

## On being pessimistic about the end of the *Aeneid*

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### ABSTRACT

I define optimistic and pessimistic interpretations of the death of Turnus in Virgil's *Aeneid*, and present a general case for pessimism. In particular I rebut the charge of anachronism that has frequently been made against this reading. I then discuss various ways in which the end of the poem can be seen as tragic, especially the sense in which it is tragic for Aeneas.

### 1 Introduction: optimists and pessimists

In his fine study of imitations of Greek tragedy in the early modern period, Martin Mueller remarks that 'the abrupt and discordant end of the *Aeneid* contrasts significantly with the quiet conclusions of the *Iliad* and of *Paradise Lost*'.<sup>1</sup> The final lines of Virgil's *Aeneid* have long been the locus of fierce disagreement of a critical—and recently of a theoretical—nature. These lines tell how Aeneas slays Turnus, his defeated opponent. Turnus begs for mercy, and Aeneas briefly entertains the possibility of sparing him, but rejects it when he catches sight of the baldric that Turnus is wearing: this had formerly belonged to Pallas, Aeneas' ward, whom Turnus had killed and despoiled. In a blaze of fury Aeneas now avenges Pallas, characterizing his act as a sacrifice (*immolatio*) and attributing it to Pallas himself. 'Nowhere,' as Julia Dyson comments, 'is the moral complexity of the *Aeneid* more apparent and more troubling than at its close'.<sup>2</sup> Three interconnected questions have troubled readers since antiquity. Is Aeneas (simply) right to kill Turnus? If he is, is he (simply) right to kill him for the reason he does? And is he (simply) right to kill him in the way he does? A portfolio of terminology, not always satisfactory, has evolved to capture possible critical responses to these questions: 'optimists' are distinguished from 'pessimists', 'Augustans' from 'Anti-Augustans', 'Europeans' from 'Harvard-school' interpreters. Recently, there has been a tendency to disparage the terms of these debates as resting on an outmoded binarism. But this attempt to rise above the traditional discourse and regard it *de haut en bas* is, in my view, unconvincing, in part because it rests on a logical muddle.

The logical distinction that we need to keep clearly in mind in assessing responses to the end of the *Aeneid* (as we do in many literary disputes) is that between contradictories and contraries: contradictories cannot both be true, or both false; contraries cannot both be true,

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<sup>1</sup> Mueller 1980: 215.

<sup>2</sup> Dyson 2001: 227.

but they may both be false.<sup>3</sup> So, while it may be the case that the *Aeneid*, for example, propounds contradictions, it cannot be the case that, as Gian Biagio Conte suggests, it says things that are both contradictory and true.<sup>4</sup> Conte uses this point to argue that optimists and pessimists have each latched on to one of the members of a contradiction, so that each is over-simplifying the complexity of the poem. His implied view that both optimists and pessimists are *right* hardly makes sense of the traditional debate. But in fact when we read on in Conte's account, we find that the two opposing positions are set up as *contraries*, not *contradictories*, the optimists offering an entirely up-beat vision of the end of the *Aeneid*, the pessimists countering with an unrelievedly bleak reading of it. It is then of course an easy move to say that Virgil offers us elements of both, or refuses to choose between them, or something of the sort, and thereby suppose that one has finessed the traditional debate. But that is not how the terms of the traditional debate have usually been expressed: the contrasting view to optimism (the end of the poem is entirely positive) has usually been conceived as its contradictory (the end is not entirely positive), rather than its contrary (the end is entirely negative). Richard Thomas makes this clear when he casts the critical disagreement as one between Augustans and Ambivalentists.<sup>5</sup> Ambivalentists are saying not that the end of the epic *rejects* Augustanism *simpliciter*, but that it does not *accept* it unreservedly, that it wishes to express doubts and uncertainties about it by raising qualms about Aeneas' decision to kill Turnus. Pessimism in *that* sense is what the optimists repudiate; and between the view that the end of the *Aeneid* does *not* invite such qualms, and the view that it *does*, there is no logical space. Conte's interpretation of the poem is clearly ambivalentist; so he is actually not superseding the terms of the traditional debate but propounding a species of pessimism, as that doctrine has usually been understood. (In fact, one often finds that, when a critic starts by snubbing the traditional binarism, he or she then goes on to take up a position which is firmly on one side of it or the other.)<sup>6</sup> Conte also thinks that the *Aeneid* is a tragic text,<sup>7</sup> and with this I fully agree: I shall be arguing for it below. But optimists will not concede that the end of the poem is tragic; that is a pessimist's reading.

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<sup>3</sup> 'This is white' and 'This is black' are contraries (at most one can be true; both may be false), 'This is white' and 'It is not the case that this is white' contradictories (exactly one must be true, the other false): see e.g. Aristotle, *Categoriae* 13a37–b35. Some philosophers hold that, in certain specialized situations (usually involving the paradoxes of set theory), contradictions may be true. But in the practice of science, broadly understood to include literary criticism, contradictions are not tolerated.

<sup>4</sup> Conte 2007: 152.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas 1990: 65.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. Kennedy 1992 (cf. 40–1 and 47); Shelfer 2011 (cf. 297 and 298).

<sup>7</sup> Conte 2007: 165–6.

In order to fix parameters, I shall define optimism as the view that answers all three questions I posed in my first paragraph affirmatively, and pessimism as the view that answers one or more of them negatively. Pessimism, being the contradictory of optimism, will also include the position that says that these questions do not arise, because they rest on a false presupposition, namely that Aeneas' conduct at the end of the poem is up for moral assessment by the reader. This presupposition is sometimes rejected on the basis that it involves confusing literary figures with real-life ones (as we are constantly warned not to do),<sup>8</sup> but this rejection itself rests on a confusion: literary figures are *representations* of the real, and in responding to them—morally or in any other way—readers are responding to the represented reality. Aeneas is represented as making a morally significant choice at the end of the *Aeneid*, and the question is how we as readers should react to this. One can of course say that the poem does not want us to engage in any moral assessment at all; that is fine, so long as one does not *also* want to say that Virgil seeks to 'pose moral questions of acute relevance for his times',<sup>9</sup> and perhaps our times as well. For if Virgil is asking moral questions then we, the audience, are invited to engage in moral reflection, so that the three questions I have put inevitably arise. That still leaves a distinction between responding to any one of the three questions by saying that Aeneas acts wrongly, and saying that his action (or the manner of it) is neither right nor wrong (or perhaps, as Conte wishes to say, both right and wrong). In this latter case, one will hold that the action is neither right nor wrong (or both right and wrong) not because the question of its moral status does not arise, but rather because, though it does arise, its status is indeterminate (or carries both values). This, according to my taxonomy, is a species of pessimism. So optimists, as I am defining the terms, say that Aeneas is *just right* to do what he does, for the reason that he does it, and in the way that he does it, and not either *just wrong*, *neither right nor wrong*, or *both right and wrong*. Each of these latter three views, if embraced in response to any of my three questions, is pessimistic. With these preliminary points settled, I shall now make a general case for a version of pessimism, as defined.

## 2 The Servian dilemma

In his note on 12.940<sup>10</sup> Servius famously praised both Aeneas' hesitation and his despatch of Turnus. He presented the decision as, in effect, involving a dilemma of *pietates*. Aeneas is

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<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Taxidou 2004: 33–4; Seidensticker 2008: 344; Griffith 2010: 112–13; 123–4; Esposito 2016: 471.

<sup>9</sup> Poulsen 2013: 131 n. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise specified, all such references are to the *Aeneid*.

*pius* insofar as he considers sparing Turnus; but Evander, Pallas' father, had laid on Aeneas the task of avenging his son's death as a religious duty, and Aeneas also shows *pietas* in fulfilling that obligation and killing Turnus. One might wonder why Servius regards the consideration that inclines Aeneas to mercy as a form of *pietas*, as opposed to *humanitas* or *clementia*, and modern commentators sometimes represent the dilemma as involving *pietas* on one side (that of revenge) and *clementia* on the other.<sup>11</sup> But this is too simple, and there are two reasons why Servius is right to locate considerations of *pietas* on both horns of the dilemma. First, Turnus had lodged his plea for clemency on behalf of his father Daunus, and that is a consideration which is calculated to appeal to Aeneas, who is the quintessential symbol of father-son *pietas* (in both directions) in the poem.<sup>12</sup> The death of Lausus is one familiar scene in the epic where this aspect of Aeneas' character emerges, focused as it is in Virgil's pregnant use (at 10.822) of the patronymic 'Anchisiades'.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, *pietas* had by Augustan times extended its semantic range beyond its core meaning of duty to gods, country, and family,<sup>14</sup> and now incorporated the sense of compassion or tenderness, principally but not exclusively towards those to whom the concept applied in its core sense.<sup>15</sup> Servius does not say explicitly whether he thinks Aeneas chose the right exit from the dilemma, but he is generally read as endorsing Aeneas' act of vengeance. Certainly, modern optimists are quite clear that, though Aeneas shows a commendable humanity in hesitating, and in starting to be swayed by Turnus' plea, he makes the right decision in the end. But this combination of views faces two connected difficulties.

First, the harder one argues for the correctness of Aeneas' final decision, the more difficult it is to justify his hesitation. If it is so obvious that Turnus must die, if 'it is sheer ahistorical nonsense to say he can be spared',<sup>16</sup> if 'for Aeneas to have spared Turnus would have been a violent reversal of code and expectations',<sup>17</sup> if to have let him go would have been 'pflichtwidrige Schwäche',<sup>18</sup> why does Aeneas even consider it even for a moment? Surely optimists ought to condemn the hesitation as evincing sentimentality and moral weakness.<sup>19</sup> At any rate, it is not clear that they have the right to approve of the hesitation, as

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<sup>11</sup> So Quint 1993: 78–9.

<sup>12</sup> See Galinsky 1969: ch. 1; Hardie 2014: 78.

<sup>13</sup> Warde Fowler 1918: 86–91. See also Johnson 1976: 72–3; Clausen 1987: 165–6 n. 71.

<sup>14</sup> On this core sense, see Powell 2008: 31–51.

<sup>15</sup> See Austin on 4.393; Johnson 1965; Gaskin 1994: 75–84.

<sup>16</sup> Galinsky 1997: 93. Cf. 1988: 322–5.

<sup>17</sup> Horsfall 1995: 203.

<sup>18</sup> Heinze 1957: 211.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Schmidt 2001: 166.

they usually do.<sup>20</sup> Most optimists want to have it both ways: they praise the enlightenment of Aeneas' humanistic impulse—or even simply take it for granted ('the virtues—*virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas*—on the shield of Augustus are all of course displayed by Aeneas')<sup>21</sup>—but simultaneously insist that, as an archaic hero, Aeneas may, or even must, slay his defeated enemy.<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, it is commonly argued that there is no place for a man like Turnus in the new order which it is Aeneas' mission to found, that he is a thug, a man of violence, a selfish, old-style Homeric hero, a moral infant, incapable of thinking beyond his own interests, an embodiment of *vis consili expers* as against Aeneas' *vis temperata*, whereas the new age is to be populated by peaceful, responsible humanists.<sup>23</sup> Turnus 'is the hero of archaic Italy, whereas Aeneas stands on a higher level of spiritual development'.<sup>24</sup> Optimists regularly advance this argument without irony, untroubled by whisperings of inconsistency. Turnus, we are told, 'is not fit to become a member of the Rome that is to lead to a higher humanity. That is why he must die at the hands of Aeneas'.<sup>25</sup> 'He is unworthy to manage the affairs of a new state, unworthy of the future'.<sup>26</sup> 'To be an Achilles or a Hector was assuredly enough for Turnus or enough until it was too late. But Aeneas was a wholly different hero, whose *aretē* consisted not just of *virtus* but of *humanitas* and *pietas* as well'.<sup>27</sup> But a page before this last quote we were also told that 'Aeneas, as Pallas' destined avenger, had an obligation that greatly overshadowed any *humanitas* he might wish to display towards his beaten foe'.<sup>28</sup> Aeneas, it seems, is the standard-bearer of *humanitas*, save when he is not. Again, 'Aeneas is appointed to be the avenger of everything beautiful and noble that, tender and helpless, has fallen victim to blind violence'.<sup>29</sup> Apart, presumably, from the occasions on which he is himself the instrument of that violence. 'To spare Turnus would have been the betrayal of the mission of Aeneas in Italy'.<sup>30</sup> How, exactly? Pessimists have not hesitated to point to the

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<sup>20</sup> So e.g. Galinsky 1988: 341; 1992a: 10; 1997: 93. Contrast Edgeworth 2005: 9.

<sup>21</sup> Horsfall 1976: 82 n. 76; cf. Heinze 1957: 210.

<sup>22</sup> Renger 1985: 67–8, 72, 83, 105. Cf. G. Williams 1983: 223–5, 231; Galinsky 1988: 343; 1994: 197; Wlosok 1990: 367, 412.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Duckworth 1956: 361; Heinze 1957: 211; Galinsky 1981: 994; 1988: 323, 343; 1994: 200; Willcock 1983: 94; Schenk 1984: 101–9, 117, 185–7; R. D. Williams 1990: 29; Erler 1992: 108; Otis 1995: 330, 348, 356. Cf. Thome 1979: 244–5, 251–2; Putnam 1995: 158; Tarrant 2012: 11–12.

<sup>24</sup> Renger 1985: 72.

<sup>25</sup> Thornton 1953: 84.

<sup>26</sup> Noonan 2003: 44.

<sup>27</sup> Otis 1995: 381.

<sup>28</sup> Otis 1995: 380.

<sup>29</sup> Wlosok 1967: 126.

<sup>30</sup> Warde Fowler 1919: 156.

fascistic resonances of these views.<sup>31</sup> Some optimists, clearly embarrassed by these echoes, reason that, though it is admittedly a bit old-order for Aeneas to kill the suppliant Turnus, and to do it so thuggishly, when that kind of behaviour was supposed to be Turnus' domain, this is to be the *last* such act: if we can only get it out of the way, then the new order can begin. So: just one more furious heave, and then the chains can come down on fury.<sup>32</sup>

The argument fails because if Aeneas is the founder of a new age, an age of humanity and civilized values, then that imposes correspondingly higher standards of behaviour on him. Some older critics saw this point clearly: Maurice Bowra observed that Aeneas' 'savagery has a cold and unpleasant quality which suits ill with him, because he is nearer to us than Achilles, and we therefore expect more from him';<sup>33</sup> Rhona Beare quipped that 'Becky Sharpe may ruin the tradesmen, but Elizabeth Bennet must pay her bills'.<sup>34</sup> There are perhaps circumstances in which higher standards can justifiably be waived, but they are not to be waived simply because Aeneas faces an adversary whose moral standards are lower than his. As Cicero tells his brother concerning the extension of the latter's proconsulship in Asia: 'If the luck of the draw had sent you to govern savage, barbarous tribes in Africa or Spain or Gaul, you would still as a civilized man be bound to think of their interests and devote yourself to their needs and welfare'.<sup>35</sup> 'Repelled by Turnus' unethical, abominable conduct as depicted in Book 10, the attentive reader will join Aeneas in the end in opting for revenge rather than mercy', writes an optimist.<sup>36</sup> But it is precisely because we *are* repelled by (some of) Turnus' conduct that we expect more of Aeneas, who is also appalled by (some of) Turnus' conduct. Of course we know that, if the fortunes of war had been reversed, Turnus would not have spared Aeneas, and would not have hesitated over a plea for mercy. Naturally not: he has lower standards. But that does not exonerate Aeneas. If the lives lost on the road to empire are not 'a total waste for civilization because they can raise civilization to a higher level of sensibility by the kind of response Aeneas exemplifies'—for example in the scene of Lausus' death, namely—'a response that is characterized by humaneness, decency, chivalry, sensitivity, and grace',<sup>37</sup> that surely means, by parity of reasoning, that when he fails to display those qualities, Aeneas depresses civilization to a lower level.

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<sup>31</sup> Fowler 2000: 214; cf. Thomas 2001: 222–59.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Schenk 1984: 109, 117, 262; Wlosok 1990: 299; *contra* Putnam 1995: 21.

<sup>33</sup> Bowra 1990: 376. Cf. Little 1970: 70; R. D. Williams 1978–80: 8–9; Gill 2003: 225–6; Tarrant 2012: 18.

<sup>34</sup> Beare 1964–5: 22.

<sup>35</sup> Cicero, *Ad Quintum Fratrem* 1.27 (tr. Shackleton Bailey).

<sup>36</sup> Stahl 1990: 205. Cf. Galinsky 1988: 322–4, 332, 343.

<sup>37</sup> Galinsky 1992b: 83–4.

But the fact that Aeneas is subject to higher moral standards does not mean that he is wrong to kill Turnus *at all*.<sup>38</sup> It is sometimes maintained by pessimists that Turnus can safely be spared:<sup>39</sup> he has been humiliated before his people and is now a spent force; he can be allowed to retire quietly to a farm near Ardea, henceforth his highest plot to plant the bergamot. But the problem with this irenic line is that Turnus has a poor record in honouring agreements: though he does not personally break either of the two treaties struck between the Latins and the Trojans, he exploits their breach without qualm. Optimists can certainly argue, with some plausibility, that it would be folly to give him another chance:<sup>40</sup> if he were spared, he might well be bitter and dangerous; he might foment war again.<sup>41</sup> Anchises' underworld advice to Aeneas as proto-Roman, *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*, 'to spare the defeated and war down the proud' (6.853), gives him no clear guidance at the end of the poem—*pace* many optimists<sup>42</sup> and pessimists,<sup>43</sup> who of course give opposite accounts of what that guidance is—partly because both conjuncts must admit of exceptions,<sup>44</sup> and partly because Turnus in any case falls into both categories.<sup>45</sup> But Aeneas is certainly within his rights to kill Turnus both for the breaches of *foedera*—Servius gives this as one of his motives<sup>46</sup>—and because he cannot be trusted.<sup>47</sup> The Trojans have had mixed experiences of clemency towards foes: it worked with Achaemenides but was disastrous with Sinon.<sup>48</sup> Julius Caesar was famous for his *clementia*—his so-called *nova ratio vincendi* ('new method of being victorious').<sup>49</sup> Augustus, too, as was noted above in connection with the golden shield of the Curia Julia (*RG* 34), liked to think that he too exemplified the virtue,<sup>50</sup> being praised in Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* (51–2) for his gentleness towards his enemies.<sup>51</sup> But in Julius' case his insouciance turned out badly for him, it was said,<sup>52</sup> and Augustus was careful to state

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Thome 1979: 316–17.

<sup>39</sup> See Quinn 1968: 273; Farron 1981: 97; Burnell 1987: 196; Putnam 1995: 155; Lyne 2007: 131.

<sup>40</sup> Galinsky 1988: 343; Cairns 1989: 105; Edgeworth 2005: 9.

<sup>41</sup> Laird 2003: 33; Shelfer 2011: 314; Tarrant 2012: 18.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Schenk 1984: 267; Wlosok 1990: 299, 424.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. Pöschl 1977: 83; Farron 1986: 71; Putnam 1995: 162, 202, 208–9, 240, 247–53; Conte 2007: 154; Panoussi 2014: 64–5. Cf. S. Harrison on *Aeneid* 10.521–36.

<sup>44</sup> Tarrant 2012: 18–19.

<sup>45</sup> Edgeworth 2005: 8.

<sup>46</sup> On 12.949; for discussion, see Shelfer 2011, esp. pp. 306–7.

<sup>47</sup> Perhaps also, as Nicoll 2001 argues, as a necessary step on the road to Aeneas' own deification.

<sup>48</sup> On these episodes, see Mackail 1930: 516–17; R. D. Williams 1962: 181–2; Quinn 1968: 61, 132–3; Putnam 1995: 65; Poulsen 2013: 115–17.

<sup>49</sup> Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 9.7c.1; Syme 1960: 159; Thome 1979: 306–12; Farron 1981: 99–100; Putnam 1995: 23, 159.

<sup>50</sup> Farron 1981: 98–100; Wlosok 1990: 444; Thomas 1998: 274; Gill 2004: 120–1.

<sup>51</sup> Bowra 1990: 374; Thomas 2001: 70.

<sup>52</sup> Cicero, *Ad Atticum* 14.22.1; Thome 1979: 311.

in the *Res Gestae* (3) that he only spared those who could safely be spared. If, at the end of the *Aeneid*, there had been no plea for mercy, and no hesitation, and if Aeneas had despatched the defeated Turnus as a punishment for the breaches of *foedera* and for practical reasons of security—on the grounds that a spared Turnus would be likely to be a Sinon not an Achaemenides—Virgil would have left us with no moral problem.<sup>53</sup> In that event readers would quite happily gloss ‘*parcere subiectis*’ as ‘spare subject *peoples* (sc. but not their *leaders*: recall the Roman triumph)’,<sup>54</sup> or ‘spare your defeated enemy, but not those who have been *sontes*, or *crudeles*, or *immanes*’.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the Romans did not always kill enemy leaders—recall Aemilius Paullus’ treatment of Perseus<sup>56</sup>—and Turnus has not been objectively crueller or more brutal than Aeneas:<sup>57</sup> if anything the reverse, given Aeneas’s extraordinary act of human sacrifice (to which I shall return). Still, there is enough on the debit side of Turnus’ account to warrant a verdict of death by the standards of contemporary morality. That gives us at least a partial answer to our first question: the killing of Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* can, in and of itself (so far as that takes us), be justified.<sup>58</sup>

### 3 The significance of Aeneas’ hesitation

Aeneas was under no obligation, then, to contemplate sparing the vanquished leader of his foes, but, remarkably, he does. Wendell Clausen commented that this is ‘an extraordinary moment of humanity; for the epic warrior never hesitates’.<sup>59</sup> The first part of this assertion is right, but the second is misleading, for two reasons: first, epic warriors do sometimes hesitate (e.g. Odysseus at *Iliad* 11.403–11), and secondly because, as I have already said in agreement with Conte, the *Aeneid* has in its background not just epic but also tragedy,<sup>60</sup> and tragic heroes (most familiarly Orestes at Aeschylus, *Choephoroi* 899) quite commonly hesitate.<sup>61</sup> The significance of Turnus’ supplication and Aeneas’ hesitation is that together these acts move the moral issue to a new level, for they show that clemency is a real option, and that purely legalistic and pragmatic considerations do not necessarily settle the matter: the hesitation automatically puts the question of clemency on the agenda. Hence, although

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<sup>53</sup> Tarrant 2012: 17–18.

<sup>54</sup> Thome 1979: 333–4.

<sup>55</sup> Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.35, 82; Galinsky 1988: 323; Tarrant 2012: 18.

<sup>56</sup> Livy 45.7–8; Thome 1979: 343 n. 874. For further examples see Poulsen 2013: 120–4.

<sup>57</sup> Little 1970; Farron 1986: 72–81; Poulsen 2013: 118. *Contra* Schenk 1984: 270.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Tarrant 2012: 19.

<sup>59</sup> Clausen 1987: 99.

<sup>60</sup> See Buchheit 1963: 130; Hardie 1997; Panoussi 2009.

<sup>61</sup> On heroic hesitations, see Ziolkowski 2004.



Turnus' killing can be *justified* on legal and practical grounds, as we have said, the question now arises whether it would have been morally *better* if Aeneas had spared him.<sup>62</sup> My suggestion is that, once this question has been raised at all, it almost forces an affirmative answer. There is a kind of bootstrapping in operation here. The very act of hesitation on Aeneas' part is morally self-vindicating, since if you ask yourself whether you ought to act in a civilized way, you are almost invariably compelled to answer your own question affirmatively. There may be situations in which to engage in moral reflection would be wrong, because (for example) it would lose valuable time; but that does not apply to the end of the *Aeneid*. In general, the question 'Should I be moral?', once reflectively posed, has to receive a positive answer (even if there are some situations in which it should not be posed). As Bernard Williams said, there is no route back from reflection in ethics:<sup>63</sup> once a question has been raised, it has been raised; the game has changed, and we cannot think ourselves back into the simpler, perhaps morally cruder, mindset that we had before we raised it. Still, as I have hinted in provisos inserted above, the question 'Should I spare Turnus?', once asked, does not *quite* answer itself. Aeneas *could* pose the issue of clemency, weigh the matter, and then decide that, all things considered, he must kill his suppliant enemy after all, perhaps for the legal and practical reasons rehearsed. But, crucially, that is not what he does.

For Aeneas does not kill Turnus either as punishment for the breach of the treaties, or because he is an enemy leader who cannot be trusted to keep the peace. This fact is often missed by optimists,<sup>64</sup> or even, if noticed, dismissed as a footling subtlety or 'the latest academic mind game';<sup>65</sup> for one senses in the writings of some optimists a certain impatience with their opponents' interest in detail and complexity: Turnus must die; does it really matter how or why he is killed? But this populist appeal to poetic justice will not do; we must indeed attend to the detail. Aeneas kills Turnus not as a judicial act of condign punishment for breaches of faith, or as a pragmatic calculation that that is what future peace requires, but as an act of revenge for the death of Pallas, and he does so in a blind rage: the dilemma is hijacked by emotion rather than resolved by reason.<sup>66</sup> Aeneas evidently regards Turnus' act of slaying Pallas as a crime (12.949), and many optimists have agreed.<sup>67</sup> But in this he, and

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Lyne 2007: 132.

<sup>63</sup> B. Williams 1985: 163–4.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. G. Williams 1983: 223; Galinsky 1988: 323, 327, 339; 1994: 198, 201. But cf. Horsfall 1995: 205.

<sup>65</sup> Galinsky 1997: 93–4.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Thome 1979: 285; Putnam 1995: 157–8; Tarrant 2012: 23; Poulsen 2013: 124.

<sup>67</sup> So e.g. Schenk 1984: 20, 83–4, 102–3, 117, 180–7, 267, 275–6, 333, 379, 395; Wlosok 1990: 298, 442; Horsfall 1995: 212.

they, are surely mistaken:<sup>68</sup> it was no crime for Turnus to kill Pallas on the battlefield—it was not an act of *murder*<sup>69</sup>—just as it was no crime for Aeneas himself to kill Lausus, as he was obliged to do in self-defence.<sup>70</sup> The killing in battle of the inferior by the superior is just what happens: if Gabriele Thome were right that Turnus’ killing of Pallas was ‘a criminal destruction of balance’,<sup>71</sup> then most battlefield killings—certainly all of Achilles’ in the *Iliad* and Aeneas’ in the *Aeneid*—would be criminal. All the major duels of the *Aeneid* are unevenly matched.<sup>72</sup> Nor is the stripping of Pallas’ body by Turnus a crime:<sup>73</sup> that is accepted heroic practice, and amounts to no more than Pallas had intended against Turnus; indeed Pallas had hoped and prayed that Turnus would see himself robbed of his arms before he died (10.462–3).<sup>74</sup> But Turnus’ donning of Pallas’ baldric, with its *impressum nefas*,<sup>75</sup> though again not a crime, was, like Hector’s donning of Achilles’ arms when he had slain Patroclus, an error of judgement (10.501–5): he would have been wiser to dedicate the spoils to a god.<sup>76</sup> And his wish that Evander might witness his son’s death, though again not a crime,<sup>77</sup> was certainly cruel, as Servius notes (*ad loc.*).<sup>78</sup>

Of a piece with Aeneas’ mistaken attribution of a *scelus* to Turnus is his reply to Magus when the latter attempts to buy reprieve from death (10.532–3): *belli commercia Turnus/ sustulit ista prior iam tum Pallante perempto* (‘Turnus removed those bargains of war at the time when he killed Pallas’). Of course Turnus did no such thing:<sup>79</sup> Aeneas, famously, is echoing Achilles,<sup>80</sup> but even Achilles engaged in such transactions, as Aeneas was reminded by the pictures in the temple to Juno at Carthage (1.484). And when he taunts Mezentius he is in effect disabused of his misconception that the death of his ward was an absolute evil by Mezentius’ reply (10.901–2):<sup>81</sup>

<sup>68</sup> See Quinn 1964: 185; 1968: 18, 222, 227; Willcock 1983: 92; Putnam 1995: 160; S. Harrison 1998: 227; Tarrant 2012: 22.

<sup>69</sup> So Stahl 1981: 158.

<sup>70</sup> Schenk 1984: 96. *Pace* Putnam 1995: 136. Cf. Boyle 1986: 96; Panoussi 2009: 41.

<sup>71</sup> Thome 1979: 290. Cf. Wlosok 1990: 424; Stahl 1990: 200.

<sup>72</sup> Horsfall 1987: 54.

<sup>73</sup> *Contra* Thornton 1953: 82.

<sup>74</sup> Wilson 1969: 73; Little 1970: 71; Lyne 2007: 123.

<sup>75</sup> The significance of this has been widely discussed. See esp. (with further references) S. Harrison 1998; Putnam 2001: 99–100; Shelfer 2011; Esposito 2016: 467–8.

<sup>76</sup> See Heinze 1957: 209–10; Hornsby 1966; Quinn 1968: 326–7; Galinsky 1981: 993; Putnam 1995: 20; S. Harrison 1998: 228, and on 10.423 and 501–5; Dyson 2001: 190–1.

<sup>77</sup> *Pace* Schenk 1984: 83.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. S. Harrison 1998: 227.

<sup>79</sup> Quinn 1968: 335. *Contra* Stahl 1990: 202.

<sup>80</sup> See S. Harrison *ad loc.*

<sup>81</sup> Little 1970: 72.

nullum in caede nefas, nec sic ad proelia veni,  
nec tecum meus haec pepigit mihi foedera Lausus.

There is no crime in being killed; nor did I come to battle on such terms,  
nor did my Lausus fix me these agreements with you.

Aeneas is similarly deluded when he tells Lausus that the latter is being misled by his *pietas* (10.812): *pietas* is not guaranteed to keep you alive, and Lausus is precisely exemplifying that virtue in his display of courage on his father's behalf. Again, Aeneas is plainly mistaken when he calls Latinus' city the *causa belli* (12.567).<sup>82</sup> The city and its inhabitants are innocent and, as commentators have observed, in Aeneas' attack on it there are uncanny echoes of Troy.<sup>83</sup> The Aeneas who kills Turnus in revenge for a *scelus* that was no *scelus* has a history of delusion.

Aeneas does have a *prima facie* obligation to Evander to avenge the death of his son, but that fact does not, as optimists sometimes suppose,<sup>84</sup> settle the matter, because he *also* has a *prima facie* obligation, as Servius says, to his fallen foe, who is a suppliant. Again, that latter fact does not, as pessimists sometimes suppose,<sup>85</sup> settle the matter either, partly because there is a cynical element in Turnus' supplication:<sup>86</sup> that is, although Turnus appears to offer Aeneas alternatives—either spare me or return my body for burial—his ulterior purpose is to persuade Aeneas to spare him. The question is what, all things considered, Aeneas should do. So far, of the various possible scenarios that Virgil might have exploited at the end of the *Aeneid* I have considered two: the one that he actually does give us, in which there is *both* supplication on Turnus' part *and* hesitation on Aeneas' part, and an alternative scenario in which there was *neither* supplication *nor* hesitation. In the latter case, I said, Aeneas' action would have been morally unproblematic. There is, of course, a third possibility: suppose that Turnus had made his plea and Aeneas had not hesitated but simply killed him, perhaps for the legal or practical reasons I have mentioned; what then, morally speaking? This is an interesting question, but in fact we do not need to answer it, precisely because Aeneas *does* hesitate and that, as I have said, changes the game. Aeneas is the sort of man to whom an appeal for clemency speaks, and that point must be factored into the moral dilemma as a relevant consideration. As Peter Winch argued in connection with Captain Vere's dilemma in

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<sup>82</sup> Lyne 2007: 129; Tarrant 2012: 21 n. 84.

<sup>83</sup> Putnam 1965: 175; 2011: 61; Tarrant 2012: 6.

<sup>84</sup> See e.g. Wlosok 1990: 412; Stahl 1990: 199.

<sup>85</sup> So Farron 1986: 69–72.

<sup>86</sup> Renger 1985: 93; Stahl 1990: 209. As a reader points out, although we do not know what happens to Turnus' body afterwards, the precedent of Mezentius (whose pierced breastplate at 11.9–10 seems to indicate that his body was desecrated) is not encouraging. See Dyson 2001: 184–94.

Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*, the sort of person one is can be relevant to deciding how one should resolve a moral difficulty.<sup>87</sup> This takes us back to the point about bootstrapping made earlier: in hearing Turnus' plea, Aeneas makes it the case that he *should* hear it, and his weighing of the plea almost, though not quite, makes it the case that he should accede to it.

#### 4 The role of *humanitas*

It is not anachronistic to bring considerations of *clementia* and *humanitas* into the equation, as I have in effect been doing: for that, as I have stressed, is what Virgil does himself in making his hero hesitate.<sup>88</sup> The charge of anachronism is regularly made against their opponents by optimists, who object to what they regard as an unscholarly importation of modern, and in particular Christian, values into our reading of an ancient epic that presupposes a much more primitive morality, in which acts of revenge are regarded as being unproblematic.<sup>89</sup> In fact optimists are not necessarily in a good position to level accusations of anachronism, since one often finds that they accord Jupiter and fate an absolute value that smacks distinctly of Christianity.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, if anyone is entitled to throw around the charge of anachronism, it should be the pessimists doing so against the optimists, not vice versa: for when Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* Christianity was just around the corner, temporally and culturally speaking—Sainte-Beuve famously said that ‘la venue même du Christ n’a rien qui étonne quand on a lu Virgile’<sup>91</sup>—whereas the Homeric age lay in the distant past. Christian beliefs and Christian values did not (ironically enough) appear by *creatio ex nihilo* a few years after Virgil died, but (at least in many cases) developed smoothly and comprehensibly from the cultural milieu Virgil inhabited.<sup>92</sup> Hence, if anything, it is more anachronistic to read his poem in the light of archaic than of Christian ethics.<sup>93</sup> This point is intimately related to the ease with which later ages construed the *Aeneid* as a proto-Christian tract written by an *anima naturaliter Christiana*.<sup>94</sup> There is of course a risk of circularity here, of reading one's

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<sup>87</sup> Winch 1972; see also Wiggins 1998: 166–84.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Thome 1979: 292; Schmidt 2001: 166.

<sup>89</sup> G. Williams 1983: 222; Schenk 1984: 11; Renger 1985: 49; Galinsky 1988: 322, 340; 1992a: 10–11; Wlosok 1967: 23–4; 1990: 295–9, 414–17; Horsfall 1995: 197, 200. On standard ancient attitudes to revenge, see Bond on Euripides, *Heracles* 562–82.

<sup>90</sup> Schmidt 2001: 167; Thomas 1998: 275; 2001: xii.

<sup>91</sup> Sainte-Beuve 1883: 68.

<sup>92</sup> See Pöschl 1977: 67–8; Thome 1979: 294–7; Dyson 2001: 234–5; Thomas 2001: 176. T. Morgan 2015 is particularly useful on the transition from Roman to Christian conceptions of *pistis* and *fides*: see chs. 1–4, 6 (note esp. pp. 219–20), 11–13.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Thomas 2001: 12.

<sup>94</sup> See Hardie 2014: 40, 127–47.

own values back into Virgil.<sup>95</sup> But finding your own values exemplified in the past is not necessarily circular: those values may actually be there. As I explore below (§6), Aeneas is indeed more of a proto-Christian hero than an archaic warrior *redux*. It is not absurd to say that when we read the *Aeneid* together with *Paradise Lost*, for example, ‘the dynamic allusive system in which a sinful Adam parallels a “sinful” Aeneas enriches our reading of both poems, allowing us to see . . . an Aeneas whose repeated efforts to do what is right take on the resonances of the Christian effort to follow God’.<sup>96</sup>

In fact optimists tend to exaggerate the moral distance not only between Virgil’s time and our own, but also between Homer’s time and our own.<sup>97</sup> When Antonie Wlosok remarks that reading Lactantius’ objections to Aeneas’ ‘punishment’ of Turnus is a useful exercise inasmuch as it brings home to us just how deep are the roots of the modern pessimism about Aeneas’ behaviour at the end of the epic,<sup>98</sup> her point proves too much: for unfortunately the roots are *so* deep that they go back not just to Lactantius but to the cultural context of the *Aeneid* itself, and indeed a good deal further—to Ciceronian *humanitas* in the first instance, but ultimately to Sophoclean and indeed Homeric anticipations of that *humanitas* in the idea of *homopatheia*.<sup>99</sup> ‘The morality of the *Iliad* is one that we should condemn, were anyone to espouse it today’, writes Richard Jenkyns.<sup>100</sup> He continues: ‘What matters, though, is not that Homer’s idea should be “true”, at least in the ordinary sense, but that it should be deep’. But the contrast between depth and truth ignores the severe limits that are placed on our finding depth in ideas that we do not regard as true. As Donald Davidson insisted, making linguistic and psychological sense of someone else involves finding him or her ‘consistent, a believer of truths, and a lover of the good’.<sup>101</sup> The last book of the *Iliad* is deep *because* it is true.

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<sup>95</sup> Powell 2008: 13.

<sup>96</sup> Kallendorf 2007: 161.

<sup>97</sup> See on this point Taplin 2001; Crisp 2013; Gaskin 2013: 138–9.

<sup>98</sup> Wlosok 1990: 444.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Pöschl 1964: 31; 1981: 718–20; Vickers 1973: ch. 2; Monti 1981: 13–16; Dover 1994: 268–72; Gaskin 1994: 75–84; Rutherford 2001: 285–90 (though in a later postscript, at pp. 290–3, Rutherford resiles—too far in my view—from the position of the article); Tarrant 2004: 118; T. Morgan 2015: 93 (with further references). It has been suggested to me (by George Gereby) that a possibly significant difference between (say) mercy as conceived by Cicero and as conceived in early Christianity is that the latter makes it a matter of divine command and example, whereas the former sees it rather as emerging organically from a purely human morality (somewhat in the manner that Hume was later to trace the genealogy of justice as a specifically human institution, with its moral status arising naturally). But here I would wish to apply a version of the *operatur* principle (to be explained below), and this move (if successful) has the effect of closing the gap between the natural and the preternatural (in effect by explicating the latter in terms of the former).

<sup>100</sup> Jenkyns 1998: 658.

<sup>101</sup> Davidson 1982: 222.

Optimists, satisfied that pessimism must be anachronistic, often assume that its only recourse is to a woolly subjectivism, or to reader-response theory, or both.<sup>102</sup> For example, to say that ‘the Christian ethic is as irrelevant (or relevant, depending on your view of the limits of “reception-theory”) to the end of the *Aeneid* as the dominant liberal outlook of academics in the period 1965–85’<sup>103</sup> implies that the only way in which a Christian ethic can be found to be relevant to the end of the *Aeneid* is by the application of reception theory. Pessimists sometimes accept this point,<sup>104</sup> supposing that they have to concede the charge of anachronism and then invoke receptionism, with its repudiation of historicism,<sup>105</sup> in order to shore up their position. But the abandonment of historicism is, as I have argued elsewhere, a wrong turning, and the appeal to receptionism mistaken.<sup>106</sup> And, in any case, pessimism does not need the help of reception theory. For, as we have said, there was enough humanitarian ideology around in the post-Ciceronian, pre-Christian culture of c. 20 BCE to cause an educated and sensitive reader of the time to find the ending of the *Aeneid* morally disturbing. So it is unnecessary for pessimists to admit the charge of anachronism, and then try (forlornly) to make the best of it: the response should rather be the combative one that Christianity *is* relevant, because Virgil’s is almost a Christian world. Literary criticism should indeed be *zeitgerecht*: it should aim to recapitulate the responses that a well-informed contemporary audience would, or could, have had to the relevant work.<sup>107</sup> That point should, I believe, be conceded on all sides, and not gifted to the optimists. But as far as an ideology of *humanitas* goes, we certainly can find the requisite antecedents, so that it is not anachronistic to apply that concept to the manner in which Turnus is put to death.<sup>108</sup>

Cornelia Renger cites the fact that in 97 BCE the senate expressly forbade *immolatio* as evidence that the practice continued well into Republican times.<sup>109</sup> True, but it *also* shows that enlightened opinion was encroaching on such archaic practices: *immolatio* was no longer regarded as acceptable. Karl Galinsky, noting that at one point Livy deliberately suppresses mention of atrocities committed by the Roman army,<sup>110</sup> adds that ‘Vergil is far too realistic to

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<sup>102</sup> Stahl 1981: 157; Wlosok 1990: 295, 417, 420–1; Galinsky 1988: 340; 1992a: 3; 1992b: 74–5.

<sup>103</sup> Horsfall 1995: 197.

<sup>104</sup> Gransden 1984: 216–17; Martindale 1993: 123. Cf. Fowler 1997: 31; 2000: 174; Thomas 2001: 6, 11–13.

<sup>105</sup> Hirsch 1967: 249; 1976: 75–7.

<sup>106</sup> Gaskin 2013: ch. 5.

<sup>107</sup> I argue for this position in Gaskin 2013.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Nisbet 1990: 387.

<sup>109</sup> Renger 1985: 68; Pliny, *NH* 30.12. Cf. Servius on 10.519; Thome 1979: 334.

<sup>110</sup> Livy 7.10.10–11, 33.10.3; Walsh 1955: 379–81.

do the same. To call [Aeneas' slaying of Turnus] "befremdend"<sup>111</sup> is the usual application of an anachronistic cultural norm that ignores the alterity of works like the *Aeneid*.<sup>112</sup> But here the significant point is that Livy felt the need to *suppress mention* of the atrocities; so he does consider the actions *to be* atrocities, and is embarrassed by them. Now Aeneas says that Pallas sacrifices (*immolat*) Turnus, and this verb has occurred twice before in the poem, in connection with Aeneas' killing of the priest Haemonides (10.541) and the sacrifice of the eight youths captured in his berserk *aristeia* after Pallas' death (10.519, 11.81–2). About the morality of the priest's death there can be argument: one might regard it as an act of sacrilege for Aeneas to kill a priest of Apollo,<sup>113</sup> but the reply to that, following Donatus (on 10.540), will be to point out, reasonably enough, that if a priest joins a battle he can hardly complain if he becomes a target.<sup>114</sup> But the contemporary Roman reader's attitude to the sacrifice of the eight youths is not in doubt.<sup>115</sup> Even in its Homeric model—Achilles' sacrifice of twelve captives to the shades of Patroclus—our reaction is meant to be one of horror and disapproval,<sup>116</sup> and the mature Roman attitude to human sacrifice was certainly that it was an atrocity.<sup>117</sup> So when we come to the third and final occurrence in the epic of the verb 'immolare',<sup>118</sup> the precedents are not good. The implication is surely that Aeneas' vicarious act of sacrifice is at the very least morally dubious.<sup>119</sup> As Rosanna Warren remarks, the *immolatio* of Turnus 'carries a burden of implicit desecration'.<sup>120</sup>

I suggest that the considerations aired in this section and the previous one show that the answer to our second initial question is negative: Aeneas is wrong to kill Turnus for the reason he does. We have only tentatively and partially answered the first question—is Aeneas right to kill Turnus at all?—and perhaps the matter cannot be fully settled. I turn now to the

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<sup>111</sup> So Pöschl 1983.

<sup>112</sup> Galinsky 1994: 197.

<sup>113</sup> So Panoussi 2014: 63.

<sup>114</sup> Renger 1985: 63; Mackie 1988: 168.

<sup>115</sup> The irony of Aeneas' 'equidem et vivis concedere vellem' (11.111) so soon after 11.81–2 is indeed striking, and was already noted by Lactantius (see Thome 1979: 296 n. 741; Boyle 1986: 99; Wlosok 1990: 441)—another failure of insight on Aeneas' part.

<sup>116</sup> Schadewaldt 1965: 333; Farron 1985: 24.

<sup>117</sup> Cicero, *Pro Fonteio* 31; Livy 22.57.6; Farron 1985: 21–4; Nisbet 1990: 387; Putnam 1995: 253–4.

<sup>118</sup> On which see Panoussi 2009: 74; Tarrant 2012: 21–2.

<sup>119</sup> This is also implied by the similarity between the end of the poem and the Helen episode of Book 2 (see Thome 1979: 319 n. 801; Mackie 1988: 211–12; Putnam 2011: 62–4), where, though the verb 'immolare' is not used, Aeneas comes within an ace of sacrificing Helen on the altar of Venus (Panoussi 2009: 43). Venus discloses Aeneas' error and leads him away from it. Whatever view one takes of the authenticity of this episode (for discussion, see Horsfall 2008: appendix 1), its main narrative features are determined by the context (see Nisbet 1990: 378; Putnam 1995: 150 n. 17, 184).

<sup>120</sup> Warren 2001: 113.

third question—is Aeneas right to kill Turnus in the way that he does (*furiis accensus et ira terribilis*)?—and I argue that this question must also be answered negatively. That will complete my main case for pessimism.

## 5 *Furor et ira*

The status of anger in ancient literature, and particularly in the *Aeneid*, has been the object of much contention. Roughly speaking, optimists argue for a Peripatetic or Epicurean approach to the final scene of the epic, according to which anger is sometimes justified,<sup>121</sup> whereas pessimists prefer to take a (strict) Stoic line, which is intolerant of passion in general and anger in particular.<sup>122</sup> The ancients thought many different things about anger,<sup>123</sup> and it is easy enough for commentators to find passages in Plato, Aristotle, or the Hellenistic philosophers to support their views. (Sometimes the same passage is adduced on opposite sides of the debate.)<sup>124</sup> Connected with this issue is the question of the status of Aeneas' *furor*, and of *furor* in the *Aeneid* more generally. (Strictly, Aeneas kills Turnus in an access of *furia*, not *furor*, but the difference is inessential.)<sup>125</sup> In particular, it is uncontroversial that Virgil is at least sometimes opposed to at least some forms of *furor*, but is *furor* always to be deplored in all its manifestations? When Jupiter envisages the enslaving of *furor impius* under Augustus (1.294–6), is 'impious' used in a restrictive sense or not? Don Fowler is dismissive of the question: '8.701, *tristes . . . dirae* does not imply that somewhere there are *dirae* who tell jokes and do children's parties and bar mitzvahs'.<sup>126</sup> But perhaps with *furor* the matter is more complicated: after all, though 'violentia' and 'insania' are used exclusively of Turnus, 'furor' and cognates are used of Aeneas as well.<sup>127</sup>

We may begin on this complex of problems by asking what exactly *furor impius* is. Some optimists suggest that the adjective directs us towards specifically *civil* war,<sup>128</sup> so that Aeneas' final fury would by implication be excluded from its purview. A pessimist might respond that, in the context where *furor impius* is depicted as bound, we are told that the

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<sup>121</sup> Thornton 1976: 159–63; Galinsky 1988; Erler 1992.

<sup>122</sup> Fowler 1997: 33; Gill 1997.

<sup>123</sup> Fowler 1997: 31.

<sup>124</sup> So e.g. Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.43–50, in which Stoic and Peripatetic views on anger are contrasted, is cited by Wlosok (1990: 432) in support of her (Peripatetic) reading of Aeneas' anger, and by Lyne (2007: 117–18) in favour of his (Stoic) reading.

<sup>125</sup> Pace Cairns 1989: 82–4. See Fowler 1990: 108; Thomas 2001: 96, 290.

<sup>126</sup> Fowler 1991: 91.

<sup>127</sup> Schweizer 1967: 39; Schenk 1984: 238; Mackie 1988: 24; Erler 1992: 108.

<sup>128</sup> G. Williams 1983: 238.



Gates of War are to be closed (*Aen.* 1.293–4), perhaps for good;<sup>129</sup> and the Gates of War are closed when the Romans are no longer engaged in war of any sort. Further, at the end of the first *Georgic* we are told that impious Mars rages over the whole world (1.511), and the Euphrates and Germany are specifically mentioned (1.509), so that, again, the implication seems to be that we are concerned with war in general. (The war against Antony was represented by Augustan propaganda, including Virgil’s account in *Aeneid* 8, as a foreign rather than a domestic war.)<sup>130</sup> Neither of these arguments is decisive. On the first point, although the Gates of War are mentioned as closed at 1.293–4, Virgil has just lauded Augustus<sup>131</sup> for extending the bounds of empire, presumably by war, and for returning to Rome ‘laden with the spoils of the East’ (1.286–9). Against this it can be replied that between this passage and the vision of *furor impius* in chains we have the line ‘aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis’ (‘the harsh ages will cease from war and grow gentle’: 1.291), which implies *world* peace; and that Augustus’ settlement with the Parthians was achieved without war. But straight after the mention of world peace Romulus and Remus are mentioned, and their reconciliation implied (1.292–3), which returns us to domestic broils and their resolution. So the matter is complicated. On the second point, it might be noted that the wider context at the end of the first *Georgic* shows that Virgil really has civil war in mind,<sup>132</sup> and that to describe the civil wars of the Republic as affecting the whole world would not be an exaggeration.

These arguments are inconclusive, then: but it seems to me that pessimists need not insist that *furor impius* embraces all war; they can agree that its primary or even exclusive reference at 1.293–6 is to civil war. However, it will not follow that Aeneas’ slaying of Turnus is exempted from falling under the rubric of *furor impius*, as optimists expect, because, as has been observed many times,<sup>133</sup> the wars of the second half of the *Aeneid* are depicted by Virgil as inchoate civil wars. If from nowhere else, that is clear from the anguished question ‘tanton placuit concurrere motu,/ Iuppiter, aeterna gentis in pace futuras?’ (‘Did it please you, Jupiter, that races destined for eternal peace should clash so vigorously?’: 12.503–4), which recalls the epic’s opening question ‘tantaene animis caelestibus irae?’ (‘Could heavenly spirits feel such wrath?’: 1.11). Indeed the implication of ‘imperium sine

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<sup>129</sup> See, however, Fowler 2000: 185–6.

<sup>130</sup> Schenk 1984: 190; Toll 1997: 45–7.

<sup>131</sup> Kraggerud 1992; S. Harrison 1996.

<sup>132</sup> See the commentaries of Mynors and Thomas ad loc.

<sup>133</sup> See e.g. Pöschl 1977: 29; G. Williams 1983: 238; S. Harrison 1988: 59; Tarrant 2012: 6–7; Reed 2014: 70.

fine' ('empire without end': 1.279) could be that all war is, ultimately, civil war.<sup>134</sup> So if we read 'furor impius' as code for civil war, and as such morally condemned by the author, it will not necessarily follow that Aeneas' action at the end of the poem escapes his or our censure.

Optimists often argue that there is good *furor* in the *Aeneid* as well as bad. According to Evander, Mezentius was expelled by his people *furiis iustis* (8.494): so why, optimists ask, should not Aeneas at the end equally be possessed by just fury?<sup>135</sup> But, even assuming that we should take Evander's words at face value, this argument backfires: there *is* such a thing as just fury in the *Aeneid*, but the *default* position is surely that *furor*—and in particular the *furor* of war—is negatively tagged in Virgil;<sup>136</sup> and that default value has to be expressly cancelled by the insertion of an override, such as is achieved by the presence of the adjective 'iustus' in the phrase 'furiae iustae', if the negative connotations of the word and its cognate forms are not to be heard.<sup>137</sup> At 1.148–53 we have the famous simile of politician calming the seditious mob. The *vir pietate gravis* is clearly a type of Aeneas,<sup>138</sup> and his calm is specifically contrasted with the *furor* of the rabble:<sup>139</sup> we are therefore shocked when he later takes on their very irrationality. At 10.565–70 Aeneas is compared to the giant Aegaeon, who exemplifies *furor impius* if any figure does: that must raise a question about the status of Aeneas' *furor*.<sup>140</sup> The precedents for the phrase 'furiis accensus' in the *Aeneid*—Dido is *furiis incensa* at 4.376; the Bacchic women are *furiis accensae* at 7.392—are not calculated to set the reader at ease when the phrase recurs at the end of the poem.<sup>141</sup>

Similar points apply to *ira*. Significantly, Aeneas is more often said to be angry than Juno, and his anger at the end of the poem ominously recalls hers at the beginning.<sup>142</sup> (His hesitation and change of direction recapitulate Neptune's famous aposiopesis at 1.135, but it is in the *wrong direction*.) The word is negatively marked right at the beginning of the epic in the question quoted above (1.11), and by dint of its association with Juno's savage—and irrational, because she knows she will lose in the end—machinations (1.4, 25, 130).<sup>143</sup> As

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<sup>134</sup> Toll 1997: 48–50.

<sup>135</sup> Stahl 1981: 166; Schenk 1984: 261–76.

<sup>136</sup> Pöschl 1977: 29; cf. Fowler 1997: 33–4.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Tarrant 2012: 20.

<sup>138</sup> Putnam 1995: 29.

<sup>139</sup> Lyne 2007: 118.

<sup>140</sup> O'Hara 2007: 99; Hejduk 2009: 302.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Burnell 1987: 192; Putnam 1995: 160–1; Gill 2004: 120; McDaniel 2006: 44; Tarrant 2012: 20–1. Possibly we should add 8.205, though the text there is doubtful.

<sup>142</sup> Tarrant 2004: 120; 2012: 20 n. 78; Putnam 2011: 13.

<sup>143</sup> Putnam 1965: 200; Boyle 1986: 88; Otis 1995: 229.

with ‘*furor*’, those negative connotations can be overridden,<sup>144</sup> but that requires a special signal.<sup>145</sup> The grief and anger that are aroused against Mezentius are explicitly characterized as just and merited (8.500–1; 10.714). Hercules deploys *ira* (and *furor*) against Cacus: optimists cite this as clinching the case for the acceptability, indeed appropriateness, of Aeneas’ furious rage at the end of the epic:<sup>146</sup> after all, is not Aeneas a type of Hercules and Turnus a type of Cacus?<sup>147</sup> But a pessimistic *modus tollens* follows hard upon the *modus ponens* of the optimists; instead of relying on Hercules to endorse Aeneas’ fury in slaying Turnus, we can run the implication backwards, reasoning from the problematic status of Aeneas’ action to the dubiety of Hercules’ behaviour.<sup>148</sup> Optimists retort: how *should* Hercules deal with a monster like Cacus, if not angrily?<sup>149</sup> (Perhaps, it might be suggested, madness and disorder can only be treated homoeopathically: perhaps fire must be fought with fire.)<sup>150</sup> And is not Cicero’s idea that Hercules might have fought without anger highly absurd?<sup>151</sup> Thus Galinsky in 1988 and 1994, but back in 1966 he had observed, surely correctly, that ‘so long as [Hercules] is dominated by his anger, he cannot overcome Cacus’.<sup>152</sup> Three times Hercules tried the way of anger; three times he failed (8.230–2). It was only when he embraced reason, for which he is praised by the Salians (8.299), that he succeeded.<sup>153</sup> There is a clear recollection of Aeneas during Troy’s final hours, as Galinsky notes.<sup>154</sup> Perhaps, then, Cicero was not wrong after all. Galinsky observes in his earlier discussion that Hercules’ *furor* anticipates Aeneas’ at the end of the epic, but makes nothing of the parallel: he fails to draw an obvious moral from the fact that the Aeneas of Book 2 and the Hercules of Book 8 were right to abandon *furor* for *ratio*.

Despite the many places in the epic where Stoic thought underlies the characterization of Aeneas,<sup>155</sup> *apatheia* is not presented as an ideal to which Aeneas is meant to aspire.<sup>156</sup> (In

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<sup>144</sup> Though surely not at 2.316, as Stahl suggests (1981: 166).

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Thome 1979: 284 n. 701; Putnam 1995: 165; Tarrant 2012: 20. *Contra* Galinsky 1994: 194; Horsfall 1995: 213.

<sup>146</sup> Wlosok 1990: 366; Wright 1997: 183.

<sup>147</sup> Buchheit 1963: 116–33; Galinsky 1966, 1990; Gransden 1976: 14–20; Wlosok 1967: 66–7; 1990: 430. Cf. Hardie 1986: 110–18.

<sup>148</sup> Lyne 1987: 28–34; Fowler 1990: 107; Putnam 1995: 186–8.

<sup>149</sup> Galinsky 1994: 193.

<sup>150</sup> Tarrant 2012: 16.

<sup>151</sup> *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4.50; Galinsky 1988: 338.

<sup>152</sup> Galinsky 1966: 41.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Horsfall 1995: 214.

<sup>154</sup> Galinsky 1966: 41–2.

<sup>155</sup> Bowra 1945: 59–65; 1990.

<sup>156</sup> Pöschl 1977: 64–5; Thome 1979: 294–7.

any case, Panaetius' milder form of Stoicism rejected *apatheia* as an ideal).<sup>157</sup> But rationality certainly is so presented: 'Aeneas has been built up as a philosophic hero', as R. G. M. Nisbet remarked;<sup>158</sup> it is not sentimentalism, as optimists sometimes imply,<sup>159</sup> to emphasize this aspect of his character. It follows that the reversion to what is clearly depicted as *akrasia* and madness at the end of the poem cannot be viewed with equanimity.<sup>160</sup> One might compare Aeneas' treatment of Turnus after their duel with Dido's response to Aeneas in the underworld: there he accosts her and she hesitates, for she still feels something for him,<sup>161</sup> but, at least on one reading, she resolves her dilemma rationally—that is, she *decides* to return to Sychaeus—whereas Aeneas after Turnus' plea hesitates also but resolves his dilemma irrationally. The *furor* and *ira* to which he succumbed during the sack of Troy he expressly judged, in retrospect, to have been irrational (2.314–17):<sup>162</sup> it is as though he has learnt nothing in his long journey.<sup>163</sup> Because the Italian conflict is a virtual civil war, Aeneas and Turnus are in some sense brothers, a connection suggested early on by the way the Tiber aids both men (8.28–101; 9.815–18),<sup>164</sup> and reinforced in many other ways,<sup>165</sup> such as in their shared ignorance (8.730; 10.666),<sup>166</sup> and in Virgil's pointed use of the same phrase ('*solvuntur frigore membra*': 1.92, 12.951) as Aeneas' introduction and Turnus' envoi.<sup>167</sup> But whereas the Romulus and Remus of Jupiter's prophecy are said to be reconciled under Augustus (1.292–3), Aeneas-as-Romulus slays Turnus-as-Remus in a re-enactment of Rome's founding *scelus*,<sup>168</sup> and in an embodiment of the very *furor impius* whose neutralization Augustus is destined to bring about.<sup>169</sup>

## 6 Aeneas as a tragic figure

A pessimistic reading of Aeneas' final act in the epic fits with a possibility that has been relatively underexplored, namely the sense in which he is *tragic*; to this idea I now turn, in

<sup>157</sup> Gellius 12.4.10; Gaskin 1994: 78–9, 89–90.

<sup>158</sup> Nisbet 1990: 389. Cf. Putnam 1995: 156.

<sup>159</sup> Stahl 1981; Horsfall 1995: 200.

<sup>160</sup> Putnam 1995: 45, 159; Gill 1997: 239–41; 2003: 225–6; 2004: 119–21.

<sup>161</sup> That is secured by 'tandem' (6.472), *pace* Norden ad loc. Cf. Fowler 2000: 58.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Mackie 1988: 48.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Boyle 1986: 171–2.

<sup>164</sup> Thome 1979: 257–8.

<sup>165</sup> L. Morgan 1998: 184–5; Dyson 2001: 227; McDaniel 2006; Tarrant 2012: 4, 13–15.

<sup>166</sup> Johnson 1976: 114; O'Hara 1990: 120; Hejduk 2009: 317.

<sup>167</sup> Putnam 1965: 200; 2011: 90–1; Lyne 1987: 135; Mackie 1988: 19; Thomas 1998: 275–81.

<sup>168</sup> See Horace, *Epodes* 7.17–20, with Mankin ad loc.; Tarrant 2012: 8, and on 12.949, where he notes the echo of Ennius' Romulus threatening to kill Remus '*nam mihi calido dabis sanguine poenas*' (*Annals* 95 Sk.). (I am grateful to a reader for drawing my attention to this reference.)

<sup>169</sup> Putnam 1965: 192–3; 1995: 5, 12, 23, 204; Warren 2001: 114–17.

more speculative and programmatic mode than my remarks hitherto. It has long been recognized that the *Aeneid* owes much to the genre of tragedy, and it has been shown that Dido, for instance, is a tragic figure in an orthodox Aristotelian sense.<sup>170</sup> Turnus is surely tragic too<sup>171</sup>—though this claim has proved more controversial.<sup>172</sup> There has been a tendency to regard Turnus as a public enemy, and to consider that his status as an opponent of fate and his alleged criminality spoil his prospects for tragic status.<sup>173</sup> But we have seen that Turnus' criminality has been exaggerated; he is certainly not 'utterly wicked' (*sphodra ponēros*),<sup>174</sup> as Aristotle characterizes one type of figure who is excluded from tragedy (*Poetics* 1453a1). And though he is a *Staatsfeind* in the sense that he opposes Aeneas' fated mission, it is noteworthy that Virgil exploits a more sympathetic tradition concerning Turnus than he might have.<sup>175</sup> Further, it was true of Dido too that she represented opposition to the Roman polity,<sup>176</sup> but that did not undermine her tragic status, so that it is unclear why his antagonism to fate should do so in Turnus' case either.<sup>177</sup>

Aeneas, I suggest, is more interestingly tragic than either Dido or Turnus. This is so in several respects. In the first place, it may be that Aeneas, like Dido and Turnus, is intended to be tragic in an orthodox, Aristotelian sense. Perhaps the killing of Turnus, though it comes at the end of the work, is supposed to mark a climactic in Aeneas' career, a fatal *hamartia* that leads to catastrophe. The basis of *hamartia* is cognitive failure of some kind,<sup>178</sup> and Aeneas certainly exemplifies delusion in several ways, as we have seen. Further, Aeneas *desires* the killing of Turnus, as Agamemnon desired the sacrifice of his daughter (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 218–27) and Eteocles the duel with his brother (*Seven Against Thebes* 686–8). Aeneas' *furor* also recalls other tragic heroes, such as Ajax, Pentheus, and Heracles, and the

<sup>170</sup> Pease 1935: 8–11, 32–9; Bowra 1945: 49–50; Heinze 1957: 115–44; Pöschl 1977: 84–122; Muecke 1983; Moles 1984, 1987; Wlosok 1990: 320–43.

<sup>171</sup> Warde Fowler 1919: 46; DeWitt 1930; Bowra 1945: 43–9; Highbarger 1948; Duckworth 1950; Garstang 1950; Putnam 1965: ch. 4; Pöschl 1977: 122–69; Thome 1979: 256–7; S. Harrison 1988: 60; Gaskin 1992; Conte 2007: 162.

<sup>172</sup> On Turnus' character see now Tarrant 2012: 9–13. Schenk 1984 is still central, though the treatment is sometimes facile. Its main technical flaws are too great an emphasis on Turnus' *audacia* (cf. Mackie 1991: 59), a quality that is in any case, as Schenk concedes, not always negatively marked (see e.g. *Georgics* 1.40 and 4.565), and the outdated supposition (still found e.g. at Conte 2007: 158) that an Aristotelian *hamartia* has to be non-moral. It has been clear since Stinton 1975 that the semantic range of *hamartia* includes moral error.

<sup>173</sup> Heinze 1957: 211; Wlosok 1967: 132, 138; 1990: 412, 417; Schenk 1984: 7, 20–3, 31, 35, 183–7.

<sup>174</sup> So, rightly, Mackie 1990; *contra* Schenk 1984: 116, 359.

<sup>175</sup> Thomas 1998: 275.

<sup>176</sup> Horsfall 1990.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Schweizer 1967: 44; Pöschl 1977: 125.

<sup>178</sup> This assertion requires support, which I do not have space to give here, but hope to do elsewhere. In the meantime, see McGinn 2006: 197.

examples of Oedipus and Heracles indicate that his expected deification is compatible with tragic status here below. How does the *Aeneid* intend us to think of the manner of its hero's death? According to one tradition, Aeneas died fighting by the river Numicus, an outcome that may be hinted at in Dido's curse and elsewhere in the poem.<sup>179</sup> It is suggested that Aeneas will survive for a mere three years after Turnus' death, and the implication may be that his despatch of Turnus is a miscalculation, arousing *invidia*,<sup>180</sup> which plunges Aeneas into uninterrupted conflict for the rest of his curtailed life. When Aeneas kills Turnus his final words correspond to Achilles' *first* words to Hector in the parallel Iliadic scene.<sup>181</sup> Conspicuously, there is no correlate to Achilles' *last* words to Hector, now dead, in which he shows knowledge of his fate.<sup>182</sup> Aeneas cannot speak such words because, although (ominously) he has assumed Achilles' mantle,<sup>183</sup> he has no such knowledge. But perhaps the reader is intended to fill in the gap.<sup>184</sup>

These possibilities are at best subtextual susurrations—if only because the poem is cut off before the late-learning (*opsimathia*), which is so characteristic a feature of tragedy,<sup>185</sup> can be developed in Aeneas' case, as it was in Dido's and Turnus'. A more substantial sense in which Aeneas is tragic lies in the way he evinces 'the despair of the spectator':<sup>186</sup> Aeneas duplicates the author's own tragic perspective,<sup>187</sup> most familiarly in his adopting the stance of *sunt lacrimae rerum* ('There are tears for things', 1.462) in Juno's temple,<sup>188</sup> and of *quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?* ('What dread desire for life has come upon these wretched souls?', 6.721) in the underworld. He shares his author's sense that the war in Italy is wrong because it is a civil war (11.108–9). As well as being a type of Hercules and Augustus, Aeneas is, or is starting to move towards being, a proto-Christian hero,<sup>189</sup> who loves his enemy as himself,<sup>190</sup> who suffers for others and is racked by the pain that he causes them.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Servius and Pease on 4.620; Pöschl 1977: 55; O'Hara 1990: 105–15, 151; Dyson 2001: 50–73.

<sup>180</sup> Thome 1979: 306.

<sup>181</sup> Knauer 1964: 292.

<sup>182</sup> *Iliad* 22.365–6; Johnson 1976: 115.

<sup>183</sup> Dyson 2001: 102–3.

<sup>184</sup> This is the theme of Dyson 2001. See esp. chs. 1–6 and Conclusion.

<sup>185</sup> Rutherford 2001: 264–70.

<sup>186</sup> Vickers 1973: 69 (quoting Beckett).

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Parry 1966: 110–11; Pöschl 1977: 62, 122; G. Williams 1983: 14; Boyle 1986: 133, 152; O'Hara 1990: 184.

<sup>188</sup> Aeneas perhaps misinterprets the temple frieze: Johnson 1976: 103; Coleman 1990: 46; Horsfall 1990: 136–7; O'Hara 1990: 183; Hardie 1998: 77; Dyson 2001: 66 n. 33. But see Spence 1991: 17; Fowler 2000: 78–9. There are interesting reflections on this scene in Scodel 2015–16.

<sup>189</sup> Pöschl 1964: 32; 1977: 40.

<sup>190</sup> Pöschl 1977: 76–7. Cf. Johnson 1976: 87; Schenk 1984: 84–5.

<sup>191</sup> McGushin 1964; Pöschl 1977: 64–5; Cairns 1989: 31–8; Barchiesi 1994: 109; Griffin 1994: 175.

He is a solitary and lonely saviour-figure who will be deified after his death.<sup>192</sup> Aeneas' adoption of the author's tragic vision is especially clear in the narrative of the second and third books: for example, his cryptic remark on the death of Rhipheus, justest and holiest of Trojans—*dis aliter visum* ('it seemed otherwise to the gods', 2.428)—echoes the author's questions at 1.11 and 12.503–4 (quoted above).<sup>193</sup> And not only does Aeneas' act of narrating make him a spectator of tragedy, but the story includes scenes, such as the deaths of Polites and Priam, in which he literally views tragedy.<sup>194</sup> Aeneas' role as metapoetically privileged spectator of tragedy, already clear in the first book, is reinforced throughout the epic.

The objectivity of Aeneas' tragic vision comes at a price, and that price is his own subjectivity. As Viktor Pöschl remarked,<sup>195</sup> in the *Aeneid* we have for the first time the tragedy of a man who suffers under historical fate; he rarely seems to belong to the moment, but always to be turned towards the past or the future. The responsibility of history rests on his shoulders—literally, when he takes up Vulcan's shield at the end of Book 8—and it is a history that he does not understand (8.730).<sup>196</sup> He has lost his Trojan past but will not himself enjoy the Roman future which it is his duty to bring about, or the Golden Age that Augustus will inaugurate. He is exploited for a purpose that is beyond his comprehending, and which has no interest in him.<sup>197</sup> His Stoic acceptance of his fate is often conveyed in laconic, unassuming phrases like 'inde datum molitur iter' ('then he resumed his appointed journey': 6.477),<sup>198</sup> as too in his notorious reticence and terseness of speech.<sup>199</sup> Perhaps he can console himself by reflecting on his vital auxiliary role in bringing about a new Golden Age? But the Golden Age topos is itself fraught with difficulty in Virgil's *œuvre*, and the ideas of a move from a Golden Age under Saturn to an Iron Age under Jupiter, and of the new Augustan Golden Age, are attended with disquieting and indeed conflicting signals.<sup>200</sup> In Jupiter's prophecy to Venus the sweeping gesture of *imperium sine fine* (1.279) is not without its

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<sup>192</sup> Lieberg 1971; Feeney 1990a: 182–3; 1991: 161.

<sup>193</sup> As Feeney notes (1991: 130), the *aporia* of 1.11 resembles questions sometimes asked by tragic figures: see e.g. Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 895–910, Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1103–10, and esp. the close of the *Bacchae*. Cf. Conte 2007: 156–7.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Otis 1995: 243.

<sup>195</sup> Pöschl 1977: 38–40. Cf. Feeney 1991: 174–5.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. G. Williams 1983: 13; Jenkyns 1985: 69–70, on the meaninglessness to him of the *Heldenschau*.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Heinze 1957: 304. Fate's lack of interest in Aeneas is clear from Venus' words at 10.46–50 (cf. 1.678); Wlosok 1967: 108–12.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. 2.795, 804; 4.396; 6.384, 899; McGushin 1964: 229–32; Putnam 1965: 46.

<sup>199</sup> Feeney 1990a.

<sup>200</sup> See Segal 1966: 49; Wiesen 1973: 753–6; Thomas 1982: 42–7, 74–6; 2001: 1–7; 2004–5; Boyle 1986: 82, 175; Feeney 1991: 152; Perkell 2002; O'Hara 2007: 83, 100–1; Hejduk 2009: 284–6.

difficulties: Jupiter deceives Venus on other matters (as she in turn ‘so often’ deceives Aeneas: 1.407)—why not on this one too?<sup>201</sup> This prophecy clashes with the end of the second *Georgic*, where Rome was implied to be just one empire among others, destined to go the way of all mortal things (2.498),<sup>202</sup> and hints of the melancholy of Sulpicius Rufus’ famous letter of consolation to Cicero—the ruins of Aegina, Megara, Piraeus, and Corinth before his eyes<sup>203</sup>—or of Scipio Aemilianus’ meditations on the destruction of Carthage<sup>204</sup> perhaps underlie the strange inventory of Italian towns in the *Heldenschau*, all insignificant by Virgil’s time,<sup>205</sup> as well as the tour of Pallanteum, which is both the future site of Rome and strewn with the ruins of dead cities (8.355–8).<sup>206</sup> The idea of the mutability of cities as that figures near the end of Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* and in Lucan’s depiction of Caesar’s tour of the site of Troy, both of which might be taken as corrections of Virgil’s vision of *Roma aeterna*,<sup>207</sup> is already present in the *Aeneid* in an undertone.<sup>208</sup> Aeneas, as T. S. Eliot said,<sup>209</sup> is historic man, a man of the future, but ‘the future is a faded song’: ‘In my end is my beginning’, Mary Stuart’s motto, was quoted by Eliot in *Four Quartets*, but also inverted to ‘In my beginning is my end’.<sup>210</sup> Perhaps that is the significance of the puzzling phrase ‘et iam finis erat’ (‘and now it was the end’: 1.222) by which Jupiter is introduced to the epic, and of the fact that Aeneas’ ire at the end of the poem recalls Juno’s at the beginning.<sup>211</sup> The process of history is itself seen by the *Aeneid* as inherently tragic.<sup>212</sup>

‘There is indeed a pathos in Aeneas’ fighting and suffering for a future that he will never fully know or understand’, writes Jenkyns.<sup>213</sup> But surely in Aeneas’ case it is more than a matter of pathos. Jenkyns suggests that Aeneas’ lot is ‘bleak’ and ‘joyless’ rather than ‘tragic’,<sup>214</sup> and he argues that Aeneas differs in this respect from some of Homer’s major figures: but for his mission, Aeneas ‘might have been comfortably resettled, like Acestes in Sicily, or Helenus and Andromache in Epirus, or with a loving wife in Carthage. But Achilles

<sup>201</sup> O’Hara 1990: 137–51; 2007: 79–81.

<sup>202</sup> See Clausen 1987: 83–4; Thomas 2001: 118–19, 147–8.

<sup>203</sup> Cicero, *Ad Familiares* 4.5; cf. Fowler 2000: 197–8 (on Horace, *Carmina* 3.30).

<sup>204</sup> Polybius 38.22; Astin 1967: 251–2; 282–7.

<sup>205</sup> Feeney 1986: 7–8.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Wiesen 1973: 761–4; Thome 1979: 248–50; Hardie 1992: 60; Otis 1995: 337.

<sup>207</sup> Putnam 1995: 218, 221; Hardie 1992: 59–62; 2014: 31.

<sup>208</sup> Fowler 2000: 186; Thomas 2001: 19; *contra* Horsfall 1976: 76.

<sup>209</sup> Eliot 1957: 61–2.

<sup>210</sup> ‘The Dry Salvages’, 126; ‘East Coker’, 1, 14, 209.

<sup>211</sup> And indeed Aeneas’ own at 2.316, near the chronological beginning of the narrative: Hardie 1992: 70. Cf. Fowler 2000: 185.

<sup>212</sup> Gaskin 1992, §5; Griffin 1998: 58; D. Fowler 2000: 186; Thomas 2001: 19.

<sup>213</sup> Jenkyns 1985: 70.

<sup>214</sup> Jenkyns 1985: 75; 1998: 653.



and Hector and Sarpedon are tragic of necessity: in the *Iliad* tragedy is the very stuff and significance of the hero's life, whoever he may be'.<sup>215</sup> Leaving aside the relatively unimportant Sarpedon, one must ask: would Hector have been tragic anyway, if the Greeks had never come to Troy? It seems unlikely. The claim is more plausible for Achilles, but that is because Achilles, like Aeneas, has tragic *vision*,<sup>216</sup> in which point he is contrasted, in the *Iliad*, with Hector, who is *verblendet*. Aeneas is tragic at least in part because he *sees* tragedy—which he would have done whatever path he had followed. Paradoxically, it is at the moment when Aeneas first feels confidence in his mission (1.450–2) that he weeps (1.459, 465, 470). Comfortably settled in Sicily or Carthage, Aeneas would have found the conditions for tragic reflection to be ideal, just as his author, the poet Virgil, found them so in Naples and Nola. Virgil and Aeneas are spectators of tragedy from a position of historic strength. For, as Nietzsche taught us, tragic vision is born of strength—and optimism.<sup>217</sup> It follows that the ending of the *Aeneid*, though, as I have argued, pessimistic rather than optimistic in the sense of those terms that I defined in §1, signals an underlying authorial and cultural optimism rather than pessimism in the non-technical senses of those words.<sup>218</sup> Only the strong and the confident can afford the luxury of tragic vision. But that paradox is endemic to the tragic genre.

In fact the position is more complicated—and more tragic—for Aeneas than I have so far implied, in two ways. First, we have to factor in considerations relating to the mechanism of divine intervention in epic and tragedy. Following Aquinas, we should set the maxim governing divine intervention in tragedy and epic as: *operatur deus in unoquoque secundum eius proprietatem*—the god acts in each person according to that person's character.<sup>219</sup> In other words, divine promptings of human action are matched to an antecedently given motivational array. Older references to 'double aspect' or 'double motivation', and more recent characterizations of the gods as 'working with' mortals,<sup>220</sup> fail to capture the

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<sup>215</sup> Jenkyns 1985: 75–6.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Johnson 1976: 74; Nooter 2012: 22–4.

<sup>217</sup> Nietzsche 1996: §§851–2.

<sup>218</sup> To that extent I think that *The Tempest* is even closer in spirit to the *Aeneid* than Kallendorf argues (2007: 102–26).

<sup>219</sup> See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1a q. 83 a. 1; Schmitt 1990: 91–9. On Virgil, see Heinze 1957: 304–9; Buchheit 1963: 102–6; Kühn 1971: 110–12, 175–6; E. Harrison 1990: 50; R. D. Williams 1990: 31; Wlosok 1990: 348–50; Erler 1992: 109–10; Otis 1995: 325, 373–7. See also Bradley 1991: 30 (on Shakespeare). The application of the *operatur* principle to epic and tragedy clearly needs more discussion and defence than I am able to give it here: I hope to provide that more general defence elsewhere; here I confine myself to some of the key points, as I see them.

<sup>220</sup> Lesky 1961: 40–1; Renger 1985: 39, 43; G. Williams 1983: 22; Schenk 1984: 327–9; Lyne 1987: 66–71.

asymmetry of the transaction. At the level of superficial observation and description, the god prompts and the mortal acts, but at a deeper, explanatory level, the god's prompting is *explained by*, and so is asymmetrically *dependent on*, the mortal's dispositions: it is *because* the mortal is disposed so to act that the god prompts, not vice versa. Talk of gods' *helping* mortals<sup>221</sup> must also be rejected as misleading: if you help me lift a stone, the act and the responsibility for it are shared between us, but if a god 'helps' me, the act and the responsibility remain mine alone. So human autonomy remains intact: it is indeed enhanced by divine intervention, in the sense that human agency has its significance enlarged by being put into a supernatural context.<sup>222</sup>

Of course, the fact that the gods 'make' mortals do what they are otherwise disposed to do does not mean that *every* divine action can be psychologized, though it is surprising how many can be. Richard Heinze gave as examples of non-allegorizable episodes in the *Aeneid* Venus' account to Aeneas of Dido's history and her delivery of Vulcan's shield;<sup>223</sup> and both of these are indeed plausible candidates. But he also added Turnus' pursuit of the phantom Aeneas and Juturna's distractive policy, episodes which are quite easy to allegorize in terms of Turnus' persistent avoidance of combat with Aeneas.<sup>224</sup> And in some cases, such as Venus' suggestion to Aeneas during the sack of Troy that he return to his family, and her prompting him to attack Latinus' city, the text contains an explicit doubling of divine and human levels.<sup>225</sup> Contrariwise, the fact that not all divine interventions can be psychologized does not imply the failure of the *operatur* principle.<sup>226</sup> Once a divine apparatus is in place, poets are obviously at liberty to treat their supernatural beings as autonomous figures who can intervene in the action in ways that are partly—perhaps indeed entirely—independent of human motivation. But the point remains that, in scenes where supernatural agents make suggestions to mortals they do so according to Aquinas' principle. It is also possible for characters to play with questions about the extent of divine influence, as Dido does at 4.379–80, and Nisus at 9.184–5. But questions about divine influence do not arise for characters in a story in the same way as they do for its readers: a sceptical attitude might be appropriate for readers but not for characters. So from the fact that Dido's Epicureanism about the gods 'is

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<sup>221</sup> So Kühn 1971: 72; but cf. 175–6.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. de Mourgues 1967: 116 (on Racine).

<sup>223</sup> Heinze 1957: 309.

<sup>224</sup> G. Williams 1983: 30–1; *pace* Coleman 1990: 47–8.

<sup>225</sup> Monti 1981: 73; G. Williams 1983: 24.

<sup>226</sup> *Pace* Schenk 1984: 17–18.

proved comprehensively wrong<sup>227</sup> *in the poem*, it does not follow that demythologizing the divine would be wrong *for the reader*: what is true *in the poem* is not necessarily true *of it*.

The *operatur* principle bears, now, on the question of Aeneas' tragic status. 'It matters terribly for Aeneas' tragedy that an external constraint makes him leave [Carthage]', says Denis Feeney.<sup>228</sup> But suppose we psychologize the divine framework in Book 4 and read Mercury's interventions as representations of the prickings of Aeneas' conscience, rather in the way that Cicero allegorizes the Furies that pursue Orestes.<sup>229</sup> Do we thereby destroy the tragedy? Generalized, that would produce implausible results. For example, the motivation of Racine's Titus, whose agonized decision to renounce Bérénice is partly modelled on Aeneas' desertion of Dido,<sup>230</sup> is depicted naturalistically, but it would be odd to say that the absence of a divine apparatus in Racine's play affected its tragic status. (*Bérénice's* status as a tragedy has indeed been frequently disputed, but not for this reason.)<sup>231</sup> Feeney adds that Mercury's role in Book 4 'is not a quasi-novelistic way of representing a decision made by Aeneas, a *faute de mieux* which we must tolerate in narrative until the development of the realism of the developed novel'.<sup>232</sup> But this misses the point. The gods are one way of doing it, the realistic novel another; but the 'it' that they are both doing is *au fond* the same, and has to do with human psychology. (That comes out with especial clarity in the works of those realistic novelists who avail themselves of divine machinery, as Thomas Hardy does, fleetingly but powerfully, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.) But the fact that the *operatur* principle applies as much to Aeneas as to other subjects of divine influence does not lessen his tragedy: quite the reverse. It means that he in some sense brings the tragic role of historic man upon himself. The statement that Aeneas is not driven by his own desire or ambition, but is rather 'forced into a mission by circumstances outside his control'<sup>233</sup> may be true as an internal description of the plot: taking the divine machinery literally, that is what one will (perhaps) say.<sup>234</sup> But one will not say it when, from an external, readerly point of view, one accommodates the *operatur* principle.

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<sup>227</sup> Feeney 1991: 173.

<sup>228</sup> Feeney 1991: 174.

<sup>229</sup> *Pro Sexto Roscio* 66–7; *In Pisonem*, 46–7, with Nisbet ad loc. Cf. Padel 1992: 177–8.

<sup>230</sup> Beare 1964–5: 27–8; Pöschl 1970: 156, 162, 168; 1977: 53.

<sup>231</sup> See Campbell 2005: 45; Greenberg 2010: 124–5; Hoxby 2015: 136–7.

<sup>232</sup> Feeney 1991: 175.

<sup>233</sup> Hardie 2014: 77. Cf. Bowra 1945: 69 ('His whole life is dictated by the gods').

<sup>234</sup> Only 'perhaps', because it can be argued that even from an internal point of view, Aeneas' 'hic amor, haec patria est' (4.347; cf. 281, 577) and 'fatis egere volentem' (8.133) are the truth, whereas his 'Italiam non sponte sequor' (4.361) and 'invitus, regina, . . .' (6.460–3) are not: they are white lies

The second complicating factor is this. Aeneas is not always historic man: he does not always act under the burden of his mission; he is not always a ‘synecdochic hero’, in Philip Hardie’s phrase, ‘the individual who stands for the totality of his people present and future’.<sup>235</sup> There *are* times when Aeneas ‘belongs to the moment’: the liaison at Carthage is one such;<sup>236</sup> the rampage after the death of Pallas is another, as is the slaying of Turnus.<sup>237</sup> But these are not occasions when Aeneas discards tragic objectivity and recovers *his own* subjectivity. On the contrary, in these moments he ricochets from a tragic objectivity to an equally tragic subjectivity—tragic because it is not truly *his*. Pallas acts through him; Aeneas does not act out of his own nature.<sup>238</sup> In the vicariousness of his agency when he kills Turnus, Aeneas is deprived of self as much, if in a different way, as he is when he dons the mantle of the author’s objective tragic vision, or acts as historic man. It may be the case that there is an erotic element in Aeneas’ feeling for, and revenge of, Pallas;<sup>239</sup> more importantly, there is self-directed anger, since he has betrayed Evander’s trust.<sup>240</sup> These features do not diminish the tragedy, given that they are unaccompanied by any self-understanding on Aeneas’ part.<sup>241</sup> (A similar point applies to the view that Aeneas’ fury represents a brief release from the pressure of his mission.)<sup>242</sup> Mueller diagnosed authorial failure in the ending of the poem: ‘Although Vergil imitated the circumstances of the Patrocleia in the story of Pallas, Turnus, and Aeneas, the effect of Pallas’ death on Aeneas is unconvincing because Vergil never succeeded in establishing a close relationship between Pallas and Aeneas that would explain or justify the furious revenge that Aeneas takes on Turnus’.<sup>243</sup> This overlooks the role of Aeneas’ betrayed obligation to Evander, but what is right in Mueller’s remark is the implication (if we replace authorial failure with success) that Aeneas acts out of a borrowed self—that his act of vengeance is not grounded in his real self.

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told to Dido for good political reasons. For discussion see Monti 1981: 43; Skulsky 1985: 449–50; Mackie 1988: 131–2; Feeney 1990a: 174.

<sup>235</sup> Hardie 1993: 4.

<sup>236</sup> Austin on 4.260; Pöschl 1977: 39. In another sense, of course, the liaison is ‘historic’ inasmuch as it looks forward to Antony’s liaison with Cleopatra.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Stewart 1972–3: 662–4.

<sup>238</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.110–11; Fratantuono 2007: 396. *Pace* Putnam, who thinks that at the end of the poem Aeneas ‘speaks and acts directly from personal feeling’ (2006: 397 n. 16).

<sup>239</sup> Putnam 1995: 27–49. This might help explain the erotic element of 8.587–91. Cf. Clausen 1987: 95–6.

<sup>240</sup> Horsfall 1995: 212; Tarrant 2012: 22. One might also find self-directed anger in the Lausus scene, particularly at 10.830–1 (‘increpat ultro . . .’), where his rebuke seems really to be directed at himself.

<sup>241</sup> Boyle 1986: 111.

<sup>242</sup> Wilson 1969: 72–3.

<sup>243</sup> Mueller 1980: 222.

Aeneas is tragic because he moves between an objective stance in which he plays the role of historic man and duplicates the author's tragic vision to a position in which he is possessed by the subjectivity of another, without self-understanding. This lack of self-understanding emerges not just at the end, but also after the death of Pallas, where Aeneas' words to his victims contrast unfavourably with the serenity and insight of Achilles' words to Lycaon in the Iliadic model scene (*Iliad* 21.64–135).<sup>244</sup> In both places Virgil highlights Aeneas' cognitive failure, which is, as we have noted, the hallmark of classical tragedy. So my suggestion is this: at one point Aeneas is tragic because, though he *has* insight, that insight is the author's tragic vision; at another he is tragic because he *lacks* insight. At one point Aeneas is the tragic Achilles, at another the tragic Hector.

## 7 Conclusion

Aeneas, I have suggested, bears some resemblance to a tragic figure; if that is right, it coheres with the general case for pessimism that I set out in §§2–5. But Virgil cannot, optimists insist, have intended to write an anti-*Aeneid*, let alone an anti-*Augusteid*.<sup>245</sup> Here the question arises whether the tradition is right to equate pessimism with an anti-Augustan agenda. After all, one might object, William Empson held that the *Aeneid*'s 'dreamy, impersonal, universal melancholy was a calculated support for Augustus'.<sup>246</sup> But this seems to me to be a piece of (not untypical) perversity on Empson's part (he is of course echoing Tennyson), which fails to convince because the pessimistic elements of the *Aeneid* are much more precise than he implies. There is indeed *universality* in the *Aeneid*, as there is in any great epic or tragedy, but there is also detail, concreteness, reality: the vagueness and insubstantiality of 'dreamy' and 'impersonal' strike the wrong note. So, while it is true that the pessimism of the end of the *Aeneid*, as I have defined and explored that in this paper, is conceptually distinct from anti-Augustanism, the common critical alignment of these two ways of reading the poem, which I mentioned right at the beginning, is not arbitrary or accidental. There is a real connection between them: I shall say something more about that in this concluding section.

We are told that Virgil cannot have intended to write an anti-*Augusteid*: perhaps not, but a quite different and happier thought of Empson's can help us here. Milton cannot have intended to write a poem that parodied God and elevated Satan to heroic stature; but that, in the eyes of readers from Blake to Empson and beyond, is just what he did. If these readers are

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<sup>244</sup> Wilson 1969: 73; Clausen 1987: 91; Gaskin 1992: 299–300; Dyson 2001: 92.

<sup>245</sup> Horsfall 1995: 194–5.

<sup>246</sup> Empson 1995: 11. Cf. Perkell 1997: 257.

right—the issue is of course controversial, but their interpretation cannot be ruled out on *a priori* grounds, and here I just need its conceivability—then we shall have to say that, while Milton may have intended one thing, in his hands the material took on a life of its own (as material has an uncanny habit of doing) and yielded something else. Could something similar be true of Virgil?<sup>247</sup> Jenkyns argues that we would not for a moment tolerate a ‘two voices’ reading of the *Inferno*; why, he asks, are we so ready to accept it in the case of the *Aeneid*?<sup>248</sup> But we must approach each case individually. It would be fallacious to reason from practice in an age of relatively stable faith, such as Dante’s, to periods of ideological turmoil, as Milton’s and Virgil’s times were. Virgil has in any case struck many readers as a more modern writer than Dante: he is ‘closer to Tolstoy than to Homer, to Thackeray than to Ennius’.<sup>249</sup> And the fact is that there are simply too many undercutting moves in the *Aeneid* for them to figure as mere footnotes to an uncritically Augustan programme.<sup>250</sup> There are at least two voices in the *Aeneid*, if not a polyphony. Dante, we may be sure (on both literary and biographical evidence), took his God seriously, Milton the man likewise, but with Milton the narrating voice the matter is not so clear: Empson makes an incisive point when he remarks that the central problem of *Paradise Lost* is ‘how Milton can have thought it to justify God’;<sup>251</sup> for it is not absurd to say that, though the *poet* no doubt thought that it did justify God, the *poem* itself is not so sure. With Virgil’s Jupiter—who, though sublimer than Homer’s Zeus, still seduces Ganymede (1.28), incites the other gods to raze Troy (2.617–8), rapes Iarbas’ mother (4.198), and both rapes and bestows an unwanted immortality on Turnus’ sister Juturna (12.144, 878–80)—matters are likewise unclear. (Io, who appears on Turnus’ shield, is another of Jupiter’s victims.)<sup>252</sup> Critics have found numerous ways in which Virgil compromises his chief god,<sup>253</sup> who is no unmoved mover, no moral Archimedean point,<sup>254</sup> but a tribal leader who asserts and sullies himself in the heat and dust of sublunary action.

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<sup>247</sup> Cf. Wilson 1969: 75; Tarrant 2012: 9–10.

<sup>248</sup> Jenkyns 1985: 71; 1998: 669–70.

<sup>249</sup> MacKay 1963: 163.

<sup>250</sup> One of the clearest examples is the passage on Brutus in the *Heldenschau* (6.817–23): see Austin and Horsfall ad loc.; Segal 1966: 50–4; Pöschl 1970: 162; R. D. Williams 1978–80: 3; G. Williams 1983: 215–16; Feeney 1986: 6, 10; Griffin 1994: 173–4; Knox 1997; Thomas 2001: 211–13; Ross 2007: 111; Shelfer 2011: 303–4.

<sup>251</sup> Empson 1961: 140.

<sup>252</sup> Thomas 1998: 287; Hejduk 2009: 309.

<sup>253</sup> Lyne 1987: 77–93; Griffin 1994: 129–30; Barchiesi 1994: 113; Perkell 1997: 275–7; O’Hara 2007: 101; Hejduk 2009.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. Feeney 1991: 155.

When, therefore, we encounter the inclemency of the gods in the sack of Troy (2.602), we cannot simply assume that this is just how things are and rest content with a gloss along the lines of ‘sometimes *clementia* is a good thing, but not here’.<sup>255</sup> As we noted above, one person’s *modus ponens* is another’s *modus tollens*: if the gods are unmerciful at Troy, which way does that cut—for the gods and against mercy, or against the gods and for mercy? Roland Austin was so horrified at the ‘fantastic apocalypse, gods in devilry, gloating over their horrid work like demons in a medieval Doom’<sup>256</sup> that he found himself embracing the latter option. If Aeneas’ human sacrifice alludes to the notorious *Arae Perusinae*<sup>257</sup>—and even if we do not believe the report that Octavian sacrificed three hundred knights and senators to the shades of his adoptive father,<sup>258</sup> still it suggests that such rumours circulated<sup>259</sup>—does that provide a precedent for Augustus (with justification running in either direction, or both),<sup>260</sup> or does it prompt us to censure his (alleged) conduct?<sup>261</sup> For it would seem that the mention of Aeneas’ sacrificial act, and the allusion to Augustus, cannot be morally neutral.<sup>262</sup> Given what we know about mature Roman attitudes to human sacrifice, we are, I suggest, invited to censure. The young Virgil had perhaps indirectly criticized Octavian in the first and ninth *Eclogues*;<sup>263</sup> and in the *Aeneid* he expressly chides Julius Caesar at 6.826–35. Even that most Augustan of books, the eighth, is full of subversive touches.<sup>264</sup> To select just one: Cacus, son of Vulcan, is, as Peter Schenk tells us, ‘dem Furor zugeordnet’,<sup>265</sup> which carries disquieting implications for the provenance of Aeneas’ shield. Coming to the end of the poem, where similar questions arise, we may ask whether Jupiter’s deployment of a *Dira* against Turnus should prompt us to conclude that *Dirae* have their positive uses after all, or to be troubled that Jupiter resorts to *furor* and descends to the level of Juno and her *Allecto*.<sup>266</sup> Schenk assures us that ‘The fact that Aeneas kills Turnus in a state

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<sup>255</sup> Cf. Schmidt 2001: 168.

<sup>256</sup> Austin 1964: xx.

<sup>257</sup> Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 15; Dio 48.14.4; Seneca, *De Clementia* 1.11.1. So e.g. Tarrant 1997: 179.

<sup>258</sup> As e.g. Syme (1960: 212), Nisbet (1990: 387), and S. Harrison (on *Aeneid* 10.517–20) do not. See also Shelfer 2011: 313.

<sup>259</sup> Dyson 2001: 130; Tarrant 2012: 26; Poulsen 2013: 97.

<sup>260</sup> So Jackson Knight 1932. Cf. Tarrant 2004: 122

<sup>261</sup> So Farron 1985.

<sup>262</sup> Pace Renger 1985: 65–7.

<sup>263</sup> Pöschl 1964: 29; Thome 1979: 342; Thomas 1998: 295–7; 2001: 94–5, 119–20, 147.

<sup>264</sup> See Wiesen 1973: 764–5; Boyle 1986: 79–80; Putnam 1995: 2–3; Fowler 2000: 48–54; Thomas 2001: 206–7.

<sup>265</sup> Schenk 1984: 237 n. 102.

<sup>266</sup> Putnam 1965: 163, 194; Boyle 1986: 106; Feeney 1991: 151; Hardie 1991: 39, and on 9. 105; Dyson 2001: 202 (‘It would seem that the weapons of heaven and hell are indistinguishable’).

of *furor* is as little to be understood as something negative as is the deployment of the *Dira* by Jupiter on the divine level'.<sup>267</sup> As little? Or as much? We cannot simply assume that, as Schenk also asserts, this turn of events shows that 'Aeneas has every human and divine right on his side'.<sup>268</sup> Evaluating that claim requires us to assess Jupiter's moral status, a point that I touched on above in this section; here it is evidently too simplistic to say, with Wlosok, that 'the world order which Jupiter represents is a moral one'.<sup>269</sup> Optimists often suppose that moral questions—what counts as good *furor*, what bad, etc.—are simply a matter of what accords and what conflicts with Jupiter's will, and with fate.<sup>270</sup> But that supposition rests on an implausibly wooden conception of Virgilian morality.

Michael Putnam famously wrote that 'It is Aeneas who loses at the end of Book XII, leaving Turnus victorious in his tragedy'.<sup>271</sup> Optimists and pessimists generally quote this dictum to reject it, both sides agreeing that it goes too far.<sup>272</sup> But it seems to me to contain an important element of truth in both its parts. Turnus is tragic, but he dies as a hero should; and in so doing he recovers his pride. Ironically, he gets what he (really) wants by not being given what he (really) asks for. Turnus is consistently dishonoured by his immortal backers,<sup>273</sup> but saved from shame in the end by his mortal enemy. There is an irony on Aeneas' side too, which is that his moment of victory is, as Putnam says, in another sense a moment of defeat: military victory, moral defeat. As W. R. Johnson observed, Aeneas kills Turnus out of despair.<sup>274</sup> If, as Theodor Haecker insinuated,<sup>275</sup> his tears over the pictures in Dido's temple are a Gethsemane moment for Aeneas, then one might hazard that the end of the poem is his Golgotha. Haecker noted the paradox that the founder of the Roman *gens* was a *Besieger*:<sup>276</sup> he was alluding to the defeat of Troy, but the remark is true in a deeper sense as well. Aeneas and Turnus, I suggested earlier, are in a sense brothers, an anticipation of Romulus and Remus. But the connection is even closer than that. As many commentators have noted, the characterizations of Aeneas and Turnus, especially in the last book as we build towards the final cataclysm, tend to coalesce, so that Turnus seems to take on the role of Aeneas'

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<sup>267</sup> Schenk 1984: 278–9.

<sup>268</sup> Schenk 1984: 278.

<sup>269</sup> Wlosok 1990: 378; cf. 1967: 14 n. 3 ('die gerechte Weltordnung'), 130; 1990: 299. Cf. Johnson 1976: 114–34; Schmidt 2001: 168; Hejduk 2009: 292, 304, 314.

<sup>270</sup> So e.g. Renger 1985: 17; Mackie 1988: 56–7, 89–90, 173, 201, 212–15; Wlosok 1990: 435.

<sup>271</sup> Putnam 1965: 193. Cf. Wilson 1969: 75.

<sup>272</sup> E.g. Galinsky 1992a: 9; Thomas 1998: 282.

<sup>273</sup> Pace Kühn 1971: 150.

<sup>274</sup> Johnson 1965: 363.

<sup>275</sup> Haecker 1958: 137.

<sup>276</sup> Haecker 1958: 116.



double.<sup>277</sup> It is almost as though, in killing his adversary in despair, Aeneas kills himself.<sup>278</sup> John Esposito has argued that ‘in Aristotelian terms, [Aeneas’] delay is the first half of a *peripeteia*’;<sup>279</sup> we might wonder whether it is also the first half of an *anagnōrisis*—a recognition of himself—which remains unconsummated.

Is the abrupt ending of the poem—which, given the elaborate preparation for it and the anticipations of the sequel, would, we can assume, have survived the poet’s *summa manus*<sup>280</sup>—exciting and upbeat,<sup>281</sup> or unsettling and downbeat?<sup>282</sup> That, in effect, has been my main concern here. The comparison that Mueller makes with the end of the *Iliad*, with which we began, can be played either way. There is no reconciliation between Aeneas and Turnus as there was between Achilles and Priam, but then this latter reconciliation was anyway a fragile, artificial affair, which could not, and did not, last. At the end of the Homeric poem the renewal of hostilities—which will kill both men—is imminent.<sup>283</sup> Virgil, I have suggested, leaves it unclear to what extent hostilities will continue after Turnus’ death, and how Aeneas will die; but we do know that the reconciliation with Juno is only temporary and partial.<sup>284</sup> And we know that the death of Turnus will be replicated in ‘the dreary catalogue of vengeance-killings of Roman civil war’.<sup>285</sup> If my argument in this paper has been persuasive, the reader will feel that the ending presents us not just with the final movement in Turnus’ tragedy, but with hints, albeit inchoate and tentative, of a stage in a tragic trajectory for Aeneas. Like Oedipus and Heracles, Aeneas will be lifted up to heaven, but first he must, like them, touch his nadir.

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<sup>277</sup> See Bandera 1981: 233; Hardie 1993: 22–3; Quint 1993: 79–80; Thomas 1998: 277; Gross 2003–4: 149–51; Tarrant 2012: 15; Poulsen 2013: 125–6.

<sup>278</sup> Gross 2003–4: 153–4.

<sup>279</sup> Esposito 2016: 467.

<sup>280</sup> Horsfall 1995: 195; Tarrant 2004: 111–15; 2012: 3.

<sup>281</sup> So Jenkyns 1985: 74.

<sup>282</sup> So Farron 1982.

<sup>283</sup> Jenkyns 1985: 73–4; Taplin 1992: 278–83; Dyson 2001: 95; Rutherford 2001: 288–9.

<sup>284</sup> Johnson 1976: 13, 123–7; Feeney 1990b; 1991: 149–51; Dyson 2001: 125–30; Tarrant on 12.842.

<sup>285</sup> Hardie 1993: 21.

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