An Essay Toward a Study of the Motives of Virgil in Writing the Aeneid and in Describing the Heroic Action

Patrick J. Halloran
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Part of the Classical Literature and Philology Commons

Recommended Citation
Halloran, Patrick J., "An Essay Toward a Study of the Motives of Virgil in Writing the Aeneid and in Describing the Heroic Action" (1944). Master's Theses. 626.
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/626

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1944 Patrick J. Halloran
AN ESSAY TOWARD A STUDY OF THE MOTIVES OF VIRGIL
IN WRITING THE AENEID AND IN
DESCRIBING THE HEROIC ACTION

by

Patrick J. Halloran

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Loyola University

December
1944
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Heroic Characterization.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An heroic character--Aretes--Aidos--Pietas--Bravery--Characters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Homer--Characters of Virgil--Modern Characterization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Virgil's Motives</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil, the man of peace--Attracted to Augustus--Virgil's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duty to the state--Virgil aids in rebuilding Roman States--Aeneid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaches reverence for will of gods and loyalty to emperor--Its</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passionate appeal to Italians--Its help in making Italy and Rome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Heroic Characters of Aeneid</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascanius--Nisus and Euryalus--Lausus and Mezentius--Pallas--Aeneas--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnus--Struggle of right and wrong--Heroes worthy of imitation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Conclusion</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Aristotle in his "Poetics" and Horace in his "Ars Poetica" present academic discussions of character treatment. Aristotle evidently regards character as involving moral qualities, and distinguishes between general characterization and individual characterization, emphasizing the latter. Horace, on the contrary, enlarges upon general characterization and disposes of individualization very briefly. Broadly speaking, both authorities speak of types of characters rather than of the traits of individual characters. The Homeric characters, for example, are portrayals true to the general type. These characters are subordinated to the action of the epic, and it is the criterion of Homeric characterization which Aristotle and Horace employ.

In Virgil's Aeneid there are traces of individualization. In the battle scenes of the last six books there are discernible several instances of a specific characterization which gives to each character a differentiating trait. In general these warriors, at least in contrast with the Homeric heroes of the Iliad, are conspicuously individualized. Although Homer's warriors may differ one from another in respect to strength or dexterity or bravery, qualities which may decide the issue of a contest, still Homer is not concerned with distinguishing the man as an individual; he is content to distinguish him by martial qualities, physical excellence. Virgil, on the contrary, emphasizes the purely human and moral element even on the battlefield.

Moreover, Virgil gives evidence of developing his characters.
He sometimes lets the character undergo trials before establishing him as a hero of the first rank. Such procedure seems to have been followed in the case of Aeneas, who, after his trials of the first six books, seems to be striving to attain heroic stature in the battle scenes of the last six books, and who succeeds ultimately at the end of the epic. Again, Euryalus in the fifth book bursts into tears when he is threatened by Nisus' unsportsmanlike maneuver, with the loss of the prize which he has won. Yet in the ninth book his bold sally through the Latin camp establishes him as a hero.

Such a marked difference in their respective treatment of character by Homer and Virgil leads one to speculate on the motives of Virgil. Why did he deem it necessary to delineate sharply some of his characters? Why do certain characters show definite evidence of development? Why did Virgil emphasize the personalizing characterization of such youths as Lausus, Euryalus, Pallas, Ascanius, and Nisus? Did he, like Augustus, see in these youths the hope of Rome's continued greatness?

This paper contains the conclusions of speculation concerning and investigation into questions such as these. The author will discuss the characters of the main heroes only. These he divides as follows: (1) the young men; Ascanius, Pallas, Nisus, Euryalus, Lausus; (2) the more mature; Mezentius, Aeneas, and Turnus. Very little mention will be made of the older men, such as, Ilioneus, Nautes, Evander, Anchises, Latinus, because they seem to be only incidental to the epic and are not essentially concerned with the ideal knight that Virgil wished to portray. To be sure these older men possessed the heroic qualities, but they illustrate such virtues in
their tales of times past. They are the directors, the admonishers, prone to give others the benefits of their experiences. More suited to the present investigation than this group of old men are the two other groups, the younger men and the more mature men, as a means for portraying the characteristics of the hero.

Nor will this paper concern itself with the women of the story, whose main virtue is unswerving devotion to family and to kin. Although heroic in stature, they will not serve to form the basis for a discussion of the heroic virtues of the warrior. Of them all, Camilla, the only woman on the battlefield, appeals strongly to the imagination. Her prowess on the field is attested by the fact that her enemies dare not meet her in open combat. Nevertheless, despite these "manly" qualities, her case will not be discussed here because she is not one of the chief characters in the epic.

At this point some remarks about the condition of the State religion and the religious feeling of the Romans are appropriate. More warmly and sympathetically than any other Latin author, Virgil gives expression to the best religious feeling of the Roman mind. Furthermore such expression concerns not only the tendencies of religion in his own day; Virgil stands apart from all his literary contemporaries in that he sums up the past of Roman religious experience, reflects that of his own time, and also looks forward into the future. No other poet, no historian, not even Livy, who sprang from the same region and in his tone and spirit in some ways resembles Virgil, has the same broad outlook, the same tender interest in religious antiquity, the same all-embracing sympathy for the Roman world he knew, and
the same confident and cheerful hope for its future. Each of the Augustan poets—Horace, Ovid, Propertius, Tibullus—has his own peculiar gift and charm; but those who know Virgil through and through will at once acknowledge the difference between the other Augustan poets and this man possessed of spiritual insight. In fact, Virgil gathers up what was valuable in the past of Rome and adds to it a new element, a new source of life and hope.

The two types of philosophical thought which took the place of that religion in the minds of the cultivated section of Roman society, neither of which could adequately supply the Roman and Italian mind with an expression of its own natural feeling, never wholly extinct, of its relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe, were Stoicism and Epicureanism. Stoicism came near to doing what was needed, by rehabilitating itself on Italian soil and indulging Roman preconceptions of the divine; but it could not greatly affect the mass of men, and its appeal was not to feeling, but to reason. Epicureanism, though perhaps more popular, was in reality more in conflict with what was best in the Italian nature, and the passionate appeal of Lucretius to look for comfort to a scientific knowledge of the rerum natura had no enduring power to cheer.

A feeling of religion, therefore, was wanting. Not an unreasonable or ungovernable feeling, not a superstition, but a feeling of happy dependence on a higher Power, and a desire to conform to His will in all the relations of human life. This is the kind of feeling that had always lain at the root of the Roman pietas, the sense of duty to family and State, and to the deities who protected them. In the jarring of factions, the cruelty and
bloodshed of tyrants, and the luxurious self-indulgence of the last two generations, the voice of pietas had been silenced, the better instincts of humanity had gone down.

In the Aeneid, therefore, by means of his characterization and reverence for religion, Virgil strives to bring about a spiritual and intellectual revival.
CHAPTER I
HEROIC CHARACTERIZATION

A hero in the modern sense is an individual who is conspicuous for moral as well as for physical courage. In Virgil's day, however, there were definite conventional requirements which the hero had to satisfy, and to understand the conduct of the heroes of the Aeneid we must become acquainted with what might be termed their heroic code.

First in importance in such a code are those rules which govern the hero's conduct in his dealings with his fellowmen. These requirements must include-

1. **Aidos**—moral responsibility; his sense of duty; his respect for his fellowmen; the quality of "noblesse oblige";¹
2. **Intellectual honesty**—a character frank and open, free from any pretense;
3. **Bravery**—The character must be not only courageous, strong, and daring; he must unite these qualities with reason and restraint; not courage aroused by fury, but courage born of a righteous cause and marked by wisdom and moderation is the demand of the heroic code;
4. **Piety**—The hero must be loyal or devoted to his gods, his ancestors, and his country.

Secondary in such a code are the internal qualities of the hero which inspire him to strive for human perfection for his own sake—without consideration of the conventions of the times or the thoughts of his fellowmen. These qualities must include the following:

1. Arete—a virtue which demands that the hero be moral in the perfect sense of the word and valorous according to the highest standards of bravery. Thus arete is a combination of proud and courtly morality with warlike valor. This twofold virtue may be divided into three parts:
   a. Honor—the glory, renown, which is the reward of hard-won arete;
   b. Magnanimity—noblesse oblige—which characterizes the hero’s valor and morality;
   c. Self-love—the motivating force which causes the hero to strive for the ideal of human perfection; this motivation, arises from the hero’s lofty conception of the dignity of man.

This division of the heroic code is an awkward one. Still, because it facilitates discussion of the different qualities of the hero, it is used here.

Arete may be used as the general term to denote heroic valor. But this valor had to be proved by the hero on the field of battle. Moreover, since each warrior had to distinguish himself in single-handed adventures, arete

\[2\text{Ibid.}, 3.\]
came to mean a power peculiar to the hero which makes him a complete man.

The hero's whole life and effort was a race for the first prize. Life to him was an unceasing strife for the supremacy over his peers. Hence in warfare the epic poet delights in giving accounts of single-handed actions which were the attempts of the heroes to achieve their Arete. Of course, the heroes would, in peacetime, match their skills with one another in war games. Consequently, nobility of birth was not enough to assure a warrior of heroic stature. That could only be guaranteed by victory in battle; and success in battle became a proof of a hero's hard-won Arete.

An essential concomitant of Arete is honor, which, in the modern sense, is synonymous with the glory and renown won by a hero. Furthermore the glory won by a hero was always acknowledged by other heroes. Indeed they treat each other with vast respect.

Aristotle says: "Men seem to pursue honor in order to assure themselves of their own Arete." 3

To the heroes of Homer's time a denial of the honor due to a hero was the greatest of human tragedies. Examples of offenses of this kind are, of course, Achilles, who was denied the rewards of heroism by Agamemnon; and Ajax, who, although he was the greatest hero after Achilles, was not given the weapons of the dead Achilles. They were awarded to Odysseus even though Ajax had done more to deserve them.

Arete, then, together with its deserved glory or renown, seems to be one of the basic characteristics of a hero. This quality also helps us to

3Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, I 5, 1095626.
understand why a hero would often strive for glory even in the face of
certain death. By death the hero establishes his Arete; and although dead,
his renown survives him. Thus Arete lives on in the glory and renown won
by a hero.

The ultimate sacrifice of a warrior in his efforts to prove his Arete
explains the reason for his being regarded as a hero. "For, says Aristotle,
"such a man would prefer short, intense pleasures, to long, quiet ones;
would choose to live nobly for a year rather than pass many years of
ordinary life; would rather do one great and noble deed, than many small
ones."4

In Homer the real mark of a gentleman is his sense of duty. Aidos is
the hero's sense of responsibility to the standards of greatness both as a
warrior and as a gentleman. Therefore this quality had a two-fold influence
on the hero's conduct: (1) the obligation to be brave—courage and manliness;
(2) the obligation to obey the high social standards of his class.

If these obligations are slighted, the slight awakens in others the
kindred emotion of Nemesis.

The word pius is used twenty times5 in connection with the name Aeneas.

An understanding of the epithet pius is necessary, if one is to get

4Ibid., IX 8, 1168627.
5Moseley, N., Characters and Epithets, Yale University Press, 1926, 70.
a clear comprehension of the entire poem, for few epithets are more likely to be misconstrued than the untranslatable pius. What is the quality "Pietas?" It is not merely "piety," for that is only part of its connotation, nor is it enough to add "pity" to "piety" unless one gives both the words a larger and a more generous meaning.

Perhaps an examination of a few illustrations of the spirit indicated by the word will help clear up the matter. First may be mentioned the death of Lausus, who in rescuing his father, was killed by Aeneas in battle. By grim necessity Aeneas in compelled to make war, and Lausus fell a victim to this necessity. But the sight of the dying boy, the boyhood and the filial love of his victim turn Aeneas from foe to friend. Lausus is a boy—but he has done what Aeneas did himself years before, he has saved his father—the patronymic "Anchisiades" is not without purpose—and now all the honor that a hero can pay to a hero, Aeneas will render to Lausus. Pietas covers his feeling for his father as well as his feeling for Lausus.

The fall of Troy and the rescue of Anchises and Julus brings to mind the picture of little Julus slipping his hand into that of his father and striving in vain to match his father’s steps. The tenderness suggested by this scene is impressed upon the sensitive mind of Aeneas, and Virgil brings out another aspect of the epithet pius.

In the ninth book another picture of Julus occurs during a siege of the camp, when he is galled by the taunts which Remulus Numanus levels at the

6Aeneid, X, 821-830.
7Ibid. ii, 723.
Trojans, and, with a prayer to Jupiter for success he shoots an arrow at him and brings him down. His father is not there, and although the action and the words are Apollo's, they are in the spirit of Aeneas, and may illustrate the quality—Pietas. The god applauds the boy and then adds a word of gentleness—for the rest refrain from war:

..."primam hanc tibi magnus Apollo
concedit laudem et paribus non invidet armis:
cetera parce, puer, bello."\(^8\)

That it is correct to suppose that this is the real sentiment of Aeneas as well as of Apollo is evident from Aeneas' words of farewell at the bier of Pallas—

"Nos alias hinc ad lacrimas eadem horrida belli
fata vocant; salva aeternum mihi, maxime Palla,
aeternumque vale."\(^9\)

It is the revolt of Pietas, in its broadest and finest quality, against a destiny which drags the hero against his will into war.

The last illustration of Pietas will be the familiar utterance of Aeneas when he saw the pictures of the Trojan warriors, including himself, on the walls of Dido's temple—

"Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt."\(^10\)

Here Virgil may mean to suggest that the work and suffering of human creatures appeals to the human heart of Aeneas.

If to Terence's *humani nihil a me alienum puto* may be added *nihil divini*...

\(^8\)Ibid., IX, 654-656.
\(^9\)Ibid., XI, 96-98.
\(^10\)Ibid., I, 462.
the enlarged expression would very well represent the new attitude of the quickened man, with which Virgil endows his hero, giving it the name Pias.  

Any discussion of character treatment in ancient literature is likely to be misleading unless at the outset certain conspicuous differences between modern and ancient practice and theory are made clear.

Generally, the subtlety and delicacy of modern character drawing were not realized by ancient writers; they did not interest themselves in character development. Modern literature presents the evolution of character; it shows the effect of outer action upon the inner self; it illustrates each step of a gradual development. Usually the practice today is to represent an individual at the outset as possessing some one quality in excess, ambition, for example; that dominant quality sets him apart from the rest of the world. Then, by the contact of that individual with other persons and events, the literary artist represents a change, sometimes a regular evolution, as taking place in the character of the individual. So in a tragedy, the dominant quality of ambition may be stimulated by external events and lead to a dramatic climax and tragic conclusion; or if it be a novel, the interplay of the individual with other persons and the vicissitudes of life may discipline the individual and mitigate his dominant quality.

Modern interest in character has brought about the demand that each character be marked not only by individualizing traits, but also by

psychological reaction to external events. This type of character development sometimes occupies a more prominent place in literature than does action. Consequently, character development and action are essential parts of modern literature.

Broadly speaking, ancient literature exalts action; it does not neglect character, but what individualizing there may be is done on broad and simple lines.\(^\text{12}\) The Homeric epic well illustrates the complete subordination of character to action;\(^\text{13}\) Homer in general has his eye upon the outer action, upon what is achieved on the battlefield or on the sea in the midst of perils. His indifference to character as the mainspring of action is manifest in his employment of stereotyped expressions; he is capable of calling a hero "great souled" in the midst of some action which reveals that hero as anything but magnanimous.

Homer's relative indifference to character in general however does not mean that there are no traces of characterization in his works. Nothing could be better than the delineation of Agamemnon, Ajax, and Achilles in the eleventh book of the Odyssey.\(^\text{14}\) It is so good that some modern scholars deny that Homer could have done it.

This near neglect of individualization in ancient literature is mainly

\(^{12}\text{Prescott, Henry W., The Development of Virgil's Art, University of Chicago Press, 1927, 460.}\)
\(^{13}\text{Ibid., 465.}\)
\(^{14}\text{Ibid., 465.}\)
a reflection of contemporary social conditions. The "city-state," contrary to most modern organizations, emphasizes the complete absorption of the individual in the large corporation. In such an atmosphere, if humanity ever becomes an object of study and thought, the first emphasis will be on the race as a whole, or upon the large groups and classes, rather than upon the individual man. It was not until the advent of the Hellenistic period that literature showed an interest in the individual; individualizing of characters is frequent, the delineation, for example, in comedy and tragedy is often slight and rather elementary, but nevertheless present.

By considering character treatment from the standpoint of the ancient theory, Virgil's work shows many evidences of clear individualization and in the case of Aeneas, the gradual evolution of a heroic character. To be sure, Virgil usually emphasizes general traits of character; this procedure may be shown in a few brief considerations of the young men, the old men and the women of the Aeneid.

Ascanius, Pallas, Nisus, Euryalus, Lausus are all ideal types of hopeful, ambitious youth, ready to expose themselves to dangers to which they are not equal. These characters are among the most attractive figures in an epic devoted to the martial achievements of matured, heroic warriors. Still, despite their general likeness, there is a slight individualization.

Prominent old men are Ilioneus, Nautes, Evander and Anchises. Between them there are slight differences; they are all lineal descendants of

Nestor: calm and dispassionate in speech and action, in contrast with the
impetuosity of youth; givers of counsel, extollers of times past, and
prone to give others the benefit of their experience. The women are
strikingly similar—their common trait is excitability.

Such general disposition of characters Virgil seems to abandon in
handling the heroic figure of Aeneas. At the outset of the poem he is
marked as insignem pietate virum. But he is far from perfect; his character
is developed under stress of perils and temptations through which he is
guided by Jupiter and the Fates. It can hardly be by accident that the
poet describes him as yielding to despair and bewailing his fate at the first
approach of danger—forgetting his mission before him and the destiny driv­
ing him on and wishing himself dead with Hector. At the sack of Troy
he yields to a mad passion of desperate fighting and exhibits a want of
self-control that is not to be found in the Aeneas of the last six books.

During the wandering of the third book it is Anchises, who leads, and
who receives and interprets the divine warnings; he seems to be the guardian
and guide of his son.

It is not, however, until after the death of Anchises that Aeneas is
exposed to really dangerous temptation; it is immediately after this event

16Aeneid i., 92 ff.
17Tbid., ii, 314 ff.
18Heinze, Vergils Epische Technik., 17.
19Aeneid iii., 709.
that a storm causes him to land in Africa where he becomes a victim to the
charms of Dido. Here, in the person of Aeneas, there is waged the con-
lict of the opposing principles of duty and pleasure, of patriotism and
selfishness. With the help of the great god who was the guardian of the
destinies of Rome, and of the goddess who was the mother of the hero and the
reputed progenitor of the Julian family, he overcomes the temptation. When
once this trial is over, the way is clear for the accomplishment of Aeneas'
mission, though he still has trials to face and as yet is not fully equipped
to meet them.

After the storm of passion in the fourth book abates, the fifth book
shows a real change in the character of the hero. Virgil makes Aeneas
perform with detailed carefulness the Roman ritual of the Parentalia • • •
the obligation of the living to honor the dead in accordance with the regu-
lations of the jus divinum. Aeneas is presented for the first time as a
Roman father of a family, discharging the duties essential to the continuance
and prosperity of that family with cheerfulness and gravitas; here his
pietas takes a definite, practical and truly Roman form.

All this is in keeping with Virgil's deft characterizations in this
book. In the fifth book Aeneas does not give way to despair when the ships
are burned, as he does in the storm of the first book; but prays to the
omnipotent Jupiter for help. He is not yet perfect, however, in his

20 Fowler, W. W., The Religious Experiences of the Roman People, MacMillan &
21 Aeneid v., 687-692.
sense of duty: he feels the blow keenly and for a moment his reliance on the gods wavers.22

Opportunely enough the shade of Anchises appears at this juncture to confirm his wavering will, to renew the sense of his divine mission, and to invite his son to meet him in Hades. This sequence of events is a turning point in the fortunes and character of Aeneas23 and sets the scene for the final ordeal which he undergoes in the sixth book, an ordeal of preparation of Aeneas for his future greatness.

Up to the moment when Anchises appears, Aeneas is always speaking and thinking of the past. In the sixth book he is at first described as "slack," as his attention is caught by what is for the moment before him or with the figures of old friends and enemies whom he meets, until the last awakening revelation of Anchises. Thus no sooner has he landed in Italy than he is attracted by the pictures in the temple of Apollo and incurs a rebuke from the priestess;24 so, also, a little farther on she has to warn him again at the entrance to the cave to think of the future.25 In this sixth book, apparently, Virgil intends that Aeneas should take final leave of all those friends and enemies of the past.26

When Anchises appears the whole atmosphere of the scene changes, and his famous words seem to show conclusively that hesitation and want of

22Ibid., v., 700-703.
23Fowler, op. cit., 419.
25Ibid., vi., 50-52.
26Fowler, op. cit., 418.
fixed, undeviating purpose had been so far his son's chief failing:

\[ \text{et dubitamus adhuc virtutem extendere factis,} \\
\text{aut metus Ausonia prohibet consistere terra?} \]^{27}

The father's vision and prophecy are of the future and the great deeds of men to come, and henceforward Aeneas makes no allusion to the past and the figures that peopled it; abandons talk and lamentations, "virtutem extendere factis." At the outset of the seventh book, we feel the ship moving at once; three lines suffice for the fresh start; Circe is passed unheeded.

\[ \ldots \text{Maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,} \\
\text{maius opus moveo.}^{28} \]

for the real subject of the poem is at last reached, and a heroic character by heroic deeds is to lay the foundation of the eternal dominion of Rome.

A very few words shall suffice about the Aeneas of the later books. Aeneas is not strongly characterized; for moderns the interest centers rather in Turnus, who is heroic as an individual, but not as a pioneer of civilization divinely led. There is no real heroine, for feminine passion would be here out of place and un-Roman, and the courtship of Lavinia is undertaken, so to speak, for political reasons. The role of Aeneas, as the agent of Jupiter in conquest and civilization, would appeal to a Roman rather than to a modern, and it was reserved for the modern critic to complain of a lack of individual interest in him.

Virgil did intend to depict in Aeneas his ideal of that Roman character to which the leading writers of his day ascribed the greatness of their

\[ ^{27} \text{Aeneid vi., 806-807.} \]
\[ ^{28} \text{Ibid., vii., 44, 45.} \]
race. His pietas is now confirmed and enlarged, it has become a sense of duty to the will of the gods as well as to his father, his son, and his people, and this sense of duty never leaves him, either in his general course of action or in the detail of sacrifice and propitiation. His courage and steadfastness never fail him; he looks ever forward, confident in divine protection; the shield he carries is adorned—a wonderful stroke of poetic genius—with scenes of the future, and not of the past:

\[
\text{talia per clipeum Volcani, dona parentis,}
\text{miratur rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet}
\text{attollens umero famamque et fata nepotum.} \tag{29}
\]

He is never in these books to be found wanting in swiftness and vigilance; when he cheers his comrades it is no longer in a half-hearted way, but as at the beginning of the eleventh book, with the utmost vigor and confidence, \textit{Arma parate, animis et spe praesumite bellum}. \tag{30}

His humanitas again is here more obvious than in his earlier career, and it is plainly meant to be contrasted with the heroic savagery of Mezentius and Turnus. \tag{31} So keenly did the poet feel this development in his hero's character, that in his descriptions of the death of Lausus and the burial of Pallas—noble and beautiful youths whom he loved in imagination as he loved in reality all young things—his tenderness is so touching that even now one can hardly read them without tears. And not only is the hero

\[29\text{Ibid., viii., 729-731.}
30\text{Ibid., xi., 18.}
heroic and humane, but he is a just man and keeps faith; when, in the twelfth book, the Rutulians break the treaty, and his own men have joined in the unjust combat:

at pious Aeneas dextrum tendebat inermem
neudato capite atque suos clamore vocabant:
"quo ruitis? quove ista repens discordia surgit?
c o oohibete iras; iotum iam foedus et omnes compositae leges: mihi ius concurrere soli."32

He claims for himself alone, under the guiding hand of providence, the right to deal with Turnus, the enemy of humanity and righteousness. And we may note that when it came to that last struggle, though conquering by divine aid, he was ready to spare the life of the conquered till he saw the spoils of the young Pallas upon him. The character of Aeneas, then, though not painted in such strong light as moderns might expect or desire, is intentionally33 developed into a heroic type in the course of the story—-a type which every Roman would recognize as his own natural ideal.34 This growth, moreover, is the direct result of religious influence. It is partly the result of the hero's own natural pietas, innate within him from the first, as it was in the breast of every noble Roman; partly the result of a gradually enlarged recognition of the will of God, and partly of the strengthening and almost sacramental process of the journey to Hades, of the revelation there made of the mysteries of life and death, and of the great future which Jupiter and the

32Aeneid xiii., 311-315.
33Fowler, op. cit., 424.
Fates have reserved for the Roman people. In these three influences Virgil has summed up all the best religious factors of his day: the instinct of the Roman for religious observance, with all its natural effect on conduct; the elevating Stoic doctrine which brought man into immediate relation with the universal; and, lastly, the tendency to mysticism, Orphic or Pythagorean, which tells of a yearning, in the soul of man to hope for a life beyond this, and to make of this life a meet preparation for that other.
CHAPTER II

VIRGIL'S MOTIVES

Virgil, the man of peace,¹ admired Augustus because he brought peace to Rome and the world. Virgil was familiar from childhood with the political aspirations of his fellow countrymen, of Sulla and the Senate, and all his national feeling would direct his sympathies away from the fallen republic to the great house which had made Italy one. It must be remembered too that Virgil neither had, nor apparently wished to have, any experience with political life. For all his interest in Roman history, he had little or no sympathy for republican institutions, for the spectacle of a great people governing itself. The old Roman commonwealth, sighed for by Cicero, was a thing foreign to his mind. His own people had been governed for centuries: they had no share in the inner movement of Roman political life; they had been ruled from without. Consequently the republic, lying outside Virgil's experience, touched his imagination but little.

Furthermore Virgil's whole nature was on the side of peace. His ideal was a quiet life unruffled by the storms of political disorder and, still more, unassailed by the fiercer storms of civil war; and for a century republican government had meant incessant strife, bloodshed, war, and confiscations—complete disorder.

... tot bella per orbem
tem multas scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
dignus honos, squalent abduotis arva colonis.  

It was not until the republican group was finally driven out of Italy that the land began to recover itself; not until it was crushed throughout the world that wars ceased and the temple of Janus was closed. In a word, the victory of Augustus meant the restoration of proper and normal life of man.

Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam...  

The return of the golden age carried with it the restoration of all that was venerable and worthy in the past. Augustus restored or rebuilt the ancient temples, besides building new ones.

The authority, dignity, and allowances of the priests he increased, particularly those of the Vestal Virgins; some, too, of the ancient ceremonies, which had fallen into disuse, he re instituted, as for example the Augurium Salutis, the flaminate of Jupiter, the Lupercal festival... 

Honor next to that of the immortal gods he paid to the memory of the generals who had found the Roman people's empire small and made it great.

Augustus had captured the general good will by genuine service to mankind; he had crushed piracy on the sea and brigandage in Italy; he had...
enabled industry and business to regain their ordinary activity; by sense and firmness he had gained the confidence of a serious people; and in negotiation and war he had maintained the credit of Rome with the foreigner. Indeed public talk admitted that under his rule the frontiers had been pushed forward to the Ocean or to distinct rivers; the provinces, the armies and the fleets of the empire had been brought into communication with one another; justice had been dispensed at home, consideration had been shown to the allies: and the city itself had been sumptuously adorned.\(^5\)

All this strongly appealed to Virgil. He wanted peace for Italy, prosperity, too, and the revival of the ancient customs of Rome. He was, of all the poets of Rome, the most interested and intelligent student of Roman and Italian antiquities. The old garb and phrase, the old use and ritual appealed to him as a poet. These things were the relics which made a forgotten day live again, symbols which expressed the grandeur of an ancient people with whom he and his day might feel a spiritual kinship. If, to Augustus, this restoration of the past was a political device—and perhaps to him it was more—for Virgil, it had a deeper import, and his regard for the Emperor was deepened by the thought that in him the present was being re-linked to the past in a hundred different ways—all full of poetic significance and suggestion.\(^6\)

These considerations of Augustus and his achievements make clear his appeal to Virgil. For these accomplishments Virgil regarded him as a friend.

\(^5\)Tacitus, Annals, i., 9 (Glover).
a savior of his country, and a heroic character.

To express his appreciation of what Augustus was doing, and perhaps to aid him in restoring the grandeur of Rome, Virgil wrote the *Aeneid*. This epic was to be the vehicle for carrying to, and preserving for, the Roman people the idea of heroism in action.

The achievements of Augustus were, without doubt, a source of great encouragement and of great inspiration to Virgil—the prophet of Rome's national greatness. Virgil must have realized that the *Aeneid* was a national epic and that in the poem he could express his deep-seated passion for his country's glory. In this respect the *Aeneid* had no prototype, as it had no successor.7

Among the most original and significant features of the poetry of Virgil is its conscious appeal to a nation—to a people of one blood living within well defined but broad limits, a people with various traditions, all fusing into one common tradition. It is the poetry of a nation and of a country, for the poet linked the people and the land closely, and by this means made people and land as a unity distinct from the rest of the world.

It was a new thing in literature. The Homeric poems are, of course, addressed to all the Greeks and all Greeks saw them as a common inheritance, but the underlying idea is quite different from that of Virgil's Italy. Greeks lived here and there in Europe, Asia, and Africa, under every form of government, divided into many independent and often, antagonistic communities,

7Ibid., 105.
conscious of their being of one blood but apparently resolved never to submit, if possible, to being under one government. The conception of one Greece and a common citizenship of all Greeks was as impossible from Greek ways of thinking as it was geographically incapable of being realized.8

Even post-Homerio Greek literature offered little appeal for national unity. The plays of the great Athenian dramatists were primarily for Athens, and though they were read abroad9 they would awaken little more consciousness of a common nationality than the best American literature may in England.

That Greek literature was throughout so independent of national or political interests may be used here to emphasize the novelty of and to give prominence to Virgil's conception. He gave for the first time literary expression to the triumph of a nation, politically, racially, and geographically one, over the clan and over the city-state.10

The poet engenders a love for Italy by his account of the country, of the inhabitants, and of the Trojan invasion. Virgil did for Italy in some degree what Scott did for Scotland. He called attention of his people for all future time to the beauty of the land, and linked the scenery with history in language that could not be forgotten.

Virgil views with askance the interest of Italians in things and places exotic. In the second book of the Georgics, he bids Italians to look at their own land, to consider her fields and crops and herds, to think of her

8Ibid., 105.
9Plutarch, Nicias, 29.
10Glover, op. cit., 106.
streams and her lakes—are these lacking in poetry, in beauty, in appeal? Think, he says further, of her people and their glorious heroism—the hardy race, schooled to bear evil, the patient builders of little towns on hill tops; look at what they have done, look at their conquest of nature, look at the battles they have fought for home and country, look at their victory over themselves—

Salve Magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus, magna virum. 11

What Virgil did in the Georgics he does again in the Aeneid. The scene is still Italy, but by the time the poet is finished writing, it is a new Italy, full of poetic associations, every region rich with heroic legend—a new Italy enhanced by a great poet's language.

The charm of Italy, however, does not depend on legends. It is the country itself, its beauty, the simply natural features that Virgil gives back to his reader. Virgil's interest in his epic is in the localities of Italy and their people. He speaks of what charmed and interested him in the places when he saw them: of "steep Praeneste and the fields of Juno of Gabii, cool Anio, and the Hernican rocks dewy with streams." 12 He shows the reader, through a poet's eyes the olive groves of Mutusca, 13 "the Massic lands glad with wine," 14 and Abella city looking down from amid her apple orchards. 15 He leads the reader from stream to lake, from "the shallows of

11 Georgics ii., 173.
12 Aeneid vii., 682.
13 Ibid., vii., 711.
14 Ibid., vii., 725.
15 Ibid., vii., 740.
Volturnus river"\textsuperscript{16} to "Mincius, child of Benacus, draped in gray reeds,"\textsuperscript{17} to Fucinus of glassy waters;\textsuperscript{18} from where the "ploughshare goes up and down on the Rutulian hills and the ridge of Circe"\textsuperscript{19} to "where the marsh of Satura lies black, and cold Ufens seeks his way along the valley bottoms and sinks into the sea."\textsuperscript{20} Descriptions like these could not fail to touch the hearts of those who love their country and open the eyes of those who had never known their native land.

From his descriptions of the country the poet now passes to its inhabitants. As an Italian, apparently, it seemed to him, that this was the time when his poem would touch hearts of his countrymen most deeply, when it told--

\begin{quote}
qualibus Italia jam tum \\
floruit terra alma viris\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

how even then the dear motherland flowered with heroes.

Virgil here illustrates the continuance of the strong and worthy qualities characteristic of the Italian. He represented in the heroic age all the virtues of Roman and Italian at the first period of their history--simplicity, dignity, hardness, faith, courage, and piety--qualities which the allies as well as the enemies of Aeneas possess.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., vii., 728.  \\
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., x., 205.  \\
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., vii., 759.  \\
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., vii., 798.  \\
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., vii., 801.  \\
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., vii., 643. 
\end{flushleft}
To such an Italy the Trojans came. They are to deliver the Etruscans from the rule of Mezentius—a symbolic action. They bring their gods to Italy; indeed they find some of their own gods waiting for them since Cybele is already an effective power along the banks of the Tiber. To this religious purpose of Aeneas in coming to Italy, Virgil joins another idea—that of founding the city of Rome:

Multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem inferretque deos Latio genus unde Latinum Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.22

Further on he sums up his theme again—

Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem.23

The foundation of Rome—of the Roman race—is the theme of the whole epic poem. But Rome is not to be a Trojan town nor her people Trojans. She is to be rather, the summing up of all that is excellent in Italy. The Trojan element only serves to re-affirm the ideals of the Italian race.

A Roman poet was not merely a professed servant of Apollo and the Muses, upon whose inspiration he claimed to depend, he was not merely a member of a craft whose rules he must master and obey and upon whose garnered store of poetic achievement he had a vested right to draw; he was also a member of a community to which was owing a service which the poet was bound to render. He did not degrade his office as a poet by the acknowledgment and the fulfillment of this public service. Virgil himself undertook as a matter of course of assisting a scheme of the department of agriculture. He wrote

22 Ibid., i., 5.
23 Ibid., i., 33.
the Georgics. This work at once polished and refined, was the performance of the poet's duty as a member of the Roman community. In Virgil's day this duty was rendered no longer as in the great days of the Republic to a free self-determining community of which the poet was a member; it was by almost common consent defined by the formidable ruler who had rescued Rome from the chaos of the civil wars, and had again made it the untroubled mistress of the world. Virgil's duty as a poet in the days of Augustus was to write a poem which would assist his patron's great political and social aim of restoring the forgotten virtues and spirit of ancient days. In fulfilling this obligation in the Aeneid, Virgil was careful not to make it a glorification of Augustus himself, and of his policy. Instead Virgil gave the story of heroic Aeneas in an epic which symbolized the greatness and the great achievements of Augustus. Thus Virgil performed his duty more effectually and more nobly than if he had obviously glorified the achievements of Augustus. His subtle and unobtrusive art was far more potent for those who could understand what they read than any direct advocacy of moral and social reform.

The blaze of Augustus' battles lights more than one page of the great epic, the great purpose of holding up to view forgotten virtues and a better past is fulfilled, but in a manner which satisfied at once the poet's own artistic conscience and the requirements of Roman patriotism and public virtue.

In writing the Aeneid Virgil realized that choosing Augustus or any recent figure as his hero would confine his imagination and intention by the trammels of historical fact. The same restriction would have hampered him
in any similar choice, for the main lines of historical tradition had already been set. The official character of every prominent figure, the official account of his life and career, had been fixed by Virgil's time: the mass of fact, conjecture, pure invention and legend had coalesced into the sort of fixed outlines we find in Livy. In none of them could he find a figure at once so majestic, so important, so free from preconceptions of tradition as to leave his imagination and invention the scope which they required. There remained only the one choice, the dimly discerned and remote figure, the goddess born, Aeneas, who stood before all beginnings and made them all possible. In the character of the son of Venus and Anchises Virgil linked the earliest Roman traditions and family histories with the great names of the Homeric age. In Aeneas, also, the imagination and invention of the poet were left relatively free, because the details of his wars and conquests had not yet become officially fixed in any official version.

Virgil must have disappointed the Emperor of a personal expectation of immortality in verse; but in so doing he fulfilled all the more nobly the other requirements that Augustus looked for in the great epic. Virgil's meticulous care in all his references to Roman religious rites and ceremonies, his laborious collection of ritual antiquities, might well have been influenced by the Emperor's desire to restore the Roman cult; and by thus tracing them back to an antiquity so remote gave them a sanction of which Augustus had never dreamed. Furthermore, the Emperor's other interest, that of the restoration of the mores majorum, found in the Aeneid a complete satisfaction. There is scarcely any virtue which the Romans recognized as
such that is not inculcated both by precept and example in every book of the poem.  

Not only Aeneas but even his humblest followers display a nobility of mind and character. Virgil gives life and reality to the Roman heroic code, he puts to shame Livy who strove to attain the same result by means of rhetoric, and Cicero, who by mustering examples of stoicism in Roman history, sought to lend authority and prestige to the reasons for leading an upright life. Cicero and Livy look backwards to a vanished past; while they hold up to their contemporaries the pattern of forgotten virtues they themselves have no real belief that these virtues will ever return. But Virgil's poem of a still more remote past has its face set toward the future: Aeneas comes to Italy to subdue a barbarous race and to found a kingdom which shall never end. In him are found the nobility of mind and love of all things Roman which Augustus deems necessary for Roman citizens. Aeneas also typifies the future greatness of the Roman Empire. This greatness, which is to be, dominates the poem from the first to the last.

Another basis for judging the quality of Virgil's poetic achievement is that he is Roman through and through. As a Roman he gives imperishable utterance to his great and lofty visions of the destiny of Rome. He has a deep and passionate devotion to the Italian countryside, to the little

towns that cluster on the mountain slopes, to the ancient ways and the
immemorial customs of his native land. Virgil has all the Roman pride of
race and blood. He claims the empire of the world as the destiny of Roman
stock. He shares the Roman sense of superiority over all races. He
sees in war and conquest the means by which Rome will establish not merely
rule of right and law but the Roman peace.

The sovereignty of the world is to belong to the Roman people, as
decreed by Jupiter in the opening book of the Aeneid, but the people is one
whose distinctive mark is the garb of peace (gentem togatam). A nation of
citizens, unarmed, is to govern the world in peace, and the very object of
its rule is peace. For, Jupiter adds, the day shall come when, under
Augustus' sway, "the iron ages shall soften and lay war aside; the gates of
war shall be shut," and the war fury shall be shackled, a helpless prisoner.

If Jupiter's prediction is not enough, Virgil gives the crowning word
which Anchises speaks in the lower world on the duty and destiny of Rome--

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
(credo equidem) vivos ducent de marmore vultus,
Orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus
describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:
tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
( haec tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.29

Pacis imponere morem, says Virgil, and the best commentary which can
be quoted on the phrase is a passage of Claudian, written four centuries
later--

27Aeneid i., 282.
28Ibid., i., 278.
29Ibid., vi., 847-853.
Claudian's tone is not exactly the same as Virgil's, but his thought is inspired by Virgil's thought. He sees very much the same empire that Virgil saw, but he sees it after four hundred years of the rule of that Roman spirit which Virgil portrays in the Aeneid. His story is the fulfillment of Virgil's prophecy, and his central thought is the same. His pacifici mores represents very closely Virgil's pacis imponere morem. The intervening ages had not been so golden as Virgil had hoped, at least not so glittering, but they were a period of the diffusion of the world's gains and of a deepening and quickening of the human spirit. If the fabric of the Roman state did not wear so well as Virgil had predicted, the mind of mankind had caught the mood and temper of the poet, and had learned to find in teaching which he never knew the satisfaction of the yearnings which he had uttered forever in his poetry. The spiritual development of the western world under the Empire is quite in agreement with Virgil's prophecy.

Not only by his prophecies did Virgil inspire Romans to believe in their divine mission of ruling the world. The Aeneid emphasizes in a hundred different ways the divine origin of the state, the great antiquity of the

30Claudian, Cons. Stil., iii., 150.
state; it stresses the unbroken tradition that Rome was destined to be the
ruler of the world and that the duration of the national Roman state was
to be eternal.

The Aeneid appealed to all these sentiments with even more power than
Ennius' epic of the Republic and than the various national histories in
Roman literature. 31 Moreover, Virgil through his epic poem was regarded
as the interpreter, or even the creator of a great national ideal. 32 That
ideal was at once political, social, and religious. In his hands the suprem-
acry of Rome took the aspect of a divine command toward which all previous
history had been leading under divine guidance. It meant the establishment
of an empire to which no limit of time or space was set;

his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora ponco,
imperium sine fine dedi. 33

and one in which the human race should find ordered peace, material prosperity
the reign of law, and the commonwealth of freedom. This mission of "the
Roman" of the Roman race envisaged that Rome's eternal mark of distinction
was not only regere imperio populos, but pacis imponere morem. This, he says
further, was to be effected by the fusion of Roman strength with Italian
piety.

To make this point more emphatic it will be appropriate to recall that
Virgil was born midway in the process of fusion; that a few years earlier
there had been a general Italian revolt against Rome—an Italian government,

---
32 Mackail, J.W., Virgil and His Meaning to the World Today, Longmans, Green
and Co., New York, 1930, 111.
33 Aeneid i., 278.
the first in history, had been set up, with the rival capital of Italica;

that the Roman world was a weak union of many provinces which were only half assimilated, plundered at will, and seething with revolt; that agriculture in Italy had almost gone to ruin and reckless commercial speculation had brought about something like an economic collapse; that the enormous wastage of the Civil Wars had left the treasury bankrupt; that Roman piety, Roman patriotism appeared to be crumbling away. Reconstruction, then was imperative, if Rome was to live—a physical and moral reconstruction.

The task of Augustus when he returned from the East in 29 B.C. was something like that of Aeneas when he founded a new nation out of the wreckage of the Trojan war. The Georgics first, the Aeneid later, and more fully, aided immeasurably the reconstruction which to Augustus and the future of Rome was so necessary. These two works, with all the charm of poetry, recalled the new generation into the old paths; and pointed them towards a new path—Sit Romana potens Italia virtute propago, in which the virtues of the past should be regained, in which a Roman Italy and an Italian Rome should go forth to rule and restore the world, should heal its wounds, give it peace and prosperity, and bind it into one.

34 Mackail, op. cit., 112.
35 Ibid., 112.
36 Horace, Odes and Epodes, Allyn and Bacon, Chicago, 1901, Book iii, Ode vi.
37 Aeneid, xii., 827.
The national, religious, and political ideas, which form the central interest of the Aeneid, help the reader to understand the many motives Virgil must have had in mind as he wrote. All of these motives are not of equal importance; in fact, the poet must have had two main motives from which all the others sprang. The two objects Virgil had before him were: First, that of writing a poem representative and commemorative of Rome and of his own epoch, in the spirit in which some of the great architectural works of the Empire, such as the Column of Trajan, the Arches of Titus and of Constantine, were erected; and, secondly, that of writing an imitative epic of action, manners, and character which should afford to his countrymen an interest analogous to that which the Greeks derived from the Homeric poems. The knowledge necessary to enable him to fulfill the first purpose was contained in such works as the ceremonial books of the various Priestly Colleges, the Origines of Cato, the antiquarian treatise of Varro, and perhaps the Annales of Tacitus and the Fasti of Ovid, which preserved the record of national and family traditions. In giving life to these dry materials his mind was animated by the spectacle of Rome, and the thought of her wide empire, her genius, character, and history; by the visible survivals of ancient ceremonies and memorials of the past; by the sight of the great natural features of the land, of old Italian towns of historic renown, or, where they had disappeared, of the localities still marked by their name:—locus Ardea quondam

Dictus avis; et nunc magnum tenet Ardea nomen.39

39 Aeneid vii., 411.
As poetic sources of inspiration for this part of his task Virgil had the national epic poems of Naevius and Ennius; and of both he made use: of the first, in his account of the storm which drives Aeneas to Carthage and of his entertainment there by the Carthaginian Queen; of the second, by his use of many half-lines and expressions which give an antique and stately character to the description of incidents or the expression of sentiment. For Virgil's other purpose, his chief materials were derived from his intimate familiarity with the two great Homeric poems: but he availed himself also of incidents contained in the Homeric Hymns, in the Cyclic poems, in the Greek Tragedies, as for instance, the lost Laocoön of Sophocles, and the Argonautics of Apollonius Rhodius. His own experience of life, and still more the insight which his own nature afforded him into various moods of passion, affection, and chivalrous emotion, enabled him to impart novelty and individuality to the materials which he derived from these foreign and ancient sources.

Although Ennius and Naevius had shown the way, their works more like a chronicle than an epic, nevertheless had established themselves as Latin classics. They were on all men's lips and were at once a schoolbook and a storehouse.

Virgil had to carry the work on to a higher plane and give to it a larger content, to produce a great Latin poem which should be a national epic in the largest sense, a poem which might be for Rome and Italy, and for the Roman world through them, something like what Homer had been to Greece. The field to him was vast. The two main motives might easily be traced to many
smaller, more complex and less easily reconcilable ones. Among them, no less than twelve may be mentioned specifically:

1. The work was a national poem in the full sense, embodying the pageant of Roman history, the portraiture of Roman virtue, the mission and the supremacy of Rome;

2. It established and vindicated the vital interconnection of Rome with Italy, and registered the birth, which was only then taking effect, of a nation;

3. It linked up Rome and the new nation to the Greek civilization, as that had manifested itself in mythology and history, in art and letters, in the Hellenization which had spread into the Western portion of the Mediterranean world;

4. It emphasized the Roman State and the Italian people as not derivative from Greece, but of distinct and actually hostile origin, and absorbing or superseding Greek supremacy; and treated the conquest of the Greek world by Rome as the entrance on a predestined inheritance;

5. It brought well into the foreground of the picture the historic conflict between Rome and Carthage, the greatest event in Roman history, which determined its subsequent course, and which fixed the limit to the

Mackail, J.W., Virgil and His Meaning to the World of Today, Longmans Green, New York, 1927, 74.
sphere of the Asiatic races;

6. It celebrated the feats of heroes, great deeds in battle and council and government, such as had lent immotal greatness to the Illiad and Odyssey;

7. It found expression for the romantic spirit, in its two principal fields of love and adventure;

8. It possessed direct vital human interest, and created men and women drawn to the heroic scale and on the heroic plane, and yet embodying the qualities and passions and emotions of actual life;

9. It connected its figures with larger and more august issues; with the laws of nature and the decrees of fate, the workings of a mysterious Providence, and the sense of human destines as at once moulding, and interpreted by, the human soul;

10. It exalted the new regime, and gave shape and colour to its ideals of peace and justice, development and reconstruction, ordered liberty, beneficent rule;

11. It drew the lineaments of an ideal ruler, pater patriae, who should hold sovereignty as the chief servant of the commonwealth; and shew him as gravely conscious of his mission, rising towards its high demands, subordinating to it all thoughts of ease or luxury, all allurements of pleasure and temptations of the senses;
12. It lifted itself into a yet higher sphere, so as to touch the deepest springs of religion and philosophy, opening windows into the invisible world and kindling a pilot-light for the future.

Such were the motives, not set forth as they are here, but interfused with one another, which are everywhere evident in the Aeneid; such were the complex threads which Virgil sought to weave into a single tapestry, a picture which was to display for all time the greatness of Italy. It is no wonder that the mere layout of the framework into which all these interrelated motives could be fitted was the task of years; and that, even when it had taken shape in its main outlines, the difficulties of its realization filled Virgil with terror and brought him near to despair:

Tanta incohata res est, ut paene
vitio mentis tantum opus
ingressus mihi videar.41

"I think myself almost mad to have embarked upon it." To the last this feeling continued, heightening and heightened by the natural melancholy of his temperament; it took its final and most acute expression when, on his deathbed, he vainly begged that the Aeneid might be destroyed and would have destroyed it with his own dying hands.

41Quoted by Macrobius, Sat., I. 24. ii.
CHAPTER III

HEROIC CHARACTERS OF AENEID

Virgil's sympathetic interest in young men is notable; he loved them; and like Augustus, saw in them the hopes of Rome's continued greatness.¹ Nisus, Euryalus, Lausus, Pallas, Ascanius are among the most attractive figures in the epic. These five young heroes are in the main alike; they are all ideal types of hopeful, ambitious youth, ready to expose themselves to dangers to which they are not equal. All are willing to die to achieve imperishable glory—and glory or honor is the reward of hard-won Arete.² All of them die except Ascanius, son of Aeneas; and all the dead heroes have attained their goal. The arete of these heroes is completed in their death. Arete, however, survives the mortal man and lives on in his glory.³ All these young men are brave and courageous beyond the call of duty; indeed each one faces combat against terrible odds: Pallas dies fighting the giant, Turnus;⁴ Lausus falls by the mighty hand of Aeneas;⁵ Nisus and Euryalus die while making a night sally into the enemy's camp.⁶ Of the five Ascanius alone comes through the war alive although he was often on the field. When warned by Apollo he is more cautious: "Such dawn of glory great Appollo's

¹Prescott, 467.
²Jaeger, 10.
³Ibid., 7.
⁴Aeneid x., 490.
⁵Ibid., x., 840.
⁶Ibid., ix., 423-445.
will concedes—but tender youth, refrain hereafter from this war."  

It is just this tenderness of youth that Euryalus embodies; he is old enough to compete in the foot-race of the fifth book and to participate in the bold enterprise of the sally through the Latin camp in the ninth book, but in the fifth book, like a child he bursts into tears at being threatened with the loss of a prize, which he has won by Nisus' unsportsmanlike maneuver. Despite that boyishness, Euryalus displays his heroic stature when he and Nisus plan and carry out their plunder and slaughter of their enemies in the Latin camp. In that episode the two youths give abundant evidence of their courage, manliness, and nobility of character.

That the two youthful heroes possess the qualities of the heroic ideal can hardly be doubted. An examination of the events preceding their sally into the Latin camp and of the event itself will prove this. Book IX, line 226 and the following reveals a council meeting of the chief Teurrian captains, trying to decide who will be the messenger to Aeneas. Nisus and Euryalus demand a speedy audience, and Nisus speaks:

Listen, ye men of Aeneas,—let this our offer be judged by our years. Relaxed with wine and slumber, the Rutulians lie silent; our own eyes have worked the ground for stratagem, where it opens in the forked way by the gate nearest the sea. The line of fires is broken, and black smoke rises to the sky. If ye permit us to use the chance, and seek Aeneas and the walls of Pallanteum, soon shall ye see us here again, laden with spoils after mighty slaughter has been wrought.  

7Ibid., ix., 654-656.  
8Ibid., ix., 234-243 (H. R. Fairclough).
Thus did Nisus and Euryalus volunteer for a perilous venture. The Trojan captains are deeply moved by such an exhibition of knightly valor, and, one of them, Aletes, with tears streaming down his face, says:

What, sirs, what guerdon shall I deem worthy to be paid you for deeds so glorious? The first and fairest heaven and your own hearts shall give; then the rest shall the good Aeneas straightway repay, and the youthful Ascanius, forgetful never of service so noble.9

Ascanius interrupts at this point promising the youthful pair abundant and fitting rewards for their bold enterprise. Disregarding the glory and the rich reward proffered by Ascanius Euryalus speaks in reply:

Never shall time prove me unmeet for such bold emprise, so but Fortune prove kind, not cruel. But from thee, above all gifts, this one thing I ask. A mother I have, of Priam's ancient line, whom neither the Ilian land nor King Acestes' City could keep, poor soul, from faring forth with me. Her now I leave without knowledge of this peril, be it what it may, and without word of farewell, because I could not bear a mother's tears. But do thou, I pray, comfort the helpless, and relieve the desolate. Let me take with me this hope in thee; more boldly shall I meet all hazards.10

All the chiefs are touched to the heart by such a speech—fair Ascanius more deeply than the others. He assures Euryalus that she will be as a mother to him in all things but name. He even promises that great honor awaits her who bore such a son.

9 Ibid., ix., 252-256 (H. R. Fairclough).
10 Ibid., ix., 280-292 (H. R. Fairclough).
The Trojan leaders shower Nisus and Euryalus with gifts in testimony of their love and good wishes and accompany them to the gates of the city. The heroes go forth upon their adventure with the praise and prayers of their princes echoing in their ears.

Of the venture itself little need be said except that their youth leads them to rashness and its consequence—death. For after much slaughter in the Latin camp Euryalus stops to pick up the spoils of victory, the gold studded belt of Rhamnes and the shapely helmet of Messapus. This delay caused them to be overtaken by Volcens, a Latin leader and three-hundred horsemen. Euryalus is taken prisoner, and when Nisus attacks, attempting to effect the escape of his friend, they are both slain. Thus Euryalus' childish delight in a shining helmet ruined the effect of their bold sally. Their rashness may be excused in view of their extreme youth, but their heroism and knightly conduct is not less bright by their failure.

In the whole scene, from the moment of their first offer to attack the camp until their death, their conduct is worthy of true heroes. They have fulfilled the definition of arete, which each hero strives for in his own life: nobility of soul combined with nobility of action. This is the ideal of human perfection, which is the especial objective of each hero. Usually the hero can accomplish his desire—the proof of his nobility of soul—by his death, i.e., dying in some heroic endeavor like Euryalus and

---

11Ibid. ix., 434-445.
Nisus. So it may be said that the *arete* of a hero is completed only in his death. His life is a constant struggle toward the ideal—human perfection. *Arete* seems to be synonymous with that perfection—it may be said to be mortal man. But it survives the mortal, and lives on in his glory.\textsuperscript{14} Glory which will make him almost immortal, then, is the desire of all heroes. To it the man always tends; it spurs him on to great deeds; it influences his conduct.

This glory, this kind of immortality, which is the reward of nobility of action and nobility of mind, is not to be confused with popular convention or human respect. These heroes were aspiring toward an ideal which was synonymous with human perfection. Moreover, every man who was worthy of the title, "man," acknowledged the existence of such a goal. Indeed if he was true to the dignity essential to the human being, he was striving toward that perfection himself.

The story of knighthood and its strict moral code and heroic code demanded, of course, adherence to ideals such as these. The knights in modern literature did not permit even the slightest fault to creep into their behavior. They were always true to their ideal: "Live pure, speak true, right wrong, and follow the king.\textsuperscript{15}

This ideal is apparent in the case of the two youths mentioned, Euryalus and Nisus. In them only the heroic side of their natures is evident. In

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{15}Tennyson, Alfred Lord, *The Idylls of the King*, Gareth and Lynette, 116.
the case of the other youths, this almost perfect nature is also obvious. It seems that in these five characters, Euryalus, Nisus, Pallas, Lausus, and Ascanius, Virgil desired to establish prototypes of the sacrifices of young heroes in later Roman history. They were the ones on whom the youths of Rome might model their lives.

Nisus and Euryalus, in the case mentioned, manifest not only courage, bravery, cunning, and skill, but also tenderness, self-sacrifice, and pity. Euryalus appeals to Ascanius to console his mother if the venture fail; thus exhibiting tender regard for his parent, and fulfilling the obligation of devotion and respect which were his duty to bestow. When Euryalus is captured by the Latins under Volcens, Nisus, forgetful of his own danger, attempts vainly to save his companion's life with the result that he is killed also.

In the scene where the death of Euryalus is depicted, Virgil describes Nisus as so moved by pity when he sees his friend "roll over in death, his lovely limbs running with blood, and his drooping neck sinking on his shoulders," that he presents this simile (borrowed from Homer) to him:

As a poppy in the garden when its cup is heavy with seeds and the rain drops of the spring, droops its head, so his head drooped beneath the burden of his helmet.

17Aeneid ix., 290.
18Iliad, viii., 306-308.
19Aeneid ix., 435-437 (Translation by H.R. Fairclough).
This passage demonstrating the complete selflessness of Nisus is one of the most touching scenes in the entire Aeneid.

Thus did Nisus and Euryalus die, the latter the victim of his own rashness, the former a victim of love. Both, however, attain, imperishable glory—a reward commensurate with their glorious deeds.

Fortunati amboli si quid mea carmina possunt,
nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet aevo,
dum domus Aeneae Capitolii immobile saxum
accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.\(^{20}\)

Aeneas at the outset of the poem is marked as insignem pietate virum. Opposed to him in this characteristic is Mezentius whose special mark of distinction is his title of contemptor divum.\(^{21}\) He and his son, Lausus, "goodliest of form save Laurentine Turnus" are mentioned for the first time by Virgil in the seventh book. In this book Virgil describes the various foes whom Aeneas is to vanquish in the succeeding six books. Mezentius heads the list. He was an Etruscan by birth, but he had been banished by his Etruscan subjects as a tyrant and had taken refuge with the Rutuli\(^{22}\) whom he had arrayed against the Trojans.

Here, then, Virgil places Mezentius, the impius against the pius Aeneas; he places a prominent bad man in the foreground apparently to impress his readers with characteristics of badness. The coming story is to emphasize that by conquering Mezentius Aeneas is to gain the primitiae, the first

\(^{20}\)Ibid., ix., 446-449.
\(^{21}\)Ibid., vii., 647.
\(^{22}\)Ibid., viii., 481.
fruits of the war,²³ just as the death of the boy, Lausus is to pierce his heart.²⁴

The title, contemtor divum, as applied to Mezentius, did not mean that he was a blasphemer, not an infidel²⁵ because he claimed, in the first book, to be judged by Jupiter whose agent for the moment he was. However, Mezentius was one who had so little regard for the divine laws as to commit the enormities ascribed to him; in this respect he was manifestly contemtor divum.

More about the seriousness of Mezentius' crime may be learned from a consideration of line 620 of the sixth book:

Discite iustitiam moniti et non temnere divos,

There was a close relation of justitia in the Roman mind to non temnere divos. Justitia was conceived as obedience to the will of the gods (the pietas of Aeneas). This was a Greek rather than a Roman or Italian idea.²⁶ Morality, then, was under the direct protection of the gods. Contrary to the opinion of some commentators, Roman deities and their cults were greatly concerned about morality.²⁷ To give evidence of this it is only necessary to recall the religious sanction of the oath, and the religious penalties attached to certain crimes, e.g., arson or parricide, where the criminal was made over, cursed and consecrated to the deity most concerned; hence the very

²³Ibid., xi., 16.
²⁴Ibid., x., 822-824.
²⁶Ibid., 44.
²⁷Fowler, Religious Experiences of the Romans, 226 ff.
close connection between religion and morality: "Discite insti\n
45

et non temnere divos"--set not at naught the divine commandment to be just
or righteous.

In another passage of the Aeneid, this time in the first book Ilioneus,
Aeneas' messenger, in demanding justice of Dido, and requiring her to deal
with him and the Trojans according to the immutable principles of justice,
reminds her of the sanction of the gods, and warns her not to despise that
sanction, non temnere divos:

si genus humanum et mortalia temnitis arma,
at sperate deos memores fandi et nefandi. 28

In the Augustan age, then, Virgil, despite the very different ideas of
Lucretius, his predecessor, emphasized the connection between religion and
morality.

Mezentius set at naught religion and morality and the will of the gods,
and he committed crimes that the gods could not tolerate because such crimes
violated the established principles of right and wrong. That a man like him
should have such a son as Lausus is surprising. It seems that the son is a
typical Virgilian young man--comely, honorable, and brave even to death.
When Aeneas meets Mezentius for the first time the latter is wounded, but not
fatally. The son, seeing his father's plight rushes to his aid. Lausus
saves his father but loses his own life at the hand of Aeneas. 29

Here Virgil through the mouth of Aeneas exhibits again his tender
regard for youth, as Aeneas says:

28Aeneid i., 542-543.
29Ibid., x., 815.
quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, pro laudibus istis
quid pius Aeneas tanta dabit indole dignum?
arma, quibus laetatus, habe tua, teque parentum
manibus et cineri, si qua est ea cura remitto.30

Thus Aeneas, manifesting his knightly honor and admiring a courageous foe, allows him to keep the armor that gave him so much pleasure in life.

Even though Mezentius was a contemtor divum, Lausus was loyal to him even to the point of self-sacrifice; and Virgil allows another character, Lausus, a foe of Aeneas to display qualities worthy of imitation by Romans.

Virgil, it seems, usually matched his brave youths against vastly superior foes. At least this was true in the deaths of Nisus, Euryalus, and Lausus. It is also true in the death of Pallas, who dies in unequal combat against the giant, Turnus.31 In the tenth book, after rallying his fleeing men, Pallas is singled out by Turnus as a victim.32 Amazed at the size of his enemy but undaunted, Pallas gives evidence of his nobility and courage with these words:

aut spoliis ego iam raptis laudabor opimis
aut leto insigni.33

He is determined to conquer or die—to win the spoils of victory or the renown of a glorious death. Pallas prays to Alcides for victory and the latter responds:

stat sua cuique dies, breve et inreparabile tempus
omnibus est vitae; sed famam extendere factis
hoc virtutis opus.34

---

30Ibid., x., 825-828.
31Ibid., x., 485.
32Ibid., x., 442.
33Ibid., x., 449-450.
34Ibid., x., 467-469.
Realizing that his death was at hand and that his fame would live on in his glorious deeds, Pallas deliberately engages Turnus and dies like a hero. By his death he fulfills the obligations of valor.

Turnus, the victor, exhibits some of the generosity shown by Aeneas in so far as he sends the body of Pallas to be returned to his father—but not all the generosity—for he strips the body of Pallas of its gold encrusted belt and exults in the spoil and the glories of winning. Turnus thus manifests a lack of restraint; his boasting is unbecoming a man of heroic proportions.35

The really inviting study for a discerning reader is the character of Turnus, and its contrast with that of Aeneas, and the contrast of the causes which each of these heroes represents is also continually before him. A few words about these contrasts of men and causes, and more particularly about Turnus, who even in this last book is far less familiar to readers than his rival, may prove interesting.

Recall that when Aeneas arrived in Italy Turnus was seeking the hand of Lavinia, daughter of the king, Latinus, and that his suit was warmly favored by Amata, Latinus' queen; that Latinus was deterred from sanctioning this marriage by unfavorable omens, and by the oracle of Faunus which he consulted, and that in obedience to these he promised his daughter to Aeneas. The fiery Turnus, however, would not renounce his suit, and Juno, induced to support him by her hatred of the Trojans, stirred up war against the new

35Ibid., x., 500.
arrivals, overcoming and alarming the old king, who retired into his palace leaving things to take their course. At the beginning of the twelfth book, Latinus has returned to authority, and once more accepts Aeneas as son-in-law. Thus Turnus is thrust aside, and his wrath is ungovernable; he insists on a mortal duel with Aeneas, and this is agreed to in a solemn treaty between Aeneas and the king.

There seems to be no doubt that Turnus was passionately in love with Lavinia, and that his passion was not prompted by any possible political advantages. Although Lavinia's own feelings are less obvious, she also returned his love. She blushed deeply when her mother was entreat ing Turnus not to fight and was declaring that she would not live to see Aeneas her son-in-law; and this blush drew from the poet a beautiful simile, and from Turnus a look of deep passion: illum turbat amor fitigitque in virgine vultus. The poet does not expatiate on the beauty of Lavinia, but we may take it for granted that she was fair as well as royal. Turnus beyond doubt had great personal attractions; when one first meets with him he was most beautiful (pulcherrimus), and he was in the very first bloom of early manhood, full of semi-divine grace, ardent, passionate, and courageous. His one fatal weakness was want of self-control; he had none of the temperantia by which the Roman set such store. And now his passion is only

37 Ibid., vii., 600.
38 Ibid., xii., 20 ff.
39 Ibid., vii., 70.
40 Ibid., vii., 55.
41 Fowler, Gathering of the Clans, 82.
42 Cicero, De Officiis, i., ch. xxxvii., (from Panaetius), Fowler, 41.
increased by opposition, by Latinus and his oracles; it is so furious that
he can hardly speak, and he works himself into a rage like that of a mad
buck. The simile of the bull has real meaning here. Turnus is one of those
untameable men who enjoy lashing themselves into fury:

Mugitus veluti cum prima in proelia taurus
terrificos ciet atque irasci in cornua temptat
arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacesrit
icitibus aut sparsa ad pugnam proludit harena.43

So, too, the lion gaudet comantes excutiens servit toros, swening to
acceso gliscit violentia Turno. This same characteristic

Poenorum qualis in arvis,
saucius ille gravi venantum volnere pectus,
tum demum movet arma leo, gaudetque comantis
excutiens servit toros fixumque latronis
impavidus frangit telum et fremit ore cruento:
haud secus anno acceso gliscit violentia Turno.44

is shown in rhetoric, in the great speech of Turnus in the ninth book, line
45, where the word pulsus, inflicted on him by his enemy Dranes, suddenly
fires his wrath. That speech, like this one, is stimulated by anger against
an individual: there is no sense of public interest in it. His fury here
is that of a lover, and the war is his personal affair, into which he has
been driven by love and jealousy, in order to win back the girl who (as he
thinks) has been unjustly taken from him.

That is his way of looking at it; but it is clear that there had been no
betrothal,46 no contract of any kind! It was the mother Amata who favored
Turnus, and who jumped to the conclusion that two young lovers ought

43Aeneid xi., 103.-106.
44Ibid., xii., 4-9.
straightway to be married. The mother is moved by individual passion, the father by judgment (consilium) and the will of Heaven.

Turnus brings his doom upon himself by the intemperate vehemence and self-confidence with which he asserts his personal claims. In this respect he is similar to the hero in the Ajax of Sophocles. Ajax is guilty of over-confidence and presumption against heaven; he, like Turnus refuses to recognize the will of the gods and is a victim of the Hellenic vice of ὑβεγίς. The violentia of Turnus seems to be the Latin parallel of the Greek ὑβεγίς.

Virgil does not, as an inferior artist might do, endeavor to augment the sympathy with his chief personage, by an unworthy detraction from his antagonist. No scorn of treachery or cowardice, no indignation against cruelty, mingle with the feeling of admiration which the general bearing of Turnus excites. The basis of his character seems to be a generous vehemence and proud independence of spirit. If Aeneas typifies the civilizing mission of Rome and is to be regarded as an embodiment of the qualities which enabled her to give law to the world, Turnus typifies the brave but not internecine resistance offered to her by the other races of Italy, and is an embodiment of their high and martial spirit—of that Itala virtus which, when tempered by Roman discipline, gave Rome the strength to fulfil her mission. The cause which moves Turnus to resist the Trojans is no unworthy one, either on patriotic grounds or on grounds personal to himself. If the Greeks were justified in making war against the Trojans on account of Helen, the Italians may be justified in making war against the same people on account of Lavinia.

He slays his enemy in fair battle, and though he shows exultation in his
victory, yet he does not sully it by any ferocity of act or demeanor—

quam meruit Pallanta remitto.
Quisquis honos tumuli, quidquid solamen humandi est
Largior:47

After his hopes of success are shaken by the first defeat of the Latins, and by the failure of the mission to Diomedes, and when the timidity of Latinus and the envy of Drances urge the abandonment of the struggle, he still retains a proud confidence in his Italian allies—

non erit auxilio nobis Aetolus et Arpi,
at Messapus erit, felixque Tolumnius, etc.48

He is ready to devote his life in single combat against the new Achilles, armed with the armor of Vulcan—

vobis animam hanc soceroque Latino
turnus ego, haud ulli veterum virtute secundus,
devovi: "solum Aeneas vocat." et vocet oro:
nec Drances potius, sive est haec ira deorum,
morte luat, sive est virtus et gloria, tollat.49

He sees the inspiring hopes of triumph disappear, but the more austere glory of suffering remains, and with a firm heart he accepts that gift of a severe fate—

usque adeone mori miserum est? Vos o mihi, Manes
este boni, quoniam superis adversa voluntas.
sancta ad vos anima atque istius insoia culpae
descendam, magnorum haud umquam indignus
avorum.50

In the final encounter he yields, not to the terror inspired by the earthly antagonist, but to his consciousness of the hostility of Heaven—

47Aeneid x., 492-493.
48Ibid., xi., 428-429.
49Ibid., xi., 440-444.
50Ibid., xii., 646-649.
His last wish is that the old age of his father, Daunus, should not be deprived of the consolation of his funeral honors. Although the headlong vehemence of his own nature, no less than his opposition to the beneficent purposes of Omnipotence, seems to justify his fate, yet, as in the Ajax of Sophocles, the violentia in Turnus is rather the flaw in an essentially heroic temper, than his dominant characteristic. The poet’s sympathy with the high spirit of youth, as manifested in love and war, and his pride in the strong metal out of which the Italian race was made, has led him, perhaps involuntarily, to an embodiment of those chivalrous qualities, which affect the modern imagination with more powerful sympathy than the qualities of a temperate will and obedience to duty which he has striven to embody in the representation of Aeneas.

To the end of the epic Turnus maintains the proportions of a true hero. He is dauntless even in the face of death; wounded and conquered he is ready to accept the terms of defeat. He freely admits his guilt in preferring his own will to that of the gods. He asks for mercy—not for himself but for his aged father, Daunus, that his parent may be permitted to receive his lifeless body. Furthermore he admits Aeneas to be the victor and gives up all claim to Lavinia.

All still might have been fortunate if Aeneas had not seen high on Turnus’ shoulder the belt of Pallas—infelix • • • balteus:

51 Ibid., xii., 895.
Stetit acer in armis
Aeneas, volvens oculos, dextramque repressit;
et iam iamque magis ounctantem flectere sermo
cooperat, infelix uerno cum apparuit alto
balteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis
Pallantis pueri, victum quem volnere Turnus
straverat atque ueris inimicum insigne gerebat.
ille, oculis postquam saevi monumenta doloris
exuviasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira
terribilis: "tune hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc volnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit,"
hoc diens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
turbitus. as illi solvuntur frigore membra
vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.52

Pallas is, in some sense, the hero of these last books, and, but for
him and his belt, Turnus might have escaped death. Turnus had seized on
the beautiful belt of his young and noble victim, and with the rude egoism
of a savage warrior was wearing it himself. Such a thing as this Aeneas
could not have done, as Virgil conceived him; and in this fatal moment his
eye catches the ill-omened spoil, his wavering will becomes fixed, and the
death of the spoiler is certain. In Aeneas the motive is partly that
of revenge for a cruel and ungenerous deed, partly too, perhaps, indignation
at the breach of an ancient rule of honorable warfare; but above all it is
the memory of the sacred relation in which he himself had stood to Pallas
and his father Evander, the beautiful old Italian relation of hospitium,
and the memory, too of his love for the lad entrusted to his care, of his
bitter grief for his death, and of his own feeling as a son and as a father.

52Aeneid xii., 938-952.
Thus all that was best in the pure and wholesome Italian tradition of family life and social relationship is placed at this last moment of the story in contrast with the wantonness of individual triumph. The ethical idea is here, focused in a single object and a single act, and illuminated by a sudden lightning-flash of poetic feeling. To spare Turnus would have been the betrayal of the mission of Aeneas in Italy.53

53Fowler, The Death of Turnus, 156.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it may be said that Virgil was the interpreter, or even the creator of a great national ideal. That ideal was at once political, social, and religious. The supremacy of Rome took in his hands the aspect of an ordinance of Providence, towards which all previous history had been leading under divine guidance. It meant the establishment of an empire to which no limit of time or space was set, and in which the human race should find ordered peace, settled government, material prosperity, the reign of law, and the commonwealth of freedom. His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora ponit, such is the decree of the Lord of Heaven. The mission of "the Roman," of the Roman race envisaged as a single undying personality, is not only regere imperio populos, but pacis imponere morem, to establish peace as the habit and usage of the world. This is to be effected by fusion of Roman strength with Italian piety, by the incorporation with Italy.

There are two ways in which the reader may contemplate the Aeneid as a whole and the teaching it offered the Roman of that day: The leading subject is the mission of Rome in the world. Providence, Divine will, the Reason of the Stoics, or, in the poetical setting of the poem, Jupiter, the great protecting Roman deity had guided the state to greatness and empire from its infancy onwards, and the citizens of that state must be worthy of that destiny if they were to carry out the great work. This mighty theme

53Mackail, 111.
54Fowler, Religious Experience of Roman People, 409.
pervades the whole poem. It is given out in the prophecy put into the
mouth of Jupiter himself at the beginning of the first book; it is heard
again from the shade of old Anchises in the last moments of the hero's
visit to Hades in the sixth book, and again in the description of the
shield which Venus gives her son. Though the poem is imperfect and some
parts of it are left without the final touches, yet whenever the poet comes
upon this great theme he unsurpassed.

The great destiny of Rome has been accomplished by the service of
man, by his loyalty, self-sacrifice, and sense of duty; by that quality
known to the Romans as pietas; and the second lesson or reminder of the
Aeneid lies in the exemplification of this truth in the person and character
of the hero.

Beyond doubt personal character had a great interest at this time for
thinking men, apart from its development; the world was ruled by individuals,
and at no time has so much depended on the disposition of individuals. So
entirely had the individual emancipated himself from the state, that he had
almost forgotten that the state existed and claimed his pietas; he worked
and played for his own ends. Even the armies of that melancholy age were
known and thought of, not as the servants of the state, but as Sullani,
Pompeiani, and so on. This almost arrogant self-assertion of the individual
was a fact of the time, and could not be suppressed entirely; it was
henceforward impossible to return to the old times when the state was all

55Aeneid i. 257 ff., vi., 756 ff., viii., ff.
56Fowler, Religious Experience of Roman People, 410.
in all and the individual counted for little.

But in the Aeneid, there is an almost perfect balance between the two conflicting interests. The state is the pivot on which turns all that is best in individual human character; in other words, Aeneas is not furthering his own ends, but fulfilling the order of destiny which was to bring the world under Roman dominion. Individualism of the wrong type, that of Dido, Turnus, Mezentius, has to be escaped or overcome by the hero, for whom the call of duty is that of the state to be; but, all the same, the hero is an individual, and one conceived not merely as a type or a force. True, he is typical of Roman pietas, and bears his constant epithet accordingly; but if examined carefully it is apparent that his pietas is at first imperfect, and that his individualism has to be tamed and brought into the service of the state with the help of the state's deities. This is what makes the Aeneid a religious poem: the character of Aeneas is pivoted on religion; religion is the one sanction of his conduct. There is no appeal in the Aeneid to knowledge, or reason, or pleasure--always to the will of God.
Pietas is Virgil's word for religion, as it had been Cicero's in his more exalted moments. In the Dream of Scipio we read that

\[ \text{piis omnibus retinendus est animus in custodia corporis: nec iniussu eius a quo ille est vobis datus, ex hominum vita migrandum est, ne munus humanum adsignatum a deo difugisse videamini.} \]

\[ 57 \text{Ibid., 412.} \]
\[ 58 \text{Cicero, De Republica, vi., 15.} \]
In these words, as is shown by those that follow, the munus hominum is exactly what it is in the Aeneid, duty to man and the state, and as it is laid down for man by God, it is also duty to Him. The state finds its perfection in the individual so long as he thus fulfills the will of God.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Source Material.


Cicero, *De Officiis*, Noble and Noble, New York, N.Y., 1926.


Horace, *Odes* and *Epodes*, Allyn and Bacon, Chicago, Ill., 1901.


2. Modern Commentaries:

Butterfield, Daniel, *Character and Duty*, Union College, 1892.


Mackail, J. W., *Virgil and His Meaning to the World of Today,* Longmans Green, New York, 1927.

Miller, Frank J., *Dramatization from Virgil,* Chicago, 1901.


Prescott, Henry W., *The Development of Virgil's Art,* University of Chicago, 1927.


The thesis submitted by Patrick J. Halloran has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classical Languages.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

March 6, 1945

Date

Signature of Adviser