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The Originality of the Aeneid

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THE ORIGINALITY OF THE AENEID

by

Robert J. Lab, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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LIFE

Robert Joseph Lab, S.J. was born in Canton, Ohio, December 11, 1925.

He was graduated from Lincoln Public High School, Canton, Ohio, June, 1943. Immediately upon graduation he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve for the duration of the war. Prior to his honorable discharge, November 2, 1945, the author completed one college semester as a candidate in the Marine Officers' Training Unit at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. From January 1946 to August 1947 he pursued his college education at St. Mary's College, St. Mary's, Kentucky, and John Carroll University at Cleveland, Ohio. In August, 1947, he was received into the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus, and made his Novitiate and Juniorate at Milford, Ohio, a division of Xavier University. He received the degree of Bachelor of Literature from Xavier in June, 1951. In January, 1952, he enrolled in the graduate school of Loyola University at West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana and began his studies for the degree of Master of Arts in Classical Languages.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Roman tradition in epic poetry is distinctively characterized by a strong preference for the historical-national theme.\(^1\) Vergil's *Aeneid* is recognized as the noblest and highest achievement in the epic expression of this national ideal in the Latin language. However, the reputation of poet and poem alike has suffered considerably throughout the ages because many critics and scholars have failed to attend sufficiently to the true character of the difference that exists between Vergil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It is of little help to a proper knowledge and appreciation of the *Aeneid* to call it a literary epic in order to distinguish it from its Greek predecessors, the primitive epics of Homer. No doubt this distinction is a valid one, but another question arises: what principle in the very nature of the poem itself is at the root of such a distinction? What differences between these two distinct types of epic poetry does this principle imply and explain? These are questions to be answered; for,

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\(^1\)Domenico Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, trans., E. F. M. Benecke, (New York, 1929), pp. 5-6.
granted that the preference for the historical-national theme differentiates the Roman epic, even in its beginnings, from the original Greek models, what does this distinction imply or demand with reference to the structure of the epic itself; with reference to the individual parts or elements of epic construction? This is the more important aspect of the distinction, and had it been more clearly defined and understood at the time of the publication of the Aeneid and down through the ages, those critics and scholars who have yielded to the temptation, because of external resemblance, to compare the Iliad and the Odyssey with the Aeneid, would have undoubtedly avoided the weakness of their conclusions, and might have been able to appreciate the originality of Vergil's imitation of Homer.

The bridge from the Greek to the Latin epic was effected by a translation of the Odyssey by Livius Andronicus about 240 B.C. This translation was soon followed by a work of Gnaeus Naevius (B.C. 270-199), Bellum Punicum, the first original narrative poem in Latin literature. It treated of a subject of living interest, glorifying the mythical past of Rome, but mainly built out of the materials of contemporary history. Already in this first effort at epic construction, the feeling and impulse for the sentiment of national glory, the desire to perpetuate the heroic accomplishments of prominent Roman patriots, is in evidence. Not long after this, Quintus Ennius (B.C. 239-199), published his Annales. This was a collection of the early traditions of the Roman people, be-
ginning from the end of the Trojan War and extending down to the poet's own times. Legend, tradition, and history were fused by Ennius into a single narrative poem. "It was a true instinct of genius to feel that the only material suitable for a Roman epic was to be sought in the idea of the whole national life," admits Sellar. Vergil reached the apex of Roman epic achievement with the Aeneid, which was published posthumously, about 17 B.C., the noblest expression of the national sentiment in all of Latin literature. It was in the Aeneid that the poetic genius of Vergil found its maturest expression, and upon it his reputation through the ages has been primarily built and maintained as Comparetti testifies:

The contemporary fame of Vergil reached its highest point in connection with the Aeneid, and it is with the Aeneid that it has been most closely associated in later times; for, however great may be the poetical value of his Bucolics and Georgics, there can be no doubt that it was in the Aeneid that his powers were most conspicuously displayed, and it is by virtue of the Aeneid that he takes rank not only as the greatest, but also as the most essentially national of Roman poets.

It is of primary importance to recognize that in view of the direction of that literary stream into which Vergil emptied his poetic genius, and because of the essentially historical character of the


3Comparetti, pp. 7, 203.

4Ibid., p. 2.
Roman people, both logically and psychologically, there was no other sentiment possible in the Roman expression of the epic ideal than that sentiment of strong nationalism which is found in the Aeneid. Failure to recognize this fact, which constitutes an essential distinction between the Greek and Latin epic expression, together with failure to appreciate the differences in epic construction which this distinction necessitates, lies at the root of the lack of understanding and appreciation of the Aeneid by some literary critics through the ages.

It may be asked, what was the judgment of the Romans of the Augustan Age who witnessed the first publication of the Aeneid? The eager anticipation which prevailed prior to the publication of the Aeneid was especially heightened by the prediction of the poet Propertius, (Elegia II.xxxiv.63-84), that it would surpass all previous Roman epics, and the Greek Iliad as well. Although it was received with genuine enthusiasm from the first, the Romans admitted, in fact, the inferiority of their own poet to the Greek. As Comparetti goes on to explain:

This judgment, when confined to a simply superficial comparison of the two poems, was doubtless correct; but when the comparison extended further to the nature and causes of the two works, the ancients, not having any clear idea, such as we at present possess, of the true nature of the Homeric epic, and regarding Homer and Vergil as two individuals separated merely by distance of time and degree of genius, were compelled to judge less

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6Sellar, pp. 299-300.
favorably of the younger writer than we should be disposed to do at the present day. 7

The consequences of such a comparison of Vergil with Homer, or of the Aeneid with the Homeric epics, is fraught with dangers. For, unless the necessary attention is given to the vastly different cultures of which these poets and their works are not only the product but also the reflection, and unless each is appraised in the light of these differences, a comparison could not prove to be anything but a detriment to the merit of one or the other. It is often convenient to make such a comparison, but in such a case, it would be wise to heed the warning of Professor Prescott: "In this comparison it has often been convenient to imply that Vergil improved upon Homer and that his remodeling was better than the original. But such implications must not be seriously considered. It is not a matter of better or worse, but only of difference. The poems must be valued with reference to the time of composition and to the enivroning conditions which produced them." 8

Unfortunately, as the literary judgments on Vergil throughout the ages will verify, this caution in such comparisons frequently went unheeded. The result was that not a few critics and scholars have failed to understand or appreciate the original contribution which Vergil made to the literary heritage of the world in his

7Comparetti, p. 3.

It was only natural that the contemporary Romans felt the influence and prestige arising from the glorification of their nation, its history, past and present; and from the prophetic vision of their future greatness which the Aeneid embodied. For this they appreciated Vergil. "But when contemporary criticism wished to analyze the processes by which this success had been attained," writes Comparetti, "it failed to penetrate beyond such parts of the work as were entirely external, partly because of the tendency of the age to interest itself chiefly with such matters, partly because its knowledge of literature was not sufficient to give it an insight into the true nature of the [Roman] epic."  

Another proof of the acceptance which greeted the Aeneid in the time of the empire is found in the fact that it was almost immediately put into the hands of Roman school boys. While the value of the grammatical, rhetorical and erudite elements in the poem was early recognized, an even higher educational purpose was also being served. The Aeneid offered the Roman school teacher an opportunity of inculcating in the young a true basis of morality which it was the purpose of the emperor to restore, and without which he realized his other imperial reforms could not succeed.

9Sellar, p. 71.

10Comparetti, pp. 22-23.

11Ibid., p. 28.
It becomes evident from a consideration of contemporary criticism that there were few who could go beyond external analysis to define the elements of the poem's original artistry. "Vergil appears to have been attacked mainly for his innovations in language, for his handling of his materials, for his close imitation of Homer, and for ignorance of religious antiquities," as Nettleship testifies. In the commentaries of Aelius Donatus and Servius is contained the substance of the criticism of the period from the Augustan Age to the fall of the Roman Empire, (A.D. 14-476). The Ars Grammatica of Donatus and the commentary of Servius were used in the Middle Ages as textbooks of grammar and rhetoric. The work of Donatus has been lost. The work of Servius, however, survives in two forms, a longer and a shorter version. Recently, efforts are being made to recover Donatus' work by the latest editors of the Latin commentaries. The method of recovery is following a theory of Professor Rand who thought it possible that "Donatus's commentary on Vergil is not lost but has been read unwittingly by several generations of scholars in the larger Servius or Daniel." It is doubtful that any satisfactory evaluation of Vergil's genius


or of the *Aeneid* was developed during this period. If such an evaluation had been known, the grammatical tradition which is full of the poet's name would not have failed to preserve it.\(^{16}\) The poet was not without admirers, in spite of such fault-finders as Carvilius Pictor, who published in his *Aeneidomastix* a catalogue of all the apparent shortcomings of Vergil in the *Aeneid*. Seneca, however, was so convinced of Vergil's excellence as an epic poet that he thought it unnecessary to make much point of it, but took it for granted.\(^{17}\) Also among Vergil's supporters was Asconius, (c. A.D. 3-88), the author of a learned commentary on the speeches of Cicero. He wrote the *Contra Obtrectationes Vergilii* in defence of Vergil. "On the whole it was a phase of criticism," writes Atkins, speaking of this period, "which did not materially affect the position of Virgil, whose fame grew steadily throughout the century; though it has at least this interest, that it illustrates what was to prove a constant factor in criticism, namely, the blindness and inadequacy of contemporary critics."\(^{18}\) Quintilian was also among those who accepted Vergil and recognized something of his poetic genius. "... to Virgil he assigns the first place among Latin epic poets. In point of merit Virgil is said to rank next to Homer... and to this is added the further comment that,

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\(^{16}\)Comparetti, p. 20.


\(^{18}\)Ibid., 171.
whereas, Homer was the greatest genius, Virgil was the greater artist, in that his task was harder—a distinction that became a commonplace in later ages."

Finally, at the close of this period, the mute testimony of St. Augustine can be cited in Vergil's favor. In A.D. 430, the saint lay dying with the invading barbarians already at the door of his episcopal city. In his youth he had studied Vergil and throughout his life he never lost the admiration that he had learned for his works and style. To this author, there seems to be good evidence for Augustine's appreciation of the literary epic as it was handled by Vergil. His own De Civitate Dei published just four years before his death took thirteen years to write. In its broad outlines of construction there appears more than a slight resemblance to the epic. What Vergil attempted to do for the Roman Empire in the Aeneid finds a counterpart in Augustine's effort to express with epic fulness, in the historico-philosophical tone from the Providential point of view, the establishment of the Kingdom of God among men in his City of God.  

From the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the Middle Ages the chief use of Vergil was still as a practical means of instruction in Latin grammar and rhetoric. The commentaries of Donatus and Servius survived from the earlier period, as well as a work of Macrobius. Fulgentius, Bernard of Chartre, and John of

19 Ibid., 287-288.
20Comparatti, pp. 230-231, note.
Salisbury during this age, following the influence of Macrobius engaged in the allegorical interpretation of the *Aeneid*. The ridiculous extremes to which this exercise was carried eventually led to an exaggerated conception of the wisdom of the poet, which is at the root of both the literary and popular legends so characteristic of this period. So widespread is the false picture of Vergil during the Middle Ages, that it may be wondered how Dante ever separated the real Vergil from the imposter of his times.

There was one fault, however, which cannot be blamed upon the writers of this period. They did not attempt to compare Vergil with Homer.

Thus when the writers of the middle ages couple, as they frequently do in their allusions to the great men of antiquity, the names of Homer and Vergil, it is evident that they are simply copying mechanically the custom of the classical Latin writers and the tradition of the schools. Of the relations between Homer and Vergil they had themselves no idea, and any comparison between the two would have been for them an impossibility. Homer was a name and nothing more; the greatest poet of antiquity who was really known and studied was Vergil.

At the close of the Middle Ages, Dante stands out as preeminent among the few who knew and appreciated the true Vergil. He was one of those kindred souls whose poetic nature and native temperament bound him closely to Vergil. Just as St. Augustine before him, Dante has left proof of his sympathetic understanding


22 Comparetti, p. 168.
and appreciation of Vergil indelibly written into his own literary masterpiece, the Divine Comedy.

While making Vergil the representative of noble truths in the poem's doctrinal intent, Dante skilfully builds at the same time a monument to Vergil's name worthy of his own architectonic genius, which the gentle, soulful Roman poet had more than any other inspired and moulded. No one ever loved Vergil more profoundly or better understood his spirit and his art. . . . All lovers of Vergil should appreciate how much the Commedia has contributed to the glory of its grandfather, that "courteous Mantuan Spirit whose fame still lasts in the world and shall endure as long as time," (Inf. 2, 58-60).23

Maritain denies that the work of Dante is an epic.24 There are others who are of the opposite opinion.25 Nevertheless, there is no denying the epic proportions and qualities of the Divine Comedy. It would seem strange indeed if Dante, who loved the poetry of Vergil and appreciated it so deeply, was inspired not at all in the form and structure of his own poem by the Aeneid. On the contrary, there is a common vision and interpretation of life which one finds in both poets, and what is more, that ability to look at nature and history sub specie aeternitatis clothed with a large element of mystery is characteristic of the works of both poets. None of Dante's contemporaries was able to approach so closely to

a true appreciation of the real Vergil, as Comparetti clearly recognizes and asserts:

It cannot be doubted that in all the varied expressions of enthusiastic admiration which the universally recognised genius of Vergil had called forth, from the time of Augustus onwards, none was at once so magnificent and so true as that of Dante. But in this, as in all the work of this privileged genius, it is evident that, while his ideas rest upon a medieval basis, they ascend to a far higher level than was otherwise attained in the middle ages. . . . None of his contemporaries had ever been able to conceive of Vergil as he did, and we have seen clearly to what an extent this type of his is a refinement of that generally current in medieval times.26

At the dawn of the Renaissance, as a result of the contribution of Dante, studies of Vergil's work and artistry came into a new prominence. But in spite of this revival of scholarly interest in Vergil, it may be doubted whether this new interest was concerned with a very deep knowledge or appreciation of the inner springs from which flowed the Vergilian genius. It does not seem that they as yet appreciated the real difference between the Homeric and the Vergilian epic, for with the new interest in Greek studies which was rising, the comparison of Vergil with Homer was bound to recur. However, opinion this time favored the side of the Aeneid. "It was discussed as an open question," relates Sellar, "whether the Iliad or the Aeneid was the greater epic poem: and it was then necessary for the admirers of the Greek rather than of the Latin poet to assume an apologetic tone."27

26Comparetti, p. 232.
27Sellar, p. 67.
Later in this period following the Renaissance, Scaliger and Voltaire in France represent a school of Vergilian enthusiasts whose extreme claims for Vergil did much to provoke from across the Rhine a heavy barrage of offensive attack against Vergil and his work, especially the Aeneid. Comparetti believes the German scholars are guilty of a grave error, the effects of which are visible in various parts of their works, for example, when they insist upon regarding the Romans from the same point of view as they do the Greeks.28 The nineteenth century, especially the first half, has witnessed the decline of Vergil's star, not only in Germany but also in England, though in a lesser degree here.29 It is a disheartened German scholar who laments the loss of appreciation for Vergil in his homeland, and insists that: "The reason is not that Virgil's star has ever set or ever can set, but that German eyes have become weak."30

Professor Prescott summarizes very well the attitudes which have prevailed in Vergilian criticism until modern times:

The interpretation of scholars in the centuries all the way down through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance was marked by constant emphasis upon the supposedly mystical and allegorical features of Virgil's work, and this understanding of the poem reached a culmination in Dante's...

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28 Comparetti, pp. 4-5, note.
29 Sellar, p. 72.
Divine Comedy. From the early Renaissance on, this mysticism gave way before a constantly increasing admiration for the beauty of Virgil's verse and the grandeur of his epic diction. Such aesthetic considerations lost their vogue near the end of the eighteenth century, when the coldly critical eye of a rational age began to study the language and style and ideas of Virgil, and qualified, or even obliterated, the unreserved praise which the Humanists of the Renaissance had lavished on the Roman epic. It is gratifying to find, in the last half of the nineteenth century, a wise blending of the aesthetic and the historical study of the Aeneid: without renouncing at all the dispassionate scientific attitude toward the poem, recent criticism is recognizing that one may admit and appreciate obvious defects without overlooking the conspicuous contribution that Virgil made to the development of literary art.  

Modern criticism and scholarship has taken a more objective view of Vergil and the Aeneid. A few of the more illustrious classical scholars whose contributions in this field deserve more special attention are, J. W. Mackail, Cyril Bailey, Robert Seymour Conway, T. R. Glover, and E. K. Rand. Others may be found listed in the bibliography of this thesis. However, there still remains an element of opposition to Vergil within the ranks of modern literary critics, as can be illustrated by a recent depreciation of the Aeneid by Mark Van Doren. Among the ancients it would be difficult to imagine a comparison of Vergil with Homer executed with more hostility and less objectivity than Van Doren has been guilty of in his book, The Noble Voice. Fortunately, however, the ranks of the opposition have dwindled to a few, which is an indication

31 Prescott, pp. 246-247.
of the effect which the above mentioned scholars have had on recent criticism.

There is one more point that this author would like to dispose of while considering the place which Vergil and the Aeneid have held in the light of literary criticism through the ages. Professor Sellar is of the opinion that the probable explanation of Vergil's own dissatisfaction with the Aeneid, evidenced by his wish that it be destroyed, was the fact that he recognised how poorly it fared in comparison with the Greek epics. This would seem to imply that Vergil himself did not understand or realise his own purpose, as if he considered the Aeneid a simple imitation of the Homeric epics, and no more. Certain critics may have fallen into this error but it is most unlikely that Vergil ever entertained such an idea. It comes as a shock to find such a shallow judgment in the work of a scholar who, otherwise, shows real depth and perception in most of his opinions. The following statement exonerates Sellar, since it seems clear that in view of this later opinion, he would have deleted the previous remark had the inconsistency been pointed out to him:

The compliance with the conditions of epic poetry, as established by Homer and confirmed by the great law-giver of Greek criticism, equally separates it from the rude attempts of Ennius and Naevius, and from the poems which treat of historical subjects of a limited and temporary significance, such as the Pharsalia of Lucan and the Henriade of Voltaire. Though Virgil may be the most imitative, he is at the same time one of the most orig-

33Sellar, p. 71.
inal poets of antiquity. We saw that he had produced a new type of didactic poetry. By the meaning and unity which he has imparted to his Greek, Roman, and Italian materials through the vivifying and the harmonizing agency of permanent national sentiment and of the immediate feeling of the hour, he may be said to have created a new type of epic poetry—to have produced a work of genius representative of his country as well as a masterpiece of art.34

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the originality of the Aeneid from the aspect of its epic-dramatic unity. Although epic poetry of its very nature tends to defy that absolute unity which necessarily governs the tragic drama, nevertheless, there is a unity proper to epic which is analogous to the unity of tragedy. It is because of the similarity of the epic to the tragedy that the term 'dramatic unity' can be ascribed to epic poetry in a true but different sense.

It is the intention of the author to analyse the Aeneid by applying from the Poetics of Aristotle the canons for epic poetry and thereby to demonstrate: first, that the Aeneid observes all of the general principles for epic which Aristotle derived from the Iliad and the Odyssey; secondly, that with all its debt to the Homeric models, the Aeneid is essentially an original epic which marks a definite and true innovation in the traditional epic form; and finally, that because of this innovation which Vergil effected in his adaptation of the traditional epic form for Roman usage, there has resulted a new epic type in which the same elements of dramatic unity, (action, plot, character, thought, and diction),

34Ibid., p. 324.
possess a distinctive character in marked contrast with these same elements of the traditional epic.

The problem is well worth facing and solving, for: "We shall hardly ever begin to appreciate the Aeneid until we realize that with all its complexity of structure and movement, with all its debt to both Iliad and Odyssey, it is no less than these an organic unity and a masterpiece of original creative art."35

CHAPTER II

ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF EPIC POETRY

In fairness to Vergil and to the Aeneid the epic principles which shall be applied to the Roman Epic shall be derived from the Poetics of Aristotle. This choice might at first appear quite arbitrary, especially since Vergil most likely never knew at first hand Aristotle's treatise on poetry. However, there is a link between Aristotle and Vergil, between the Poetics and the Aeneid, which fully justifies this procedure.

Though Vergil had never seen the Poetics, he was certainly familiar with the Homeric epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the Aeneid it was his intention by imitating the Homeric epics to conform in general to the traditional epic form, while adapting this form to his own purpose, age, and civilization. Furthermore, it was from the epics of Homer that Aristotle derived his principles for epic poetry as they are found in the Poetics. Therefore, with the Homeric epics between Aristotle and Vergil as common ground, it is not unfitting to judge Vergil's Aeneid according to Aristotle's canons for epic poetry. Nor is this to imply that Vergil was a slave in his imitation of Homer, and in his employment of the traditional epic form as Theodor Haecker is quick to perceive;

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No—there is no greater difference within the whole compass of ancient literature; and to understand this is to see how absurd are those critics who would dismiss Virgil contemptuously as a mere plagiarist and imitator of Homer. There is no more profound or astonishing originality in all the literature of antiquity than Virgil's; and that precisely because it operates within the limits imposed by the inherited and traditional forms, which it reverently observes.  

It would be a mistake to consider, as many have done before, the Poetics of Aristotle as a codified system of laws governing epic and tragic poetry. Such judgments in the past have led to absurd conclusions. Moreover, it is doubtful that Aristotle himself considered his treatise in this rigid fashion. A more valid opinion of the Poetics would be based on a recognition of the fact that: "In Aristotle's fragment we find an urbane, open-minded man of the fourth century B.C. observing the specific literary products of Greek civilization and drawing generalizations from them concerning the craft of writing." 2 With the epics of Homer and the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides before him, Aristotle formulated the underlying principles of these types of poetry. His approach was empirical. His intention was not to create esthetic or ethical laws for literature, but merely to discover and formulate the laws or principles according to which these poets successfully constructed their literary masterpieces.

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To claim more than this for the *Poetics* is dangerous, as can be learned from those in the past who have considered this treatise as the absolute law for both tragedy and epic poetry. Such an hypothesis precludes the possibility of development or evolution beyond the artistic expression that these forms of literature had achieved in Greece by the fourth century B.C. This opinion would arrest and stifle literary art by introducing and imposing unnecessary limits.

And yet, there are esthetic and even ethical principles for the literary forms of epic and tragedy enunciated in the *Poetics*. These have been recognized and accepted as valid principles from the beginning. Moreover, they are as universally true today as when they were first taught by Aristotle. In recognizing this fact there is no disrespect shown for the authority of Aristotle when it is also maintained that his principles for epic poetry are applicable but inadequate for the *Aeneid*. For, although the *Poetics* can provide the basis for an analysis of the structural form of the traditional epic, it must be remembered that Vergil, in writing the *Aeneid*, ventured beyond the limits of this traditional type. Such freedom has evoked censure from many quarters, especially from those who have been led by an intemperate admiration for their master, Aristotle. Professor Butcher answers these critics in his preface to the first edition of the *Poetics*:

A far truer respect would have been shown him had it been frankly acknowledged, that in his *Poetics* there are oversights and omissions which cannot be altogether set down to the fragmentary character of the book; that his judg-
ments are based on the literary models which, perfect as they are in their kind, do not exhaust the possibilities of literature; that many of his rules are tentative rather than dogmatic; that some of them need revision or qualification.3

If Vergil saw fit to adapt that epic form which he learned from Homer, he was justified. How well he was able to accomplish this remains to be seen. But first it must be learned what the traditional epic form was.

Because Aristotle presents his theory of epic side by side with tragic theory one may at first be hopelessly confused by this procedure. Such confusion diminishes when the reader of the Poetics realises the close connection which exists between these two forms of literary art. For example, Homer, an epic poet, is often called upon by Aristotle to provide an illustration for a point of dramatic construction, e.g., Poetics, VIII, 1451 a, 22-30; XVI, 1454 b, 26-30. Very early in the treatise, Poetics, IV, 1448 b, 34-1449 a, 7, Aristotle acknowledges Homer's excellence in use of the dramatic form and states that tragedy has its roots in epic. While it will be necessary for a clear and logical definition of epic to unravel it from the 'skein' of the text, much of what has been said about tragedy must come with it. To accept as applicable to epic what Aristotle says about the various elements of tragedy is a valid mode of procedure since: "All the elements of an Epic poem are

found in Tragedy." An approach to a fuller definition of epic poetry now lies open. What is an epic? What are the various elements of its dramatic unity? What are the properties of these elements? Such questions and their answers will occupy the major part of this chapter.

From Chapter 23 of the Poetics the following limited definition is proposed by Aristotle:

As to that poetic imitation which is narrative in form and employs a single metre, the plot manifestly ought, as in tragedy, to be constructed on dramatic principles. It should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It will thus resemble a living organism in all its unity, and produce the pleasure proper to it. It will differ in structure from historical composition, which of necessity presents not a single action, but a single period, and all that happened within that period to one person or to many, little connected together as the events may be.

This definition is incomplete in as much as it does not include the concepts of character and thought, while diction is only implied by the statement about the meter. Three major points of epic structure are insisted upon. First, the plot is to be constructed on dramatic principles. Secondly, the subject of an epic must be a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Finally, the unity of the epic resembles that of a living organism which thus produces the pleasure proper to it.

At the close of Chapter 24 Aristotle states that: "The diction

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4Ibid., p. 23. (Poetics, V, 1449 b, 18-19.)
5Ibid., p. 89. (Poetics, XXIII, 1459 a, 17-24.)
should be elaborated in the pauses of the action, where there is no expression of character or thought. For, conversely, character and thought are merely obscured by a diction that is over brilliant." It will be necessary to fill in the details respecting the elements of epic not developed in Chapters 23 and 24 by Aristotle. The author of the Poetics took for granted that the relationship of epic to tragedy was perfectly clear. It was left to his readers and students to adapt the doctrine. Common opinion is that sections of the Poetics dealing with epic have been lost together with the whole treatment of comedy. However, since it is possible to enlarge the concept of epic poetry from parallels with tragedy, this loss need not be considered irreparable.

Under six headings all the elements of epic structure can be considered, namely, action, plot, character, thought, diction, and purpose. The basis of this division is established in several places in the Poetics. At the conclusion of the treatise when Aristotle is arguing for the superiority of tragedy to epic poetry, he says that inasmuch as tragedy possesses two added elements not to be found in epic, namely, music and spectacle, it is capable of producing greater pleasure. By a comparison of this passage with the definition of tragedy and the enumeration of its various elements in Chapter 6 it is possible to conclude that, with the exception of the two above mentioned elements, all others are to be

6Ibid., p. 97. (Poetics, XXIV, 1460 b, 3-5.)
7Ibid., pp. 110-111. (Poetics, XXVI, 1462 a, 14-17.)
found in epic. Further isolation of each elements is in order at this point so that a compact and workable definition for epic, together with an understanding of its component parts, may be had.

What is the pleasure proper to epic? What is the purpose of the epic poem? A discussion of these two questions in the first place will serve for a better understanding of the relation and interrelation of the other elements in the epic. This is true because it is the purpose which is the ultimate determining principle of esthetic and ethical accomplishment.

Purpose provides the principle of selectivity to be applied to the various means which might be used to achieve a determined effect. It is the determining factor in the poet's choice of an action to be imitated. It is the guiding norm for constructing the plot. Likewise, since the action being imitated is to involve human agents, characters, these also come under the all-pervading control of the purpose of the epic. The motivation which carries the plot along with necessity to its ultimate conclusion is revealed in the thoughts of the characters. Thus, the purpose of the epic will affect the determined style or diction in which the thought is to be expressed. From all this it should be obvious how important a clear idea of the purpose of epic is for a proper understanding of its nature. Aristotle's emphasis on the finis of a work of art is consistent with the Greek stream of thought. Just what that thought was in the days of Aristotle is clear from this statement of Lane Cooper:
Starting with the Platonic assumption that a literary form, an oration, for example, or a tragedy, [or an epic] has the nature of a living organism, Aristotle advanced to the position that each distinct kind of literature must have a definite and characteristic activity or function, and that this specific function or determinant principle must be equivalent to the effect which the form produces upon a competent observer; that is, form and function being as it were interchangeable terms, the organism is what it does to the person who is capable of judging what it does or ought to do.  

What effect does an epic have, or ought an epic have, on a competent audience or reader? Aristotle simply states that the organic unity of the epic is directed to produce the pleasure proper to it. In an effort to specify this pleasure, W. Hamilton Fyfe states that the epic pleasure is evidently to be regarded as the same as that for tragedy. Fyfe's opinion appears to limit this idea of pleasure, however, to pity and fear. It would seem correct from Aristotle's text that more is included than pity and fear, although these also are to be included. In Poetics, XXVI, 1462 a, 14-17, Aristotle makes a point of the pleasure that music and spectacle give to tragedy over and above other pleasures which are also found in epic. Some of these pleasures found in both tragedy and epic are; the delight or pleasure, (EuqPalvel, 1451 b, 23), experienced from the traditional stories as well as from those invented by the author; surprise, (To ThaupasTov, 1452 a, 4), whereby the complex plot is the more effective and pleasure-

8Lane Cooper, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, (New York, 1913), p. xx.

able; sudden reversal, (ΠΕΡΙΠΕΤΕΙΑ, 1452 a, 22-38), whereby the tragic experience is deepened and more poignantly felt; and finally, the pleasure accompanying a person's ability to suffer with the tragic character, (Το Φιλανθρωπον, 1452 b, 38). All of these elements are present in some degree in every epic and contribute to the accomplishment of that pleasure which is the proper object of epic to effect. However, it seems more proper that these various elements are so many aspects or factors of the total cathartic effect, taken in its widest sense, rather than separate and subordinate pleasures to be achieved. This seems clear from Aristotle's further statement that we must not demand of tragedy or epic any and every kind of pleasure, but only that which is proper to each. And since the pleasure which the poet should afford is that which comes from pity and fear through imitation, it is evident that this quality must be impressed upon the incidents. 10

Perhaps it was in this latter sense that W. Hamilton Fyfe understood the pleasure proper to epic and tragedy to be pity and fear taken together and in union with these other pleasures as they are impressed upon the incidents. This opinion appears to be the underlying assumption of more than one interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of catharsis. Moreover, such a view of catharsis eliminates or at least diminishes the difficulties which other interpretations must necessarily face and solve. However, one

10 Butcher, Aristotle on Poetry, p. 49. (Poetics, XIV, 1453 b, 11-14.)
must understand something of the origin and evolution of this question to appreciate its solution.

Traditionally there have been two divergent interpretations of Aristotle's doctrine of catharsis which account for separate streams of thought in literary criticism. Both interpretations have their roots far back in history, although the pathological or therapeutic interpretation is more widely accepted as being closest to the mind of Aristotle. Nevertheless, the religious, ethical or moral interpretation has had its champions through the years and is worthy of understanding. If one and only one interpretation represents the true mind of Aristotle, one might ask whether there is not some validity to the opinion that a more comprehensive view of the issue would reveal elements of both interpretations inextricably bound together. Dr. Foerster would seem to espouse this latter position as is evident from the following statement:

Now if there is any sense at all in the history of criticism from Greek antiquity to the present century, two kinds of value are inherent in literature, esthetic, and ethical. Let it be granted at once that esthetic value and ethical value are interdependent and, in all strictness, blended inseparably; still, it has not been found possible to discuss them both adequately at once and the same time. Let it be granted also that, logically if not practically, esthetic value must come first, since this determines whether a piece of writing is literature or a piece of non-literary writing.11

Was it perhaps because Aristotle considered poetry in this logical fashion that he adopted the esthetic viewpoint in treating epic and tragic poetry? This appears to have been the case as is apparent from both Bywater’s and Butcher’s interpretation of Aristotelian catharsis. Bywater states that, in favor of the physiological interpretation of the metaphor used by Aristotle, ancient evidence in Aristotle and elsewhere is decisive.12

According to the pathological interpretation of catharsis, the emotions of pity and fear which afflict all men with discomfort or harm in real life, are exercised through tragedy and epic. In the vicarious experience the excess of these emotions is relieved and there is effected a harmless pleasure of relief. In the elucidation of this Bywater explains the tacit assumption which apparently underlies this theory, namely, that the emotions in question are analogous to those pescant humours in the body which, according to the ancient humoral theory of medicine, have to be expelled from the system by the appropriate catharsis.13 The inadequacy of Aristotle’s explanation is admitted by Bywater:

The legitimacy of this pleasure is assumed throughout the Poetics (see especially 14, 1453 b, 11), but its precise nature is not explained, either in the existing book or elsewhere, by Aristotle. It falls naturally enough, however, into its place in the classification of pleasures in the Nicomachean Ethics, which recognizes the existence of a class of things as pleasurable not directly and in themselves, but through their effect, as

13Ibid., p. 155.
being of the nature of cures or remedies to remove the
disquietude arising from an unsatisfied want and restore
us to a normal condition of body and mind. (Eth. N. 7,
13, 1152 b, 34; 7. 15, 1154 b, 17).\textsuperscript{14}

Ancient sources are cited by Bywater in confirmation of the path-
ological interpretation given to the notion of catharsis. Plu-
tarch, Aristides, Quintilianus, Iamblichus and Proclus form the
nucleus of those who traditionally held this opinion. However,
as Bywater admits, Iamblichus has taken the edge off the Aristo-
telian theory by giving it an ethical turn.\textsuperscript{15} This clearly illus-
trates the closeness of relationship which has existed between
the two interpretations of Aristotle. It appears that it is but
a fine line that separates them, yet the distinct viewpoint which
each involves leads to different conclusions.

Aristotle did adopt in the \textit{Poetics} the pathological inter-
pretation of the metaphor concerning catharsis. This appears to
be quite clear and justified if it is recalled that in formulating
his theory of poetry he was reacting to an opinion of Plato.\textsuperscript{16}
In the light of this reaction, which determined to meet in system-
atic fashion the Platonic attack upon the poets, Aristotle's es-
thetic analysis of the nature of tragedy and epic must be under-
stood. Although there are still many who do not agree that Aris-
totle's analysis is complete, or who would dispute over the rather

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 155-156.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{16}Butcher, \textit{Aristotle on Poetry}, pp. 245-246.
\end{flushright}
limited esthetic interpretation of the doctrine of catharsis, Bernays, Bywater and Butcher have established by the authority of their scholarship that this is the genuine interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine concerning the end and purpose of tragedy and epic poetry.

The opposing moral or ethical interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine of catharsis, however, must be examined. Butcher, speaking of Aristotle's metaphor, admits that, "... a tradition almost unbroken through centuries found in it a reference to a moral effect which tragedy produces through the purification of the passions." Bywater reviews five variations of the doctrine of catharsis, but that proposed by Heinsius and Milton, and developed by Lessing in the eighteenth century is the only interpretation that calls for serious consideration:

It must be admitted, however, that Lessing himself did little more than expand the old idea of 'moderating' the passions, and translate it back into the language of the Nicomachean Ethics. 'The tragic purification of the passions,' he says, 'consists merely in the conversion of pity and fear into virtuous habits of mind. But as with every virtue, according to Aristotle, there are on either side of it extremes of excess and defect, between which it stands as a mean. Tragedy, if it is to turn pity into virtue, must be able to purify us from both extremes of pity; and it must do the same thing with fear likewise.'

The obvious objection against this interpretation is that it apparently ignores the fact that Aristotle assumed in the Poetics

17 Ibid., p. 243.

the role of opposition to the Platonic teaching. This point of
view is a clue to understanding and interpreting his opinion. By-
water gives several other reasons why the ethical interpretation
is not according to Aristotle's mind and concludes:

The primary error, however, in this and similar interpre-
tations of παθητικόν καθαρόν is that it reads a
directly moral meaning into the term, as though the thea-
tre were a school, and the tragic poet a teacher of mor-
ality. That, however, is not Aristotle's theory; the
great function of the tragic poet, he thinks, is to excite
certain emotions, and to procure us the pleasure that must
accompany such excitement (Poet. 14, 1453 b, 11). This
pleasurable excitement of emotion, in fact, is with him
the end and aim of tragedy, so far as the poet himself is
concerned. 19

It is important to remember while interpreting Aristotle's view of
poetry that his opinion breaks with the traditional teaching of
the Greeks. The poet, even in the classical age, was conceived as
primarily a teacher. According to Jebb, "Aristotle was the first
who formally asserted that the aim of poetry, as of all fine art,
is to give noble pleasure, and that its didactic use is accidental.
But the older conception held its ground, and often re-appears in
the later Greek literature." 20

Although the ethical or moral interpretation of the purpose
of epic and tragedy cannot be ascribed to Aristotle, since, as was
indicated, he chose to consider only that aspect of poetry which
was logically first, namely the esthetic, he could also admit the

19 Ibid., p. 161.

20 R. C. Jebb, The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Po-
validity of such an interpretation. In fact, it would be difficult to imagine a Greek of Aristotle's time who could not appreciate the ethical role which poetry had played in molding the Greek poetic spirit. However, the view which he assumes in the Poetics is perfectly valid even if it is undeniably restricted. It was not Aristotle, but his over zealous disciples, who over-emphasised the esthetic principles, making of them rigid laws, without reference to the historical context in which Aristotle lived and wrote.

Before leaving this discussion of the purpose of epic poetry and tragedy as conceived by Aristotle it will be valuable to cite in summary the view of a comparatively modern study on the issue. In Fairchild's opinion, the common explanation of catharsis explicitly proposed by Butcher has not been carried to its logical or psychological conclusions. The purely negative aspect of a total activity is emphasized, and while the emotions of pity and fear are surely purged of their disquieting element resulting in a pleasurable experience, this catharsis is secondary or incidental to the main activity or process, which is positive. "It is part of the powerful illusion of poetry," writes Fairchild, "that while reader and spectator think they are but following the portrayal of a tragic character, they are being led to conceive and construct a com-


22Ibid., p. 47.

23Ibid., p. 48.
lementary character which, though it is individual, is also a part of universal humanity. This positive activity is sweeping and comprehensive, taking in not only the central character, but the whole social order and the ultimate principles which underlie that character. Life itself is to be judged. "It may be that the principles of life and social order are fixed and unchangeable. In the world of fact and truth at least they may be so. But in the world of imagination they are not. They are at least not necessarily so. There they may be shifted, rearranged, reorganized at man's will. There, not what is, and makes man unhappy and ruins his life, but what may and ought to be to bring him joy, is conceived and built into an ideal world."

A bare statement of the conclusions of Fairchild will suggest the particular line of thought which this modern author has chosen to champion:

First, there is an intimate connection between what Aristotle calls Katharsis, and a positive or constructive activity. Katharsis is not a separate and independent effect of tragedy. It is the negative side of a total activity, the primary function of which is to build up and construct an ideal corresponding to the tragic character. Katharsis cannot be produced unless this constructivity works. . . .

And, secondly, it is primarily through a positive and constructive activity that we come to know, as far as inner experience is concerned, what the nature of tragedy really is. . . . Katharsis, or the purification of the pity and fear of everyday life, is not directly a

24 Ibid., p. 51.
25 Ibid., p. 54.
part of the aesthetic experience at all. It is a condition of its consummation. What we know of the nature of tragedy depends less upon a negative than upon a positive and constructive activity.²⁶

Whatever one may think of Fairchild's opinion, and this author finds it not altogether satisfactory, it is evidence of the larger truth expressed by Foerster that, "[t]he heresy of the esthetic seems to me as bad as the heresy of the didactic; both endeavor to make partial truth serve as the whole truth."²⁷

All poetry for Aristotle is based on the principle of imitation, (1447 a, 13-16).²⁸ In common with tragedy, epic is an imitation of an action, and although a multiplicity of plots may be admitted, (1456 a, 12-13), singleness of action must be insisted on, (1459 a, 19-21). In fact, it is this singleness of action which causes that organic unity so essential to achieving the purpose of this type of poetry. The concepts of 'imitation,' 'action,' and 'plot,' in Aristotle's definition of epic poetry require examination if they are to be properly understood.

Although Aristotle inherited from Plato the esthetic term 'imitation,' he interpreted it anew, deepened its signification and established a new point of departure for future literary

²⁶Ibid., pp. 55-56.

²⁷Foerster, p. 209. Confer note 11 of this Chapter.

²⁸Bywater's accusation against Aristotle of an inconsistency in sometimes including and other times excluding epic narrative as a form of imitation has been adequately answered by William Ridge- way, "Three Notes on the Poetic of Aristotle," Classical Quarterly, VI (October 1912), pp. 235-241.
criticism. As he employs the term it does not contain the earlier limitations of a mere copying of nature. "For that there is no question here merely of such mechanical imitations as waxworks or photographs, is sufficiently clear from Aristotle's curious statement elsewhere that music is a particularly representative art." A more accurate English translation of the Greek would be "representation," but even this does not clearly suggest the exact meaning of the original term.

The essential activity of the poet is to be creative, or more properly, to re-create out of the prosaic reality of man's everyday experience a more permanent and universal significance of life. The poet's freedom in selecting those materials which will be apt subjects for imitation is unlimited, but the more important aspect of the poet's activity is his handling of those materials. It is easy to see how far short the term "representation" falls from the Greek concept of πίνακας if one accepts the following explanation by Atkins:

But from this conception of "imitation" as a creative act Aristotle arrives at a new position, at what is perhaps his most valuable contribution to literary theory, namely, his conception of poetry as a revelation of the permanent and universal characteristics of human life and thought. For if poetry be no mere transcript of life, it is also something more than pure illusion. What the poet does is to construct out of the confused medley of everyday existence an intelligible picture, free from unreason, in which are revealed the permanent possibilities

of human nature, and therefore truth of an ideal and universal kind.31

What then is to be said of this "action" which is the object of imitation in the epic? It certainly is not the mere reproduction of external human operations or activities. It is something much deeper. Butcher's interpretation of the action as "an inward process, a psychical energy working outwards,"32 has been widely accepted as a legitimate understanding of Aristotle's use of the term.33 The true merit of this meaning of action lies in the emphasis it places on the inner meaning and significance of human activity thus imitated in a poem. Likewise, this interpretation is consistent with Aristotle's view that both poetry and philosophy share a common concern with ideal or universal truth, (Poetics, 1451 b, 5-6).

Francis Fergusson rightly observes, however, that Aristotle in the Poetics offers no definition of action but rather appears to assume it as an analogical concept to be understood with reference to particular actions. He sees the whole of Aristotle's work on the Poetics as a study of action in some of its many modes.34 This appears to be a somewhat novel insight but it has

31Atkins, p. 80.
32Butcher, Aristotle on Poetry, p. 123.
33Fergusson and Maritain adopt this interpretation of action.
solid foundations in the Poetics. The importance of understanding the concept of action for this thesis cannot be exaggerated for, to apply to the epic what is said of the drama, "It [action] points to the object which the dramatist is trying to show us, and we must in some sense grasp that if we are to understand his complex art: plotting, characterization, thought, and their coherence."35

Maritain finds real satisfaction in Ferguson's statement36 that in the phrase "imitation of an action" Aristotle does not really mean the "events of the story but the focus or aim of psychic life from which the events, in that situation, result."

Maritain continues: "In other words the action must not be confused with the plot, which is either the 'form' or 'first actualization of the tragic action,' or, in a secondary sense, the means of producing a certain effect upon the audience. . . . Action is a quality immanent in the work. The work does not only exist, it acts, it does."37

The properties of action according to Aristotle are first, it must be single, (1451 a, 31-33); secondly, it should be serious; and finally, it must be complete and of a certain magnitude, (1449

35Ibid.
36Ibid., p. 36.
b, 24-25). Although Bywater makes one item of this third property, Butcher sees two distinct properties. The former is closer to the Greek text and seems on the whole to be more consistent with the context. Both interpretations, however, give much the same meaning ultimately.

For epic as well as tragedy Aristotle is insistent upon the principle of unity of action.38 "Unity in Aristotle is the principle of limit, without which an object loses itself in the ἄμει-

The region of the undefined, the indeterminate, the accidental. By means of unity the plot becomes individual and intelligible. . . . at the same time it will gain in universality and typical quality."39 This first property of unity is very closely related to the third property of completeness in as much as the two qualities unite to produce the effect of ample scope taken from real life while the intensity of the focus removes everything from the plot that might be superfluous. Also included in these two notions is that fundamental requirement of proportion which is necessary for organic beauty. Completeness of the action assures also emotional satisfaction which is the true end of both epic and tragedy, referred to as catharsis.

Finally, the action of epic must be serious. The Greek word σοφός has more of the meaning of solemn rather than serious,

38 Compare the passages from the Poetics 1451 a, 31-33, and 1459 a, 16-20.

39 Butcher, On the Art of Poetry, p. 275.
although not solemn in the sense of sad. C. S. Lewis provides an interesting insight into the primitive sense in which the Middle English *solempne* was understood, a sense which could be admissible in this context. However, the phrase *humanly significant* seems to render satisfactorily what is contained in the Greek term. Again, what is serious in the sense of humanly significant is bound to engage the emotional participation of an audience and thus lead directly to the proper end of the epic, its cathartic effect. Thus do all the properties of action conspire to a single end and purpose, that is, to produce the effect proper to a particular work of poetry.

In the light of the above discussion of action it will be less difficult to understand what is intended by plot. And although the distinction between action and plot is difficult to make in general terms, it is nevertheless fundamental. This point occupied Fergusson in his study of the *Poetics* and his insight into two aspects under which plot is to be conceived will be valuable for this present consideration.

Treating of plot Aristotle makes three important assertions. He says first that plot is the "imitation of an action—for by

40C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, (London, 1942), pp. 15-16. Solempne implies the opposite of what is familiar, free and easy, or ordinary. Unlike solemn it does not suggest gloom, oppression, or austerity. "The solempne is the festal which is also stately and ceremonial, the proper occasion for pomp—and the very fact that pompous is now used only in a bad sense measures the degree to which the idea of "solemnity" has been lost."
plot I here mean the arrangement of the incidents," (1450 a, 3-5). The distinction between plot and action in this passage appears to be assumed by Aristotle as it is also presumed in another passage, 1451 a, 31-32, where he reiterates the assertion that the plot is the imitation of an action. It is clear that plot is not action, but before specifying further what sense is to be attributed to plot in this context a second important assertion concerning plot must be cited. For Aristotle plot is the "soul of a tragedy," (1450 a, 38). This latter statement specifies the plot as the soul or formal cause of epic or tragedy and it is in this sense that Aristotle exalts plot above all the other elements of epic or tragic poetry.

The third important statement about epic plot asserts that the "plot manifestly ought, as in tragedy, to be constructed on dramatic principles. It should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle and an end. It will thus resemble a living organism in all its unity, and produce the pleasure proper to it," (1459 a, 18-21). The plot considered from this point of view is understood under the aspect of final cause. "Most of Aristotle's discussion of plot is concerned with its purpose, or final cause," since the plot is the main

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41 Plot is also the "soul of epic" since Aristotle admits the similarity between tragedy and epic, 1449 b, 18-19.

42 Ferguson, p. 231.
element in affecting the emotional experience of the audience. The two aspects under which Aristotle considers plot are then, plot as final cause, and plot as formal cause. The relation between action and plot as formal cause is cleverly expressed by Fergusson:

The first act of imitation consists in making the plot or arrangement of the incidents. Aristotle says that the tragic poet is primarily a maker of plots, for the plot is the soul of tragedy, its formal cause. . . . The reader must be warned that this conception of plot is rather unfamiliar to us. Usually we do not distinguish between the plot as the form of the play and the plot as producing a certain effect upon the audience—excitement, "interest," suspense, and the like. Aristotle also uses "plot" in this second sense. . . . At this point I am using the word plot in the first sense; as the form, the first actualization, of the tragic action.43

This last statement affords the clue to the most intelligible explanation of the proper relation between action and plot. According to Fergusson the plot is the first actualization of the action which the entire epic or tragedy is imitating. A second form or actualization of this same action is achieved in the characters, and a third actualization of this action is effected in the words of the poem. In this third actualization is included thoughts of the characters and diction. Thus is provided the basis for considering the several elements of dramatic unity in relation to the action of a poem. In the next chapter something similar will be attempted for the Aeneid illustrating this point.

43 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
As for the properties which are attributed to the plot Aristotle is rather prosaic in his first requirement. He merely states that it should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. No great mystery is involved in this statement. Lucas explains this requirement as follows: "All that Aristotle is insisting upon is that a play should have good and obvious reasons for beginning where it begins and ending where it ends; and that its incidents should follow from one another by a clear chain of causation, without irrelevance. There should be nothing which is not clearly caused by what precedes, nothing which is not clearly the cause of what follows." Although in general this statement substantially applies to epic as well, Aristotle admits a freer employment of the episodic plot in narrative poetry, (1459 b, 22-31).

Practically no other single aspect of epic and tragic poetry is considered by Aristotle in more detail than plot. This author has counted no less than forty-five statements in the text of the Poetics specifically dealing with plot, nor was this count exhaustive. For the purpose of this thesis, however, only several of the important and necessary properties of plot need be considered.

In addition to the fact that the plot must have a beginning, a middle and an end, Aristotle outlines several other properties for plot which can be summarized under the following four headings: first, the epic plot should be unified by imitating a single

44Lucas, p. 75.
action; secondly, the greater scope of epic admits a certain looseness, even a multiplicity of subsidiary plots, according to its very nature; thirdly, the rule of probability applies to the epic plot; and finally, the kinds of plot and the parts of plot are the same as those of tragedy.

In Chapter 8 Aristotle is careful to make the point that unity of plot does not mean unity of hero since there are many actions of one man which cannot be made into one action, (1451 a, 15-19). Here it is clear that the underlying principle of the unity of plot consists in the unity of the action imitated. Homer is held up as the ideal in this matter of making plots since he makes the action of both the Iliad and the Odyssey to center about a single action. Likewise, in Chapter 23 Aristotle insists that in order that the pleasure proper to epic be produced, it is essential to build the plot upon a single action, (1459 a, 20-24). Homer is again cited as the model in this matter because of his skill. The unity here spoken of in no way contradicts that other special quality of epic plot, which permits a multiplicity of secondary plots, as will be shown.

In Chapter 7 Aristotle states that the length or scope of the plot is not determined by rules for dramatic presentation or sensuous presentment, but by the nature of the drama itself, (1451 a, 9-15). The same applies equally well to epic, the nature of which determines the manner of handling the plot. The principle that Aristotle applies in every case is perspicuity. Although in
Chapter 18 he readily admits that epic structure may have a multiplicity of plots as its nature demands, he is insistent that each part must keep its proper magnitude. In Chapter 24, (1459 b, 22-31), the property of epic for enlarging its dimensions by admitting many episodes is maintained. This feature he holds to be peculiar to narrative, but even in this case perspicuity must not be sacrificed. Only episodes relevant to the subject are to be admitted into the plot, for only these will add body and dignity to the poem.

The rule of probability for the plot is the third requirement according to Aristotle. In Chapter 9 he treats of the poet as maker of plots and says that the plots should be made according to the law of probability or necessity. Here episodes strung together without causal connection or relevance are condemned in epic, and even more so in tragedy. Chapter 15 comes back to this point of the necessary or probable as the aim of the poet. Here it is not only the plot, but also character portrayal which follows this norm of probability. This is a cardinal point for Aristotle inasmuch as the rule of probability elevates poetry above mere history to a position which it shares with philosophy. In Chapter 24 Aristotle returns to this same point insisting that the poet should prefer probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities, (1460 a, 26-31).

Finally, in Chapter 24 Aristotle states: "Again, Epic poetry must have as many kinds as Tragedy: it may be simple, or complex,
or 'ethical,' or 'pathetic.' The parts also, with the exception of song and spectacle, are the same; for it requires Reversals of the Situation, Recognitions, and Scenes of Suffering," (1459 b, 8-12). For an explanation of the simple and complex plot a reference to Chapter 10 must be had. If the action is one and continuous and the change of fortune takes place without reversal of the situation and without recognition, that plot is simple. When from the internal structure of the plot the change of fortune is accompanied by reversal or by recognition, or by both, the plot is complex, (1452 a, 12-13). In the case of the complex plot the demands of necessity or probability must be fulfilled. Homer's Iliad is cited by Aristotle as an example of a story of suffering with a simple plot, while the Odyssey illustrates the complex plot of character.

The concept of character and the relation of character to the other elements of tragedy and epic do not present the difficulties that were encountered in the consideration of action and plot. Except for an overstatement in one place, 1450 a, 23-24, Aristotle teaches a plain and simple doctrine concerning characterization. "Epic poetry," says Aristotle, "agrees with Tragedy in so far as it is an imitation in verse of characters of a higher type," (1449 b, 9-10). This does not mean that epic is not also an imitation of an action, which has been insisted upon until now. Aristotle himself goes on to explain what is meant: "... Tragedy is the imitation of an action; and an action implies personal agents, who
necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought; for it is by these that we qualify actions themselves, and these—thought and character—are the two natural causes from which actions spring, and on actions again all success or failure depends," (1449 b, 36-1450 a, 3). The action, therefore, as has been maintained, is the all important element in epic and tragedy. But this action materializes at least in three different ways or at three separate levels. Plot was shown to be the first level of actualization of the epic and tragic action. Character is the second of these three levels as Fergusson maintains: "The characters or agents, are the second actualization of the action. According to Aristotle, 'the agents are imitated mainly with a view to the action'—i.e., the soul of the tragedy is there already in the order of events, . . . but this action may be more sharply realized and more elaborately shown forth by developing individual variations upon it."45

Aristotle's statement that there could not be a tragedy without action is perfectly true, but his further statement that there could be one without character must be considered a simple exaggeration.46 Action does necessarily imply personal agents as Aristotle has already stated, although these may be of secondary importance. In both tragedy and epic, according to Aristotle,

45Fergusson, p. 37.

46Butcher, On the Art of Poetry, pp. 343-344.
"Character holds second place," (1450 a, 38). But second place does not mean that it can be dispensed with entirely. A note of Professor Butcher is particularly enlightening on this point:

'Plot' in the full sense of the word is the 'action' (in the large Greek meaning of πρᾶξις), and includes not only the circumstances and incidents which form the main part of 'plot' as popularly conceived, but also 'character' in the full dramatic sense of 'characters producing an action.' An antithesis, therefore, between 'character' and 'plot,' thus conceived, is obviously impossible.

On these grounds, we may say that 'character,' in the popular sense, exists for the sake of the 'action'; but 'character' in the full sense cannot be correctly said to exist for the sake of the 'action.' What is meant in the latter instance is rather, that, dramatically, the significance of the 'characters' arises from their place in the 'action.'

Character is defined by Aristotle as, "... that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids. Speeches, therefore, which do not make this manifest, or in which the speaker does not choose or avoid anything whatever are not expressive of character," (1450 b, 8-11). The particular properties of character portrayal are set down in Chapter 15 of the Poetics. All characters should verify the following four requirements: goodness, propriety or trueness to type, lifelikeness or trueness to tradition, and consistency, (1454 a, 16-33).

When Aristotle requires that a character be good (χρηστόν), both Bywater and Butcher understand the term in the sense of ἔπλοισις...

47 Ibid., pp. 344-345.
εἰκῆς, i.e., suitable or fit, combined with the sense contained in σπουδαίος, i.e., morally good. Butcher is insistent upon the moral aspect of this term as used by Aristotle. Moreover, he rejects the attempts of other interpreters, Corneille, Lessing and their followers, who make Aristotle say something other than is actually contained in his writings. However, Butcher does admit the narrowness of Aristotle's view, but he explains it on the grounds that Aristotle is considering only the best or ideal poem. It was not the intention of the author of the Poetics to exclude all inferior characters from epic and tragedy, but these must be known for what they are, inferior to the ideal character.

The second and third quality required of epic characters can be considered together. By τὸ ἀρνόττοντα is included everything proper to the class to which the individual character belongs—true to type. Likewise, traits which are foreign to a particular type of character are to be excluded. The meaning of ὑμοῖον is not very clear in this context according to the admission of Bywater. The suggested sense of the term is likeness to the original in legend or history, true to tradition or true to life. Finally, the ἑθος of the epic and tragic person should be ὑμαλόν, not inconsistent with itself. Aristotle

48Bywater, Aristotle's Poetics, p. 226; and Butcher, On the Art of Poetry, pp. 230, 326-333.

49Ibid., p. 227.
says of this last quality, "though the subject of the imitation, who suggested the type, be inconsistent, still he must be consistently inconsistent," (1454 a, 26-28). Moreover, Aristotle also requires of all characterization that the rule of necessity and probability should always be the aim, just as it was to be the norm of ideal plotting, (1454 a, 33-37).

In the order of importance, thought holds the third place in the elements of epic dramatic unity. "Third in order is Thought, that is, the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances. In the case of oratory, this is the function of the political art and of the art of rhetoric; and so indeed the older poets make their characters speak the language of civil life, the poets of our time, the language of rhetoricians," (1450 b, 4-8). Of special note in this context is the intelligent concession that Aristotle makes with respect to the differences in mode of expression that time and circumstances will allow. Since it is natural to expect human agents as characters to reveal themselves and their inner motives through their speech, it must be expected that the expressions of thought will exhibit peculiarities of language prevalent at the time of composition. Even considering the elaboration of thought which Aristotle gives in Chapter 19, the treatment which he gives to thought is in no way comparable to the attention directed to plot and characterization. Perhaps he considered that what was said in the Rhetoric could be understood
with regard to thought and diction and that there was no need for further elaboration.

Butcher fills out the concept of thought and displays its relationship to character in the following statement: "Dianoia," he states, "is the thought, the intellectual element, which is implied in all rational conduct, through which alone ἅθος can find outward expression, and which is separable from ἅθος only by a process of abstraction."50 The most satisfying understanding of thought, however, comes from Fergusson whose illustration of plot and characterization was so helpful:

The third actualization is in the words of the play. The seeking action which is the substance of the play (i.e., Oedipus) is imitated first in the plot, second in the characters, and third in the words, concepts, and forms of discourse wherein the characters 'actualize' their psychic life in its shifting forms, in response to the everchanging situations of the play. If one thinks of plotting, characterization, and poetry as successive 'acts of imitation' by the author, one may also say that they constitute, in the completed work, a hierarchy of forms; and that the words of the play are its 'highest individuation.' They are the 'green leaves' which we actually perceive; the product and the sign of the one 'life of the plant' which, by an imaginative effort, one may divine behind them all.51

Διάνοια is clearly an element in the agents of the epic or tragedy and it is to be discovered whenever the individual agent speaks or acts. Since this is the case, it seems only logical to expect that individual characters in furthering the action of

51Fergusson, pp. 37-38.
the epic or tragedy should reflect in their speech a consistency and propriety befitting their character. Incongruity and confusion would otherwise result, leading to ridiculous results on the stage or in the epic. The rule of necessity and probability can also be applied to thought, since, no less than plot and characterization, thought reflects that philosophic character of poetry which separates it from mere history. Thought is the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances, (1450 b, 4-5).

"Fourth among the elements enumerated comes diction; by which I mean, as has been already said, the expression of the meaning in words; and its essence is the same both in verse and in prose," (1450 b, 13-16). Thus Aristotle introduces the definition of the final element of dramatic unity in the epic. Chapters 20 and 21 are devoted to a detailed grammatical analysis of the use of words and various figures of speech. It would seem that such treatment is proper to philology but not proper in a treatise on poetry. However, as Bywater explains, the connection between grammar and poetry in Greek antiquity was a fact not always appreciated by modern critics. 52

Aristotle's theory of poetical language or diction is more properly treated in Chapter 22 of the Poetics. Here are to be found the general principles according to which the poet will

mold his language:

The perfection of style is to be clear without being mean. . . . That diction, on the other hand, is lofty and raised above the commonplace which employs unusual words. By unusual, I mean strange (or rare) words, metaphorical, lengthened,—anything in short, that differs from the normal idiom. . . . A certain infusion, therefore of these elements is necessary to style. . . . But nothing contributes more to produce a clearness of diction that is remote from commonness than the lengthening, contraction, and alteration of words. For by deviating in exceptional cases from the normal idiom, the language will gain distinction; while at the same time, the partial conformity with usage will give perspicuity.53

It is clear from the above passage that there are two essential attributes of good diction, namely, clearness and elevation above the commonplace. For the rest, they are merely suggestions by which the perfection of style may be achieved by the poet. Common everyday words will afford clarity, but for distinction the poet is free to use foreign words, dialect words, and newly coined words. The use of metaphor and periphrastic expressions is also conducive to elevation of poetic diction, but the distinction of language must never obscure the meaning or sacrifice clarity. Aristotle's great principle of propriety applies also to this aspect of poetry. "It is a great matter to observe propriety in these several modes of expression, as also in compound words, strange (or rare) words, and so forth. But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius, for to make good

53 Poetics, 1458 a, 18-1458 b, 7.
metaphors implies an eye for resemblances," (1459 a, 4-8).

In epic poetry Aristotle maintains that every form of unusu-
al diction is permissible, (1459 a, 8-11), as long as its use
preserves clarity, perspicuity and a certain elevation is achieved.
Critics who have censured the licenses of speech of the poets in
the past are charged with their error by Aristotle because they
do not understand the requirements of poetic diction.

It will be useful to review briefly the conclusions of this
chapter. Discussion of epic in the Poetics was seen to rely
heavily upon its relationship to tragedy and for that reason it
was not always possible to keep the considerations simple. The
following brief sketch, however, is not so much a definition as
a description of the general characteristics found in the tradi-
tional epic by Aristotle.

Epic poetry is an imitation of an action. By imitation is
to be understood a representation or symbolic image of an object.
In the case of epic poetry the object of the poet's imitation is
action, by which Aristotle understood human life and thought un-
der one or other of its permanent and universal aspects. It is
absolutely necessary that the action imitated in an epic poem be
single, in order that unity, determination and focus characterize
the entire poem. The action must also be serious, that is, human-
ly significant in a way that will engage emotional participation
from the audience. Finally, the action must be whole and complete
in order that the imitation be beautiful and pleasing, and thus
effect the pleasure proper to the organic epic poem.

Though the action is single, the symbolic attitude of human life being imitated is carried along in the epic at three different levels. In other words, there are three levels of actualization inextricably bound together, mutually dependent upon one another. These three levels can be considered as a hierarchy of secondary forms in the epic united under the primary form of the action.

In the hierarchy of forms, plot holds the first place since it is the very soul of epic. Plot is not just any haphazard arrangement of incidents, but a designed and deliberate arrangement of incidents according as the demands of necessity or probability dictate for the meaningful representation of the action. The epic story is not related for itself but for the sake of a higher meaningful and intenser feeling of the epic action. Epic plot must be unified even though a multiplicity of sub-plots be admitted in the episodes. The principle of unity will come from the single action imitated. The beginning, middle, and end of the plot must be joined together in a causal pattern, although epic admits of a looseness which is content with mere relevance of episodes as long as the demands of necessity and probability are met.

Characters in the epic represent the second form or actualization of the epic action. The characters are to be above the ordinary, which is to say, heroic. Although they must remain true to life and to type and to tradition, they should be ennobled in
keeping with the requirements of poetry. Likewise the characters should be consistently drawn so that no incongruity results. Since the action itself is ideal and heroic, the characters must also be consistent with the action. Moral goodness is also required in the ideal epic or tragic character according to Aristotle. This last requirement, however, admits of degrees, since Aristotle was considering the ideal character and best character.

Epic thought is the third in the hierarchy of forms. At this level the epic action is actualized or imitated through the speech of the characters by which they reveal their inner motives of action. By their speeches the action progressively evolves to the end. It is clear that propriety, consistency, and the rule of necessity or probability should mark the speech of each character.

Epic diction admits a single meter, the Dactylic hexameter, which possesses a majestic quality. The diction itself must be clear without being common, and elevated without becoming obscure. Wide use of metaphorical expression is the mark of a gifted poet, while every poet is charged to employ his diction with propriety. It is also understood that epic will differ from tragedy in mode of imitation, which it achieves by narrative alone, not by acting out events. Moreover, the tragic effect of epic is usually inferior in impact because more diffuse, being less concentrated than in drama. Finally, epic has all the major elements and constituents of a drama except music and spectacle.
If a definition of epic poetry might be suggested at this point it could be modeled upon Aristotle's definition of tragedy and would run as follows: Epic is an imitation of a single action that is serious, whole and complete, having a beginning, middle, and end, as well as being of a certain magnitude. The plot is constructed on dramatic principles, involving human agents or characters of a higher type who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought. The whole is exhibited in language embellished with every kind of artistic ornament, in the form of narrative which employs the heroic meter. The unity of the whole is like that of a living organism whose purpose it is to produce a purifying relief of the emotions of pity and fear which is pleasurable, by the controlled exercise of these emotions on artistically created situations and persons.
CHAPTER III

EPIC NATURE OF THE AENEID

Vergil did not write in a literary vacuum, nor did he live as an historical isolationist. He was every bit a Roman of the Empire, proud of its ancient traditions of race, fully conscious of its prestige as mistress of the world, and optimistic about its noble destiny. Moreover, Vergil had inherited a rich literary tradition from his predecessors both Greek and Roman with which he was thoroughly conversant. Therefore, to appraise him or his poetry independently of that particular historical and literary context in which he wrote would be a grave mistake.

It was observed in the Introduction that many critics over the ages have erred on this point. They formulated their evaluation of the Aeneid on a prejudice which falsely assumed that the Homeric epics were the ultimate criteria for judging all epic poetry. Thus they neglected in their criticism of Vergil's work other important influences of time and circumstance, thereby failing to recognize the evolution that the Roman epic poet had effected in this type of poetry. This false assumption led to a misunderstanding of the Aeneid since it prescinded in its judgment from the intention of the poet. A work of art or poetry, however, ought to be judged according to the intention of its
maker if it is to be judged fairly. In this chapter an attempt will be made to illustrate the epic nature of the Aeneid by considering some important influences which determined Vergil in its composition.

Two important questions were proposed in the Introduction of this thesis: first, what principle of epic construction underlies the distinction existing between the Aeneid and its predecessors, especially the Homeric epics; and secondly, what adaptations of the traditional form did this new principle of epic composition necessitate with respect to the several elements of action, plot, character, thought, and diction? To appreciate the answers to the above questions, consideration is directed to the problem which faced Vergil in writing a national Roman epic. Only in this context can Vergil's solution of the problem be understood.

Vergil must have felt from the beginning that his fundamental problem in writing a national poem would be originality. Roman taste and literary tradition was predetermined to the epic type. This imposition of a particular literary form could have impaired the originality of a lesser poet. In Vergil it did not. A wise literary critic has observed with respect to this question of submitting to a pre-existing literary form: "It would in my opinion be the gravest error to suppose that this fertilization of the

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poet's internal matter by the pre-existing form impairs originality, in any sense in which originality is a high literary excellence. (It is the smaller poets who invent forms, in so far as forms are invented.) ... The matter inside the poet wants the Form: in submitting to the Form it becomes really original, really the origin of a great work.  

But even if Vergil recognized the truth of this, a second difficulty with respect to originality presented itself in the theme chosen. The matter inside the poet which he realized must be incorporated into any Roman epic had also been predetermined by his predecessors, particularly Ennius and Naevius. The problem which Vergil finally faced came to this: how was he to compose an original and thoroughly national Roman epic within the limitations of the traditional epic form inherited from Greece and the restrictions of the accepted historical and legendary materials of his Roman predecessors.

Vergil solved this problem by two important decisions. First, he conceived and composed the Aeneid with one eye on Greek tragedy and secondly, he reverted to the Platonic and traditional Greek view of all poetry with respect to its finis or purpose. In this latter he unashamedly submitted to the peculiar requirements of his day and age by admitting the didactic purpose into the Aeneid. Thus, he became the first on the Roman scene to integrate with perfect harmony the esthetic and ethical purpose of epic in a truly

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2C. S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost, (London, 1942), p. 3. Parentheses and Italics are in the original.
great work of art. Other factors of time and circumstance undoubtedly also influenced Vergil's mode of composition of the Aeneid. We believe, however, that a consideration of these two views already suggested will provide ample scope for understanding the originality of Vergil's adaptation of the traditional epic form and for appreciating his unique employment of the inherited epic materials. Moreover, it is only in this light that Vergil and the Aeneid can be judged and appreciated adequately.

Professor Mackail in his history of Latin literature traces the evolution of Vergil's poetic genius from the Eclogues through the Georgics, and finally its full flowering in the Aeneid. Moreover, the dramatic character of the Vergilian epic did not escape this author. However, it is E. K. Rand who, while admitting that Vergil was born to write epic, insists upon the dramatic genius of Vergil and acknowledges his debt to Greek tragedy. "There are some," writes Rand, "but not many, indications in Vergil's early poems of dramatic genius. His main impulse from the first was to epic. . . . Further, the tragic problem had early engaged the poet's mind, as passages in the Culex, the Giris, and the Bucolics suggest. In the Georgics, there is tragic as well as epic feeling in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, and while he was occupied with the Aeneid, Virgil was meditating profoundly on death and the soul."
on the problem of Greek tragedy." 5

If the influence of Attic drama on Vergil's composition of the Aeneid is accepted, its full significance as yet has only been partially recognized. No one would doubt the dramatic character of the destruction of Troy in Book Two of the Aeneid. Nor would anyone deny the dramatic character of Book Four. 6 However, it would seem that if the influence of Greek tragedy is restricted to only isolated episodes or parts of the Aeneid, its greater overall influence on the whole is certain to be missed. C. M. Bowra is not alone among respectable Vergilian critics who look for Vergil's peculiar epic achievement in detail rather than in that greater unity of the whole:

But in Virgil, great though the paragraphs are, compelling though the climax is when reached, we are more concerned with the details, with each small effect and each deftly placed word, than with the whole. We linger over the richness of single phrases, over the "pathetic half-lines," over the precision or potency with which a word illuminates a sentence or a happy sequence of sounds imparts an inexplicable charm to something that might otherwise have been trivial. Of course Homer has his magical phrases and Virgil his bold effects, but the distinction stands. It is a matter of composition, of art, and it marks the real difference between the two kinds of epic, which are not so much authentic and literary, as oral and written. 7

The distinction that Bowra makes between the oral and written epic

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is certainly a valid one. But like so many other distinctions which have been drawn between the Homeric and Vergilian type of epic, such as the literary and primitive, artificial and natural, it leaves one with only a partial answer to the question. The remarks of R. S. Conway concerning the Dido episode of the Aeneid can be applied to the poem as a whole, inasmuch as its real character and meaning has escaped some modern readers:

It is at least a curious circumstance that a number of Vergil's modern readers have criticised Vergil himself because they have keenly felt precisely what he meant them to feel. These critics have not troubled to inquire into the general sentiment of the Augustan Age, nor asked how far it conditioned the form of Vergil's art; still less have they penetrated below the surface of his art or realized how its half-narrative, half-dramatic shape partly reveals and partly obscures the poet's own mind. This twofold nescience, of Vergil's time and of Vergil's style, has spread into a host of commentaries upon the Aeneid, and forms, in fact, at the present moment a serious hindrance to the study of one of the most wonderful parts of the poetry of Europe.8

From this it is clear that a view of Vergil's epic from the dramatic or tragic point of departure could possibly afford a renewed insight into the epic as a whole. At least it is worth following the lead of other scholars and attempting for the whole what they have individually discovered in various parts. It is the belief of the author of this thesis that the dramatic character of the Aeneid taken as a unity affords valuable insights for understanding Vergil's meaning in his epic.

When Vergil determined to admit the didactic purpose into his epic he laid himself open to the charge of later critics, and it appears to the charge of Aristotle as well, that he was distorting the end of art and poetry. The fact that the earliest Greek tradition up until and including Plato believed in the union of both the esthetic and ethical end of fine art is lost on these objectors. Nor was the practice unheard of at Rome before Vergil, although it must be admitted that both Ennius and Naevius would certainly fall under the same censure which befell Empedocles. These earlier Latin epic poets wrote in the heroic meter, and in some points were able to rise to real poetic achievement. However, for the most part their work fails on esthetic grounds to be true poetry. It was for the same reason that Aristotle preferred to call Empedocles a physicist rather than a poet although he had written in verse.

Mark Van Doren readily admits the fault that Vergil committed when he yielded to the demands of his time and the desire of the Emperor to make the Aeneid a didactic poem, a political tool. He believes that a greater poet would have resisted this temptation. "If criticism is to be merciless," writes this author, "it must note that the necessity was something to which Vergil sacrificed the last reach of the art he practiced."10 It is hoped that this

9*Poetics*, 1447 b, 16-20.

thesis will give some evidence to believe that Vergil, far from committing a fault in attempting to unite these two purposes, the esthetic and ethical, really proved his poetic genius by doing what no one before him had accomplished so well.

In defence of Vergil's choice in this matter and in praise of his accomplishment in the Aeneid modern scholarship offers an abundance of testimony. Bowra, Prescott, Rand, and Sellar, to mention a few, have all recognized the dual purpose of the Aeneid, nor do they find any inconsistency or lack of complete harmony in this fusion. Professor Sellar's opinion is representative of this group of scholars. He says of the political purpose of Vergil:

Virgil has also found a truer poetical expression than any other for the political feeling and tendency of his time. . . . As Augustus shaped the policy, Virgil moulded the political feeling of the future. It is in his poems that loyalty to one man, which soon became, and till a comparatively recent period, continued to be the masterforce of European politics,—apparently a necessary stage in the ultimate evolution of free national life on a large scale,—finds its earliest expression. And the loyalty of Virgil is not merely a natural emotion towards one who is regarded as the embodiment of law as well as of power, but is a religious acknowledgment of a government, sanctioned and directed by the divine will. 11

This latter point, Vergil's relation to Augustus as a poet of the empire, deserves further consideration.

It might be objected that Vergil was a court poet grinding out verses for pay and patronage, thus explaining his lack of true art. Granted that it was at the request of Augustus that he

11 Sellar, pp. 81-82.
undertook to write the Aeneid, there is no proof that he would not have done so even if the Emperor had not requested. The nature and the origin of poetic intuition as discussed by Jacques Maritain in a recent work will illuminate this point:

From the very start poetic intuition is turned toward operation. . . . This incitation (to create) can remain virtual. Nay more, a poetic intuition can be kept in the soul a long time, latent till some day it will come out of sleep and compel to creation. But at that moment there is no need of any additional element, it is only a question of application to actual exercise. Everything was already there, contained in poetic intuition, everything was given, all the vitality, all the insight, all the strength of creativity which is now in act, like a dart empowered with a power of intellectual direction; and in a certain sense (intensively—whatever part adventitious chance may have in the development) the totality of the work to be engendered was already present in advance, whether this totality is now virtually given in the first line of a poem, as a gift from the preconscious life of the soul, or virtually concentrated in the spiritual germ of a novel or a drama.12

What is said of a novel or a drama can equally be said of an epic. The request of Augustus was no more than a circumstance or occasion of Vergil's Aeneid—what Maritain might have called an adventitious chance. It need not however have influenced the original poetic intuition of the poet. It certainly is not evidence that the poet was simply a servant of the state, and therefore not free in his art. "The work may have been undertaken at the request of Augustus," remarks M. S. Slaughter, "but the theme was thoroughly congenial to the poet, who was sincerely devoted to the Julian

family and would gladly sing the fortunes of this house, whose
services, not to himself simply, but to the State, had been of the
greatest possible significance."\textsuperscript{13}

Professor Prescott, for another, while treating of the his-
torical crisis that gripped the empire between 30 B.C. and 20 B.C.,
takes a more reasonable position of Vergil's determination to in-
corporate the didactic purpose into his epic. "From this crisis
the Aeneid issues naturally and inevitably," writes this author,
"and it was meant to react upon the critical situation which gave
it birth. Virgil intended to teach and to delight, not so much
from any conscious conformity to ancient theory regarding the mor-
al as well as aesthetic value of poetry, but simply because his
environment impelled him to make poetry, in part at least, the
handmaiden of the state."\textsuperscript{14}

There is no justice in the accusation that Vergil perverted
the fine art of epic poetry to a purpose which is foreign to art
in itself. The pleasure which the literary epic the Aeneid was
expected to excite in its audience was essentially the same pleas-
ure which the poet himself experienced, given his view of reality.
The contents of that reality contained a vision of the future
greatness of the Roman Empire which was gradually materializing

\textsuperscript{13}M. S. Slaughter, "Virgil: An Interpretation," \textit{Classical
Journal}, XII (March 1917), 373.

\textsuperscript{14}Henry W. Prescott, \textit{The Development of Virgil's Art}, (Chi-
under the sage guidance of the Roman state by Augustus. It was Vergil's purpose to demonstrate this fact to his fellow countrymen, to share with every Roman his own great pleasure and joy springing from the realization of Roman destiny. Vergil was sincere in his poetry. The will of the emperor, with respect to the poetic ideal conceived, ultimately exercised a negligible influence on Vergil. As an artist, Vergil did not betray his office of poet.

Finally, it is asserted that Vergil's decision to look at his epic with an eye to Greek tragedy assures the Aeneid of satisfying the fundamental requirement of epic poetry, to purge its readers with pity and fear. "Virgil abides by Aristotle and purges his readers with pity and fear," as Rand observes. But that is not all. His didactic purpose which he hoped to achieve by inspiring all Romans with a strong sense of pride in their national destiny was artistically incorporated without detriment to the esthetic requirements of epic poetry. For, "... once we begin to grasp the various elements which make the complex art of literary epic, we are on the way to appreciate poetry of a special kind, which, though it claims to deal with a single subject, attacks it from different angles and at different levels. The mere story is less important than what it represents in the poet's vision of life."16

15Rand, Magical Art of Virgil, p. 370.
16Bowra, Virgil to Milton, p. 31.
Action of the Aeneid

The primary source of unity in a poem comes from the "action imitated." Epic action, according to Aristotle, must be single, serious, whole and complete in itself. As such, the action will be the controlling element in the poem determining the character of the other elements of dramatic unity. It is here that Vergil begins his adaptation of the traditional epic style as the demands of his age required.

No one who reads the Aeneid through to completion can fail to grasp its theme—the founding of Rome. The action Vergil explicitly declares within the first thirty-three lines of the poem. The driving purpose of the hero, his fated destiny, for which he is to suffer on land and sea is first stated in lines 5-7 of the introduction:

\[ \text{dum conderet urbem} \\
\text{inferretque deos Latio genus unde Latinum} \\
\text{Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.} \]

The final line of the introduction closes with a second statement of the all-important action of the poem: \text{Tantae molis erat Romam condere gentem. (Aeneid i.33).}

In a discussion of the evolution of epic, C. S. Lewis attributes to Vergil the introduction of the large national or cosmic subject of super-personal interest. "In my opinion," he further states, "the great subject (the life of Arthur, or Jerusalem's fall) was not a mark of the primary epic. It enters the epic with Virgil, whose position in this story is central and who has altered the very notion of epic; so much so that I believe we are tempted
to read the great subject into primary epic where it does not exist.\textsuperscript{17} The esthetic consequences of this choice remain to be seen.

If the vastness and importance of this theme is not immediately apparent from these statements in the introduction of the poem, Vergil leaves no doubt about this fact as the epic progresses. Three times, and possibly four, Vergil returns to a statement of the action of the \textit{Aeneid}. A review of the devices used by the poet to incorporate a clear vision of the action throughout the \textit{Aeneid} will provide an insight into the originality of his imitations of similar devices used by his predecessors.

After the introduction, the first restatement of the action appears in Book 1, lines 257-296.\textsuperscript{18} Jupiter's response to Venus, his lovely daughter, involves the deep prophecy of Rome's future greatness:

\begin{quote}
\textit{His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono: imperium sine fine dedi. Quin aspera Juno, quae mare nunc terraque metu caelumque fatigat, consilia in melius referet, cecumque fovebit Romanos, rerum dominos gentemque togatam. Sic placitum. (Aeneid i.278-283)}
\end{quote}

This interest of the chief of the gods in the founding of the Roman race is encouraging to the reader who can feel some sense of security throughout the long enduring hardships of the hero.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{17}Lewis, \textit{Preface to Paradise Lost}, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{18}Consult \textit{Appendix I} for the complete text of Jupiter's response to Venus.
\end{flushright}
Moreover, Juno will also be reconciled to the divinely appointed Roman destiny and forget her hatred. It is clear that Vergil intends to keep the main action of the founding of Rome clearly before his audience throughout the poem, and this use of the past to explain the present by way of prophecy is an appropriate means.

Nowhere in the Aeneid does the poet demonstrate more clearly his original poetic technique for imitation than in Book 6. More will be said about this book of the Aeneid in connection with the plot; however, at the end of this book is found a second declaration of the main action of the poem. As his father Anchises escorts Aeneas through the Elysian fields he reveals to his son the future tribe of great Romans and adds the following explicit commission for Rome's future greatness, shrouded in prophecy:

Excedent 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
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,
parcere subjectis et debellare superbos. (Aeneid vi. 847-853)

These are some of the most famous lines of the Aeneid, containing as they do an epigrammatic expression of Rome's destiny.

From Book 8 of the Aeneid two more repetitions of the theme can be drawn. In the first, King Evander, a Greek king with whom Aeneas seeks an alliance against Turnus and the Latins, escorts Aeneas on a visit to the future site of Rome. It is this incident that C. S. Lewis finds to be the most moving of the poem in its
attempt to draw past and present together over the vast expanse of time which separates them. However, the shield of Aeneas described in lines 612-731 of Book 8 is to this author the most conclusive evidence of Vergil's originality in handling his materials for the epic in accordance with that choice of epic action which he dared. At the request of Venus, Vulcan promises to forge a suit of armor for Aeneas. Upon the return of the hero from the mission to Evander he is presented with the armor and shield by his goddess mother. The shield is decorated with many scenes from the future history of Rome designed to fire the imagination of the hero and reader alike. There is Romulus and Remus nursed by the wolf; the rape of the Sabine women; the siege of Rome by Lars Porsenna; the saving of the capitol from the Gauls; Catiline's punishment; the battle of Actium; and the triumphs of Augustus are all depicted on this marvelous shield. The book closes with these lines which describe the wonder and joy that filled Aeneas about to bear upon his shoulders the reputation and fate of his people:

Talia per clipeum Volcani, dona parentis, miratur rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet attolens umero famamque et fata nepotum. (Aeneid viii, 729-731)

Each of the three selections chosen to illustrate the action of the Aeneid is characterized by similarities. Allusion to the

19Lewis, p. 34.

20The complete text is cited in Appendix II.
origins of Roman religion and popular mythology is verified in each passage. Moreover, that peculiar use of history which is one of Vergil's unique triumphs in the Aeneid is found in all three. Finally, Augustus Caesar and the Age of Empire holds the place of prominence in each of the above selections. All three may have been modeled upon similar passages from Homer, but beyond the external resemblance there is little that is common to the Iliad or the Odyssey in Vergil's imitation. His originality and the freedom with which he employs the epic form and his ability to manipulate his materials within that form are proof of his poetic skill. The testimony of a scholar of the last century on this point is noteworthy inasmuch as his essay has rightfully gained for himself wide recognition as an interpreter of Vergil's Aeneid. "Rome is before us throughout," says J. R. Green speaking of the theme of the Aeneid, "per tot discrimina rerum tendimus in Latium. It is not as a mere tale of romance that we follow the wanderings of the man who first came from Trojan shores to Italy. They are the sacrifice by which the father of the Roman race wrought out the greatness of his people, the toils he endured dum conderet urbem. Italian quaero patriam is the keynote of the Aeneid, but the Quest of Aeneas is no self-sought quest of his own. Italian non sponte sequor, he pleads, as Dido turns from him in the Elysian fields, with eyes of speechless reproach."21

The fact that this action is serious and of some importance and magnitude goes without saying, nor is there anyone who has denied these qualities to Vergil's theme in the Aeneid. However, a question may arise concerning the singleness of this action. It has been observed by many writers on this topic that the Aeneid is more than an epic of the founding of Rome—that it is also an epic of mankind. Glover, Mackail, Prescott, Rand and Sellar have all recognized this fact. But this is no reason to imagine that the action of the Aeneid is anything but single, for it is the peculiar property of poetry to embody within its single action a second action transcending the first. Just as Aristotle recognized poetry as more philosophical than mere history, it can be claimed that poetry contains a message or meaning which transcends the time and circumstances of the poem itself. In the case of the Aeneid professor Glover expresses this idea very well:

The poem finds its unity in its central thought; it is the poem of the birth of a great people, of a great work done to found a great race, of a spirit and temper brought into the world which should in time enable that race to hold sway over the whole world, and be to the whole world, with all its tribes and tongues, the pledge and the symbol of its union and its peace. . . . The poet looks down the history of his race from Aeneas, he looks back through it from Augustus, and he finds it one, one story telling of one spirit. . . . Virgil finds still more in it. He finds here his philosophy of history, the unity of the story of mankind, the drama of the progress of man from war, disorder, and barbarism to peace and humanity. And he finds in this story of Aeneas a clue to the story of every man, the linking of divine decree with human suffering and service, something to explain waste of life and failure of hope by a broader view of heaven's purposes and earth's needs, a justification of the ways of God to men, not complete, only tentative, but yet an anodyne and an
encouragement in an unintelligible world. 22

It is in connection with the action that the evidence of the didactic purpose of Vergil is more prominent, just as it will be in the plot that the influence of the drama predominates. Action and plot were shown to be very closely related according to Aristotle, as when he defines plot as an "imitation of an action." 23 Certainly in the poem itself these two, action and plot, are inextricably fused together, although they can be rationally distinguished. The actual events of the narrative have an importance in themselves, but taken alone without the higher meaning which the poet has written behind these events, only half of the poet's purpose would be achieved. Bowra finds in the profounder purpose underlying the Aeneid a distinction which separates the Homeric from the Vergilian epic:

... [Because Aeneas is typical of Rome, the events through which he passes are equally so. The difficulties which he has to surmount, the burden which the gods have laid upon him, the human beings who ensnare or hinder him, the obstacles which he finds in his circumstances or in his followers or in himself, represent what may happen to any Roman. Aeneas behaves as a Roman would in conditions familiar to Roman experience. Therefore though the action takes place in a kind of historical past, it transcends history in a way that the Trojan War does not in Homer. Each action in the Aeneid may be interesting for its own sake, but its special claim is that it typifies a class of actions and situations in which great questions are raised and great issues are at stake. That is partly why Virgil tells a story less well than Homer.

23 Poetics, 1452 a, 12-14.
His task prevents him from really enjoying a tale for its own sake, from concentrating entirely on the excitement of what happens. Beyond the actual events there is always something else, a problem or a principle or a hint that what occurs has some other claim than its immediate interest.

Vergil committed himself to the epic form which Homer used in the Iliad and the Odyssey and therefore must in the Aeneid observe the fundamental esthetic requirements of that epic form. However, Vergil boldly introduced the ethical purpose into his poem and thus was forced to adapt the elements of epic structure to this new purpose. Moreover, his decision to permit Greek drama to influence his epic technique was bound to involve further adaptation of the traditional epic form. The added scope that these two decisions allowed Vergil in constructing the Aeneid are at the base of his originality. Already the action of the Aeneid has been discussed with respect to these two points. It remains to consider the plot, the first actualization of the action, and how it is adapted to this new type of action.

**PLOT of the Aeneid**

The plot of the Aeneid is complex but unified. From its first appearance this was not always recognized, nor has this failure been totally remedied in succeeding generations. The impression that the Aeneid was simply a Roman Odyssey and Iliad neatly fused together in imitation of the Greek epics was too obvious to

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be missed. This external resemblance has successfully dissuaded some from looking any further for something more original. "It is sometimes remarked—Servius said it first—that the first half of the Aeneid is an Odyssey of travel and adventure, while the last half is an Iliad of war. This looks like a neat observation, but it is pertinent merely to the outline of Vergil's epic and the external events in the narrative."\(^{25}\) The power of originality and the dramatic impact of Vergil's plot has escaped such literary critics as Tyrrell of the last century,\(^ {26}\) and Van Doren of the present.\(^ {27}\) For although the action of the Aeneid was not too difficult to identify, for a proper understanding and appreciation of just how that action informs and moulds the epic material into the plot a more refined analysis is necessary.

The plot of the Aeneid is the very soul of the epic, the first actualization of the epic action. It governs and dictates the arrangement of incidents, episodes and every other element of the epic in accordance with the unfolding of the action imitated. Moreover, these materials would be no more than an amorphous mass of unrelated historical facts and legends totally void of meaning without the determination of that aim of psychic life which comes from the action. Inasmuch as duality of purpose was recognized

\(^ {25}\)Rand, Magical Art of Virgil, p. 339.

\(^ {26}\)R. Y. Tyrrell, Latin Poetry, (Boston, 1895), p. 143.

as an important factor in Vergil's choice of action, it is logical to expect that same duality to have influenced in some degree the shaping of the plot.

The dramatic unity of the Aeneid is fully recognized in the plot. Nettesheim had recognized this fact and E. K. Rand has done much to support this judgment with facts:

An analysis of the Aeneid in the light of the foregoing discussion reveals an epic poem presenting a unified narrative and yet constructed of two tragedies, the tragedy of Dido and the tragedy of Turnus. These tragedies are linked together by the Sixth Book, which is indispensable for the plot of either, as it sets forth the nature of the fate that controls both. The larger ideas in which personal action is set are disclosed with completeness only in the later books—majus opus moveo.28

In our view, there are three tragedies in the Aeneid. The first two, the tragedies of Dido and Turnus, are of a mixed variety being pathetic and ethical according to Aristotle's norms and possessing an unhappy ending. The third and greatest tragedy is the tragedy of Aeneas, likewise pathetic and ethical, but with a happy ending. It is true that many smaller episodes possess the elements which go to make tragedy. The fall of Troy related by Aeneas in Book 2, and within that story the tale of the lie of Sinon; the Nisus and Euryalus episode from Book 9 and the Camilla episode of Book 11, are some examples of tragic material within the Aeneid. However, it is believed that the three tragedies give the structure to the whole epic, especially the human tragedy of Aeneas

28Rand, Magical Art of Virgil, pp. 380-381.
which embraces the entire twelve books of the poem. This epic drama relates the tragic story of Aeneas' sufferings and the character which these moulded. The successful issue of the main action of the epic—the founding of Rome—is the happy outcome and reward for all the heroic trials endured. What is the general plot of the Aeneid?

In imitation of Homer, Vergil establishes the epic theme in the introductory lines of the poem, invokes the Muse, and plunges immediately into the action, in medias res. Throughout the action of the poem there runs a sub-plot involving the Olympian gods and goddesses. Juno is the protagonist of the hated Trojans while the mother of the hero, Venus, is the Trojan patron. All the deities of Olympus are suggested as taking sides in this endeavor, the founding of Rome. This device Vergil learned from Homer for it lends epic fulness and heroic proportions to the action of the epic. But even here in Vergil's employment of the traditional epic materials of mythology he ventures beyond his master, Homer. In the Aeneid there is more than a suggestion of what we call Divine Providence—the existence of some higher intelligence which rules the lives of mortal men in accord with a sublime purpose.29 The mystery of human freedom remains unsolved for Vergil but this is no fault of the poet. Philosophers today are still puzzled by the same problem, nor do they agree entirely about the fact of freedom.

The **Aeneid** begins its action within three months of its end. Aeneas and his band of Trojans are enveloped in a terrible storm just as they are about to realize the object of their journey, the arrival in Italy. The winds rage and blow their frail ships off their course, and a deep despair fills their hearts as they see Italy, the home of the new Troy, receding from vision. The complication has jelled when the dispersed fleet is washed ashore at Carthage, the realm of Queen Dido. (Romans reading this in Vergil's time or after might well have shuddered with apprehension at this event since they knew Carthage only as the enemy of Rome.) Dido receives the refugees hospitably and prepares a banquet for Aeneas and his men. Books 2 and 3 consist in the tale of the fall of Troy and the wanderings of the fleet until they were shipwrecked at Carthage. Meanwhile, from the subtlest beginnings and throughout Aeneas' story, Dido's love for the hero has grown from a mere spark into a consuming fire.

The complication thickens with the opening of Book 4—rises quickly—and finally resolves with the tragic suicide of Dido as Aeneas and his men set sail for Italy again. Book 5 provides the matter of dramatic relief after the tense tragedy of the previous book. Enroute to Italy, the Trojan ships put in at Sicily where the funeral games in honor of Anchises are celebrated. Discontented women set fire to the ships, many of which are lost.

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minor complication, instigated by Iris at the suggestion of Juno, is solved by abandoning the malcontents at the city of Acestes, while the remainder set sail for Italy. Venus, fearing further treachery from Juno, obtains safe passage from Neptune. However, the death of Palinurus who is overcome by sleep that night closes Book 5 on a tragic note. Book 6 has been compared to a great dome crowning the top of a basilica which was formed by a triple-bayed narthex (Books 1, 3, 5), with two splendid and elaborately adorned flanking halls (Books 2 and 4). While this illustration is of value for understanding Book 6 in relation to the first half of the Aeneid, it is more accurate to use the figure of R. S. Conway which also brings out the uniting force of this Book placed between the two great divisions of the Aeneid. He calls Book 6 the keystone of the whole poem in which the first half of the poem is revealed in its greater significance while the second half of the work, Books 7 to 12, takes on a new importance and interest in the light of the prophecy of Anchises. Conway states this as follows:

It is true that in the First Book, and since, we have had promises and prophecies connecting the Trojan exiles with Rome and giving Aeneas a steadily increasing something both to hope for and to do; yet how small a part is this of the world-drama, or world-procession, which the Sixth Book unfolds! It is not, we now discover, the fate of a few exiles which is at stake; it is the purpose of creation itself; the whole divine ordering of the world from the first stirring of fiery breath in primeval chaos, from the first imparting of divine life to individual men.

31 J. W. Mackail, Virgil and His Meaning to the World of Today (New York, 1927), p. 95.
and other creatures, down to the long process of civilizing barbarous humanity; the process of which the Roman Empire was to be the consummation. Seen from such a mount of vision, even the humblest details of the search for a site, of local traditions, of fitting allies, of sieges and storms, and single combats—all these incidents are transfigured.32

The second half of the Aeneid begins with a new invocation of the Muse, lines 37-44 of Book 7—majus opus moveo. It is difficult for modern readers to appreciate the import and significance of the last six books of the Aeneid. For several generations the attention of school children has been restricted to the first half of the epic because of its natural interest and human appeal. The result of this neglect of the remainder of the Aeneid is a general lack of understanding of its integral relation to the whole and a failure to appreciate its paramount importance to the Roman audience of the poet's own age. What is this greater work to which the poet sets his hand in the last six books of the Aeneid?

Having invoked the Muse a second time, Vergil immediately sets the action before his readers. The plot takes up with the arrival of Aeneas and his band of Trojans at the land of King Latinus. The second tragic complication is suggested, namely, the struggle for the hand of Lavinia, princess-daughter of the king, who promised her to Turnus, a Rutulian prince. Juno also returns to the story, fomenting opposition to Aeneas and the band of Trojans, unleashing the Fury Allecto from Hades to stir up the Latinas.

against the invaders. The third invocation of the Muse, lines 641-646, immediately precedes the catalogue of Italian forces and their leaders which closes Book 7. The appeal for allies goes out from both camps in Book 8; Turnus sends Diomedes, while Aeneas goes personally to Evander and afterwards to the Etruscans. The two significant episodes already mentioned, the survey of the future site of Rome by Aeneas with Evander and the armor made by Vulcan for Aeneas, set once again before the reader the heroic proportions of the main epic action—the founding of Rome. Juno again enters the plot with the opening of Book 9. Iris, sent by Juno, urges Turnus to attack the Trojan camp while Aeneas is away. At night the Rutulians pitch camp on the plain before the Trojan camp hoping thus to cut them off from help. The tragic adventure of youthful Euryalus and his friend Nisus, who were attempting to reach Aeneas through the Rutulian camp, ends in death for both. At dawn the Trojans see the heads of their two brave comrades displayed from the enemy camp. Turnus leads the Rutulians in a savage attack on the Trojan camp which sustains heavy losses when Turnus succeeds in gaining entrance. However, the leader of the enemy is finally surrounded by Trojans and only escapes death by diving from the battlements into the river Tiber.

A council of the Olympian gods is called by Jupiter who proclaims that fate, and not the quarreling gods, will decide the issue. Thus Book 10 opens. Aeneas arrives with the reinforcements from Evander and the Etruscans. A bitter but indecisive battle is
pitched in which Pallas, son of Evander, is killed by Turnus. Aeneas slays Lausus and Mezentius and closes the action of the book. The second last book opens with both sides mourning their dead during a truce of twelve days. The Latins are weary of the war and especially when news arrives of the unsuccessful mission of Diomedes. Peace proposals are made by King Latinus to which Turnus refuses his support. Turnus is willing to decide the issue by single combat with Aeneas. The warrior-maid, Camilla, undertakes a cavalry mission which is at first successful, but ends in rout when the maid herself is killed. The end is clearly in sight as Book 12 opens with Turnus renewing his proposal to face Aeneas in single combat. Terms of peace are drawn but the truce is broken by a Latin acting under the suggestion of Juno who is yet hostile to the idea of a new Troy in Italy. Battle is renewed and only when Turnus recognizes the plight that will befall Laurentum unless he meets Aeneas in single combat does he order his men to cease fighting. The final duel commences. After several attempts of Juturna to save her brother have failed, the sword of Aeneas finds its mark in Turnus' body. The hero is at first tempted to spare his enemy's life, but upon seeing the belt of Pallas upon his shoulder, in anger he slays Turnus. The last real obstacle to the founding of the new Troy is conquered, and with that ending the poet leaves the future of that nation which has been revealed in prophecy and foreshadowed in poetic figure. The rest is left to the imagination of the interested reader.
"At both ends of the Aeneid," says R. S. Conway, "the wall of time is swept away; and the story of Aeneas almost suddenly takes place in an immortal and infinite Design." Although the entire chronology of the poem's external action takes place in three months, the impression of infinite time is effected throughout the epic, whereas the perspicuity of the whole is maintained.

Since the recent study of Duckworth there can be no dispute about the intricate pattern and design of the Aeneid as a unified whole. In the light of so much evidence it is useless to maintain the impossibility of dramatic unity for an entire epic while restricting the influence of drama to individual episodes or books of the Aeneid. To avoid repetition it will be well to treat the three separate tragedies of Dido, Turnus, and Aeneas under the heading of character, since the plot in each case is made to follow the evolution of the character portrayed.

As for the properties of epic plot in the Aeneid it is already abundantly clear that the action imitated is single. Moreover, the incidents are so arranged in the plot that the epic presents the founding of Rome as one whole and complete action towards which every other action is directed. Because Vergil deliberately chose to permit the strong influence of the Attic drama to guide him in his handling of the epic plot, the Aeneid more than the Iliad or

33Conway, Vergilian Age, p. 145.

the Odyssey verifies the principles of dramatic construction. As a result, the tragic effect of the Aeneid as a whole is more intense than any of its predecessors, although its impact may be inferior to pure drama which is less diffuse and more concentrated. A purifying relief of the emotions of pity and fear by the controlled exercise of them on artistically created situations and persons will be the effect of the tragedies of Dido and Turnus, while the ideal character of Aeneas remains for all ages a model of perfect manhood. Thus Vergil has accomplished in the artistic manipulation of his epic materials in the plot the dual purpose, the aesthetic and ethical, which he deliberately determined upon from the beginning.

CHARACTER and THOUGHT in the Aeneid

Character may be defined as the sum total of moral qualities or permanent dispositions of the mind which reveal a certain condition of the will in an individual personal agent. Since it is also true that character and thought are the two natural causes from which actions spring, it will be more suitable to treat, along with the element of character, Vergil’s employment of thought. Thus, in this place, attention will be directed to the characterization of Dido, Turnus, and Aeneas.

Each of the three major epic characters in the Aeneid, Dido, Turnus, and Aeneas, verifies in its own way the requirements which Aristotle demands of the tragic character. These agents of the main action enable the poet to realize more sharply and more elab-
Orately three distinct and individual variations upon that main and all-important main action. It is clear that this consideration of the main characters and their personal tragedies will also give some amplification of the plot, since as already has been pointed out, the characters are necessary agents of that action imitated in the plot. Aeneas represents the concrete ideal of character which is in harmony with the main action. He furthers that main action by his individual activity. But Dido and Turnus are characters who find themselves in opposition to the main action, and in this consists their tragic character. Thus it may be supposed that Vergil reasoned when he set out to deploy his materials in the dramatic epic, the Aeneid. By considering these three main epic characters as tragic heroes of individual dramas, sufficient scope will be given to illustrate Vergil's characterization and thought in the Aeneid. In view of the close relation between these elements of dramatic unity, this seems justified.

No commentator on the Aeneid has failed to recognize the consummate skill with which Vergil has drawn Dido, the tragic heroine of the first six books. An analysis of her character reveals the originality of Vergil, as Professor Rand clearly admits. Homer created Calypso and Circe. In Dido, Vergil pays scant homage to these traditional paradigms of character portrayal. Nor does he draw heavily on the Medea of Euripides.35 No one has denied the

35Rand, Magical Art of Virgil, p. 391.
essential tragic character of the Dido episode though many have questioned the morality which it implies. However the question of morality cannot detract from the strong characterization of Dido.

The heroine, Dido, is introduced to Aeneas and to the reader in the middle of Book 1. Vergil is careful to have Venus emphasize the tragedy of Dido's past history—

... longa est injuria longae ambages; sed summa sequar fastigia rerum. (Aeneid i. 341-342)

Thus Vergil evokes sympathy in Aeneas by a very natural device, predisposing him for his meeting with Dido, and paving the way for the subsequent tragedy. A bond between Aeneas and Dido exists. They share a similar epic mission. Dux femina facti—Venus describes the Carthaginian expedition which fled from Phoenicia.

As Aeneas and Achates view the temple of Juno, built by Dido, their attention is drawn to the scenes from the Trojan War, revealing the sympathy of these people for the sufferings of others.

Constitit et lacrimans "quis jam locus," inquit, "Achate, quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris? en Priamus. Sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi; sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt. solve metus; feret haec aliquam tibi fama salutem."

The entrance of Dido at this point is in the dramatic sense and is prepared by dramatic methods. To a waiting audience, Dido enters:

36 Aeneid i. 335-401.
37 Ibid., 364.
38 Ibid., 459-463.
regina ad templum, forma pulcherrima Dido incessit, magna juvenum stipante caterva. (Aeneid i. 496-497)

The solemn rhythm of these lines suggests the formal procession of Dido and her attendants. Vergil likens her to Diana leading in the dance the goddesses, over whom she towers, distinguished for her stately height, an essential of classic beauty.

talis erat Dido, talem se laeta ferebat per medios, instane operi, regnisque futuris. (Aeneid i. 503-504)

The picture which Vergil gives of the beautiful queen attending to the business of government is an attractive one. However, he need only let her speak and she will reveal herself. Dido replies to the plea of Ilioneus for safe refuge for the Trojan exiles:

Tum breviter Dido vultum demissa profatur:
'solvite corde metum, Teucri, secludite curas.
res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt
moliri et late finis custode tueri.
quis genus Aeneasum, quis Troiae nesciat urbem,
virtutesque viroque aut tanti incendis belli?
non obtunda adeo gestamus pectora Poeni,
nec tam aversus equos Tyria Sol jungit ab urbe.
seu vos Hesperiam magnum Saturniaque arva
sive Erycis finis regemque optatis Acesten,
auxilio tutos dimittam opibusque juvabo.
vultis et his mecum pariter considere regnis?
urbem quam statuo, vestra est; subducite navis;
Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.
atque utinam rex ipse noto compulsus eodem
adforet Aeneas! equidem per litora certos
dimittam et Libyae lustrare extrema jubebo,
si quibus electus silvis aut urbibus errat.' (Aeneid i. 561-578)

Dido's speech leaves nothing to be desired in revealing her character. She is forthright and determined in her decision to shelter the Trojans. In true regal tradition she manifests magnanim-
ity of soul as she offers to share her kingdom equally with these exiles, or if they prefer, she offers her resources for refitting their ships. The self-possession of a strong character predominates throughout this speech, whereas the manner of her delivery would suggest that modesty peculiar to a woman—*vultum demissa profatur*. There can be no doubt at this point that Dido meets that first requirement of heroic characterization, a nobility and goodness exceeding the ordinary.

Dido's sympathy with the cause of the Trojans is perfectly in keeping with her own experiences as she herself relates in the last words of her address to the Trojan leader, Aeneas:

> me quoque per multos similis fortuna labores jactatam hac demum voluit consistere terra. non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco. (Aen. i.628-630)

One who has known the loss of fatherland is suited to understand and sympathize with these Trojan exiles. Thus Dido's sympathetic reception is true to life.

Dido's third speech is a prayer of invocation to Jupiter and Bacchus as she pours a libation of wine during the banquet. She begs the gods' blessing upon this fateful union of Trojan and Tyrian. Finally, Book 1 closes with Dido's request that Aeneas relate the fall of Troy and his seven years wandering. Vergil, however, has excited the interest of his readers by suggesting the birth of that passion which will eventually destroy the gracious queen; *infelix Dido longumque bibebat amorem*, (Aeneid i.749). The night lingers on as Aeneas begins the tale of Troy's last stand.
Book 1 closed with Aeneas the center of attention, as all at the banquet expectantly awaited his response to Dido's reasonable request. Vergil handles his epic materials with extraordinary naturalness, especially at this point. Book 2 opens with this line: *Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant.* Book 3 closes thus: *Conticuit tandem, factoque hic fine quievit.* of the banquet's conclusion and the departure of the guests Vergil says not a word. The requirements of epic scope and the practice of Homer sufficiently justify the episodes of Books 2 and 3. However, the studied similarity between the two lines above, which enclose the substance of Aeneas' story, has a double function. First, by harking back to the earlier line, the vast expanse of time embraced by the interim becomes more perspicuous; secondly, the reader is also brought back to that exact psychological moment at which attention was diverted from Dido. The object of Book 1 was to introduce the characters of the drama which is to be staged in Book 4. The charm and grace of Queen Dido excited intense interest while her tragic history engaged the sympathy of Aeneas and the reader alike. Her return to the stage of action has been well planned by Vergil.

An observant reader will surely have noticed a significant change in Vergil's description of Dido in Book 1, a change which prepares for the events of Book 4. Lines 503 and 685 of the first Book describe her as *laeta* and *laetissima*, one upon whom fortune smiles favorably. By the end of that book Dido is *infelix*, an epithet that she must wear eternally, which Vergil predicted in
lines 712 and 749, after her meeting with Aeneas.

A total of nine speeches is given to Dido in the fourth book of the Aeneid, three of which are soliloquies, while one is a brief commission given to her nurse to summon her sister. It is an interesting study in character analysis which Vergil presents in the person of Dido. The deterioration of her moral principles under the pressure of passion is a pitiable sight to behold, yet in scorn and anger, even in her tragic death, her noble character exhibits an esthetic beauty that is terrible.

Book 4 opens with Dido anxiously pacing the room in the palace and calling to her sister, Anna:

Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomniis terrent!
quid novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes,
quem seae ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis;
credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum.
degeneres animos timor arguit. heu, quibus ille
jactatus fatis! quae bella exhausta canebat;
si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet
ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare jugali,
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit;
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,
huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae.
Anna, fatebor enim, miseri post fata Sychaei
conjugis et sparsos fraterna caede penatis
sulius hic inflexit sensus animumque labantem
impulit. agnosco veteris vestigia flammae.
sed mihi vel tellus optem prius ima dehiscat
vel pater omnipotens abigat me fulmine ad umbras,
pallentis umbrae Erebo noctemque profundam,
ante pudor, quam te violo aut tua jura resolvo.
ille meos, primus qui me sibi junxit, amores
abstulit; ille habeat secum servetque sepulcro.
(Aeneid iv.9-30.)

The psychology of the speaker of the above words is that of a distraught woman. Here at least, Dido, without being less than a
queen, is even more of a woman—a woman in love. The reason for her extreme agitation, as given in lines 15-16, is that she has vowed to remain faithful to her dead husband. Until Aeneas appeared she had no difficulty; but since her meeting with the Trojan prince, the stirrings of the old passion kindle within her. Her speech, closing with a solemn oath to preserve her vow, belies a passionate and indecisive character.

Anna's reply is pleasing to Dido. Without actually removing the obstacle of the vow, Anna succeeds in encouraging Dido's love for Aeneas. All doubts vanished from her mind and the scruple repressed, Dido visits the shrines of the city with Anna to ask the blessing of the gods upon this love. However, Dido's anxiety in this love affair does not subside, but is agitated and distressing. Moreover, the work of government is neglected and the construction crews are idle:

non coeptae adsurgant turres, non arma juventus
exercet portusve aut propugnacula bello
tuta parant; pendent opera interrupta minaeque
murorum ingentes aequataque machina caelo. (Aen. iv, 86-89)

The royal hunt is also an excuse from her duty by which Dido keeps Aeneas close to herself. Many diversions occupy her time and energy while she neglects the government of her kingdom on behalf of her love.

The complication and reversal which Vergil permits from divine interference in Dido's tragedy has been looked upon as a flaw in motivation. It is not. The interests of Juno and Venus have been clear throughout the epic. Their conspiracy at this point
is not essential to the motivation of the human agents. The incident of the storm is quite plausible from natural causes. In the light of the previous action the consummation of the 'marriage' in the cave is hardly less plausible. This sin in itself, moreover, is not the tragic flaw in Dido's character but rather it is its logical consequence. As Vergil intended it, Dido's character flaw was her determination to forget her vow to Sychaeus. Juno and Venus were not responsible for Dido's decision which came about naturally by the encouragement of her sister, Anna.

Dido's second speech in Book 4 follows upon her knowledge of Aeneas' intention to abandon Carthage to seek once again Hesperia. From a noble queen of Book 1, to the emotionally disturbed woman of Book 4, to the violent and passionate outburst of a thwarted woman insane with rage, Vergil depicts the evolution of Dido's character:

Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra? nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido? quin etiam hiberno moliris sidere classem et mediis properas Aquilonibus ire per altum, crudelis? quid, si non arva aliena domosque ignotas pteres, et Troia antiqua maneret, Troia per undosum pteretur classibus aequor? mene fugis? per ego has lacrimas dextramque tuam te (quando alius mihi iam miserae nihil ipsa reliqu), per conubia nostra, per inceptos Hymenaeos, si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam dulce meum, miserere domus labentis et istam, oro, si quis adhuc precibus locus, eue mentem. te propter Libyaes gentes Nomadumque tyranni odere, intesii Tyrii; te propter eundem extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam, fama prior. cui me moribundam deseras,—hospes
There is no need to enter into the question of analysis of this speech into its oratorical components, nor to suggest that there is a problem of language barrier between Aeneas and Dido. The exchange of speeches in lines 305-387, in spite of what others have made of them, must be understood as golden utterance given to charged emotion. For the most part the passion of the thought itself determines the speech of Dido, and the intuitive nature of the woman knows better than oratory can teach the way to the heart of a man. Logical divisions would destroy the overall poetic effect. Dido’s speech quoted above is an example of the power of her passion. There is no lack of eloquence in her plea. It is not logical but psychological appeal which Vergil achieves here.

Dido calls Aeneas perfide, crudelis, and finally she hurls a double barbed hospes, reminding him that as guest he is not only indebted to her, but also responsible to Jupiter for his conduct. Lines 327-330 of Dido’s speech represent the absolute depths of pathetic appeal. These lines manifest a powerful example of what might be considered selflessness in Dido’s love for Aeneas. If any argument would be effective surely this latter plea and show of unselfish love was Dido’s only chance. But that also failed to detour Aeneas from the path that duty and loyalty demanded of him.
Dido's third speech in Book 4, lines 365-387, reveals the final deterioration of her character under the pressure of passion. The tragedy of her death is all that is needed to complete the picture, for although the end is forestalled when she sends her sister Anna to Aeneas in a last effort to dissuade him from his plan, little or no hope of success is entertained. The three soliloquies which remain are simply examples of the extreme to which her madness has driven her, occasions for cursing her lot and begging vengeance against Rome. Total absence of restraint, a certain shamelessness in her vilification of the man she so recently loved, and wild terror characterize Dido's final state. Here the character of Dido can rival the greatest of the ancient heroic characters as well as the tragic heroines, Antigone and Medea. It is her true character that wins our sympathy and pity for her cause, while the change which her character has undergone fills us with terror when we see with what violence she hurls herself to destruction. It was through the medium of thought that Vergil presented the character of Dido, since it is from these two together that action springs and the plot moves forward. The character of Dido created by Vergil is ample testimony of the poet's power in the use of these two elements of dramatic unity in the epic, character and thought.

A final evaluation of Dido's character must take into consideration her appearance in Book 6. Bowra suggests that this meeting of Dido and Aeneas vindicates the cause of Dido, and moreover,
this same author maintains that Vergil considered the contempt and scorn shown Aeneas by Dido as deserved. 39 This is not absolutely certain and possibly it is altogether misleading. We prefer to see in this incident the indelible character of the heroine's tragic flaw which, even in death, blinds her to the true issue which separated her from Aeneas. Dido could not in this situation rise to the humaneness of granting Aeneas forgiveness on the grounds that when he left her he was duty-bound to follow his destiny decreed by the fates. In this final test Dido fails to get out of herself or to rise above purely personal feelings and selfish motives which Vergil could not approve. As a symbol of the ancient heroic type, Dido's character is contrasted with that of Aeneas and the difference is immediately evident. R. S. Conway has also failed to give sufficient attention to this final appearance of Dido in his discussion of the place she has held in history. 40 Vergil's estimate of women, however, can be considered as a significant contribution to Western culture, and the character of Dido has served this function for centuries.

The second half of the Aeneid introduces another tragic hero similar in character to Dido. Whatever case may be made for the opinion that Turnus is a foil to the character of Aeneas, it must be insisted that he is much more. "It is hard not to believe,"

40R. S. Conway, New Studies, pp. 140-164.
writes one author, "that Turnus has been unjustly treated by
writers and commentators. For there has been a tendency to regard
him as a foil to Aeneas and to imagine that you can praise the
Trojan by finding fault with his adversary. To do this, is to be-
little both Vergil's dramatic insight as a poet and his imagina-
tive feeling as a man. It is the sort of mistaken approach that
has led to so much misunderstanding over Dido."41 Vergil surely
appreciated the real contribution which the Latin temperament had
to offer to that final assimilation of traits from both east and
west from which the Roman race was born. No one who reads the
Aeneid, particularly the last six books, can fail to recognize the
respect and profound admiration which Vergil shows for all that is
native to Italy, including the ennobled primitive character of
Turnus. He too must have his tragic flaw but that does not deprive
him of other virtues and traits proper to an heroic character.

The first clue to the character of Turnus is given in Book 6
where he is described by the Sibyl: *alias Latio jam partus Achil-
les, nate et ipse dea.*42 It remains to be seen how far Turnus ap-
proaches the Homeric hero type, but it seems clear from this pas-
sage that such is the intention of Vergil in introducing the char-
acter of Turnus.

The first act of the second tragedy within the Aeneid opens

42*Aeneid* vi.89-90.
with Book 7. The importance which Vergil attached to this last half of the Aeneid is unmistakable—*majus opus moveo*, (Aeneid vii. 44)—although this has not always been recognized. An indication of this is found in the fact that these later books are neglected for the most part when the Aeneid is taken in the classroom. The natural inherent interest of the first six books and the dramatic power of the Dido tragedy have so impressed many readers that they can desire nothing else from the poem. However, this second drama presenting the tragedy of Turnus, is no less than the tragedy of Dido built upon dramatic principles and is linked with the first half of the poem.\(^{43}\) In Book 7 the characters are introduced, the action is established once again and the cross purposes of motivation between the hero and the protagonist are interestingly knit into the fiber of the characters.

It is no mere straw man that Vergil makes of the tragic hero of Books 7–12. In every way Turnus is a worthy adversary of noble Aeneas. Vergil has endowed him with that nobility and goodness of character which elevates him above the ordinary level of humanity. He is the son of a goddess, as the Sibyl predicted. Queen Amata specifies his noble ancestry even further:

\[
\ldots \text{et Turno, si prima domus repetatur origo,}
\]
\[
\text{Inachus Acrisiusque patres Mediaeque Mycenae.}\quad ^{44}
\]

Thus the lineage of the hero Turnus is traced to ancient Greece

\(^{43}\text{Rand, Magical Art, p. 373.}\)

\(^{44}\text{Aeneid vii. 371-372.}\)
which is a very natural and plausible explanation for the hostility he shows toward Trojan Aeneas, apart from the rivalry for the hand of the daughter of King Latinus, Lavinia. Besides his noble ancestry, Turnus is gifted with natural beauty above all men—ante alios pulcherrimus omnis Turnus. Moreover, all these traits are crowned with that essential characteristic of Homeric epic heroes, physical prowess, in which Turnus is the equal of Achilles. The attractiveness of this trait in Turnus is best illustrated by the compelling charm which he exercises over his own men as he exhorts them to follow him as their leader in war:

haec ubi dicta dedit divosque in vota vocavit, certatim se se Rutuli exhortantur in arma. hunc decus egregium formae movet atque juventae, hunc atavi reges, hunc claris dextera factis.

As if to emphasize properly this trait of physical prowess, Vergil reiterates at the close of Book 7 this same trait of Turnus:

Ipse inter primos praestanti corpore Turnus vertitur arma tenens et toto vertice supra est.

In all of Book 7 Turnus has but one speech in which he directly addresses Alecto, that hellish monster breeding wars and strife who was sent by Juno to arouse Turnus to fury. Disguised as aged Calybe, the servant of Juno, she appears to Turnus in sleep. The motivation of Turnus in this case is not unnatural nor does it

45Ibid., 55.
46Ibid., 471-474.
47Ibid., 783-784.
necessarily deprive him of free-will. By this device Vergil merely yields to the requirements for epic poetry by showing the parallel plot among the divine agents. A similar situation was also found in Book 4 where Juno and Venus conspired to achieve the marriage of Dido and Aeneas. The natural rage and fury which Turnus displays upon waking could just as well be the result of a simple dream in which the realization of his position with respect to this Trojan invader was vividly brought home to him. The real significance of the speech which he makes in reproaching the disguised Alecto cannot be missed:

Hic juvenis vatem inridens sic orsa vicissim ore refert: 'classis invectas Thyridis undam non, ut rere, mess effugit nuntius auris; ne tantos mihi finge metus. nec regia Iuno immemor est nostri. sed te victa situ verique effeta senectus, o mater, curis nequiquam exercet, et arma regum inter falsa vatem formidine ludit. cura tibi divum effigies et tempa tueri; bella viri pacemque gerent quis bella gerenda.'

Although this speech is made in a dream, it can more easily be accepted as representative of the true disposition of Turnus. In the light of subsequent action this is certainly true; however, it is only necessary to point out this first sign of that tragic flaw which shall be the undoing of Turnus. First, the tone of the speech is sarcastic, insulting, even contemptuous—inridens. It can be thought that Turnus knew, or at least recognized, the form

48Ibid., 435-444.
of Juno's servant, and should have shown her common courtesy. But being a self-contained, confident individual he taunts the old woman, and might just as well have told her to mind her own business. Essentially a man of action, he has little regard for circumspection or moderation in speech. This is the first example of that trait of character which Vergil attributes to Turnus—violenta—unbridled rashness.49

As Book 7 closes, the first act of this second tragedy is complete. All the major characters of the story have been introduced. Turnus, a secondary hero in the epic, is sharply drawn and motivated with strong probability. Thus Vergil's first problem in this second half of the Aeneid, to create an antagonist worthy of Aeneas, is completed:

It is no easy task to match the splendid strength and reserve of the hero's [Aeneas'] character. Yet Vergil is so successful that the sympathies of not a few readers besides Mr. Saintsbury are enlisted for Turnus. Like Dido, Turnus has a vigorous and immediately engaging personality. He is young and goodly to see, brave and aristocratic—"potent in grandsires and greatgrandsires," and above all, patriotic and Italian. By careful suggestion, by deliberate contrast with other characters, like that of the plausible but weak-spirited Drances, Vergil prepares us for his final array of qualities at the end of the poem.50

A fundamental question with respect to the character of Turnus has to do with his motivation; why does he wage such violent war against Aeneas and the Trojans. Scholars are divided in their

49 Ibid., x.151; xi.376; xii.9,45.
50 Rand, Magical Art, p. 374.
answer to this question. Some writers condemn Turnus because he was determined by selfish and personal motives, "heedless of national well-being or divine decree, if, at any cost to anybody and everybody, he can gratify his own wishes." The opposite view is adopted by Sellar along with many other reputable scholars. "The cause which moves Turnus to resist the Trojans is no unworthy one," writes Sellar, "whether on patriotic grounds or on personal grounds to himself." With all the evidence that might be deduced for both of these opinions, one is inclined to believe that there is truth in both positions. Professor Conington, in the Introduction to his edition of the Aeneid appears to have solved this problem with peculiar tact:

Virgil must have sympathized with Aeneas, not only as realizing the adopted type of heroic action, but as representing the undeviating and relentless march of Roman greatness. But the modern spirit was too strong for him; in describing Turnus as he conceived him to have been, he was led, in fact, to advocate his cause, and to record a protest against heroic and Roman aggression alike. It is the spirit of the drama allowing itself free play; and the result is the enlargement of human sympathy, the vindication of the weaker as well as of the stronger. In many respects, as I have intimated, the character of Turnus does not command our approval; there is fierceness in it, and blind fury, and in the case of Pallas at least, savage cruelty.  

51 Glover, Virgil, p. 229; also in agreement with this view are Prescott, p. 476; and Conway, Vergilian Age, pp. 65, 110-111.  
52 Sellar, Roman Poets, p. 402; also of this opinion are, Bowra, pp. 44-49; and Haerhoff, pp. 98-100.  
At least the opinion expressed by Conington recognizes the possibility of Vergil being a sufficiently deep poet to have transcended the restrictions of both interpretations. The tragic flaw in the character of Turnus remains to be considered, as well as the illustration of that fault in the speeches of this hero.

Whatever opinion one may prefer concerning the motivation of Turnus throughout the last six books of the *Aeneid*, the fault which vitiates his character and brings about his doom is the same. Vergil is quite explicit about the fault of Turnus. In almost every one of the twenty-five speeches of Turnus there is reflected a violence and ruthlessness which borders on contempt of the gods themselves. In his third appearance Turnus exhorts his men to bravery and in his tirade under the influence of a consuming passion for victory he utters these words:

> . . . nil me fatalia terrrent,  
> si qua Phryges prae se jactant, responsa deorum:  
> . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
> . . sunt et mea contra  
> fata mihi, ferro sceleratam excindere gentem  
> conjuge praerepta; (Aeneid ix.133-134; 136-138.)

At the close of Book 9 when Turnus found himself locked within the Trojan camp, victory was within his very grasp except for his tragic flaw. Vergil explains it thus:

> et si continuo victorem ea cura subisset,  
> rumpere claustra manu sociosque immittere portis,  
> ultimus ille dies bello gentique fuisset.  
> sed furor ardentem caedisque insana cupidó  
> egit in adversos. (Aeneid ix.757-761.)

Turnus was a firm believer in action to which fortune would surely
add her favor as he instructs his men—audientia Fortuna juvat.54

Well may the belt of Pallas symbolize this tragic flaw in the character of Turnus and serve to recall the ugly circumstances of his death. In Book 12 at the climax of the action, the sight of that belt by Aeneas is enough to seal the doom of Turnus, which makes it clear what fault brought this tragic death upon him.

After Pallas had fallen at the hands of Turnus we are shown the full revelation of the tragic hero's character flaw:

... et laevo pressit pede talia fatus
exanimem rapiens immania ponders baltei
impressumque nefas: una sub nocte jugali
caesa manus juvenum foede thalamique cruenti,
quae Clonus Eurytides multo caelaverat auro;
quo nunc Turnus ovat spolio gaudetque potitus.
nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae
et servare modum rebus sublata secundis. (Aeneid x.495-502.)

The lack of moderation and restraint in action is fundamental to the character of Turnus as Vergil presents him.55 In this there is a similarity between Dido and Turnus. Moreover, Aeneas is conspicuous for the virtue of moderation in all actions except for the two failures which Vergil permits in him. Thus there is contrast.

Did Turnus really understand himself, and was he fully aware of the heroic type which he exemplified? He was, for this was the source of his pride. The reply of Turnus to Drances in Book 11 is clear evidence of this fact. In a speech characterized by sharp

54Aeneid x.284.
ridicule and stinging sarcasm Turnus derides Drances and all those who find no security in war—nulla salus bello. With eloquence born of passion he jeers and mocks with cold contempt all cowards, among whom he includes Drances. He addresses his 'would-be' father-in-law, King Latinus, with feeling and argues persuasively to renew every effort to repulse the invader with Fortune's help. The closing words reveal his great courage and trust in himself:

ibō anima contra, vel magnum praestet Achillem factaque Volsci manibus paria induat arma ille licet, 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 lust, sive est virtus et gloria, tollat. (Aeneid xi.438-444.)

A round of debates followed when suddenly it was announced that the soldiers of Aeneas were invading the kingdom. In biting sarcasm Turnus praises them for their pursuit of peace. He stalks from the council to brandish the sword of war as leader of the Latins.

The totality of blindness which affected Turnus as a result of his violent temperament is further emphasized in the two replies which he makes to Latinus and Amata who wish to dissuade him from his rash purpose. To their every consideration he answers with violence:

haudquaquam dictis violentia Turni flectitur; exsuperat magis aegrescitque medendo.57

In view of Vergil's characterization of the hero to this point, it

56Aeneid xi.362, 399.
57Ibid., xii.45-46.
is impossible for Turnus to appreciate the thoughts or feelings of
these others. He must trust himself to his own strength and they
must set their worries and cares aside while he seeks glory.

Quam pro me curam geris, hanc precor, optime pro me
deponas letumque sinas pro laude pacisci. (Aeneid
xii.48-49.)

Thus speaks the Homeric type of hero of which Turnus is the only
fully developed example in the Aeneid. There is a natural and
rugged appeal in this character type, especially in the courageous
support that Turnus gives to his cause. Fault is to be found in
the manner in which he pursues this cause, but his character is no
less admirable than that of Aeneas with respect to the dedication
to his destiny—at least as Turnus conceived that destiny.58

The slaying of Turnus by Aeneas has excited various interpreta-
tions from several authors. If Turnus is merely a foil to the
character of Aeneas, this last scene takes on the aspect of a mod-
ern wrestling match in which Aeneas plays the role of victor, Turn-
us that of the villain. But this would destroy the dramatic
character of the entire second half of the epic in the absence of
that tragic inevitability of the plot which must spring from the
action of free agents. In this contest Turnus is no villain.59

The tragic end comes to him as a result of that principle of in-
ternal consistency proper to tragic heroes. In this last scene

58Prescott, Development of Vergil's Art, p. 476.
59Haarhoff, Vergil the Universal, p. 96.
the character of the individual contestants as developed in the epic is sufficiently plausible to be consistent with the inevitable outcome of their actions at this point. Turnus could not have been expected to see Aeneas from the Roman viewpoint. As far as he was concerned, the Trojan could be accused of self-seeking no less than himself. Given his character, Turnus could not act in any other way than he does, and in this the sympathy and pity of the reader is evoked on his behalf. "We have here, as in the case of Dido," writes Haarhoff, "the Aristotelian inevitability of tragedy. It is wrong to abuse Turnus merely to make a Roman holiday. He has suffered too often from a one-sided moralizing. The very blindness that drives him on in his impetuous pride constitutes for Vergil the tragedy of the situation. The clash is inevitable and in that clash the splendid, if excessive and untamed, human qualities of Turnus are wasted." 

Another opinion in this question appreciates the far-reaching effects of the interpretation of this final scene of the Aeneid. "If the death of Turnus is an act of sheer vindictive vengeance which assures the foundation of Rome," writes Miss Thornton, "then the Aeneid is ultimately a national epic, no less, but no more." The authoress denies the above condition. By comparing the episodes of Aeneas-Lausus with Turnus-Pallas, she concludes that the

60Ibid., p. 100.

character of Aeneas cannot grant pity to a man who is incapable of pity himself. The belt of Pallas which Turnus is wearing symbolizes the immoderation of his character, the element of *hybris*. At the sight of the belt on the fallen foe the hesitancy of Aeneas is resolved, the issue is inevitably determined. Turnus must die.

Every reader who has ever experienced the profound and sympathetic hope that the *coup de grace* might be withheld from Turnus reflects the feeling of Vergil himself. Only in this light does the fulness of the tragedy have its effect, when one experiences the profound human interest with which the poet has characterized Turnus. Professor Conington feels similarly in this statement:

> Here again the secret seems to be, that Virgil is impregnated with modern feeling, and that Turnus occupies ground which, to modern feelings, appears unassailable. As in the case of Dido, the fact that the gods are on the side of Aeneas makes but little impression on us; we hear their dictates and their warnings, but the note does not ring with the same awful clearness as in the Homeric poems; our human feelings are roused, and our ears are filled with other sounds. The words of the oracle are express, and we feel Amata's interpretation of them is a mere gloss; but it is good enough for the purpose; it gives a verbal sanction to a course which our hearts tell us to be the true one, and we are satisfied with it accordingly.62

> When human feeling is subjected to higher reason all are compelled to recognize the eternal truth which Vergil certainly held and Shakespeare has put so well—"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings."63


In his characterization of Dido and Turnus, Vergil shows that he understood and appreciated the Homeric ideal of heroism, and that its achievement was not beyond his power. In Aeneas, however, one recognizes Vergil's fundamental rejection of the Homeric hero with all its self-assertive spirit and cult of honor which had inspired a primitive civilization. The age of peace and order, the Augustan Age of Empire, demanded a hero of another mold.64 Those who still prefer the Homeric model are tempted to view Aeneas as a mere puppet of the gods, a character under the complete domination of divine agency. These fail to distinguish in the action of the Aeneid two very important factors which must not be confused; first, that human actions come under the impelling force of divine agents, and secondly, that human agents remain essentially free. As one writer expresses this ideal: "The poet, then, dignifies important action by divine intervention, but never abandons the explanation of outer action as due to causes entirely within the soul of the human agent."65 The mystery of human freedom has plagued philosophers since the beginning of time, nor have modern thinkers successfully unravelled the mystery. It is not fair, therefore, to blame Vergil for asserting in his character of Aeneas the two facts of human freedom and Divine Providence without explaining the mystery. The fact that he recognized it is

64 Bowra, Virgil to Milton, p. 56.
65 Prescott, Development of Virgil's Art, p. 261.
enough. It remains for his readers to recognize the universal paradox which he has embodied in the main characters of the Aeneid. In this recognition of a new approach to life appears, an approach through wisdom.

The character of Aeneas is that of a tragic epic hero. As has been pointed out, the Aeneid is composed of three tragedies. The first six books constitute the tragedy of Dido, and the last six books contain the tragedy of Turnus. Both of these tragedies are of the mixed variety, pathetic and ethical, according to the norms of Aristotle, with an unhappy ending. The tragedy of Aeneas is of a similar type, both pathetic and ethical, but with a happy ending which detracts not at all from its tragic spirit. To appreciate the complexity of the tragic theme throughout the Aeneid it is necessary to understand the inevitability of the clash which Vergil portrays between the main hero, Aeneas, and the secondary heroine and hero, Dido and Turnus. Although the human interest of these latter characters cannot help but capture the sympathy of most readers, it is the character of Aeneas which best illustrates the moving forces of the Vergilian era.66 Any attempt to explain or understand the Aeneid must in the end prove inadequate unless due attention is directed to an intelligent interpretation of the relationship between the three tragic characters.

Little space need be wasted in the establishment of the nobility and goodness of the character of Aeneas since Conington's work on this point.\(^{67}\) Although Vergil permits Turnus to taunt the hero with incidents from Homeric sources, it must be remembered that the Aeneas Vergil created was not intended to share the limitations of Homer's Aeneas. The difference in viewpoint is essential in a question involving natural prejudices.

The judgment of Mark Van Doren on the character of Aeneas is reasonably dismissed.\(^{68}\) For a critic to claim that he has formed his judgments in the most generous perspective available,\(^{69}\) and then to admit that his knowledge is limited to translations of the works to be criticized,\(^{70}\) is sufficiently self-incriminating for intelligent readers. However, if the basis for Van Doren's criticism of Vergil is that he did not achieve precisely what Homer has achieved, we deny the supposition that Vergil did try or should have tried to accomplish exactly what Homer attempted. Vergil's achievement in its own individual way, though quite different from Homer's excellence, can and does rank together with the Iliad and the Odyssey of the Greek epic poet as a masterpiece of another kind. Likewise Aeneas' character has its place along

\(^{67}\)Conington, Works of Virgil, II, 11-16.


\(^{69}\)Ibid., p. xiii.

\(^{70}\)Ibid., p. xiv.
side Homer's Achilles, though they are different types.

The propriety or trueness to life which Vergil portrays in his characters, especially Aeneas, is not less in conformity to reality because it is universal and ideal. Poetry is more philosophical than history as Aristotle admits, and as a result the poet's characters may be more generalized than individual:

His [Vergil's] characters are more generalized than Homer's less individualistic, more symbolical. His ideal character (Aeneas) is a combination of Roman and modified Stoic qualities, possessing deep sense of devotion to duty (pietas), wisdom, moderation, control of emotions, ability to endure adversity, but also human defects and weaknesses (pity, anger, love, discouragement). Heroism for Vergil is not Homeric military prowess, but strengthening of character, overcoming of natural human weakness through suffering and experience.

It is no fault of Vergil's that his characters appear Lilliputian in comparison to Homer's; Achilles or Odysseus are simply of a different character type and not to be compared with Aeneas.

The consistency of Aeneas' character cannot be fully appreciated unless it is considered in the light of the development or evolution that Vergil designed in the Aeneid. Aeneas is the embodiment of Vergil's own philosophy of life, and although the question whether he was an Epicurean or Stoic may be avoided here, the Stoic influence on the hero's character cannot be denied.

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71Poetics, ix, 1451 b, 5-7.
73Green, Stray Studies, pp. 248-249.
suggestion of the poet's own struggle between these two conflicting philosophies is reflected in the tragedy of Dido, but here it is the hero that conquers, not without sympathy for the cause of the tragic queen, however.

In the Stoic character there seems to be but one possibility of a tragic flaw, to act from passion. Throughout the Aeneid the hero is characterized with a single epithet, pius. Piety, in itself, does not translate the Roman ideas behind this adjective. Loyalty or devotion to duty would be closer to the real meaning of the term. There is, indeed, an entire and complete moral scheme contained in the Roman concept of pietas. Loyalty to the gods and one's country, devotedness to family, to be true to oneself, all of these ideas are drawn in the character of Aeneas. It seems wiser to identify the tragic flaw with its root-source rather than to find it in its effect as Pease has done. The deviation from duty imposed by fate is the effect of Aeneas' loss of control; as when he delayed with Dido at Carthage yielding to the impulse of passion. Throughout the story the hero is torn between two modes of conduct. One springs from his sensitive nature and the desire to follow his feelings, while the demands of destiny and duty pull him in the opposite direction. When Aeneas falls from the heroic plane he acts from passion, without regard for the requirements of pietas. The conflict of these two sides of the character of Aeneas.

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Aeneas, the struggle between this sensitiveness to affection and his entire absorption in the mysterious demands of the destiny to which he is called, is the essence of the tragedy of Aeneas and not only of the Dido episode. The full meaning and tragic pathos of the Aeneid is bound up in this aspect of the character of the hero. Because this is so, the tragic flaw in the hero must be recognized as that propensity to yield to passion instead of following the path of duty which destiny had marked out for him. The ultimate victory of Aeneas is not so much the conquest of Turnus, but the triumph of the cause of duty within his own character over the tyranny of passion, for which both Turnus and Dido went down to death.

Vergil's first presentation of the hero in the Aeneid shows Aeneas face to face with the struggle just described. At the height of the storm in Book 1 his prayer and lament is that he might have died in honor beneath the walls of Troy. After six long years of wandering and narrow escapes from death his regret is that he did not follow his passion on that fatal last night of Troy's fall, heedless of Hector's command. The despair characterized in this first utterance is naturally born of fear of the storm and of impending death. Having reached the shores of Libya,

75 Green, Stray Studies, p. 236.
76 Aeneid 1.94-101.
77 Ibid., 11.289-295; 314-316.
the hero finds himself once again and, as the situation demands, he exhorts his men. Vergil's language and psychological insight in this speech coming from Aeneas are a revelation of the power of his conception of the hero's character in the Aeneid. But the finest touch appears in the following two lines, 208-209:

Talia voce refert curisque ingentibus aeger  
spe vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem.

Vergil shows us a leader who is capable of fear but who does not permit that passion to disturb his men, especially when the demands of a leader require that he be an inspiration to them. To be afraid in circumstances of impending danger, to feel disappointment after long cherished hopes have been dashed to pieces, to feel love and hatred, is not a fault. To yield to these passions when duty demands otherwise, would be a fault.

Father Henle has suggested an outline of Book 2 illustrative of the development of the theme of Aeneas' destiny. The three major temptations are; to join the battle even after Hector's command; to slay Helen, the cause of the war; and finally, to perish with Troy despite the demands of Hector and Venus. Each case illustrates the conflict between passion and reason. A suffering accompanies each temptation followed by a divine illumination in which the path of the hero appears. Finally, the loss of Creusa

78 Ibid., 198-207.

and the appearance of her ghost confirms Aeneas in his determination to follow that destiny which Hector, Venus, and the omens had already commanded. The sacrifice of his own feelings to the call of duty is accomplished with personal pain, but such is the hero's role in the Aeneid.

Once in the tragedy of Dido and once in the tragedy of Turnus Aeneas' tragic flaw appears.\(^8\) In both cases one is made to feel that Vergil is not wholly in sympathy with the action of the hero but is forced to make a concession to human nature. Green is not quite correct in his assertion that Vergil excludes any sign of Roman cruelty from his portrait of Aeneas.\(^9\) In this case his enthusiasm for the character of Aeneas has gone beyond the evidence. No defence is necessary in either case for Aeneas. The requirements of dramatic characterization demand that the tragic hero possess a tragic flaw. In accordance with this demand Vergil complies. The plausibility in each case is quite satisfactory.

\(^8\) Aeneid iv. 265-276 contains Mercury's reproach to Aeneas. Forgetfulness of his own destiny—\textit{regni rerumque oblite tua tum}—is but one criticism of the hero. The more powerful motive which at last moves Aeneas to depart from Carthage is the sense of duty which he should feel toward his son Ascanius, upon whom Rome's future will depend. The association which Vergil effects in Book xi by having Aeneas wrap the dead body of Pallas in the two gold cloths received from Dido appears to be an attempt to unite the two instances of Aeneas' flaw. Having wrapped the body, Aeneas caused certain youths to be conducted with the body of Pallas to Evander. Certainly this example of human sacrifice practiced by Aeneas was not justified in Vergil's mind, even though their blood would sprinkle the funeral pyre of one so dear as Pallas. (Aeneid xi. 72-82.)

There is some truth in the accusation of H. V. Routh that in comparison with the great speeches which Vergil gives to both Dido and Turnus, hardly a single characteristically noble utterance is put into the mouth of the chief character. As it stands, this statement is an exaggeration. There is a nobility born of passion in the speeches of Dido and Turnus which would not be consistent with the character of Aeneas as Vergil conceived him. Nevertheless one must be prepared to admit a nobility of a different kind in the character of Aeneas. As evidence of the nobility of the character of Aeneas the following passages should prove a point.

From the incident of the landing at Carthage already cited, the address of the leader to his men is surely noble utterance:

O Socii (neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum),
o passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem.
vos et Scyllaem rabiem penitusque sonantis
accestis scopulos, vos et Cyclopia saxa
experti: revocate animos maestumque timorem
mittite; forsan et haec olim memorabo juvabit.
per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum
tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas
ostendunt; illic fas regna resurgere Troiae.
durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis. (Aeneid
I.198-207.)

The underlined portions of the above speech of Aeneas are sufficiently noble to be frequently quoted in Western literature. Character of unusual depth and philosophic bent is indicated in the hero. Likewise, these same traits of Aeneas are further illustrated in his address to Achates as they gaze upon the scenes from

the Trojan War in the temple of Juno:

Constitit et lacrimans 'quis jam locus' inquit 'Achate quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris? en Priamus. sunt his etiam sua praemia laudis; sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt. sove metus; feret haec aliquam tibi fama salutem.' (Aeneid i. 459-463.)

The last speech of Aeneas in Book 1 is the noble and gracious expression of his deep gratitude to Queen Dido. This speech is certainly characteristic of the depth of feeling in the hero and the expression is uniquely Vergilian. Indeed it would be incongruous in the mouth of Achilles or Odysseus:

improvisus ait: 'coram, quem quaeritis adsum, Troius Aeneas, Libycis ereptus ab undis. O sola infandos Troiae miserata labores, quae nos, reliquias Danaum, terraeque marisque omnibus exhaustis iam casibus, omnium egenos, urbe, domo socias, grates persolvere dignas non opis est nostra, Dido, nec quidquid ubique est gentis Dardaniae, magnum quae sparsa per orbem. di tibi, si qua pios respectant numina, si quid usquam justitia est et mens sibi conscia recti, praemia digna ferant. quae te tam laeta tulerunt saecula? qui tanti talem genuere parentea? in freta dum fluvii current, dum montibus umbrae lustrabunt convexa, polus dum sidera pascet, semper honos moneque tuum laudesque maneunt, quae me cumque vocant terrae.' (Aeneid i. 595-610.)

With the above speech, the introduction of the new heroic type is complete in the Aeneid as far as the basic elements are concerned.

At the banquet which Dido gives for the Trojan leader and his shipwrecked men the queen is inflamed with great love for Aeneas. She desires to know about the fall of Troy and his wanderings. It is thus that Books 2 and 3, while deferring the dramatic problem, provide a natural occasion to trace the evolution of the character
of Aeneas. These books also provide Dido with a more probable and natural development of her love for the hero as she learns to admire his constancy of purpose and to sympathize more deeply with his sufferings.

In Book 4 Dido is the aggressor and the eloquence of her unrestrained passion is something which would be inconsistent with the character of Aeneas. Are we to imagine that Vergil deliberately intended to make the hero conscious of the weakness of his own cause in his determination to leave Dido? Why is Aeneas so prone to silence when Dido is so eloquent? The answer to these questions lies in Vergil's knowledge of human psychology. The silence of Aeneas, his refusal to give vent to his own feelings and the pain that this separation is costing him, possesses an eloquence peculiarly consistent with the character of the hero. What would it have availed if he had employed the persuasive power of a Demosthenes? Against the passion of Dido it would have been in vain.

The indecisiveness of Aeneas throughout the earlier books of the Aeneid is gradually removed as each hardship is borne and overcome in fidelity to his interior illuminations. The appearance of Anchises in Book 5, lines 724-739, directs the hero to visit the

83 Rand, Magical Art, pp. 352-353.

84 Aeneid iv.331-332; 361, 395, 448-449; also vi.455, 460. Aeneas is not as unfeeling as may appear. He realizes that his actions must speak for themselves.
underworld. There in the full vision of the future the character of Aeneas will be strengthened and his destiny determined beyond doubt:

Now as he stands with Anchises watching the souls preparing to enter into life (for they are at the river Lethe where souls yet unbofn are waiting), his father unfolds to him the glorious pageant of Roman history. These are the sons of Aeneas to be; this the race he will found; herein lies the meaning, the worth, the value of his temporal destiny. He will go forth from this adventure, from this vision of the future, no longer dutiful to the gods, but enthusiastically devoted to the task heaven has given him. The sufferings of the seven years of wandering and the great temptation at Carthage have tempered his character to steel hardness; now the revelation, too, is complete. Hereafter, there will be no wavering, no doubting: the vision and the will are now his till death. His character is confirmed in strength.85

From the last half of the Aeneid it will suffice to show that the character of Aeneas has lost nothing of its reflective nature. The nobility of his expression seems to be marked by this unique trait to see beyond the mere external circumstances of this life to a deeper meaning in reality. The primitive vigor of the heroes of Homer is lacking in him, but these would be incongruous in the Aeneid and inconsistent with Vergil's purpose.86 The concept of heroism had changed from Homer to Vergil, nor is a return possible without a violent upheaval and regression of our civilization.

It is characteristic of Aeneas that he should feel less real joy in the exploits of war, which is not the same as saying that

85Henle, Fourth Year Latin, p. 380.
he is a weak warrior. In Vergil's view, war is to be considered as a necessary evil among the Romans, and then it must only be waged against the proud and the haughty. Peace and good government of subject peoples was the basis of Roman greatness as it was to be the secret of Rome's founder, Aeneas. This was just as Anchises had predicted:

\[\textit{tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento} \\
\textit{(hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,} \\
\textit{parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.} \textit{(Aeneid vi.851-853.)}\]

Thus, true to his commission, Aeneas speaks to the Latin envoys who seek permission to bury their dead:

\[\textit{quaenam vos tanto fortuna indigna, Latini,} \\
\textit{implicuit bello, qui nos fugiatis amicos?} \\
\textit{pacem me examinis et Martis sorte peremptia} \\
\textit{oratis? equidem et vivis concedere vellem.} \\
\textit{nec veni, nisi fata locum sedem que dedissent,} \\
\textit{nec bellum cum gente gero: rex nostra reliquit} \\
\textit{hospitalia et Turni potius se credidit armis.} \\
\textit{aequius huic Turnum fuerat se opponere morti.} \\
\textit{si bellum finire manu, si pellere Teucros} \\
\textit{apparat, his mecum decuit concurrere telis:} \\
\textit{vixet cui vitam Deus aut sua dextera dedisset.} \\
\textit{nunc ite et miseris suponite civibus ignem.} \textit{(Aeneid xi.108-119.)}\]

The effect of this speech took hold immediately upon the envoys and no doubt the knowledge of the magnanimous Trojan leader which these envoys carried back was largely responsible for many abandoning the cause of Turnus. This view of the ideal leader was also recognized as being in the spirit of Augustus.\(^{\text{37}}\) The final advice which Aeneas gives to his son is also touched with that

\(^{\text{37}}\text{Conway, New Studies, p. 141.}\)
noblelty of expression characteristic of Vergil's epic hero:

disse puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem, 
fortunam ex aliis. nunc te mea dextera bello 
defensum dabit et magna inter praemia ducet. 
tu facito, mox cum matura adoleverit aestas, 
sis memor et te animo repetentem exemplis tuorum 
et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector. (Aeneid 
xii.435-440.)

It is clear from the underlined words in the above passage that Aeneas understood clearly the meaning that is to be found in bearing one's fortune with resignation. The importance of this lesson was the final testament that he would leave his son as he departed for battle. Though Ascanius is older than Astyanax was at the time Hector went off to his death, the reference to Hector appears to be intended by Vergil to recall that previous tragic parting.

The character of Aeneas is to be measured by the concept of heroicity of Roman and not Greek civilization. If the emphasis is on the moral rather than the physical, this is fully justified in the light of the demands of time and circumstance in which Vergil wrote the Aeneid. The most important point in this consideration, is whether Aeneas as an epic hero is adequate for the role which Vergil gives him. In the judgment of this author, he is.

Vergil's DICTION and Style

Epic diction employs a single meter, the dactylic hexameter, which because of its majestic quality is most suited for heroic poetry. Aristotle also requires that the diction be clear without

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being common; elevated without becoming obscure. Wide use of metaphorical expression is praised by Aristotle as the true mark of a gifted poet. Finally, the whole execution of the meter must be accomplished with propriety.

One does not read very far in the Aeneid before encountering unfamiliar words, or unfamiliar meanings of common words in the form of archaisms. The use of proper names, not just for their sound but because they are names of splendid, remote, terrible, or celebrated things, gives sweep and magnificence to this style of poetry. Vergil knew this. Moreover, the embellishments of language suggested by continued allusions to any source of heightened feeling in common sense experience, such as light, darkness, storms, flowers, jewels, love; all these are fair materials for the epic poet. Over all these materials the poet must exercise a great measure of control in order to achieve that dignity and solemnity proper to this literary type. In every one of these respects Vergil was master of his materials as well as master of the expression that he gave to them.

In defense of Vergil's solemn style of poetry Bowra and Lewis have a most plausible explanation. Bowra understands and explains the great difference which separates the Vergilian from the Homeric epic style by an appeal to the different manner in which the poems were presented to the audience. Homer was meant to be recited at

89 Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost, pp. 39-50.
a festive banquet. Vergil also gains much from being heard, but
the reader was the intended audience. Speaking of the literary
epic poets, Bowra says that they have written for readers and are
centered with the evocative power of every word, and that they de-
mand a close attention which by its very nature excludes immediate
and direct pleasure which is given by oral poets. It is to be
doubted that Bowra denies the added pleasure that hearing Vergil
would afford. What he seems to want to say is that Vergil is fre-
quently more concerned with hidden meanings which lie deep within
the context, whereas Homer is more direct. To read and re-read a
passage from Vergil is often the only way to reap the rich meaning
that the author intended. In a mere recitation much of this would
necessarily be lost. As an example of this one could cite what is
perhaps the most famous line from the Aeneid: sunt lacrimae rerum
et mentem mortaliam tangunt, (Aeneid 1.462). The many interpreta-
tions which this line has had and the thoughts which it has sug-
gested have occupied scholars for centuries. The deep imagery
and rich suggestion of Vergil's poetry is another attempt to put
into the literary epic what was lost when the formal occasions of
recitation at a banquet were past. C. S. Lewis makes the point

91 Ibid., p. 6.
92 Arthur L. Keith, "A Vergilian Line," Classical Journal,
XVII (April 1922), 398-402.
in this way:

There is no robed and garlanded ἀοίδος, no altar, not even a feast in a hall—only a private person reading a book in an armchair. Yet somehow or other, that private person must be made to feel that he is assisting at an august ritual, for if he does not, he will not be receptive of the true epic exhilaration. The sheer writing of the poem, therefore, must now do, of itself, what the whole occasion helped to do for Homer. To blame it for being ritualistic or incantatory, for lacking intimacy or the speaking voice, is to blame it for being just what it intends to be and ought to be.93

It would surely be the gravest mistake to regard as faults those very properties which the poet labored hardest to attain, and which, rightly enjoyed, are central to the poem's essential pleasure (ὀικεία ἡδονή).94 In his similes,95 metaphors,96 onomatopoeia,97 and variations of the dactylic hexameter Vergil has proved himself a master of the epic technique. Nicholas Moseley has concluded that in his use of epithets in the Aeneid Vergil insisted that metrical expedience must be subordinated to plot and action.98

Vergil's diction is accomplished in a style eminently classic in precision and harmony. Few poets ever seem to be as really

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93Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost, p. 39.
94Ibid., pp. 1-2.
95Aeneid i.82; 11.626-631; x.693-696; xi.624-628.
96Ibid., iv.173-197; vi.1.
97Ibid., 1.55, 87, 105, 147; 11.313; vii.596; x.291.
infallible with the right word. There is a classic restraint together with romantic exuberance in his expressiveness. Undoubtedly it is his style that has influenced the world of poetry more than any other Latin author before or since his Aeneid. Even those who find fault with almost everything else about Vergil's poetry are forced to admit the charm and elegance of a style that is full of grandeur and vitality, "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man."
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

"It is a pity," writes Niebuhr, quoted by Sellar, "that posterity overrated the very work which was but a failure."\(^1\) Although Sellar remarks that Niebuhr's authority is more to be respected in the field of history than in literature, he also admits that, "this verdict on the merits of the Aeneid was in accordance with the most advanced criticism of the time when it was written, both in Germany and England."\(^2\)

Is it a mere coincidence that these are the two countries of Europe in which the Protestant Reformation had made the deepest inroads; the countries which the age of rationalism had plunged into a golden age of scientific achievement trailing in its wake all the abuses of Liberalism? These critics and scholars, no less than the poets, Homer and Vergil, have been children of their own times, conditioned in their tastes and preferences by the culture which gave them birth. With this in mind, it is understandable why the heroic age of Homer would have more appeal for the German and English mind of the 19th century than the spirit of Vergil.

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\(^1\) Sellar, Roman Poets, p. 72.

\(^2\) Ibid.
would. They can feel a kinship with Homer's more uninhibited characters who seek to reap the fruits of this life for themselves, its glory, wealth and power. Vergil, with his teaching of the divine origin of political authority, the religious character of every aspect of man's life seen in relation to his individual destiny and in relation to the national destiny, was not palatable to that age which was the child of the enlightenment. But there were some scholars on the scene who would not be misled by the philologic-esthetic treatment to which literature, including the works of Vergil, was being subjected at this time. Theodor Haecker emphasizes the fact that, "any mere philological-aesthetic account of Virgil and his work is a falsity, a disintegration of the whole, to be effected only by disintegrated minds." 3

A second point on which Vergil has been harshly treated is the accusation that he has made his poem out of books and not out of life. This sneer is quite wide of the mark and has been answered by Gilbert Murray:

No artist builds his work out of mere life; only a newspaper reporter does that, and not the most intelligent kind of reporter. A poet builds out of life interpreted; out of life seen through transfiguring and illuminating media of emotion and memory and imagination. To make up his experience, both at the moment of emotion and still more when the emotion is 'remembered in tranquility,' there go elements from all his knowledge of life, all things remembered or imagined, all the experiences of other poets through which he has imaginatively lived, all the old poetry which has

become a part of his being.\textsuperscript{4}

Life addresses itself to man through the avenues of the senses, feelings and emotions, memory and imagination, and through these to man's highest faculties of intellect and will. Thus it is the role of the poet to interpret life through his use of the medium of language which is directed to the totality of man's human nature. However, it takes a certain amount of pre-conditioning before one is ready to accept and understand the art, especially the poetry, of an age so vastly different from the modern age. Modern man is almost incapable of understanding the species of poetry called narrative epic. The reason is that one must, either in mind or reality, be able to see or experience the impact of the death of an era or its birth. But this alone is yet insufficient, for one must also be able to comprehend within his own being the entire sweep of an epoch. To understand the message of an epic one must in some sense be a kindred soul with the poet. Otherwise the great risk of misunderstanding, rash judgment, and dissatisfaction with the efforts of the poet.\textsuperscript{5}

The purpose of this thesis has been to consider the Aeneid within that historical and literary context which gave it birth, first, in order to recognize the inner workings and relations of its vast materials within the traditional framework of the epic,\footnote{\textsuperscript{4}Gilbert Murray, \textit{The Classical Tradition in Poetry}, (London, 1927), p. 144.} \footnote{\textsuperscript{5}Lewis, Preface to \textit{Paradise Lost}, pp. 1-3.}
and secondly, to appreciate more fully the skill of Vergil as an original epic poet. Under the heading of each of the several elements of dramatic unity the discussion proceeded to illustrate the adaptations of the traditional epic form which Vergil achieved in his effort to Romanize effectively what had originally been native to Greece. The two most important innovations were the profound influence of the Attic drama on Vergil's epic construction, and his admission of a deliberate didactic purpose in the epic as a stimulus to Roman nationalism. As a result, the choice of action imitated in the Aeneid, the handling of plot and characterization, the expression of thought, the style and diction of the whole poem was shown to be uniquely Vergilian, even though as an epic it remains faithful to the traditional requirements. A brief resume will focus more sharply the distinctive characteristics which these elements of dramatic unity have in the Aeneid. If one accepts the validity of these conclusions there will be no temptation to compare Vergil with Homer. Instead one will surely recognize that the Aeneid is not a failure but a new type of epic poem, different from both Iliad and Odyssey, but no less epic for that difference.

The epic subject is Vergil's invention, according to Lewis, and in the Aeneid he has chosen to imitate an action which has altered the very meaning of the word epic. Without going against those canons which Aristotle set down for epic construction, Vergil has gone beyond anything that Homer attempted. The problem of in-
Integrating the Greek epic form and Roman materials was Vergil's chief poetic achievement:

His solution of the problem—one of the most important revolutions in the history of poetry—was to take one single national legend and treat it in such a way that we feel the vaster theme to be somehow implicit in it. He has to tell a comparatively short story and give us the illusion of having lived through a great space of time. He has to deal with a limited number of personages and make us feel as if national, or almost cosmic, issues are involved. He must locate his action in a legendary past and yet make us feel the present, and the intervening centuries, already foreshadowed. After Virgil and Milton, this procedure seems obvious enough. But it is obvious only because a great poet, faced with an all but insoluble problem, discovered this answer and with it discovered new possibilities for poetry itself.6

Ancient epic had influenced the form and provided a rich source of material for the development of Greek tragedy. Thus it happens that Vergil looked back at Homer through Greek tragedy and in his composition of the Aeneid was influenced in no small degree by the accomplishments of the Attic theatre.7 Moreover, the traditional Greek view of the poet as teacher, providing there is no indifference to beauty and form, was admirably suited to Vergil's purpose in the Aeneid. Aristotle is responsible for separating the two aspects of fine art, the esthetic and the ethical purpose. Strictly speaking, Vergil would have agreed that literature has nothing to do with morality as such. However, as Glover observes, "The poet and the artist are concerned with reality, and have no

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6Ibid., p. 33; also pp. 32-38.
7Rand, Magical Art, p. 28.
business to preach; but if their work is true, it has inevitably, like all life, morality implied in itself." Thus it follows, that in treating the various elements of epic construction as they are employed by Vergil, one must recognize those factors which influenced his art.

Aristotle praised Homer as the master of epic achievement, unrivalled in thought and diction, the model of all epic excellences, (1448 b, 35); the Homeric characters are said to be of an ideal kind, (1448 a, 11); his supreme merit lies in his observance of the unity of action, (1459 a, 30); Homer also has the merit of speaking little in his own person, (1460 a, 5). Finally, the artistic lie by which Homer infuses an element of obvious truth to give an air of veracity to the whole, including the fanciful parts of the story, marks Homeric excellence, (1460 a, 21).

Throughout the Poetics Aristotle uses Homer as the criterion for determining the technique of ideal epic construction. However, since Vergil is known to have inaugurated a vaster theme for the epic action of the Aeneid, and harmonized the didactic purpose with the esthetic requirements, his poem is specifically different from either the Iliad or the Odyssey. A few of the differences to be observed in the elements of dramatic unity will serve to summarize the conclusions of this thesis.

Considering the plot of the Aeneid, one immediately becomes

8Glover, Virgil, p. 204.
aware of its twofold character. Rand expresses this same idea:

The plot of the Aeneid, like that of most epics after Virgil wrote, is of a twofold character. Something of the sort may be made out in the Iliad, and Virgil doubtless saw its presence there. But in the Aeneid it is written into the very texture of the poem and is the clue to its ultimate greatness...

There is, however, in the poem a general and pervasive sort of allegory, which constitutes one aspect of what I should call its larger plot. Its lesser plot, concerned with the actors in the story, is the problem of how the hero, with the help of his new allies, is to defeat his valiant foe, win his promised bride, and found a new Troy in Latium. The larger plot is concerned with the ideal aspects of the Roman temperament. As I have already tried to make clear, it tells of a battle between the native qualities of Italy and the civilizing influences that came to it from abroad, particularly from Greece. Aeneas is a symbol of these influences; Turnus and the natives are the qualities on which these influences work. The city founded is a civitas Dei, the Roman ideal in its richness and strength, with a mission of peace for all the world.9

Anyone who is familiar with the vast influences, historical, traditional, and local which go to provide the incidents of the plot cannot help but marvel at the unity which Vergil has achieved at this level of the epic. Vergil is compared to a goldsmith, picking his precious metals and jewels from a thousand different sources and shaping his design with the knowledge of many earlier designs before him.10 But the plot remains unified in the midst of all its diversity, unified by reason of an all controlling serious action—the founding of Rome. And yet the Aeneid seems to be still broader in its scope than the furthermost regions of the

9Rand, Magical Art, pp. 418-420.
10Conway, New Studies, p. 122.
empire, presupposing the discovery of that common destiny of man which gives Vergil's philosophy of history.11

Likewise, in his conception of Aeneas as a new type of epic hero, Vergil departs from the tradition of Homer. The destiny of the individual takes its deepest meaning from its relation to the national or common human destiny. The social character of man is emphasized in Aeneas, whereas in both Dido and Turnus some of the Homeric 'rugged individualism' may be detected. But the properties of epic character are verifiable in each of these three characters from the Aeneid. Vergil has given a new dimension to the character of his epic hero which is quite different from anything seen in earlier epic poets. Aeneas is Vergil's hero in a new kind of heroic poem, and in him we see how different Virgil's epic vision is from Homer's. Aeneas is Virgil's own creation, conceived with the special purpose of showing what a Roman hero is.12 Dido and Turnus are perhaps more dramatic and more tragic than Aeneas, but he is nonetheless truly an epic hero.

In the light of this new type of epic hero, one is led to expect a certain modification of the element of thought. The speech of Vergil's characters, especially that of Aeneas, is meant to give expression to ideal, universal truths which form the basis of the motivation of their actions. This is necessarily required by

11Glover, Virgil, p. 7.
the scope of the action of the *Aeneid* and the purpose of the poet. Only characters of this type are adequate to Vergil's purpose and as long as propriety and consistency is preserved there need not be any fault attributed to the author. This same characteristic is also verified throughout the poem even when human characters are not speaking. "Virgil at his best," writes Murray, "does write in such a way that almost every verse, if you think it over, seems to have some meaning beyond its immediate meaning."13 This particular achievement of Vergil has endeared him to readers of every age and is proof of the universal and ideal quality of his poetic expression.

The diction of the epic poem must of necessity be elaborate. Vergil has ever been recognized as a champion in this aspect of his art, even by those who criticize him most sharply on other counts.14 Perhaps the best description of Vergil's power of diction would be to say of him what Lewis says of Milton—that every sentence has that power which physicists attribute to matter, the power of action at a distance.15 This is but one of the qualities of Vergil's style.

"Vergil's language and verse and all that can be included in those conceptions," writes Jackson Knight, "infinitely varied and

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complex though they may be, yet constitute a unity which is hard to denote except by calling it Vergil's 'style'." In the Aeneid, Vergil's diction is in perfect harmony with the greater unity of the whole poem, being consistent with the various elements of dramatic unity, and in no way lacking propriety. If style is understood as a "manner of matching mood and personality by words and word-order," it is not hard to see why his manner at times appears to be artificial. Since it is required by dramatic poetry especially that the poet adopt a personality which is not strictly his own, one may find it difficult to assume a similar personality in reading the poem, and thus find fault with the style. This is somewhat the same as C. S. Lewis' conviction that the diction of the epic poet must necessarily supply for the reader some of the mood and solemnity which originally accompanied epic recitation.

In Jackson Knight's elaborate study of the features and qualities of Vergil's style attention is frequently directed to those influences which his predecessors had upon him, but Vergil recognized that his style must be his own and original. The often quoted response that is attributed to him when accused of stealing from Homer, "it is easier to take the club from Hercules than a single line from Homer," would imply that he appreciated his debt to his predecessors without thinking to become their slaves.

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17 Ibid., pp. 253, 255, 261, 263.
the Aeneid we possess the maturest expression of Vergil's style as Knight testifies:

In the mature style of the Aeneid Vergil has partly freed himself from his willed insistence on the unity of the period, and from his early subjection to the balances of the Eclogues. He was used to the wayward surprises of his imagination, to the reasoned intrinsic metaphors which he could make out of simple words, and to the straight narration of thought, fact, and fiction according to the sequence and rationality of prose. These, and many more, practices, artifices, methods or predilections had become spontaneous. They might blend together, or come separately into play, when the Aeneid had grown to the supreme power of its culminating orchestration.18

The artistic diction of the poet may be compared to the clothes which he designs and fashions to cover the naked structure of his poem. Yet it is not the diction alone that makes the poem any more than 'the clothes that make the man.' Beneath the mere external diction one recognizes the truth of a great idea expressed in elegant language. The dramatic content of that most famous line,—sunt lacrimae rerum; et mentem mortalia tangunt—is but a single example of the poet's message. Whenever men have felt the dramatic impact of this line, its tragic force has produced within their being the purgation of the emotions of pity and fear. Thus Vergil continues to purify the human race, preparing men for the next stage in this pilgrimage, enlightenment, which Vergil, without revelation, is unable to realize fully. Nevertheless, his message to a modern world is ever more and more urgently needed,

18 Ibid., p. 273.
and will serve as a stepping stone to that broader view of reality and truth which comes by faith.

In confirmation of this thesis establishing the dramatic unity and originality of the *Aeneid*, W. Y. Sellar may be cited:

The compliance with the conditions of epic poetry, as established by Homer and confirmed by the great law-giver of Greek criticism, equally separates it from the rude attempts of Ennius and Naevius, and from the poems which treat of historical subjects of a limited and temporary significance, such as the Pharsalia of Lucan and the *Henriade* of Voltaire. Though Virgil may be the most imitative, he is at the same time one of the most original poets of antiquity. We saw that he had produced a new type of didactic poetry. By the meaning and unity which he has imparted to his Greek, Roman, and Italian materials through the vivifying and harmonizing agency of permanent, national sentiment and of the immediate feeling of the hour, he may be said to have created a new type of epic poetry—to have produced a work of genius representative of his country as well as a masterpiece of art.19

Only the man who has experienced and recognized the cry of nature such as Vergil did, will ever understand and appreciate his poetry. It was from nature that Vergil sought the answer to that infinite longing of his heart for beauty, truth, love, and the meaning of reality. First he questioned the world outside of man, and finally he cross-examined human nature itself. As man, the artist in Vergil is eminently human; as artist, the man in Vergil could find in the medium of language the power to express for his fellow-men that meaning, love, beauty and truth which he read in nature. Because his vision was broad, his senses keen, and his heart pure, nature revealed her secrets to him. In gratitude,

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Vergil spent a lifetime in his attempt to share this wisdom from nature with his fellow-men. The Aeneid represents the crowning achievement of the poet in his effort to give adequate expression to the meaning of the universe.
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'parce metu, Cytherea, manent immota tuorum fata tibi; cernes urbem et promissa Lavini moenia sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli magnanimum Aenean; neque me sententia vertit. hic tibi (fabor enim, quando haec te cura remordet, longius, et volvens fatorum arcana movebo) bellum ingens geret Italia poplosque ferocis contundet moresque viris et moenia ponet, tertia dum Latio regnante viderit aetas, ternaque transferint Rutulii hiberna subactis. at puere Accanius, cui nunc cognomen Iulo additur (Ilus erat, dum res statit Ilia regno), triginta magnos volvendis mensibus orbis imperio explebit, regnumque ab sede Lavini transferet, et longam multa vi muniet Albam. hic iam ter centum totos regnabit annos gente sub Hectorae, donec regina sacerdos Marte gravis geminam partu dabit Ilia prolem. inde lupae fulvo nutricis tegmine laetus Romulus excipiet gentem et Mavortia condet moenia Romanisque suo de nomine dicit. hic ego nec metas rerum nec tempora ponis imperium sine fine dedi. quin aspera Juno, quae mare nunc terrasque metu caelumque fatigat, consilia in melius referet, mecumque fovebit Romanos, rerum dominos gentemque togatam. sic placitum. veniet lustris labentibus aetas cum domus Assaraci Phthiam clarasque Mycenas servitio premet ac victis dominabitur Argis. nascetur pulchra Trojanus origine Caesar, imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris, Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo. hunc tum olim caelo spoliis Orientis onustum accipies secura; vocabitur hic quoque votis. aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis; cana Fides et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aenim post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento.'
APPENDIX II

(Aeneid viii.612-731)

'en perfecta mei promissa conjugis arte munera: ne mox aut Laurentis, nate superbos aut a crem dubites in proelia poscere Turnum.' dixit, et amplexus nati Cytherea petivit, arma sub adversa posuit radiantia querou. ille deae donis et tanto laetus honore expleri nequit atque oculos per singula volvit, miraturque interque manus et brachia versat terribilem cristis galeam flammamque vomentem, fatiferumque ensem, loricam ex aere rigentem, sanguinem, ingentem, qualis cum caerula nubes solis inardescit radiis longaque refugiet; tum levis coreas electro auroque recocto, hastamque et clipei non enarrabile textum. illic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi fecerat et viridi fetae Mavortis in antro procubuisse lupam, geminos huic ubera circum ludere pendentis pueros et lambere matrem impavidos, illam tereti servce reflexa mulcere alternos et corpora fingere lingua. nec procul hinc Romam et raptas sine morae Sabinas consessu caveae, magnis Circensibus actis, addiderat, subitoque novum consurgere bellum Romulidis Tatioque seni Curibusaque severis. post idem inter se posito certamine reges armati Iovis ante aram pateraque tenentes stabant et caesa iungebant foedera porca. haud procul inde citae Mettum in diversa quadrigae distulerant (at tu dictis, Albane, maneres!) raptabatque viri mendacis viscera Tullius per silvam, et sparsi rorabat sanguine vepres. nec non Tarquinium eictum Porsenna iubebat accipere ingentique urbem obsidione premebat: Aeneadæ in ferrum pro libertate ruebant. illum indignanti similem similemque minanti aspiceres, pontem auderet quia vellere Cocles.
et fluvium vinclis innaret Cloelia ruptis.
in summo custos Tarpeiae Manlius arcis
stabat pro templo et Capitolia celsa tenebat,
Romuleoque recens horrebat regia culmo.
atque hic auratis volitans argenteus anser
portibus Gallos in limine adesse canebat;
Galli per dumos aderant arcemque tenebant
defensi tenebris et dono noctis opaceae:
aurea caesaries ollis atque aurea vestis,
virgatis lucent sagulis, tum lactea colla
auro innecentur, duo quisque Alpina coruscant
gaesa manu, scitis protecti corpora longis.
his exultantis Salios nudosque Lupercos
lanigerosque aipples et lapsa ancilia caelo
extuderat, castae duxebat sacra per urbem
pilentis matres in mollibus. Hinc procul addit
Tartareas etiam sedes, alto ostia Ditias,
et sceleum poenas, et te, Catilina, minaci
pendentem scopulo Furiarumque ora trementem,
secretosque pios, his dantem jura Catonem.
haec inter tumidi late maris ibat image
aurea, sed fluctu spumabant caerula cano,
et cirrum argento clari delphines in orbem
sequora verrebant caudis aestumque secabant.
in medio classis aeratas, Actia bella,
cernere erat, totumque instructo Marte videres
fervere Leucaten auroque effulgere fluctus.
hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar
cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis,
stans celsa in puppi, geminas cui tempora flammas
laeta vomunt patriumque aperitur vertice sidus.
parte alia ventis et dis Agrippa secundis
arduus agmen agens: cui, bellis insigne superbum,
tempora navali fulgent rostrata corona.
hinc ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis,
victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro,
Aegyptum virisque Orientis et ultima secum
Bactra vehit, sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx.
una omnes ruere ac totum spumare reductis
convulsam remis rostrisque tridentibus aequor.
alta petunt; pelago credas innare revulsas
Cycladas aut montis concurrere montibus altos,
tanta mole viri turritis puppibus instant.
stuppea flamma manu telisque volatile ferrum
spargitur, arva nova Neptunia caede rubescunt.
regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina sistro,
necessum etiam geminos a tergo respicit anguis.
omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis
contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam
tela tenent. saevit medio in certamine Mavors
caelatus ferro, tristesque ex aethere Dirae,
et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla,
quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello.
Actius haec cernens arcum intendebat Apollo
desuper: omnis eo terrore Aegyptus et Indi,
omnis Arabs, omnes vertebant terga Sabaei.
ipsa videbatur ventis regina vocatis
vela dare et laxos jam jamque immittere funis.
illam inter caedes pallentem morte futura
feceat ignipotens undis et Iapyge ferri,
contra autem magno mærentem corpore Nilum
pandentemque sinus et tota veste vocantem
daeruleum in gremium latebraque flumina victos.
at Caesar, triplici invectus Romana triumpho
moenis, dis Italis votum immortale sacrabat,
maxima ter centum totam delubra per urbem.
laetitia ludisque viae plausaque fremebant;
omibus in templis matrum chorus, omnibus arae;
antiaras terram caesi stravere iuunci.
ipse sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi
dona recognoscit populum aptaque superbis
postibus; incidunt victae longo ordine gentes,
quam variae linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis.
hic Nomadum genus et distinctos Mulciber Afros,
hic Lelegas Carasque sagittiferosque Gelonos
finxerat; Euphrates ibat iam mollior undis,
extremique hominum Morini, Rhenusque bicornis,
indomitiique Dabae, et pontem indignatus Araxes.
Talia per clipeum Volcani, dona parentis
miratur rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet
attollens uermo famamque et fata nepotum.
APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Mr. Robert Joseph Lab, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classics.

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.

Nov. 7, 1958

Date

Raymond V. Schoeder, S.J.
Signature of Adviser