitors. She seeks security from potential harm, which her vow had already afforded her, but in betraying this vow she endangers everyone.

Lastly, I will show how this train of events and their eventual conclusion show a rift between the will of the gods, what is fated to happen and what is morally correct.

It is clear that the arrangement of the ‘marriage’ was made by Juno and Venus, both with their own separate agendas. Dido had made a pledge to her dead husband to remain faithful to him and until now she had kept that vow. Her famous vow kept her safe while refusing the proposals from neighbouring kings. When contemplating her decision of whether or not to allow herself to love Aeneas, Dido expresses that she’d rather die than break her promise. Finally being convinced by her sister, she begs for mercy from the gods, gives into her love and begins to form a life with the prince. After her love affair with Aeneas, she is overcome with guilt over what she has done, breaking her vow and endangering her people, and takes her own life. The question remains, however, as to how much of what happened was under the control of Dido herself and how much was purely the result of the will of the gods. It is clear that Venus and Juno caused her love for Aeneas and placed her within close proximity to him with the hopeful outcome of the two characters coming together physically; however was she truly *forced* to forge an intimate relationship with Aeneas? We see that Dido is, in fact, held morally accountable by Virgil for her liaison with Aeneas, as seen by her self-inflicted and untimely death, but were her choices made of her own volition or were they forced? To examine this, I will turn to a closer examination of the text. Also, I will utilize Gorgias’ defence of Helen in order to show that, though Gorgias argues well for the inability of women to fight against the will of gods, men or their desires, whatever may be the verdict with regard to Helen, it is clear that Dido was in control of her own faculties and not only made her own decisions, but held herself responsible for the results of her actions.



The first experience the reader has with Dido's character is through the mouth of Venus. There are reasons why this passage, Dido's back-story, might be taken with scepticism. It is possible that the goddess is already plotting against Dido, in her attempt to bring the queen and Aeneas together. However, it is not Aeneas whom Venus is trying to coax into love. His attraction to the queen is accentuated by her appearance as a virginal figure, but noting their similarity of personal experience is not meant to inspire love in Aeneas. It is merely the goal of Venus that Aeneas be welcomed in this new land and aided in the continuance of his journey. If Aeneas fell in love with Dido, this could hinder his journey and cause him to desire to remain in Carthage, implying that he has the freedom of choice to do so. For these reasons, as Agatha Thornton argues, it is possible to interpret this introduction as "a preparation for the following love story, but on the part of the poet, *not* on Venus' part" (Thornton, p.84). Virgil is prepping the reader for the inevitable relationship between these two characters, flavouring it with commonalities and emotional realism. Venus' interest is not in making Aeneas love Dido, but in making Dido love Aeneas.

In our first encounter with Dido herself, she is compared to virginal Diana (1.498-504). This is rather blatant on Virgil's part; of course we would want to view Dido as virginal, not only does it make her character seem more wholesome, but it also intensifies the attraction that Aeneas feels upon seeing her for the first time. Also, right before revealing the queen herself, Virgil has Aeneas looking at a tapestry portraying the battle of Troy. The last figure that he focuses upon is that of Penthesilea, a maiden huntress. Directly following a description of the maiden in her role among men the reader is introduced to the character of the queen and Dido is compared to Diana, another maiden huntress. The passage runs as follows:

Even as on Eurotas' banks or along the heights of Cynthus Diana guides her dancing bands, in whose train a thousand Oreads troop to right and left; she bears a

quiver on her shoulder, and as she treads overtops all the goddesses; joys thrill Latona's silent breast – such was Dido, so moved she joyously through their midst, pressing on the work of her rising kingdom (Maro 2006, p.297 (1.498-504)).

This clearly shows that the reader and Aeneas are supposed to view Dido as a maiden figure. This theme is continued and her actions are set parallel to a running narrative of a virgin leaving her maiden status and embarking on her marital journey. Virgil tells us that she is seeing to the administration of her city, which is a man's domain. She is conducting her manly affairs with grace. This, taken along with her noble back-story, gives us the impression of a just queen in control of her city and her affairs. As Gill points out, Dido “is depicted, in her dealings with her own people and the Trojan refugees, displaying in a ‘kingly’ way virtues such as justice, piety, and humanity” (Gill, p.441). However, she is not a full woman, or is no longer, since she is unwed, in this case, widowed.

In contrast to this, the first subtle implication of the immorality of the union between Dido and Aeneas occurs after Aeneas and his refugees have been accepted into Carthage. When Aeneas is requesting his son and different assorted gifts to be brought from his ships, guest gifts for the queen, one of the items is a veil. This one item has the longest description of all of the items Aeneas requests from the ship, being given four lines to itself.

[A]nd a veil fringed with yellow acanthus, once worn by Argive Helen when she sailed for Pergamus and her unlawful marriage – she had brought them from Mycenae, the wondrous gift of her mother Leda (Maro 2006, p.307 (1.649-652)).

Aeneas is bringing Helen's wedding veil to Dido as a gift, the wedding veil for her illegitimate marriage to Paris, when she was still married to her previous husband Menelaos. Later in the story, when Aeneas is telling Dido about his trials, he describes his urge upon seeing Helen to kill her for her wrongdoings. He sees her cowering at a shrine during the battle and he hates her

for what she has done to Troy, since her adultery destroyed his city (2.567-587). Her union to Paris was obviously an illegitimate one, as she was still married to Menelaos when she left. When Aeneas requests this gift for Dido, the reader is reminded of a horrible adulteress, though this allusion lends nothing solid to her moral character at the stage within the story at which it is placed.

Also worth noting is the fact that Iarbas calls Aeneas ‘another Paris’, again hinting at the immorality of the otherwise seemingly correct union of Dido and Aeneas. Praying to Jupiter, Iarbas exclaims, “This woman who, straying in our bounds, set up a tiny city at a price, to whom we gave coastland to plough and terms of tenure, has spurned my offers of marriage, and welcomed Aeneas into her realm as lord. And now that Paris with his eunuch train, his chin and perfumed locks bound with a Lydian turban, grasps the spoil; while we bring offerings to your temples, yours forsooth, and cherish an idle story” (Maro 2006, p.437 (4.211-218)). Here Iarbas is drawing a parallel between the betrayal of Helen and that of Dido against himself, also likening Aeneas to Paris, the thief of wives. He saw himself as the legitimate mate for Dido, and though that has no bearing on the story, the comparison is clearly meant to portray the impropriety of their union.

The queen takes the Trojans in, throws a feast and listens to Aeneas’ story. During his re-telling of his trials, Dido falls in love with Aeneas. She is poisoned by love’s arrow when she takes Cupid, in the guise of Ascanius, into her lap and plays with him. However, even being in love, love-sick as it seems, she has yet to break any vow, the breaking of which must be a conscious decision on her part. The gods have an influence upon her emotional state, not on her actions, which are within her power to choose. We see this in her conversation with her sister, Anna, in book four, lines 6-55. Dido explains her situation and fidelity to her dead husband,

telling Anna how much she loves Aeneas and how worthy he is, but claiming that she would rather die than break her vow. Anna, using reason, laments that Dido is sad, that she refuses to partake in the joys of marriage when the dead do not care for her suffering. She concedes that until now Dido was not interested in any of her suitors, but does not see why she should not give into the potentially beneficial love offered to her. Anna points out the many enemies of Carthage and the political and military benefit to be made by solidifying the queen's position and adding Aeneas' warriors to her own, strengthening her position within Libya. All of these reasons, offerings of security and prosperity, sway the queen and she gives in to her love for Aeneas. It is clear here that she had a choice to make; if this were not the case, then she would have simply fallen in love with Aeneas and automatically embraced it, but instead her sister's words "put hope in her wavering mind, and loosed the bonds of shame" (Maro 2006, p.427 (4.55)). She felt shamed at the mere idea of breaking her vow to her dead husband, not guilt, but shame. Guilt is a private emotion, feeling badly for a wrong that you have committed. Shame is an emotion that is thrust upon someone by their misdeeds being made public, a feeling of inadequacy of character or unworthiness. As a queen of reportedly high moral character, Dido, on some level, is aware of the potential effect of this decision upon her moral character, reputation and the security of her people, if things should go badly. As Gill explains, "[t]hese passages illustrate a feature recurrent in Book four: Dido herself sees her passionate love for Aeneas as a fault or source of blame;" "her surrender to passionate love is against her better judgement or 'akratic'" (Gill, p.444). Here, her passion involves an inner conflict that she is continually and rationally aware of. Dido is described here in a way akin to Aristotle's description of the incontinent character, one who knows that their own actions are base but does them anyway because of the desires they pursue, ignoring the results of their rational calculations regarding a situation in

favour of following their passions (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p.1809 (VII 1145a35-1145b20)). This will be discussed further when Dido's character is examined as a complete unit.

Once she has accepted her love for Aeneas, Dido is compared to a wounded deer. This analogy, in context with her comparison to virginal figures, her hesitation at the threshold of her bedchamber and her symbolic 'marriage', together offer her the running comparison to a maiden on her way to her nuptials. The significance of this scene, within the context as it is described here, is not outlined within the literature on the subject, however I will show its importance for our purposes here.

First, Dido is compared to a deer wounded by a wandering shepherd unaware that he has hit his target. The deer runs wild through the mountains of Crete. It is obvious that Aeneas is the shepherd, leading the people to their destiny. He is yet unaware of the effect that he has had upon the queen. The deer, Dido, is shot with love's arrow by the unknowing shepherd of his people. Once wounded, Dido is possessed by the love, influenced by her own desire. Eventually the deer will die from the wound, without seeking help. As Morgan points out: "He does not realize the effect of his presence has upon Dido and Dido has been so careless as to forget her obsessive marital loyalty. The casual arrow of his charm, like one of Cupid's unconsidered darts, is unnoticed by him; but it hangs from the wound in Dido's body" (Morgan, p.67).

Dido, as the deer, is placed upon Crete, a place where there is an herb, *dictamnus*, that, when eaten, has the medicinal property to remove arrows and cure poison. This plant is in fact cultivated later at 12.411-22 by Venus in order to cure Aeneas. Also, Morgan claims that Dido does in fact find the cure for her ailment, since, he argues, there is no instance where an animal fails to find the herb; he suggests that her cure is found in the cave after the hunting scene and the storm (Morgan, p.68). Armstrong disputes this idea, arguing that the deer, like Dido, is not

looking for a cure, but will eventually die from her wound (R. Armstrong, p.330). As the story goes, this is in fact what happens: Dido does die as a result of her love for Aeneas. It does not seem that she found a cure in the cave, or anywhere else, though she may have delayed the inevitable for a brief period. However, it may be the case that Dido does in fact find her cure, in death. Her choice to end her own life may not only be seen as her taking responsibility for the decisions that she had made, but also as her taking control of her own emotions once again. She was coaxed into love, but she was not forced to give into that love. She chose to break her vow, a choice that she willingly pays for, at the same time as she reclaims her stature after her lapse in judgement and ensures the security of her people.

The allusion to Crete, still left insufficiently explained, is yet another device used by Virgil in the running comparison of Dido to a virgin on her way to her nuptials. Anchises' speech already established a connection between Crete and the goddess Cybele at 3.103-17. It is also worth noting that Cybele was worshipped as Agdistis/Angdistis, patroness of childbearing (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 4671*). Her sphere of influence also included fertility (Walton and Scheid), (Price and Kearns, p.139). At the stage in the narrative where this analogy is placed, it seems appropriate, since she is deciding to begin a new relationship with a new husband, that she would be wishing for fertility, in order to secure her position within her city. In fact, Dido's sister, Anna, explains this very thing to Dido when she is trying to convince the queen to give in to her affection for Aeneas at 4.31-53. In a way, this running can be viewed as a maiden's procession as is fitting before marriage, a substitution for the real thing, since Dido is no longer a maiden. However, being without a husband and working within the male sphere of influence, Dido can easily be viewed as maiden, not yet a woman in full right.

As we see in the analogy, Dido is raging madly around the city, much like a woman who has been possessed, like a Corybant. Possession of females is more common in myth than that of males (Dillon, p.179). Though the followers of Cybele were usually male, she would often possess others with madness<sup>37</sup>. In addition to this, a trilogy of similes associated with Dido is pointed out by Estevez, in which Dido as a deer is the first and in the other two Dido is compared to a Bacchant (Estevez, p.26). Given the setting of the simile, it is not a stretch to think that the meaning of the comparison is to show the character of Dido as being possessed, like a Corybant, by the goddess, who is close to Aeneas, and that this being driven mad is her preparation for her next stage into proper womanhood, through marriage to Aeneas. It is a temporary madness, one of hope and joy, unlike her later comparisons, not a literal possession<sup>38</sup>. She has fallen in love, temporarily revelling in this feeling, but is still able to think rationally, as can be seen in her hesitation before her final decision to join Aeneas for their outing.

Another important scene to note is that of the conversation between Juno and Venus. In this conversation, Juno explains at 4.125-7 that she is going to arrange a union between Dido and Aeneas, as if it were truly a legitimate marriage. This shows that whatever union is established between them is desired by the gods, even if the couple are unaware of the significance of their encounter. Dido herself does view their relation as that of a 'marriage', using this label to cover her shame at breaking her vow to her dead husband and thus endangering both her reputation and her people. It is also important to notice that at each step in this progression, Dido has choices to make and makes them willingly. She did, however, make them in accordance to her emotional directions, loving and wanting to be with Aeneas, but they were not forced upon her. If she had chosen to decide with rationality, it is clear that she would have had the option of choosing

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<sup>37</sup> As seen in Menander's *Theophoroumene* and it is mentioned in Euripides' *Hippolytus* 141-5.

<sup>38</sup> Literal possession can be seen in the possession of the Sibyl, for example, which is a complete taking over of personal volition.

otherwise, like her predecessor Elissa had supposedly done. However not using her reason, she chose badly. She seeks security through this union, but is aware that none is to be found from the wandering shepherd of his people.

Next we see Dido's hesitation at the *thalamus* before she sets out for the hunt that will end with her symbolic 'marriage' to Aeneas. This is a moment of stillness among the wild preparation and anticipation of the hunt, described previously as the leaders' respective retinues ready themselves. Segal goes into detail regarding the importance of this moment and its significance to the upcoming marriage (Segal, pp.5-6). He pays particular attention to the description of Dido, comparing 4.139 (*aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem*) with 1.492-93, the description of Penthesilea (Segal, pp.3-4). This is important to note here because it is a comparison between Dido and a virginal woman working within the sphere of men. It further supports the idea that this is a symbolic 'marriage'. Dido hesitates at the threshold of her bedchamber, as a virgin bride-to-be would hesitate before finally leaving the safety and privacy of her maiden life. According to Segal, "this allusion to the nuptial moment has the merit of placing Dido's hesitation in the central zone of her tragedy, with its conflicts between passion and duty, love and rule, private life and public achievement" (Segal, p.6). He also points out her hesitation as an attempt to deny fate, the will of the gods and her own demise, but in this she fails (Segal, pp.8-9).

This chain of events, leading up to the union of Dido and Aeneas, mirrors the proper behaviour for a maiden before her nuptials. It is interesting that, though Virgil strays so far away from the traditional image of Dido as a steadfast, loyal queen, who would rather die than break her promise to her dead husband, he still manages to make the union as legitimate as possible, comparing her to virginal figures, allowing her a maiden's procession, showing the presence of



divine intention and intervention and showing her moment of doubt and decision before thrusting herself onto her chosen path.

The first blatant indication that Dido made the wrong decision in forming a relationship with Aeneas occurs in the narrative directly following the consummation of their love within the cave. It is clear from these lines that, though the build up to this moment made the choice seem to be the correct one, it in fact was not.

That day the first of death, the first of calamity was cause. For no more is Dido swayed by fair show or fair fame, no more does she dream of a secret love: she calls it marriage and with that name veils her sin (Maro 2006, p.433. (4.169-172)).

Dido covers her shame with the guise of something blessed and legitimate, as does Virgil in his telling of the story. However, it is clear here that she is deluding herself. Here, just like when she had first decided to give into her feelings for Aeneas, Dido's shame is overcome by her emotional compulsion toward him and hidden by her rationalizing. Morally, she should have stayed loyal to her first husband, maintaining the sanctity of her vow as well as the security of herself and her people. As Agatha Thornton explains, "[t]he guilt (culpa) that she incurs by loving Aeneas and calling him her husband lies in her deserting her loyalty to her dead husband Sychaeus" (Thornton, p.12). Her shame, Dido claims, is Aeneas' fault, that it "is on his account that the flame of her loyal regard for Sychaeus has been extinguished and that she has lost her former reputation which alone would have raised her to the stars, that is, made her immortal" (Thornton, p.12). However, it is more than this that is at risk for Dido. One of the main reasons for which Dido decides to pursue her love is because of the prospect of the security offered by Aeneas' forces being joined with her own and the security which an heir provides. These reasons, above the queen's happiness, are offered by her sister. Also, the risk to herself and her

people with Aeneas' departure are pointed out by Dido as she pleads with him to remain and not leave her at the mercy of her disgruntled neighbours.

Dido repeatedly hides her feelings of shame behind what she views as a legitimate marriage, arranged by the gods, though she is unaware of this, and to the benefit of her land and standing. Dido is able to uphold this illusion for a time, but only until Aeneas decides to leave her. It is clear that Dido is torn, but it does not appear as if she has no choices. She is more akin to Aristotle's incontinent character, since she knows what is right, but lacks the will power to go through with actions based upon this knowledge. As Aristotle explains, the incontinent character knows that an action is morally incorrect before they are in a passionate state (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, pp.1809-1810 (7.1145b20-1146a20)). It is clear that she did not view the betrayal of her vow and risking her people as morally correct before she fell for Aeneas. This is shown in her resistance of all other suitors, despite the security such a union could potentially bring to her throne it was too much of a risk, whereas her reputation as a steadfast queen kept everyone safe. Also, Aristotle points out that though we might want to believe that what the incontinent person has when making their determination is only opinion or belief and not actual *knowledge*, if this were the case then such actions would not be blame worthy, but they clearly are (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p.1810 (7.1145b30-1146a5)). For this reason, he holds that the incontinent person, in fact, does have knowledge regarding right and wrong in these situations, yet they still follow through with what their passions dictate and this is the reason for their blame (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p.1810 (7.1146a1-1146a10)). It is not mere opinion that Dido holds regarding the state of her virtue and security being tied to her vow, she knows that betrayal of her promise to her dead husband will ruin her reputation and besmirch her virtuous character putting her in danger of invasion. Her reputation is, in fact, ruined by her

actions, she has no doubt of this. In this way, not only is Dido certain (whether through knowledge or true opinion) that what she did was wrong, before and after, but it was in fact morally incorrect. Aristotle finds it to be surprising that someone would commit a wrong action while being conscious that that action is morally incorrect (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, pp.1811-1813 (7.1146b5-1147b20)), but that is what happened to Dido (she was aware of the universal principle governing her situation, while at the same time desiring to believe that it did not apply to her particular situation). She knew that breaking her vow was dangerous and wrong, however, she rationalized that in her particular situation it was beneficial for her to break her vow, under the guise of marriage, in order to solidify her position and protect her city. She sought security and obtained the opposite. Dido acted upon her desires and her reasoning undermined her previous rationality regarding her fidelity to her dead husband and she returns to form after her passions have been dispelled. However, it would be unfair to classify Dido's character as excessive and unrestrained overall; in this instance she acted against her own good reason, but it is clear from her past that her passions did not rule her life in the same way as a glutton.

Can we then assume that Dido was completely subject to the will of the gods, as was Gorgias' Helen? Or that she was forced by deeds, seduced by words or possessed by love? Virtue and vice lie within actions, and it is obvious within the text that what Dido did in the betrayal of her vow was wrong and potentially dangerous, regardless of how she attempted to convince herself that it was not. However, if it is the case that she was forced by word or deed to break her fidelity, then she cannot be held responsible for her vicious action. Here it is useful to utilize the arguments of Gorgias because of the similarities between the situations of Helen and that of Dido. His defence of Helen is relevant here, simply because if it is possible to prove that

Dido was responsible for her own actions, that she could have chosen to do other than she did, then we are able to remove the will of the gods as the cause for her actions, thus showing that there is an element of freedom of will presented within the text.

Gorgias argues that it is the nature of things that the weaker be ruled by and follow the stronger (Gorgias, p.51 (DK82B11.6)). Therefore, if it be the case that Dido was forced by the gods to commit the actions that she did, then she cannot be held responsible for that which the gods forced her to do. If Dido was merely subject to the will of the gods, then “it is right for the responsible one to be held responsible; for god’s predetermination cannot be hindered by human premeditation” (Gorgias, p.51 (DK82B11.6)). If Dido’s decisions were not her own to make, then she cannot be held responsible for the actions that she undertook as a result of those decisions. To determine this, we must look at the decisions that were made by Dido and establish whether they were made of her own volition or not.

The first decision Dido has to make, and that which is the most pronounced within the text, takes place when the queen is puzzling over the wisdom of giving into her affection for Aeneas. For this decision, she consults her sister. During this conversation, it is clear that Dido is conflicted. She loves Aeneas and desires to be with him, but she also takes into consideration her reputation, security and her fidelity to her dead husband. Her sister appeals to Dido’s future happiness and offers her rational reasons for acquiescing to her feelings for Aeneas. She reminds the queen of her tentative hold upon the land she rules and the possibility of impending wars with their neighbours. With a king by her side, his warriors added to her own, Dido’s position would be more secure. Also, Dido yet has no heir to her throne, as she has no children. If she did have a child by Aeneas, she would have a successor to continue her line and add to the stability of her family’s rule. All of these reasons, offered by her sister, are reasonable positives

to a union with the travelling prince. However, it is also true that the same reasons would apply to marriage to Iarbas, the neighbouring king and constant suitor of Dido. The queen has no romantic interest in Iarbas, so these reasons, though they would apply to both suitors, did not work to convince her to marry the king. Dido does not seem as if she was difficult to convince. Her emotions made her more inclined to listen to her sister's favourable reasons for attaching herself to Aeneas. Even if this is the case, it is still clear that, since there was a period of deliberation, she could have chosen to resist her affection for Aeneas. She could have, like she had with Iarbas, stayed loyal to her vow to her dead husband, as she should have, or she could have established the same security and a more definite union through marriage to Iarbas.

Another important decision that Dido has to make is that of self destruction. She rages upon discovering that Aeneas is gone. Pulling herself together, she quickly recovers from her initial irrationality and settles upon the decision of taking her own life, rather than living with the shame of what she has done and the impending destructive implications for her city. She then curses Aeneas' descendants and makes preparations for her funeral pyre, under the guise of a religious ritual. When moving toward the pyre, she is flushed and trembling at the thought of what she is about to do, however, when she is positioned to kill herself she pauses thoughtfully, obviously no longer irrational. Dido tells of her own good deeds, lamenting Aeneas' arrival and blaming him for her shame before taking her own life. Though she blames Aeneas and Fate for her situation, pushing the blame off of herself, hers is an ending not prescribed by Fate or the gods. This is shown by the fact that, when she lies dying, the gods are not ready to receive her, she was not prepared for death. Juno has to send Iris down to perform the rites to Dis and spirit her away to the Underworld. This clearly shows that, despite all of the planning the gods might

do to steer mortals in a certain way, mortals have the ability to defy the plans of the gods, they have freedom of will.

I have shown here that at each stage Dido had decisions to make, ones which she could have potentially made differently, like her predecessor Elissa supposedly had, but she made the conscious decision to tread the path she did. The involvement of the gods in her affairs and her resulting shame at acquiescing to their will, show a rift between morality and the divine. Agathe Thornton in her book *The Living Universe: Gods and Men in Virgil's Aeneid* states clearly that Virgil's goal was moral teaching (Thornton, p.2). She states that "[h]e wanted to express ethical values as well as religious beliefs in his *Aeneid* and these two were for him inseparable" (Thornton, p.2). Also, she states that "the Virgilian cosmos is a carefully articulated structure in which human action is set firmly into the hierarchy of divine forces which culminates in and is ultimately ruled by Jupiter" (Thornton, p.2). However, as we have seen, the will of the gods is, as Virgil views it, not synonymous with what is morally right, and moreover, they were at odds with the designs of Fate, which look to the founding of Rome. Juno and Venus plot to bring Dido and Aeneas together, but their union is wrong: it ruins Dido's reputation as a virtuous and loyal queen, destroys the security of her people and it forestalls Aeneas' journey to Italy. It may be the case that these gods are involved in human affairs, but it would be a mistake to conclude that they are a moral compass for the piece.

Returning to Gorgias' arguments for the innocence of Helen, as they apply to Dido, he argues that if someone is forced by another person to do something wrong, then the person who did the forcing is responsible for the wrong action (Gorgias, p.51 (DK82B11.7)). As to whether Dido was forced physically, it is evident from her first analogy, in which she is compared to a wounded deer, that Aeneas not only did not force her to choose to be with him, he was unaware

of his effect upon her emotional state. As the wandering shepherd, Aeneas was unknowingly the source of the affection that caused Dido to willingly sacrifice her safety and reputation for his embrace. It is clear that Dido was not forced by Aeneas in any way.

Also, if Dido was forced by words, a persuasive speech crafted to change her emotional state and compel her action in a certain direction, then her action was not blameworthy, merely unfortunate (Gorgias, p.53 (DK82B11.15)). “Speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works: it can stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity” (Gorgias, p.52 (DK82B11.8)). It is true that Anna’s words inspired hope in Dido and eased her shame, but, as we have seen, it was not difficult to sell Dido on Aeneas. In addition, Anna does not offer a false argument, she merely offers the same argument that can be used for the promotion of any union. Her advice favours the wrong decision, but she counsels marriage with Aeneas, not symbolic, but actual marriage. It does not seem that Dido even attempts this route and it is highly unlikely that Aeneas would have responded positively to the proposal. The truth of the situation is that Dido wanted to be with him, she already loved him and she relented to her emotional inclination/desires. Rationally, she knew that she should stay loyal to her vow, that only through her high moral standing was she able to achieve immortality, security and glory. Alternatively, following her sister’s advice, procuring for herself a legitimate marriage would have rationally fulfilled all that she was desiring in her relation with Aeneas. All of this she knew, but she allowed herself to be swayed, not by the words of her sister, but by her own desire. She did not desire the things that Anna advised that she needed and should have; she wanted Aeneas. It is not the case that Anna’s convincing of her could be interpreted as the type of forceful persuasion that Gorgias means when he likens the effects of speech to that of a drug upon the soul (Gorgias, p.53 (DK82B11.14)). Anna does not

spin her words in such a way to bewitch the hearer, she merely repeats the reasons she appears to have been giving Dido for years regarding her desire for the queen to take a husband.

One point worth consideration is her ‘possession by love’. Again, Gorgias’ argument for possession by love is similar to his argument that the weaker is meant to be ruled by and follow the stronger. Love, being a goddess, rules over men and, having the divine power of a god, cannot be refused by a mortal (Gorgias, p.54 (DK82B11.19)). In this way, it has already been shown that Dido’s will was not forced by the gods. However, if love is not the force of a god, “if it is a disease of human origin and a fault of the soul, it should not be blamed as a sin, but regarded as an affliction” (Gorgias, p.54 (DK82B11.19)).

The question remains as to whether Dido was made insane by Love, or by her conscious decision to give in to her love. Previous to her deciding to give into her love for Aeneas, Dido is conflicted, pensive and possibly even pining over the prince, however she is not described in a way that can be interpreted as in a mad frenzy until after she talks to her sister – though she is described as being ‘male sana’ at book 4.8, which can be translated as ‘distraught’ or, more colloquially, as ‘not all there’ - and decides to ignore her reasons for resisting her love for Aeneas and give into her affection for him. The decision that she has made drives Dido to madness. Her mad frenzy is first located within a simile, comparing her to a wounded deer, but this madness is fleeting and hopeful, if manic. Later, upon hearing that Aeneas is leaving her, she is compared to a Bacchant. Bacchic fury is also temporary, but it is less hopeful and more a pure insanity invoked by the divine, however there is no divine intervention in this case. The final figures she is compared to, Pentheus and Orestes, are figures of a more lasting, plaguing madness. Her raving madness leaves the realm of simile when Aeneas finally leaves her and she rants about sending her ships to kill him for his betrayal. She realizes that she is irrational and



does not go through with the attack, but this madness is not merely pointed toward, muted or quiet, but reveals itself loudly within the narrative.

The figures with which she is likened, Pentheus and Orestes, are part of a more lasting tragedy. Orestes, son of Agamemnon, returned to his household to find that his father had been murdered by his mother. He was told by Apollo to avenge his father's murder<sup>39</sup>, and having done so, was harried by the Furies for spilling familial blood, forcing him to flee his home in fear. Orestes was not forced by the gods to kill his mother, rather he was told to do so and informed of the consequences he faced if his father's murder remained unavenged. Orestes was chased by the Furies and, in Aeschylus' telling of it, he fled to Athens where he was acquitted of his crime<sup>40</sup>. Pentheus denied the divinity of Bacchus, his first cousin, and the miraculous birth of the god from Jupiter's thigh. This denial, his hybris, is viewed as insanity and, as a result of his insult, Dionysus takes him as a spy to view the bacchic rites. There, his mother, in bacchic frenzy, believes him to be a lion, and the maenads tear him apart with their bare hands<sup>41</sup>. Pentheus' irrationality of belief is seen as madness and his punishment is death. Here, both Pentheus and his mother are deceived by the god, however, Pentheus was given many chances to change his mind regarding Bacchus' divine status. In both cases, that of Pentheus and that of Orestes, the gods steered them down a path of wrongdoing and madness, resulting in their torture or death (Orestes, however, only did wrong in the eyes of the Furies). These two comparisons, taken together, tell us that Dido was wronged by the gods when they influenced her emotional state and opened a new path down which they desired her to walk. However, it is clear that she had freedom of choice in walking this path and, having done so, paid for her wrongdoings.

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<sup>39</sup> Aeschylus' *The Libation Bearers*, ll. 269-301, 939-941, 1030-1033, to cite some examples.

<sup>40</sup> Aeschylus' *The Furies*.

<sup>41</sup> The story as it is told in Euripides' *Bacchae*.

Either way, it is clear that Dido was not insane, in that she was not frantically out of her mind or hysterical due to possession by love, instead she became emotionally overwrought only when Aeneas left her, and even then, she was able to pull herself together at the end of her life, in her choice to kill herself. Overt emotionality can be interpreted as insanity, but hers was not a lasting insanity or irrationality. Her character was stable before her encounter with Aeneas, she showed more instances of clarity of thought than bouts of irrationality while she was with the prince and her thoughts were clear upon reflecting on her own death. Her death was her redemption as well as a means of ensuring security for her city.

Christopher Gill in his book *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*, discusses Dido's character and gives an interpretation of her anger as either quasi-Plutarchean or a Stoic-Epicurean manifestation of anger. He views her conception of herself as being tightly linked to her vow to her dead husband (Gill, p.441). Gill describes Dido as having a more or less stable character to begin with which takes a negative turn upon the loss of her relationship with Aeneas. Thus he offers a Plutarchean interpretation of her character, ascribing to Dido the characteristics of an individual who has not achieved complete virtue, which would enable her to overcome any adversity without the loss of ethical stability (Gill, pp.441-442). In this model, a person's character is viewed as a combination of "inborn nature, habituation, and reasoned choice" with the stance that a person is composed of both rational and irrational parts (Gill, p.413). This model assumes that a character, once formed, is relatively coherent and stable (Gill, p.413). In this way, Dido is viewed as having a relatively stable character that takes a turn for the worst on account of her situation at the end of her life. However, this pattern assumes life-long enduring character traits, like incontinence, but it was only in this particular situation that

Dido shows incontinence. Previous to this instance, her choices seem to have been in-line with what she believed was correct.

Another interpretation offered by Gill lies within the realm of Senecan tragedy, in which surrender to emotion begins a long phase of emotional instability, “involving irrational reasoning, internal conflict and self-blame, and a kind of ‘madness’” (Gill, p.442). He outlines how this pattern fits both the Stoic and Epicurean interpretations of anger and emotion. Gill favours this interpretation, melding Stoic and Epicurean ideas of anger into one. The text also supports this interpretation since, as it has been shown, Dido’s first instance of comparison to a maddened figure (the wounded doe) occurs directly following her acceptance of her love for Aeneas. Her madness intensifies when she receives news of Aeneas’ departure and reaches its height when she discovers him gone. Then in her final moments, while delivering her own obituary, she is able to show surprising rationality (Gill, p.442). On the ethical flavour of Dido’s anger, Gill sides with a shared Stoic-Epicurean stance which includes “the idea that only the wise person is fully coherent in psychological make-up and behaviour and that all non-wise people are more or less incoherent” (Gill, p.444). Because of Virgil’s presentation of Dido’s passion involving inner conflict and her incontinent actions in her continuing madness, Gill leans further toward the Stoic interpretation of her character than the Epicurean one. However this is set against the background of Senecan tragedy and it is clear to me that even prior to her acceptance of love for Aeneas and the breaking of her vow, Dido was not a Stoic character. At 1.613 ff. Dido, upon first seeing and listening to Aeneas, is struck by him. He is beautified by Venus, however she is not yet in love, nor has she made the decision to give into her passions. She proceeds to accept him, feast with him and implore him to tell her the story of his strife. This does not seem the epitome of Stoic calm. Nor does her emotional reaction upon hearing the

plight of the refugees appear to reflect this calmness of mind. Also, if we look further into her back-story, her emotional reaction to the death of her husband, her anger with her brother for Sychaeus' murder and her melodramatic vow to honour her dead husband even though she had many child-bearing years ahead of her and a prospective throne to protect, all show that she did not withstand all of her plight with a stoic calm, even if she did what she deemed morally correct. If she were purposefully being portrayed as a Stoic queen, I would think that her emotional calm would be made more explicit in her manner before her fall to the passions. For this reason, though I agree with Gill's Stoic-Epicurean interpretation of the presentation of Dido's character, I side with an Epicurean take on her morality, anger and madness, as it is presented in the *Aeneid* because the Epicurean accepts emotion for what it is, does not condemn justified anger, as in the case of Dido's anger for the murder of her husband, and does not insist upon Stoic non-emotionality.

## **DIDO**

### Conclusion

As was shown in this section, justice is seen as socially beneficial to all as it provides order and security, which necessarily involves a sense of fairness and the ability to live by a social contract – or in the leader’s case, provide such laws and contracts for their people. Also, it was shown that the ability to defy Fate does belong to the realm of the mortal and thus there is a measure of freedom of will presented within this work. This does not fit with the Stoic idea of Fate, it does however fit with an Epicurean determinism. While examining Dido’s character, it was determined that her presentation of emotion was more consistent with an Epicurean presentation of a passionate character, one who tends to be overly dramatic. Epicurean interpretations of emotion will be dealt with in further detail in the next section on Aeneas, however it is clear that so far all that has been examined is more consistent with Epicurean philosophy than Stoic.

## CHAPTER IV: AENEAS

### Plot Summary of Character

When we first encounter Aeneas, he is in the midst of Juno's storm. He laments his fate and wishes that he had died in Troy, defending his homeland, that death being more honourable than one at sea. Surviving this ordeal, half his crew are shipwrecked on the beaches of Libya. Here, though anxious of his situation, he gives a reinvigorating speech to his men about them having been through worse and assuring them of better times to come and their great destiny. Also, in his role as their leader, he hunts for his men and provides meat for his crew.

Next, in his encounter with his mother, Venus, who is disguised as a maiden huntress, he again laments the trials he has faced and brings his mother near the point of tears when she hears his plight. She directs him to Carthage where, upon viewing the city, Aeneas admires the culture, order and structure of the budding city. He reaches a temple to Juno and, upon seeing the tribulations of Troy depicted on its frescoes, is moved to tears at the sight of his homeland being destroyed. When he finally meets queen Dido, Aeneas is in such a state that he is overwhelmed by her gracious hospitality and promises that, as long as the gods, justice and good will are honoured, her good deeds will be remembered. His first deed as a guest is to order guest-gifts brought from the ships and, in his role as a loving father, he cannot bear to be away from his son for very long, thus he also sends for Ascanius. Venus exchanges Ascanius with Cupid in order to kindle Dido's affection for the prince.

During the royal feast, while Cupid, in the guise of Ascanius, is coddled by the childless queen, Aeneas is requested to tell the story of his travels. As he begins his telling, he is already brought to tears at the memory of his fallen kinsmen and homeland. He tells of his dream, in

which Hector warns him and tells him to flee Troy. He tells of his courage in defending the city, even knowing that it is useless, and leading a group of courageous men in a futile battle proclaiming that “[o]ne chance the vanquished have [is] to hope for none” (Maro 2006, p.341 (2.354)). His trek through the city leads him to an encounter with Helen, whom he finds cowering by the altar of Vesta, and he is filled with rage and a fierce desire to avenge his people by killing the woman who had brought this horror to them. He acknowledges that there is no honour in killing a woman; however he still feels justified in punishing her for her adulterous and ultimately murderous actions. Before he can act, however, he is restrained by his mother. Venus shows him that the fall of his city is the work of the gods and not of one woman, something he could have not otherwise known. She warns her son again of the inevitability of Troy’s fall, tells him to flee and directs him to his home, where his family waits without his protection.

Aeneas follows his mother’s direction and returns home where, after some convincing, he places his father onto his back holding the household gods, takes his son by the hand and leads his wife through the falling city. Unlike when he is fighting by himself, Aeneas is terrified while he totes his family through the city, a father protecting his family. He loses his wife, Creusa, along the way and, against his better judgement, goes back for her, cursing the gods. His journey through the city to find his wife is reckless as he shouts her name with abandon and searches wildly for her, though she is already gone. Her shade appears to him and tells him to go without her, informing him that she is dead and no longer suffering or in captivity. Weeping for his loss, Aeneas leaves the city with his father, son and a group of refugees, but without his loving wife.

They build a fleet and sail from Troy. Aeneas has a couple false starts, founding cities in unfortunate places based upon misinterpreted information. He and his crew face the Harpies, the

Cyclopes and finally the loss of his beloved father, Anchises. Soon after comes the storm that lands him on Dido's shore.

Dido, having fallen in love with Aeneas, seeks to delay him and Aeneas acquiesces, unknowingly allowing her to believe their relationship is a permanent marriage. Jupiter gets wind of Aeneas' love and winter's delay and he sends Mercury to speed the prince on his way, reminding him of his obligation to the legacy of his family. Aeneas' response is immediate, to obey the will of the gods; however he hesitates to break the news to his love, he is nervous and uneasy. Secretly, he orders his fleet readied as he tries to figure out how to approach Dido about his leaving. She discovers that he intends to leave, possibly without telling her at all, and she approaches him angrily. In the face of her begging, knowing that in her mind she believes that she had ruined her reputation and her relations to her neighbours by taking in a foreign king, Aeneas represses his feelings. He thanks her for her hospitality, denies his intention of leaving in secrecy or joining with her in marriage and informs her that he is spurred by the gods to seek Latium and the destiny of his offspring. Being cursed by his love, Aeneas returns to his ship, unmoved by her grief and begging, unable to show his true feelings toward his love - until he finally meets her in the Underworld following her suicide.

Mercury comes again to Aeneas in a dream and warns him of the danger of remaining on the shores when Dido has been burnt so by love. Aeneas sails and, as he leaves, he can see the smoke of Dido's cursed funeral pyre.

Next they put in at the city of Acestes, where Anchises' tomb was, and Aeneas, as leader, holds games in commemoration of his father. During these games, the Trojan women, spurred to frenzy by Juno's workings, set fire to the fleet. Upon noticing this disaster, Aeneas prays for his ships and Jupiter sends a storm to quench the fires. Not knowing what to do about the rebellion



of his people, Aeneas is torn until he finally decides – after the advice of Nautes being supported by a dream of his father – to leave behind all those who have lost heart for the journey and continue on with those who seek glory. Then, having repaired the ships, the Trojans continue on to Latium.

Next they land at Cumae in order to consult the Sibyl. Aeneas inquires after the certainty of their future and seeks entrance to the Underworld. He gathers his tribute and buries his unburied kinsman, before he is able to enter the cursed place<sup>42</sup>. There he encounters his love once more, finally exposing his regretful feelings toward his actions against her and weeps as her shadow flees from his pleadings. He finds his father, who tells him about the nature of the universe and reveals to him details of the future of his Roman line.

Leaving the world of the dead, Aeneas sets sail once again and finally enters the mouth of the Tiber river. He is greeted warmly by king Latinus, the king having been prophesized to marry off his daughter, Lavinia, to a foreign prince. Latinus' wife, queen Amata, sincerely wants Turnus to be her son-in-law and opposes the binding of her daughter with a foreigner, being further incited by Allecto, an agent of Juno. She likens Aeneas to Paris, warning her husband that the prince will steal away her daughter. The Fury also visits Turnus in a dream and tells him to defend his right to marry Lavinia by attacking the Trojans. At first, Turnus dismisses the old woman, but when Allecto reveals her true identity, he takes up arms and prepares for war. He gathers his people and begins a march against king Latinus.

In order to incite the Latins to war it was arranged that when Ascanius is out hunting he makes a divinely aided shot and kills a stag, which happens to be a special, tamed member of the royal herd. The citizens rise up against the Trojans and war begins. This was a war crafted by

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<sup>42</sup> The details of his trip through the Underworld have already been described when discussing Anchises and thus I will not repeat them here.

Juno; though she acknowledges that she cannot thwart Fate, she seeks only to postpone the peace offered to the Trojans. As for Latinus, he curses Turnus for breaking the truce between the Latins and the Trojans and shuts himself away, allowing the war to take place, since he cannot hold the country back as the gates of Mars were opened despite his desire for peace.

An anthropomorphic representation of the river Tiber visits Aeneas in his dreams and advises him to seek the aid of a nearby king. Aeneas meets with the king of the Etruscans, Evander, and his son Pallas and implores them to ally with him against their common enemy, the Latins. The king greets him with familiarity and agrees to their alliance. King Evander also entrusts Aeneas with the mentorship of his own son, Pallas, to “let him endure warfare and the stern work of battle; [to] let him behold your [Aeneas’] deeds, and revere you from his early years” (Maro 2000, p.97 (8.515-517)). They set off for battle and when they first stop to rest, Venus brings to her son a helmet, sword, corslet, greaves, a spear and a shield, all of which were crafted by her divine consort, Vulcan.

Meanwhile, Juno keeps Turnus on the path to war, making him aware of Aeneas’ moves, though it does not appear that he is in need of urging. “I follow the mighty omen, whoever you are who call me to arms!” (Maro 2000, pp.115-117 (9.21-22)). With this enthusiasm, he attacks the Trojan forces and their allies while Aeneas is away. When the Trojans retreat to their camp, unreachable, Turnus attempts to set fire to their fleet. Before he can do so, however, the ships are turned into sea nymphs, protected by Cybele, from whose trees the ships were built.

These same nymphs meet Aeneas with his gathering army, after his meetings with various allies, and inform him of the present siege of his Trojan camp. Aeneas hurries toward his countrymen and his son. He and his army fight from the banks of the Tiber to reach their comrades’ encampment. When part of the army attempts to flee, Pallas gives a rousing speech

invoking the name of his king father as he battles his way through the enemy. Turnus sees Pallas and goes after him personally, claiming that to him alone “Pallas is due” (Maro 2000, p.203 (10.442)). Turnus dispatches the boy quickly taking his spoils and sending his body back to his father.

Now Turnus exults in the spoil, and the glories in the winning. O mind of man, knowing not fate or coming doom or how to keep bounds when uplifted with favouring fortune! To Turnus shall come the hour when for a great price he will long to have bought an unscathed Pallas, and when he will abhor those spoils and that day (Maro 2000, pp.207-209 (10.500-505))<sup>43</sup>.

Aeneas quickly learns what has happened and seeks Turnus “still flushed with fresh slaughter. Pallas, Evander, everything is before his eyes – the board to which he came then, a stranger, and the right hands pledged” (Maro 2000, p.209 (10.514-517)). Aeneas takes four youths to sacrifice on Pallas’ funeral pyre then he executes a suppliant begging for mercy at his feet, claiming that the actions of Turnus have made clemency impossible. Next he runs down and kills a priest of Phoebus and Trivia<sup>44</sup>. He proceeds on his killing spree in the midst of the battle until the enemy begins to flee before his rage. Turnus, however, is spared by Juno, removed from the battlefield at Jupiter’s acquiescence and given a temporary reprieve.

Meanwhile, Mezentius, a Tyrant driven out of his own land and a friend of Turnus, enters the battle alongside his son. He deals death to many as many attempt to kill their tyrant king. When Aeneas meets him in battle, Mezentius is wounded and his son, Lausus, shields him in order for him to flee. Lausus rages insanely against Aeneas and after a long onslaught the Trojan prince prevails. This death, however, is different for Aeneas and vastly contrasted against Turnus’ killing of Pallas. He sees himself in the slain enemy, a loving son devoted to his father.

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<sup>43</sup> This becomes an important portent of what is to happen to Turnus as a result of this action.

<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to note here that these actions, though known to be abhorrent, are not elaborated upon as being so in the same way as the killing of Pallas was.

He does not loot his victim but offers him respect instead. Mezentius, hearing of his son's death, does not appreciate the reverence offered to his son and, though wounded, re-enters the battle seeking Aeneas, "a vast tide of shame and madness mingled with grief" (Maro 2000, p.233 (10.870-871)). Mezentius forsakes the gods as he attacks Aeneas and succumbs to the hero; his only request is that his body be protected from his people, who hate him, and be entombed with his son.

Pallas' body is returned to his father and king Evander, though lamenting his son's death, does not place blame on the Trojan hero but rather obligation; he asks for the death of Turnus. Before the fighting can be resumed, a truce is struck until all proper funerary rituals have been performed and the mourning period for the dead is ended. Aeneas blames the war on Turnus' refusal to fight him and Latinus' decision to take back his promised alliance with the Trojans. It is clear that the majority of the Latins also blame Turnus for the war which cost them the lives of their loved ones and king Latinus is more than willing to be peacefully allied to the Trojans once again. The Latins try to urge Turnus to face Aeneas in one on one combat to settle the issue over the marriage to Lavinia, but he insists that there are other options and will not agree until they are exhausted. King Latinus, knowing that the war is out of his hands and beyond his decree, retires from the council and sadly loses hope of preserving his kingdom. Battle is waged once again and the Trojans and their allies are all but victorious as night stalls the fighting.

Turnus finally accepts Aeneas' challenge in earnest, knowing that his side has lost. Latinus attempts to convince Turnus that his sacrifice is not necessary for a peace to be made, but Turnus is set upon pitting his skills against that of the Trojan. The queen Amata, king Latinus' wife, cries at his feet pledging his fate to be her own, that she would rather die than see her daughter married to the Trojan prince.

Aeneas swears an oath on the altar that if he loses the Trojans will withdraw and not bother the Latins again, and also, if he should win, the Trojans and Latins will live peacefully together, he will marry Lavinia and the king will retain his throne, in each instance maintaining a mutually beneficial social contract. King Latinus vows to the gods that their peace will never be broken regardless of the outcome of the battle. Before the battle for peace can even begin, Turnus' sister, a nymph, rouses the men into belief that they would be cowardly to allow one man to fight for all of them and convinces them that they cannot lose against the Trojan forces. Thus, Turnus' forces break the peace before it can even start. The sacred altar, set up for the occasion of peace, is defiled and the sacred truce is broken.

While attempting to halt the battle, Aeneas is injured by an arrow and is dragged from the field. Turnus goes mad with bloodlust at the sight of his enemy wounded and enters the battle with vengeance. Aeneas is quickly healed by his mother and returns to the fighting seeking Turnus. As he returns, he kisses his son on the head and says: "Learn valour from me, my son, and true toil; fortune from others" (Maro 2000, p.331 (12.435-436)). Aeneas does not join the fray, but searches for one combatant: Turnus. As his enemy evades him he tracks him until finally he is attacked by enemy warriors. Aeneas' fury grows to match that of Turnus and he deals carnage on the enemy forces trying to make his way toward his true enemy. When he realizes that the citadel has been left unmanned he orders the Trojans to attack it. Amata, upon seeing the citadel in a great state of havoc, assumes the city to be taken and Turnus to be dead and decides to kill herself, furthering the grief of the people.

Turnus offers his life to the gods in return for not being considered a coward – as he appeared to have been avoiding battle with Aeneas at all costs - and renews his vow to fight the Trojan one on one. Aeneas immediately turns from his siege of the city and rejoices in the

chance to finally face his true enemy. When Turnus' blade snaps in battle, he immediately tries to flee in terror, begging for another sword. When Aeneas stops to retrieve his spear, Turnus' sister gives her brother back his sword. Facing Aeneas once again, Turnus holds no hope of winning and searches desperately for a way out. Aeneas finally decisively wounds his enemy with a spear through the thigh. Beaten and at the mercy of his foe, Turnus begs for his life, for the sake of his father, and surrenders to the Trojan. Aeneas hesitates, considering allowing him to live, but seeing the spoils of his friend upon his enemy, remembering the death of Pallas and his debt to king Evander, he kills him, exclaiming, "Clad in the spoils of one of mine, are you to be snatched from my hands? Pallas it is, Pallas who sacrifices you with this stroke, and takes retribution from your guilty blood!" (Maro 2000, p.367 (12.947-949)) Aeneas finishes him with a single blow to the heart.

## AENEAS

### Character Description, Piety, Justice and Anger

In this section I will revisit the traits of both piety and justice in relation to the character of Aeneas in order to show, once again, that piety is a virtue of orthopraxic obedience to the gods and loyalty and duty to family and country. Also, to show that justice is obedience to law, order and the keeping of sworn oaths, mutual contracts, all for the benefit of social relations. Next, I will examine Aeneas' emotional character, in particular his anger as it is presented by Virgil. I will show that a Stoic interpretation of Aeneas' character is not true to the presentation of the character or to the portrayal of his anger. I will also show that an Epicurean view of justifiable anger better fits with the manifestations of anger shown by Aeneas and is more suitable to the portrayal of him as a Roman hero.

#### Piety

As was mentioned in the section regarding Anchises, Aeneas is considered a very pious character. Again, as Moseley points out, "in the course of the twelve books of the *Aeneid* Vergil applies to Aeneas the epithet *pius* fifteen times in the narrative, has other characters refer to him as *pius*, *pietate insignis* or some equivalent expression eight times, and finally has Aeneas speak of himself twice as *pius*" (Moseley, p.387). To the modern reader, Aeneas' actions may not strike one as being particularly pious; however our modern definition of piety – which includes reverence for God and religious devotion – does not fit with that of the ancients.

It is interesting to note that Aeneas' piety is a traditional trait. He was known for his piety in Homer's *Illiad* as well. As Moseley explains, quoting Aelian's *Varia Historia* III, 22 in translation:

When Troy was captured the Achaeans having the most pity of all the Greeks for the fate of the conquered made this announcement, that each one of the free men might pick up any one thing he wished of his private possessions and carry it out. Aeneas taking up his paternal gods carried them out, ignoring other things. The Greeks were so pleased at the piety of the man that they allowed him to remove another possession. He lifting his old father up on his shoulders took him out. Even more astounded by this they gave him all of his possessions, agreeing that even those who were enemies by nature were softened toward pious men who treated with respect the gods and their parents (Moseley, p.393).

This is of course not how the events were portrayed in Virgil's account, however this does show that piety is manifested in different ways. For the Romans, "*pietas* might be used in relation to one's country, one's family, and one's fellow human beings" (Moseley, p.389) not only in relation to the gods.

Aeneas shows piety toward his father and family in book 2.707-804, when he rescues them from Troy – his father particularly as he carried the man on his back and his son as he held the boy by the hand. Also, in this passage he shows piety to his wife as he searches tirelessly for her through burning Troy. We could also interpret these actions as being ascribed to one who is loyal, but as functions of Aeneas' roles as son, father and husband and the responsibilities associated with these roles, it is also interpreted as him being *pius in patrem* and *in filium*.

His loyalty or piety to his country, *pius in patriam*, can clearly be seen throughout the text as he carries the Penates with him in the hope of founding a new Troy. It can most clearly be seen when he is faced with a physical representation of the fall of Troy at 1.453-493: his emotional response to the sight of his great city falling, his friends and the king slain, his homeland lost, was one of great grief and longing. This is juxtaposed by his reverence for the



work being done by the Carthaginians in building a new city, laying down laws and bringing order and security to the land as described at 1.418-440. His determination to found a new Troy shows in every attempt he makes to do so outside of Italy, and the great battles which he fights once he meets with hindrances at Latium.

His piety toward the gods is shown “most clearly in the submission to the divine will – in the fall of Troy, in the loss of Creusa, in the separation from Dido” (Moseley, p.389). The first instance mentioned occurred while Aeneas was set on defending Troy even when it was obviously hopeless and his mother, Venus, had to come to him to inform him that the fall of Troy was not the work of men, or of Helen, but the will of the gods and thus was out of his control to hinder, and urge him toward his duties to his family and his lineage (2.594-620). Here we see Aeneas deciding between two duties, that to his country and that to his family; he is able to fulfill both by fleeing and keeping Troy alive in a different way. The second instance mentioned occurs when Aeneas is fleeing Troy and realizes that his wife has left their company. He does not give up looking for her until her shade comes to him, abates his fears by telling him that her fate was death, not something worse and beneath her station, and tells him that he must leave because there is a Latin bride that he must take as his own in order for his lineage to achieve its greatness and thus she could not have made the journey with him (1.776-789). This is not a message directly from a god to Aeneas; however it does indicate knowledge of the gods’ will for Aeneas to continue without his wife. The last, Aeneas’ separation from Dido, occurs at the end of a winter long affair between the Carthaginian queen and the Trojan prince. When Jupiter sends Mercury down to remind Aeneas of his obligations to his son and his fortunated lineage, Aeneas’ response is immediate. However it takes another warning from Mercury for him to hasten his retreat and finally set sail – the two promptings from Mercury are seen at 4.265-276

and 4.560-570. In all of these instances, piety means *religious duty*, which is the thesis of Moseley's article 'Pius Aeneas', in other words, an obedience and willingness to follow the will of the gods. According to John M. Cooper in his introduction to Plato's *Euthyphro* "piety is justice in relation to the gods" (Cooper, p.1)<sup>45</sup>. This definition, though problematic for Plato, seems to fit quite well with the manifestations of piety within the *Aeneid*. For Epicureans, since they do not believe in the gods as they are presented within this work, 'justice in relation to the gods', if divinity is not concerned with the affairs of humans, consists in making ourselves closer to their state of blessedness instead of making them in our flawed image. This will be explained in further detail below; suffice it to say for now that aiming at freedom from disturbances, security for oneself within one's community and a mutual agreement to lessen all harm, can be seen as the Epicurean conception of piety. It is clear in Virgil's presentation of piety that included in the idea of being willing to follow the will of the gods is doing one's duty as a father, a son and a citizen, which included orthopraxic traditions. In this way, though these seem to be separate manifestations of piety, they can all be attributed to one obeying the desires of the divine as interpreted by humans<sup>46</sup>.

As we have already seen, it would be a mistake to conflate the idea of obeying the gods with obedience to Fate, as Jupiter and Fate have been shown to be two distinct concepts. Also, being religious is not necessarily a matter of orthodoxy, but rather a matter of orthopraxy. It is important that Aeneas obey the decrees of Jupiter and make the appropriate sacrifices and perform the appropriate rituals, which is consistent with orthopraxic piety. As a fictional character, being encountered directly by gods, it is not possible to understand Aeneas *himself* as

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<sup>45</sup> However this definition leads Socrates to the conclusion that piety is an attempt at all times to be a good person and thus it makes it difficult to distinguish piety from other virtues; this discussion, however, is outside of the purview of this paper.

<sup>46</sup> Epicurean piety will be discussed in the conclusion, however it is enough to say here that, though Epicureans did not believe in the gods as they are portrayed in the *Aeneid*, most of them did hold to orthopraxic traditions.

not believing in the gods, in the simplest meaning of belief. As a reader<sup>47</sup>, it is possible to suspend belief in order to accept anthropomorphic gods in such historical fiction as the *Aeneid*; however it was much less important for the Romans that people held an actual belief in the gods and much more important that they did not stray from traditional practices of ritual and sacrifice. Nine of the fifteen times that *pius* is applied to Aeneas are in relation to him giving sacrifice to the gods, performing a ritual, praying or carrying out an order from the gods (Moseley, p.394).

## Justice

The justness of Aeneas is shown not only in his relation to the gods, but also in his role as '*pater Aeneas*'. "Only twice does *Pater Aeneas* mean specifically "father of Iulus" (Moseley, p.391). *Pater* in other contexts designates him as ruler or fatherly dictator – comparable to father Jupiter – and is used most prevalently during book five when Aeneas organizes games for his people in honour of his father's death (Moseley, p.391). Diomedes, in his denial of Turnus' petition for help, describes Aeneas as a brave and fierce warrior, and he says that, even in comparison to Hector, Aeneas was the most *loyal* (Maro 2000, p.257 (11.288-293)). Because of this, Diomedes entreats the Latins to join in a treaty with the Trojans and warns them against meeting them in arms (Maro 2000, p.257 (11.288-293)). Aeneas' justness is most clearly shown in his actions during books ten to twelve. When the Latins first break the treaty and the Trojan allies have outmatched them in battle, the Latins sue for a truce of six days in order to pay proper homage to the dead. Aeneas replies that he is most willing to give them what they ask, honour for the dead, and moreover he is willing to offer honour for the living as well and end the strife between them. He points out that it was those who followed Turnus who decided to break the

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<sup>47</sup> This is assuming an educated reader contemporary to Virgil.

peace and he offers them that same peace again (Maro 2000, p.245 (11.108-119)). Then after he again defeats the Latin forces, he again agrees to a peace between them, allowing the current king to retain his throne and offering his conquered people the chance to live freely as equals beside his allies (Maro 2000, pp.313-315 (12.176-194)). Again, when the peace is broken a third time, Aeneas does not join the fray but first attempts to settle the conflict on the pre-designated terms and prevent any further bloodshed (Maro 2000, p.323 (12.313-317)). His approach to this conflict is always tempered by his just attempts to bring peace and security to all involved, not just his own men. He repeatedly tries to end the conflict by defeating his only true enemy, Turnus, but is continuously denied that simple solution by the interventions of Juno or by the cowardice of Turnus himself. Aeneas himself speaks out against the injustice done by the breaking of the peace treaties and rightly blames the other side for the betrayal of their mutual contract (Maro 2000, p.341 (12.565-582)). He remained faithful to his father's advice "to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud" (Maro 2000, p.593 (6.853)). His goal throughout is to bring peace for all peoples involved and repeatedly attempts to forge a mutual contract to ensure the security of all of them. Aeneas' justice is not only in relation to himself, though one cannot be just when alone, but he attempts to acquire a beneficial social relation for all, benefiting himself as well as those around him in his attempt to end the fighting.

## Emotion and Anger

Let us turn now to Aeneas' expressions of emotion. There are many instances where the hero weeps and a few instances where he gets angry, which are worthy of note. Outward expression of emotion and how it is presented within the text is very telling if we are working

under the assumption that Aeneas is a hero. This should be obvious from both his predominance within the text and the fact that he is being described as the founder of the Roman line. He is our protagonist and thus we must work under the assumption that his presentation is the presentation of not only a morally virtuous, though realistic, character but also a heroic character. In modern times most heroic characters are presented as rather Stoic in their expression of emotions, at least to the point where they do not cry easily or openly<sup>48</sup>. Most heroes, as we know them, show their sadness by taking violent revenge upon whoever harmed them or their loved one, which is distinctly not Stoic. That, however, is not the way heroes were depicted in ancient times and it is not how Aeneas is depicted here. This has been a common criticism of his character, as discussed by Bowra, however within the historical context we must not forget that Achilles brooded in his tent when his prize was taken from him during Homer's *Illiad* and Odysseus cried daily on Calypso's beach in Homer's *Odyssey*. These emotional men are not the type of heroes that we idolize today; however they were idolized in Roman times, as was Aeneas. This is another reason why Aeneas fails to represent the Stoic model.

Concerning Aeneas' crying, he sheds many tears throughout the story, most notably when he views the physical depiction of the fall of Troy on the temple walls in Carthage (1.459); when he tells the story of the trials he faced as Troy was destroyed (2.6-13); when his wife dies (2.790-791); and when he sees Dido in the Underworld (6.455). All of these instances are understandable as an emotionally developed human being expressing appropriate sadness for the loss of loved ones, their homeland and their love or expressing regret for a wrong doing – as in the case of Dido. In none of these instances did Aeneas seek vengeance of any sort against those he felt responsible for his losses – though he contemplates taking vengeance against Helen *during* the fall of Troy, an episode that will be discussed below and one in which Aeneas sheds

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<sup>48</sup> Taking this gross over-generalization mainly from 90's action movies.

no tears. Also worth noting is that when Aeneas cries, it is not simply the narrator and the reader who are aware of it, but he cries openly when he feels moved to do so. As Aeneas himself puts it: “[w]hat Myrmidon or Dolopian, or soldier of the stern Ulysses<sup>49</sup>, could refrain from tears in telling such a tale?... though my mind shudders to remember and has recoiled in pain, I will begin” (Maro 2006, p.317 (2.6-13)). Aeneas himself defends his open emotions as a natural response, one which anyone would have, no matter how courageous, to the loss of one’s homeland and people. He does not view his emotionality as a weakness or as being irrational. This is not a Stoic presentation of emotion, as they held the belief that nothing outside of one’s self is able to cause us harm (Gill, p.451). They would not feel compelled to tears by the actions of others, no matter what loss was suffered. Thus Virgil’s presentation and justification of a healthy expression of emotion is clearly not Stoic.

There are three instances of what most people would interpret as ‘rage’ shown by Aeneas. The first is when he sees Helen cowering at the altar and, viewing her as the cause of the fall of his homeland, he has a strong desire to kill her for the harm he believes she had caused (2.567-587). The second is the spree that Aeneas goes on when hearing about the death of Pallas: he takes three men as human sacrifices, kills a priest and even kills a suppliant (10.513-542). This instance of violence is particularly interesting because, unlike the others, there is no explanation within the text as to his internal motivations for these actions – other than Aeneas’ statement that mercy became no longer an option once Turnus slew his charge – and there is no apology made for any of his actions within the text. In fact this episode is not presented as out of place and appears as though it would be completely accepted by a Roman audience as what was normally done after such a transgression was made. These actions are also not without

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<sup>49</sup> For clarity, here Aeneas is comparing himself to soldiers of Odysseus and Achilles as well as those of Achilles’ son – all of whom were known for their valour and bravery in war – in order to show that his emotional state at the fall of his country is not a sign of weakness.

precedent, as Augustus' actions, as they are described by Suetonius in his *Vita Augusti*, are similar to the actions taken by Aeneas, even to the point where Augustus reportedly sacrificed prisoners of war on the Ides of March at the altar of Julius Caesar (Bowra, p.18). The last instance of Aeneas' rage occurs in the final slaying of Turnus (12.919-952).

Much literature has been written about the final scene regarding whether or not the action was 'acceptable' or 'right' – in the contemporary moral sense of Virgil's audience. In all of these instances, I believe that any interpreter should assume that the actions of the main character and hero of the piece are all morally acceptable unless they are followed by an act of contrition on the part of the hero. Aeneas' break with Dido was not wrong as it was both the will of the gods and the only way to work toward the founding of Rome, which is the ultimate good from the perspective of the Roman people. Aeneas tries in the Underworld to make up for the *manner* with which he broke with Dido, when he dismisses her with little to no show of emotional sympathy for her pain or expression of love. Feeling guilty for how he had treated her, he weeps and apologizes to her for how shabbily he had treated her upon their parting. He does not, however, ever make apologies for the above mentioned moments of anger but instead he justifies his desire to punish Helen and his duty to kill Turnus. He offers no justification or apology for his actions immediately following the death of Pallas – which again suggests that these actions were completely acceptable to his Roman audience. In addition, there is an analogy associated with this 'spree' which compares Aeneas to a force of nature: "Such were the deaths the Dardan chieftain wrought over the plains, raging like a brook in torrent or a black tempest" (Maro 2000, p.215 (10.602-604)). At 9.666-671 Virgil also uses the imagery of a storm to describe the rush of an army and the chaos of a battle. This all suggests that Aeneas' actions were fully sanctioned actions associated with war.

According to Seneca<sup>50</sup>, “anger is a brief madness: for it’s no less lacking in self-control, forgetful of decency, unmindful of personal ties, unrelentingly intent on its goal, shut off from rational deliberation, stirred for no substantial reason, unsuited to discerning what’s fair and true” (Seneca, p.14 (1.2)). He also claims that anger causes whoever is in its hold to forget their duty and that it is the desire to take vengeance for a wrong done or to punish the person who has unjustly caused harm to you (Seneca, p.16 (2.3a-b)). However, it is still a question of whether or not that is the way that anger is being portrayed in Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

Does Aeneas show a lack of self-control? There are two ways of interpreting ‘self-control’. One is to consider Aeneas’ ability for restraint, which will be dealt with first. The second questions whether he is in control of his own actions. The question of freedom of will with regard to the characters in the *Aeneid* is dealt with in the section on Dido’s character and will be revisited here concerning Aeneas’ actions.

He refrains from killing Helen in favour of saving his family – that is, if we understand Venus’ intervention as a psychological phenomenon, though even if she were a real influence, Aeneas rethinks his approach and chooses not to kill Helen based upon the information provided to him. Once he is informed of the truth of the situation before him, he quite easily restrains both his anger and his actions. His reaction to the slaying of Pallas does not appear to lack control, since he keeps three men for sacrifice later and follows through with that sacrifice at a later time, after his anger has cooled; this shows a rational intention in his actions – even if we may not be able to relate to that rationale today. He also hesitates before killing the suppliant and takes the time to explain to the man why he is unwilling to offer him clemency. Aeneas also hesitates before killing Turnus, thinking of possibly offering him mercy for the sake of Turnus’ father, but

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<sup>50</sup> Seneca is a popular Stoic philosopher who draws upon the historical tenants of Stoic belief while adapting it to his contemporary Roman audience. In this way, though he wrote later than Virgil, his work is most useful, conceptually, for my purposes.



makes the decision that his promise to Evander, Pallas' father, outweighs his sympathy for the bond between father and son in the case of the oath-breaking Turnus. All of these instances show that Aeneas was in fact in control of his actions, however he chose to act after his deliberations.

Showing that Aeneas has choices to make, free choices, is much easier than regarding the actions of Dido, which at first may have appeared coerced. Showing freedom of will on the part of the characters is necessary not only to show that Aeneas has self-control, but also to prove that these characters are responsible for their actions and thus that Turnus is responsible for his actions against Aeneas. Every interaction that Aeneas has with the gods was more direct than the plotting of Juno and Venus regarding Dido. The gods deal directly with Aeneas either through prophecy, while in disguise or through Mercury<sup>51</sup>. Prophecies are by their nature cryptic, the messages sent through Mercury, however, are not. The messenger of the gods is sent to talk to Aeneas twice in book four, both times to convince him to leave Carthage. Both of these conversations do not entail Mercury ordering Aeneas to do what the gods demand of him, but rather in each instance the messenger gives him reasons why he should go, implying that he has the choice to do otherwise. In the first instance, Mercury asks, “[i]f the glory of such a fortune does not stir you [Aeneas], and for your own fame’s sake you do not shoulder the burden, have regard for growing Ascanius, the promise of Iulus your heir, to whom the kingdom of Italy and the Roman land are due” (Maro 2006, p.441 (4.272-276)). He does inform Aeneas that he has come at the request of Jupiter, but he offers reasons, not orders, and appeals to the hero’s duty to his son. When Mercury visits him the second time about the same issue he warns

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<sup>51</sup> He speaks to Venus in disguise in book one, in person in book two, receives a cryptic prophecy of Apollo in book three, is visited by Mercury twice in book four, is visited in a dream by the Penates in book five, and receives prophecy from the Sibyl and insight from his father in the Underworld in book six. In all of these instances the supernatural source offers support, knowledge or reasonable incentive.

Aeneas that if he stays then Dido's passion will be unleashed upon him and his fleet (Maro 2006, p.461 (4.560-570)). Again, no one is ordering Aeneas to leave Carthage, implying that he could potentially choose to stay, but pious Aeneas does as the gods wish and as his duty compels him. It is known that he is pious and just, and thus these reasons would obviously appeal to him. Aeneas does what he believes the gods want him to do, which makes him pious, but he is not ordered but rather reasoned with, all of which implies that he has his freedom to choose to do otherwise. Also, his contact with the gods drops dramatically after his visit to the Underworld, when the future is revealed to him if he remains on his path to Italy. After this he does not again stray from this path.

The fact that Aeneas was able to stray at all from the path on which the gods desired him to be tells us that he always had the freedom to do otherwise from the start. In this way, he is not only free but also responsible, just like Dido. His feeling of responsibility is shown clearly when he encounters Dido in the Underworld and weeps while apologizing for the manner with which he broke with her. He had done exactly as the gods desired him, but he still felt responsible for his actions. It is clear that he was held responsible by Virgil since there is no reason other than that emotional reaction for Aeneas to encounter Dido in the Underworld.

Returning to Seneca's definition of anger, it is easy to see that in each of these instances Aeneas is very mindful of personal ties. His acts of vengeance are not for harms done to himself, but harms done to his homeland, his charge and his people. His anger is also not portrayed as being unrelenting in its goal. Again, he does not kill Helen and he offers peace to the Latins three separate times, twice after they have broken a treaty with him. Here he also shows that his expression of anger is not shut off from rational deliberation and that he is able to discern what is right or true. It is also clear that his anger is not spurred by flippant reasons. Each of the above

mentioned instances are episodes where Aeneas was justifiably angry for the sake of something very important to him: the destruction of his homeland; the loss of the lives of many people for whom he cared; the slaying of a youth placed in his charge by a loving father, who now has to outlive his only son, a son whom Aeneas was supposed to mentor into manhood; and the trespassing of sacred oaths of peace, of laws put into place to maintain order and provide stability and security to the kingdom of Latinus, trespassed for personal gain, pride and jealousy. All of these motivations are not whims of anger applied for no reason and at no point does it appear as though Aeneas is forgetting his duty to his people, his family, his allies or his word when he reacts with anger at their harm or trespass.

When simply looking at Seneca's description of anger, it is clear that his conception of this emotion is not the one that Virgil is portraying in this character, nor does it appear as though there is a negative light shown upon anger as it is connected to Aeneas. Still, there are those that argue for Aeneas as a Stoic character and, when he is judged as so, most often he is viewed as a less than ideal character.

C. M. Bowra claims that if Virgil was trying to make Aeneas into the 'perfect man,' then he failed horribly to do so, arguing that Aeneas is a "coward, a muddler, and a seducer, who tries to justify his behaviour by attributing it to divine ordinance" (Bowra, p.9). He cites certain criticisms of Aeneas' actions from ancient Romans themselves and many from much later Christian writers (Bowra, p.10), but, at the same time, admits that "orthodox Romans believed in Aeneas as an ideal man" and that "Virgil's contemporaries and successors reiterated with wearisome devotion praises of Aeneas" (Bowra, p.9). Bowra's argument is that Virgil himself did not intend his main character to be morally upright. He argues that Aeneas was a Stoic and

as a Stoic he must endure many trials in the crafting of his morality after which the glory of future Rome is revealed to him (Bowra, p.11).

Bowra divides Stoic morality into four categories; justice, moderation, courage and wisdom (Bowra, p.11). He admits that, in justice, Aeneas never fails, but claims that he fails in all other categories. In moderation, Aeneas apparently fails when he takes up arms in futile defence of his country, during the Helen episode and when he is searching for his wife in burning Troy (Bowra, p.13). In courage, he fails when he is unprepared for his shipwreck and worries about his lost comrades, when he complains to his mother about his trials and when he is indecisive after the burning of the fleet (Bowra, pp.13-14). In wisdom, there are four instances where Bowra claims that Aeneas fails: when he is accepting the Wooden Horse into Troy, upon losing his wife Creusa, when he is settling on Crete and when he is tarrying with Dido (Bowra, p.11).

Citing these examples, Bowra concludes that by Stoic standards Aeneas fails, with which I agree. However, I do not agree that Virgil was intending to write a Stoic hero who faced trials sent by the gods to test him and thus forge Aeneas into a virtuous character. The first point to consider is that Bowra's defence of this 'testing' concerns that this *exercitatio* was essential to the teachings of Cicero, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius (Bowra, p.15). Of these three Stoics, two were not even born when Virgil died. We may assume that Stoic concepts were maintained between generations, but using a word – which is only used within the text twice and literally means 'to be kept busy' - that was not yet established within a school of thought is stretching the connection. Concepts are different from specific word usage and it is impossible to show definitively that these two instances of this specific word meant what Bowra wants them to mean

and, even further, that they were intended to be interpreted in a Stoic way even if the translation is correct.

More important is that the epic ends with Aeneas' wrathfully killing Turnus. In defense of this action, as well as most actions Aeneas takes after the death of Pallas, Bowra has to turn away from Stoicism and argue that anger and revenge were part of the Augustan ideal, even recalling actions of the early Augustus which are similar to that of Aeneas during that period (Bowra, pp.16-18). Bowra claims that Virgil's high Stoic ideals were brought down to the level of the 'Roman world' (Bowra, p.18). It could not be stated more clearly than Bowra himself does when he states that "[t]his continual display of anger as a martial quality was quite alien to Stoic principles" (Bowra, p.18).

I believe that it need not be that convoluted: one need not try to fit Aeneas' character into a Stoic mould with a Roman 'downfall'. Epicureans take a different approach to vices and would not view the above mentioned 'slips' as inconsistencies in a character or even flaws. Vices, to Philodemus, are "stable dispositions to believe certain things and to feel and behave in certain ways, under certain circumstances, for certain reasons" (Tsouna, p.32). If looked at in that way, then Aeneas is a just and pious character who feels natural emotions and that is how he would be viewed by an Epicurean<sup>52</sup>. These are the only stable character traits that he displays.

“'[N]atural' anger may be shown by someone of good character (*diathesis*) and not typically prone to anger, if a correct examination of the situation shows that anger is appropriate... Aeneas' willingness to suppress the desire for revenge and to show pity is a mark of the reasonable character shown in earlier cases" (Gill, pp.457-458). Gill concludes, in the end that he prefers a Stoic interpretation and condemnation of Aeneas' character, because he does not

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<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that not all Epicureans agreed on such matters as anger and Philodemus is considered moderate in his views.

seem to approach the killing of Turnus with an unpleasant feeling, as Stoic doctrine dictates (Gill, p.459). However, focusing on Aeneas' fury, Gill forgets his expression of grief. Lines 12.945-947 read: "*Ille, oculis postquam saevi monumenta doloris / exuviasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira / terribilis*", 'He, after he drew up with eyes the remembrances of cruel sorrow and the spoils, having been kindled from above by furies and terrible with respect to his wrath [he speaks]'<sup>53</sup>. Right before this, Turnus had pled for his life, for the sake of his father and Aeneas was about to forgive him of his crimes. If he had not remembered his obligation to another father, Turnus' complete lack of restraint when in a similar situation or his duty to end the betrayal that the war he was fighting essentially was, he would have granted Turnus mercy. However, by Roman law, by the will of the gods<sup>54</sup> and by his own word, Aeneas could not have done any differently than he did. Gill argues that his decision to enact punishment on Turnus was not an unpleasant one, however it appears to me that it was depicted as appropriately painful for Aeneas, whose first instinct was to show mercy. Aeneas is depicted as angry, I would assume not only because of what Turnus has done to him, but also because of what Turnus has forced him to do.

Looking at his overall character, one might argue that Aeneas was struggling with a tendency to aggress against those who have caused harm to those close to him. However, Philodemus distinguishes between natural and unnatural anger and encourages one to utilize the technique of 'setting-before-the-eyes' the evils that anger can incur (Tsouna, pp.203-204). This reminds the reader of the Helen scene, where it is pointed out to Aeneas that the fall of Troy was not the doing of Helen, but of the gods, and thus he relinquishes his anger, deeming it an inappropriate response. However, when he goes after Turnus, "Pallas, Evander, everything is

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<sup>53</sup> This is as close to a literal translation as I could manage within the constraints of coherent English expression.

<sup>54</sup> Shown in a small exchange between Jupiter and his son previous to the death of Pallas. "For Turnus too his own fate calls, and he has reached the goal of his allotted years" (Maro 2000, p.205 (10.462-463)).

before his eyes – the board to which he came then, a stranger, and the right hands pledged” (Maro 2000, p.209 (10.515-517)). It seems here that Aeneas has set the evil before his eyes, but what he sees is his duty, his obligation, to right a wrong. He has no delusions about the intentions of Turnus to harm his charge – which he specifically does in order to harm Evander for befriending Aeneas – nor does he shy from fulfilling his obligation to king Evander. He also acknowledges that it is Turnus who is causing the war and who repeatedly breaks his oaths. Aeneas *may* be described as an ‘irascible’ person, one who “tends to become angry and desires to retaliate as a reaction to what he perceives as an intentional offence done to him by someone else” (Tsouna, p.210). However, if his perception is the correct one, then his anger is not irrational but justified and it certainly is in the case of Turnus, the only time that Aeneas’ rage plays out until its end. Aeneas thinks about taking vengeance on Helen, and he curses the gods for the loss of his wife, but the only action he takes in retribution of a perceived wrong, which is the correct attribution of intention, is killing Turnus. I do not believe that Aeneas is ‘irascible’ in the way Philodemus means it because, as shown, he does not act upon every perceived slight.

There is a very simple contrast to draw between Turnus’ killing of Pallas and Aeneas’ killing of Lausus, which clearly outlines the difference in Aeneas’ nature and his type of anger. Turnus is seen revelling in the death of Pallas; he sees it as a punishment aimed at the youth’s father for befriending Aeneas and he “exults in the spoil, and glories in the winning” (Maro 2000, p.207 (10.500)). On the other hand, Aeneas tries to warn the son of Mezentius away from the fight and, once he wins, he feels sad for the youth and honours him for defending his father. Aeneas refuses to take spoils from the boy as a sign of respect, even though he hates the boy’s father who is a villainous tyrant (Maro 2000, pp.229-231 (10.821-830)). It appears clear then that Turnus *enjoys* his rage, his vanity and glory, whereas Aeneas would much rather have peace

and security, even at the cost of war. These actions speak to two different natures: one is clearly irascible while the other does not have that tendency but would be better described as that of a leader and protector of his people.

The death of Turnus has many legal implications as well as moral ones. Turnus was not only wrong to kill the son in order to punish his father, he was also a war criminal, having broken the peace treaties twice and there is no mercy for a crime such as his in ancient Rome (Galinsky, pp.192-193). This is not spelled out within the text – though the sacred treaty itself is given in great detail – but this would not need to be explained for the audience for which the poem was intended (Galinsky, p.193). As Karl Galinsky states, “[a]ll, except for the Stoics, realize there is a rightful place for that emotion and that it can be channelled into righteous actions” (Galinsky, p.193).

As Gill explains, for the Stoic there is an objective attitude toward the actions of others, one which insists that no one is able to harm you other than yourself and interprets all anger as irrationally based on the mistaken impression of a harm having been done (Gill, p.451). This is not the way that emotions are presented by any of the characters within this work. They believe and act upon the belief that the actions of others affect their lives. The defining factor between the Stoic and Epicurean views of anger is that the Epicureans realize that it is a natural emotion, though an unpleasant one, which is acceptable *if it is justified*. “Even for the Epicureans, then, the difference is quite clear – understood by Philodemus in col. xlv.33-37 – between *orge*, natural anger, springing from motives that are justified, moderate in its duration and its intensity, and *thymos* (which Philodemus seems also to call *kene orge*), blind and uncontrolled rage, to which the wise man is unable to fall prey” (Indelli, pp.105-106). The Epicurean believes that one is able to be harmed by another, intentionally, and that one is able to view the actions of



others objectively in order to justify a reactive attitude (Gill, p.452). They also hold that having a reactive attitude when one is not mistaken that a harm was done is the definition of natural anger (Gill, p.452). I have shown that Aeneas' anger toward Turnus is justified by both morality and legality. Turnus intended to harm those who were close to Aeneas for the simple reason that they were close to him. He also repeatedly broke sacred treaties. Epicureans believe that anger is a painful emotion, though a natural one, and thus should be short and serve the purpose of justice because some punishment needs to be exacted (Galinsky, p.196). As shown above, the anger Aeneas felt against Turnus was "produced by an extremely intense pain, the death of young Pallas" (Indelli, p.109). His emotion here is presented as Epicurean, anger that is both justified and painful.

If we compare the Helen episode with that of Turnus, the distinction is clear. Aeneas is mistaken as to the blame of Helen for the harm done to Troy and, upon realizing this, immediately his anger disappears, being replaced with a concern for his family. When Turnus begs for his life, Aeneas re-evaluates the blame and it is clear to him that Turnus is to blame for the harm caused and immediately his anger returns and he carries out the punishment that his enemy deserved. His hesitation, his re-evaluation of the situation with its true conclusion and his painful reaction toward Turnus' actions all make this presentation of anger very clearly Epicurean in its manifestation.

I must conclude then that Virgil's presentation of emotion, particularly his portrayal of anger is consistent with Epicurean descriptions of natural or properly displayed emotions. Also, given that we must assume the hero of the epic to be a moral character, Aeneas' treatment and condemnation as a Stoic does not fit with his being the protagonist of this piece and the founder of Rome. Bowra desires to make Aeneas a Stoic brought down to the level of the Roman world,

but our hero is both a product of and a model for the Roman world; he cannot be taken out of it and fit into a Stoic ideal. In the Epicurean frame, Aeneas is judged as the hero he was hailed to be and thus I believe the Epicurean framework is once again more fitting to the emotional presentation of the *Aeneid*.

## **AENEAS**

### Conclusion

In this section we have seen Aeneas presented as a pious character in relation not only to the gods in an orthopraxic manner, but also in relation to his family, his friends and his people. His willingness to obey the gods extends to his understanding of what they would desire, which is clearer for him than any other character. It has also been shown that his choices were his own to make, reinforcing our proof of Virgil's presentation of freedom of will in his cosmos. We also saw that justice, as it is presented through the character of Aeneas, is shown to be portrayed as a desire to seek peace and security for one's self and one's community. Also, as a leader or the father of his people, Aeneas has a duty to secure a beneficial future for his family line and people. When analyzing Virgil's presentation of emotion, it was shown that under the Stoic model our hero is condemned; however under an Epicurean framework he is a reasonable and laudable hero. Working under the assumption that Aeneas was a Roman hero, this leads us to conclude that Virgil's presentation of emotion and anger is Epicurean, not Stoic.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

We are more than aware of what a Stoic character would look like and that Aeneas does not fit this model, but what would a Roman Epicurean character look like? It is obvious that if Aeneas were an Epicurean character he would believe that he was both free and responsible for his own actions (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecus* 133-4), (Epicurus, *On Nature* 34.21-2, 34.26-30). This belief prevents a fatalistic attitude toward his destiny and also prevents an apathy regarding not only his own future but also the actions of others. Aeneas would, and does, apologize and feel guilty for his hurtful actions and hold others, namely Turnus, accountable for their harmful actions. As an Epicurean character he would also rationally seek to pursue pleasure - as the absence of pain - and avoid pain and distress, unless there was a greater pleasure to be gained through pain (Cicero, *On Ends* 1.29-32, 37-9, (21A.5-6)). For example, he would be willing to suffer through war if the end was the security of his family and descendants. He would also care little for worldly goods or the routine of political intrigue and have no fear of death or battles (Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, pp.38-39 (2.1-61)). Aeneas himself is a hero and a leader, but he did not choose to be so, this destiny was chosen for him and he rises to his duties in order to provide security for his people. Also as an Epicurean, he would highly value friendship (Epicurus, *Key Doctrines* 27-8) and be able to take on “the greatest pains on behalf of his friends” (Plutarch, *Against Colotes*, 1111B). This is evident in Aeneas as he continually protects his people, keeps his oaths and fights for his own.

His piety would not be defined by his belief in the gods, but rather by his orthopraxic behaviours, which would be consistent with participation in traditional Roman rituals, sacrifices and contracts. “Although he [Epicurus] dismissed most of the popular notions about the gods

and their involvement in human affairs, he still encouraged his followers to participate in the traditional cults of their countries” (Summers, p.32). Orthopraxic tradition is supported by both Epicurus and Philodemus, but opposed by Lucretius (Summers, p.32). Cicero also distinguishes *superstitio* from *religio*, the former being “the groundless fear of the gods” while the latter is “the pious worship of them” (Summers, p.33)<sup>55</sup>. Aeneas necessarily believes in the gods, as this is part of the literary tradition – his own mother after all is a goddess – and the inclusion of the gods in his affairs necessitates his belief in what his senses perceive. However, once we view the gods as literary devices, we are able to suspend belief with regard to his encounters. His orthopraxic piety is displayed many times when he performs rituals, prays and offers proper sacrifice to the gods. This is also true about Anchises, who is often seen offering proper sacrifice, performing rituals and praying for the favour of the gods. Aeneas also does not seem to be fearful of the gods, as his willingness to follow their proscribed path is not based upon his fear of their wrath – he suffers the wrath of Juno throughout the poem without fear – instead it is based upon his duties to his family, homeland and people. Anchises fathered a child with the goddess Venus and was subsequently punished by Jupiter for bragging of his affair, but he still does not display a fear of the gods, rather a healthy respect for them as he attempts to properly interpret their prophecies.

During the section regarding Anchises, the conclusion was drawn that piety was defined in the *Aeneid* as following orthopraxic traditions and having the willingness to follow the will of the gods. Participation in traditional ritual was encouraged by some, but not all, Epicureans, including Epicurus himself and Philodemus. It is untrue to say that Epicureans did not believe in divinity, they merely did not believe in the gods as they were defined by popular theology.

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<sup>55</sup> Lucretius does not believe that a distinction can be made between the orthopraxic traditions and the fear that accompanies the belief in the gods (Summers, pp.34-35).

Epicurus describes gods as imperishable and blessed, not irascible and full of human frailties and flaws and concerns (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* 123-4, 76-7, p.140). The gods are obviously not portrayed this way in the *Aeneid*, which has already been explained as a literary device, as is the characters' relation to them. There was a widespread belief in oracles and prophecies in the ancient world, but no one had a relation to the gods akin to that of Aeneas because he lived in a time when men and gods were closer, an age of heroes like Achilles, Hector and Odysseus. The relation between the gods and men during the time when Virgil was writing was different from times long past – that is in mythical times, not historical. In Virgil's time, orthopraxic traditions were all that remained among the educated peoples of Rome, prophecies were bought, omens traded and the mystic parts of religion were integral parts of politics and commerce. Thus, having the willingness to follow the will of the gods must be interpreted less literally in practice than it is in mythology. In this way for the Epicurean character 'following the will of the gods' is to imitate them, to attempt to free our lives from all disturbances and strive for their blessedness. If this is what it means for an Epicurean to be pious – following orthopraxic traditions and seeking freedom from all disturbances – then we can see that these ideas coincide with those presented within the *Aeneid*, even as these same Epicurean ends are manifested through Virgil's presentation of justice.

The just Epicurean character would express justice in “accord with the utility of social relationships” (Epicurus, *Key Doctrines* 36-7, 17), or “mutual association” (J. M. Armstrong, p.328). Justice, not good in and of itself, is good only if it aims at freedom from pain through security from fears and the confidence of his neighbours (J. M. Armstrong, pp.324-325). Though the Epicurean character would understand justice as being independent from law in essence, they would always maintain the law in order to live free of the fear of prosecution (J. M.

Armstrong 1997, p.330). He would also understand that “the security of the community conduces to the security of the individual” (J. M. Armstrong, p.329). Dido’s explanation for her suicide exemplifies this understanding; she knows that her actions have endangered her political position with regard to her neighbours and thus she has risked the security of herself and her people. Previous to her encounter with Aeneas, her desire for security through beneficial social relations is shown in her dealings with her neighbours – keeping herself from offending anyone that could disrupt the peace of her people – and her preference for mutual contract is shown in her fair dealings with her people. Aeneas is a just character, as even Bowra admits, and he believes in as well as follows laws, protects his people and acts in a way that aims at security for his own. This is seen most clearly in his dealings with the Latins, where he makes peace with them multiple times, even when he has already won the war, in order for all involved to live in security. The final action, the killing of Turnus – who continually broke the peace, harmed those close to Aeneas and showed no willingness to change his self-serving and destructive ways – is a means to this end, that of peace and security for all involved. Viewed in this light, not only is Aeneas just, but his final action is an Epicurean necessity in striving to achieve the ultimate good. Here again, we see that the definition of justice presented within the *Aeneid* is strikingly similar to that which is offered by the Epicureans. Both involve mutually beneficial social contracts and the attainment of security from harm.

The cosmology outlined by Anchises in the Underworld is ambiguous at best. However, we have seen that there is a distinction made within the text between Fate and Jupiter and that morality is not linked to the will of the gods, even if piety is the willingness to follow the will of the gods. We have seen that it is possible for a character to do what the gods want them to do and still do the morally incorrect thing. We have also seen that it is possible for human action to

go against the decrees of Fate and that those actions are not necessarily held as morally incorrect. It has also been shown that with a measure of human freedom of will comes responsibility for one's actions. In addition, this responsibility affords a character to view the actions of another objectively and judge them as morally and legally culpable for their actions and thus allows that character to react with appropriate anger against the guilty actions of another. We have also seen that Aeneas' character and actions, though criticized by many judging him as a Stoic hero, are consistent with an Epicurean character, his beliefs and goals. All of this is inconsistent with Stoic philosophy, but perfectly consistent with Epicurean philosophy. With all of this taken together, I must conclude, though this is not definitive, that it appears that the source of morality for Virgil's *Aeneid* is most likely Epicurean.

This is also consistent with the ancient tradition holding that Virgil was taught by the Epicurean Siro. Donatus, an ancient historian writing in the fourth century A.D., attributed many poems to Virgil, including the *Catalepton* (Donatus, 17) and it is thought that his *vita* was based upon that of Suetonius – who wrote in the first century A.D.. The *Catalepton* is a collection of fifteen short poems, some more contentious than others in their attribution to the poet. Poem number five concerns Virgil's decision to leave his rhetorical studies behind and retire to study philosophy under Siro. "We are spreading sail for blissful havens, in quest of noble Siro's learned lore, and will free our life from all worries" (Maro 2000, p.489). Poem number eight is an ode to Siro's villa. "O little villa, once Siro's, and you, poor little farm - yet to such an owner you were wealth - to you, should I hear aught ill of my homeland, I entrust myself and with me these folk, whom I have always loved, my father foremost" (Maro 2000, p.491). These two poems, whether they were written by Virgil or not, show someone who decided to leave behind his studies in other areas to devote his life to Epicureanism and, as a result of that devotion,



inherited his teacher's villa. This is by no means proof of my conclusion, it is however consistent with it.

The Stoic, or Christian, interpretation of the *Aeneid* has prevailed for more than a millennium. The oldest book written within the modern tradition that I was able to find expressing Virgil and his work as Epicurean was that of W. R. Johnson, a book entitled *Darkness Visible*, which argues, among other things, for Virgil as a conflicted and troubled character who abandoned the garden because he was unable to ignore the riots at the gates but was impotent to solve the problems inherent within society (Johnson, pp.152-153). This was also the only work that I had come across which condemned both Virgil and his characters for not living up to Epicurean standards. Previous to this, a few articles, such as that by Tenney Frank published in 1920, argued for certain Epicurean aspects within the work, but none that I have found made the argument for the work as a whole to have been Epicurean. Most of the articles claiming Epicurean aspects within the *Aeneid* have been published since the late 1980's, though some existed before this time. Previous to this, scholars such as Agathe Thornton, Nicolas Moseley, C. M. Bowra and Mark W. Edwards have insisted that the *Aeneid* was a Stoic work. Having the label of being a Stoic was not the only hat that Virgil was made to wear. In fact, he was also hailed a natural Christian and the *Aeneid* was dubbed a Christian epic – though he died 20 years before Christ was born – and Virgil was also named a hero of anti-Nazism (Levi, pp.1-2)<sup>56</sup>. As times change, our desire to fit Virgil and his works into the box that we choose for him is tempting. However, I hope that we are able to return to the ancient tradition of Virgil as an Epicurean and that this paper will aid in the acknowledgement of evidence provided within the *Aeneid* in support of this work being Epicurean in nature as well.

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<sup>56</sup> See T. S. Eliot's *Virgil and the Christian World* and Theodor Haecker's *Virgil, Father of the West*.

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