The Aeneid Study Guide

The Aeneid by Virgil

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

When Virgil was dying in 17 BC he asked for the unfinished *Aeneid* to be destroyed. The emperor Augustus refused the request. This decision affected the course of literary history and the development of western culture. Even in his own lifetime Virgil's poetry had become a school text. Early Christian writers who attempted to reject Virgil could escape neither his style nor his attitudes. Christian thought assimilated them both. The *Aeneid* and the Bible were probably the two most consistently read books in Western Europe for two thousand years.

The *Aeneid* was composed at least in part to celebrate "truth, justice, and the Roman way" and to promote the rebirth of the Roman way of life under Augustus. The *Aeneid* also universalizes Roman experience, ideals, and aspirations. The *Aeneid* represents a pivotal point in western literature: Virgil drew on the whole of Greek and Latin literature to create this epic. He expanded the range of the Latin epic, using elements from most types of late classical literature, while refining the linguistic and metrical possibilities of the epic genre. Because of its generic inclusiveness and linguistic brilliance, the *Aeneid* spread its influence across every form of written discourse for centuries.

In the last two thousand years the *Aeneid* has been a pagan bible, a Latin style manual, a moral allegory, a document of European unity, a pacifist document - and one of the most-read and studied works of world literature of all time. Entering its third millennium, the *Aeneid* can still speak immediately to the reader.

Author Biography

Virgil, full name Publius Vergilius Maro, was born near the village of Andes not far from Mantua in northern Italy on October 15, 70 BC. He died on September 21,19 BC at Brindisi on the heel of Italy. The earliest biography of the poet, written by Suetonius, in the second century AD, says that he was from a poor and obscure family. It is clear, however, that Virgil was a Roman citizen. Circumstances pieced together from contemporary sources and from Suetonius make it seem likely that his family was at least of the landowning class. Further, Virgil was given an excellent and expensive education, including training for the Roman bar. This suggests that he might have been of the equestrian (middle) class and that his family was ambitious for political and social advancement. In fact he was preparing for the same sort of career which earlier brought Cicero, the great master of Roman oratory and Latin prose, from a country town to the consulship. Virgil gave up legal practice after pleading one case and began to study philosophy with an Epicurean master

Virgil was described by Suetonius as "tall, raw-boned and dark, always rather countrified in his manners." He was sickly and so shy that he was nicknamed "the maiden." At least one modern biographer has suggested that he was invalided home from the army of Brutus and Cassius before the battle of Philippi.

Virgil's family property was confiscated to help settle war veterans. He had friends in high places, however, who intervened with the young ruler Octavian Caesar (later called Augustus) to restore the property. Virgil's *Eclogues,* were written between 42 and 37 BC, partially in gratitude to his friends and the young Octavian. He followed with the *Georgics,* written between 36 and 29 BC, a long poem on farming and the country life. Virgil lived most of his later life near Naples. He became ill on a trip to Greece and returned to Italy only to die there. Suetonius suggests that Virgil was acutely concerned with leaving behind an unrevised *Aeneid.* He asked his friend Varius to burn the work if he died before it was finished. Varius emphatically refused. Augustus, who had heard parts of it read, ordered its preservation. He delegated Varius and another of Virgil's friends, Tucca, to edit the poem for publication.

Virgil was a painstaking writer. He described his method as "licking the verses into shape." Suetonius records that Virgil wrote out the whole of the *Aeneid* in prose and then worked it up into verse

Plot Summary

Book 1

Aeneas and his Trojans are seven years into their journey home from the Trojan War to Italy when Juno, queen of the gods and arch-enemy of the Trojans, has Aeolus, god of the winds, blow up a violent storm which drives their ships off course. Aeneas, with some of the Trojan fleet, lands in North Africa Aeneas is a nearly broken man, but he pulls himself together and encourages his people.

The scene switches to the home of the gods on Mount Olympus. Aeneas's mother, the goddess Venus, begs Jupiter, her father and king of the gods, to aid her son. Jupiter replies with serene optimism. He promises the Trojans, through their descendants, not only empire, but a new golden age. Venus departs from Olympus and, disguised as a huntress, meets her son. She sends him to Carthage. There he finds the Trojans who were separated from him in the storm and meets Queen Dido, the founder of the city. Dido takes pity on the Trojans. Meanwhile, Juno and Venus, each for their own purposes, scheme to have Aeneas and Dido fall in love.

Book 2

At a banquet given in his honor, at Dido's request Aeneas narrates the story of Troy's last day and night. He tells the famous story of the Trojan Horse, left outside the city gates when the Greeks were supposedly departed, but actually filled with Greek warriors. The Trojan priest Laocoon warned "I fear the Greeks even when bearing gifts." When Laocoon and his young sons were crushed by two enormous serpents who came out of the sea, the Trojans took this as a sign from the gods and brought the horse into the city during their celebration of what they thought was the Greek withdrawal. That night the Greek warriors emerge from the horse and open the gates to their returned comrades.

Aeneas is warned by the ghost of his cousin Hector, the greatest of the Trojan warriors (killed by Achilles in the *Iliad*), who tells him to flee the city. As this section ends, Aeneas watches helplessly as Pyrrhus kills King Priam's youngest son before his father, and King Priam himself in front of his daughters and wife, Queen Hecuba.

Aeneas returns home to persuade his father to leave the city. He carries the crippled Anchises. Ascamus, his son, holds his hand while his wife Creusa and the servants follow. When Aeneas reaches the refugees' meeting point he finds Creusa has been lost in the confusion. He rushes back into Troy frantically looking for her. Finally he is met by her ghost. The ghost tells him that the mother of the gods (Cybele) has taken her under her care.

Book 3

Aeneas continues the story of the Trojans's wanderings. Slowly Anchises and Aeneas learn more about the promised land of Italy and the future that the gods predict for them there. The book ends with the death of Anchises. Aeneas is left alone with his young son to carry out the will of the gods as best he can.

Book 4

Aeneas's story is done. Dido, under the influence of Venus, is now hopelessly in love with him. Her sister Anna persuades her to forget her vow of fidelity to her dead and dearly beloved husband, Sychaeus. She loses all interest in governing her city. The ongoing construction of Carthage comes to a halt. Juno and Venus arrange for Dido and Aeneas to have to shelter together overnight in a storm-bound cave. Jupiter sends Mercury, the messenger of the god, to remind Aeneas of his duty to travel on to Italy. Aeneas is miserable, but accepts that he must follow the will of the gods. Dido begs him not to leave her, and ultimately commits suicide as the Trojans set sail, cursing them with her last breath and vowing her people to eternal war with those of Aeneas.

Book 5

The Trojans land in Sicily and hold commemorative games. Aeneas relaxes briefly, but disaster strikes again. Juno, in disguise, leads the Trojan women to burn the ships. At Aeneas' s prayer Jupiter quenches the fire, but four are destroyed. Aeneas is broken by this blow. He wonders whether he should give up trying to reach Italy. The ghost of his father appears. He tells him to continue and to visit him in the underworld. Leaving behind four boatloads of families who have decided to settle where they are, the remains of the Trojan fleet again sets sail

Book 6

At this halfway point in the epic the Trojans reach the promised land of Italy. This book falls into three parts the preparations for the descent into the land of the dead, a tour of the land of the dead, and the meeting between Aeneas and the ghost of his father Anchises. In the first part, Aeneas seeks out the Sibyl of Cumaea, a priestess-prophetess of Apollo who will be his guide into the underworld. He finds her at Apollo's temple. There she gives him instructions. He must first bury his comrade Misenus who has just died. Then he must find a talisman, the golden bough, to present to Persephone, Queen of the Dead.

In part two, Virgil sends Aeneus through the traditional geography of the underworld. Aeneas and the Sibyl encounter the three-headed guard dog Cerebrus, the river Styx, the boatman Charon, Tartarus, the abyss of hell for the vilest souls, and finally the fields of Elysium, where he meets the ghost of his father. On the way he meets three recent

ghosts: Palinurus, Dido - who refuses to speak to him and pointedly returns to the ghost of her husband - and Deiphobus, his cousin who was killed on the night of Troy's fall. These meetings fill Aeneas with sorrow, guilt, and remorse for what his mission has already cost in human terms.

In part three Aeneas meets Anchises. His father explains to Aeneas how the souls of all but the very evil and the very good are purified of their sins and reincarnated for another chance. Those who have lived lives of exceptional goodness and benefit to humanity are allowed to remain forever in Elysium. Finally he shows Aeneas the souls who will return to the upper world to become the great figures of Roman history. It is for these souls and what they represent that Aeneas has suffered and will continue to suffer.

Book 7

This book opens peacefully, building to an incident of tragic reversal of fortune. The Trojans are welcomed by King Latinus, who sees their arrival as the fulfillment of a prophecy that foreigners will come to intermarry with the Latins and found a great empire. Latinus promises his daughter Lavinia to Aeneas in marriage. Juno, however, stirs

Book 11

The book begins with Aeneas presiding over the funeral of Pallas. A messenger comes from the opposing Italian forces asking for a truce to bury the dead. Aeneas replies that he wishes for a truce not just for the dead, but for the living. He wants to come to some sort of accommodation with the Italians. The action of the poem is now dominated by Turnus. He debates with his allies, defending his determination to destroy the Trojans. The battle begins again and focuses on the warrior-maid Camilla, one of Turnus's chief allies. When she is killed the Italian allies fall back in retreat.

Book 12

When Book 12 opens, Turnus welcomes the challenge of settling the whole war in single combat with Aeneas. He rejects the pleas of King Lavinius and Queen Amata and arms himself with eager anticipation. Aeneas promises that if he is defeated he will leave Italy and if he wins he will not seek dominion over the Italians, but the two peoples will be united under the same laws. The Rutilians, Turnus's people, feel it is shameful to commit their fortunes to what they believe is an unequal combat and break the truce. General fighting begins again. Aeneas tries to stop the renewal of hostilities. His attempts are ended when a chance arrow wounds him The wound is healed by divine intervention, but it enrages him. He rages over the battlefield. Turnus does the same in a different part of the field. The description of the slaughter they make leaves very little difference between them.

Juno, still protecting Turnus, keeps him away from the worst fighting. In his absence the Trojans surround the Latin capital. Queen Amata commits suicide. Turnus becomes aware that his chariot is being driven by his disguised sister, the nymph Juturna, who with Juno's help is keeping him away from real danger. Turnus learns of the queen's suicide and the siege of the city. The single combat between Aeneas and Turnus begins, but is suspended in mid-narrative as the scene switches to Olympus and a confrontation between Juno and Jupiter.

Jupiter forbids Juno to intervene any further against the Trojans. She accepts this order, but she begs Jupiter for three things. She asks that the eventual descendants of intermarried Trojans and Italians be called Latins, that they speak the native language, Latin, and that they wear the native Latin dress, the toga. Jupiter grants this and more, promising that not only the Latin mode of dress but the whole way of life will be derived from the native Italians. Juno, then, is described is being responsible for the particular character of the Romans, and the audience understands at last that this is the reason for all the horror and bloodshed she caused.

The narrative returns to the combat between Aeneas and Turnus. Aeneas wounds Turnus and he begs for mercy Aeneas is about to spare him when he notices that Turnus wears the best of his victim Palla. Overwhelmed by a rage for vengeance, Aeneas kills Turnus

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Aeneid is a story about Trojan survival, triumph over adversity and fulfilling one's destiny. It is also a story of honor and loyalty. Told in two parts, the story recounts the trials that the Trojans faced on their long journey to their promised land and then their claiming of the land. Not only are the Trojans at the hands of fate, but many of their trials are the direct result of the gods interfering. Determined to do what is morally right and honorable, Aeneas does his best to lead his people to safety and bring them to a peaceful existence.

Juno uses her powers to keep the Trojans lost at sea. When Neptune finds out, he calms the ocean. Aeneas and his men make it through the turbulent waters and head for land. Aeneas sets out the next day with his friend, Achates, to check out the lay of the land. Venus appears to Aeneas disguised as a huntress. When he asks where they are, she tells him they are in Carthage. Only as she walks away does he recognize her and chastises her for always putting on disguises.

Cloaked in a mist, Aeneas and his friend see depictions of the Trojan War laid out before them. It upsets Aeneas to see this. They continue in the mist and see their fellow Trojans go before Dido pleading to let them stay, which she does. All of this happens while Aeneas and Achates look on from their shrouded mist. They take this moment to step forward, which catches everyone by surprise. He offers his gratitude to Dido for welcoming the Trojans on her shores.

Aeneas calls his son forth but does not know that Venus is sending her son, Cupid, in disguise instead. Trying to be smart, Venus uses Cupid to charm Dido into allowing the Trojans to stay for a while and offer them protection. Cupid, still disguised as Aeneas' son, goes to Dido and enchants her. Happy to have such guests, she begs Aeneas to tell her the whole story of the war.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Aeneas's ultimate destiny is laid out in this chapter; it foreshadows events that will occur even long after Aeneas is dead. However, regardless of the trials that Aeneas needs to face in the near future, he will ultimately be victorious because Jupiter, Father of the gods, lays out predictions that can only occur if Aeneas is successful. He predicts the wars in Italy as well as the expansion of the Roman Empire and the coming of Caesar. The lands will not be peaceful until Caesar dies and Augustus takes over.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Aeneas begins the story with the horse and how the armed Greeks hid in it and were wheeled into the city. Once in the city, the trap door is opened and the soldiers come out of the horse and into the city while it sleeps. Hector appears to Aeneas in a dream all bloodied from when he has been slain by the Greek, Achilles. Hector warns Aeneas that the Greeks are within the city walls and that they need to save themselves. Aeneas awakes just then and hears the battle sounds from the city as it reaches his house.

Aeneas and a band of men come together in an attempt to defend their city. Everywhere is destruction as the Greeks set fire to all the dwellings. Aeneas tells his family to flee, and he helps them get to safety. He carries his father on his back while his son and wife follow behind. As Aeneas runs, he is not aware that his wife has fallen behind. When they stop, he looks for her but to no avail. He comes upon her ghost, and she tells him that he will travel by sea and end up on Hesperia.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The fall of Troy only marks the beginning of Aeneas's woes. Although he is known as a brave warrior, it is not until later that he truly is a leader and "Father" Aeneas. He grows into his ultimate destiny. The warnings he receives while still in Troy is a glimpse into much larger warnings and visions he will experience later.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Aeneas continues his story and tells how they built their fleet and left the shores of Troy. When praying at a stone temple, Aeneas hears a voice that tells him and the Trojans to go to Crete. There he founds the city of Pergamum. Soon after this, they are struck with a plague. Aeneas has a dream that tells him to go to Hesperia. They once again set sail. While on the stormy seas, they are blown off course for three days until they sight land again in the Strophades in the Ionian Sea. It is here that they encounter the Harpies.

After the Harpies threaten them, they once again set sail for other shores. After a year, they land on Buthrotum. Andromache, Hector's widow, sees the Trojans coming and faints, overcome that she is seeing fellow Trojans. She tells him what has befallen her.

Aeneas begs the gods to give him more warnings on their journey. Helenus tells him that he still has an arduous journey ahead of him, and even though Aeneas thinks that Italy is close by, it is not. Aeneas is warned not to go to the near coast of Italy because the towns are held by the evil Greeks. Once they get to Sicily, they need to head to the left and avoid the right. After they leave Sicily, they will arrive at Cumae. Aeneas visits a prophetess, who gives him a prophesy. She tells of future events in Italy and predicts a favorable journey to Italy.

Back at sea, they see Italy's shores and give thanks. They see four white horses as their first omen. With the seas stormy once again, they become lost. They stop on land and come upon a Greek, who begs for their mercy. Anchises promises friendship and Achaemenides tells of the Cyclopes monster in the cave that devoured the Greeks. He warns Aeneas and the Trojans to flee because there are other Cyclopes monsters around. They immediately take off as the Cyclopes heads toward them. They evade his attack and leave. At this, Aeneas pauses in his story and rests.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The Trojans and people of this day and age are big believers in portents and predictions. The Trojans, in particular, eagerly seek signs to point them in the right direction. When they started out, they lacked direction, and as they move forward, they learn about their destiny and what they are supposed to do. In the beginning of the story, there is only an allusion to the land they will eventually call home. In this chapter, there are several references to the new land and their great future.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Dido confesses to her sister Anna that since her husband died, Dido has not desired a man until she met Aeneas. Anna tries to eliminate Dido's doubts and convinces her to love again. It happens as it is predicted; Dido and Aeneas come together and forget about their people and their lands as they escape into carnal bliss. Rumor spreads and the overall feeling throughout the land is not good. Dido's suitors become jealous and this creates unrest throughout her land.

Jupiter is concerned about Aeneas spending too much time in Carthage and sends Mercury to talk to him. When Mercury arrives and sees Aeneas building up Dido's city, Mercury asks Aeneas why he is doing this when he is supposed to be building up Aeneas' own cities. Mercury reminds him that Italy is Ascanius' inheritance, and they, therefore, need to go there in order to claim it. Mercury disappears, and Aeneas is filled with fear because he knows he needs to do the gods' bidding and leave. He ponders how he will break the news to Dido, who he knows will take it very hard.

Before Aeneas even has the chance to let her know, she discovers his intentions. He tells her that it is the gods' wishes that he leave at once. His quest for Italy is not for himself, but for his son. Then he reminds her that they were never formally married, and she should not begrudge him this. This sends her into a rage. Conceding defeat, Dido conceals the fact that she plans to commit suicide. Mercury again appears to Aeneas and commands him to leave immediately. When Dido sees the ships setting sail, she throws herself on her sword and dies.

Chapter 4 Analysis

As is typical in this story, the use of storms is usually significant of underlying troubles or of trouble brewing. This case is no different. It is a storm that brings Dido and Aeneas together. So while gloom hangs over the land, the two will be joined in matrimony. Prior to this event taking place, even Juno calls Dido "unfortunate." Juno might be either referring to past history because she was widowed so young, or she might be foreshadowing future events, which might make Dido regret this decision to come together with Aeneas.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Since they still could not reach Italy's shores, they sail west and land on Acestes' shores. He pays homage to Anchises for a blessing on them. As a tribute to Anchises, Aeneas announces funeral games. The games include boat races, a sprint, a boxing match and an archery contest. Finally, with Ascanius on horseback, three troops broke out into mock battles for everyone's enjoyment.

Juno stirs up some trouble when she sends Iris to influence the Trojan women to burn the fleet. The ruse works, and the women get riled up and start burning the ships. Aeneas prays to the gods to put the fires out and the skies pour rain on everything, so that the ships are saved. Anchises appears to Aeneas and tells him to let the aged and weary stay behind in Sicily and only take the strongest on to Italy. Venus makes an appeal to Neptune that they may travel in safety, and Neptune soothes her by saying that they will have a safe journey and lose only one on the seas. As the Trojans set out on the waters, the fleet captain Palinurus, is tricked by the gods and tossed into the waters.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Juno stirs up trouble when she sends Iris to influence the Trojan women to burn the fleet. Iris is despairing that there is still so much water to cross before they get to Italy, and she poses as Beroe, Doryclus' wife. She tries to convince the Trojan women that after seven years of travel, they shouldn't have to sail anymore and they can build a new Troy on the shores of Sicily. Lying to them, she tells them that Cassandra, the prophetess, has come told her that they need to make this land the new Troy. The women know better and recognize this as the work of the gods. However, the women are riled up and burn the ships anyway.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Aeneas and the fleet land on Italy's shores. When the priestess Deiphobe appears, she tells Aeneas that they need to make a sacrifice. Once done, she tells him to claim his destiny. He offers his thanks and praises and vows to erect a shrine. The oracle warns of troubles to come. He asks her if she will grant him a visit with his father. She tells him yes, but he has to follow very specific directions. Later, on his journey into the cave with the seer, he travels on the river Styx and sees Palinurus, who begs to be given a proper burial. The seer tells Palinurus that the people will pay homage to him in death, and the place will be named after him.

They continue their journey, and as they come closer to the Elysium shores, Charon gets angry and yells at them. The Sibyl explains that their intentions are good, and they should be allowed to pass. He lets them go, and Aeneas goes further into the depths of the underworld, where he sees various souls in groups separated by the type of death they suffered. He sees Dido and tries to tell her he was sorry for going, but she does not seem to recognize him. Rather, she turns and walks into the arms of her first husband.

The move on toward Elysium and prepare to leave their offering. They enter the paradise realm and seek Anchises, who is waiting for them in a green valley. He explains the mysteries of Elysium and the process by which souls may choose to be reborn. He shows Aeneas his future line of descendents, including Romulus and all of the Caesars. When Aeneas leaves Elysium, he rejoins his fleet and sets sail once again.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Once again, there is a prophecy about Aeneas's destiny and the great history that will result from his victory. As Anchises talks, the future history of Italy unfolds before his eyes, and he sees the great rulers who have not yet been born. Since these future rulers can only come about from Aeneas's victory, it foreshadows the trials yet to come. Although Aeneas does not know it yet, this destiny is going to happen, but can only happen if he wins. This lays out a path of victory for Aeneas before his greatest trials.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Aeneas and the fleet land on Italy's shores in King Latinus' kingdom. His only child, a daughter, is ready for marriage, and the Queen desires Turnus to be her son-in-law. Latinus, however, sees another portent that tells him to marry his daughter to a stranger, not someone from his land. When the king hears of the Trojan's arrival, he invites them to meet with him. Aeneas sends representatives to the king. They tell him that they are there to stay, and ask for some land to live on. They offer gifts to the king, which he accepts. The king also realizes that these are the strangers referred to in the portent and that one will marry his daughter.

Juno claims she must be losing her powers because the Trojans have come so far and risen so high. She is angry and determined to destroy them all. She calls on the hateful Allecto for help. Allecto causes Queen Amata's to rage over her daughter's betrothal to Aeneas, which upset the entire household. Queen Amata hides her daughter away in order to delay the marriage to Aeneas.

Allecto then tempts Turnus to start a war over the matter, but he ignores her, which only increases her anger. She casts her poison at him, and when he wakes, he is determined to set his forces against Latinus. At the same time, Ascanius sees a beautiful stag and shoots it with his arrow, but it is a native's family pet. When this happens, tempers flare, people are called to arms and there are casualties. Juno, happy with Allecto's work, dismisses her and continues on. Finally, troops from all over are called together to fight against the Trojans.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Aeneas's destiny continues to unfold. As the prophecies about Lavinia come true, it is clear to see how close Aeneas is getting to the end of his journey. It was predicted that Aeneas will marry again and have another child. Also, the last pages of the chapter signify how Aeneas continues to step closer to his ultimate goal as armies from all over are called together to take up arms against the Trojans. Previous oracles foretold that Aeneas would fight a great battle before fathering the new race of Trojans. This war is that great war that was prophesied.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Aeneas is troubled but has a dream that tells him not to worry. The Trojans sail up the Tiber and come upon King Evander's territory. Aeneas explains their blood relation, so the king welcomes him warmly and offers help and supplies to Aeneas. Later during the feast, the king tells Aeneas the story of Hercules killing Cacus, the ogre. Their feast is a tribute to Hercules for killing the fire-breathing monster.

Venus goes to her husband, Vulcan, and asks him to help Aeneas by making armor and weapons. He agrees and starts his smiths working.

King Evander goes to Aeneas and convinces Aeneas to seek help from the Etruscans. At first, Aeneas is not sure, but he receives a sign from Venus that this is what he must do. He takes his best men and sends the rest to his son, so they can tell him what passed. Aeneas is now on his way to the Etruscans. When he is alone, Venus appears to him and provides him with the armor that Vulcan made. The shield depicts Roman history yet to occur.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Elements of foreshadowing occur as King Evander sends his son, Pallas, to fight alongside the Trojans. Evander calls to the gods and begs them to cut him down if Pallas does not return to him. He immediately falls unconscious and is brought inside, giving credence to the omen that perhaps Pallas will not return home.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Turnus is alerted that Aeneas is on his way and gathering forces with the Etruscans. Turnus bursts forth, and the Teucrians follow Aeneas's orders and await the enemy in the towers. In an attempt to get the Trojans to come out, Turnus's troops try to fire the towers. Vulcan sways the winds, so the fires do not harm the Trojans. Instead, Turnus attempts to burn the Trojan fleet, but the gods intervene, and the ships turn into sea animals and swim off into the depths, unharmed.

Nisis and Euryalus insist on getting word to Aeneas about the events. They get permission from Ascanius to go. They happen upon the drunk and sleeping Rutulians. Initially, their ambush is successful, but they get greedy and end up losing their lives. Their fellow Trojans see their dismembered heads left out on purpose by the Rutulians. This action devastates them. In a counter attack, Turnus and his men try to attack the Trojans in their towers, but it only causes death for Turnus' men. Ascanius tries his hand at the bow and arrow and kills Numanus Remulus. Apollo, seeing Ascanius's skill, appears to him as Butes and tells him that he needs to take himself out of battle.

The Trojans then open the gates and assault the enemy as they try to enter. When they finally close the doors, they do not realize that Turnus is with them. With Juno empowering him to do so, Turnus embarks on a mad killing spree, killing as many of the Trojans as he can. The Trojans finally force Turnus into the Tiber, upon which he floats back to his troops.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Once again the gods intervene with the mortals and create trouble. Juno, bent on destroying the Trojans, goads Turnus into warring with the Trojans. The gods' involvement leads up to what happens next at Olympus. Likewise, Vulcan sways the winds in order to prevent the Trojan fleet from going up in flames. At the same time, the fleet transforms into sea nymphs and swim away before any harm can come to them. All of the meddling builds up to a head that is about to burst, as Jupiter calls together all of the gods in Olympus.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Jupiter addresses the gods and tells them to quit quarreling because it goes against his direct wishes. Venus speaks up and begs that Ascanius be saved from the war. He should not have to undergo all the trials only to die senselessly. Juno argues that war is not her fault, but she blames the other gods for leading the Trojans astray. Jupiter decides that the outcome is in the hands of fate.

The Rutulians continue their siege at the Trojan walls. Meanwhile, Aeneas makes progress and strikes a deal with the Etruscans for their help. As Aeneas sails that night with the Etruscan fleet, the Trojan ships that were transformed into sea nymphs recognize Aeneas and stop to talk to him. They quickly guide him to shore, and when his troops see the fleet, their spirits lift. He immediately starts killing all Rutulians in his way.

Juno pleads with Jupiter to spare Turnus and grant him a reprieve. Jupiter allows this, but warns her that the course of events is already in motion and cannot be altered. Hearing this, Juno creates an apparition of Aeneas that appears to Turnus, who chases it aboard a ship. Once on deck, the ship sails out to sea, sparing him.

When Aeneas learns of Pallas' death, he goes after Mezentius, who he wounds in the groin. Taken out of battle, Mezentius' son, Lausus, goes to fight for him, and Aeneas kills him. When Mezentius hears of Lausus' death he is grieved and determined to kill Aeneas. Ultimately Aeneas defeats Mezentius by taking his horse down and attacking him.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Another element of foreshadow appears in this chapter when Juno begs Jupiter to grant Turnus a reprieve. Although Jupiter allows this, he also cautions Juno that the course of events is already in motion and cannot be altered. This is not only another step toward Aeneas fulfilling his prophesized destiny, but it shows that this destiny is unshakable; nothing will be able to alter the path.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The next morning, Aeneas gives thanks and praise for his victory and honors the dead. He laments Pallas' death before all as they set out to return his body to his father. A procession of a thousand accompanies the body back, as well as spoils of the war. Afterward, the Latium envoys come, shaded in olive branches, requesting their dead. Aeneas explains that they can peacefully take their dead and continue to live on in peace because he regrets going to war with them. He explains that the war is between him and the king, not the people and that he wants to end the war.

The envoys tell Latinus of what transpired with Aeneas, and he tells them that he wants to give the Trojans a tract of land upon which to build their city. If they do not want to stay, they will build twenty ships for them to sail out on in search of conquering other lands. In addition, they propose to offer Livinia's hand in marriage to Aeneas. Turnus does not want to hear any of this and is still determined to defeat the Trojans. He is convinced that if they can gather their forces, they can still overrun Aeneas. Turnus agrees, though, that if Aeneas calls him out to single combat, he will fight him one on one. Meanwhile, Aeneas and the Etruscans are already making their way toward the city for more combat.

Turnus takes up arms alongside Camilla and heads out to battle. After a grueling and valiant battle, Camilla falls to her death. Before she dies, she requests that Turnus not allow the Trojans to enter the city. The day ends as Turnus gets the message and both sides stop for the day.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Two important things occur in this chapter: Aeneas demonstrates his compassion as he laments the loss of Pallas, and Turnus demonstrates his pride by refusing to go one-on-one with Aeneas. It is becoming a theme with Aeneas being known more as the father figure; one who shows proper respect and compassion for others. He is becoming more and more the moral authority. Turnus, on the other hand, is almost the complete opposite of this. He knows he cannot match Aeneas in one-on-one battle and fears defeat would shame him. Turnus's defeat is yet again foreshadowed when Diana says that Camilla is arming herself with weapons in vain. It can only be in vain if she is going to be unsuccessful, which the gods know is the case.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Turnus agrees to single combat against Aeneas. Amata tries to talk him out of it, but he insists on moving forward. Juno, desperate to save Turnus, calls upon his sister Juturna to intervene. Aeneas, Turnus, and Latinus come out together before the combat is to begin. Aeneas vows that if he loses and dies, his son and their people will withdraw from the land and claim nothing. If he is victorious, he will not lay claim to the land in any way. He wants only to live on it in peace and marry Lavinia. It is also his wish that Latinus continue to rule the land. The Rutulians however, are not satisfied with this treaty. Juturna, hearing these protests, disguises herself as a Camers, a known warrior, and goes amongst the ranks. She stirs up their emotions by saying that it is shameful that they do not get their day of battle when they will surely win.

The Rutulians are stirred up, and they throw spears and shoot arrows. Just as the treaty is sealed, Aeneas is wounded. Turnus sees him leaving and excitedly thinks that he now has the upper hand. Venus comes to Aeneas's aid and heals him, so he can go back into the field. Seeing Aeneas back in action, Juturna then disguises herself as Turnus' driver and steers him away from the immediate danger. When Queen Amata believes Turnus dead, she hangs herself in the palace, since she feels the war is her doing. Turnus discovers that his sister is driving the chariot as one of his men approaches to alert him to the queen's death. They tell him that he is their last hope and that he needs to get back.

At last face to face, Turnus attacks Aeneas with his sword, but it splinters before it even makes contact. Turnus discovers he is using the wrong sword and runs in a panic to find his own. Aeneas throws his spear, which becomes lodged in a tree, as Turnus retrieves his sword. When Venus sees this, she unplucks Aeneas's spear from the tree. Aeneas makes a fatal blow against Turnus. As Turnus dies, he asks that his body be returned to his son.

Chapter 12 Analysis

When the Rutulians see the portent with the eagle snatching the swan, they cheer it as they see themselves as righteous, going after the eagle and releasing the swan. What they do not realize is that it might indeed be a portent, but the symbolism that they see as theirs, may belong to the Trojans. In other words, the Rutulian's may be the eagle to the Trojan's swan. They are too blinded by fury and adrenaline to stop now.

As Jupiter tells Juno the battle is coming to an end and Aeneas will be victorious. She finally accepts the news with resignation and wants him to promise that all things Latium will not change—not the language, the name of their land (it will still be called Latium), and the manner of their dress. On this Jupiter agrees.

Characters

Adromache

Widow of Hector, given as a prize of war to Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. She later marries Helenus. In a twist of fate, they come to reign over part of Pyrrhus's kingdom after Pyrrhus is killed by Orestes, son of Agamemnon. She never forgets either her adored Hector, or their little boy Astyanax, whom the victorious Greek threw from the walls of Troy for fear he would grow up and avenge his father.

Aeneas

Prince of Troy and chief protagonist of this work. There are as many readings of his character as there are readers of *The Aeneid.* Virgil's narrative repeatedly puts Aeneas into situations in which he finds his duty to the gods and to the future in conflict with his own personal desires, freedom, and autonomy—when he wants to stay with Dido, Queen of Carthage, for example, and the god Jupiter sends a messenger reminding him that it is his destiny to leave and lead his people on to Italy.

Aeneas often seems to be confused about what he should do. He sometimes makes choices that seem clearly wrong to many readers. The classic epic pattern generally shows its protagonist becoming a true hero by learning through experience the importance of wisdom, tolerance, compromise, and justice. While Aeneus shows these qualities intermittently, some interpretations of *The Aeneid* indicate that at the end all his painfully acquired knowledge is thrown away in an act of bloody and violent revenge when he slays Turnus in a rage.

Aeolus

The god of the winds. He is indebted to Juno for his role among the gods, and at Juno's request causes the storm that drives Aeneas's fleet onto the coast of North Africa in Book I.

Amata

Lavinius's wife. The goddess Juno encourages her to think of Aeneas and the newly-arrived Trojans as dangerous interlopers on Italian soil. She opposes the proposed match between Aeneas and her daughter Lavinia.

Anchises

A prince of Troy, Aeneas's father and Priam's second cousin. Aeneas is the son of a union between Anchises and the goddess Venus. One tradition holds that Jupiter crippled Anchises with a thunderbolt when he boasted of being Venus's lover.

Anna

Dido's sister. She persuades Dido that an alliance with Aeneas is in her own best interests as well as those of her city, Carthage.

Ascanius

The son of Aeneas and Creusa. The Roman tribe (extended family) of Julius claims him as an ancestor. He is the founder of Alba. His boyish joke in Book VII about the Trojans eating their tables together with their food recalls Anchises's prophecy that his people would find their foretold home in Italy only when they were reduced to eating their tables.

Cacus

The monstrous son of the smith god Vulcan, he terrorizes the kingdom of Evander from a cave on the Aventine hill. He is killed by Hercules.

Camilla

A warrior maiden, Camilla is the child of an exiled tyrant, Metabus. Her father pledged her life in service to Diana, goddess of the hunt. The goddess Diana protected Camilla when Metabus bound her to his spear and threw her across a river as he fled from pursuers. She is an ally of Turnus. Her death in battle is a severe blow to the Italian cause.

Cerberus

The three-headed watchdog of the underworld. When the Sibyl escorts Aeneas through the underworld, she throws the dog a drugged honey-cake so that they can pass him safely while he sleeps.

Charon

The ferryman of the dead. Souls of the dead must cross the River Styx to enter the underworld. If they have been properly buried, with coins on their eyes to pay him, Charon will ferry them across the river.

Creusa

The first wife of Aeneas, she is killed when Troy falls to the Greeks.

Deiphobe

See Sibyl

Dido

Phoenician princess who flees with many of her people from the tyranny of her ruling brother. She founds the city of Carthage and is a capable ruler until, under the influence of the love-goddess Venus, she falls in love with Aeneas. When Aeneas deserts her to continue his journey to Italy on the orders of Jupiter, she kills herself, cursing Aeneas and the nation he will found. Her disintegration from a strong, virtuous, and capable woman and ruler to a distraught, love-sick suicide is based in her character, circumstances, and the interference of the gods in her life.

Evander

King of Pallanteum, a small city on one of Rome's seven hills. When he was a teenage prince of Arcadia in Greece, he met Aeneas's father Anchises and was deeply impressed by him His Arcadians are at constant war with the Latins, but they enjoy good relations with the Etruscans. Evander brings the Etruscans into the war on Aeneas's side partly out of respect for the memory of Aeneas's father

Ganymede

Trojan prince whom Jupiter abducts to be the cup-bearer of the gods.

Hector

The greatest of Priam's son, a loving husband and father, generous and conscientious, a great warrior who does not glory in war, he is the bulwark of the Trojans until he is killed by Achilles. Aeneas in many ways takes on some of his dead cousin's attributes as well as his position of leadership among the Trojan refugees.

Hecuba

The queen of Troy, wife of King Priam, she is forced into slavery after the city of Troy falls to the Greeks and she has witnessed the deaths of her husband and son.

Helenus

Son of Priam, he is enslaved by Pyrrhus after the Trojan war. When Pyrrhus is killed by Orestes, son of Agamemnon, Helenus comes into possession of part of his kingdom. He and his wife Adromanche recreate the city of Troy on a small scale. Helenus is a prophet who assures Aeneas that he will eventually reach Italy and make a home there.

Hercules

A great hero, the son of Jupiter and a mortal woman named Alcmena. He is known for his great feats of strength and bravery. He rescues the people of Evander from the monster Cacus.

Iulus

See Ascanius

Juno

Queen of the gods, both wife and sister of Jupiter. She is the patroness of married women and of the cities of Argos and Carthage. Juno sided with the Greeks in the Trojan Wars because she was offended when the Trojan warrior Pans pronounced Venus rather than Juno the most beautiful of the goddesses.

Jupiter

"Father of gods and men," Jupiter is the king of the gods and the most powerful among them. He is bound only by his own word and by fate.

Juturna

Turnus's sister, the spirit of springs. She is given immortality by her lover Jupiter.

Lausus

A young Italian killed by Aeneas as he defends his father, the tyrant Mezentius. Aeneas regrets this killing immediately, realizing that he would have defended his own father Anchises with the same valor. When Aeneas carries the boy's body to his companions, this act of compassion leads to a temporary truce between the warring Trojans and Italians.

Lavinia

She is the only child of Lavinius and Amata of Italy. Queen Amata hoped that Lavinia would marry Turnus, but the gods send signs that show she is fated to marry Aeneas, thus founding the Roman line.

Lavinius

King of the Italians, he welcomes Aeneas and the Trojans. He offers his daughter Lavinia to Aeneas in marriage because he believes that it is the will of the gods.

Mezentius

An Etruscan king, whom Virgil calls a "scorner of the Gods." He rules Argylla until his incredible cruelty causes his people to drive him from the city. Turnus shelters him. The Etruscans join Aeneas, urged by Evander, in order to be revenged on Mezentius.

Misenus

Aeneas's trumpeter, killed when he challenges Triton's pre-eminence on the trumpet. Aeneas must bury him and ritually purify the fleet before he can descend to the underworld.

Neoptolemus

See Pyrrhus

Neptune

God of the sea, he favors the Trojans in their attempt to reach Italy. He is annoyed when he finds that Juno and Aeolus caused the storm at sea that shipwrecks Aeneas's fleet on the African coast without consulting him.

Palinurus

Aeneas's helmsman. He is washed overboard just as the Trojan fleet reaches Italy and is murdered when he reaches the shore. His death is described by Neptune in Book 5 as a sacrifice to guarantee the safe landing of the rest of the Trojans:"One shall be given for the many." His shade (spirit or ghost) meets Aeneas in the underworld and begs for his help is crossing the River Styx—he was not properly buried and does not have money to pay the boatman Charon The Sibyl who is guiding Aeneas through the underworld promises that the people who killed Palinurus will come to understand then-error and will bury him with the necessary honors— and coins—to ensure his passage across the river.

Pallas

Evander's son, a young man on his first real battle campaign. Aeneas is drawn to the father and son, and acts as a mentor and protector of Pallas. When Pallas is killed in the climactic battle between the Trojans and Italians, Aeneas goes wild with grief. He had been about to spare Turnus's life, but when he is reminded that Turnus killed Pallas, he in turn butchers Turnus savagely.

Paris

Aprince of Troy, son of King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy. At his birth it was prophesied that he would someday cause the destruction of Troy, so his parents sorrowfully abandon him as an infant to die on Mt. Ida. He is found and raised by a shepherd. Paris grows to be an exceptionally handsome young man, and the goddess Venus offers him his choice from among the most beautiful woman in the world. He selects Helen, unfortunately already married to Menelaeus of Greece, and abducts her. Helen's former suitors, who include all the major warriors of Greece, had sworn an oath to her husband to always protect their beloved lady. The Trojan War begins when Greek troops attack Troy to recover Helen.

Persephone

Pluto's wife, queen of the underworld and of the dead.

Pluto

The king of the underworld and of the dead. Pluto is the brother of Jupiter and Neptune.

Polydorus

A son of Priam who is sent abroad to be raised in the court of the king of Thrace. When Troy falls, the king of Thrace kills him for his treasure. His ghost appears to Aeneas when the Trojans stumble upon his burial mound.

Priam

King of Troy. He dies at Pyrrhus's hands while defending his family on the night Troy falls to the Greeks.

Pyrrhus

Son of the famous Greek warrior Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad.* During the fall of Troy, Pyrrhus kills Priam's son Polites and then Priam himself with great cruelty in the presence of Queen Hecuba and her daughters. Adromanche, widow of Hector, is forced to become his mistress. When he is killed by Orestes, part of his kingdom comes into the hands of his slave, Helenus, a brother of Hector.

Sibyl

The sibyls were priestesses and prophetesses of Apollo. Aeneas visits the Sibyl of Cumaea in southern Italy before his trip to the underworld .

Sychaeus

Dido's first husband, murdered by her brother.

Turnus

Prince of the Rutulians, a brilliant young warrior deeply conscious of his honor and standing. The Sibyl compares him to Achilles. He is a descendant of the royal house of Argos and is a favorite of the goddess Juno. Turnus seems to find war his most natural and satisfying occupation.

Venus

The goddess of love and of beauty. In the *Aeneid,* she is also the mother of the Roman people. It is her son, Aeneas, who leads his Trojan fleet to Italy, where he intermarries with the Italian princess Lavinia, thus beginning the Roman ancestral line. Venus is a devoted mother in the distant way that many of the gods who have children with mortals remain somewhat involved in the lives of their offspring.

Objects/Places

The Rutulian Tribe

This tribe is headed up by Turnus who leads the Rutulians into battle against Aeneas and the Trojans.

Latium

This is an area of Italy that King Latinus rules over.

Romulus

Romulus is the future founder of Rome. Aeneas saw Romulus when he was told of future events.

Carthage

This is Dido's land where Aeneas and his fleet land at the beginning of the story. She rules it alone as she is a young widow. As the Trojans settle in, they help build up her cities.

Aeolia

This is a country of clouds and raging winds.

Hesperia/Italy

The Greeks called it Hesperia. It is an ancient land, strong in war and rich in soil. A "younger" race named it Italy after their leader. In *Aeneid*, this is the future home of the Trojans, where Aeneas will be the father to a great race as prophesied by Jupiter.

Harpies

These are birds described as having maiden faces and hands like claws. They drop foul excrement and their faces are pale with hunger. These creatures come swooping out to ruin the feast the Trojans set out for themselves. As they are beginning to starve as a result, the Trojans pack up and leave swiftly.

Sicily

It is in Sicily that the Trojans play the funeral games as Aeneas celebrates his father's life.

River Styx

Aeneas is guided on this river through the underworld, in order to visit his father, who waits in Elysium. While on the river, he passes many souls that have died. They are neither in hell or heaven.

Tartarus

Tartarus is the complete opposite of Elysium; also known as hell. Traveling on the River Styx in the underworld, there are two ways to go. One is toward Elysium, the other is toward Tartarus.

Fields of Lamentation

While traveling through the underworld on the River Styx, Aeneas passes the Fields of Lamentation. Charon explains that this is where the souls go that were cheated by love in life.

Elysium

Elysium is considered paradise in the afterlife, also known as heaven. Aeneas takes a trip through the underworld to see his father in Elysium. It is there that Anchises shows Aeneas the great future rulers of Rome.

Olympus

This is the city where the gods congregate.

Troy

Original home of Aeneas and his family. This is from where the Trojans originate. While Aeneas recounts his tale to Dido, he tells her about the Greek invasion of Troy.

Themes

Roman History

The *Aeneid* quickly achieved a preeminent position in Latin literature and eventually in world literature and culture. Thanks to the *Aeneid's* enormous popularity and its immediate adoption as a school text, it became the standard for the epic in Western Europe. The work of Virgil's predecessors was almost completely lost. For these reasons it is difficult to properly appreciate Virgil's originality. The early Roman epics of Naevius and Ennius were essentially history, at times current events, written in the epic form. Virgil's *Aeneid* is equally concerned with Roman history, but handles it in a radically different way.

To handle both the flaws and the real, if frustrated, virtues and promise of the Roman way, Virgil used a legend for the main line of narrative in *the Aeneid.* History was relegated to digressions. In the *Aeneid,* legend was treated like real life, history was insinuated into prophecy, visions and into the descriptions of objects (ecphrasis). This means that the main narrative can be understood both as explicating the ancient source of the Roman way of life and as a commentary on the present as Virgil experienced it. The protagonist Aeneas both is and is not equated with the ruler Augustus (who may have commissioned or requested the work).

Virgil connects ancient legendry with his modern reality. Aeneas's legendary struggles are paradoxically the reality from which the Roman people, their history, and their institutions came. Aeneas and his history forge the Roman character for better and worse. In the *Aeneid,* all the dangers and all the glories of the Roman way of life resonate from their origins through the nation's whole history into Virgil's present.

Right Conduct, the Roman Way of Life, and Roman Destiny

The moral center of the *Aeneid* is the Roman way of life which Augustus was attempting to revitalize in Virgil's own time. This system was ideally based on duty to the gods, to country, and to family and friends. It was powered by a deep sense of humanity. Virgil is aware of the social cohesion, order, even the personal happiness, which this ideal could produce. He is equally aware of the sorrows and cruelties which could result from the clash of these duties. Private experience and duty are often placed in tension against public duty. This tension is at the heart of the parting of Dido and Aeneas. On a historical level, Virgil expresses this tension with an allusion in to Brutus, the first consul, who drove the tyrant king Tarquin out of Rome and ordered his own sons executed for attempting to reinstate Tarquin. These tensions are foregrounded throughout the poem. Nevertheless, it remains clear that Virgil believes that the ideals of Roman life and public service remain worth the often difficult struggle with self. In Book I the god Jupiter summarizes what the Roman way of life could and would give not only Rome, but all of humanity, a world-rule which brings universal peace and humane civilization. This world is not expressed in political terms, but ethical ones. It is available to all who follow the

Roman way. Without this and similar prophecies the suffering of Aeneas, Dido, Creusa, Palinurus, Pallas and others are nearly unbearable. Aeneas must be brought to understand the promise which is given through him. The pageant of Roman history in Book 6 and the pictures on his shield illustrate the moral qualities of the Roman way of life. Nevertheless, Virgil often undercuts this glorious possibility: in the lament for Marcellus in Book 6, for example, and in the end of the poem itself when Aeneas abandons his highest principles in grief for Pallas and kills Turnus, to whom he had considered granting mercy.

The Sorrows at the Heart of Things

The theme which dictates the tone of the *Aeneid* for modern readers is that of human loss and regret. The theme can be defined by two remarks in Book 1. In line 203 Aeneas says, "Perhaps even this will be something to remember with joy." In the most quoted passage of of the *Aeneid,* Aeneas exclaims, "Here are tears for things and human mortality touches the heart." The first passage, however, is set in the context of promised destiny of Aeneas and his followers in lines 204-7: "Through many circumstances and various troubles we travel towards Italy where the fates point out a place of rest. There it is decreed for Troy to rise again. Endure and keep yourself for prosperity!" In the second passage the tears and thoughts of which Aeneas is conscious are themselves a reflex of fame. "What region is not full of our distress? Here," he says in lines 460-1, "is the reward of praise." The sorrows of the individual heart caught in conflicting duties are seen in the setting of a divinely granted destiny and the immortality of fame.

Private and Public Ideals

There is a strong sense of tension between Virgil's two ideals of individual human felicity and the mission of Rome. This has sometime been characterized as the tension in Virgil's own ethical ideals between Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. Stoicism was a philosophy of self-sacrificing public service, of a heart unmoved yet rationally compassionate. Epicureanism was a form of philosophical quietism, a retreat from the world. It was not a search for sensual pleasure, as is sometimes suggested, but for an absence of pain. The tension in the poem, however, is more complex. There is a tension between individual happiness and public mission. There is a frightening tension between the ideal and its fulfillment. Roman history was not a litany of broken loves, abandoned friends, and rage. Conjugal love, friendly fidelity, justice, and magnanimity towards the stranger were, for the Roman, what characterized the essence Roman way of life. The Romans never deluded themselves about the difficulty of this life of family and commonwealth. Aeneas is on one level the symbol of the difficulties which beset even an essentially decent man in maintaining the humanity which was necessary if Rome was going to be the great civilizing force the gods intended rather than simply another great power in a long line of great powers.

Divine Intervention

Aeneas has a great destiny. From the outset of the story, it is determined that he will lead the Trojans to a new land and become its founder. He will be the father of a new country that promises to produce some of the greatest leaders in the Roman world. Although Jupiter makes this decree, it does not go unchallenged. Throughout the entire story, the gods battle with each other in order to change destiny. In order to do this they charge other gods to do their bidding or get directly involved themselves in hopes of influencing their desired outcomes.

It is known from the beginning that Juno is against Aeneas fulfilling this destiny. She will do whatever she can to see that this does not happen. Venus on the other hand, as his mother, will do everything in her power to protect Aeneas. This sets the stage for conflict amongst the gods, conflict between the gods and mortals, and finally - as a result of the gods' interference - mortals conflicting with other mortals. Venus sends Cupid to do her bidding to influence Dido to protect Aeneas. Juno sends Allecto to create unrest among the people and spur Turnus on to start a war with the Trojans. Even after Jupiter commands them to stay in line, they continue to get involved. However, toward the end of the story, Jupiter explains that regardless of what Juno and Venus do, the wheels are set in motion and Aeneas is fast approaching his destiny.

Honor and Compassion versus Pride and Vengeance

At the start of the story, Aeneas recounts the fall of his beloved Troy. As he does so, he is seen as angry and vengeful. He seems so bent on defending his city and killing the invaders that he almost forgets about his family. In addition, he is about to kill Helen when the gods intervene and remind him that the war is not her fault. He is reluctantly pulled away to save his family and go on to a greater destiny. Much later in the story, he takes a very different stance toward battle and those he fights against. He repeatedly shows his compassion and usually leans toward lenience unless driven by a greater reason. For instance, he allows a peace so the Latins can claim their dead and mourn together. His actions are also usually honorable. For example, he does not want to involve the people in the battle against Turnus. Rather, he wants to fight Turnus one on one and have no more bloodshed amongst the soldiers on either side. Even in the final fight with Turnus, he is about to show mercy, when he realizes Turnus' cruel deed in wearing Pallas's armor.

Turnus, on the other hand, starts out more complacent. It is only through Queen Amata's urging and then Allecto's infection that Turnus becomes enraged and determined to claim what he believes is his. This means that he has to go to war. It does seem, though, that if he had not been provoked by Juno's interference, he might have lived peacefully with the Trojans. As the story unfolds, Turnus becomes more involved and then, out of pride, finds it impossible to end the conflict. While Aeneas is compassionate, Turnus is hateful. Unlike Aeneas, Turnus does not pause for reflection or mourning. He does not let his people do so either. Since Turnus knows he cannot win

against Aeneas directly, he hopes to keep Aeneas at bay with an all-out war. This does not happen however, because Aeneas's destiny brings them to a confrontatioin anyway.

Father Figures

A major theme throughout *Aeneid* is that of father figures. From the beginning there is Jupiter, who is the father of all the gods. It is his will that shall be done. Then there is Priam, the king of Troy. He is elderly and feeble, characteristics later exhibited by Latinus, but unlike Latinus, Priam is feisty and wants to defend Troy till his dying breath. Only because he is held back, does he not get involved. Again, King Latinus is also old and feeble, but when faced with conflict in his land and own home, he chooses to close himself off and let everyone else solve the problems.

Anchises is Aeneas's father. He and Aeneas share a mutual respect for one another. He guides Aeneas as a father would and continues to do so even after he is. Finally, Aeneas himself is also a father figure, in more ways than one. He is Ascanius's father and is devoted to his son as his father was to him. But Aeneas is also fiercely devoted to his people. As a father, he guides them and seeks peace for them. As the story comes to a close, he is more and more referred to as "father" Aeneas, as he is truly is the father of his people. as well as the father of the future people of Italy. The title also brings with it moral responsibility such as a father have to his family.

Style

Point of View

The particular literary character of the *Aeneid* derives from its double point of view. The personal vision, from Aeneas's point of view, emphasi7.es the human element in the story. The patriotic vision, concerned with both human and divine events combining to form the genesis of the Roman empire, is concerned with presenting a mythic and idealized view of Roman history. The tension between these two approaches creates a sense of breadth which affects both the work at hand and, because of its importance to world culture, the development of western literary expectations.

Setting

The action of the *Aeneid* ranges across the entire Mediterranean region. The most important geographic site is, of course, Italy - the final destination of the wandering Trojans. Virgil includes elements of the history, culture, and legends of many Mediterranean countries, however, so that even though this epic is about the founding of what became the Roman empire in Italy, the work is not narrowly nationalistic in focus.

Imitation

Virgil drew heavily on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in composing his own epic. Almost the whole of the first book is constructed from the *Odyssey.* The storm, the despair of Aeneas, the landing on a strange shore, the meeting with a disguised goddess, the reception by the ruler of the foreign land, the banquet, the minstrel's song leading up to the hero's narration of his adventures - all these elements are patterned on events in *Odyssey.* The two works share both similarities and differences. In the *Odyssey,* Odysseus is trying to return home from the Trojan war to reunite with his wife and to take up his old and much-missed way of life. He succeeds, as his followers do not, by showing great resources and endurance. He is the ultimate individualist. Aeneas, however, is fleeing his home after the city' s destruction in that same war. He loses wife, family, and home, and starts out to find the place ordained by the gods to build a new life and found a new empire. His first duty is to bring his people to that haven. Underscoring the connection between the two works, Virgil even has Aeneas rescue one of Odysseus's men. on his way. Virgil's original audience knew Homer's narratives very well. They bad their memories of and opinions about the Greek poet's earlier work to supplement their understanding and enjoyment - or criticism - of the *Aeneid.* This practice of building on an established tradition still takes place in popular entertainment today: modern audiences, for example, will watch a movie sequel or a television show featuring a "crossover" guest performer from another series partly because they already know what to expect and enjoy seeing the familiar in a new setting.

Divine Intervention

The gods have a number of roles in the *Aeneid.* Jupiter represents the providential divine intention for the human characters, while his wife Juno represents the seemingly irrational hostile forces that stand between the characters and their goals. Venus represents the divine nurturing of the Roman people and state. Sometimes gods are the direct motivation behind actions, and they are seen to always have some influence on events, which never unfold purely by coincidence or chance. Whether Virgil's audience actually believed in them or not, the gods were a tremendously powerful artistic symbol. The entire body of Greek and Roman art and literature is infused with demonstrations and explanations of the role of the gods in the affairs of humankind. This shared cultural referent was reinforced by a nostalgic affection among Virgil's audience for the ancient faith of their ancestors, with its overtones of rural simplicity and straightforward vigor.

Imagery

Virgil's imagery in the *Aeneid* derives power from the repetition and sometimes startling variation of particular images through one or more books.Virgil exploits the repetition of imagery to constantly recall past events from the narrative. In the present, the past is being repeated or the future foreshadowed. The use of serpent and fire imagery in Book 2 provides an excellent demonstration of this facet of Virgil's technique

Structure

The structure of the *Aeneid* has interested a number of critics in the twentieth century. It has been suggested that the poem is divided between books of intense action (even numbered books) and diffuse action (odd numbered books). In this view Books 3 and 5 function partly to release the tension of Books 2 and 4. The Aeneid has been described as a trilogy, with the tragedy of Dido, told in Books 1-4, and that of Turnus, in Books 9-12, flanking a central Roman section in Books 5-8. Another way of looking at the structure of the *Aeneid* suggests that the first six books are patterened after Homer's *Iliad* and the second six resemble his *Odyssey.*

Diction, Rhetoric, and Meter

Virgil's word choices and meter have been constantly studied and copied for nearly two thousand years. It is hard to understand this aspect of the *Aeneid* without having also studied Latin, but it is possible to make a few basic generalizations.

Quantity is the time it takes to pronounce a syllable. In Latin, along syllable takes twice as long to pronounce as a short one. The *Aeneid is* written in quantitative hexameters; that is: each line has six metrical feet. These feet are a combination of short and long syllables. A hexameter line is made up of dactyls - one long syllable followed by two short syllables (the name " Ludwig van Beethoven" is an English double dactyl, for

example) and of spondees - two long syllables ("blackboard" is an English spondee). This may sound restrictive, but within this relatively narrow rhetorical structure the *Aeneid* displays great variety. Lines can be jagged and abrupt. They can flow with a lulling smoothness of sound

Virgil often uses commonplace words in fresh ways. Sometimes he deliberately used outdated terms that would attract attention because of their quaintness. Virgil chose and combined words which enlarge the reader's range of perception. His essential tool is variation within a symmetrical pattern, even within individual lines. Adam Parry, in his essay "The Two Voices of Virgil" (see Bibliography) demonstrates some of the effects that occur in less than two lines with an example from Book 7: "For you Angitia's woods wept, For you Fucinus's glassy waters, For you the transparent lake." Here he has used repetition (of the phrase "for you,") personification (the weeping of the woods and the lake), and levels of variation (first: woods, then water; second, water, mentioned first by proper name ("Fucinus's glassy waters") and then by the common noun "lake".

Points of View

The story is told from a third person omniscient point of view. The reader knows the thoughts and feelings of each character and is clearly sympathetic to the protagonist. The bad qualities of each villain and antagonist is also clear. As the story unfolds, Aeneas emerges as the hero and "father" of the future Italian race. Incidentally, his image as a father figure also comes to the forefront as he is more frequently called "Father" Aeneas. In the beginning of the story, Aeneas is a tragic hero. who has survived the Greek attack on Troy, but by the end of the story, he is the hero of an entire group of people and is clearly seen as a father.

Although they see everything that goes on among the mortals, the gods cannot always tell the future. Here, they are often seen as interfering and meddlesome. As per Jupiter, there is a set path for Aeneas that will unfold whether anyone else likes it or not. However, the gods scheme for their own benefits and involve themselves with the mortals. There are gods such as Jupiter and Venus that are seen as good and more virtuous, and then there are those such as Juno and Mercury that are seen as troublesome.

Setting

Aeneid is told in a variety of settings. These settings range from Troy to Olympus, from the sea to various lands, from the River Styx to Elysium. There is a great deal of action throughout the tale, and that actioin is reflected in the number of locations. Many parts of the story occur while at sea. As exiles from their homeland, the Trojans spend a great deal of time on the water as they continually try to arrive at their promised land, Hesperia, which is the future Italy. Significant action takes place in Carthage, where the Trojans first land in the story. When Aeneas gets caught up in his affair with Dido, the

Trojans are settling in and building cities. They go back out to sea, however, and land in Sicily, where they hold the funeral games in Anchises' honor.

Aeneas is also led into the underworld, where he travels on the River Styx as part of his journey to see Anchises. This occurs after Apollo gives Aeneas his prophecies on where the Trojans will settle and find their new homeland. He travels through the underworld until he arrives in Elysium, which is paradise. Back at sea, the Trojans land on Italy's shores in Latium. They end up settling in the territory that is not far from the future Rome.

Language and Meaning

Aeneid is a story told in verse, similar to that of a poem. It was written over two thousand years ago, which automatically means the language and style of writing is very different from modern prose. The verses do not carry the typical tempo or rhyme associated with most poetry. Although the language is old, most sentences are short and easily understandable.

Since all of the action revolves around Aeneas, there is a lot of dialogue associated with him. When others interact with Aeneas, there is obvious respect and reverence for him. When Aeneas addresses the gods, he does so with a great deal of respect. There is very little familiarity in the dialogue between him and the gods, although he is the son of an immortal.

Also important to note is the dialogue amongst the gods. The language used between mortals and gods is more formal, but the dialogue amongst the gods themselves is more informal. Another thing to note about language and meaning is the description given to different objects and places. With much of the story rooted in legend, it's no surprise that seemingly mythological objects and references are described. As an example, when the Trojan fleet is in jeopardy of being attacked by the Rutulians, the gods intervene and transform the ships into sea nymphs that swim out to sea and away from harm. These nymphs are mythological creatures and used as plot devices, especially as they are used to signal to Aeneas that trouble is afoot, and he needs to prepare. This sort of creature would likely only be used in this type of work.

Structure

The story is written in verse, similar to that of a poem. The book is broken down into twelve chapters, each chapter contains approximately 700-1000 lines. Although not broken down specifically, there are two main parts to the book: the first part is about Aeneas and Dido and the second part concerns Aeneas and Turnus. At the start of the story, the Trojans are tossed about at sea and land in Carthage. When Aeneas meets Dido, she asks him to recount his tale. He does so, and Chapter Two and Chapter Three are flashbacks to the fall of Troy and the story of how Aeneas came to be in Carthage. The remainder of the story is told in a linear fashion.

Historical Context

Roman Government

Rome was founded in 753 BC. For nearly 250 years it was a monarchy. The last king was a tyrant whose son Tarquin raped the wife of a Roman noble. (One of the most famous accounts of this is found in the long narrative poem "The Rape of Lucrece" by William Shakespeare.) Outraged by this crime, the Romans, lead by L. Junius Brutus (an ancestor of the Brutus who assassinated Julius Caesar), drove the Tarquin family out and set up a republic. For the next 450 years Rome was ruled by the senate and consuls. The senate, chosen from the highest class of citizens (patricians) decided on government policies and the use of public money. The equites (middle class) and plebians (working class) had their own assembly which could accept or reject the proposals of the senate. After 287 B.C., Senate proposals had the force of law The executive posts in the government from the consuls down were elected by the vote of all male citizens. The consuls were elected in pairs for one year only to protect against the rise of another tyrant. Later they were joined by the tribune of the people, who looked after the interests of the equite and plebian classes. Even after Rome entered a period of imperial rule (ruled by emperors), some forms of republicanism were maintained.

Rome and War

Roman history during the Republic is full of wars. Some of these wars were fought simply for survival. Many, however, were wars of expansion. Military achievements were important to all levels of Roman society. Upper-class men who hoped for political careers needed to demonstrate personal courage and organizational ability in the ultimate test of war. Men of the lower classes could improve their place in society with a reputation for courage, loyalty, and intelligent obedience in warfare.

Of all the wars Rome fought, few were as important as the three Punic wars against Carthage, the city founded by Dido. These wars saw Rome's greatest triumphs as well as greatest defeats. Even when Italy itself was invaded by the Carthaginian general in 218 BC, the Romans refused to capitulate. After over a century of warfare, Roman forces eventually destroyed Carthage. Virgil constantly alludes to these ongonig wars in his narrative. Roman commentators believed that Dido's death scene in Book 4 was full of references to the Punic wars.

Roman Society under Pressure

At the end of the Punic Wars Rome was the major power in the Mediterranean. The Romans themselves believed that as long as Carthage had remained a threat, Rome was strong because of the need to stay united in the face of this powerful enemy. Social problems were quickly dealt with so that the city could focus its attentions on opposing

the Carthaginian threat. When this single-minded focus was removed, Rome began to fall apart.

Originally, most Roman citizens had at least a small farm that could generally support a family. The wars devastated these family holdings. Many men were away for long periods of fighting. Many never returned. It was difficult for the women and children left behind to do heavy farm work. Further, many Romans had to flee the countryside and band together in the safety of the cities when Hannibal invaded Italy. Further, international trade sprang up in the peace that followed the Punic Wars, and many small family farms could not compete with a flourishing trade in agriculture. Returning Italian soldiers, as well as the wealthy Roman senators, were able to buy up failed farmland cheaply and to amass huge estates. Instead of planting grain, they chose to raise sheep, grapes, or olives, all of which needed fewer farmhands. The collapse of traditional Roman agrarian (or agricultural) society and the enlargement of the empire made it more and more difficult for the government to function effectively. Civil disturbances between various factions grew worse and worse. By the time Julius Caesar assumed personal control with the grudging acceptance of the senate after a bloody civil war, Roman society needed drastic action.

Renewal under Augustus

Julius Caesar's assassination threw Rome and her empire back into civil war, which continued until Caesar Augustus's defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 BC. Augustus attempted to revitalize the traditional Roman way of life and recruited poets to help. Virgil was commissioned to write in part to remind the Romans of the circumstances which created them and their society and the part of the gods in it. He defined their sense of having been chosen and lead by a divine wisdom. It has been suggested that Virgil knew Jews living in Rome and that his view of history was affected by their own sense of mission as "chosen people" with a specific preordained destiny.

The Roman Way of Life

The Roman way of life, the *mos maiorem* ("manners of the ancestors") had both a religious and a social aspect. Roman religion was based on two sets of gods. There were the Olympian gods, of whom Juno, Jupiter, Venus, Neptune, Vulcan, Diana and Pluto play a role in the *Aeneid* The *Lares* and the *Penates,* or "household gods," were the protective spirits of the family, the hearth (emblamatic of the center of the household), the storeroom, and the countryside. Each family had its own personal household gods. Like the brownies or elves of fairy tales, but much more powerful, the household gods watch over each family. In the *Aeneid,* Aeneas's father is described carefully carrying his family's household gods away from the destroyed city of Troy. Traditional Roman families prayed to their *Lares* and the *Penates* every day.

Roman society was based on family and friends bound by mutual ties of respect and aid, and on the patronage system. Patronage may seem strange or even distasteful to a

twentieth-century sensibility. To the Romans, it was perfectly honorable and practical way of life. A patron stood by his clients, ensured that they always received justice under Roman law, offered advice, and helped their careers. Clients of a patron in turn would support and advise him and live up to the recommendations he had given them. This pattern of give and take was expected at all levels of society. Aeneas and Misenus can be seen as an example of a patron and a client. Letters of recommendation from Roman patrons promote their clients as personal assistants, political candidates, even as potential sons-in-law. These young men would be expected to live up to their patron's recommendations. Prominent and powerful men expected to be asked to serve as mentors to promising young men, just as had been done for them in their youth. This practice connected families in a web of mutual responsibility and gratitude. A man might be asked to help the career of the nephew or son of a man who had done the same for him or his father years before. The connections down the generations among Anchises, Evander, Aeneas, and Pallas in the *Aeneid* offer examples of these kinds of continuing relationships. Further, the emperor Caesar Augustus functioned as a patron of the poet Virgil himself. Virgil's great epic is a preeminent example of a kind of work-for-hire that served the purposes of his patron while enabling the poet to advance his own career The system was clearly open to misuse, but it served Roman society and administration well for nearly a millennium.

Critical Overview

Virgil's earliest critics concentrated on discussing the style in which he wrote and the sources from which he drew his material. The *Aeneid* was written for a cultured and educated, extremely well-read audience, and almost immediately became a school text. Many Roman critics wrote treatises explaining the book's historical, religious, philosophical, and literary allusions to make it easier for teachers and students alike to understand. Others wrote explanations of difficult words or unusual grammar. In the fourth century, a teacher named Donatus published excerpts from many of these works to produce a kind of general reader's guide. A generation later, another teacher, Servius, relying in part on Donatus, produced a similar commentary for schools.

Macrobius's *Saturnalia* written in the first half of the fifth century, treated Virgil as a Roman bible. Macrobius depicted actual historical figures, including Servius, discussing the *Aeneid.* These figures were members of the last generation of educated Roman pagans, attempting to defend their gods, their way of life, the very nature of Rome, from the growing cult of Christianity.

Early Christian reaction to Virgil was mixed. On one hand, he was the poet of the Roman state and religion, which Christianity sought to usurp. On the other hand, his work was an essential part of a complete education, and he was widely considered the finest poet writing in Latin. Christian poets like Prudentius used Virgil as a model. Saint Augustine of Hippo admitted crying over Dido's tragic end when he read the *Aeneid* as a schoolboy. In the end, western Christianity simply co-opted Virgil. In his Fourth *Eclogue* Virgil had written about the birth of a wonderful child who would end war and bring back the golden age. For this, Virgil was popularly (if not officially) accepted as a prophet of Christ.

During the early middle ages, the *Aeneid* was used as a schoolbook for the study of Latin. Servius's commentary, with or without extra material from Donatus, was reprinted many times. In the late fifth or early sixth century, a Christian wrote a short treatise in the form of a rather humorous vision of Virgil in which the poet explained the *Aeneid* as an allegory - an extended narrative metaphor - about the soul's growth to maturity and virtue. From the late eleventh century on, Virgil's reputation for enormous learning, a few allegorical passages in Servius, and the popularity of allegory as a literary form changed the way people read the *Aeneid.* It was often treated as a sort of coded message, full of deep, hidden meanings. This approach was popular until the time of Shakespeare. It had a big impact on how other epic works were written. Writers like Torquato Tasso or Edmund Spenser wrote epics according to this allegorical model, with the action and even characters all serving as metaphors or symbols for something else. Throughout all the changes in literary and critical fashion, the *Aeneid* remained popular simply as a story. The earliest French romance was not about Lancelot and Guinevere, but Aeneas and Lavinia.

Modern criticism of the *Aeneid* began in the seventeenth century. Late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French and English critics began to interpret *Has, Aeneid* not

as an allegory, but as a narrative which conveyed meaning in the same way as history. The narrative provided models of the highest qualities of conduct for both princes and their subjects. In the dedication to his translation, the poet John Dryden stressed these elements, which appealed to the readers of his time, who were looking for royal leadership into an era of national renewal.

Proponents of literary Romanticism in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries reacted against the classicism of the 1600s and 1700s, when Greek and Latin texts from Virgil's era were highly praised and imitated. The Romantics found Aeneas a poor hero and were not impressed with Roman destiny as a theme. When they praised Virgil at all, they did so for his style or for the same emotional sensitivities they admired in their own poetry. This approach lead readers to examine what critics have come to call Virgil's "private voice." For much of the nineteenth century, Romantic critics and commentators focused on examining Virgil's treatment of individual human beings caught up in the larger issues of Rome's destiny.

In the twentieth century, criticism of the *Aeneid* has become increasingly more sophisticated in its understanding of the literary, social, and political realities of Virgil's world. Modern critics still reflect as much of their own world as of Virgil's. Two world wars and the end of colonialism have affected reader responses to the events depicted in the work. A critical arena which has shown great development is the continuing study of readers' changing attitudes about Virgil over the centuries. Kenneth Quinn's observation that Virgil "is rarely completely for a character or completely against the character opposing him" is one of the most important ideas that any reader can bring to the *Aeneid.*

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Conrad-O'Briain offers a general assessment and an overview of the Aeneid.

It is impossible to imagine western literature without Virgil's *Aeneid.* Outside of the Bible, perhaps no other book has had more direct effect on our writing and thinking. For four hundred years the *Aeneid* had the place in Latin education that could be compared to the King James Bible and the works of Shakespeare in English. Virgil's language, presentation, the things he found important, even the things over which he simply lingered, sank deep into the heart of Latin literature. The *Aeneid* became a part of the Christian tradition. Even in the so-called Dark Ages in European history students were exposed to Virgil. Education in Europe and later the Americas meant: Virgil.

Whenever writing about the *Aeneid,* a critic is writing about ideas and forms which have application for all areas of western literature. The story of Aeneas offered real possibilities. It was a story involving big ideas, in the distant past. Its main outlines were fixed, but many of its larger details were fluid. Material could be added or subtracted. It could be used to reflect on recent events, but was far enough in the past to be neutral. The *Aeneid* is characterized by inclusiveness. It is a public Roman epic for a very particular audience. It is also Virgil's epic. It represents a series of rapprochements between what the establishment wanted and what Virgil the thinking Roman wanted. In the process of fulfilling both sets of expectations Virgil wrote an epic not just for Rome, but for humankind.

Virgil's epic is on one level a conflation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* but a conflation that is radically re-oriented away from largely self-centered, self-sufficient heroes to a hero and a chosen people. Virgil had re-invented the epic for an exploration of human nature in a social and political situation. Virgil and his original audience would have been conscious of a sense of coming age of Latin literature with such a controlled and masterful re-use of Homer, but this was not poem's real purpose nor even his main reason for echoing Homer. Virgil manipulated the earlier material to write a commentary on the heroic life into his own poem.

The *Aeneid* was written to explore the source and meaning of the Roman way of life, the tool of divine providence. Against this providential social history is the history of the heart - and not Aeneas' s heart alone. All the private human plans and hopes of characters great and small are caught within the larger sweep of the will of the gods. It is these personal passages of the *Aeneid* which have always maintained interest because paradoxically Virgil's treatment of the individual simultaneously stresses the particular and the universal.

The vision of what the providential role of Rome in human history could achieve is just and dignified. It was the gods' offer of a humane society for the world, in which evil would be overcome by the concerted physical and ethical courage of the Roman people. Unfortunately it remains through out the poet, even in the poem's projected

future only a possibility which seems doomed to be frustrated, not only by those who do not understand it, but by the character who is expected to bring it into being, Aeneas. The reader is constantly confronted with the paradox that in pursuit of this humane ideal, Aeneas becomes less than he was.

Quinn wrote in one of the most perceptive and simplest sentences in the history of Virgilian criticism that Virgil is "never completely for a character or completely against the character opposing him" (see Sources for Further Study). It is impossible to find a character in the epic who does not show some ambiguity. Nevertheless, criticism, particularly of the major characters, has too often attempted to read characters as either good or bad, and not as Virgil meant them to be read, human and fallible.

The characters make their own lives and deaths with their decisions. Like all great literature, the *Aeneid* is about characters's reactions to events and to each other In it moral responsibility cannot be shirked. The tears are not only shed by men and women, they are caused by them.

Presiding over human action and choices are the gods. Divine providence is as ambiguous and dark as human nature in the *Aeneid.* Critics and readers focus on Juno's rage. More disconcerting is the chilling picture of the gods destroying Troy on the night of the city's fall. There is something cold and deeply frightening in that scene, like something out of a monster movie, for a modern reader in the vision of these vast beings pulling up the walls of Troy, while ant-like humans fight and flee. There is a legendary streak of perfidy and disrespect for the gods in the history of Troy, but Virgil does not make this clear. Troy is not innocent, but on that night it hardly seems to matter. Only Jupiter rises above this divine terror. His is the vision, his is the disposition of all things towards a plan, but it is only late in the poem that he masters the other divine powers in the poem's universe. The new world order is being mapped out not merely on earth, but in heaven.

Thematic discussions take up a large part of critical analysis, particularly those aimed at first-time readers who meet the poem in translation. Virgil's characters and themes are memorable both because they seem to tap into constants of the human situation, but also because of his technique. For readers who do not know Latin, a good entry into Virgil's technique is his use of imagery. It has been remarked that Virgil has very small vocabulary of images. What Virgil does with that relatively restricted range of images is important.

Virgil in his chosen dactylic hexameter was perhaps the most technically perfect poet in the history of western literature. It has even suggested that Virgil's perfection exhausted the possibilities of the hexameter at the same time as it created an overwhelming audience expectation for it. We cannot experience this perfection in a translation. What we *can* see in a good translation, and even more clearly with a good translation and a little Latin, is the way Virgil chooses and arranges his words and ideas within a pattern of symmetry and variation. The meaning of the whole is always greater than the meaning of the individual words. From individual lines up to the poem as a whole, Virgil constantly balances ideas, images, characters and actions against one another. Within

that balancing he uses variety. This variety is not an exact one on one replacement. Instead Virgil's variation extends meaning and action a little at a time. It occurs from the level of the line to the level of verse paragraphs to whole books and in the poem as a whole.

If we look at one short passage in Book 1 (lines 1.490-504) which introduces Dido for the first time, we can see Virgil at his best. Aeneas is looking at a representation of Penthesilea, an Amazon queen who died helping her Trojan allies. This work of art begins to function as a simile as the narrative moves on to the approach of Dido. Dido appears exactly in the center of the 15-line passage. Her appearance is accompanied by a another simile comparing her to Diana and her followers dancing through the wilderness. Penthesilea is used to bring Dido on the stage since she too is a queen who will die because of helping the Trojans. The image of the Amazon moving through the armies like fire begins the passage and Dido's radiance as she moves through the crowd ends it. The comparison with Diana looks positive, but it is subtly dangerous. There is an ironic resonance in the line which records the happiness in Latona's heart for the grace of her divine daughter, since Latona's children had been known to destroy those who thought themselves happier than the gods.

Source: Helen Conrad-O'Briain, for *Epics for Students,* Gale Research, 1997.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, the authors note Virgil's significance as a writer who has had a profound influence on all subsequent Western culture, and examines those qualities of his writing that they believe make his poetry still relevant to modern readers.

Perhaps more than any other Roman writer, Virgil has expressed the achievements, and the shortcomings, of that civilization of which we are the children, in a way that has led to his being called 'the father of the western world'. But supposing that we were not his children, supposing that we were people from Mars freshly arrived on this planet and able to read Latin, would we find in him qualities to ensure his continued survival? I think that we would.

Those qualities that make Virgil's poetry relevant today, two thousand years after his death, can be assessed by looking at two main aspects of a poet's work: technical skills in poetic craftsmanship, and the exploration of the underlying meanings and potentialities of human existence.

Technical skills mean the ability to use words in poetic composition - as a carpenter uses wood or a potter clay or an architect space - to produce something which has an aesthetic impact by its mastery of technique. The most obvious of these skills is the ability to produce word-music - 'the sweetness of the sound' as Dryden called it - and here it has been universally agreed, even by those few who have been unreceptive towards him otherwise, that Virgil was preeminent. He was helped in this by having available as the appropriate metre for epic poetry the Latin hexameter, adapted from Greek by Enmus, and developed by Cicero, Catullus, Lucretius, and others, until in Virgil's hand it became what Tennyson called 'the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man'. The full elaboration of this would involve a lengthy technical discussion, and suffice it to say here that Virgil explored to the full the sonorous beauty of the Latin language so that the sound of his words could echo, and indeed express, the sense of the meaning. In particular the nature of the hexameter (a metre based on quantity) and the pronunciation of Latin (based like English on accent) gave two rhythms which could be employed in harmony or counterpoint as the mood and sense required.

This sense of word-music contributed greatly to a second technical requirement in poetry, descriptive power, and Virgil's word-music was supported by his almost unique imaginative visualization. He loved to depict scenes which the human eye does not see: the imaginary Golden Age in *Eclogues* 4, Orpheus and Eurydice in the underworld in *Georgics* 4, the Olympian gods in the *Aeneid* going about their business in the halls of heaven. We see this kind skill right at the beginning of the *Aeneid* in the mythological description of the winds imprisoned in Aeolus' s mountain:

Hie vasto rex Aeolus antro luctantis ventos tempestatesque sonoras imperio premit ac vinchs et carcere Jrenat tilt indignantes magno cum murmure montis circum claustra fremunt: celsa sedet Aeolus arce sceptra tenens mollitque animos et temperat iras,

nifaciat, mariaac terras caelumque profundum qmppeferant rapidi secum verrantque per auras

{Aeneid 1.52-59)

Where in a spacious cave of living stone, The tyrant Aeolus from his airy throne, With power impenal curbs the struggling winds, And sounding tempests in dark prisons binds. This way and that the impatient captives tend, And pressing for release, the mountains rend* High in his hall the undaunted monarch stands, And shakes his sceptre, and their rage commands, Which did he not, their unresisted sway Would sweep the world before them in their way: Earth, air, and seas through empty space

would roll, And Heaven would fly before the driving soul.

(tr. Dryden)

This sort of imaginative description colours the whole of the *Aeneid.* We are invited to visualize Juno striding majestically through the halls of heaven, Jupiter smiling at his daughter Venus, Neptune driving over the sea in his chariot with his retinue of strange sea-deities, Iris descending to heaven on her own rainbow:

Ergo Ins croceis per caelum, roscida pennis mdle trahens vanos adverso sole colores devolat

{Aeneid 4. 700-702)

Downward the various goddess took her flight, And drew a thousand colours from the light.

(tr. Dryden)

Another essential technical skill for an epic poet is the ability to tell a story in an exciting way. In this respect Virgil is often compared unfavourably with Homer, and most people would agree that in sheer narrative speed and excitement Homer takes the palm. Virgil's epic method (like Milton's) is different, but that is not to say that he does not hold us with bated breath on occasion; for example, the story in Book 2 of the wooden horse, the treachery of Sinon, the last hours of Troy, moves with a verve which is breathtaking.

One might continue with other instances of technical skill in poetry, for example, Virgil's use of brilliant rhetoric in speeches. Those between Turnus and Drances, or especially between the goddesses Juno and Venus, enable us to relax emotionally, and enjoy intellectually the brilliant firework display of exaggerated oratory, in which Cicero would have revelled.

Or again we might consider the structure of Virgil's poetry. The *Eclogues* are symmetrically and elegantly organized in the Alexandrian mode, sometimes with balancing verses from two competitors in a song contest, sometimes with repeated refrain. The first two and the last two books of the *Georgics* cohere in their content, but

in mood Books 1 and 3 correspond, and Books 2 and 4. Descriptive passages throughout are interspersed with didactic information in order to give variety of structure. The *Aeneid* especially shows architectural construction on a large scale. This is clearly a requirement of epic above all other kinds of poetry: the epic poet must be a builder on a large scale, able to handle his masses of material. Symmetries and contrasts may be seen between the two halves of the poem, between the first third and the last third, between the different books, and between the different sections of each book. Much has been written about Virgil's skill in structure during recent years, so much so that one should enter a *caveat* and say that however important the structure of poetry may be, it differs from architecture in that structure should be subservient to the poetic message; it is not an end in itself.

This brings us to the second main aspect of a poet's work: the underlying significance of the poetry in relation to human experience. The message conveyed by means of technical skills is obviously deeper in some poets than in others. Most of us could name poets whom we greatly enjoy solely or very largely because of the technical skills just mentioned, and we derive aesthetic rather than intellectual pleasure from their poetry. Virgil, however, is one of those poets who used his aesthetic skills not only for their own sakes, but in order to explore human behaviour in its most crucial aspects.

In the *Eclogues* some critics have put their greatest emphasis on the pure loveliness of the poetry, but increasingly in modern times these poems have been seen as explorations of an idyllic world to which mankind could attain but from which he may be excluded by the social and political pressures of real life. The fourth *Eclogue* is a vision of such a golden world; the first and ninth show the agony of the loss, through dispossession, of the happiness which the idyllic countryside offers. Here is a part of the first *Eclogue,* conveying the envy of the dispossessed for the shepherd who still retains his pastoral world:

fortunate senex, hie interflumina nota etfontis sacros frigus captabis opacum, hinc tibi quae semper vicino ab hmite saepes Hyblaeis apibus fiorem depasta salicti saepe levi somnum suadebtt mire susurro, hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras, nee tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes nee gemere aeria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

(Eclogues 1. 51-58)

Ah, fortunate old man, here among

hallowed springs And familiar streams you'll enjoy the longed-for

shade, the cool shade. Here, as of old, where your neighbour's land

marches with yours, The sally hedge, with bees of Hybla sipping

its blossom, Shall often hum you gently to sleep On the

other side Vine-dressers will sing to the breezes at

the crag's foot, And all the time your favourites, the husky-voiced

wood pigeons Shall coo away, and turtle doves make moan in

the elm tops

(tr. Day Lewis)

The *Georgics* too have had, and still have, a great appeal purely because of their descriptive power, and the best-known parts have always been the most brilliant of the descriptive passages, like the praises of Italy (2.136ff.) or the activities of the bees (4.67ff.). But again modern criticism has concentrated on the concept in the poem of man as part of nature, divinely created, and on his successes and failures. The poem is seen as a presentation of the positive achievements of man in fitting himself in to the world of nature, and of the disasters which sometimes seem inexplicable (like flood or fire or the plague) and which sometimes are due to man's own folly in the neglect of his duty towards 'the divine countryside'. Above all the life of the countryman is extolled as a religious communion with nature, calling for 'unremitting toil' and resilience, but offering the richest of rewards. Here is a passage contrasting the ambitious, wealth-seeking town-dweller with the contented farmer:

condit opes alms defossoque incubat au.ro; hie stupet attomtus rostris, hunc plausus hiantem per cuneos geminatus enim plebisque patrumque cornpuit; gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum, exsilwque domos et dulcia hmina mutant atque alio patnam quaerunt sub sole iacentem agricola tncurvo terrain dimovit aratro: hie anni labor, hinc patnam parvosque nepotes sustinet, hinc armenta bourn meritosque tuvencos

(Georgics 2. 507-515)

One piles up great wealth, gloats over his

cache of gold; One gawps at the public speakers; one is worked

up to hysteria By the plaudits of senate and people resounding

across the benches-These shed their brothers' blood Merrily, they barter for exile their homes beloved And leave for countries lying under an alien sun But still the farmer furrows the land with his

curving plough: The land is his annual labour, it keeps his

native country, His little grandsons and herds of cattle and

trusty bullocks.

(tr. Day Lewis)

The *Aeneid* differs from the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* with regard to its underlying significance in that it deals with man's problems by presenting and developing individual characters in constantly changing situations. The characters of *the Eclogues* are in a sense static pictures in a given situation; the characters of the *Georgics* (except for the Orpheus and Eurydice story) are not individuals at all, but generalized types. The *Aeneid,* however, as is appropriate for an epic poem, dwells at length on character, and this is best illustrated by focusing on the hero of the poem.

First and foremost Aeneas is a man who has accepted a divine mission which dictates the whole of his actions. He would have preferred to die at Troy among his friends, he would have preferred to stay with Dido, but because he has received intimations by means of visions, dreams and oracles that he has been chosen as the agent of Providence to fulfill a destiny which will bring great benefits to mankind, he devotes himself to this mission. Throughout the poem Virgil explores the effect which such a calling has upon an individual, and many readers of the *Aeneid* have thought that it causes Aeneas to be a puppet-like creature in whose activities it is hard to take an interest. This is a wholly mistaken view: he is in fact free at any time to cry 'Enough', to decide that his mission is too hard or too uncertain or too unconvincing for him to continue. That he does continue - often by the skin of his teeth - is due to a series of acts of his own free-will. This is explicitly shown, as we have seen, in a passage already referred to (5.700-703) where he ponders on two possible courses of action: continuing with his mission, or abandoning it, 'forgetting' the fates. Thus the fascination of Aeneas lies in the character study of a man whose actions are guided by a sense of divine duty, which he has to struggle to obey, falteringly at first but then with increasing confidence as he becomes more aware of the nature of his calling. Throughout the poem he is devoutly religious in prayer and sacrifice, but increasingly he begins to understand God's purpose for the world and his part in it.

This devotion to the divine will, involving often the sacrifice of personal wishes, covers a large part of Virgil's frequent epithet for Aeneas - *plus,* 'devoted', 'ready to accept responsibility', 'aware of his duty'. But there are other aspects of this specially Roman virtue which affect his actions. Patriotism is one, and in Aeneas's case this merges with his devotion to the gods whose intention it is to found the Roman race. Care for his family is another, and this is a powerful motivation for his actions. He saves his father from the burning ruins of Troy, and pays the utmost attention to his advice until the very moment of his death His concern for his son Iulus is evident throughout, and his last words to him are the poignant ones:

Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem, fortunam ex aliis.

(12.435-436)

Learn, my son, valour from me and the reality of toil, but good luck from others

Care for his friends and his fellow-soldiers is a part of *pietas,* and here again Aeneas does all he can to safeguard his followers (unlike Turaus, whose rash impetuousness leads to many unnecessary deaths). Aeneas is the group hero, the social man.

To achieve this object (which he does not always succeed in doing) Aeneas has to sacrifice something of himself - he gives away something of his own personal individuality in the interests of his duty. In this he contrasts with the vivid personalities of Homer's heroes; they shine more brightly than Aeneas because they are always themselves, seeing life very clearly, understanding their obligations clearly, but not having to struggle inwardly with themselves in order to try to determine the right course of action. They know instinctively what the right course is, and to the best of their ability they set about doing it. But Aeneas is always groping for a way of life which he does not fully understand, and in the course of it tragedies and disasters befall him and others for which he feels guiltily responsible. In a paradoxical way it is his *pietas* which is responsible for the cruelty with which he treats Dido (indeed Virgil implies as much, 4. 393): he sacrifices his own personal wishes (and with them hers) to what he sees to be a higher responsibility.

In contrast with Aeneas both Dido and Turnus are characters drawn very simply, on Homeric lines. Dido knows exactly what she wants, and is not swayed from her personal desire by any other considerations at all. Her duty towards the city of Carthage is forgotten and she alienates her subjects by her disregard of all her queenly duties. She is completely unable to understand Aeneas's arguments that he would like to stay with her but cannot; for her 'like to' and 'can' are the same. Similarly, Turnus is not confused in his attitude by any attempt to weigh up the requirements of Fate, or the wishes of his king, against his own personal determination to have his own way if he possibly can. With both Dido and Turnus we feel that they have been treated scurvily by the force of events - but they are neither of them prepared to compromise in any way with what they want to do.

Aeneas for the most part is very different - thinking always of the implications of a situation and often deciding to act against his own personal wishes. But there are moments when he loses this rational control and lets himself be swayed by his personal instincts - as when he hears of the death of Pallas in Book 10 and rages wildly over the battlefield dealing indiscriminate slaughter; or again after he has been wounded in Book 12; or finally at the end of the poem when he kills Turnus in hot anger. The last adjective to be applied to him in the poem is *fervidus,* 'in a passion'. In founding Rome he has not trodden an easy path, and he has left it bestrewn with the corpses of those who wished to help as well as those who wished to hinder.

Very many critics in the two thousand years of the *Aeneid's* existence have found it above all a poem of sadness, of the world's tragedies, of this our vale of sorrow, and Virgil is often thought of as the poet of the 'tears in things', *lacrimae rerum.* To a very large extent this is true; and yet the vision of a Roman Empire spreading peace and civilization to a war-weary world never fades altogether, and in the attempts of Aeneas, very imperfect though they are, to set in motion the beginnings of this worldly paradise we see something of mankind's indomitable spirit, through mistakes and setbacks and calamities, to press onwards: 'to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield'.

Source: R D Williams and T. S Pattie, "Virgil Today," in *Virgil- His Poetry through the Ages,* pp, 57-67 London, British Library, 1982.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Anderson discusses the significance of the opening line of the Aeneid: "*I sing of arms and of the man."*

It is not enough.. .to describe Virgil's opening ["I sing of arms and of the man"] as a skillful allusion to inevitable rivalry with Homer. To be sure, he used two nouns of different orders, one referring to a person, one to a thing, and the nouns suggest main elements of the two Homeric narratives. Two nouns together, however, interact; they cannot be absorbed separately as mere equivalents to separate Greek epics. When George Bernard Shaw entitled his comedy *Arms and the Man,* he knew exactly what he was doing and exactly what Virgil meant with his pair of nouns: they affect each other. Shaw humorously explores some of the paradoxical ways in which warfare affects the personality of the warrior. One appreciates the comedy all the more if he has read the *Aeneid* and grasped the near-tragic vision which Virgil presents of Aeneas the man of arms. Homer knew that warfare can turn a man into a beast, but in the *Iliad* war remains a fact with which men must deal; within the limited context of battle, men can become heroes. It is part of Achilles' tragedy that he can no longer accept the war as a necessary fact for himself. Virgil goes beyond Homer, since he does not present war as a necessary or desirable fact, and furthermore he shows not only that war brutalizes men, but also that men alter the meaning of war. Note, however, that he does not define Aeneas from the beginning as a tragic warrior, as Homer does Achilles. Instead of the negative term "anger" (later elaborated for its ruinous effects), Virgil uses the neutral word "arms," which he explains in the next lines as crucially important for the establishment of Rome. Together, "arms and the man" could be viewed as positive words, interacting creatively to make possible the good that undoubtedly existed in Rome. So from the beginning Virgil has started a theme of rich ambiguity, a theme which runs through the poem and remains provocatively rich even after the last lines.

This Virgilian theme of arms and man is so crucial that the reader should be prepared for it a little more elaborately. Virgil narrates two distinct occasions of war: the fall of Troy and the conquest of Latlum. In the first, Aeneas meets defeat; he battles heroically - and his triumphs are not neglected - but the gods do not permit him to die, with conventional heroism, fighting for Trojan home and country. Although briefly bestialized by the exigencies of desperate resistance to the Greeks, Aeneas remains uncompromised; and it is evident that the gods have selected him because he has more importance as man than mere warrior. The second war is more complex. It starts under checkered circumstances, not without some responsibility on the Trojan side. It continues despite many cruel losses on both sides. Aeneas loses control of his passions and slaughters indiscriminately until at last he vents his anger on the guiltless Lausus and the guilty, but devoted, father Mezentius. Neither of these victories is clean and glorious, neither entirely tarnished by circumstances, but our uncertainty as to the attitude to adopt toward them applies to Aeneas as well. What is this war doing to him and to his ultimate goal? We see now that Virgil never intended to limit our sight to arms and Aeneas in themselves. We are always concerned, as we were but rarely.in the *Iliad,* with the ultimate purpose to which this warfare is instrumental. Aeneas while being a man, also

stands for Rome itself. If his victories are compromised, what happens to the Rome he founds? That is the tragic question which Virgil makes us face in Book Twelve, as we watch the encounter between Aeneas and Turnus. Without any obvious guilt on his part (such as Achilles' anger), Aeneas becomes so involved in the Italian war as to render his final victory equivocal.

A few words about Virgil's verb "I sing." Just as Virgil felt free to exploit Homeric convention and to present a theme of complexity that accorded with the new complexities of civilization seven centuries after Homer, so he altered somewhat his relation to material and reader. I have already emphasized the tradition of *impersonality* and insisted that Virgil could not have begun with a set of autobiographical lines. Now it is time to note the other facet of the poem: with all its impersonal narrative devices, it is also highly personal. A recent writer has used the term "subjective," and perhaps that is more serviceable here, to avoid the awkwardness of the pair "impersonal" and "personal." Virgil's subjectivity is developed from a post-Homeric attitude in Greek and Roman writers, who openly placed themselves in their poetry, expressing attitudes toward narrated events and openly influencing readers. It is too much to detect in "I sing" an assertion of this artistic method. The reader, however, will do well to notice how often and ambiguously Virgil suggests attitudes, especially sympathy for Aeneas' victims....

In the myths about Troy, there is little doubt that the city deserved its destruction. A heritage of deceit and ruthless exploitation culminated in the selfish lust of Paris, who stole Helen, the wife of the man who was his host in Sparta, and heedlessly took her back to Troy, where the Trojan leaders permitted him to enjoy his criminal passion. Homer adds to this heritage of evil by staging a violation of truce negotiations: Pandarus shoots Menelaus, the injured husband, at the moment when a carefully arranged duel has promised to settle the war with a minimum of bloodshed. Thus, although the individual Trojan might feel deeply the defeat of his country, it was conventional to depict the end of Troy as an event favored and promoted by gods as well as men. To escape from Troy, defeated but alive, would mean to leave behind the sinful taint of the past and to seek some new, creative future. And since Aeneas was permitted to escape, it should also follow that he himself was hardly tainted by the misdeeds of Paris and other members of Priam's family. In Italy, destiny had chosen a new environment for the Trojans under Aeneas; there, the good aspects of the Trojan heritage could flourish, stimulated by the change of milieu and the proximity to the new Italian culture.

At one level, then, the flight from Troy to Rome signifies the abandonment of a corrupt past and dedication to a creative future in a new land - all this happening far back in the mythical past just after the Trojan War, that is, around 1200 B.C. But Virgil saw more immediate, contemporary relevance in the Trojan theme, and he shared his insight with other writers of the period. Also writing in the 20's, Horace published a poem in which he made much of the Trojan War, the move to Italy, and the hostility of Juno .... Horace's theme concerns the absolute and necessary break between guilty Troy, which must remain ruined and uninhabited, and the new land founded by the Trojan survivors. To this extent, his short Ode 3.3 parallels Virgil's epic. Horace also links this remote mythical past with the present by comparing the reward of apotheosis won by Romulus,

Aeneas' descendant who founded Rome, with the divinity to be granted Augustus for his heroic achievements. For Horace the myth of Troy-Rome was a symbolic story which could be applied fruitfully to contemporary history. Virgil made a similar application on a larger epic canvass.

Source: William S Anderson, "Virgil Begins His Epic," in *The Art of the Aeneid,* pp 1-23 Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Quotes

"Spare your fears, Cytherean. Your people's destiny remains unmoved. You will see Lavinium and its promised walls, and you will raise great-souled Aeneas to the stars on high." (Chapter 1, page 9)

"Troy's last day and final hour have come. We are Trojans no more. Ilium is no more. The great glory of the Teucrians is gone." (Chapter 2, page 37)

"Enduring sons of Dardanus, the land that bore you from paternal stock will welcome you back to her fruitful bosom. Seek your ancient mother. From that land the house of Aeneas will rule the world, his son's sons and their sons thereafter." (Chapter 3, page 57)

"What are you thinking of, wasting your time in Libya? If your own glory means nothing to you, think of the inheritance you owe to Ascanius - a kingdom in Italy and the soil of Rome." (Chapter 4, page 86)

"Dispel your fears; my mind has not changed. Your son will arrive safely at Avernus, just as you wish. One man only will be lost at sea, one life given for many." (Chapter 5, page 127)

"And here is the man promised to you, Augustus Caesar, born of the gods, who will establish again a Golden Age in the fields of Latium once ruled by Saturn and will expand his dominion beyond the Indus and the Garamantes, beyond our familiar stars, beyond the yearly path of the sun, to the land where Atlas turns the star-studded sphere on his shoulders." (Chapter 6, page 157)

"If my powers are not great enough, why should I hesitate to seek help from any source whatever? If I cannot sway Heaven, I will awaken Hell!" (Chapter 7, page 172)

"Aeneas was moved to wonder and joy by the images of things he could not fathom, and he lifted to his shoulder the destiny of his children's children." (Chapter 8, page 214)

"The troops posted in the towers stood in stark grief at the sight of the transfixed heads they knew so well, heads now dripping with dark gore." (Chapter 9, page 231)

"There shall come a time (do not hasten it) when wild Carthage will open the Alps and pour down upon Rome. Then may they fight and ravage each other. For now, cease your strife and assent with good will to my covenant." (Chapter 10, page 244)

"Each is his own hope, but you see how slender is ours. Your complete ruin is before your eyes. You can reach out and touch it. I do not blame anyone. What valor could do has been done. We have given all we have." (Chapter 11, page 287)

"Seething with rage, Aeneas buried his sword in Turnus's chest. The man's limbs went limp and cold, and with a moan his soul fled resentfully down to the shades." (Chapter 12, 340)

Adaptations

For centuries the *Aeneid* was an enormously popular source of ideas for other writers and artists. The first medieval romance was an adaptation of the *Aeneid.* Hundreds or thousands of paintings have been based on scenes and episodes from the poem. The *Aeneid* was the basis for many operas; the two most famous being Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Berlioz's *Les Troyens.*

The *Aeneid* provides a story outline and a collection of characters and incidents that have become an integral part of popular culture. We see the dilemma of Aeneas and Dido recreated over and over in novels, movies, and on television. In novels and movies of the American westward expansion and in such "revenge" films as Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* and the "Deathwish" series starring Charles Bronson, audiences see a quiet hero roused to action when someone young and vulnerable is killed, much as Aeneas is at the end of the Virgil's epic.

The early television series *Wagon Train* has been compared to the *Aeneid,* with its similar small band of people leaving behind one way of life and traveling in search of a place where they can make another. It has been suggested by recent scholars that the television series *Star Trek*— which has been called *"Wagon Train* to the stars," also closely resembles Virgil's basic plot. Captain Kirk recreated the Aeneas and Dido episode regularly, for example, romancing and ultimately abandoning a lovestruck woman (or alien) on every planet.

In the spring of 1997, NBC television presented a 2-part miniseries based on Homer's *Odyssey,* an important primary source for Virgil's *Aeneid.*

Topics for Further Study

The Etruscans, who join Aeneas as allies, also claimed to have come from Asia Minor. Research the Etruscans and the ways in which they influenced the essential character of Roman society.

Can the wanderings of Aeneas and his Trojans be found to have any basis in fact? There are strong archaeological indications that many established kingdoms were in fact destroyed around the traditional date of the fall of Troy (circa 1193), Research this period and try to determine if there is any archaeological evidence for the legends of the Trojan refugees.

Virgil locates the origins of Rome and Carthage's long period of warfare in the goddess Juno's spiteful actions and Queen Dido's broken heart and suicide when Aeneas leaves her. Compare and contrast Virgil's imaginative account with the more concrete historical reasons behind the three Punic wars between Rome and Carthage.

Define the concept of a "hero" from your own point of view. Give historical or contemporary examples if they help explain your concept. Compare your idea of what it takes to be a hero with some traditional literary, legendary, or mythic considerations of what a hero must be, think, or do (handbooks of literary terms will supply some definitions). Discuss ways that Aeneas either lives up to or falls short of both your idea of a hero and the traditional view of one.

Virgil used plot elements and even characters from the earlier *Odyssey* and *Iliad* of the Greek poet Homer. Different generations of readers and critics have responded differently to this "borrowing." Discuss it from your own point of view. Are the events both wrote about large enough to support more than one literary retelling? Cite examples of this kind of "recycling" of themes and subjects from your own time.

Compare and Contrast

Legendary Period: Aeneas and the Trojans are only one of the many peoples who legend records as being driven from their homes in this period. Men, women, and children, bringing with them only the possessions they can carry, search desperately for some haven where they can restart their lives. They often meet with serious resistance from the Inhabitants of places where they come ashore.

Late twentieth century: Recent history is full of instances of people being driven from their homes by war. Often reduced to poverty, few find their integration into other societies easy or even peaceful

First century BC: There is enormous interest in poetry among the hterate.The Roman tradition of patronage and the lack of copyright law means that poets are almost always subsidized by wealthy and politically powerful men. Even under the patronage system, some exceptional poets, such as Virgil and Horace, can have both financial independence and comparative artistic freedom to create their works.

Late twentieth century: Poetry is no longer a common medium for conveying history, ideas, or elements of a shared cultural experience. Most poets depend on university appointments or grants from various cultural bodies. Others hold down full-time jobs to support their writing.

Legendary Period: All free men are soldiers when the need arises. Political leaders are expected to take part in the righting to prove that they are worthy to lead in both war- and peacetime.

Late twentieth century: The armies of most industrialized nations are professional. Politicians are no longer expected to necessarily have served in the military - although this is still a recommendation to some voters. The military's highest leaders and officers are not expected to take part in actual combat.

What Do I Read Next?

The *Eclogues* (often called the *Bucolics)* is Virgil's first published collection of poetry. It consists of ten selections, *(eclogues,* in Greek). The word *Bucolics* comes from the Greek word for cowherd. These are pastorals, poems set in a idealized countryside among herdsmen and small landowners. Reality intrudes in *Eclogues* 1 and 9, which concern the confiscation of Virgil's farm.

Virgil wrote the *Georgics* in four sections. This handbook of agriculture was also intended to promote the revival of traditional Roman pastorial and agrarian life, with an emphasis on family life, hard work, practical patriotism and simplicity of manners and pleasures. Commissioned by Caesar Augustus in an attempt to make Rome's pastoral and agrarian past seem like an attractive and viable way of life for the population to continue to follow, the vision put forward in the *Georgics* is in many ways like that of Thomas Jefferson's for the new nation of the United States of America that he helped found.

Lucan's *Pharsalia* also known as the *Bellum*

Civili, is an epic written during the reign of the Emperor Nero. It is about the civil war between Caesar and Pompey a hundred years earlier. Unlike the *Aeneid,* it takes place in known historical times. It uses Fate rather than the intervention of the gods to explain events. For these reasons, its earliest critics claimed it was not an epic.

Livy wrote at the same time as Virgil and for many of the same reasons. In his history, *Ab urbe conditor,* he reminds his Roman readers of their great heritage. Not all of Livy's work survives, but it was almost as influential as that of Virgil.

David Wishart's / *Virgil* published in 1995, is a fictionalized biography of Virgil. It assumes that Virgil was ambivalent toward his protagonist Aeneas and the scope and plot of the *Aeneid* because he had reservations about Caesar Augustus's rule of Rome. In this account, Virgil is poisoned by Augustus when he realizes that the *Aeneid* is an indictment of his character.

Further Study

Anderson, William S *The Art of the Aeneid,* Prentice-Hall, 1969,473 p.

An introductory study of the *Aeneid* which discusses themes, images and technique in the context of a broad synopsis. It is a good accessible running commentary to all aspects of the poem

Bernard, John D. ed, *Vergil at 2000 Commemorative Essays on the Poet andhts Influence,* AMS Press, 1986

A collection of essays on Virgil and his influence, many of which are listed below.

Boyle, A. 1, ed *The Roman Epic,* Routledge, 1993. A good new collection of essays placing the *Aeneid* in the setting of its Latin predecessors and descendants.

Boyle, A J. "Roman Song" In his *The Roman Epic,* Routledge, 1993, pp.1-18.

Perhaps the best short English introduction to the tradition of the Latin epic Boyle briefly covers the form from Virgil's earliest predecessors, Livius and Naevius to the Renaissance epic

"The Canonic Text: Virgil's Aeneid." In his *The RomanEpic,* Routledge, 1993, pp. 79-107.

A solid discussion of all aspects of Virgil's epic from his sources through literary style to its political and moral implications. Boyle offers an essentially negative reading of Aeneas's character Commager, Steele. ed *Virgil- A Collection of Critical Essays,* Prentice Hall, 1966

A good introductory collection for student use.

Curthis, Ernest Robert *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans Willard R Trask Bollingen Series 36, Princeton University Press, 1973

This classic study explains how Latm literature affected the development of literature all over Europe Curtius pays special attention to the influence of Virgil.

Dominik, William J. "From Greece to Rome: Ennius *Annales"* m Boyle, A. J ed *The Roman Epic,* Routledge, 1993, pp 37-58.

An important and revealing study of the poet who was Rome's epic poet before Virgil Dryden, John Introduction to *Virgil: The Aeneid,* translated by John Dryden, Heritage Press, pp ix- xlni

The founder of modern English criticism gives his reading of *the Aeneid* This introduction was the most influential reading of the poem in English for over a hundred years It formed every educated English speaker's view of the poem.

Freeman, Charles. *The World of the Romans,* Cassell, 1993. A very thorough and well-written description of every facet of Roman life It includes the essentials of Roman history. The illustrations are very good. An excellent student resource

Goldberg, SanderM "Saturnian Epic. Livius and Naevius," in Boyle, A J, ed *The Roman Epic,* Routledge, 1993, pp 19-36.

A good study of the features of these two early Roman writers of epic which most influenced Virgil. A fascinating example of scholarship as detective work, piecing together literary history from fragments.

Graves, Robert "The Virgil Cult," *The Virginia Quarterly Review,* Vol. 38, No 1, Winter, 1962, pp 13-35.

Perhaps the best known modern attack on Virgil, it is as much an attack on T. S. Eliot and C. S Lewis and their conversion to Christianity. Wishart offers a fictionalized autobiography of the poet.

Hadas, Moses *Ancilla to Classical Reading,* Columbia University Press, 1961.

A good place to find biographical sketches of all those ancient writers that Virgihan critics assume everyone knows

Jones, J. W "The Allegorical Traditions of the Aeneid" in Bernard, JohnD., ed. *Virgilat2000: Commemorative Essays on the Poet and his Influence,* edited by John D Bernard, AMS Press, New York, 1986, pp. 107-32

A worthwhile study of the allegorical readings of the *Aeneid* and of the medieval treatment of the poem.

Le Bossu, Ren. "On the Fable of the Aeneid,' in *Le Bossu and Voltaire on the Epic,* Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970, pp. 26-31.

A short statement of the main ideas of this important early modern critic of the *Aeneid*

Mackail, J. W *Virgil and his Meaning to the World ofTo-Day,* Marshall Jones Co., 1922.

A popular introduction, most useful for its discussion of Virgil's technique.

Marks, Anthony and Tmgay, Graham. *The Romans,* Usbourne Publishing Ltd., 1990.

This book is for young readers, but it's layout makes it a good source for presentations. Handouts and charts can be simply made by enlarging pages.

Miles, Gary B. and Allen, Archibald W. "Virgil and the Augustan Experience," in *Vergil at 2000. Commemorative Essays on the Poet and hts Influence,* edited by John D. Bernard, AMS Press, New York, 1986, pp. 13-41.

Conveys the complexity thepenod's ideals andrealiues.

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A wide-ranging study of the influence of Virgil on Shakespeare This article would be the perfect place to begin a paper comparing the two poets Ohs, Brooks "The Odyssean Aeneid and the Diadic Aeneid," in Commager, Steele. ed *Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays,* Prentice Hall. Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966, pp 89-106.

Otis concentrates on the ways that Virgil adapted Homer's epics He shows Virgil transforming Homer rather than simply imitating. He traces the way this builds in a sort of Homeric commentary within the *Aeneid* Quinn, Kenneth *Virgil's Aeneid A Critical Description,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.

A somewhat more demanding read than Anderson's introductory book, filling in the fine detail. The first chapter, "The Heroic Impulse," gives a balanced introduction to modern critical treatment of Virgihan heroism and covers the heroic impulse in heroism in the minor as well as the main characters Reynolds, L D. "Vergil," in *Texts and Transmissions,* Clarendon Press, 1986, pp 433-36

A clear and fascinating introduction to the manuscripts which preserved the text of *the Aeneid* Virgil. *The Aeneid, 1* Vols., trans. H Rushton Fairclough Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1978.

A good plain translation of the poem with the Latin text on the facing page.

The Aeneid, trans David West, Penguin Books, 1990

A popular modern translation with useful maps and appendixes Williams, R. D. *Virgil,, Greece and Rome: New Surveys in the Classics* 1, Clarendon Press, 1967.

The journal *Greece and Rome* is geared towards secondary school teachers of classical literature and interested, but serious amateurs. This booklet gives a good serious overview of criticism on the *Aeneid,* Williams, R D. and Pattie, T. S. *Virgil. His Poetry through the Ages,* London, British Library, 1982.

This introduction is carefully geared to the first-time reader of *{he. Aeneid* It includes a full synopsis of the epic. The chapter "Virgil Today" is probably the best place to begin reading criticism on the *Aeneid* Wolverton, Robert E. *An Outline of Classical Mythology,* Littlefleld Adams and Co, 1966

A short and occasionally funny introduction to mythology. There are family trees and useful lists of types of stories

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Epics for Students (EfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, EfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of EfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of EfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in EfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by EfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

EfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Epics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Epics for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Epics for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from EfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from EfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Epics for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of EfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Epics for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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