SONDERDRUCK AUS:

EUPHROSYNE

STUDIES IN ANCIENT EPIC AND ITS LEGACY IN HONOR OF DIMITRIS N. MARONITIS

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Heroes Cunctantes / Hesitant Heroes: Aeneas and Some Others

Moments of indecision—whether in life or in literature—are opportunities for understanding. Such pauses disclose confused or opposed motivations. In Erving Goffman's metaphor,[1] the presentation of self is interrupted as two or more scripts (with stage directions) compete for realization. The suspension of action is typically brief, lasting from milliseconds to minutes or hours, a day at very most. Life does not stand still for long.

Instances of hesitation are especially obvious in drama, where any cessation of action is itself a most significant act. Frequently, wavering characters articulate, verbally and/or nonverbally, the nature of their quandary. Shakespearean soliloquies come immediately to mind. Such interludes allow the author to divulge painfully conflictual motivations. In Greek tragedy, the afflicted characters, *in extremis*, often ask the advice of others; at a loss to manage irreconcilable responsibilities or desires, they simply don't know what to do: "Πυλάδη, τί δράσω;" / "Pylades, what should I do?" (Aesch., *Cho.* 899: Orestes face-to-face with the mother he has planned to kill); "τί δῆτα χρὴ δρᾶν; φράζε· πείσομαι δ' ἐγώ" / "what then must I do? Tell me, and I will obey" (Soph., *Ant.* 1099: Creon to the chorus after the immuring of Antigone and his unsettling interview with Teiresias); "ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δράσω;" / "O Zeus, what should I do?" (Soph., *Phil.* 908: Neoptolemus, hesitating to (re-)victimize Philoctetes and praying for instruction); "αἰαῖ· τί δράσω;" / "Ai! ai! What should I do?" (Eur., *Med.* 1042: Medea with the children she means to destroy).

In the analyses that follow, I examine moments of hesitation in epic narratives to demonstrate their value both for accurate identification of specific motivations and for interpretation of their artistic representation. Though the discussions in the three sections have discrete focuses, the clash of freedom and responsibility is a common element throughout. My procedure is *explication de texte*, my approach broadly comparative.

I

> Not all Virgil's art can make the figure of Aeneas here [*Aen.* 4.331 ff.] appear other than despicable. His conduct had been vile, and Dido's heart-broken appeal brings its vileness into strong relief.
>
> T. E. Page[2]

Vergil's Aeneas is a badly overburdened man, saddled with obligations to others that clash painfully with his own personal desires. Appropriately, the best-known artistic images of Aeneas depict him bowed under the weight of Anchises on his back, leading his son and other dependent compatriots out of the holocaust of Troy. In the *Aeneid*, the pressures of opposing claims on the hero often so sap his mental resolution as to put him in a state of shock, physically benumbed, even paralyzed: "extemplo Aeneae solvuntur

1 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York 1959).

2 *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books I-VI* (London 1894), ad loc.

frigore membra" / "Aeneas' limbs suddenly grow cold and weak" (*Aen.* 1.92).[3] The fear that freezes him as we see Aeneas for the first time in the epic is not fear of death, but fear that he has made the wrong decision. By obeying the instructions of Venus and the portents of Jupiter (2.619, 679-98), Aeneas has lost his chance for the compensatory fame won by Hector and Sarpedon: "o terque quaterque beati..." (1.94-101). Rather than dying in heroic defense of his doomed city, he now faces an inglorious death by drowning. Gallingly, the cause he has espoused in lieu of a certain hero's death holds no strong personal value for Aeneas. Hence his lament.

The irresolution that sometimes besets Aeneas contrasts sharply with the dogged persistence of another Trojan War survivor. Homer's Odysseus is admirably tenacious in his quest to return to Ithaca. But such determination is easy for him, precisely because he is personally devoted to his ultimate goal—reunion with his family. Unlike Aeneas, he knows precisely where he is going and why. His choices are thus less morally difficult, their consequences less psychologically burdensome. Even when he turns down Calypso's (bogus?) offer of immortality, he is doing what he personally wishes. Hermes appears to and instructs Calypso in *Odyssey* 5; Odysseus himself needs no reminder of his mission. In the analogous Vergilian scene in *Aeneid* 4, Mercury confronts Aeneas directly. The difference is telling. Odysseus is not asked to privilege other, externally imposed, intentions over his own motives as an individual. Odysseus does endure inner conflict—when he pulls his punch with Iros: ὣδε δέ οἱ φρονέοντι δοάσσατο κέρδιον εἶναι, / ἦκ' ἐλάσαι[4] / "and in the division of his heart this way seemed best to him, / to hit him lightly" (*Od.* 18.93-94);[5] when he is abused by Melantho (18.320 ff., 19.65 ff.); during the interview with Penelope (19.204-12); when he teases his decrepit father (24.318-20). A disguised guest in his own home, Odysseus witnesses the misbehavior of servants and suffers the abuse of suitors; he must tap deep reserves of patience: "τέτλαθι δή, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης, / ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε..." / "Bear up, my heart, you have borne worse than this on that day when..." (20.18-19). But in each case, he may and does choose what he judges best for himself, as an individual, in the long run. The options are immediate and eventual self-gratification. Aeneas, by comparison, must again and again repudiate his own self-interest altogether. He can seldom do this automatically; the effort often momentarily stuns him, stops him cold. We may discern the vectors of interest and responsibility that traverse the soul of the hero at such times.

In two crucial episodes, in Book 4 and in Book 12 (see section III below), Vergil uses the participle "cunctans" (both times in the accusative case in the fourth foot of the hexameter) to describe Aeneas. In these two moments of hesitation, overarchingly important motives collide, as Aeneas must follow one course of action and forgo another. The decisions he makes define him as a hero and as a human being.

In Book 4, after Aeneas has broken the news of his departure to Dido, she denounces his duplicity and infidelity in a pair of extended speeches. Her arguments are cogent, her indignation rightful and understandable: she did in fact offer help that saved Aeneas and his men, did in fact show great generosity of spirit and unlimited hospitality—for an en-

3 All quotations of the *Aeneid* are from R.A.B. Mynors, ed., *P. Vergilii Maronis Opera* (Oxford 1969); unattributed translations are my own.

4 All quotations of the *Odyssey* are from P. Von der Mühll, ed., *Homeri Odyssea*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart 1984); unattributed translations are my own.

5 R. Lattimore, trans., *The Odyssey of Homer* (New York 1965).

tire year at this point, did in fact trust him to requite her love. Aeneas is quite aware of all this and admits the truth of her claims. Moreover, he seems genuinely to care for Dido and is not deaf to her appeals. He begs her not to enflame his (and her) emotions any further by her pleas: "desine meque tuis incendere teque querelis" (*Aen.* 4.360). He is shaken in his heart by the great love he feels—"magnoque animum labefactus amore" (4.395)—yet must renounce.

Aen. 4.388-91:

> his medium dictis sermonem abrumpit et auras
> aegra fugit seque ex oculis avertit et aufert,
> linquens multa metu cunctantem et multa parantem
> dicere.

At these words [Dido] broke off sharply. She hurried in her misery away and hid from sight, leaving Aeneas anxious and hesitant, and longing to say much more to her.[6]

Aeneas hesitates. His mind races, seeks but does not find words to make it right, make the pain go away: "lenire dolentem / solando cupit et dictis avertere curas" / "he wants to lessen her anguish with consolation and dispel her torments with words" (4.393-94). There can be no such words, no such consolation. And so, "pius Aeneas" obeys the divine commands and rejoins his men as they prepare to cast off: "iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit" (4.396). But this action impairs his soul. For Aeneas knows, by firsthand experience, the need for him that Dido expresses. He, too, has suffered emotional deprivation and isolation. He has lost his wife Creusa and, more recently, his revered father Anchises. His complaint to his mother Venus, after her apparition in Book 1, is the genuine *cri de cœur* of a profoundly lonely adult child:

Aen. 1.407-9:

> "quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis
> ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram
> non datur...?"

"Why do you so often delude your son with false hopes? Why may we not join hand to hand?"

Now Aeneas inflicts just such cruelty on Dido. He has led her on, defrauded her by the baseless expectation of a permanent and mutually satisfying union. What else was she to think after a whole year's time? Having lived with her as man and wife, he now cravenly claims technical exemption from doing the decent thing: "nec coniugis umquam / praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni" / "I never carried the wedding torch or entered the bond of marriage" (4.338-39). Aeneas behaves dishonorably, whatever the strict legalities of his situation. His compliance with the dictates of the gods over the urgings of his own conscience justifies his special epithet—"sum pius Aeneas" (1.378; cf. 4.393), but leaves him frustrated and sorely constrained: "Italiam non sponte sequor" / "I go to Italy not of my own free will" (4.361).

Compare the choice made by Milton's Adam in an analogous predicament in *Paradise Lost.* Eve has eaten the forbidden fruit.

6 W.F. Jackson Knight, trans., *Virgil: The Aeneid* (Baltimore 1956).

PL 9.888-91:[7]

> Adam, soon as he heard
> The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
> Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
> Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed....

Thus far, Adam reacts with true Aeneas-like paralysis; the physical symptomatology is identical, including shock, ataxia, chills, and aphasia: "Speechless he stood and pale..." (9.894). But, after a considerable hesitation, he delivers an interior monologue that reveals a profound self-knowledge: "at length / First to himself he inward silence broke" (9.894-95). Adam's reverie is a lament for Eve, the "fairest of creation...on a sudden lost, / Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote" (9.896, 900-901). He knows that she has succumbed to the beguilement of Satan, "the enemy," to her ruin and, he immediately adds, to his own:

PL 9.904-7:

> "Some cursed fraud
> Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
> And me with thee hath ruined, for with thee
> Certain is my resolution to die."

Faced, like Aeneas, with the alternatives of obedience to divine directives and loyalty to the woman he loves, Adam calmly (!) decides for the woman, knowing full well that death will be the awful outcome: "How can I live without thee, how forgo / Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined, / To live again in these wild woods forlorn?" (9.908-10). His attachment to Eve proceeds from his own conception of self. Like Odysseus on Ogygia, Adam knows himself, his mate, and the infrangible connection that holds them, come what may.

PL 9.913-16:

> "I feel
> The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
> Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe."

So it is that when he speaks aloud to Eve, he does so "in calm mood" (9.920). He knows that to leave her would entail a loss of self every bit as irrevocable as physical death; a "forcible bond of nature" (9.955-56) is in effect: "Our state cannot be severed, we are one, / One flesh; to lose thee were to lose my self" (9.958-59).

A similar bond inspirits Odysseus, too. He readily admits to Calypso that his wife cannot match the beauty and presence of a goddess,

Od. 5.218-220:

> "ἡ μὲν γὰρ βροτός ἐστι, σὺ δ' ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως.
> ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἤματα πάντα
> οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι."

> "for she is mortal, while you are deathless and unageing.
> Still I yearn all my days to go back home and see the day of my homecoming."

7 All quotations of *Paradise Lost* are from A. Fowler, ed., John Milton: *Paradise Lost* (London 1968).

An ontological imperative informs the steadfastness of Adam and Odysseus. Each knows his place, his obligation to his woman and, concomitantly, to himself.

Aeneas' hesitancy and despondency stem from awareness of the self-sacrifice he must make. He is conscious of his own human frailty, the meaning of love and separation. And, indeed, it is precisely the call to transcend his human nature that evokes his heroism. To be a hero—in the terms set by Vergil—he must renounce his own identity. Like Jesus in Gethsemane (Mk 14:36), he would prefer that the cup might pass, yet will do the will of his father: "me patris Anchisae... / admonet in somnis et turbida terret imago" / "in dreams the darkling image of father Anchises admonishes and frightens me" (*Aen.* 4.351, 353). Aeneas must count his love for Dido well lost for the world of future Rome. His heroism is predicated on a broader, if not deeper, responsibility than that which impels Odysseus or Adam.

II

> "Damn you guys. You drank the best booze, had the best-looking women, flew the hottest airplanes—now you're gonna have to pay for your reputation. If you have a bridge to knock out, that's your job. I know the ground fire is lethal. I know that if you really press home and go down on the deck, you'll be lucky to come through it. But that's war. That's your mission, and you've got to start doing it."
>
> Gen. Chuck Yeager[8]

Though the instinct for self-preservation is passing strong, a hero can, by definition, overcome it to achieve some feat of bravery. Indeed, he often actively seeks out situations in which he may demonstrate this ability. Gilgamesh is eager to confront Humbaba, despite Enkidu's vivid warnings; Beowulf, himself a Geat, goes to the assistance of Danes against the loathsome Grendel; Roland caught in the Saracen ambuscade, refuses (till too late) to blow his horn to summon help. The prize for success is to cheat death by immortalizing oneself—to see, as Gilgamesh says, one's name stamped in brick or, better, in the memories of men and women in future ages; "ὡς καὶ ὀπίσω / ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' ἀοίδιμοι ἐσσομένοισι" / "so that we shall be sung of among men hereafter" (Hom., *Il.* 6.357-58: Helen to Hector).[9]

Many heroes so fully embrace the ethos of honor and fame that their actions in the face of danger are virtually automatic. Homer's Diomedes, for example, would go on fighting the Trojans even if all the other Greeks returned home (*Il.* 9.42-49); while he may, in a moment of tranquillity, listen to Glaucus's resigned reflection on human mortality (6.146-49), he himself never wavers, as Achilles (in)famously does in *Iliad* 9, in his conviction that death is a fair price for renown.

Still, there are moments when even brave men falter. Leaders must often counteract their men's natural desire to avoid life-threatening situations. Thus, Wiglaf son of Weohstan berates the men who deserted the mortally injured Beowulf:

8 (Then) Colonel Yeager addressing pilots of a U.S. Air Force Fighter Wing in Vietnam, ca. 1964: Gen. C. Yeager and L. Janos, *Yeager: An Autobiography* (New York 1985), 288-89.

9 All quotations of the Iliad are from D.B. Munro and T.W. Allens, edd., *Homeri Opera*, vols. 1-2, 3rd ed. (Oxford 1920); unattributed translations are my own.

Beowulf 2884-91:[10]

"Now the receiving of treasure, the giving of swords, and enjoyment of home and happiness must cease for you and your families. As soon as the princes of all nations hear about your flight and your shameful conduct, each of your clan will go landless and destitute. To any fighting-man death is better than a life of dishonour."

The perquisites of nobility—land, material possessions, and prestige—must be earned through fearless conduct in combat.

The best-known Homeric enunciation of the concept of *noblesse oblige* is put into the mouth of Sarpedon:

Il. 12.310-16:

"Γλαῦκε, τίη δὴ νῶϊ τετιμήμεσθα μάλιστα
ἕδρῃ τε κρέασίν τε ἰδὲ πλείοις δεπάεσσιν
ἐν Λυκίῃ, πάντες δὲ θεοὺς ὣς εἰσορόωσι,
καὶ τέμενος νεμόμεσθα μέγα Ξάνθοιο παρ' ὄχθας,
καλὸν φυταλιῆς καὶ ἀρούρης πυροφόροιο;
τῶ νῦν χρὴ Λυκίοισι μέτα πρώτοισιν ἐόντας
ἑστάμεν ἠδὲ μάχης καυστείρης ἀντιβολῆσαι...".

"Glaukos, why is it you and I are honoured before others
with pride of place, the choice meats and the filled wine cups
in Lykia, and all men look on us as if we were immortals,
and we are appointed a great piece of land by the banks of the Xanthos,
good land, orchard and vineyard, and ploughland for the planting of wheat?
Therefore it is our duty in the forefront of the Lykians
To take our stand, and bear our part of the blazing of battle...".[11]

Glaucus, of course, well knows every point in this harangue. But even very good "fighting-men" sometimes need to have their duties recalled to them.

Glaucus is, admittedly, a lesser hero in the *Iliad*. But more notable personalities also have moments of hesitation in extreme situations, poised on the razor's edge till one vector of responsibility overcomes another. Odysseus experiences just such a moment as, in the thick of heavy fighting, he suddenly finds himself without companions. Typically (cf. Achilles and Athena in *Il.* 1.188-218), Homer externalizes an inner conflict as a dialogue:

Il. 11.403-10 (trans. Lattimore):

ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
"ὤ μοι ἐγώ, τί πάθω; μέγα μὲν κακὸν αἴ κε φέβωμαι
πληθὺν ταρβήσας· τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον αἴ κεν ἁλώω
μοῦνος· τοὺς δ' ἄλλους Δαναοὺς ἐφόβησε Κρονίων.
ἀλλὰ τίη μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;
οἶδα γὰρ ὅττι κακοὶ μὲν ἀποίχονται πολέμοιο,
ὃς δέ κ' ἀριστεύῃσι μάχῃ ἔνι, τὸν δὲ μάλα χρεὼ
ἑστάμεναι κρατερῶς, ἤ τ' ἔβλητ' ἤ τ' ἔβαλ' ἄλλον."

And troubled, he spoke then to his own great-hearted spirit:
"Ah me, what will become of me? It will be a great evil
if I run, fearing their multitude, yet deadlier if I am caught

10 David Wright, trans., *Beowulf* (Baltimore 1957).

11 R. Lattimore, trans., *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago 1951).

alone; and Kronos' son drove to flight the rest of the Danaans.
Yet still, why does the heart within me debate on these things?
Since I know that it is the cowards who walk out of the fighting,
But if one is to win honour in battle, he must by all means
Stand his ground strongly, whether he be struck or strike down another."

For a few seconds of stop-action, Odysseus reflects on his predicament, allowing play to an impulse that heroes must and do routinely suppress. We glimpse a conflict of impelling forces: an inner voice says "save yourself!" but Odysseus' heroic conditioning reasserts itself, allowing him to regain his composure and hold his ground in the face of danger (presently sustaining a serious wound). Odysseus, however, has faced only a very grave danger, not certain death.

Hector in *Iliad* 22 places himself in dire straits by remaining outside the city walls within which the Trojan army has sought safety from the onslaught of Achilles. Though he now faces Achilles and the entire host of the Achaeans, Hector cannot well take refuge from these overwhelming odds, because that would entail loss of face. For Hector has confidently and publicly boasted (to Poulydamas) of his prowess and of Trojan chances of defeating the Achaeans (12.230-250, 18.285-309). That is uppermost in his mind now: "ὤ μοι ἐγών, εἰ μέν κε πύλας καὶ τείχεα δύω, / Πουλυδάμας μοι πρῶτος ἐλεγχείην ἀναθήσει" / "ah me! Were I to enter the gates and the walls now, Poulydamas would be first to reproach me" (22.99-100). Hence what he knows to be (22.103) his foolhardy position and his imperviousness to the pleas of his parents (22.37-89).

In the event, Hector's downfall as a hero is time—the time it takes Achilles to cross the intervening plain and reach the gates of the city. These moments of inactivity give Hector a chance to think and for the survival instinct to exert itself. As Achilles bears down, Hector breaks and runs, till his conditioning at last takes hold again and, resolved to face the danger, he meets his death. Had Hector had less time to reflect on his plight, he might not have run from his enemy. He would still have died at Achilles' hands, but with his heroic persona more fully intact. The operation of his hero's conditioning would have been more automatic.

To illustrate this point, we may consider Tolstoy's Prince Andrew. At the battle of Borodino, an artillery shell lands "within two steps" of Andrew, but does not immediately detonate. In the seconds before it does, Andrew hesitates, frozen in place as contrary forces fatally collide.

War and Peace, bk. 10, ch. 36:[12]

"Lie down!" cried the adjutant, throwing himself flat on the ground.

Prince Andrew hesitated. The smoking shell spun like a top between him and the prostrate adjutant near a wormwood plant between the field and the meadow.

"Can this be death?" thought Prince Andrew, looking with a quite new, envious glance at the grass, the wormwood, and the streamlet of smoke that curled up from the rotating black ball. "I cannot, I do not wish to die. I love life—I love this grass, this earth, this air...". He thought this and at the same time remembered that people were looking at him.

"It's shameful, sir!" he said to the adjutant. "What...".

12 All quotations of *War and Peace* are from L. and A. Maude, trans., *War and Peace: A Novel by Leo Tolstoy*, rev. ed. (London 1933).

He did not finish speaking. At one and the same moment came the sound of an explosion... .

Tolstoy's aristocratic characters evince many of the traits of Homeric heroes. They are subject to all the same articles of battlefield decorum, the overriding concern with what onlookers might say (*Il.* 22.99-100, quoted above; cf. 6.441-43: Hector to Andromache; 12.317: Sarpedon to Glaucus). And they, too, have acquired such concerns from their fathers. Hector was taught to win glory not only for himself, but also for his father (6.444-46). Prince Andrew has gone to the same school.

War and Peace, bk. 1, ch. 28:

"Well, now, good-bye!" He gave his son his hand to kiss, and embraced him. "Remember this, Prince Andrew, if they kill you it will hurt me, your old father ...". He paused unexpectedly, and then in a querulous voice suddenly shrieked: "but if I hear that you have not behaved like the son of Nicholas Bolkónski, I shall be ashamed!"

"You need not have said that to me, father", said the son with a smile.

How well the son has learned his lessons, Andrew proves at Borodino, just as Hector had on the plains of Troy. In the moments before the shell discharges, as the men around him leap for cover, Andrew weighs his life in the balance of shame and glory and sustains the mortal wound that brings him a lingering death. His father will have no reason to be ashamed.

III

"tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos."

"You, Roman, remember: Govern! Rule the world!
These are your arts! Make peace man's way of life;
Spare the humble but strike the defiant down."[13]

Aen. 6.851-53

At the end of the Vergil's epic, Aeneas stands over the wounded Turnus. The Italian champion publicly admits defeat: "ille humilis supplex oculos dextramque precantem / protendens 'equidem merui nec deprecor' inquit; / 'utere sorte tua'" / "Turnus spoke, with the suppliant's outstretched hand / and humble glance: 'I have earned it. I have no plea. Take what you've won'" (*Aen.* 12.930-32; trans. Copley). He concedes Lavinia, the prize of victory, and then asks Aeneas to think of Anchises and spare Turnus' elderly father, Daunus, the grief of losing his son. The appeal affects Aeneas and makes him hesitate, despite the ferocity of his present state of mind.

Aen. 12.938-41:

Stetit acer in armis
Aeneas volvens oculos dextramque repressit;
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo
coeperat... .

13 F.O. Copley, trans., *Vergil: The Aeneid*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis 1975).

> Aeneas stood, eyes wild, fearsome in his armor, and held back the blow; gradually, the words began to affect him as he hesitated....

In the next instant, Aeneas catches sight of the baldric of dead Pallas, stripped off his body by Turnus, who now wears this memento of victory. In a blaze of anger, Aeneas stabs Turnus to death.

Vergil has a predilection for depicting young men cut off in their flower: in the Iliadic half of the *Aeneid*, besides Pallas, one thinks of Euryalus in Book 9 and Lausus in Book 10. A common interpretation of Aeneas' action in the present scene is that he is fired by anger and a lust to avenge an attractive but pathetic young ally, for whom he feels an almost paternal responsibility. Aeneas is "furiis accensus et ira / terribilis" / "aflame with fury and terrible in his rage" (12.946-47), and "fervidus" / "inflamed" (12.951) as he plunges the sword into Turnus's breast.

I believe that, by considering the intricate crosscutting of duties in *Aeneid* 12, we may reach a more plausible explanation of both Aeneas' hesitation and his ultimate decision to kill Turnus. In the first place, Aeneas is actuated by a political motive: To resolve decisively the military conflict. The war in Italy is fought to determine who will win Lavinia in a dynastic marriage that will—since Latinus has no male heir—secure the political preeminence of her husband in Latium. Much blood has been shed in the struggle, and the assembled Trojan and Italian witnesses of the truce and the arranged monomachia rightfully expect a fight to the death. Anything less would be unsatisfying because inconclusive. Further, in the minds of Vergil's readers, the precedent of Achilles and Hector in *Iliad* 22 intensifies the anticipation of a deadly outcome, as indeed does the prophecy of Jupiter at 1.263-64: "bellum ingens geret Italia populosque ferocis / contundet..." / "he will wage a great war in Italy and crush fearsome nations...".

Aeneas is also conscious of a second, more personal duty: To live by the ethical instruction of his father Anchises. When Turnus appeals to Aeneas to pity the old age of Daunus ("Dauni miserere senectae" *Aen.* 12.934), he invokes the figure of Anchises (12.933-34). This, of course, strongly suggests a Homeric antecedent: in *Iliad* 24, Achilles is reminded of his own father, Peleus, by Priam grieving his lost son, Hector. But, it also calls to the hero's (and the reader's) mind Anchises in the Underworld and the final words of his memorable appraisal of the Roman genius: "[memento]...parcere subiectis et debellare superbos" / "remember...spare the humble but strike the defiant down" (6.853). This prescription had special resonance in the context of late Republican and Augustan Rome. The vocabulary of leniency and magnanimity had often informed the speech and the policies of Julius Caesar, who traced his *nomen gentilicium* back to Aeneas' son Iulus and thus to Anchises. During the Civil War, the dynast had even hoped to make the "clementia Caesaris" a watchword of a new political strategy: "haec nova sit ratio vincendi ut misericordia et liberalitate nos muniamus" / "let this be the new style of conquest, to make mercy and generosity our shield."[14] In late 45 B.C., the senate decreed that there should be constructed a temple (announced on coins after the assassination) to honor *Divus Iulius* and *Clementia*. Suetonius remarks: "moderationem vero clementiamque cum in administratione tum in victoria belli civilis admirabilem exhibuit" / "he [Caesar] indeed

14 Caesar *ap.* Cic., *Att.* 9.7c; Latin and English from D.R. Shackleton Bailey, ed., *Cicero's Letters to Atticus*, vol. 4 (Cambridge 1968).

showed commendable moderation and mercy both in his handling of the civil war and in its victorious aftermath" (*Iul.* 75.1).[15]

Augustus, too, sedulously publicized similar virtues of generosity and forbearance. *Clementia* was one of the cardinal virtues trumpeted in 27 B.C. on the golden Shield of Virtue (*Clupeus virtutis*) set up in the Curia in his honor. This tribute was further advertised on coins, both in image and legend (*Cl V*), and in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*:

> *RG* 34.2:[16]
> clupeus virtutis in curia Iulia positus [est], quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae et pietatis caussa testatum est per eius clupei inscriptionem.
>
> A golden shield was set in the Curia Julia, which, as attested by the inscription thereon, was given me by the senate and people of Rome on account of my courage, clemency, justice, and piety.

Gross propaganda, of course, but the poet of the *Aeneid* will have been acutely aware that his hero should exhibit or at the least affirm the approved moral qualities of the Julian and Augustan programs.

Aeneas hesitates, caught between obligations at cross purposes. His role as battlefield victor and political leader dictates a *coup de grâce*; the entire impetus of the fighting in the *Aeneid*—as in its Iliadic prototype—has been directed to this goal. But Aeneas' opponent exactly fits the condition Anchises designated by the adjective *subiectus* (6.853). Further, the Trojan hero has himself had occasion to extend his hand in an appeal for compassion: "cur dextrae iungere dextram / non datur" (1.408-9). Vergil tells us that the hesitant Aeneas was inclining to *clementia* (12.940-41).

At precisely this moment, the sword-belt of Pallas forcefully reminds Aeneas of another, specific responsibility that trumps his own personal preference, a diplomatic imperative to exact vengeance for the death of Pallas. Evander, the father of Pallas, has charged Aeneas with the avenging of this youthful ally. This is not a responsibility that emerges from a strong attachment between Aeneas and Pallas. Vergil has not shown the great leader and his young ally developing a close relationship, beyond one conversation during the journey back to the Trojan camp in Latium (*Aen.* 10.160-62). The two have not known each other long enough for that. Pallas is nothing like a substitute Ascanius. Had it been his son that Turnus killed, then Aeneas' burning rage in 12.951 would in fact be personally motivated. Nor has Turnus committed an atrocity or behaved unfairly by killing Pallas. They met on the field of battle; to be sure, Pallas was overmatched by a more experienced and stronger opponent, but such are the fortunes of war. Aeneas killed an equally sympathetic but overmatched character in young Lausus, also in Book 10. We must find elsewhere the source of his rage and justification for his brutal execution of Turnus.

> *Aen.* 11.176-80 (trans. Copley)
> "vadite et haec memores regi mandata referte:
> quod vitam moror invisam Pallante perempto
> dextera causa tua est, Turnum gnatoque patrique

15 J.C. Rolfe, ed., *Suetonius*, rev. ed. (Cambridge 1951).

16 Latin and English from P.A. Brunt and J.M. Moore, edd., *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (London 1967).

quam debere vides. meritis vacat hic tibi solus
fortunaeque locus."

"March on! Mark this and tell it to your king:
'With Pallas lost, I loathe my life; I live
solely for your right arm, that now owes Turnus
to father and son. This debt remains unpaid
by you and by fate.'"

With these words, King Evander, having received the news of Pallas' death, sends (be it noted) *orders* ("mandata") to Aeneas. Bereft of his son, his life is blighted. The reason is his alliance with the Trojan leader—metonymically, the hand that Aeneas extended ("dextera tua") and Evander freely grasped in a solemn compact: "ergo et quam petitis iuncta est mihi foedere dextra..." / "thus, as you sought, my right hand joins yours in this pact" (8.169; cf. 8.467-68). Aeneas is beholden to both father and son: "gnatoque patrique". So far as Evander is concerned, due recompense for the loss of Pallas must be the sole item on the Trojan leader's agenda.

Thus, still another father joins Daunus and Anchises in the final scene of the *Aeneid*. Evander and his injunction break the deadlock of impulses in the mind of Aeneas hesitating over the suppliant Turnus. *Pius Aeneas* must act, one last time, *non sua sponte*: "Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas / immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit..." / "Pallas inflicts this wound on you, Pallas exacts the penalty of your wicked blood" (*Aen.* 12.948-49). The repetition of Pallas' name conveys exasperation. Aeneas, prepared to comply with Anchises' advice ("memento...parcere subiectis") and accept a non-lethal victory over an enemy no longer *superbus*, cannot act on that impulse. Yet again, he must fulfill an obligation to another claimant on his *pietas*. What would he tell Evander otherwise? His alliance with the Arcadian leader has brought him crucial assistance on the battlefield but also encumbered him in a debt. After the loss of his city and the chance to die gloriously in its defense, after the mandated abandonment of Dido, Aeneas must now retire a diplomatic debt and suppress his true inclination. As the dutiful hero, aware of his responsibilities, he does the deed, but (small wonder) with a burning ("fervidus") anger. His rage signifies not lust for vengeance or hatred of Turnus, but the appallingly recurrent frustration of verifying his heroism by abjuring his humanity.