On Creusa, Dido, and the quality of victory in Virgil's *Aeneid*

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A CONTINUING CHALLENGE for readers of the *Aeneid* is to assess the moral quality of Aeneas' victory. Viktor Pöschl, in his extremely important work on the *Aeneid*, established that the moral poles of the poem are *imperium* and *furor* or, as he terms them, "order" and "the demonic" (violence, madness).[1] In his view Jupiter, Aeneas, and Augustus represent the higher moral principle of order. The triumph of these figures over their enemies is, therefore, morally legitimate and unambiguously edifying.[2] Subsequent critics have refined this reading by noting that it is not only Aeneas' enemies who are characterized by *furor* but Aeneas himself.[3] How, then, is this fact to be interpreted? Is Aeneas, like Dido, Mezentius, or Turnus, morally compromised by his *furor* – or is he not? This is an essential question to pose because Aeneas embodies the Roman imperial achievement. Through his picture of Aeneas, Virgil characterizes Rome.

Critics like G. Karl Galinsky and W. S. Anderson imply that there is a hierarchy of *furor* in the poem: some violence is good, "creative," while other violence is bad or destructive.[4] The reader may consequently distinguish between Aeneas, the exemplar of good *furor*, and his enemies, exemplars of bad *furor*. Some readers, however, may feel that this distinction risks being arbitrary and subjective. Michael Putnam, also an important critic of Virgil, does not observe such a distinction since he notes that in the poem's final scene Aeneas becomes identified with or parallel to Juno,[5]

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whose *furor* is incontrovertibly negative. Thus Aeneas would yield, finally, to that very *furor* against which he had struggled throughout the course of the poem. Most recently, W. R. Johnson, fully acknowledging Aeneas' flawed virtue, yet feels that the *Aeneid* is morally ambiguous, that it permits no final judgment on Aeneas and the Rome which he exemplifies.[6] The reader, then, confronts a substantive dilemma when excellent critics differ so widely on the moral quality of Aeneas' ultimate victory.

Certainly it is difficult to make unambiguous moral judgments about the *Aeneid*'s major figures. The final scene, for example, is splendidly problematic. Are we to damn Aeneas for his *furor*? or to praise him for his *pietas*? or perhaps for his political acumen in prudently eliminating a future adversary?[7] Or should we rather question even the political advisability of Aeneas' slaying the beaten, suppliant Turnus within the full view of his future subjects? Many factors – personal, political, moral – must occur to us when we attempt to evaluate Aeneas' actions. Consequently it is not surprising that no consensus has been reached about where the moral emphasis of the *Aeneid* lies. Yet it is unsatisfying, at least in the opinion of this writer, to assume that Virgil has no final conviction, that the problem must forever elude solution. Virgil shows Aeneas making choices; surely he intends us to evaluate those choices, not only to lament their difficulty.

If study of the motif of *furor* has not led to a secure judgment about Aeneas, we must then seek other indices of his humanity and morality which may help us to formulate a judgment. The hypothesis of this writer is that study of Aeneas' behavior towards Creusa and Dido, although it constitutes only a small part of the total picture of Aeneas, will shed light on his spiritual qualities and moral choices.

Aeneas' relationships with Creusa and Dido are parallel in several ways, a fact which suggests that Virgil shaped them deliberately and consistently. For example, both of these relationships end in the woman's death. This death is, at least partially, attributable to Aeneas, although in each case Aeneas attributes it to some cause or person outside himself. Each of the women perceives herself as abandoned by Aeneas. Finally, there is in each case a

connection between Aeneas' departure and his *pietas*. First I should like to establish that this pattern does exist, and then I shall attempt an interpretation of it.

In order to set Aeneas' actions with women in appropriate perspective the reader must first consider the traditional epic heroes with whom Aeneas is implicitly compared. Hector and Odysseus constitute, in epic poetry, the most positive models of male behavior towards women. Neither is traditionally defined by his military role; each in his relationship with his wife is seen to be completely human, to have human feelings and needs. This human dimension makes them sympathetic figures.

Hector's relations with women are strongly developed in *Iliad* 6.[8] He appears, in contrast to both Paris and Achilles, as the hero of responsibility, of the cultural values of humanity, family, and love. Women are necessarily associated with these values since they are the life of the city, all able-bodied men being outside the walls at war. Hector's visits to Hecuba and Helen are dictated by the military situation since he must instruct his mother to lead sacrifices to Athena and direct Paris to return to battle. Remarkable by contrast is his visit to Andromache, whom he wishes to see purely for sentiment – and even before his loved son. The scene between Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6 is one of the most profoundly touching in all of classical literature, for Hector's interactions with his wife and infant son evoke powerfully the reader's sympathy.[9] Personal love and social responsibility coincide in Hector in *Iliad* 6 as he defends his family and city.

Odysseus similarly experiences compelling love for Penelope, for whom he rejects the goddesses Circe and Calypso, as well as the promise of immortality.[10] When Odysseus chooses Penelope over Calypso he affirms his humanity and mortality. Penelope's recognition of Odysseus, suspensefully delayed by the poet, is climactic, a significant mark of his return to a human, civilized, just society. Odysseus values Penelope because she suits (*θυμαρέα* *Od.* 23.232) and completes him.[11] His search for identity and "wholeness" overall is marked by his acceptance of positive female values. As Taylor writes:

> Odysseus' quest for identity is in fact inextricably bound up with the feminine. In seeking the wholeness of his being, he (Odysseus) passes through intimate experience with various embodiments of archetypal woman, each reflecting some aspect of what he as masculine hero lacks.[12]

In sum, both Hector and Odysseus have strong, positive relationships with their wives and this contributes largely to their being human, sympathetic figures.

When we consider Aeneas in this regard we note that he seems not to be bound decisively to any female by love. Rather he is absorbed and driven by the political-military goal of founding the Roman empire. Love for Creusa and Dido remains subordinate to this goal. The destined marriage with Lavinia is a political act and does not signify affection.[13] While in Hector and Odysseus there is a convergence of personal and political goals, in Aeneas the personal and political are experienced as mutually exclusive. This dichotomy, typically although not exclusively Roman, is perfectly exemplified, for example, in the story of Brutus' execution of his sons for treason against Rome (Livy Bk. 2.5; cf. *Aeneid* 6.820 ff.). Love, whether for wives or children, is opposed to patriotic goals. Thus a love relationship with a woman apparently has no essential place in Aeneas' life's mission.

Let us first examine Virgil's treatment of Creusa's story.[14] As far as is known, tradition offered Virgil two variants of this story, the older of which represented Creusa as accompanying Aeneas into exile. This is the tradition which the Roman epic poet Naevius, for example, followed. It is illustrated on vases which show Aeneas departing from Troy accompanied by Creusa and other women; or which show him and Creusa exchanging a glance over the head of Iulus.[15] The other tradition, perhaps created by Stesichorus, tells how Cybele and Aphrodite conspired to rescue Creusa from Troy (Pausanias 10.26.1). This latter tradition is followed by Virgil, with the notable addition that, as Richard Heinze, an important critic of Virgil, puts it,[16] Aeneas allows Creusa to fall into danger, first by isolating her from the male family members and then by forgetting her altogether. Consider the following verses which illustrate Aeneas' concerns:

una salus ambobus erit. mihi parvus Iulus
sit comes, et longe servet vestigia coniunx
(2.710-711)

Whatever waits for us (Aeneas and his father),
we shall both share one danger, one salvation.
Let young Iulus come with me, and let
my wife Creusa follow at a distance.

succedoque oneri; dextrae se parvus Iulus
implicuit sequiturque patrem non passibus aequis:
pone subit coniunx.
(2.723-725)

and then [I] take up Anchises; small Iulus
now clutches my right hand; his steps uneven,
he is following his father; and my wife
moves on behind.

nunc omnes terrent aurae, sonus excitat omnis
suspensum et pariter comitique onerique timentem.
(2.728-729)

I am terrified by all the breezes, now startled
by every sound, in fear for son and father.

Because he forgets to look back for Creusa, Aeneas is unaware of her fate (cf. 6.463-464).

hic mihi nescio quod trepido male numen amicum
confusam eripuit mentem. namque avia cursu
dum sequor, et nota excedo regione viarum
heu! misero coniunx fatone erepta Creusa
substitit? erravitne via seu lassa resedit?
incertum.
(2.735-740)

some unfriendly
god's power ripped away my tangled mind.
For while I take a trackless path, deserting
the customary roads, fate tears from me
my wife Creusa in my misery.
I cannot say if she had halted or
had wandered off the road or slumped down, weary.

And perhaps more significant:

nec prius amissam respexi animumve reflexi,

> quam tumulum antiquae Cereris sedemque sacratam
> venimus . . .
> (2.741-743)

> I did not look behind for her, astray,
> or think of her before we reached the mound
> and ancient sacred shrine of Ceres;

If Aeneas appears careless of Creusa here, verses 712-720 show, in illuminating contrast, his attention to detail, his cool and effective planning for successful escape and reunion, and his concern for the safety and ritual purity of the *penates*. In this critical moment Aeneas plans effectively for his father, son, and household gods but not for his wife. May we infer that he is more concerned for them than for her?

Aeneas' neglect of Creusa has been overlooked by most critics. However, one must suspect that Virgil intended something significant by it since he is innovative and consistent (2.711, 725, 729, 735-742) on this point. Aeneas' isolation of Creusa (as in 729) evidently troubled some ancient readers for Servius *auctus* attempts to explain it away by understanding "son" to stand for "son and wife" ("*quidam comiti pro comitibus accipi volunt*"). This remedy does not, however, account for 2.741: "I did not look behind for her, astray/or think of her . . ." Consequently, the reader must consider the significance of Aeneas' remarks here. Heinze, alone among modern critics, studies this perplexing incident at some length: "For what purposes, one might ask, does Virgil complicate the causes of Creusa's loss, since, even without all this, the Great Mother could have taken Creusa to herself?"[17] Some critics think the purpose of the incident is to elicit sympathy for Aeneas.[18] Yet could one not plausibly argue that the incident must rather elicit sympathy for Creusa? She herself does not wish to perish, as she indicates clearly in her single speech as a living woman. As Aeneas rushes from home to futile (as he knows) battle, she addresses him on behalf of the survival of the entire family group, with herself emphatically included. She questions by implication the value of arms, asserts the value of family,[19] and expresses her sense that Aeneas is abandoning her:

'si periturus abis, et nos rape in omnia tecum;
sin aliquam expertus sumptis spem ponis in armis,
hanc primum tutare domum. cui parvus Iulus,
cui pater et coniunx quondam tua dicta relinquor?'
Talia vociferans gemitu tectum omne replebat . . .
(2.675-679)

'If you go off to die, then take us, too,
to face all things with you; but if your past
still lets you put your hope in arms, which now
you have put on, then first protect this house.
To whom is young Iulus left, to whom
your father and myself, once called your wife?'
So did Creusa cry; her wailing filled
my father's house.

In her speech she is the final, hence emphatic, family member in the *tricolon abundans* (2.677-678). She values her person and, as it seems, she expects from Aeneas certain actions expressive of family responsibility, both as father and as husband. At this point (680) the portent appears and the reader cannot know if Aeneas would have yielded to Creusa's appeal of his own accord.

Once aware of Creusa's disappearance, Aeneas is frantic. He risks his life to search for her in the flaming city. Clearly he has much feeling for Creusa (cf. 2.784 *dilectae . . . Creusae*) and he does not wish to lose her now. Yet this search, although it shows courage and sentiment, does not undo the consequences of Aeneas' initial flight. Similarly, the vision which Aeneas experiences of Creusa's shade, with its deceptively positive prophecy,[20] does not restore to life the living woman who felt endangered and abandoned. Creusa – and what she represents to Aeneas of family, love, and personal values – is definitively lost to him and to the poem.[21]

Aeneas' view of his own responsibility here is interesting and seems to anticipate his view of himself at other significant points in the poem. On several occasions, of which this is one, he appears to attribute to an external force or to another person the responsibility for a negative action, which might otherwise be attributed to him. Here, although Aeneas, as seen above, forgets Creusa, he does not assume responsibility for her death. Rather he blames others:

quem non incusavi amens hominumque deorumque,
aut quid in eversa vidi crudelius urbe?
(2.745-746)

What men, what gods did I in madness not
accuse? Did I see anything more cruel
within the fallen city?

He blames implicitly even Creusa herself:

hic demum collectis omnibus una
defuit, et comites natumque virumque fefellit.
(2.743-744)

at last, when all were gathered, she alone
was missing — gone from husband, son, companions.

Fefellit means "disappointed" or "deceived."[22]

Finally let us note the connection of *pietas* (piety) with Aeneas' loss of Creusa. Aeneas' flight from Troy with Anchises on his back and Iulus at his side epitomizes the *pietas* of Aeneas.[23] It has become such a famous image that modern readers may be surprised to learn that, as Galinksy has shown, Aeneas was not traditionally associated with *pietas*. Rather Virgil, by defining Aeneas as *pius* (pious) at 1.10 and throughout the poem, makes him into the embodiment of *pietas*.[24] Modern readers may also assume without question that Aeneas' *pietas* was meant to be admired in all its features. Yet, as Galinsky has also shown, this was not so even in antiquity.[25] In our passage Virgil shapes the image of Aeneas' *pietas* to include only males: Aeneas, his father, and his son. Since the exclusive maleness of Aeneas' *pietas*, as reflected in his flight from Troy, was not demanded by the tradition Virgil inherited but rather occurs as a result of Aeneas' forgetfulness of Creusa, Virgil may have intended it to express Aeneas' own unarticulated and unacknowledged values. The reader is invited to consider the emotional implications of *pietas* so conceived and so exemplified.[26]

Let us now consider Dido. As in the case of Creusa Virgil is again innovative in his use of tradition. Tradition, as in Timaeus (fr. 23 Mueller) and Macrobius (5.17.5-6), tells that Dido, still

honoring her dead husband, commits suicide rather than yield to marriage with a neighboring African king.[27] In these versions Aeneas plays no part at all in Dido's tragedy. Indeed, Dido and Aeneas are not even contemporaries in legend. Scholars have speculated that Naevius first linked the tales of Dido and Aeneas and that Virgil followed him in that version.[28] Since there is no persuasive evidence for this hypothesis we may provisionally assume that the love of Dido and Aeneas was original with Virgil. Macrobius (as cited above) relates that everyone knew that Virgil's story of Dido was false. Why then does Virgil tell the story as he does? Readers must consider this question with special care.

To many critics Aeneas' leaving of Dido has seemed a heroic assertion of resolve and responsibility against the temptation to self-indulgent, merely personal happiness.[29] The poet, however, does not show Aeneas, genuinely torn, deliberating over this choice: whether or not to leave Dido. Aeneas' vision of Mercury affects him powerfully and his decision to leave Carthage is instantaneous:

> ardet abire fuga dulcisque reliquere terras
> (4.281)
>
> He burns to flee
> from Carthage; he would quit these pleasant lands.

Rather Aeneas is shown deliberating over how to tell Dido of his leaving. Evidently the poet wishes the reader to consider not so much the question of Aeneas' departure but the manner of his departure:

> heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem
> audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat?
> atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc
> in partisque rapit varias perque omnia versat.
> haec alternanti potior sententia visa est:
> Mnesthea Sergestumque vocat fortemque Serestum,
> classem aptent taciti sociosque ad litora cogant,
> arma parent et, quae rebus sit causa novandis,
> dissumulent . . .
> (4.283-291)

> What can he do? With what words dare
> he face the frenzied queen? What openings
> can he employ? His wits are split, they shift
> here, there; they race to different places, turning
> to everything. But as he hesitated,
> this seemed the better plan: he calls Sergestus
> and Mnestheus and the strong Serestus, and
> he asks them to equip the fleet in silence,
> to muster their companions on the shore,
> to ready all their arms, but to conceal
> the reasons for this change.

Aeneas' provisional decision is to postpone meeting with Dido and he retreats to a male world, as Virgil implies in 4.288, a verse entirely filled with men's names and epic epithet. We infer that Aeneas more easily faces battles and winter storms than he faces a difficult encounter with Dido. (We may compare Euryalus' bravura commitment of his very life to a dangerous mission and his simultaneous fear to tell his mother of it in *Aen.* 9.287–290.) Aeneas cannot with courage (cf. *audeat* 4.284) and honesty face Dido. *Dolos* ("deceit" or "guile") is the poet's term (4.296) for Aeneas' actions. As Page (*ad loc.*) notes, *ambire* ("to get round") and *exordia* ("openings") also imply deceit.

Many readers have felt Aeneas to be most ignoble in Book 4. He may hope to flee without ever having to face Dido (so Quinn).[30] His final speech to her is unsympathetic and not wholly honest. Troubled by Aeneas' lack of courage and nobility here, some critics attempt to defend him, saying that his love was so great he dared not voice it. Others argue that any negative judgment of Aeneas is anachronistically harsh: a Roman would have approved.[31] But Virgil clearly intended us to notice the unsympathetic quality of Aeneas' speech because he points the reader's attention towards it. Aeneas' speech to Dido is framed by his awareness, although unvoiced, of the necessity of being gentle and consoling to Dido. Preceding his speech to Dido Aeneas tells his men that:

> sese interea, quando optima Dido
> nesciat et tantos rumpi non speret amores,

temptaturum aditus et, quae mollissima fandi
tempora, quis rebus dexter modus
(4.291-294)

while he himself –
with gracious Dido still aware of nothing
and never dreaming such a love could ever
be broken – would try out approaches, seek
the tenderest, most tactful time for speech,
whatever dexterous way might suit his case.

Following Dido's speech the poet expresses Aeneas' thoughts:

At pius Aeneas, quamquam lenire dolentem
solando cupit et dictis avertere curas,
multa gemens magnoque animum labefactus amore,
iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit.
(4.393-396)

But though he longs to soften, soothe her sorrow
and turn aside her troubles with sweet words,
though groaning long and shaken in his mind
because of his great love, nevertheless
pious Aeneas carries out the gods'
instructions. Now he turns back to his fleet.

The truly striking thing, then, is that while Aeneas does recognize the necessity of being gentle and consoling, the words which he actually utters to Dido are not consoling but inflammatory. In his speech Aeneas acknowledges no fault of his own; expresses no love for Dido, no sympathy for her pain, no regret at leaving her. Instead he attempts to exonerate himself with the superficially correct but substantively false legalism that he never actually married her:

pro re pauca loquar. neque ego hanc abscondere furto
speravi (ne finge) fugam, nec coniugis umquam
praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni.
(4.337-339)

I'll speak
brief words that fit the case. I never hoped
to hide – do not imagine that – my flight;
I am not furtive. I have never held

> the wedding torches as a husband; I
> have never entered into such agreements.

Aeneas evidently cannot openly confront the human issue which entangles him and Dido. Dido, however, perceives instantly what is missing from his speech, and that is, precisely, humanity.[32] As she expresses it:

> nec tibi diva parens generis nec Dardanus auctor,
> perfide, sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
> Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admorunt ubera tigres.
> (4.365-367)

> No goddess was your mother, false Aeneas,
> and Dardanus no author of your race;
> the bristling Caucasus was father to you
> on his harsh crags; Hyrcanian tigresses
> gave you their teats.

For Dido, what is intolerable in Aeneas' speech is the bleakly absent assertion of care, for this is all that could solace her. Aeneas' lack of sympathy is what most keenly wounds:

> num fletu ingemuit nostro? num lumina flexit?
> num lacrimas victus dedit aut miseratus amantem est?
> (4.368-370)

> For did Aeneas groan when I was weeping?
> Did he once turn his eyes or, overcome,
> shed tears or pity me, who was his loved one?

Aeneas' actions no less than Dido's determined the course of their drama, yet Aeneas does not acknowledge this.[33] The reader, however, knows that Aeneas allowed Dido's love and expectations to develop inasmuch as Aeneas is entirely aware of Dido's passion for him:

> with gracious Dido still aware of nothing
> and never dreaming such a love could ever
> be broken
> (4.291-292)

In action and dress Aeneas acted as Dido's husband, as we may infer from Mercury's term *uxorius* (4.266), which is corroborated later by Dido's phrase "the hand you pledged" (*data dextera* 4.307). Because of this Dido legitimately feels both rejected and betrayed.[34] Certainly Dido is a difficult character, tempestuous, fierce, passionate. The reader cannot be uncritically sympathetic towards her. "Her mind is helpless; raging frantically,/inflamed, she raves throughout the city – just/as a Bacchante . . ." (*inops animi, incensa* 4.300, *bacchatur*, 4.301). These verses suggest that Aeneas' view of her as "frenzied" (*furentem* 4.283) is justified. The flaws of Dido's character are not, however, of concern to us here but rather the truth of her accusations, which are exact. She catches Aeneas' thoughts and words with precision:

> *dissimulare* etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum
> posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra?
> (4.305-306)
>
> Deceiver, did you even hope to hide
> so harsh a crime, to leave this land of mine
> without a word?

Thus she echoes Aeneas' above cited *dissimulent* (291), *taciti* (289), and also *fuga* from *ardet abire fuga* (281) with *fugam* (328).

The effect of these passages is to make the reader question Aeneas' moral and emotional courage and honesty.[35] His legal (as connoted by the phrase *pro re*) argument, although technically correct, ignores the substance of his actions in Carthage which, as we saw, implied husbandly status. In addition he declines to make a statement of care or sympathy although he feels it to be necessary. Consider the following extract from his speech to Dido:

> me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
> auspiciis et sponte mea componere curas . . .
> (4.340-341)
>
> If fate had granted me to guide my life
> by my own auspices and to unravel
> my troubles with unhampered will, then I . . .

After this suspensefully elaborated protasis, both Dido and the reader surely expect that Aeneas will conclude (to paraphrase) ". . . I would remain with you." This is the moment to affirm love and care. Contrary to this expectation, however, Aeneas completes his condition by saying that, if he were free, he would not remain with Dido but would seek to restore Troy:

> urbem Troianam primum dulcisque meorum
> reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,
> et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis.
> (4.342-344)

> should cherish first the town of Troy, the sweet
> remains of my own people and the tall
> rooftops of Priam would remain, my hand
> would plant again a second Pergamus
> for my defeated men.

The reader may imagine how bitter this confession must be for Dido. And when Aeneas finally speaks of love it is not for Dido but for Rome:

> sed nunc Italiam magnam Gryneus Apollo,
> Italiam Lyciae iussere capessere sortes,
> hic *amor*, haec patria est
> (4.345-347)

> But now Grynean
> Apollo's oracles would have me seize
> great Italy, the Lycian prophecies
> tell me of Italy: there is my love,
> there is my homeland.

As Aeneas does not voice his own feeling for Dido, so he also implicitly discredits her feeling for him by suggesting that it is malice or envy which motivates her to detain him:

> si te Karthaginis arces
> Phoenissam Libycaeque aspectus detinet urbis,
> quae tandem Ausonia Teucros considere terra
> invidia est? et nos fas extera quaerere regna.
> (4.347-350)

> If the fortresses
> of Carthage and the vision of a city
> in Libya can hold you, who are Phoenician,
> why, then, begrudge the Trojans' settling on
> Ausonian soil? There is no harm: it is
> right that we, too, seek out a foreign kingdom.

Aeneas' accusations appear gratuitous[36] and are most certainly tangential to the real issue which troubles these two. Only when Aeneas speaks of his father, his son, and Jove (4.351-359) does his speech have genuine power and pathos. When Aeneas leaves the difficult topic of Dido and his actions towards her he speaks with feeling.

Dido warns that Aeneas' departure will have fatal consequences for her: "the cruel death that lies in wait for Dido" (*Moritura . . . Dido* 4.308), "a fallen house" (*domus labentis* 4.318), "this dying woman" (*me moribundam* 4.323). In the underworld, however, Aeneas claims to have been unaware of the consequences for Dido of his leaving her behind:

> nec credere quivi
> hunc tantum tibi me discessu ferre dolorem
> (6.463-464)

> And I could not
> believe that with my going I should bring
> so great a grief as this.

In sum, Aeneas does not voice responsibility for his affair with Dido, for his departure from her ("It is not my own free will that leads to Italy" *Italiam non sponte sequor* 4.361 and cf. 6.458-460), or for the consequences of his departure. One may usefully contrast the attitude of Aeneas' men who do apprehend the import of his leaving:

> duri magno sed amore dolores
> polluto, notumque furens quid femina possit,
> triste per augurium Teucrorum pectora ducunt.
> (5.5-7)

And yet the Trojans
know well the pain when passion is profaned
and how a woman driven wild can act;
their hearts are drawn through dark presentiments.

Following his final interview with Dido Aeneas is called *pius* (4.393). This is the first time in Book 4 that he is called *pius* and the first time since Book 1.378. Therefore we may infer that in leaving Dido, and even in so disquieting a fashion, Aeneas affirms his *pietas*. Again *pietas* is consonant with the loss of a female figure. While Aeneas pursues *pietas* and his mission he loses the opportunity of love from and for a woman. It almost seems as if loved women are introduced into the *Aeneid* in order that they may subsequently be lost from Aeneas' life. Thus Virgil is suggesting the emotional cost to the Romans of becoming an imperial people.[37]

What conclusions may we draw about the significance of Aeneas' actions towards Creusa and Dido? We note that Virgil has altered the traditional stories of Creusa and Dido in similar ways. This pattern suggests deliberation and purpose. Both of Aeneas' relationships with women end in female casualty and in Aeneas' departure. The women's deaths are at least partially attributable to the manner of Aeneas' departure although Aeneas does not acknowledge this. To Creusa Aeneas is fatally inattentive. To Dido he is also irresponsible, even treacherous. Each of the women perceives Aeneas as abandoning her. Creusa's criticism of Aeneas, while briefer and gentler than Dido's, is comparable in substance. Finally, there is in each case a connection between Aeneas' departture and his *pietas*. Thus each of the women becomes in some sense a casualty of the Roman mission.

My hypothesis is that this collocation of departure, female casualty, denied responsibility, and *pietas* is intended to reflect an incomplete humanity in Aeneas and in the *pietas* which he exemplifies. If Aeneas epitomizes *pietas*, as his repeated epithet would indicate, then perhaps Virgil is suggesting that *pietas* so conceived is a flawed ideal since it seems not to require humane virtues or any personal loyalty or affection which does not ultimately sub-

serve what we might term political or military goals.[38] Love for Anchises and Iulus, as expressed in *pietas* towards them, is consistent with Roman political goals; love for Creusa and Dido is not. Thus, while Aeneas as a commander is entirely successful, as a human being – by comparison to the Homeric figures of Hector and Odysseus – he is incomplete.

It is not at all the intention of this paper to suggest that Aeneas has no virtues. He has many qualities which deeply move the reader. Viktor Pöschl is convinced of his nobility. Wendell Clausen's deservedly famous essay is a most beautiful and moving expression of a sensitive reader's identification with Aeneas. W. R. Johnson also gives eloquent voice to Aeneas' appeal.[39] Yet Johnson himself, Hunt, and Putnam have skillfully and variously pointed to Aeneas' disquieting actions and compromised *pietas*. Virgil's portrait of Aeneas is subtly considered. In the first book of the *Aeneid* we see Aeneas defeated and exiled. In his sorrow he is a sympathetic figure, noble, responsive to compassion. The tragedy of Aeneas' experience is that fate or history rewards his *furor*, not his humanity. His triumphs come from his *furor* which allows him to break the Latin siege:

> talia per campos edebat funera ductor
> Dardanius, torrentis aquae vel turbinis atri
> more *furens*. Tandem erumpunt et castra relinquunt
> Ascanius puer et nequiquam obsessa iuventus.
> (10.602-605)

> Such were the deaths dealt by the Dardan chieftain
> across the plains while he raged like a torrent
> or black whirlwind. The boy Ascanius
> and all the warriors break out at last
> and quit their camp site; now the siege is pointless.

Furor allows Aeneas to devastate his enemies and consequently to achieve victory. As Johnson points out, Aeneas, in order to conquer, is compelled to suppress love and pity but not *furor*.[40]

The significance for the *Aeneid* as a whole of Aeneas' behavior towards Dido and Creusa is that it reveals his otherwise astonishing brutality in Books 10 and 12 to be not entirely anomalous. Otis

feels that Aeneas' cruelty in these books is unbelievable, inconsistent with his character.[41] An alternative is to imagine that Aeneas has within him from the start the capacity for inhumane action. This capacity, partially revealed in his actions towards Creusa and Dido, is nurtured by success and allows him ultimately to achieve the victory he both envisions and embodies. As Aeneas pursues his vision of Rome his actions must trouble the reader's sympathy, however great it was initially. Aeneas' killing of the noble Lausus (10.811-815), his cruel boasting (10.531-532, 557-558, 592-593), his slaughter of a priest (10.537-541), his sacrifice of live youths to Pallas (11.81-82) are all cases in point.

Aeneas' final action in the poem is the killing of Turnus. This action was difficult for Aeneas, as his hesitation shows. Certainly the death of Pallas was a grievous loss to Aeneas and the reader shares his sorrow. Yet when Aeneas declines to spare the beaten and suppliant Turnus, he not only falls short of Anchises' ideal of sparing the vanquished, but he does so in the full sight of his future subjects. This is a spectacularly public killing. To the Latins Aeneas appears not a figure of compassion but of murderous fury.

Here it is critical to note that, as previously with Creusa and Dido, Aeneas attributes responsibility for this difficult action to another. As he kills Turnus he cries:

> '. . . Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
> immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.'
> (12.948-949)

> 'It is Pallas
> who strikes, who sacrifices you, who takes
> this payment from your shameless blood.'

As Anderson observes, these words do not hide the real identity of the killer – at least not from the reader.[42]

At the poem's close Virgil leaves the reader to ponder the implications of Aeneas' victory. What place is left in Aeneas' spirit and in his empire for those humane values which would legitimize his conquest and the losses it required? It may be useful for us in seeking an answer to this question to return to Homer and to con-

trast the final scene of the *Aeneid* with the conclusions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's often recalled epic models.[43] In the conclusions to these poems the hero comes together with other human beings. There is for him a moment of shared experience and intelligibility.[44] *Iliad* 24, in particular, concludes with Achilles' heroic magnanimity to an enemy and his reflective acceptance of his own humanity as he yields to Priam's plea (*Iliad* 24.486-551). Aeneas, on the contrary, declining Turnus' almost identical plea, stands victorious and alone, passionate for conquest and private vengeance.[45]

Acknowledgements

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Translations of the *Aeneid* are from Allen Mandelbaum, *The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation* (Berkeley 1971). All others are my own.

Notes

1. Viktor Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the Aeneid*, trans. by Gerda Seligson (Ann Arbor 1962) 18 (hereafter cited as Pöschl).
2. See, e.g., Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1964) (hereafter cited as Otis); Pöschl 15, 18.
3. E.g., Michael C. J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Cambridge, Mass. 1966) 192-193 (hereafter cited as Putnam); J. William Hunt, *Forms of Glory: Structure and Sense in Virgil's Aeneid* (Carbondale, Illinois 1973) 77-78; William Nethercut, "Invasion in the *Aeneid*," *G & R* (1968) 82-95.
4. G. Karl Galinsky, "The Hercules-Cacus Episode in *Aeneid* VIII," *AJP* 87 (1966) 18-51, especially 41-42; William S. Anderson, *The Art of the Aeneid* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1969) 63 (hereafter cited as Anderson).
5. Putnam 200-201.
6. W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Vergil's Aeneid* (Berkeley 1976) 1-22 (hereafter cited as Johnson). The *Aeneid* is an "uncommitted meditation on man's nature and on the possibilities and impossibilities of his fate" (22). One could, however, argue that the overall effect of Johnson's compelling book is to suggest rather Virgil's despair in the face of his experience.

7. See, e.g., Otis 378 f., Pöschl 133 f., Putnam 192-201, and Anderson 98-100.
8. See James M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Chicago 1975) 119-127.
9. See James M. Redfield (*ibid*) and E. T. Owen, *The Story of the Iliad* (Toronto 1946) 56-72.
10. See George deF. Lord, "The *Odyssey* and the Western World," *The Sewanee Review* 62 (1954) 406-427, reprinted in Charles H. Taylor, ed., *Essays on the Odyssey* (Bloomington, Indiana 1963, repr. 1969) 36-53; William S. Anderson, "Calypso and Elysium," *CJ* 54 (1958) 2-11 (also reprinted in Taylor 73-86).
11. Ann Amory, "The Reunion of Odysseus and Penelope," in Taylor (*ibid*) 121.
12. Charles H. Taylor, Jr., "The Obstacles to Odysseus' Return: Identity and Consciousness in the *Odyssey*," *The Yale Review* 50 (1961) 579; reprinted in Taylor (*op. cit.*, note 10) 87-99.
13. See, e.g., Putnam 186.
14. See Richard Heinze, *Virgils Epische Technik* (Leipzig 1915; repr. Darmstadt 1972) 57-63 for the most complete discussion of Virgil's treatment of Creusa.
15. See R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Oxford 1955, repr. 1966) *ad* 708.
16. Heinze (*op. cit.*, note 14) 60.
17. *ibid.*
18. See, for example, K. Büchner, "P. Vergeilius Maro," *RE* 8 A2 (1958) 1357; Kenneth Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* (London 1968) 120.
19. Quinn (above) 7 notes that Hecuba in *Aeneid* 2, similar to Creusa in this passage, represents human values and doubt of arms (2.519-522).
20. "but you will reach
Hesperia, where Lydian Tiber flows,
a tranquil stream, through farmer's fruitful fields.
There days of gladness lie in wait for you;
a kingdom and a royal bride."
(2.781-784)

See Sara Mack, *Patterns of Time in Vergil* (Hamden, Connecticut 1978) 57 on the disparity between the reality of Aeneas' experience and the prediction which he hears from Creusa's spirit/shade. Thus this prophecy, among others, becomes "the vehicle of a terrible irony not fully revealed until the poem ends."
21. Putnam 47: "The hell of Troy, and the presence of Creusa therein, offer in subtle conjunction an attraction for all that is human in Aeneas . . ."
22. On the connotations of *fefellit* see T.E. Page, *The Aeneid of Virgil* (London 1894; repr. New York 1967) *ad loc.* against Austin (*op. cit.*, note 15) *ad loc.*
23. See G. Karl Galinsky, *Aeneas, Siciliy, and Rome* (Princeton 1969) 21: *Aeneid* 2.721-725 is "supposed to be emblematic of *pietas*."

24. Galinsky (above) 3-61, especially 4, 20, 61.
25. Galinsky (*op. cit.*, note 23) 4.
26. Cf. Quinn (*op. cit.*, note 18) 6: "He [Virgil] leaves it to us to formulate, if we choose, the moral implications of his narrative; his form does not deal in express moral judgment."
27. On the history of the Dido tradition see Arthur Stanley Pease, *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1935; repr. Darmstadt 1967) 14-21.
28. For a convenient bibliography of sources see Pease (above) 19; also Heinze (*op. cit.*, note 14) 115-117.
29. Cf. Austin (*op. cit.*, note 15) *ad loc.*, Anderson 46: "The apparent coldness and rationality of his words, then, represent a heroic achievement . . ."
30. Quinn (*op. cit.*, note 18) 343-345.
31. E.g., Austin (*op. cit.*, note 15) 106: "His speech, though we may not like it, was the Roman answer to the conflict between two compelling forms of love, an answer such as a Roman Brutus once gave, when he executed his two sons for treason against Rome." See also note 29, above. Pöschl (44) assumes that the gods forbade Aeneas to comfort Dido, but this is not expressed in the text.
32. Cf. Friedrich Klingner, *Virgil: Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneis* (Zurich 1967) 449: "She must, however, be enraged that he denies human feeling." The earliest model for this passage is Patroclus to Achilles (*Il.* 16.33-35). See Pease (*op. cit.*, note 27) *ad loc.* for an exhaustive list of parallel passages in Greek and Latin.
33. Klingner (above) 449: "It remains obscure, however, how Aeneas could have indulged Dido so long in the belief that he acquiesced in her desire." Contrast Aeneas' behavior here to Odysseus' restraint when confronted with Nausicaa's youthful interest in him (*Od.* 8.457-468).
34. See Büchner (*op. cit.*, note 18) 1371: "Aeneas must allow himself to be reproached – justly – not only with harshness, but with transgression of the highest Roman value (*perfide* 366, *nusquam tuta fides* 337), if one accepts Dido's purely human interpretation, that faith (*fides*) is established through a natural bond, without expression in words." Aeneas has violated an implicit bond.
35. See Otis 268-269.
36. Cf. Francesco Arnaldi, cited by Otis (269, note 1): "He accuses because he is afraid of himself." Aeneas' inner conflict may also be implied by Virgil's change of Homeric precedent in making Mercury visit Aeneas. In *Od.* 5.21-115, Hermes visits Calypso, not Odysseus, since she is the obstacle to Odysseus' departure.
37. See Wendell Clausen, "An Interpretation of the *Aeneid*," *HSCP* 68 (1964) 143-145, reprinted in Steele Commager, ed., *Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1966) 75-88 on the emotional costs to Aeneas and to the Roman people of founding Rome.
38. Cf. Hunt (*op. cit.*, note 3) 60: "Certainly the *pietas* of Aeneas is clearly established; but its connotations in the course of the epic come to suggest less of goodness than of devotion or commitment to his mission through

all acts good or evil." Cf. W. R. Johnson, "Aeneas and the Ironies of *Pietas*," *CJ* 60 (1965) 362: In killing Turnus Aeneas "yields, constrained by anger, to the lesser claims of revenge (lesser, that is, if *humanitas* is the prime virtue in the poem; greater, of course, if politics is of the essence) . . . His claim to *pietas* as compassion is here destroyed . . ." It is perhaps revealing of Virgil's purpose here to note that the *pietas* of Augustus was perceived by some of his contemporaries as merely an excuse to legitimize the elimination of political enemies. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.9; Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939, repr. 1971) 147, 201 on self-serving claims of *pietas* by Augustus.

39. Pöschl 41-42; Clausen (*op. cit.*, note 37); W. R. Johnson 15: ". . . he is a deeply humane and profoundly good man; he is also fearless and courageous, as powerful and as energetic as he is compassionate and gentle."
40. Cf. W. R. Johnson (*op. cit.*, note 38) 360 on Aeneas' achieving significant advances through *furor*, while his effort at peaceful control fails (362). He cites 10.525, 10.556-560, 10.597-600, 12.932-934 as instances of Aeneas' ignoring compassion (363). The correlation between violence and success occurs also in *Georgic* 4. See Büchner (*op. cit.*, note 18) 1310 on the "*Brutalität*" of *bougonia*; cf. my "A Reading of Virgil's Fourth *Georgic*," *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 219-220.
41. Otis 361.
42. Anderson 100.
43. See especially Otis 215-392 on Virgil's recalling of the Homeric epics.
44. See Redfield (*op. cit.*, note 8) 210-223, especially 215 on "reconciliation" with Priam. Achilles' sense of mortality "here becomes a bond with others, even with his enemy" (216). With respect to intelligibility Redfield writes that Achilles "states the concluding synthesis of the poem . . . Achilles is able, for the first time, to reflect upon himself and his own fate as one instance of a universal pattern" (217). See Michael S. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition: A Study in the Oral Art of Homer* (Berkeley 1974) 185-198 on Achilles' reaffirmed humanity and vision. On Odysseus's humanity and vision see Taylor (*op. cit.*, note 12) 580 and John H. Finley, Jr., *Homer's Odyssey* (Cambridge, Mass. 1978) 185-186, 195-200, and 211-217. On lack of "intelligibility" in Aeneas see Robert A. Brooks, "*Discolor Aura*: Reflections on the Golden Bough," *AJP* 74 (1953) especially 279-280 (reprinted in Commager [*op. cit.*, note 37] 143-163), who writes of Aeneas' "success in action/frustration in knowledge" (278). This is true not only of Aeneas' experience with the Golden Bough but, I would suggest, in the poem overall.

    Aeneas' final speech in the *Aeneid* is emphatic in its *furor* because Aeneas' emotional direction in the poem is the inverse of Achilles' in the *Iliad*. While Turnus' plea echoes Priam's, to which Achilles yields, Aeneas' final words in the *Aeneid* recall the raging Achilles in *Iliad* 22.261-272 (cf. Pyrrhus in *Aen.* 2.547-550) and not the compassionate, reflective Achilles of *Iliad* 24.

    For a systematic and illuminating examination of the nature and

direction of Aeneas' utterances throughout the poem see Gilbert Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton, N.J. 1972) 29-43. Aeneas' first speech in the poem recalls Odysseus, his last Achilles of *Iliad* 22.

45. Cf. Putnam 193. See 151-291 ("Tragic Victory") for a powerful study of this book as a whole.