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Virgil's shipwreck: how a Roman poet made and unmade the epic in the west

Jesse Bryan Burchfield Russell

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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VIRGIL'S SHIPWRECK:
HOW A ROMAN POET MADE AND UNMADE
THE EPIC IN THE WEST

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Interdepartmental Program in
Comparative Literature

By
Jesse Bryan Burchfield Russell
B.A., Franciscan University of Steubenville, 2004
M.A., Franciscan University of Steubenville, 2005
M.A., Catholic University of America, 2007
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Dedication

For my Jennifer, *Lavinia mea*, and my parents,
James Russell and Lynette Zwerneman

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Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	vi
Introduction: Post-Modernity's Critique of the Imperial Vision.....	1
Chapter	
1 Plato and Martin Heidegger: Ancient and Post-Modern Readings of Poetry and Community	23
2 Virgil's Imperial Vision.....	81
3 Dante's Use of Virgil's Epic: The Sacred and the Secular.....	158
4 Edmund Spenser and the National Christian Epic.....	214
5 Ezra Pound and the Disastrous End of The Imperial Vision.....	269
Conclusion.....	350
Works Cited.....	357
Vita.....	412

Abstract

We are still feeling the effects of the Second World War sixty-seven years after its conclusion. Much of post-war thinking has attempted to sort through the roots of the totalitarian ideology that developed in Europe and caused such massive destruction. Marxist and Frankfurt School critics have demonstrated that the roots of Fascism go deeper in the West than the twentieth century and are part and parcel of the West's combination of technology and myth. Additionally, Post-Colonial critics have pointed out that the horrors of this war were also perpetrated throughout Europe's colonial endeavors and have undertaken the task of deconstructing the ideology of European colonial powers. However, such criticism is both accurate and incomplete. Western civilization is not simply built upon ideology but also contains a long tradition of rational philosophy and self-criticism.

In the West, Plato helped formulate an early poetics that was used in education to form and shape the soul and thus the community. In the twentieth century, the Germany philosopher Martin Heidegger modified Plato's vision, showing how a people is formed through their culture and given their destiny. Plato and Heidegger's poetics can be applied to the work of the Roman poet Virgil. Through his *Aeneid*, Virgil establishes a tradition of forming an *exemplum* of empire. In his *exemplum* of empire, Virgil presents a hero, prophecies that support the empire, and a sympathetic but nonetheless demonized Other. Following Virgil's lead, Dante Alighieri, Edmund Spenser, and Ezra Pound have sculpted their epics as imperial *exempla*. Each of these poets includes the Virgilian formula of a hero,

prophecies, and an Other. At the same time, each poet develops a work that is not bound by imperialism but transcends its prejudice.

Introduction

Post-Modernity's Critique of the Imperial Vision

At the end of July 1941, Klos, a baker from Warsaw Poland, successfully escaped from the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was from barrack 14, a housing unit for sickly prisoners. In response, the prisoners of barrack 14 were to be punished: ten prisoners were taken and killed. They were lined up in order and forced to stand at attention for hours. SS Karl Fritsch, the assistant commandant of Auschwitz, began to select prisoners to be killed in reprisal for the escape. When one of the prisoners was chosen, a Pole named Francis Gajowniczek, he began to cry that he had a family and clamored for mercy. In response, another Polish prisoner from barrack 14, Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest, stepped forward and, in German, calmly asked to stand in Gajowniczek's place. The SS commandants were shocked and asked Kolbe what his profession was. Fr. Maximilian responded, "I am a Catholic Priest" (Frossard 195). Fr. Maximilian Kolbe was assigned to a barracks in which he and the other prisoners would be starved to death. The prisoners were forced to strip their clothes and were placed in a small cell. As the prisoners began to die, Fr. Maximilian attended to them and comforted those who were still surviving. For fourteen days, Fr. Maximilian stood in the cell until he and three others were killed by having phenic acid injected into their veins. Fr. Maximilian's example of heroics and self-sacrifice were by no means unique; many of those persecuted showed surprising humanity and altruism.¹

¹ For information on St. Maximilian Kolbe and his martyrdom, see André Frossard's *Forget not Love: The Passion of Maximilian Kolbe*, Patricia Treece's *A Man for Others*:

In response to a letter written by the Catholic Bishop of Utrecht, Netherlands denouncing the deportation of Jews from Holland, which was read at all Catholic parishes in Holland on July 26, 1942, Nazi officials retaliated by targeting Jewish converts to Catholicism. On August 2, two S.S. officers drove to the Carmelite monastery at Echt to arrest a nun whose religious name was Sr. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross (née Edith Stein) as well as her sister Rosa. The two sisters were first taken to Roermond and then Amersfoort where they were united with other Jewish converts to Christianity. The prisoners were then taken to Westerbork, which served as one of the primary camps in Holland. The humiliation to which Sr. Theresa and others were subjected will be familiar to anyone who has studied the German treatment of civilians during the Second World War. The prisoners were shuffled in and out of a maze of rooms and were required to fill out the paperwork that would later condemn them. Sr. Theresa, like Fr. Maximilian, responded by comforting and caring for the other prisoners. Eventually, Sr. Theresa was put on a train to Auschwitz, where like Fr. Maximilian, she died.²

Fr. Maximilian Kolbe and Sr. Theresa Benedicta were later canonized saints in the Roman Catholic Church and now are venerated as martyrs of the Holocaust. In the lives and deaths of these two religious figures, two divergent understandings of community come into conflict. This man and woman died with hope of a community

Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz, In the Words of Those Who Knew Him, and Elaine Murray Stone's *Maximilian Kolbe: Saint of Auschwitz*.

² For information on the life of St. Theresa Benedicta (Edith Stein), see Waltraud Herbstrith's *Edith Stein: The Untold Story of the Philosopher and Mystic Who Lost Her Life in the Death Camps of Auschwitz*, Paul Hamans' *Edith Stein and Companions: On the Way to Auschwitz*, and María Ruiz Scaperlanda's *Edith Stein: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*.

that would transcend geographic region and ethnic community and even the limits of human temporality. Their persecutors were a group of Germans who believed that the Nordic tribe was the dominant race, which had obligation to subdue the other tribes of the world.³ While this empire was often discussed in mystical terms, it would ultimately be under a secular rule.⁴ This empire, which has been described by Mark Mazower in his *Hitler's Empire* as a colonial effort by Germany to mimic the work of other colonial powers such as France and England, was responsible for the death of millions of human beings, most of whom were designated as an Other outside of the German community and thus deprived of their dignity and rights.⁵ This party, democratically elected by the German people, went on to ignite a war that eventually sent fifty million people to their deaths and has cut a deep scar into the heart of the West, causing an implosion of self-confidence and identity.

During the spring semester of my senior year of college, I attended a study abroad program in Gaming, Austria, a small village about two hours southwest of Vienna. This program afforded students opportunities to visit various cultural and religious sites throughout Europe. We spent one of the weekends in Poland visiting Krakow as well as a number of religious shrines. One of the stops on our visit was

³ Many of details of the Second World War and the Nazi regime are largely common knowledge; however, one of the most recent histories of Germany and the Second World War is Richard Evans' trilogy: *The Coming of the Third Reich*, *The Third Reich in Power*, and *The Third Reich at war*.

⁴ For a reading of a possible lineage for the Nazis in modern German thought, see McGovern's *From Luther to Hitler: The History of Fascist-Nazi Political Philosophy* as well as Karl Löwith's *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*. See also Richard's Weikhart's discussion of the influence of mutated forms of Darwinism on Nazi thought in *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*.

⁵ For discussion of the economic qualities of the colonial ambitions of the Nazis, see Adam Tooze's *The Wages of Destruction*.

the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. I previously had studied the Second World War and the Holocaust, so I assumed that I knew what I was to expect. However, upon entrance to the camp, I was overwhelmed with the residue of evil that seemed to linger about the facility. One of the things that most struck me was a sculpture outside of the gates in which a swastika was in the process of turning while at the same time disintegrating—the pieces of its arms were strewn about the ground, and the artist had crafted the effect of the symbol collapsing into the ground. The meaning was fairly clear: National Socialism, which strove to be eternal, had collapsed in the midst of that striving, and its own ambition and arrogance had brought it down. As I continued my academic career and undertook an exploration of Post-Modern thought, I learned that there was a movement to link the evils that were perpetrated during World War II with the entire history of Western Civilization.

Since World War II, which was the most brutal and most well documented consequence of the idea of the Other, there has been an effort to analyze and then deconstruct the tradition of European imperialism and ethnocentrism.⁶ Furthermore, there has been an effort to connect the mass executions performed by the Germans upon European populations, most especially, the specific targeting of Europe's Jewish population, as being just one part of Europe's colonial ambitions, which began in Antiquity but reached unmatched proportions beginning in the

⁶ See Paul Crosthwaite's *Trauma, Postmodernism and the Aftermath of World War II*, Robert Eaglestone's *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*, and Enzo Traverso's *Understanding The Nazi Genocide: Marxism after Auschwitz*.

sixteenth century.⁷ Many Post-Modern thinkers also have sought to use the Marxist concept of ideology to explain how National Socialism developed out of capitalism, specifically analyzing the idea of ideology in which the Other is dehumanized and by which one's own people are aggrandized.⁸

For many Post-Modern scholars, the Holocaust is the defining moment of modernity. Nationalism, rationalism, materialism, and technology reach their culmination in the annihilation of those who do not fit in one image of what a nation would be. However, for others, the Holocaust is the culmination of all of Western Civilization. The legion of heroes in the West: Jason, Hercules, Odysseus, Roland, and Sir Gawain created a tradition of the glorification of irrational and oppressive masculinity that can be compared to Heinrich Himmler and the SS. Two of the defining features of Nazism, Anti-Semitism and superstition, which festered in both Roman and Reformed Christianity finally were able to enact large-scale damage with the use of modern technology. The chauvinism of both Christian and Pagan Europe that believed in the divine mandate to transform and rule the world is found in the Nazi project to find *liebensraum* in Eastern Europe, eradicating the Jews and Slavs as well as political enemies in the process. And finally the image of the Other in the West as a deformed monstrous dark creature reached its limits in the degrading caricatures of Jews depicted by the Nazis and the execution of those Others. In response, many contemporary scholars ranging from Virgilians such as Richard Thomas to defenders of Ezra Pound such as Hugh Kenner attempt to rediscover

⁷ For the use of art and architecture especially of a classical bent in the Third Reich, see Scobie and Spots.

⁸ For a Marxist analysis of the rise of Nazism, see Gluckstein's *The Nazis, Capitalism and the Working Class*,

European artifacts and remove any trace of this connection to the horrors of Nazism.

The truth of the matter is much more complex than the portrait described above. Indubitably, there is a lineage from Homer to Hitler just as there is a lineage from Homer to Marx or Homer to George Washington or Homer to Homer Simpson. This lineage is complex and multifarious, and it is one of the tasks of the contemporary comparative literature scholar to approach the issue of art after Auschwitz. Whether or not the contemporary experiment in globalism will reap beneficent or disastrous results, literature has truly become global. If Western literature is to maintain its prestige in World Literature, these underlying questions of the relationship of Western art to the atrocities committed in the West must be explored. It is my firm belief that treatment of this issue will reveal that Western civilization is much more complex than simply its wrongs. The history of Western culture—specifically Western poetry—is fundamentally a search for meaning and harmony—not “will to power” and destruction even if ideology has been a part of the West since its inception.

In the Marxist tradition, ideology is fundamentally a tool for the ruler to control the ruled. Marx writes of ideology in *The German Ideology* and *Capital*. Ideology is fundamentally a way of creating an illusionary world for the worker and the capitalist to live in which the worker is given a false consciousness or a lie about him or herself. In fact, for later Marxist thinkers like Slavoj Žižek, “false consciousness” is a part of a totally fantastic, illusory world as he explains in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*:

ideology is not simply a 'false consciousness', an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as 'ideological'—*'ideological' is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence—that is, the social effectivity, the very reproduction of which implies that the individuals 'do not know what they are doing'.* (Žižek 15-16)

Ideology is thus fundamentally illusory; it creates a false “reality” in which the true nature of things is obscured. Erich Fromm, the Frankfurt School critic, sees a history of ideology that has reached its culmination in the idea of “common sense” and “public opinion,” which are especially insidious because they are not as obvious forms of ideology as the old forms, Church, State, etc.: “We have become automatons who live under the illusion of being self-willing individuals” (252). Usually, the ruling class creates the myth that they deserve to be the ruling class because of a scientific law or religious mandate. The ruling class also seeks divine sanction for their actions, and the ruled come to believe that their rulers are placed in position by the gods or God and that the condition of a worker is to be ordained by God. Terry Eagleton describes the use of art as ideology in modern “aesthetics” and explains that it is a way of “inserting social power more deeply into the very bodies of those it subjugates, and so operating as a supremely effective mode of political hegemony” (28). One of the primary means of facilitating ideology is through art and culture, and, for many Marxist critics, a critique of culture is essential to understanding how late capitalism works.⁹ Marx is primarily concerned with the condition of the nineteenth century European proletariat, but later thinkers utilize

⁹ “In contemporary debates on modernity, modernism and postmodernism, ‘culture’ would seem a key category for the analysis and understanding of late capitalist society” (Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* 1).

the idea of ideology in their writings. One group that especially makes use of the concept of ideology are the Post-Colonial critics.

Post-Colonial critics have focused on the issue of ideology as used by the colonizer against the colonized. According to many Post-Colonial critics, during the imperial process, it was necessary to create an ideology of supremacy for the colonizer and one of inferiority for the colonized. Thus the art and architecture of the colony aggrandized those who ruled and belittled those who were being ruled. The European colonist, according to the Francophone Post-Colonialist, Frantz Fanon, has made a false consciousness for the colonized: "*C'est le blanc qui crée le nègre*" (*Sociologie d'une révolution (L'an V de la révolution algérienne)* 29/47, "It is the white man who creates the Negro").¹⁰ Fanon's point is that the "Negro", who is the degenerate, uncivilized savage, is something that colonized blacks learned to be; they were told through the rhetoric of colonization that they were "Negros," and they came to believe it. Colonialism consequently becomes a complete infestation of the colonized country: "*Ce ne sont pas les ports ni les aerodromes. Le colonialisme français s'est installé au centre même de l'individu algérien et y a entrepris un travail soutenu de ratissage, d'expulsion de soi-même, de mutilation rationnellement poursuivie*" (SR 48/65, "It is not the soil that is occupied. It is not the ports or the airdromes. French colonialism has settled itself in the very center of the Algerian individual and has undertaken a sustained work of cleanup, of expulsion of the self,

¹⁰ For my quotes for Fanon's *Sociologie d'une révolution (L'an V de la révolution algérienne)*, I use the François Maspero 1968 French text, and, for the English text, I use Haakon Chevalier's English translation *A Dying Colonialism*. I provide the French edition page number first followed by the page number of the English translation in the parenthesis.

or rationally pursued mutilation"). The process of colonization is not simply the transfer of population or the construction of European structures on foreign soil. Colonization requires the reprogramming of the colonized through ideology. In order for colonization to be complete, the colonizer must give the colonized a false consciousness; the colonized are taught their inferiority. Fanon also writes that colonialism has the effect of lumping together the mass of colonized people:

Le colonialisme, qui n'a pas nuancé ses efforts, n'a cessé d'affirmer que le nègre est un sauvage et le nègre pour lui n'était ni l'Angolais, ni le Nigérien. Il parlait du nègre. Pour le colonialisme, ce vaste continent était un repaire de sauvages, un pays infesté de superstitions et de fanatisme, voué au mépris, lourd de la malédiction de Dieu, pays d'anthropophages, pays de nègres. (*Les Damnés de la Terre* 202/150)

Colonialism, little troubled by nuances, has always claimed that the 'nigger' was a savage, not an Angolan or a Nigerian but a 'nigger.' For colonialism, this vast continent was a den of savages, infested with superstitions and fanaticism, destined to be despised, cursed by God, a land of cannibals, a land of 'niggers'.¹¹

The vision of the colonized by the colonist is that the developing world is a festering morass of irredeemable savages. The denunciation of the Other as being savage manufactures an identity of the Other that is placed over him or her.

In *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Aimé Césaire, another Francophone Post-Colonial critic, explains that colonization causes the colonizer to see the colonized as an animal (21/41 "*s'habitue à voir dans l'autre la bête*").¹² Césaire further writes that in colonialism, both the colonizer and the colonized are degraded: "*Aucun contact humain, mais des rapports de domination et de soumission qui transforment*

¹¹ For my quotes from *Les Damnés de la terre*, I use the La Découverte edition for the French and Haakon Chevalier's English translation *A Dying Colonialism*.

¹² For Césaire's work, I use the French edition published by Éditions Présence Africaine and the Joan Pinkam's English translation *Discourse on Colonialism*.

l'homme colonisateur en pion, en adjudant, en garde-chiourme, en chicote et l'homme indigène en instrument de production" (23/42, "No human contact, but relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production"). Even the colonizer him or herself is dehumanized, becoming a mere overseer. Furthermore, the colonized is destroyed and made into a commodity: "*colonisation=chosification*" (23/42 "colonization = "thingification"). Because of colonization, both the colonizer and colonized are turned into figures or objects in a relation of domination.

In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno address the subject of the Other as manufactured by ideology in their works, utilizing the methods of psychoanalysis.¹³ They see a corollary among Jews, colonized people and women who are minorities or who are weaker than the ruler: "As with the subjugated original inhabitants in early forms of state, the indigenous population of colonies, who lack the organization and weapons of their conquerors, as with the Jews among Aryans, her [woman's] defenselessness legitimizes her oppression" (86). For Horkheimer and Adorno, the Jew (and the Other in general) is principally hated because he or she reveals what the hater him or herself is: "In the image of the Jew which the racial nationalists hold up before the world they express their own essence. Their craving is for exclusive ownership, appropriation, unlimited power, at any price" (138). Ideology that sculpts the image of the Other as

¹³ For a history and background of the Frankfurt School, see Martin Jay's *The Dialectical Imagination A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* and Rolf Wiggershaus' *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*.

Other is derived in the will to dominate the Other, yet this will to dominate the Other is merely a projection of the dominator's own violence. The Other's vicious character is actually the oppressor's vicious character. This domination becomes the basis of all acts and relations: "Domination itself which, even as absolute power, is inherently only a means, becomes in untrammelled projection the purpose both of oneself and of others, purpose as such" (156). The Other, whether it is a targeted minority within the body politic or an Other on a foreign shore who must be colonized, is largely a construction of ideology. The Other must be manufactured in order that the process of domination might become complete.

The process of ideology is essentially tied to the arts. Aimé Césaire condemns European historians and novelists for their racism:

Des historiens ou des romanciers de la civilisation (c'est tout un), non de tel ou tel, de tous ou presque, leur fausse objectivité, leur chauvinisme, leur racisme sournois, leur vicieuse passion à dénier aux races non blanches, singulièrement aux races mélanienues, tout mérite, leur monomanie à monopoliser au profit de la leur toute gloire. (*Discours sur le colonialisme* 40/55-56)

From the historians or novelists of civilization (it's the same thing)—not from this one or that one, but from all of them, or almost all—their false objectivity, their chauvinism, their sly racism, their depraved passion for refusing to acknowledge any merit in the non-white races, especially the black-skinned races, their obsession with monopolizing all glory for their own race.

Césaire holds that most Western art is demeaning to non-European people, and Europeans have ignored or dismissed the cultures of people from the so called "developing world". In *Orientalism*, the Palestinian-American critic Edward Said describes the Orient as being an aesthetic creation of the West: "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance,

exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1).

There is thus an ideology that has been used in colonization in which the West has hidden the true character of the colonized world behind an ideology or superstructure constructed from art. European writers, from poets to economists, “have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, ‘mind,’ destiny, and so on” (Said, *Orientalism* 3). According to Said, Westerners did not care to see the Orient itself; they created an illusory dividing line between East and West and projected a fantastic image of the East over itself. For Said, the Orient is often associated with sensuality: “the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies...” (*Orientalism* 188). One of the principal images that the West projected over the East is that of an irrational, mystical, and sensuous world that was untamed by reason or order. The relationship of power is based upon an anti-metaphysical view of the world.

Essentialism is fundamentally chauvinistic and racist according to many Post-Moderns because it does not just make differentiations between various objects in the world, e.g., a spoon is different from an orange, but rather between peoples as well, e.g., a Frenchman is different than an Algerian. Said explains, “The difficulty with theories of essentialism and exclusiveness, or with barriers and sides, is that they give rise to polarizations that absolve and forgive ignorance and demagoguery more than they enable knowledge” (*Culture and Imperialism* 31). If there

are Frenchmen, then those Frenchmen should live together in France, and the Algerian is thus an outsider and should be living in Algeria: “no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions: Greeks always require barbarians and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etc.” (Said, *CI* 52). Furthermore, for Said, there are not essences but representations, which can be changed: “We live of course in a world not only of commodities but also of representations—their production, circulation, history, and interpretation—are the very element of culture” (*CI* 56). It is necessary to create the Other through representation.¹⁴ Non-Europeans were represented as having a “non-European essence” and “were made subservient to Europe” (*CI* 106). If the Other is not placed at a distance, he or she can be part of one’s own home and thus should not be dominated. However, if the Other is represented as an Other who is unlike one’s community and lacking in civilization, thus posing as a threat, he or she can be dominated. The construction of borders creates a demarcation between one’s own and the other: “A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surrounding and the territory beyond, which they call ‘the land of the barbarians’” (*Orientalism* 54). Said notes that the creation of this border “*can be* entirely arbitrary” (*Orientalism* 54). A people may have much in common, but, once some cultural or concrete fence is placed between them, they become others to one another.

¹⁴ “It is perfectly possible to argue that some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and that these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality” (Said, *Orientalism* 54).

Adorno and Horkheimer also develop the idea of the relationship between the West and the Other as being one of power and the will to dominate. They see the earliest seeds of the Enlightenment as containing the combination of the will to know and the will to dominate, found in the writings of the English Renaissance philosopher Francis Bacon: “The ‘happy match’ between human understanding and the nature of things that he [Bacon] envisaged is a patriarchal one: the mind, conquering superstition, is to rule over disenchanted nature. Knowledge, which is power, knows no limits, either in its enslavement of creation or in its deference to worldly masters” (Horkheimer and Adorno 2). The Enlightenment began as a project to dominate and control all of creation. However, for Adorno and Horkheimer, “enlightenment” is not simply a phenomenon of the modern period; it is found in myths: “enlightenment also recognizes itself in the old myths. No matter which myths are invoked against it, by being used as arguments they are made to acknowledge the very principle of corrosive rationality of which enlightenment stands accused. Enlightenment is totalitarian” (4). Through myth, humans learn that the universe functions through relationships of power: “The awakening of the subject is bought with the recognition of power as principle of all relationships” (5). One’s first understanding of him or herself as a self takes place through the recognition of a relationship of power. As humans begin to see themselves through myths, the distinction between God and man dissolves: “In their mastery of nature, the creative God and the ordering mind are alike. Man’s likeness to God consists in sovereignty over existence, in the lordly gaze, in the command (6). Even though

human myths may contain stories of gods, they are primarily about asserting human power over nature and other human beings according to Horkheimer and Adorno.

The primary point that Horkheimer and Adorno are making in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is that the history of the West in both its mythic and scientific modes is one of domination in which the “man of science knows things to the extent that he can make them. Their ‘in-itself’ becomes “for him” (6). The whole universe is presented as a hunting ground for Western men and women “in which nothing exists but prey” (6). The merger of myth and enlightenment finds its culmination in Fascism: “With the spread of the bourgeois commodity economy the dark horizon of myth is illuminated by the sun of calculating reason, beneath whose icy rays the seeds of the new barbarism are germinating” (25). Herein lies the primary goal of Adorno and Horkheimer; they seek to find the source of the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century, which they see as the merger of myth and science. While liberal countries attempt to distance their philosophies from Nazism and Fascism, the liberal scientific world-view was integrally tied to the emergence of Nazism. The scientific world-view combined with the mythological led to the demonization of the Other.

Thinkers in the Frankfurt school as well as Post-Colonial critics seek to see Nazism as the culmination of Western Civilization, that is, all of Western thinking revealed what it is in the Holocaust. Aimé Césaire sees Nazism as part and parcel of Western civilization. Césaire does not distinguish liberalism from Nazism; he says that Hitler resides in all Christian, bourgeois Europeans: “*Oui, il vaudrait la peine d’étudier, cliniquement, dans le détail, les démarches d’Hilter et de l’hitlérisme et de*

révéler au très distingué, très humaniste, très chrétien bourgeois du XXe siècle qu'il porte en lui un Hitler qui s'ignore, qu'Hitler l'habite, qu'Hitler est son démon..." (DSC 13/36, "Yes, it would be worthwhile to study clinically, in detail, the steps taken by Hitler and Hitlerism and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler inhabits him, that Hitler is his demon..."). The bourgeoisie who see themselves as the great victors over tyrannical Nazism are, in fact, part of the same current of ideology as Nazism. Césaire explains that Nazism is the revelation of colonialism in the midst of Europe, for Hitler did to Europeans what they had done to the colonized: *"et devoir à appliqué à l'Europe des procédés colonialistes dont ne relevaient jusqu'ici que les Arabes d'Algérie, les coolies de l'Inde et les nègres d'Afrique.* (14/ 36 "H]e applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the 'coolies' of India, the "niggers" of Africa). The Holocaust then becomes the icon of European aggression; it awakens Europe to what it had done to the developing world for centuries. Edward Said also explicitly makes the connection between colonial imperialism and the Holocaust, hoping to carry the indignation over the mass executions of Jews into criticism of Europe's colonial exploits. In his preface to the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of *Orientalism*, Said writes, "We allow justly that the Holocaust has permanently altered the conscious of our time: Why do we not accord the same epistemological mutation in what imperialism has done, and what Orientalism continues to do?" (xxii). Like other postcolonial critics, Said notes that the Holocaust is upheld as the most egregious crime in human history, and it has so

greatly affected humankind that it has even altered the way humans think and feel.

Frantz Fanon sees Nazism as being a colonial process: "*Il y a peu de temps, le nazisme a transformé la totalité de l'Europe en véritable colonie* (DT 98/57 "Not so long ago, Nazism transformed the whole of Europe into a genuine colony"). However, Fanon sees colonization as being worse than European war:

Sous l'occupation allemande les Français étaient demeurés des hommes. Sous l'occupation française, les Allemands sont demeurés des hommes. En Algérie, il n'y a pas seulement domination, mais à la lettre décision de n'occuper somme toute qu'un terrain. Les Algériens, les femmes en 'haïk', les palmeraies et les chameaux forment le panorama, la toile de fond *naturelle* de la présence humaine française.

Under the German occupation the French remained human beings. Under the French occupation the Germans remained human beings. In Algeria there is not simply domination but the decision, literally, to occupy nothing else but a territory. The Algerians, the women dressed in haiks, the palm groves, and the camels form a landscape, the *natural* backdrop for the French presence. (DT 240/182)

The Europeans often, but not always, treated each other as human beings while they consider other human beings from The Third World as being mere objects.

According to many Post-Modern critics, the Holocaust is thus the central event of the twentieth century in which Europe finally discovers who she is.

The criticism of the Western tradition by Marxists, Post-Colonialists and Frankfurt School critics is strong. While Europe has not been the only imperial force in world history that has crafted an image of itself as superior and the Other as inferior, the combination of technology with myth has allowed European empires to do a great deal of damage to the world. However, at the same time, Europe has within herself another voice. This voice, which has its strongest roots in Ancient Greece, is the voice of reason. While European science has often been tied to

prejudiced European myth, there is also a strong tradition of humanism and self-criticism in the West.

The Greek philosopher Plato is one of the strongest voices for reason. Within his dialogues, Plato presents a vision of the soul as being composed of three essential parts, reason, spirit, and appetite. These parts must be harmonized under the guidance of reason, love, and beauty in order for human beings to find happiness. The happiness of the city or *polis* is also dependent upon the ordering of the souls of the citizens. A city full of bad people will be a bad city; thus, the city has a stake in the forming of good souls, which can only be accomplished by proper education. One of the principal forms of education for Plato is poetry. Through poetry, the soul can be formed by either positive or negative *exempla*.¹⁵ Poetry must consist of just *exempla* in order to form rightly the souls of the city's youth. Poetry is thus essential to the well-being of a community and should be ethical and didactic according to Plato. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger complements Plato's theory of poetry much later.

For Martin Heidegger, like Plato, humans are fundamentally together; humans dwell together and are not isolated from one another. Moreover, art is essential to the formation of the identity of the people. The people are shaped by the poetry and art that is presented to them. The achievements of their ancestors and the values held by them as a people show the people what they should be and what they should do. Poetic thinking is further essential to Heidegger's phenomenology. For Heidegger, scientific thinking has corrupted the modern world, and humans are

¹⁵ The word *exemplum* has a host of meanings throughout its history. I will henceforth use the word "*exemplum*" to mean "model" or ideal.

blind to Being. Humans cannot see the richness and holiness of beings in the world because their language and science has blinded them. There thus must be a revival of poetry and poetic thinking that will make Being present to humans again.

Heidegger and Plato's theory of poetics is a useful critical tool that can be used to examine the artifacts of the Western tradition, most notably the epic, for the epic is one of the principal ways in which human communities have educated their people and bound their people together.¹⁶

One of the strongest traditions of epic in world literature is the Virgilian tradition, which has transcended its original cultural milieu and has been appropriated by innumerable cultures from medieval Christianity to contemporary America.¹⁷ While the work is often appropriated for imperial aims, the ironic qualities of the work are appropriated as well. In his epic Virgil constructs an imperial *exemplum*, consisting of a hero, prophecies, and an Other. Virgil presents the idea of a hero who is an *exemplum* of virtue for the reader and who is part of an imperial community that is supported by divine prophecies. However, Virgil shows the weakness and flaws of his hero Aeneas. Virgil additionally presents a series of prophecies that support his empire, but these prophecies change and are moderated

¹⁶ For a general induction to the idea of epic poetry, see *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic* edited by Catherine Bates as well as *Epic and History* edited by David Konstan and Kurt A. Raafaub.

¹⁷ Over the past couple decades there have been a number of important works, tracing Virgil's influence on various historical periods. One can find a general overview of the history of Virgil's reception in R.D. Williams and T.S. Pattie's *Virgil: His Poetry through the Ages*. While it is a bit dated, Domenico Comparetti's classic study, *Virgil in the Middle Ages*, explores Virgil's place as folk hero and magician during much of the Middle Ages. David Wilson-Okamura traces Virgil's influence on the Renaissance in *Virgil in the Renaissance*. For the influence of Virgil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Theodore Ziolkowski's *Virgil and the Moderns*.

throughout the epic. Virgil further illustrates an Other in the poem who must be conquered by the civilized Romans. On the other hand, there is a great deal of sympathy for the defeated others from North Africans to the Gauls. Although Virgil's work champions empire, it is a work that contains criticism of empire. A number of authors have appropriated Virgil's work, and each author has carried the baggage of his or her cultural milieu and perspective. Some of the most prominent of these authors are Dante Alighieri, Edmund Spenser, and Ezra Pound. All of these authors could be placed under the scrutiny of the Post-Modern critique; however, they transcend the limits of their perception of the Other through their treatment of an essential human nature.

Dante Alighieri is one of the principal poets who adopt Virgil's presentation of an imperial *exemplum*. Dante's hero is a distinctly Christian *exemplum* who must undergo a conversion in order to experience unity with God in heaven. Furthermore, throughout his writings, Dante longs to reconstruct the Roman Empire in a Christian milieu. He lays the groundwork for this empire in his *Monarchia*. Dante wishes to have an empire free from papal governance that will unite the world and heal the moral rot in human nature. On the other hand, there is a profound awareness in Dante of the mutability of this world, and he constructs the true eternal empire of heaven and its counterpart, hell, in his *Commedia*. Dante thus struggles throughout his works with a desire for an earthly empire that is unattainable and the consolation of a heavenly empire. Dante's Others throughout the *Commedia* are both enemies of the earthly empire as well as enemies of the heavenly empire or the unrighteous.

Edmund Spenser, as well, modeled his career on Virgil's, and his great epic, *The Faerie Queene*, is modeled on the *Aeneid*. Spenser presents a hero based upon classical, British, and Christian sources. This hero will be a Protestant Christian courtier who will rely on God's grace for his improvement and virtue. Spenser envisions Great Britain as heir to the great Roman Empire who will bring order not only to Europe but the world. England will subdue the primitive Catholic population of Ireland, cripple the Catholic empire of the continent, stave off the attacks of Islam, and build her colonies in the New World. Like Virgil and Dante, Spenser is profoundly aware of the mutability of the temporal world, and he sees salvation as the reward of valorous patriotic acts. Additionally, Spenser's theological and philosophic vision moderates his aggressive imperial views.

Developing his own version of the imperial *exemplum*, Ezra Pound stands at the vanguard of twentieth century modernism and envisioned himself as the epic poet of Fascism and the birth of a new order in the West. Pound presents his hero as a drawing from the tradition of great men, which for Pound is a religious and cultural tradition to be found in Indo-European as well as Chinese models. Pound entrenches a divide between the imperial community and the Other along racial and not simply cultural lines. Like Heidegger, Pound was caught up in the *Zeitgeist* of the period and embraced Fascism as the savior of European civilization from the pincers of Marxism and consumerist capitalism. In his *Cantos*, Pound presents a new vision for Europe and the West. He has resurrected the old pagan gods and combined them with Neo-Platonism and Confucianism. Pound projects the image of a great man, who, inspired with love for a beloved woman, ascends to the Neo-

Platonic *nous* from which he gains a vision of the just society. It is then up to the great man, in Pound's vision to found a just and right empire. There is thus a tension in Pound between a transcendent philosophic vision and a restrictive racism.

One of the qualities of poetry is to shape and form the souls of the reader or auditor. Since Antiquity, communities have used poetry to shape and mold themselves. Whatever the future of the West and the world itself, Virgil and the epic that he help to birth will continue to read and imitated, for, while epic poetry is imperial, it is fundamentally civilized and civilizing. In my dissertation, I have attempt to engage specific issues within contemporary criticism of Virgil, Dante, Spenser and Pound as well as respond to the wide criticism of the West and its epic in post-World War 2 scholarship.

Chapter One

Plato and Martin Heidegger: Ancient and Post-Modern Readings of Poetry and Community

Within contemporary structuralism and linguistics, there has been an increased emphasis on rhetoric and the power of ideas to form human beings; however, the idea of rhetoric having the ability to form the soul is very old.¹⁸ As with many things, the ancient Greeks were among the first people to think through the matter and reflect critically on the power of art to form a people.¹⁹ Art is one of the central issues of Plato's *Republic*. While many have incorrectly viewed Plato as dismissing art completely in his *Republic*, the philosopher, in fact, emphasizes the importance of poetry as well as music in the formation of the guardian class.²⁰ In Plato's view, art and music are essential to forming a properly ordered soul. The soul, for Plato, is like a piece of marble that must be properly chiseled by rulers of the city. This city is a macrocosm of the soul, and the harmony, order, and balance in the city mirrors balance in the soul: an ordered city relies upon an ordered soul and vice versa. It is in the interest of the city to use poetry that builds up the people and shapes their souls. Plato's poetics, ultimately, provide a key theoretical tool for

¹⁸ For an overview of structuralism in the twentieth century, see the essays in *Structuralism and Since: From Levinas to Derrida* edited by John Sturrock. For the relationship between structuralism and rhetoric, see Bann and Pender.

¹⁹ George A. Kennedy provides the classic introduction to Greek rhetoric in his *The Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece*. See also Kennedy's *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*.

²⁰ The discussion of the role of poetry vis a vis philosophy in Plato has been an object of increasing study in recent criticism. See Janaway, Levin, Mitscherling, Murdoch, and Rosen.

understanding Virgil's epic and a tool for responding to the Post-Modernity's criticism of the West.

Plato's Soul

Plato's poetics relies upon his understanding of the soul, which he describes throughout his works.²¹ Plato discusses the soul at length through the character of Timaeus in the dialogue of the same name. This dialogue, the only one of Plato's available to the Latin West throughout much of the Middle Ages, is largely dominated by the speech of Timaeus describing the creation of the world.²² The creation story in the *Timaeus* notes that the souls of men and women can experience sense perception as well as pleasure and pain in addition to the emotions, "[a]nd if they could master these emotions, their lives would be just, whereas if they were mastered by them, they would be unjust" (42b:1245).²³ Justice here for Plato means "right" or properly ordered; in this case, it is a properly ordered soul that controls the desire for pleasure. The soul must act rationally, and only the truly good person has "a correct conception of what a given virtue is" (Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* 197). Plato further makes the point in the *Timaeus* that the rational part of the soul is the most divine part: "Now we ought to think of the most sovereign part of our soul as god's

²¹ Scholars generally break up Plato's *corpus* into "early," "middle," and "late" sections. For my quick treatment of Plato's ethics, it is not necessary to consider the macro developments of Plato's thought. See Irwin's *Plato's Ethics* and *Plato's Moral Theory* for the developments in Plato's overall thought.

²² Gregory Vlastos, one of the prime Plato scholars of the twentieth century, presents a discussion of the *Timaeus* as well as Plato's wider scientific world-view in contrast to Plato's predecessors in *Plato's Universe*.

²³ For my quotes from Plato, I use the Hackett Edition of Plato's works edited by John M. Cooper. In the parenthesis, I place the section term followed by the page number of Cooper's edition.

gift to us, given to be our guiding spirit" (90:1288).²⁴ This rational part must moderate the other two parts of the soul in Plato's other works.²⁵ In the *Republic*, Plato's long dialogue on the question of justice, Socrates says, "Moderation is surely a kind of order, the mastery of certain kinds of pleasures and desires" (4.430e:1062). Plato calls self-control virtue in the *Laws*, a collection of Plato's writings: "Virtue is the general concord of reason and emotion" (2.653b:1344).²⁶ For Plato, there are two fundamental parts of the soul: the thinking part and "the part with which it lusts, hungers, thirsts, and gets excited by other appetites, the irrational appetitive part, companion of certain indulgences and pleasures" (*Republic* 4.439d:1071). There is, additionally, the spirited part. The appetites seek pleasure, and the spirit seeks honor, which can lead to immoderation of the soul. In the *Timaeus*, Plato calls pleasure "evil's most powerful lure" (69c:1271). In the *Laws*, Plato says that lack of self-control, especially in regard to drink, reduces humans to the mental state of a child (1.645e:1339). He also explains that intemperate consumption of food would stupefy the human race: "Such gluttony would make our whole race incapable of the philosophy and the arts, and incapable of heeding the most divine part within us" (*Timaeus* 73:1274).²⁷ Here is Plato's core idea of the

²⁴ Havelock writes that in Plato's mind, "reality is rational, scientific and logical, or it is nothing" (44).

²⁵ Irwin explains that for Plato, "happiness requires direction of someone's life by the desires concerned with his capacities, aims and interests as a whole, not by desires concerned only with particular satisfactions..." (*Plato's Moral Theory* 252).

²⁶ By becoming unjust, the soul enters into a "corrupt condition" (*Gorgias* 477b:821). In this corrupt condition, it is impossible for one to be happy, and one's soul is full of "injustice, ignorance, cowardice, and the like" (*Gorgias* 477b:822).

²⁷ In the *Republic*, Plato lists a number of vices: "the turmoil and straying of these parts are injustice, licentiousness, cowardice, ignorance, and, in a word, the whole of vice" (*Republic* 4.444b:1075).

shrouding of the mind by the appetites in which one degenerates into a purely animal state. Plato even goes so far as to say that great pleasure or pain leads to a sort of madness, and, in the midst of great physical sensation, a human being “goes raving mad and is at that moment least capable of rational thought” (*Timaeus* 86c: 1285).²⁸ If the human mind is clouded by desire, a human being is not able to think and make rational decisions.²⁹ Stanley Rosen explains, “the erotic mania, if it is not regulated by divine fate, or a prophetic synopsis, is extraordinarily dangerous” (90). It is necessary that “a man should both lead and be led by himself in order to have the best prospects for leading a rational life” (*Timaeus* 89d:1288). By making choices based on decisions, the human person can live an ordered life. The highest good for the human being is not pleasure but rather to become virtuous: “His highest good is to become as virtuous as possible and to continue to exist in that state as long as life lasts” (*Laws* 4.707:394). True happiness is found in preserving self-control and rationality.

Plato further warns of someone whose soul is not in harmony, but only has his appetites “forcibly held in check by his carefulness” (*Republic* 8.554b:1165). This apparently moderate man or woman keeps him or herself in check only because he

²⁸ “Now when judgment is in control and leads us by reasoning toward what is best, that sort of self-control is called ‘being in your right mind’; but when desire takes command in us and drags us without reasoning toward pleasure, then its command is known as ‘outrageousness’” (*Phaedrus* 237e-238: 517).

²⁹ In *Plato’s Ethics*, Terrence Irwin argues that the unjust or tyrannical person does exercise some reason: “It is not even clear that the tyrannical person is habitually dominated by appetite in opposition to his practical reason and deliberation. He is dominated by a particular demanding urge or ‘lust’ (*eros*)..., but this lust does not cause him to reject or violate his rational plans and desires. On the contrary, his obsessive lust controls his rational plans too; and so he follows these plans in his actions” (284).

or she is fearful for his or her possessions, which may be lost due to immoderate behavior. There is a clear difference from those whose souls are formed in the core and those who are merely controlling themselves. Wolz explains that “Deliberation and exercising control are obviously beneficial, in as much as they make a man an authentic human being” (178). Furthermore, the unjust soul cannot form friendships or a community: “Such a man could not be dear to another man or to a god, for he cannot be a partner, and where there’s not partnership there’s no friendship” (*Gorgias* 507e:852). Plato even goes so far as to say that for the unjust man “it’s better not to be alive, for he necessarily lives badly” (*Gorgias* 512:855). Unruly passions can enslave a soul; however, Plato does not believe in complete suppression or elimination of the appetites. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato writes that there are two human desires, which are innate and natural: “one is our inborn desire for pleasures, the other is our acquired judgment that pursues what is best” (237d:516). There is a natural desire for pleasure in humans as well as a refined desire for the good that is the result of education. As Rupert Lodge demonstrates, for Plato, the appetites are universal and necessary: “Every human being feels their power. And to some extent a positive response to their promptings is necessary: if the individual is to survive and to do his part toward ensuring the survival of the community” (111). In some of his dialogues, Plato even praises intense desire.

In two of his most famous dialogues that deal with the issues of love and beauty, the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, Plato seems to have a complicated attitude toward desire. Plato calls the unreasoning desire *Eros*, which is “all-conquering in its forceful drive” (*Phaedrus* 238c:517). This love can be a good thing when it is sent

from the gods: “in fact the best things we have come from madness, when it is given as a gift of the god” (*Phaedrus* 244:522). These best things include poetry, prophecy, mysticism, and love. This madness can lead the soul to the highest levels of heaven. Divine madness thus appears to be the capstone of the philosophical life: “For just this reason it is fair that only a philosopher’s mind grows wings, since its memory always keeps it close as possible to those realities by being close to which the gods are divine” (*Phaedrus* 249c:527). The good lovers “are modest and fully in control of themselves now that they have enslaved the part that brought trouble into the soul and set free the part that gave it virtue” (*Phaedrus* 256b:533). Love can be reached “through philosophical discussion” (*Phaedrus* 257b:533). As critics note, love is not something that is completely irrational. Stanley Rosen writes that “the erotic appetite, in order to be satisfied gives rise to a deliberation which is itself nonerotic” (99). In order to satisfy desire, one has to utilize his or her reason in order to satisfy it.³⁰ Additionally, the true philosopher is a lover of wisdom and thus desires it. Writing of Plato’s idea of *eros*, Terrence Irwin explains, “The genuine lover of truth and knowledge will not have fulfilled his eros and desire until he has completed his pregnancy, had intercourse with true reality, and begotten intelligence and truth...” (*Plato’s Ethics* 302). The love of wisdom is essentially procreative; this love produces virtue and justice in soul of the lover and justice in the city. Plato distinguishes between this right love and an inferior material love in the *Symposium*.

³⁰ Weineck suggests that love in the *Phaedrus* specifically is selfish: “The lover is attracted to the beloved because the image of the beloved, resembling the personal god of the lover, offers understanding of lover’s own past, a pathway of remembrance” (38).

There are two basic forms of love, which Plato develops in the *Symposium*. In the *Symposium*, Plato's Pausanias says that there are two goddesses who represent two types of love. The first goddess is the goddess of noble love: "she is known as Urania, or Heavenly Aphrodite" (*Symposium* 180d:465). The other goddess is the goddess of common or vulgar love, "the daughter of Zeus and Dione: her name is Pandemos, or Common Aphrodite" (*Symposium* 180e:465). Common Aphrodite's love is simply for those who only care about "completing the sexual act" (*Symposium* 181b:466). It is material lust. Heavenly Aphrodite's love is exclusively homosexual and seeks to form the bonding love with the young boy in which the young boy will learn virtue from the older man:

When an older lover and a young man come together and each obeys the principle appropriate to him—when the lover realizes that he is justified in doing anything for a loved one who grants him favors, and when a young man understands that he is justified in performing any service for a lover who can make him wise and virtuous—and when the young man *is* eager to be taught and improved by his lover—then, and only then, when these two principles coincide absolutely, is it ever honorable for a young man to accept a lover. (*Symposium* 184d-e:469)

The lover-beloved relationship is one of education and growth in virtue and wisdom; it is not exclusively a sexual relationship. Love further must be virtuous; it is good itself, but it must lead to the right sort of behavior: "love is, like everything else, complex: considered simply in itself, it is neither honorable nor a disgrace—its character depends entirely on the behavior it gives rise to" (*Symposium* 183d: 468). Love also provides a harmony to the universe; it includes things like the human soul's desire for beauty, but it is also present in the animal and plant kingdoms as well as the realm of the gods: "Love is a deity of the greatest importance: he directs everything that occurs, not only in the human domain, but also in that of the gods"

(*Symposium* 186b:470). Love is the guiding force of the universe; it is even found among the gods. Love must further be moderated, and moderated love is the adhesive force of human and divine society:

Such is the power of Love—so varied and great that in all cases it might be called absolute. Yet even so it is far greater when Love is directed, in temperance and justice, toward the good, whether in heaven or on earth: happiness and good fortune, the bonds of human society, concord with the gods above—all these are among his gifts. (*Symposium* 188e:472)

These passages must be joined with Plato's discussion of reason and moderation. It is not simply an intellectual operation that orders things; love and emotion seems to play a role as well. Stanley Rosen sees *eros* as the basis of society: "The city is a form of Eros, as becomes clear when we think of the brotherly love of its citizens for each other, and of their filial love for the land from which they believe themselves to have been generated. But the city is not the *highest* form of Eros, as is symbolized by its origin in a lie, however noble" (109). The *eros* here is not philosophic and therefore is incomplete. The lie in which the city originates is the fact that it is part of Socrates myth; it is an ideal city. Love even seems to have the effect of moderating pleasures: "For moderation, by common agreement, is power over pleasures and passions, and no pleasure is more powerful than Love! But if they are weaker, they are under the power of Love, and *he* has the power; and because he has the power over pleasure and passions, Love is exceptionally moderate" (*Symposium* 196c:479). Again, Plato's view of the superiority of reason over passion seems to be tempered here by the celebration of the power of love.³¹ The soul of the good man or woman in *Symposium* is not simply just or ordered; it is beautiful, and the beautiful soul can

³¹ Rosen, however, notes, "The love of beauty in the *Symposium* seems to be replaced by the praise of justice in the *Republic*" (105).

inspire virtue in the others.³² If an educated young man “has the luck to find a soul that is beautiful and noble and well-formed, he is even more drawn to this combination; such a man makes him instantly teem with ideas and arguments about virtue—the qualities a virtuous man should have and the customary activities in which he should engage; and so he tries to educate him” (*Symposium* 209b-c:492). For the people of Plato’s ideal city, the education of the souls of the citizens is a central concern.

Plato’s *Polis*

The corruption of the soul can lead to the corruption of the entire *polis*, and there is a parallel between the soul and the state, which should be ordered with the philosopher at the top, followed by the guardians, and then the common people.³³ There is an integral connection between the rightly ordered city and truth in Plato; as Stanley Rosen explains in *The Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry*, “That which is furthest from law and order is furthest from philosophy and *logos*” (5). Right thinking begets a good city. Plato understands that if the souls of the citizens of a *polis* are not just, then the whole city will be corrupted. If the appetitive and spiritual parts overwhelm the rational, then there is chaos in the soul of an individual. If their appetites overrun the individuals in the city, then the city itself is embroiled in chaos and cannot survive.

³² Iris Murdoch explains, “Beauty gives us an immediate image of good desire, the desire for goodness and the desire for truth. We are attracted to the real in the guise of the beautiful and the response to this attraction brings joy” (45).

³³ “A just order is strengthened if most people actually observe the rules of justice, and it is weakened if most people are no more than apparently just” (Irwin, *Plato’s Ethics* 188).

The just soul is the basis of the just friendship, political community, and a just cosmos as Socrates says to Callicles in the *Gorgias*, “And surely a self-controlled person would do what’s appropriate with respect to both gods and human beings... And of course if he did what’s appropriate with respect to human beings, he would be doing what’s just, and with respect to gods he would be doing what’s pious ...” (507-507b:851). The just ruler is one who rules with the benefit of the people in mind: “every kind of rule, insofar as it rules, doesn’t seek anything other than what is best for the thing it rules and cares for, and this is true both of public and private kinds of rule” (*Republic* 1.345d:989). Justice, further, “brings friendship and a sense of common purpose” (*Republic* 1.351d:995). The goal of education is to make the whole city happy (*Republic* 4.420b:1053). However, there is a class of people, the guardians, who are allegedly superior and who must rule the many: “the desires of the inferior many are controlled by the wisdoms and desires of the superior few” (*Republic* 4.431d:1063). The moderation of the guardians spreads throughout the whole city. However, a group of corrupt souls, as Socrates explains in the *Republic*, will ultimately destroy themselves through civil war: “injustice has the power, first, to make whatever it arises in—whether it is a city, a family, an army, or anything else—incapable of achieving anything as a unit, because of the civil wars and differences it creates, and, second, it makes that unit an enemy to itself and to what is every way its opposite, namely, justice” (1.352:995). The state will ultimately become a tyranny in which the people as well as the ruler are enslaved.

Plato's Poetics

The city then rules the people and uses poetry to fashion them.³⁴ Stanley Rosen explains that the “statesman’s art,” is for Plato, the “weaving together the divine and animal parts of the human soul...” (62). The great man, philosopher king, or dictator is the highest *exemplum* of the right way to live who sets an artistic model for others to follow:

He simply has to be the first to set out on the road along which he wishes to urge the citizens—whether to the practice of virtue or vice—and give them a complete moral blueprint by setting his own personal example; he must praise and commend some courses of action and censure others, and in every field of conduct he must see that anyone who disobeys is disgraced. (*Republic* 4.711b-c:1398)³⁵

Stanley Lodge explains how art in general can serve as the model for the entire city: “Art can be the mirror of good citizenship, the communicator and amplifier of right opinion. As Plato directs its use, art supplies the *ethos* of the model city with its constant overtones, its characteristic cultural atmosphere” (128). The philosopher king is an exemplum or model for the people, but God is a higher model than even the dictator, for God is moderate, peaceful and ordered: “the moderate man is God’s friend, being like him” (*Republic* 4.716d:1403).³⁶ In being virtuous or moderate the just man is mimicking the great king as well as God.

³⁴ Poetry was used as means of education in ancient Greece. See Mitscherling (15-75). Mitscherling writes that Plato’s poetics is “a ‘poetics of virtue’: underlying his consideration of poetry is the question of how it might serve to educate the members of the polis in virtue; that is, to create ... virtuous citizens and statesmen.

³⁵ Stanley Rosen explains that, in the *Republic*, “The philosopher-kings rule by philosophical *doxa*, and hence by *phronēsis* or sound judgment as well as by political myths, rather than an elaborate legal code like the one developed in the *Laws*” (2).

³⁶ Vlastos writes that Plato’s God in the *Timaeus* “is not so much a governor as a philosopher, a mathematician, an engineer, and, above all, an artist” (26).

The same logic applies to beauty. Beauty found in sensual things can lead to heavenly beauty: “that which someone shows when he sees the beauty we have down here and is reminded of true beauty; then he takes wing and flutters in his eagerness to rise up, but is unable to do so; and he gazes aloft, like a bird paying no attention to what is down below—and that is what brings on him the charge that he has gone mad” (*Symposium* 249d-e:527).³⁷ True beauty should direct the lover’s vision heavenward; a degenerate love will be overcome by lust and set “out in the manner of a four-footed beast, eager to make babies; and...wallowing in vice” (*Symposium* 250e:528). Furthermore, true beauty stands on “sacred pedestal next to Self-control” (*Symposium* 254b:531). There is a harmony in the soul when it is just, and Plato often compares justice in the soul to music; there is something musical about the soul: ‘gracelessness, bad rhythm, and disharmony are akin to bad words and bad character, while their opposites are akin to and are imitations of the opposite, a moderate and good character” (*Republic* 3.401:1038). Thus, education must be directed toward forming the soul: “because rhythm and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else, affecting it most strongly and bringing it grace, so that if someone is properly educated in music and poetry, it makes him graceful, but if not, then the opposite” (*Republic* 3.401d-e). There is connaturality between the soul and music, and music shapes the innermost parts of the soul. On the other hand, Plato does seem to belittle poetry.

³⁷ Irwin writes, “An emotion is attached to its goal by habituation; it depends on fairly constant beliefs about the goodness or badness of something; it is not wholly flexible when rational believers about over-all good require different kinds of choices; and so it must be attached to the right kinds of objects to reduce conflicts with rational desires” (*Plato’s Moral Theory* 195).

Plato, while he himself composes poetry and views poetry as essential to educating the soul in its early stages, does seem to belittle poetry as being inferior to philosophy.³⁸ In the *Republic*, Plato explains that poets have a tendency to promote licentiousness, and poets “go on repeating with one voice that justice and moderation are fine things but hard and onerous, while licentiousness and injustice are sweet and easy to acquire and are shameful only in opinion and law” (2.363e-364:1004). As Stanley Rosen writes, for Plato, “poetry is morally or politically defective because it encourages the license of desire, and in particular, of eros” (1). Poets further seem to praise unjust rulers and depict the gods as unjust. In the *Timaeus*, Plato has Socrates explain, “I have no disrespect for poets in general, but everyone knows that imitators as a breed are best and most adept at imitating the sort of things they’ve been trained to imitate. It’s difficult enough for anyone of them to do a decent job of imitating in performance, let alone anything that lies outside their training” (19d-e:1227). The poets are primarily imitators as they are in the *Ion*; they make images of things about which they have no real knowledge: “The imitator does not imitate the things as they are but as they appear, not truth but phantasm” (Mitscherling 231). It is only the philosopher, according to Plato, who has the true knowledge of things.

³⁸ Mitscherling suggests that the early stage of human development was key period of censorship, for a child will not “be capable of recognizing what Plato calls the *hyponoia*, the ‘underlying meanings,’ of the text” (278). Lodge suggests that Plato longed for a “union of philosophy with the art of creative and critical writing” and projected a “philosopher-artist” who “raises his craft to the highest of all: the level being permeated by insight into the ‘idea of the good,’ the ultimate principle whose power transmutes every kind of human activity, making it an integral part of the ideal life” (87).

Essential to the idea of Plato's poetics is the idea of imitation or *mimesis*; the soul is molded by the exemplar, which is found in life and art.³⁹ The people of the ideal polis "must imitate from childhood what is appropriate for them, namely, people who are courageous, self-controlled, pious, and free, and their actions. They mustn't be clever at doing or imitating slavish or shameful action, lest from enjoying the imitations, they come to enjoy the reality" (*Republic* 3.395c-d:1033). From an early age, children must learn self-control, for humans are natural imitators according to Plato. Additionally, "imitations practiced from youth become part of nature and settle into habits of gesture, voice, and thought" (*Republic* 3.395d:1033). The good poet is he or she who imitates "the speech of a decent person" (*Republic* 3.398b:1035). Even music should be regulated; the rhythm must also be moderate; the mode should "imitate the tone and rhythm of a courageous person who is active in battle or doing other violent deeds, or who is failing and facing wounds, death, or some other misfortune, and who, in all these circumstances, is fighting off his fate steadily and with self-control" (*Republic* 3.399-399b:1036). The key problem is that the imitators do not know what is good or beautiful, for their "opinions are many because they hold that beauty is no one thing at all. They judge on each occasion 'this is beautiful', 'that is beautiful', but when asked what makes all these things beautiful (when asked, if you like, for their opinion about what 'beautiful' itself is), they do not believe that there is a single answer" (Janaway 109). Lodge explains:

for Plato, *mimesis* is not something external, the work of a clever journalist talking or writing about what *others* do. In the end, it is identical with the life of action itself, the life of model citizens. Their civic drama is not something

³⁹ For an exploration of *mimesis* and other aesthetic ideas in ancient Greece, see Warry.

you go to see in a theatre or art-gallery. You see it on the streets, in the homes, and in the council-chambers of the model city itself. (187)

The city is regulated by a system of mimesis in which the art forms the people.⁴⁰

Plato explains that the poet is third from the truth because he or she imitates an imitation; poetry also has the danger of corrupting “the mind..., for it is capable of enticing its viewer away from the strenuous, and thus immediately unpleasant, pursuit of such rational endeavor as philosophical inquiry” (Mitscherling 23).

Janaway notes that poets do not “aim at what is good for the audience, nor do they pursue their ends by adhering to general, rational principles” (36). A poet is an imitator below the level of a craftsman: “a poetic imitator uses words and phrases to paint colored pictures of each of the crafts. He himself knows nothing about them, but he imitates them...” (*Republic* 10.601:1205).⁴¹ Poetry further appeals to emotions and desires: “imitation really consorts with a part of us that is far from

⁴⁰ Homer and Hesiod were among the key poets in Ancient Greece. See Mitscherling 113-158. See also Warry: “for the Greeks Homer and Hesiod were more than poets; they were sacred books, the main repositories for Greek Religious tradition” (57). Mitscherling makes the point that poetry had possibly declined in Plato’s time, and the “pleasure-seeking audience had come to settle for and even to prefer mere show and appearance, totally ignoring whatever truth or reality this appearance may have disguised or otherwise, and in other hands, been capable of indicating by virtue of its performing a symbolic function” (33). Nettleship writes that what Plato wanted was that the Athenians “should not become, as they seemed to him to becoming, a nation of actors, but should assume genuine characters” (45).

⁴¹ Rupert C. Lodge suggests that Plato and his academy were rebelling against the Pythagoreans who supposedly attempted to mimic the movement of the planets through their rituals. Plato, on the other hand, attempted to become consciously just:

Instead of reproducing superficial cosmic movements ritually and externally, he grasps their internal principle, and takes this up, directly into his own life. He does not imitate externally the behavior of the cosmic deities, who are doubtless patterns of holiness, justice, and wisdom. He becomes actually, *in propria persona*, holy, just, and wise: the personification of their spirit. (Lodge 29)

reason" (*Republic* 10.603:1207).⁴² Poetry incites sexual desire, melancholia, hilarity, anger and other dangerous emotions and desires, which causes "disarray in the soul" (Nehamas 54): "It nurtures and waters them and establishes them as rulers in us when they ought to wither and be ruled" (*Republic* 10.606d:1211).⁴³ Stanley Rosen sees poetry, then, in Plato's vision as leading potentially to tyranny:

The identification of poetry and tyranny is thus explained; it is the tyranny of desire as unhindered by teleology or a hierarchy of ends. In the extreme case, man desires to become, not merely the master and possessor of nature, but the producer of nature. He wishes to transform nature into an artifact or poem. Coordinately, the connection between the tyranny of desire and Eros is rooted in the primacy of production. In order to satisfy his desire completely, man must recreate the world in his own image. Eros is accordingly unmakes as narcissism. (13)

Plato does grant that, if one can show that poetry is effective in molding the city and "is beneficial to constitutions and to human life" (*Republic* 10.607d:1212), then the poets can remain. Christopher Janaway writes that mimesis is especially dangerous because "*mimēsis* alters people's characters because they tend to become assimilated to what they habitually enact. Pursuit of dramatic enactment as an end in itself distorts the personality, making a person 'double' or 'multiple' (11). Murdoch writes that "Art is dangerous chiefly because it apes the spiritual and

⁴² Mitscherling notes that "imitation, as practiced by actors and orators was a means whereby one could appear to be what one was not..." (71).

⁴³ Nussbaum notes that since "poets create out an rational state of the personality akin to inspiration or madness" and when someone is in a state he or she "is unable to give a satisfactory *logos* of what he discusses" (84). She further explains, "Philosophical discourse ... is praised for its ability to produce general truths, and for addressing itself wholesomely to pure reason alone" (Nussbaum 86). However, reading the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, Nussbaum notes that "The good is grasped not by transcending erotic madness, but inside a mad life" (Nussbaum 104).

subtly disguises and trivializes it" (65).⁴⁴ Mimesis can be dangerous in as much as it creates an appetizing illusion.

Love also plays a role in the formation of music and poetry. The great musician as well as the poet is inspired by musical love and bringing a harmony and rhythm together from discordant notes: "Music, like medicine, creates agreement by producing concord and love between these various objects. Music is therefore simply the science of the effects of Love on rhythm and harmony" (*Symposium* 187c:471). The muses who inspire poetry also produce love: "This is the honorable, heavenly species of Love, produced by the melodies of Urania, the Heavenly Muse" (*Symposium* 187e:471).⁴⁵ The vulgar sort of love is "produced by Polyhymnia, the muse of many songs" (*Symposium* 187e:171). One should keep a measure to music in order to prevent "slipping into debauchery" (*Symposium* 187e:471). Love is further the teacher of artists and craftsmen and women: "And as for artisans and professionals—don't we know that whoever has this god for a teacher ends up in the light of fame, while a man untouched by Love ends in obscurity" (*Symposium* 197:480). The poet can be inspired by love and teach others to properly love the good.

⁴⁴ Julia Annas also writes, "The Part of us that takes pleasure in seeing others' sufferings in the theater is the part that longs to indulge its own; taking pleasure in laughing at comedies tends to affect our attitudes toward real life and to makes us cynical and unserious" (10). See also Nehamas who hold that mimesis dangerously conflates appearance and reality: "This attitude toward the mask, or the appearance in general is exactly what horrifies Plato..." (68). See also Urmson. Murdoch explains that "images of wickedness and excess may lead even good people to indulge secretly through art feelings which they would be ashamed to entertain in real life" (6).

⁴⁵ In *Plato's Ethics*, Irwin writes that according to Socrates, "we must prefer the desires with the greater rational warrant over those with greater current strength" (126).

Plato further defines poetry as being any sort of art or making; “‘poetry’ has a very wide range. After all, everything is responsible for creating something out of nothing is a kind of poetry; and so all the creations of every craft and profession are themselves a kind of poetry, and everyone who practices a craft is a poet” (Plato, *Symposium* 205b-c:488). Christopher Janaway writes that it is “tempting to suppose that possession of a kind of supreme *technē* will be equivalent to human excellence” (41). In the *Symposium*, Plato gives the poet a great deal of power and nobility.⁴⁶ Poets beget “Wisdom and the rest of virtue” (209:491). Poetry further seems to play some role in the making of the moral goodness of the city: “by far the greatest and most beautiful part of wisdom deals with the proper ordering of cities and households, and that is called moderation and justice” (*Symposium* 209:491). Additionally, Poets seem to have the noble task of praising heaven in the *Phaedrus*: “The place beyond heaven—none of our earthly poets has ever sung or will ever sing its praises enough” (247c:525). Weineck suggests that in the *Phaedrus* Plato gives poetry pride of place over philosophy, and the “argument about the superiority of sane sexuality is...implicitly subverted” (35). Poetry, which is a type of making, should seek the good of the soul that is being formed by poetry: “for anyone who intends to practice his craft well never does or orders what is best for himself—at least not when he orders as his craft prescribes—but what is best for

⁴⁶ Mitscherling suggests that Plato’s makes a distinction between poetic inspiration and the *technē* of *mimēsis*, favoring the former as a source of wisdom and dismissing the latter as mere imitation: “By means of its symbols, the poem is an image of Forms, and specifically, of the Forms of such virtues as wisdom, temperance courage, piety, and justice. By virtue of its symbolic function, the work composed by the true poet—the *inspired* poet, not the mere practitioner of the *technē* of *mimēsis*—does not serve to promote relativistic morality (303).

his subject” (*Republic* 1.347:990). The goal of poetry is to make the soul ready to undergo a philosophic education and encounter the forms.⁴⁷ These forms are to be imitated, and the philosopher “studies things that are organized and always the same, that neither do injustice to one another nor suffer it, being all in a rational order, he imitates them and tries to become as like them as he can” (*Republic* 6.500b-500c:1121). Although Plato recognizes that the soul and the city will never be completely perfect in this life.

Furthermore, in the *Ion*, Plato makes it clear that poetry is a divine craft in as much as the rhapsode and the poet are possessed by a divinity. He uses the analogy of the magnet to describe the power of the god upon the rhapsode who, in turn, has a great influence upon the audience: “the Muse makes some people inspired herself, and then through those who are inspired a chain of other enthusiasts is suspended” (*Ion* 533e:941). Unlike the philosopher, the poet loses use of his intellect, and “poets are nothing but representatives of the gods, possessed by whoever possesses them” (*Ion* 534e:942). The rhapsode then becomes possessed by the spirit of the poet (Ion is possessed by Homer) who, in turn, inspires the audience with possession: “The god pulls people’s souls through all these wherever he wants, looping the power from one to another” (*Ion* 536:943).⁴⁸ There thus seems to be a magical, entrancing

⁴⁷ Poetic images can be educative only “if these images are indeed viewed as mere images—that is, as leading us toward things that are on a higher ontological plane” (Moravcsik 40).

⁴⁸ Despite Plato’s insistence on Ion as a mere performer, Weineck writes that “rhapsodes were free to paraphrase, embellish, interpret and comment on them [texts] at their discretion” (28). Janaway notes that for Plato, “craft-knowledge and poetic inspiration exclude one another: the inspired are in a state of mind in which they do not understand what they are doing and are even not full agents, merely mouthpieces for higher beings who speak through them” (33).

power to poetry publically performed; poetry here seems to be the most powerful form of rhetoric. Socrates seems genuinely to praise Homer; he calls him “the best poet and the most divine” (*Ion* 530c:938). Socrates makes it clear that to be a good rhapsode, one must not just to know Homer’s words, but his thought as well, which will be communicated to the audience: “A rhapsode must come to present the poet’s thought to his audience; and he can’t do that beautifully unless he knows what the poet means” (*Ion* 530c:938). Socrates explains Homer’s thought as being his ability to understand war as well as “how people deal with each other in society” (*Ion* 531c:939). There thus seems to be something that Homer does understand; it is the rhapsode who does not understand. What the rhapsode does is lovely although he or she does not know what exactly he or she is doing (*Ion* 542:949). One must know the good in Plato, in “order to aim at the best state of something of some kind (*K*), one must have a conception of what a good thing of that kind (a good *K* thing) is” (Janaway 46). Proper education is thus needed to form souls through poetry.⁴⁹

Plato’s Theory of Education

For Plato, education “is the craft concerned with turning around, and with how the soul can most easily and effectively be made to do it” (*Republic* 7.518d:1136).⁵⁰ In *Plato’s Ethics*, Terrence Irwin explains that poetic education is preparation for rational functioning: “The pleasures and pains of young people are to be formed so that they go in the direction that reason will approve when it comes

⁴⁹ “The issue is one of substance, for if we understand misrepresentation and impressing a bad character on the young as two distinct faults, then we must face Plato with the possibility of a fiction’s failing on the one count while succeeding on the other” (Janaway 90).

⁵⁰ Some critics see the *Republic* especially as an attack on “the existing educational apparatus of Greece...” (Havelock 13).

along; and so, once young people acquire correct rational judgment, they will welcome and accept what it says" (223). Plato does not attempt to abolish poetry completely.⁵¹ Socrates further explains that poetry and music's harmonies gave the souls of the guardians "a certain harmoniousness, not knowledge; its rhythms gave them a certain rhythmical quality; and its stories, whether fictional or nearer the truth, cultivated other habits akin to these" (*Republic* 7.522:1139). Lodge explains that "for Plato, art originates in the deliberate attempt of mankind to acquire self-mastery: to control their human motility by patterning it in ways that will prove useful in achieving the venture of humanity" (45). In *Plato's Moral Theory*, Irwin writes, "Most moral training comes, not from formal instructions in morals, but from education which produces the right physical capacities and sentiments and from the informal but ubiquitous presence of the rest of society" (25). In the *Timaeus*, Plato emphasizes that guardians should be "given both physical and cultural training" (1226:18b). This cultural training, according to Plato, will make the people good citizens and soldiers: "The good education they have received will make them good men, and being good they will achieve success in other ways, and even conquer their enemies in battle. Education leads to victory..." (*Republic* 1.641c: 1335). Education here is geared to war; however, it is not exclusively directed toward war but rather to the happiness of the citizens: "as a rule, men with a correct education become good, and nowhere in the world should education be despised, for when combined

⁵¹ Julia Annas, however, suggests that by Book 10 of the *Republic*, Plato makes poetry "as marginal as scene painting and optical illusions" (18). For a discussion of Plato's views on painting see Keuls.

with great virtue, it is an asset of incalculable value” (*Republic* 1.644b:1338).⁵² Plato further has Socrates say in the *Republic* that the guardians should be given “physical training for bodies and music and poetry for the soul” (2.376e:1015).⁵³ The culmination of education is philosophy, but poetry plays an integral part to education. Plato calls education “the correct formation of our feelings of pleasure and pain, which makes us hate what we ought to hate from first to last, and love what we ought to love” (*Republic* 2.653c:1344). Education further is a gift from the gods of poetry and music and “comes originally from Apollo and the Muses...” (*Republic* 2.654:1345).⁵⁴ The connection between art, morality and law is extremely important for Plato. There is a sense of a harmony that flows through the soul of the universe; this harmony is found in the soul through virtue and is contained in art and the artist; thus a vicious person will make vicious art, which, in turn, will inspire more viciousness among the citizens of the polis:

Pleasure indeed is the proper criterion in the arts, but not the pleasure experienced by anybody and everybody. The productions of the Muse are at their finest when they delight men of high caliber and adequate education—but particularly if they succeed in pleasing the single individual whose education and moral standards reach heights obtained by no one else (*Laws* 2.658e:1350).

⁵² Janaway writes that Plato censors for class reason and “opposes the pursuit of diversity or novelty for their own sake, the seeking out of pleasurable experiences, the imaginative exploration of the morally reprehensible and ambiguous sides of human existence, the cultivation of the viewpoints of women and slaves which challenge the secure habits of the aristocratic *kalos kagathos*” (105).

⁵³ Lodge notes that “Music, like rhetoric, is a community art; necessarily so” (60).

⁵⁴ However, Irwin notes that “it does not follow that the musically educated man chooses virtue, as Glaucon demanded, for its own sake and not for its consequences. He still regards virtue as a source of pleasure or honour, and that is why he chooses it; he would not choose it without these consequences, and so he does not choose it for its own sake” (*PMT* 203).

Art is not to be dictated by the common man and woman; it is to be created by the virtuous to make others virtuous. Poetry is essential for education because

the philosopher statesman realizes that ordinary men and women can hardly be expected to respond directly to a purely rational appeal. They can be induced, it is true, to feel something of the attractiveness of his vision. But it would be too much to expect them to see it as clearly as he sees it, with a full sense of its beauty and power. His vision has to be translated for their benefit; expressed in ways, which they can appreciate and accept. He has to appeal convincingly to their senses and emotions. (Lodge 155-156)

Plato places the emphasis on poetry as a shaper of souls in the *Republic* and writes that some stories should thus be censored: “we’ll persuade nurses and mothers to tell their children the ones we have selected, since they will shape their children’s souls with stories much more than they shape their bodies with handling them” (*Republic* 2.377c:1016). The soul is like a wax that must be molded or an instrument that must be tuned. Plato thus censors poetry that depicts the gods as unjust or praises unjust behavior in mortals such as intemperance or a lack of control of one’s emotions or an excessive love of money or being disrespectful to the rightful rulers. The combination of the just soul with the well-formed body makes the guardian a work of art: “if someone’s soul has a fine and beautiful character and his body matches it in beauty and is thus in harmony with it, so that both share in the same pattern, wouldn’t that be the most beautiful sight for anyone who has eyes to see” (*Republic* 3.402c-d:1039). The knowledge of the good must come first before education through poetry (*Republic* 3.402c:1039).⁵⁵ The poetry must be simple: “simplicity in music and poetry makes for moderation in the soul” (*Republic* 3.404e:1041). The soul is stabilized by the images and rhythms of poetry and

⁵⁵ Lodge explains that Plato’s criterion for poetry would be “consistency with the idea of the good” (175).

music.⁵⁶ Plato's Athenian in the *Laws* notes that there are three important qualities of a judge of art:

So anyone who is going to be a sensible judge of any representation—in painting and music and every other field—should be able to assess three points: he must know, first, *what* has been represented; second, how *correctly* it has been copied; and then, third, the *moral value* of this or that representation produced by language, tunes and rhythms. (2.669-669b:1359-1360)

The moral character of the art that would fit into Plato's scheme would be art that harmonizes the emotions and desires of the soul. This harmonious soul will serve as the basis of a harmonious city.

For Plato, the music and art of a city essentially concerns the greater city as a whole as Lodge explains: "The stories, hymns, march-tunes, and the rest, which are current in the model city, are not the work of individual citizens, celebrated as 'artists' and paid or praised for the professional quality of their productions. They arise out of the community living, and are, one and all mimesis of the community *ethos*" (186). Plato even goes so far as to suggest that the degeneration of music and art leads to the degeneration of society, and, once the laws of music were broken, and the common people began to make pronouncements on the quality of music, then anarchy ensued: "But if this democracy had been limited to gentlemen and had applied only to music, no great harm would have been done; in the event, however, music proved to be the starting point of everyone's conviction that he was an

⁵⁶ Wolz describes the condition of an unjust state without proper education: In such a state education is held in very low esteem. The populace, at huge public gatherings, shouts its approval or disapproval, declaring as good what it likes and evil what it dislikes. Young men of great promise soon discover where the real power lies. They flock to sophists who teach them how to manipulate the moods of the crowd, how to arouse it to anger and how to soothe it, thus learning to exploit it for their own selfish interests without regard to the welfare of the state (187).

authority on everything, and of a general disregard for the law. Complete license was not far behind" (*Laws* 3.701-701b:1389-1390).⁵⁷ Plato reiterates the comparison between the state and the soul in Book 12 of *Laws*. Neglect of education and poetry is also one of the steps on the way to civil war; Plato specifically criticizes those who have "valued physical training more than music and poetry" (*Laws* 8.548b:1160). Freedom is a serious defect for Plato and will ultimately lead to anarchy and the degeneration of the city:

This freedom will then take other forms. First people grow unwilling to submit to the authorities, then they refuse to obey the admonition of their fathers and mothers and elders. As they hurtle along toward the ends of this primrose path, they try to escape the authority of the laws; and the very end of the road comes when they cease to care about oaths and promises and religion in general. They reveal, reincarnated in themselves, the character of the ancient Titans of the story, and thanks to getting into the same position as the Titans did, they live a wretched life of endless misery. (*Laws* 701b-c: 1390)

Plato uses the mythological image of the Titans who represent an earlier period of savagery and violence in the history of the world. The whole universe is a cosmos that maintains harmony; it is not possible to have anarchic art without it leading to the upsetting of the fabric of society as well as that of the entire universe.

Additionally, it is important, for Plato, that the city teaches poetry that makes the people deferential to the gods. The people must not believe that the gods are buffoons or are profane, for the people will imitate the gods. Also, Plato does not seek to eliminate poetry entirely; he merely seeks to excise those passages that

⁵⁷ "Only people who let themselves go into their feelings, people who give way to the promptings of appetite, people who are vicious, ill-educated, devoid of insight—in a word, people who are definitely unsuited to the regular rhythms of life in the model city—take pleasure in such relaxed, hysterical, and indeed insensate activities" (Lodge 238).

depict the gods as something not becoming gods or men. Education makes one love the fine and good that one knows is fine and good; ignorance is the opposite: “when a man thinks something is fine and good, but loathes it instead of liking it, and conversely when he likes and welcomes what he believes is wicked and unjust. I maintain that this disaccord between his feelings of pleasure and pain and his rational judgment constitutes the very lowest depth of ignorance” (*Laws* 3.689:1378). The goal of education is to get one to love what is truly good and noble and hate what is bad. Plato even goes so far as to censor children’s games, for an innovator of novel games could upset the whole tradition: “In fact, it’s no exaggeration to say that this fellow is the biggest menace that can ever afflict a state, because he quietly changes the character of the young by making them despise old things and value novelty. That kind of language and that kind of outlook is—again I say it—the biggest disaster any state can suffer” (*Laws* 7.797c:1466). Poetry and literature, according to Plato can lead to impiety and “invest it with a pernicious glamour” (*Laws* 10.899e:1556). However, for Plato, the highest education is philosophy for which poetry and music prepares the soul. Following mathematics and astronomy, dialectic directs the soul toward the forms: “And when the eye of the soul is really buried in a sort of barbaric bog, dialectic gently pulls it out and leads it upwards...” (*Republic* 7.533d:1149). While he voyages into mysticism in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, Plato here emphasizes the importance of philosophy to educate one’s soul.

Ultimately, although it has deep roots in earlier Greek thinking, Plato’s theory of the soul is one of the foundations of philosophical anthropology. Plato

understands the soul as having three parts: the appetitive, spirited, and the rational. Human health and sanity come from the harmonizing of the passions through self-control and reason. On the other hand, Plato does grant room for some periods of ecstatic passion and overwhelming desire. Love can be the impetus for unity with the gods and the highest truths of philosophy, the apprehension of which takes a mystical character. Ultimately, self-control is an essential concern of the *polis*, for disharmonious souls will lead to a disharmonious community. The people of the *polis* must seek to maintain order in the city and thus must have the most rational people, the philosopher kings, use the most spirited people, the guardians, to guide the mass of people who, according to Plato, are ruled by their appetites. Poetry is thus used to provide *exempla* of virtue for the training of the people, especially the guardians. The proper poetry will tune the souls of the people and prepare some of them for philosophy. In the end, philosophy is superior to poetry because it utilizes the highest function in human beings: reason. Nonetheless, poetry is essential for those who cannot reach the heights of philosophy as well as those who are younger and not ready for philosophy. Plato thus provides a scientific examination of the soul as well as politics and presents a theory of the importance of poetry to education of the soul, which influences Western civilization for two millennia.

Problematic Appropriations of Plato

In the twentieth century, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger appropriates Plato's thought.⁵⁸ Although Francisco Gonzales sees Heidegger as

⁵⁸ See Gonzales's work for a critique of Heidegger use of Plato's metaphysics. See Wolz's *Plato and Heidegger*, which seeks to read Plato through the lens of Heidegger's existential thought, exploring such Heideggerean ideas as the "they-self"

fundamentally misreading Plato's metaphysics and epistemology, Tom Rockmore, in *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy*, sees Heidegger's politics as a "form of right-wing Platonism" (54). Heidegger's thought is largely a misreading of classical philosophy. Heidegger sought to reclaim classical Greek thought and wanted to proclaim a return to the great age of Being.⁵⁹ Heidegger desired to return to a primitive form of poetic language, which would enable poetic thinking, which would then enable a poetic people. The human being-there or Da-sein is fundamentally with others, and the people also have a Da-sein. In the contemporary world, due to the corruption of language and thus thinking, humans are blind to Being. While there are passages in Heidegger in which he celebrates the advent of science and technology, most of his effort is an attempt to counteract the effect of scientific thinking on the human being. Heidegger's principal targets are modern, Enlightenment philosophers such as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant who posit the human being alone in his or her own subjectivity; this human being utilizes reason and mathematical thinking in order to compress the world according to his or her own image. Heidegger seeks to renew the modern world through the rebirth

and inauthenticity" in Plato's work. S Montgomery Ewegen explores the influence of the myth of Er on Heidegger's reading of Holderlin in "A Unity of Opposites: Heidegger's Journey through Plato." See also Rosen 127-147. Rosen views Heidegger as inverting "the conventional or obvious interpretation of the Platonic Ideas by rendering them in a Kantian perspective" (133). See Catherine Zuckert's *Postmodern Platos: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida* for a broader exploration of Plato's impact on Heidegger and other postmodern thinkers.

⁵⁹ Recent discussions of Heidegger's relationship to Greek thought include *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays* edited by Drew A. Hyland and John Panteleimon Manoussakis as well as Bernard Alan Miller's *Rhetoric's Earthly Realm: Heidegger, Sophistry and the Gorgian Kairos*.

of poetry, which will make a new community that dwells poetically and waits for the gods' return.

In his critique of modern subjectivism, Heidegger presents an idea of community in works such as *Being in Time* in which humans fundamentally are with one another (*mitsein*). In the modern world, this community has become the "they," and humans live inauthentic lives absorbed in the opinions of others. Heidegger sees a response to this malaise of inauthenticity in a renewal of art. In his essay "On the Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger develops a theory of poetry and art (two terms that he seems to use interchangeably), which suggests that poetry creates a people. Heidegger holds that poetry gathers together the values of a people and creates a destiny for them to follow articulated in art. Heidegger's theory of art rests on his theory of language and Being, which form and shape the human being. Unfortunately, the concrete world situation into which Heidegger hoped to incarnate his ideas had disastrous consequences.

Heidegger's Political Engagement

There is a specter hanging about Heidegger's thought that only grows larger as time progresses. Heidegger was not detached from the world of politics and was actively engaged with the Nazi party. Moreover, Heidegger never seemed to recant his allegiance to National Socialism and appeared indifferent to the mass executions perpetrated by members of the Nazi party and Wehrmacht. The scholarly consensus

is that Heidegger grew disappointed with Nazism because it attached itself to biological racialism and the adulation of technology.⁶⁰ Heidegger himself explains:

I ... believed that the movement could be spiritually directed onto other paths and ... felt such an attempt could be combined with the social and overall political tendencies of the movement. I believed that Hitler, after he assumed responsibility for the *whole* Volk in 1933, would grow beyond the party and its doctrine and everything would come together, through a renovation and a rallying, in an assumption of Western responsibility. This belief proved erroneous, as I recognized from the events of June 30, 1934 [The Night of the Long Knives]. (qtd. in Wolin 5)

Basically, Heidegger had hoped Nazism would become something else. He had hoped for a cultural and philosophical renaissance in the West that National Socialism would usher in. Heidegger praises National Socialism in a passage that he later amended after criticism, praising “the inner truth and greatness of this movement” (*IM* 213).⁶¹ Heidegger had hoped that Nazism would have saved Europe.

In his philosophical writings, Heidegger points to Germany as the guardian of European civilization against the twin enemies of Russia and the United States. In *the Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger writes of Europe being trapped between two pincers: “...Europe, in its unholy blindness always on the point of cutting its own throat, lies today in the great pincers between Russia on the one side and America on the other” (40). Heidegger sees Europe in a perilous state of decline. According to

⁶⁰ There are a number of works that deal with Heidegger’s affiliation with Nazism. One of the works that set off the recent interest in Heidegger’s Nazism is Victor Farias’ *Heidegger et le Nazisme*. A very aggressive attack on Heidegger, which even suggests that the German philosopher’s work be removed from book stores and libraries is Emmanuel Faye’s *Heidegger l’induction du nazisme dans la philosophie*. See also Julian Young’s *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, Tom Rockmore’s, *On Heidegger’s Nazism and Philosophy* and Philip Lacoue-Labarthe’s *La fiction du politique: Heidegger, l’art et la politique*.

⁶¹ For the quotes from *Introduction to Metaphysics*, I use the translation from Gregory Fried and Richard Polt.

Heidegger, both the United States and Great Britain were emblematic of a corrupted way of thinking that was based upon a corrupted language that produced a corrupted way of life. The Soviet Union as well was based upon the same corrupted, scientific way of viewing the world, being rooted in Marxism: “Russia and America seen metaphysically, are both the same: the same hopeless frenzy of unchained technology and of the rootless organization of the average man” (*IM* 40). Capitalist, liberal democracy and Soviet Marxism have ungrounded America and Russia, destroying the poetic dwelling of their *Volk*. Heidegger expresses a similar idea in 1943: “The planet is in flames. The essence of man is out of joint. Only from the Germans can there come a world-historical reflection—if, that is, they find and preserve their ‘Germanness’ (qtd. Wolin 14). This fantasized Germany was the bearer of Heidegger’s own version of National Socialism, which made overtures to technology and racism, but was nonetheless rooted in something deeper in the Western tradition—so Heidegger thought.

Heidegger’s elucidation of Germany’s position is based on his understanding of fate. Tom Rockmore explains Heidegger’s idea of fate, which is tied to his idea of the hero (*Held*): “Like the theological conception of *kairos*, there is a right time, a propitious instant when things come together, so to speak—a moment when an important action is possible, such as the transition to authenticity in practice through the grasp and reenactment of one’s heritage on both levels of the individual and the group” (48). Heidegger believes that one’s ancestors and tradition as well as his or her historical situation place him or her in the situation of a vocation or obligation. In defense of his commitment to National Socialism, Heidegger writes in his

“Rectoral Address: Facts and Thoughts”, “I saw in the movement that had gained power the possibility of an inner recollection and renewal of the people and a path that would allow it to discover its historical vocation in the Western world” (qtd. in Rockmore 483). Heidegger had hoped for his own philosophical and poetic version of National Socialism that would bring about a renewal of poetic dwelling for all of Western Civilization. As Nazism revealed itself as a totalitarian movement based upon biological racism, Heidegger grew disenchanted and even was placed under surveillance by the SS as Hugo Ott notes in his biography, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*.

Furthermore, Heidegger did criticize Hitler and Nazism in as much as “Hitler led in the service of machination” (Rickey 147). Furthermore, Christopher Rickey notes that from “the earliest days of his political interest, Heidegger opposed the ‘biological’ doctrine as propounded by Rosenberg or the ‘biological’ reading of Nietzsche that had found favor with Nazi hierarchy” (Rickey 219). In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger specifically rejects the understanding of humans according to “an empty and pale biology and psychology or epistemology” (150). Heidegger’s understanding of Nazism must thus be perceived from the perspective of Heidegger’s philosophy, which reveals what he hoped National Socialism would become. Tom Rockmore sees Heidegger’s politics as being intimately intertwined with his thought; Heidegger’s “abiding fascination was undoubtedly with Being itself, which called forth his commitment to National Socialism as a way station on the road to ontology” (56). Indeed, in his political lectures, Heidegger seems to blend philosophical terms with Nazi rhetoric. Heidegger said to a group of German

students in November of 1933, “The National Socialist revolution is bringing about the total transformation of our German existence [Da-sein]” (“German Students” 46). In more recent times, scholars such as Victor Farias and Immanuel Faye have sought to uncover the relationship between Heidegger’s philosophy and his political writings to undermine Heidegger’s legacy. Despite its heavy baggage, Heidegger identifies an integral mode of being in the West, which has its philosophical roots in Plato. The first important point in Heidegger’s revolutionary phenomenology is his idea of togetherness.

Being Together and the Problem of Everydayness

Heidegger sees human beings as essentially bound together. Ernst Tugendhat writes, “the self givenness of subjectivity is for him no longer an absolute. Rather, as the ecstatic temporality of Da-sein, it is already mediated by a prior openness—its ‘world’ as ‘history’; and to this extent, the transcendental approach has been superseded” (“Heidegger’s Idea of Truth” 248). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger develops his idea of world and explains that one of the possible means of world is “the ‘public’ world of the we or one’s ‘own’ and nearest (domestic) surrounding world” (61).⁶² The sense of sharing a world with others Heidegger calls *Mitda-sein* and is a topic of ontological investigation: “The task is to make this *Mitda-sein* of the nearest everydayness phenomenally visible and to interpret it in an ontologically adequate way” (*B&T* 110). Each person is in a world, and this world is “the totality of environmental meaning given to me in my experience” (Rickey 33).

⁶² I use Joan Stambaugh’s translation of *Being and Time*.

Heidegger develops his idea of "*mitsein*" or "being together" in *Being and Time* although similar ideas can be found in his other works. Heidegger says, "...Da-sein in itself is essentially being-with" (*B&T* 113). Heidegger further explains, "Being-with existentially determines Da-sein even when an other is not factually present and perceived" (*B&T* 113). To be Da-sein is to be with others: "As being-with, Da-sein 'is' essentially for the sake of others" (*B&T* 116). Humans fundamentally are together; they are political and social beings. Heidegger recognizes one's state of "being together" as being a precognitive state: "This understanding, like all understanding, is not a knowledge derived from cognition, but a primordially existential kind of being which first makes knowledge and cognition possible" (*B&T* 116). Da-sein knows itself through recognizing being-with and the care for the other:

Knowing oneself is grounded in primordially understanding being-with. It operates initially in accordance with the nearest kind of being-together-in-the-world in the understanding knowledge of what Da-sein circumspectly finds and takes care of with the others. Concernful taking care of things is understood in terms of what is taken care of and with an understanding of them. Thus the other is initially disclosed in the taking care of concern. (*B&T* 116)

Those together with Da-sein in its world are together concerned about the things that they share in the world. Thus, the people of a city may be concerned with a park or a church they frequent. This phenomenon of being together is called empathy and provides "the first ontological bridge from one's own subject, initially given by itself, to the other subject, which is initially quite inaccessible" (*B&T* 117). There is a pre-reflective relationship among people, and one is toward others, and "in being with and toward others, there is a relation of being from Da-sein to Da-sein" (*B&T* 117).

However, this relationship is initially a very superficial one: "Being-with-one-another cannot be understood as a summative result of the occurrence of several 'subjects.' Encountering a number of 'subjects' itself is possible only by treating the others encountered in their *Mitda-sein* merely as 'numerals'" (B&T 118). One initially encounters the other as an object. Moreover, one finds him or herself apart from the other in as much as Da-sein attempts to mimic the other: "Existentially expressed, being-with-one-another has the character of *distantiality*" (B&T 118). Furthermore, "Da-sein stands in *subservience* to the others. It itself *is* not; the others have taken its being away from it. The everyday possibilities of being of Da-sein " (B&T 118). This phenomenon Heidegger describes as being caught up in the "they" or everydayness in which Da-sein's authenticity is lost. Consequently, one can see that Heidegger's philosophy does not make room for the groupthink and conformity demanded by Nazism and other totalitarian regimes. The very fact that this state is pre-reflective and is taken for granted is upsetting for Heidegger: "In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the they [*Das Man*] unfolds its true dictatorship. We enjoy ourselves and have fun the way *they* enjoy themselves. We read, see, and judge literature and art the way *they* see and judge" (B&T 119). Heidegger clearly, at this point in his career, at least, rejects the idea of the absorption of the human being into an unthinking mass.

However, Heidegger then reveals the affinity with Nazism in a later passage. Heidegger explains that the phenomenon of averageness, "the they", and everydayness as a leveling effect:

This averageness, which prescribes what can and may be ventured, watches over every exception which thrusts itself to the fore. Every priority is

noiselessly squashed. Overnight, everything primordial is flattened down as something long since known. Everything gained by a struggle becomes something to be manipulated. Every mystery loses its power. The care of averageness reveals, in turn, an essential tendency of Da-sein, which we call the *leveling down* of all possibilities of being. (B&T 119)

In clear indictment of liberal democracy, which Heidegger will make in mutated forms throughout his career, Heidegger denounces the desacralization and contempt for all greatness that is characteristic of the modern world. Heidegger calls this phenomenon “publicness” and claims that it “obscures everything, and then claims that what has been thus covered over is what is familiar and accessible to everybody” (B&T 119). Heidegger will later treat this phenomenon under the label “enframing”; Being is hidden away behind mass culture and scientific knowledge. This publicness further takes away Da-sein’s responsibility: “In the everydayness of Da-sein, most things happen in such a way that we must say ‘no one did it’ (Heidegger, B&T 120). In this primordial state, Da-sein is “inauthentic” and “is *dispersed* in “the they” and must first find itself” (B&T 121). Da-sein must free itself from “the they” and “the they’s” obscured view of the world, “and disclosing of Da-sein always comes about by clearing away coverings and obscurities, by breaking up the disguises with which Da-sein cuts itself off from itself” (Heidegger, B&T 121). There are, again, two readings of Heidegger’s desire to break away from “the they”: the individualistic and the *Volkish*. One can either express his or her radical individuality, or “the they” itself must change. Heidegger seems to favor the latter as he writes, “*Authentic being one’s self* is not based on an exceptional state of the subject, a state detached from the they, *but is an existentiell modification of the they as an essential existential*” (B&T 122). What must occur then is a radical change of

“the they”, for one is essentially *mitsein* or with others, and this radical change is accomplished by a change in thinking and in politics. Heidegger explains this task in *Introduction to Metaphysics*: “The point is to restore the historical Dasein of human beings—and this also always means our ownmost future Dasein, in the whole of the history that is allotted to us—back to the power of Being that is opened up originally...” (44). The people must be renewed through philosophy and poetry.

Heidegger's *Volk*

Along with his idea of *mitsein*, is Heidegger's idea of *Volk*.⁶³ In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger makes references to the unity of the German people into a collective body through National Socialism: “But today the We is what counts. Now it is the “time of the We” instead of the I. We are” (74). Heidegger sees the German people as being united in a *Volk*. The *Volk* is the authentic community founded by poetry. Heidegger writes that, “the essential disposition [*Grundstimmung*], that is, the truth of the Da-sein of a nation [*Volk*], is originally founded by the poet” (qtd. In Wolin 9). The *Volk* is primarily a spiritual community, which in his rectoral address, Heidegger sees is the job of German university faculty to facilitate: “The faculty will only be a faculty if it develops into a capacity for spiritual legislation, a capacity that is rooted in the essence of that faculty's particular science, so that it can give shape to the forces of existence that beset *it* and fit them into the *one* spiritual world of the *Volk*” (“Self Assertion of the German University” 36). This *Volk* has a place in which it dwells. Heidegger asks, “does not the flourishing of any genuine work depend upon its roots in a native soil?” (*Discourse on Thinking* 47). The *Volk* has a dwelling

⁶³ For a lengthy treatment of Heidegger's notion of *Volk*, see James Phillips' *Heidegger's Volk: Between National Socialism and Poetry*.

place as well as a destiny. Tom Rockmore notes that, for Heidegger, a Volk “shares a common heritage, or destiny” (48). Heidegger writes, “Only a historical people is really a people. It is only historical, however, if it occurs on the basis of the center of Being” (qtd. in Rockmore 131). Heidegger also said to a group of German workers in January of 1934, “Everyone of our Volk who is employed must *know for what reason* and *to what purpose* he is where he is. It is only through this living and ever present *knowledge* that his life will be rooted in the *Volk* as a whole, and in its destiny” (“National Socialist Education” 56). The people are united together in the *Volk* and share a common destiny. In “The Self-Assertion of the German University,” Heidegger writes, “[t]he will to the essence of the German university is the will to science as the will to the historical spiritual mission of the German Volk as a Volk that knows itself in its state” (30). There is a specific mission of the people that is tied to philosophy and science. Heidegger further writes in “The Self-Assertion of the German University,” “[f]or the Greeks science is not a ‘cultural treasure,’ but the innermost determining center of their entire existence as a Volk and a state. Science is also not merely the means of making the unconscious conscious, but the force that keeps all of existence in focus and embrace it” (32). The *Volk* is united in philosophy, science and a common path of thinking. In addition to thinking together, the *Volk* also works together: “The first bond is the one that binds to the ethnic and national community [*Volksgemeinschaft*]. It entails the obligation to share fully, both passively and actively, in the toil, the striving, and the abilities of all estates and members of the Volk. This bond will henceforth be secured and rooted in student existence [*Da-sein*] through *labor service*” (“SAGU” 35). Heidegger explains that it is

not through the will to will or the will to power that a Volk is destined to rule; rather it is through destiny: “what is decisive in leading is not merely going ahead, but the strength to go alone, not out of obstinacy and the desire to dominate, but by virtue of the most profound destiny and the broadest obligations” (“SAGU” 34). The *Volk* is united by a common historical destination, which also seems to be yoked here with a strange fatalism or Neo-Pagan view of fate. Heidegger further uses the Greek world *polis* to describe the Volk: “The *polis* is the site of history, the Here *in* which and *for* which history happens. To the site of history belong the gods, the temples, the priests, the celebrations, the games, the poets, the thinkers, the ruler, the council of elders, the armed forces, and the ships” (*IM* 163). Thus, the people are united together by place, culture, work, philosophy, fate, and war, and much of Heidegger’s writings do not focus on the specific biological aspects of Nazism. There are exceptions, however.

Despite his contempt for scientific materialism, Heidegger does express a belief in biological relational as the basis of the *Volk*. In “The Self Assertion of the German University,” he says:

the *spiritual world* of a Volk is not its cultural superstructure, just as little as it is its arsenal of useful knowledge [*Kenntnisse*] and values; rather, it is the power that comes from preserving at the most profound level the forces that are rooted in the soil and blood of a Volk, the power to arouse most inwardly and to shake most extensively the Volk’s existence. A spiritual world alone will guarantee our Volk greatness. (34)

Here, Heidegger quite clearly expresses the biological tribalism and Neo-Paganism of Nazism; “forces” that derive from its blood kinship and soil or dwelling space power the Volk. Reading these lines after the revelations of the mass executions by members of the Nazi party and *Wehrmacht* is a disturbing experience, but the bulk

of Heidegger's thought is not affected by biologism. Spiritual forces unite the community he seeks to establish, and these spiritual forces are summoned through art.

The Death of Art

This *Volk* is made by its art; art or poetry is the grounding of a people. However, in the modern world, art is in a state of crisis. People have yet to think poetically: "The poetic character of thinking is / still veiled over" (*Poetry Language Thought* 12). In the modern world, humans are blind to Being because their thinking has become too scientific, subjectivist, and Kantian. He further states in "The Origin of the Work of Art" that the word "art" is "nothing more than a word to which nothing real any longer corresponds" (*PLT* 18). Heidegger sees this process as beginning in the period of the Romanizing of Greek thought: "*Roman thought takes over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally authentic experience of what they say, without the Greek word. The rootlessness of Western thought begins with this translation*" (*PLT* 23). Heidegger sees the need to avoid the imposition of subjective impressions on the thing; rather one should listen to it. He seems to even reject reason in both its medieval and modern understandings and embraces emotion and mood: "Perhaps however what we call feeling or mood, there and in similar instances, is more reasonable—that is, more intelligently perceptive—because more open to Being than all that reason which, meaning become *ratio*, was misinterpreted as being rational" (*PLT* 24-25). This passage is deeply Romantic and further carries the seeds of much of Post-Modernism's celebration of irrationality and affectivity: humans must turn to emotions and irrationality to discover who

they truly are. Heidegger continues this thought in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. In this work, Heidegger explains that modern Westerners are “in a spell of boredom, when we are equally distant from despair and joy...[and] when the stubborn ordinariness of beings lays open a wasteland in which it makes no difference to us whether beings are or are not...” (IM 2). Modern humans are in a tranquilized state of boredom in which they are indifferent to their own existence or the world around them. This condition has been brought about by the death of spirituality: “The spiritual decline of the earth has progressed so far that peoples are in danger of losing their last spiritual strength, the strength that makes it possible even to see the decline [which is meant in relation to the fate of ‘Being’] and to appraise it as such” (IM 40). Heidegger is not a materialist; he has his own personal mysticism that blends elements of Christianity, paganism, and Romanticism, and he recognizes that the crisis of the modern world is spiritual. Furthermore, the *ressentiment* endemic to mass democracy has contributed to the modern malaise in which Heidegger sees “the darkening of the world, the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the reduction of human beings to a mass, the hatred and mistrust of everything creative and free...” (IM 40). The spiritual malaise is tied to the destruction of the earth through technology as well as the leveling effect of mass democracy and “the preeminence of the mediocre” (IM 47). Heidegger sees the need to deconstruct the old, rotten world before a new one is built; the philosopher of the twentieth century has “the great and lengthy task of tearing down a world that has grown old and of building it anew...” (IM 133). The philosopher must know the tradition, and he or she should set to the task of remodeling it.

Humankind must learn to listen and grant “the thing, as it were, a free field to display its thingly character directly. Only then do we yield ourselves to the undisguised presence of the thing ... (PLT 25). Heidegger later uses the image of the heart to discuss the deepest core of human being:

The inner and invisible domain of the heart is not only more inward than the interior that belongs to calculating representation, and therefore more invisible; it also extends further than does the realm of merely producible objects. Only in the invisible innermost of the heart is man inclined toward what there is for him to love: the forefathers, the dead, the children, those who are to come. (PLT 125)

The heart, not reason, here is the deepest part of the human being. Heidegger additionally suggests that what is most precious to humans is the tradition of the *Volk*: one’s ancestors and children. Human understanding is often done through mood: “On the level of everyday life this primordial understanding is always present in mood, and all understanding in its turn is connected with mood” (Kockelmans 102). Tom Rockmore explains that “one’s state-of-mind, or potential for a given mood, is significant not only to disclose a person as what he or she is but also as an indication of how an individual comes into contact with the world” (50). Heidegger also speaks of spirit in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Spirit is the basis of all culture: “For all true energy and beauty of the body, all sureness and boldness of the sword, but also all genuineness and ingenuity of the understanding, are grounded in the spirit, and they rise or fall only according to the current power or powerlessness of the spirit” (IM 50). Heidegger here clearly rejects the materialism of National Socialism or Marxism as well as rationalism. He further explains that the “spiritual world becomes culture, and in the creation and conservation of culture the individual seeks to fulfill himself” (IM 50). The spiritual world is the source of all life

for Da-sein and the *Volk*. Heidegger further sees the crises of being as crisis in theology or a default of God: "The default of God means that no god any longer gathers men and things unto himself, visibly and unequivocally, and by such gathering disposes the world's history and man's sojourn in it" (PLT 89).

Heidegger's theology is tied to his poetics, which is developed at length in his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art."

Heidegger's Poetics

Heidegger explains that art reveals the truth of a thing.⁶⁴ In the "Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger uses the example of one of Van Gogh's paintings of peasant shoes: "The art work lets us know what shoes are in truth" (PLT 35). In the essay, Heidegger had given an explanation of the "equipmentality" of the shoes as known by a peasant woman, and he further explains that this equipmentality, that is, what the shoes really are, is revealed through the painting: "Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth. This entity emerges into the unconcealedness of its being. The Greeks called the unconcealedness of beings *aletheia*" (PLT 35). This shining forth or lightning bolt of truth is unveiled by the artwork, and the shoes are revealed as what they really are beyond their materiality or what subjective thoughts may be veiled over them. It is not the likeness or image of the shoes that is unveiled; rather is the essence of the shoes themselves: "The work, therefore, is not the reproduction of some particular entity that happens to be present at any given time; it is, on the contrary, the

⁶⁴ For Heidegger's understanding of art, see Iain Thomson's *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*; Julian Young's *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*; and Michael Zimmerman's *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, and Art*.

reproduction of the thing's general essence" (*PLT* 37). The work of art shows what the thing depicted is. Moreover, there is a tension revealed by a work of art of concealing and revealing, of world and earth in which intelligibility is revealed and concealed in earth and matter:

A world opens itself, the earth shelters and closes; both are present in the art work. Furthermore, the work does not refer to something else as a sign or a symbol does, but it presents itself in its own Being and invites the beholder to dwell and while with it. It itself is present in such a way that it gives the earth (materials, color, sound, words) the chance to be present as what it really is. (Kockelmans 67)

The thing shows what it is in both its matter and form. Heidegger writes in *Introduction to Metaphysics* that "art is the opening up of the Being of beings" (140). Tom Rockmore explains that this revelation is essential to Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology itself, which, in Heidegger's view, is "nothing more than the rendering visible of that which is not visible because covered up or hidden, which in turn leads to his characterization of phenomenological description as interpretation, that is, the hermeneutic that elucidates the authentic structures of Being" (16). The poet is a key figure who allows Being to unveil itself, yet the poet's role is more passive than active.

Heidegger reveals a very Romantic understanding of the artist as a conduit or vessel for the creation of art: "It is precisely in great art—and only such art is under consideration here—that the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge" (*PLT* 39). However, the poet seems to have some active role; it is the goal of the poet to seek out the absent gods: "Poets are the mortals who, singing earnestly of the wine-god, sense the trace of the fugitive gods, stay on the god's

tracks, and so trace for their kindred mortals the way toward the turning" (*PLT* 92). The poet "utters the holy" in the destitute periods of the world (*PLT* 92). The poet is charged with revealing Being to the *Volk* in periods of desolation. Heidegger explains that the poets are creators who must rise above the city, using violence: "Rising high in the site of history, they also become *apolis*, without city and site, lonesome, un-canny, with no way out amidst beings as a whole, and at the same time without ordinance and limit, without structure and fittingness <*Fug*>, because they as creators must first ground all this in each case" (*IM* 163). The poets are great men and women who make the very culture of the people. However, the poet is not a great active creator who imposes his or her will; the poet channels a power: "The violence-doing of poetic saying, of thoughtful projection, of constructive building, of state-creating action, is not an application of faculties that the human being has, but is a disciplining and disposing of the violent forces by virtue of which beings disclose themselves as such, insofar as the human being enters into them" (*IM* 167). The poet is conduit for the forces of Being. The poet grounds and founds "the historical Da-sein of a people" (*IM* 176).

Art further has a world in which it exists, and works of art are thus ripped from their world when they are placed in a collection. Heidegger explains that the work belongs, "as work, uniquely within the realm that is opened up by itself" (*PLT* 40). Art then has the function of grounding and even making the culture of a people. Heidegger uses the example of a temple:

It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being. The all-governing expanse of this open

relational context is the world of this historical people. Only from and in this expanse does the nation first return to itself for the fulfillment of its vocation. (PLT 41)

This passage is one of the key points of Heidegger's thought. Destiny is a central idea for Heidegger, which he develops throughout his works. The destiny for a people is revealed by the work of art. The work of art shows the people who they are; the *Volk* is presented to the people through art. The people look to the works of art to see what their ancestors have done and thus receive their vocation. An epic, such as the *Aeneid*, presents the Roman people to themselves. They see the values of their people gathered together and then projected into the work of art; they are then impelled to follow these values: "The temple, in its standing there, first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves" (PLT 42).

Heidegger further gives the example of a tragedy explaining that in the tragedy there is a battle "of the new gods against the old..." (PLT 42). There is a struggle of the people's values in the tragedy:

The linguistic work, originating in the speech of the people, does not refer to this battle; it transforms the people's saying so that now every living word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flighty, what master and what slave... (PLT 42)

The work of art is where the values of a people are worked out. The "work opens up a *world* and keeps it abiding in force" (PLT 43). This worlding is done by art work, which determines the very being *Da-sein* of the people: "Wherever those decisions of our history that relate to our very being are made, are taken up and abandoned by us, go unrecognized and are rediscovered by new inquiry, there the world worlds" (PLT 43). Iain Thomson explains that great artworks first open up the

implicit (or “background”) ontology and ethics through which an historical community comes to understand itself and its world” (*Heidegger, Art and Postmodernity* 43-44). The work of art shows the people what they believe, and by showing them what they believe, it shows them who they are. The work of art can reawaken in a people their destiny once they have forgotten it: “The world is the self-disclosing openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decision in the destiny of an historical people” (*PLT* 47). The world of the people is made manifest to them: “Projective saying is saying which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously brings the unsayable as such into a world. In such saying, the concepts of an historical people’s nature, i.e., of its belonging to world history, are formed for that folk, before it” (*PLT* 71). The truth revealed by poetry is directed toward a specific people, for “in the work, truth is thrown toward the coming preservers, that is, toward an historical group of men” (*PLT* 72). Works of art are thus temporal and exist for a certain people at a certain time, creating the culture of the people.

Heidegger further explains that poetry does not transport humans to another world; it allows humans to dwell on earth: “Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling” (*PLT* 216). Poetry, for Heidegger, provides a clearing for Being; this clearing “allows the beings of our world to be intelligible as the beings that they are” (Young 3). The Being of beings is both concealed and revealed in Heidegger, that is, there is a presence of the thing revealed; however, much of a being remains shrouded in

mystery and is presented as such: “For if the ‘clearing’ (*“Lichtung”*) that is a prerequisite for the emergence of Being is a *temporal* clearing, this means that the ‘presencing’ of Being is essentially a historical presencing—a *Seinsgeschichte*” (Wolin 13). Poetry makes the world habitable for humans to dwell in by creating a culture that cultivates Being. In Heidegger’s mind, a community is literally made by its art: “poetry is the most originary language of a people ... poetry is the basic framework of historical being and that language is the basic event of historical existence” (Rockmore 129). Humans are shaped by how and what they speak, and the poet teaches them to speak well and thus be well. Poetry, further, is superior to science, for it is more spiritual: “Because of this superiority, the poet always speaks as if being were expressed and addressed for the first time” (*IM* 28). The poet is able to listen to Being and can experience what the scientist with his or her limited language and thus limited thinking can. This poet, for Heidegger, is also a mystic.

Heidegger’s Gods

Heidegger’s understanding of the work of art is also distinctly theological and contains ambiguous neo-pagan statements. Heidegger writes, “In a world’s worlding is gathered that spaciousness out of which the protective grace of the gods is granted or withheld. Even this doom of the god remaining absent is a way in which world worlds” (*PLT* 44). Art seems to have the power to make the god present. The holiness of the temple also makes the god present: “By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is in itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct” (*PLT* 40). The god is connected with beauty: “Dignity and splendor are not properties beside and behind which the god,

too, stands as something distinct, but it is rather in the dignity, in the splendor that the god is present" (*PLT* 43). Art presents a clearing through which humans discover who they are: "Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are" (*PLT* 51). Art shows things as they are and people who they are. One of the manifestations of truth is beauty: "*Beauty is one way in which truth occurs as unconcealedness*" (*PLT* 54). Beauty is truth: "Truth is the unconcealedness of that which is as something that is. Truth is the truth of Being. Beauty does not occur alongside and apart from this truth" (*PLT* 79). To reveal Being then is to reveal beauty.

Additionally, true dwelling is waiting for the return of the gods: "Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities. In hope they hold up to the divinities what is un hoped for" (*PLT* 149). Humans wait for a return to the age of Being in which the divine essence of beings is revealed. The proper way to dwell for humans is to dwell looking up for the divinities, and "man is allowed to look up, out of it, through it, toward the divinities" (*PLT* 218). According to Julian Young, Heidegger's understanding of art suggests that art gives commands and serves a moral or theological guide: "If I do not understand that authentic gods—and the places they visit—are to be honoured, that rulers are to be obeyed, that my fellow citizens are to be treated differently from slaves, then I don't properly understand what a god, ruler, or citizen is" (28). Heidegger's mysticism is thus tied to his poetics.

Heidegger writes in his *Phänomenologie des Religiösen Lebens*, “Religion should accompany all the doings of life like a holy music” (qtd. in Rickey 1).

However, Heidegger sees religion as being no different from art. He writes,

With reference to the historical position of art, the effort to produce the ‘collective artwork [“*Gesamtkunstwerk*”] remains essential. The very name is demonstrative. For one thing, it means that the art should no longer be realized apart from one another, but that they should be conjoined in *one* work. But beyond such sheer quantitative unification, the artwork should be a celebration of the *Volksgemeinschaft*: it should be *the* religion. (qtd. in Wolin 9)

The Volk must wait in expectation for help from the gods; Heidegger makes this point especially clear at the end of his life. In his *Der Spiegel* interview, Heidegger famously says, “[o]nly a god can save us. The sole possibility that is left for us is to prepare a sort of readiness, through thinking and poetizing, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god in the time of foundering [*Untergang*]; for in the face of the god who is absent, we founder” (“Only a God Can Save Us” 107). He further says, “...Hölderlin is the poet who points to the future, who expects god...” (“Only a God Can Save Us” 112). The *Volk* should be a religious community, but it is a new church united by its art not its faith in a Christian God.

Heidegger Notion of Language

Heidegger’s theory of poetry rests on his theory of language. Heidegger explains that language “brings what is, as something that is, into the Open for the first time” (*PLT* 71). Language allows beings to be encountered: “Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. Only this naming nominates beings *to* their being *from out* of their being” (*PLT* 71).

Language allows things to be intelligible. In as much as it reveals the truth of things,

language “itself is poetry in the essential sense” (*PLT* 72). Language is where Being takes place: “Language is the precinct (*templum*), that is, the house of Being” (*PLT* 129). Being presents itself through language, and truly poetic language allows Being to do so while scientific jargon and the modern phenomenon of the will to will obscures Being. Moreover, language is not the symbol of Being; it is that through which humans reach Being: “The nature of language does not exhaust itself in signifying, nor is it merely something that has the character of sign or cipher. It is because language is the house of Being, that we reach what is by constantly going through this house” (*PLT* 129). There is a real contact between humans and Being through language. One of the fundamental ways of unifying human beings is language. Heidegger states in a defense of his Nazi activities in 1945’s “Letter to the Rector of Freiburg University”: “I sought to show that language was not the biological-racial essence of man, but conversely, that the essence of man was based in language as a basic reality of *spirit*” (qtd. in Wolin 64). Christopher Rickey explains:

Humans do not so much speak as are spoken by language; humans do not have language but rather language has them... From the point of view of the participating humans, there is a certain passivity with regard to language. This passivity toward language is what makes the disclosive *logos* a mood or attunement (*Stimmung*). Insofar as a group shares a language, it shares the attuning medium which is the meaning of being. (110)

Language in Heidegger unites a people. Language is also, for Heidegger, the house of Being. Language allows for the Open, which allows for Being to be made present:

By naming beings for the first time, language brings them first to word, brings them first to appearance, and lets them be what they are. The naming of language nominates the beings and calls them into their Being from the Being of the beings, i.e., from Being itself. Such saying is a projection of the

clearing in which it is announced *as* what it is that the being will come into the open. (Kockelmans 189)

Language enables consciousness and experience of being through mood and understanding. If the language is corrupted, then Being will be obscured, and Da-sein itself will not flourish. Heidegger explains in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, “the fate of language is grounded in the particular *relation* of a people to *Being*” (54).

Language affects how Being is experienced by a people and subsequently affects the fate of the people. It is Being that speaks to the people through language (*IM* 57).

Cristina Lafont writes, “Language understood as an ‘articulated whole of significance’ (as a world-disclosing lexicon, so to say) first supplies Da-sein with the intelligibility it requires in order to be able to express a statement at all” (70).

Language, in the West, has become corrupted by scientific logic, losing the poetry of Greek language and thought: “What distinguishes Greek *Logos* from logic is that it has not yet been divorced from its function of revealing or disclosing; it has not yet degenerated into the statement or proposition” (Lafont 73). Greek and even Latin (Heidegger admits) powered Western culture for a considerable time: “The text books of the Greek and Latin grammarians were schoolbooks in the West for over a thousand years. We know that these were anything but weak and petty times” (*IM* 61). It is not just Greek and Roman culture, but even the languages of Greece and Rome themselves provided the spiritual strength of the West for Heidegger.

Language has become especially corrupted in the modern world, and “the misuse of language in mere idle talk, in slogans and phrases, destroys our genuine relation to things” (*IM* 15). Being cannot break through the crust of the idle chatter of the modern world.

However, Heidegger notes that as the poet is the conduit of poetry, so too is a person shaped by language: "It is language that tells us about the nature of a thing, provided that we respect language's own nature... Man as though *he* were the shaper and master of language, while in fact *language* remains the master of man" (*PLT* 144). It is language that shapes who humans are: "In its essence, language is neither expression nor an activity of man. Language speaks" (*PLT* 194). For humans to dwell poetically, that is, be attuned to Being and experience affectively the beauty and divinity of beings, they must have a poetic language. Modern human beings have become dehumanized and their scientific language has made them into scientific observers and objects. Humans must then learn to listen again. The poet then put the *Volk* in a state of humility before the gods: "The poet makes poetry only when he takes the measure, by saying the sights of heaven in such a way that he submits to its appearances as to the alien element to which the unknown god has 'yielded' (*PLT* 223). The poet presents the finitude of humans, which is measured against the infinity of the gods. He also allows for the gods to introduce their newness to the people. Language is further tied to the history and even the soil of the people: "We know that a standardized language unfolds from the speech of dialects that originally stand rooted in soil and history" (*IM* 72). The language of a people comes from their dwelling place. Language makes a people; it "is the primal poetry in which a people poetizes Being. In turn, the great poetry by which a people steps into history begins the formation of its language" (*IM* 183). Language generates a people and "preserves in each case the being that has been opened up" (*IM* 198).

Heidegger and Being

Heidegger's theory of Being is tied to his theory of language. In his poem, "The Thinker as Poet," Heidegger writes, "Being's poem, / just begun, is man" (PLT 4). If men and women are made by language, it is Being that does the speaking. In the same poem, Heidegger continues:

*All our heart's courage is the
echoing response to the
first call of Being which
gathers our thinking into the
play of the world. (PLT 9)*

Heidegger's idea of attunement is found here. Humans must listen to Being in order to be who they truly are: "Through Being there passes a veiled destiny that is ordained between the godly and the counter-godly" (PLT 51). The Being of the beings is revealed through art. Poetry discloses Being for the people. Joseph Kockelmans explains the phenomenon of turning away from Being to theory or *doxa*:

For most people Being is difficult to attain; in them the view on Being does not achieve its end. They divert themselves from the effort to gain a pure view upon Being; and in so turning away they are no longer nourished by Being; instead, they make use of the nourishment that comes to them thanks to *doxa*, i.e., what offers itself in some fleeting appearance which things just happen to have at any given moment. (9)

Appearances can be deceiving, and Being is often hidden below them, but the artist, according to Heidegger, helps reveal Being, which, in turn changes the people. As Francisco Gonzalez explains, "theory 'objectifies' our *Umwelt* and thereby drains it of the significance it has *as lived*, as *Umwelterlebnis*; it transforms what meaningfully encounters us in our lived world into a mere *thing* or *object*" (37).

The early stage of Ancient Greece held the true understanding of Being when it was known as *phusis*. Heidegger writes that Greeks received *phusis* as a result of their poetry: “on the basis of a fundamental experience of Being poetry and thought, what they had to call *phusis* disclosed itself to them” (*IM* 15-16). For the Ancient Greeks, *phusis* was received through a primitive experience of nature: “Thus *phusis* originally means both heaven and earth, both the stone and the plant, both the animal and the human, and human history as the work of humans and gods; and finally and first of all, it means the gods who themselves stand under destiny” (*IM* 16). Heidegger looks to this early experience of *phusis* as the authentic experience of Being, which was soon corrupted by physics. The Greeks also experienced Being as nobility: “Being is the fundamental characteristic of the noble and nobility (that is, what has and rests upon a high, essential provenance)” (*IM* 106). Glory also is tied to Being: “Glory, for the Greeks, is not something additional that someone may or may not receive; it is the highest manner of Being” (*IM* 108). Being further appears and “essentially unfolds as appearing” (*IM* 107). Being thus is the appearing of glory: “Glory means *doxa*. *Dokeo* means: I show myself, I appear, I step into the light” (*IM* 108-109). Being is the appearance of nobility, glory, and divinity. Being is when things appear and emerge in their proper glory from their concealment. Being is different from becoming because Being is constant: “Being as *phusis* is the emerging sway. In opposition to becoming, it shows itself as constancy, constant presence” (*IM* 132). Being as *phusis* is not in a state of flux; it is a stable presence.

There is further a struggle to stand in Being, and only philosophers and poets are capable of doing so; other people “just reel about within the orbit of their caprice

and lack of understanding" (*IM* 141). The strong philosopher listens to being and is strong enough to stand in the emergence of being.

He further writes, "What is higher in rank is what is stronger. Thus Being, logos, as the gathered harmony, is not easily available for everyone at the same price, but is concealed, as opposed to that harmony which is always a mere equalizing, the elimination of tension, leveling..." (*IM* 140). Only great men and women can receive the gathered presence of beings; only great ones (one assumes Heidegger has himself in mind here) are able to be philosophers and poets. Being is also encountered through apprehension, which "denotes of a process of letting things come to oneself in which one does not simply take things in, but rather takes up a position to receive what shows itself" (*IM* 147). The philosopher and poet is one who receives Being and listens to it; Heidegger does not celebrate the subjective dominance of the will over beings. This *phusis* and ancient experience of Being has been obscured by idea, proposition, and science.

In the modern world of physical sciences, Being is hidden, and beings "become objects, whether for observing (view, picture) or for making, as the fabricated, the object of calculation" (*IM* 66). Beings are thus just objects that are packaged by the will to will and corrupted scientific thinking: "The motley mass of beings is more noisily and more widely given than ever before; but Being has deserted them" (*IM* 66). In this trash heap of spiritless things, Heidegger sees the temptation of pessimistic nihilism.

For Heidegger, the salvation of the West is contingent upon a new attunement to Being: "The Still hidden truth of Being is withheld from metaphysical

humanity. The laboring animal is left to the giddy whirl of its products so that it may tear itself to pieces and annihilate itself in empty nothingness" ("Overcoming Metaphysics" 69). Because of the modern subjective state, the will of Da-sein gets into the way of receiving Being: "In this self-guaranteeing of the will to will, the primal being of truth is lost" ("Overcoming Metaphysics" 81). In his *Der Spiegel* interview, Heidegger says of technology, "Everything is functioning. This is exactly what is so uncanny, that everything is functioning and that the functioning drives us more and more to even furthering functioning, and that technology tears men loose from the earth and uproots them" ("Only a God Can Save Us" 105). According to Heidegger, the modern world is on a path of self-destruction and needs renewal. Heidegger views the West as having a crisis of philosophy and art. However, according to Julian Young, Heidegger does not believe, like Hegel, that great art is doomed to never return, for one cannot discern the laws of history: "History is, rather, 'sent' to us by a 'Being' we can neither comprehend, predict, nor control" (14). Young sees "The Origin of the Work of Art" as "Heidegger's contribution to creating the possibility of the rebirth of art" (15). Nihilism will be overcome by a new age of art.

Ultimately, while it is uncertain to what degree Plato is commenting on a previous tradition of poetics or how much he is influenced by the Pre-Socratics, Plato is one of the major founding fathers of the Western understanding of the role of poetry and the logic of the soul. Plato's theory of the soul has been frequently interpreted and revisited from its first reception. Plato views the soul as being composed of three parts, the rational, the spirited, and the appetitive. The rational

must control the spirited and the appetitive. Poetry must shape the soul by presented *exempla* of virtue for the child or young person to follow. The soul is literally molded by poetry. Heidegger considered himself as being a philosopher who presents a reinterpretation of Greek philosophy. Heidegger modifies the Platonic tradition in his own distinct fashion. For Heidegger *Da-sein* is submerged in language and culture. Language, for Heidegger, is the house of Being, and all Being is filtered through language. In his "Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger demonstrates that the work of art presents and shapes a people. Heidegger's observations that the people see themselves and their fate in art are pertinent to the imperial epic, which the Roman poet Virgil crafts.

Chapter Two

Virgil's Imperial Vision

One the key texts that serves as part of the foundation of the West is the *Aeneid*, a work that celebrates empire but is rich with self-criticism and humanism. In his *Aeneid*, the Roman poet Virgil tells the story of the Trojan Aeneas who flees his burning city, wandering through the Mediterranean in search of a prophesized home in the west. Aeneas lands in North Africa, encountering the Carthaginian queen Dido with whom he has a brief affair that ends in Dido's tragic suicide. Aeneas finally arrives in his promised home, Italy, where he must fight a series of battles with the natives but with whom the Trojans are finally reconciled and join into one people who allegedly form what will later be called Romans. In this epic, written during the age of Caesar Augustus (27 BC-AD 14), Virgil follows the poetic model, which Plato facilitated and Martin Heidegger later identified.⁶⁵ This tradition is what is called the *exemplum* or model of virtue that a poet presents for emulation. Many poets in Virgil's Roman milieu such as Horace and Lucretius treat the topic of the *exemplum* and didactic poetry in general. Ultimately, Virgil's *Aeneid* is a didactic work that presents an *exemplum* of empire, consisting of a hero, the imperial community and the prophecies that support that community, as well as a sympathetic Other who must be conquered by that community.

⁶⁵ See my "Chapter One." The model that Plato facilitates is the use of poetry to mold and shape the souls of the citizens of the city. Heidegger presents a modified version of this theory in his "The Origin of the Work of Art" in which a people or *Volk* is made by their art, i.e., a people sees a collective work of art that tells them about their ancestors, and they seek to emulate these ideals or *exempla* in their lives.

In the 1812 painting by Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Virgil Reading to Livia, Augustus, and Octavia*, the artist depicts a scene in which Octavia, Augustus' sister, has fainted at the mention of her son, Marcellus. Augustus is holding his sister in his arms with a look of calm determination and a hand outstretched, warning Virgil to stop his reading. The scene evokes the power of art and very strongly connects art to life. The members of the Augustan household are hearing a poem about themselves; it is a poem that gives validation for Augustus' empire and speaks personally to the hearer. Augustus' household see themselves in the poem; they feel that the poem speaks directly to them and is not merely about them. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas himself, after having been ship wrecked on the coast of North Africa, experiences a similar scene in Book 1, as he looks upon the depiction of the Trojan War on the walls of Juno's temple, which is found in the city of Carthage, ruled by queen Dido. Although it is an empty picture, *pictura...inani* (*Aen.* 1.464), Aeneas feeds his soul on it, marveling and crying.⁶⁶ The idea of composing art that speaks directly to the reader and seeks to inspire both an emotional response is essential to Virgil's work. Critics such as Kimberly Bell suggest that Virgil himself uses Greek art in a similar manner, undertaking a *translatio studii et imperii*, a translation of culture and empire from Greece to Rome, "constructing a national identity for Rome as

⁶⁶ For a discussion of this scene in the *Aeneid*, see Michael Putnam's "Dido's Murals and Virgilian Ekphrasis"; Wells' comparison of this scene with Shakespeare in "To Find a Face Where All Distress is Stell'd": 'Enargeia', Ekphrasis', and Mourning in 'The Rape of Lucrece' and the *Aeneid*." See also Avery, Beck, Clay, Fowler's "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis", Gibson's "Aeneas as *Hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4", Horsfall's "Dido in the Light of History", Lowenstam, Segel, Stanley, Thomas' "Virgil's Ekphrastic Centerpieces," and Williams. For a broader discussion of ekphrasis in the *Aeneid*, see Putnam's "The Ambiguity of Art in Virgil's *Aeneid*" and *Virgil's Epic Designs: Ekphrasis in the Aeneid*.

glorious and ancient as that of Greece" (11). Virgil thus uses Greek art as a model for his own work. Virgil's Aeneas is modeled, at least partially, on Homeric characters, and Virgil's use of him, "afforded Vergil the occasion to provide for his own nation a poetic prehistory as antique and deep-rooted as the one Homer provided for Greece and Greeks..." (Toll 42).⁶⁷ Furthermore, Virgil's use of Aeneas helps to create a distinctly Italian story, for "Aeneas is made to function as ancestor to an entity greater than Rome...." (Toll 42)⁶⁸ On the other hand, some critics have criticized the view that Virgil's artwork serves a didactic, nation-building purpose. Shadi Bartsh suggests that the works of art that Virgil depicts in the *Aeneid* itself such as the baldrick of Pallas, son of Evander and friend of Aeneas who is brutally killed by Turnus, the Rutulian prince and whose death Aeneas will later avenge, or the story of Daedalus on the doors of Apollo's temple, to which Aeneas must journey in Book 6 on his way to the underworld are "spectacularly unsuccessful" in serving the purpose of moral reform and bringing about peace and order (325). Virgil's attempt at moral reform through the creation of an *exemplum* of Roman civilization in the *Aeneid* seems to be undermined by the scenes in which Aeneas commits incredible acts of violence during the Italian wars in the second half of the poem. Such violence, however, does not necessarily undermine the reading of the *Aeneid* as an imperial

⁶⁷ See also Karl Galinsky's *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome*, for a discussion of the Aeneas legend.

⁶⁸ For Katherine Toll, Virgil's use of Aeneas is intended to unify Italy, for, in Virgil's time, "the unity of Italy (and of Roman citizens outside Italy) was recent and unsteady: his audience's generation, and their parents' and grandparents', had been torn and tortured by increasingly destructive civil wars reaching right back to the 90s B.C.E" (35).

exemplum, and Virgil's use of the *exemplum* is part of a diverse theory of poetics, which one can see throughout the classical world.

The idea of the *exemplum* was common among the Greeks, and the Romans adapted the Greek model in turn.⁶⁹ Even though an ancient poet could use a conquered or other foreign culture for his source, scholars of the *exemplum* note that ancient writers often took the *exempla* from their own people's history.⁷⁰ The Romans were no exception, and critics have analyzed the distinctly Roman use of the *exemplum*.⁷¹ In his essay, "Exemplarity in Roman Culture", Matthew Roller gives a number of characteristics of the Roman *exemplum* or what Roller calls the "'exemplary' discourse in Roman culture" (4). Roller notes that an *exemplum* usually demonstrates an action "held to be consequential for the Roman community at large, and admitting of ethical categorization—that is, regarded as embodying (or conspicuously failing to embody) crucial social values" (4). The *exemplum* further has an audience of people who see the action and "place it in a suitable ethical category... and judge it 'good' or 'bad' in that category..." (5). The final two characteristics of the Roman *exemplum* are the commemoration of the deed, which includes the commemoration of the action and "its consequences for the community," (5) as well as the imitation, which includes a spectator who "is enjoined to strive to replicate or to surpass the deed himself..." (5). Roman writers usually used *exempla* to demonstrate an appropriate virtue to be emulated or a vice

⁶⁹ In "A Paradigm for the Analysis of Paradigms: The Rhetorical Exemplum in Ancient and Imperial Greek Theory," Kristoffel Demoen treats the Greek idea of the *exemplum*, focusing on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

⁷⁰ See Litchfield (16) and Roller (3-6).

⁷¹ See Litchfield for a dated but nonetheless helpful outline of the idea of the *exemplum* among the Romans.

to be avoided. Henry Litchfield points to patriotism as being the most important virtue in his reading of the *exemplum* (15). However, the *exemplum* did not necessarily have to be a perfect embodiment of virtue. William Turpin explores the idea of the *exemplum* among the Stoics, noting that “people did not have to be perfect or even generally admirable, to offer inspiration; barbarians, people of low social standing, and people who have not always behaved well could be even more inspiring than the more obvious role models” (365).⁷² This idea of imperfect *exemplum* seems to be part of Virgil’s method and could provide an answer to the problems that critics have regarding the death of Turnus as well as Aeneas’ other alleged faults. An examination of Roman writers reveals that the idea of the *exemplum* would be something with which Virgil was familiar. Poets, philosophers, and rhetoricians who either influenced Virgil or were contemporaneous with the Mantuan develop this idea of *exemplum*. Some of the most prominent of these writers and thinkers include Lucretius and Horace.

In his *De Rerum Natura*, the Roman Epicurean poet Lucretius, who lived a generation before Virgil, writes that he will instruct his reader by luring him or her in through the sweetness of poetic verse as when doctors put honey on the rim of a cup of medicine (*De Rerum Natura* 1.921-950). Lucretius hopes the reader will learn the entire nature of things, *omnem / naturam rerum* (*DRN* 1.95), from his poem.⁷³ Thus poetry, according to Lucretius, can educate. It can impart philosophic truths

⁷² For a more extended discussion Stoicism and poetry see Phillip DeLacy’s “Stoic Views of Poetry.”

⁷³ All of the Latin translations contained in this chapter are my own.

through art. Horace presents an even more developed idea of the power of art in his writings.

The poet Horace, who was a contemporary and friend of Virgil, presents a similar idea in the *Ars Poetica*, Horace's treatise on art. In this work, Horace presents the idea of the poet as teacher as well as entertainer. He writes that some poets seek to either teach or to amuse while others attempt to do both: *Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae / aut simul et idonea dicere vitae* (AP, 333). Horace then champions the latter poet who can both entertain and amuse: *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, / lectorem delectando pariterque monendo* (AP, 343-344, "He carries every point who mixes together the useful and the sweet, equally pleasing and admonishing the reader"). Poetry has the twofold task of both teaching and delighting. Horace further delves into mythology to show the tremendous civilizing power of art. Horace writes that Orpheus civilized humans through art: *Silvestris homines sacer interpretesque deorum / caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus...* (AP, 391-392, While men still lived in the woods, the sacred interpreter of the gods, Orpheus, drove them away from filthy living and murdering...). Amphion, son of Juppiter and Antiope, was able to build cities with his lyre: *dictus Amphion, Thebanae conditor urbis, saxa movere sono testudinis et prece blanda / ducere quo vellet* (AP 394-396, "And it has been said that Amphion, builder of the city of Thebes, was able to move rocks by the sound of his tortoise shell lyre and lead them where he wished by his sweet prayer"). Horace thus seems to emphasize the civilizing power of poetry and art; it has the ability to craft the morals of humans and even serves as the basis of their civilization (literally building human cities). An

additional point that Horace makes is that Homer and Tyrtaeus, a Spartan poet who wrote martial poems, were able to inspire heroics in the hearts of young men for war: *post hos insignis Homerus / Tyrtaeusque mares in Martia bella / versibus exacuit* (AP 401-403, "After all these was distinguished Homer and Tyrtaeus who stimulated manly spirits for the wars of Mars"). According to Horace, poets have the power to shape and discipline men for war. Thus, poetry does not simply teach abstract truths; it serves as means of shaping and developing the soul. Horace presents this idea elsewhere in his *oeuvre*.

In his letter to Augustus, Horace explains that poetry can have a didactic function, presenting models for the youth:

os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta figurat,
torquet ab obscenis iam nunc sermonibus aurem,
mox etiam pectus praeceptis format amicis,
asperitatis et invidiae corrector et irae,
recte facta refert, orientia tempora notis
instruit exemplis, inopem solatur et aegrum. (*Epistle* 2.1.126-131)

The poet shapes the tender, lisping mouth of a boy; now he turns the boy's ears from obscene matters. Soon after, he forms the heart with amicable instructions. The poet is the corrector of bitterness, envy, and anger. He presents right deeds and instructs the new generation with noble examples and brings solace to the desperate and grieving.

In this epistle, which he addresses to Caesar Augustus, Horace gives the role of the poet as being someone who shapes the youth's moral outlook through noble examples, *notis / ...exemplis*. In addition to providing healing to the suffering, the poet shapes and educates the youth through right examples. Thus, Horace, a confidant of Virgil who had written an ode (1.3) on Virgil's journey to Greece, upholds the idea of the *exemplum*, that is, the idea that poetry can provide examples to the reader for emulation.

There are a few points in the Virgilian *oeuvre* in which the poet articulates the idea of the *exemplum*. In his *Eclogues*, Virgil's collection of pastoral poems, Virgil writes of the education that the long awaited child, whom the poet introduces in *Eclogue 4*, will have. Addressing the child in the fourth *Eclogue*, the speaker says:

At simul heroum laudes et facta parentis
iam legere et quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus.
molli paulatim flavescet campus arista,
incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva
et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella.
pauca tamen suberunt priscae vestigia fraudis,
quae temptare Thetin ratibus, quae cingere muris
oppida, quae iubeant telluri infindere sulcos.
alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quae vehat Argo
delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella
atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles. (*Eclogue 4.26-36*)

But, at the point at which you will be able to read the glories of heroes and the deeds of your father, you will know what virtue is. Little by little, the plain will become golden with soft grains, and from uncultivated thorns, will hang the red grape, and the hard oaks will distil gooey honey. However, a few vestiges of ancient fraud will subsist, which will tempt men to sail ships and build walls around towns and to cut the earth with furrows. Then there will be another Tiphys and another Argo that will carry chosen heroes. There even will be more wars and again a great Achilles will be sent to Troy.

The young boy here, whom Virgil paints as Rome's savior who will bring about a new golden age, will be educated on stories that will teach him virtue; these stories will be specifically about heroes, that is, moral *exempla*, from whom the boy will learn. Additionally, in somewhat cryptic words, Virgil suggests that the old Greek heroes will return and carry out new deeds of greatness. One possible reading of the last lines of the above quotation is that Virgil sees new heroes springing up among Romans who have been educated in works such as the *Iliad* and the *Argonautica* and who will imitate the heroes contained in the works. In his epic, the *Aeneid*, Virgil attempts to present similar *exempla* of heroes to a new generation of readers,

making the heroes definitively Roman and providing a justification for Augustus' imperial regime. However, Virgil's *exempla* are very complex and seem to follow the Stoic idea that *exempla* need not be perfect. The complexity of Virgil's *exempla* has recently caused some contemporary scholars to doubt the traditional reading of Virgil as an imperial poet.

Recent criticism of Virgil has challenged the view of Virgil as an imperialist. At their mildest, these critics posit a multitude of voices in Virgil: some imperial and others critical of empire. Adam Parry, in his seminal article, "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*," helped initiate the dialogue in the twentieth century. Parry suggests that Virgil's epic is not simply a triumphal piece of propaganda; rather, Virgil simultaneously recognizes the price of empire while praising its glory: "More than blood, sweat and tears, something more precious is continually being lost by the necessary process; human freedom, love, personal loyalty, all the qualities which the heroes of Homer represent are lost in the service of what is grand, monumental and impersonal: the Roman State" (78). Parry contends that Virgil is sensitive to the suffering of his characters, including those who are Aeneas' supposed enemies. Other critics attempt to demonstrate that Virgil's critical voice is much stronger. In his *Virgil's Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence*, Michael Putnam has attempted to show that the triumphal and imperial readings of the poem ultimately fail. According to Putnam, Aeneas is not the model exemplar of Roman behavior; he even can be a villain. Putnam further suggests that reading Virgil's *Aeneid* with Seneca's tragedies reveals that Aeneas is a deeply flawed character who commits a violent human sacrifice at the end of the poem: "...Virgil ... would have us condemn his

hero's final deed as the action of someone deranged, driven by the fury to violate not only his father's injunction to behave with *clementia* but also a basic tenet of civilized behavior as already Homer would have known it" (254). Putnam thus views Aeneas as being an insane barbarian out of place in the world of Roman piety and virtue. For Putnam, "Virgil deliberately associates Aeneas not with reason but with the irrationality that permeates the epic" (19). Aeneas is by no means an exemplar, and, in Putnam's view, reading the *Aeneid* as a work meant to present *exempla* for the reader is out of place. Putnam is not alone but is part of a whole movement of contemporary scholarship, often called the "Harvard" or "pessimist" school, that seeks to revise the reading of the *Aeneid* as a pro-imperial work.

Another critic who has pessimistic tendencies, Richard Thomas has made an attempt to expose a tradition of misreading the *Aeneid* in *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*. In his work, Thomas explores the idea of Virgil as a radical poet who hides his anti-imperialism and hostility to Caesar Augustus behind a patriotic persona. Thomas holds that Aeneas has been misread by a long tradition of ideologues at the service of various dictators. In fact, according to Thomas, Virgil depicts characters such as Dido and Turnus as victims of the brutal and inhumane Aeneas who symbolizes the brutal and inhumane rule of Augustus. Thomas ultimately seeks to show that readings of Virgil as a supporter of Augustus have often led to bloodshed and tyranny in the real world. He even seeks to associate critics who hold Aeneas as hero as following in the footsteps of Nazis and Fascists. Thomas ends his book by stating, "It has been our theme that one particular point of view, that of Augustus and the successors of Augustus, necessarily suppresses the

point of view of the dispossessed. But in the end Virgil's poetry refuses to succumb to the needs of Augustus and those who follow his standard" (296). Throughout his book, Thomas makes it clear that the successors of Augustus are poets who perhaps deliberately misread Virgil in order to support tyrannical regimes from Spenser's Elizabeth to Jean de Segrais' Louis XIV to Dryden's Charles II. However, the *Augusti* of the twentieth century include those whose actions led to the deaths of millions of human beings: Adolph Hitler and Mussolini. Thomas thus seeks to make the connection between those who claim that Virgil was genuinely supportive of Augustus' regime as taking up the banner that was once carried by Joseph Goebbels. However, there are some critics who have attempted to bridge the gap between the imperialist and pessimistic readings of Virgil.

In his writings, the Italian classicist, Gian Biagio Conte has attempted to demonstrate that, while Virgil expresses a great deal of sympathy for the barbarian peoples in the *Aeneid*, Virgil nonetheless celebrates Augustus' regime. Conte explains, in *The Poetry of Pathos: Studies in Virgilian Epic*, that the traditional reading of the *Aeneid* held that "the established image of reality and of the national history covered over every other perspective of truth like a top layer" (33). If there was any remorse or hesitancy to support the Augustan regime on the part of Virgil, the Roman poet suppressed it. However, Conte suggests that "Virgil lets this deep dimension of denied events emerge to animate his text..." (33). What the pessimistic school of critics has found in Virgil's criticism of empire is part of a wider polyphony of voices in the poem. The narrative of the *Aeneid* is "complex and contradictory" and "dramatically articulated in a plurality of personal points of view" (33). There is

a discussion of the pros and cons of the Augustan regime in the *Aeneid*; however, Virgil ultimately writes an epic in support of Augustus. The supposed villains in the *Aeneid* are certainly sympathetic: “For Virgil ... war with Carthage was not born of a *difference*; when traced back to the time of its origins, the war was created by an excessive and tragic love between *equals*” (Conte, *Poetry of Pathos* 45). Virgil and his Aeneas are sympathetic toward Dido and the Carthaginians, but that does not mean that Virgil is anti-imperial or anti-Augustan. Conte is not alone in his attempt to bridge the imperial and pessimistic readings of Virgil.

In “Vergil and the Politics of War,” R. O. A. M Lyne also seems to take a moderate view, recognizing that Aeneas fails to follow Anchises’ plea for mercy. According to Lyne, although Aeneas is a noble hero, “he finds that in practice *vis temperata* is a chimaera (*vis* is indivisible), *inclementia* is often irresistible, and High Motives clash with high motives; nor is it always possible to keep one’s eye on the Highest. Vergil’s hero demonstrates the truth (we might say) of imperial ideals, what actually happens to them in practice” (203). Virgil is thus, according to Lyne (who is not the only critic to make this point), a pragmatist who moderates his virtuous ideals with a hardheaded practicality. Other critics seem to suggest that Virgil was only a reluctant admirer of Augustus. C. M. Bowra writes of Virgil as a man who attempted to conform to epic mode and celebrate the achievements of Rome and her ancestors: “We cannot question that he had an honest admiration for the character and performances of Augustus, and that he tried to give a hint of them in his character of Aeneas. His mind acquiesced in the necessity of the Augustan régime, but his imagination was never fully touched by it” (21). Virgil thus is first

and foremost an artist who accommodated himself to Augustus' regime. Bowra is not alone in this reading. Examining the effect of the works of art that Virgil depicts in the *Aeneid*, Shadi Bartsch writes that Virgil shows that

art can never work, solely for the purposes of the ideology that produces it, as the very text of the *Aeneid* makes clear. There is always leeway for individual interpretation, and always leeway for a reading that will strengthen and foster the beliefs of one particular individual rather than the state: that will, in other words, foster a new kind of subjectivity rather than force an existing one. (339)

Basically, Virgil is too complex of a poet simply to adhere to the model of propaganda, even if one of the voices of the *Aeneid* is unquestionably propagandistic. In addition to the political conflict identified in the *Aeneid*, other critics see a divide in Virgil between the pastoral and epic genres.

Like other moderate readers of Virgil, Susanne Wofford, in her *The Choice of Achilles: The Ideology of Figure in the Epic*, attempts to reconcile the divide between pessimists and imperialists by suggesting that Virgil contains two narrations in his epic: the Augustan and a subversive voice which speaks through the landscape of Italy:

The politics and poetics of land in the *Aeneid* indicate the degree to which the poetry itself is implicated in the plot of conquest. Virgil gives the land a voice that speaks in favor of Aeneas' epic project, and characterizes the landscape of Italy in idealizing pastoral tropes, but the tie of idyllic landscape description and personification to poetic voice hints that some act of violence necessarily lies behind such characterization. (191)

This tension, Wofford demonstrates, can be found as far back as the *Georgics*: "The distinction between the happiness of the simple rural woodsman and that of the sophisticated city dweller and public leader is aligned by implication with the distinction between the peace enjoyed by the writer of a poem about causes (a

philosophical poem) or about woodland gods and the struggle undertaken by the writer of epic” (104). According to Wofford, Virgil is drawn to the tranquility of the pastoral life from one direction and toward the imperial mode of the epic from the other. Virgil’s voices in the *Aeneid* are multifarious and seemingly conflicting. As J.D. Reed writes, “...Virgil’s narrative is a tissure of metaphors, a horde of personae—including the narrating persona—vying for authority, inflecting one another’s meanings in unexpected and unpredictable ways” (29). Perhaps, as Conte notes, there is one dominant imperial voice, but there are further voices to which one must listen. In the end, a contemporary reading of Virgil must take into account the tremendous influence of the pessimistic school and the valid and genuine points that they make. Any reading of Virgil that suggests that the poet is a pure and simple propagandist who creates a work that recklessly champions imperialism is ultimately flawed. On the other hand, any work that seeks to find the real, subversive Virgil is equally flawed. The *Aeneid* is a work full of pathos and sympathy for the other. Aeneas, further, is a flawed character. Nonetheless, Virgil presents him as an imperfect *exemplum* that is part of a wider *exemplum* of empire.

Virgil’s Hero

Aeneas, the Trojan son of Anchises and Venus, is Virgil’s principal *exemplum* in the *Aeneid*. Although critics have traditionally seen Aeneas as the model Roman, one of the most disputed questions in recent Virgilian criticism is the issue of Aeneas’ identity. Vassiliki Panoussi writes that one “of the major issues explored in the poem is precisely the formation of a Roman identity and more specifically the formation of a new identity for Aeneas himself: the hero only gradually—and at

times even reluctantly—becomes aware of his task and is able to assume his new role as a Roman” (97). Aeneas’ stance with one foot in the east in Troy and one foot in the west in Rome makes his identity at times vague. It is clear, however, that Virgil seeks to modify the model given by Homer in his Achilles and Odysseus by presenting Aeneas as the hero of the empire. Additionally, Virgil presents a number of virtues that Aeneas embodies, which clash with his seeming vices. Aeneas is a complicated hero and has a rich interior life.⁷⁴ In addition to his ambiguous ethnic identity and his status as a new type of hero, Aeneas’ moral qualities are debatable. Throughout the poem, Aeneas vacillates between almost Stoic self-control and brutal, irrational behavior. However, one of the established marks of Aeneas is his *pietas*, which he manifests in his reverence for his parent Anchises as well as toward the gods. Aeneas, despite his flaws and mistakes, is an *exemplum*, which Virgil upholds for other Romans.

Aeneas is a character that transforms the ancient hero but, at the same time, retains some of the militant warrior qualities of Hercules, Odysseus, or Achilles.⁷⁵ Like the Greek heroes, Aeneas often seeks individual glory, and he prizes honor and fame. Despite his role as the father of Rome, Aeneas praises individual fame in Book

⁷⁴ This is so despite Bowra’s statement, “It is quite true that Aeneas never appears to us with the same thrill as Dido or Turnus or even Mezentius, that he is so burdened with morality that he loses his individual lineaments and becomes too often a mass of disparate ideals” (8).

⁷⁵ Galinsky, for example, points to the death of Turnus as a scene that demonstrates Aeneas’s “[h]umane sensibility and concern” as opposed to the brutality of Achilles when dealing with Hector (341). Also, see Anderson’s “Vergil’s Second *Iliad*” for a discussion of Aeneas as a hero who atones, “in the course of this second *Iliad*, for the guilt of the Trojans in Homer’s poem...” (30). See Van Nortwick for a discussion of how Virgil uses Achilles as a model for both Aeneas and Turnus even if there are many differences between the Greek warrior and the Trojan and Rutulian.

1 upon seeing his friends and family immortalized in art as far away as the murals on the walls of Juno's temple in Carthage. He exclaims, *en Priamus! sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi, / sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt. / solve metus; feret haec aliquam tibi fama salutem* (*Aeneid* 1.461-463, "Look Priam! Here also are the prizes of praise. These here are tears for things, and mortal concerns touch the mind. Dispel your fears! This fame will bring some salvation for you. "). Aeneas finds consolation in the fame that has resounded throughout the world. Aeneas, at least early in the poem, sees fame as one of the rewards of battle. During his narration of the fall of Troy to Dido in Book 2, he presents an example of lust for fame in war. When seeing his city in flames, Aeneas expresses a lust for battle and desires to die beautifully in war:

arma amens capio; nec sat rationis in armis,
sed glomerare manum bello et concurrere in arcem
cum sociis ardent animi; furor iraque mentem
praecipitant, pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis. (*Aeneid* 2.314-317).

Crazed, I search for weapons, but there is not reason for arms. Yet, my spirits burn to gather a band for war and to rush with my friends to the citadel. Anger and rage move my mind, and it seems beautiful to me to die armed.

Distraught over the fall of his city, Aeneas seeks fame and glory in war as consolation; he does not look to a future empire at this point. Elsewhere in the story of the fall of Troy in Book 2, Aeneas narrates how he offered his men the choice of fighting to the bitter end: *iuvenes, fortissima frustra / pectora, si vobis audentem extrema cupido / certa sequi, quae sit rebus fortuna videtis* (*Aen.* 2.348-350, "Youth, vainly valiant, if you desire to follow me to the end, you see what your fortune is"). Aeneas offers his men the choice of fighting with him in a lost cause. He explains that the gods have abandoned them, and they have nothing to lose: *excessere omnes*

adytis arisque relicitis / di, quibus imperium hoc steterat; succurritis urbi / incensae moriamur et in media arma ruamus (Aen. 2.351-353, "All the gods on whom this empire had rested have left, abandoning the temples and altars. The city that you run to succor is burning. Let us run out and die in the midst of battle"). Since the gods have abandoned the altars of Troy, the Trojans should rush to battle and fight to the last man. Here, Aeneas seems to be seeking glory and honor for himself and his men; he has no concern to build something new or even continue living for that matter. Virgil moderates this reckless desire for battle in quieter parts of the poem, but unleashes it in Aeneas again in the later wars in Italy as Aeneas seeks vengeance for his friend Pallas' death. Desire for individual glory is not the only mark of a Homeric hero that Aeneas possesses. Virgil also adds the quality of beauty to Aeneas, presenting him as a lovely work of art.

In addition to being a hero who longs for glory, Aeneas is very beautiful. One of the most pronounced manifestations of Aeneas' beauty is found in his revelation to Dido. In Book 1, the sun shines down upon him, and his glory is revealed to Dido: *restitit Aeneas claraque in luce refulsit* (Aen. 1.588, "Aeneas stood shining in the clear light"). He further has the appearance of a god that radiates from his face and shoulders: *os umerosque deo similis* (Aen. 1.589, "his face and shoulders were like a god's"). Virgil continues to describe him as having lovely hair, a good complexion, and eyes with a radiant luster. Aeneas is a splendid work of art like a carved or worked piece of ivory, silver, or gold set in marble: *quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo / argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro* (Aen. 1.592-593 "just as when hands add ornament to ivory or when silver or Parian rock is encircled by

yellow gold”). Before Aeneas and Dido celebrate their affair in the cave that the goddesses Juno and Venus had orchestrated, Virgil describes Aeneas as being like the god Apollo, for such beauty shines forth from his face: *tantum egregio decus enitet ore* (*Aen.* 4.150, “such great beauty shines from his face”). Aeneas is not only beautiful; he also has the demeanor of a warrior. Dido recognizes that Aeneas is a man who is dignified, courageous, and skilled in battle, telling her sister that Aeneas is of divine origin, *genus esse deorum* (*Aen.* 4.12). Aeneas’ martial prowess, physical presence, and resemblance to the gods are all recognizable by others. However, Aeneas is not simply an Adonis character that serves as the site of ekphrasis; he is the father of his people, and Virgil transforms him into a character that helps to build a civilization.

As he learns of the prophecies that the gods have given to him throughout the poem, Aeneas becomes increasingly a civilizing figure. Aeneas literally is a founder of cities. As Kimberly Bell notes, Aeneas is one of many heroes in the poem who founds cities (14).⁷⁶ Aeneas founds the city of Pergamum and begins the process of ruling and guiding the city. The young people are getting married and farming (*Aen.* 3.136), and Aeneas says that he was forming laws and grants homes: *iura domosque dabam* (*Aen.* 3.137, “I was handing out laws and homes”). Aeneas is forced to leave Pergamum, but the foundation scene demonstrates the hero’s ability as a civilizer and lawgiver. He ultimately will found the city of Lavinium from which the Roman

⁷⁶ Bell perhaps places too much emphasis on Aeneas’ role as founder of cities: “With the exception of his heroic action on the night of Troy’s downfall and his battle against Turnus at the end of Book Twelve, Aeneas’ actions lie in his founding of cities” (20).

people spring and thus becomes one of the fathers of what will become the Roman Empire. Aeneas' role as founder is tied to his position as the father of his people.

Virgil refers to Aeneas as "father", *pater*, throughout the poem to describe Aeneas' relationship to his people and not merely to Iulus, his son by Creusa. In Book 1, Ilioneus, one of Aeneas' companions, refers to Aeneas as the great father of the Trojans, *pater optime Teucrum* (555). Virgil emphasizes Aeneas' role as *pater* in Book 9 when he shows that Aeneas has assigned Mnestheus and Serestus, two of his Trojan companions, roles as leaders if he should die in the wars in Italy: *instat Mnestheus acerque Serestus, / quos pater Aeneas, si quando adversa vocarent, / rectores iuvenum et rerum dedit esse magistros* (*Aen.* 9.171-173, "Mnestheus urges on as does judicious Serestus, those whom father Aeneas, if at any time misfortunes would call him away, gave as leaders of the youth and rulers of the peoples' matters). As Moseley demonstrates, Virgil's use of the appellation *pater* connects Aeneas to "Jove *pater omnipotens*, the fatherly director and ruler of the universe" (391). Virgil presents Aeneas as the father of his people, who, like Jove, rules over that which is entrusted to him.⁷⁷ Aeneas, however, is not just a great warrior and civilizer; he is best known for his loyalty to his family and the gods.

⁷⁷ The term *pater patriae* was often used for Augustus himself as well as other important male Romans. See Favro, Frank, Galinsky's *Augustan Culture*, MacMullen Ramage, Severy, and Zanker among others for treatment of Augustus as the father of the Roman people. Moseley admits that Augustus was not officially named *pater patriae* until later, but he "must have been hailed as such very early in his reign" (399). Moseley points to Horace's Ode 1.2.50 as an example of poets calling Octavian "father."

Aeneas is primarily known for his *pietas*, which is loyalty to one's family, country, and gods.⁷⁸ As critics such as Nicholas Moseley have suggested, the *Aeneid* is a poem about fathers and sons—especially the idea of Aeneas as the father of the Roman people (391). Moseley further notes that ‘in the course of the twelve books of the *Aeneid* Vergil applies to Aeneas the epithet *pius* fifteen times in the narrative, has the other characters refer to him as *pius*, *pietate insignis* or some equivalent expression eight times, and finally has Aeneas speak of himself twice as *pius*” (387). Kimberly Bell also emphasizes Aeneas’ duty to his *patria* and notes that Virgil places “greater emphasis on his hero’s fulfillment of his public destiny and downplaying his personal glory” (14). From the beginning of the poem, Virgil identifies Aeneas with *pietas*. It is Aeneas’ duty to build a city and bring his gods to Latium, *inferretque deos Latio* (*Aen.* 1.6). Virgil further refers to Aeneas as a man known for his piety, *insignem pietate virum* (*Aen.* 1.10). Aeneas frequently identifies himself as being pious as when he tells his mother that he is pious Aeneas who has brought his household gods with him: *Sum pius Aeneas, raptos qui ex hoste Penates / classe veho mecum, fama super aethera notus* (*Aen.* 1.378-379, “I am pius Aeneas. I carry my household gods, snatched from the enemy, with me in my fleet. My fame is known beyond the heavens”). This boastful presentation of the self is a point essential to the identification of classical heroes.⁷⁹ Ilioneus refers to Aeneas as king than whom none or more just, pious or skilled in war: *Rex erat Aeneas nobis, quo iustior alter /*

⁷⁸ There is some debate, however, over Aeneas’s piety. See Parry for a discussion of an impious Aeneas who abandons Dido (77). It is odd that many early Christian early Christian fathers dismissed Aeneas as an immoral man as in the case of Tertullian and as a cold Stoic in the mind of Augustine (Bowra 10-11).

⁷⁹ “...Vergil is certainly following the Homeric custom of heroes to whom it was as disgraceful to be silent about truths as it was to tell a lie” (Moseley 388).

nec pietate fuit nec bello maior et armis (Aen. 1.545-546). Others recognize Aeneas' piety, and the ghost of a famous Trojan hero has given him the task of protecting the household gods. In Book 2, Hector announces that it will be Aeneas' duty to carry the household gods of Troy: *sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia Penates: hos cape fatorum comites, his moenia quaere, / magna pererrato statues quae denique ponto* (Aen. 2.293-395 "Troy commends to you her holy things and the household gods. Take these to be comrades of your fate. Seek out great walls for them, which you will establish after having crossed the great sea"). Many other characters recognize Aeneas' piety. Helenus calls Aeneas famous in piety and power, *pietate insignis et armis* (Aen. 6.403) in Book 6 as does the Sibyl, saying that his descendent Silvius will be like Aeneas, having no equal in *pietas* or martial skill, *pariter pietate vel armis / egregius* (Aen. 6.769-770). Repeatedly, throughout the *Aeneid*, various characters recognize and identify Aeneas' *pietas* and nobility ("Exemplarity in Roman Culture" 5). One of the key scenes of Aeneas' piety toward his family is found in his narration of the fall of Troy to Dido.

Aeneas is sure to protect Anchises and Ascanius as well as the household gods when he is fleeing from Troy, which the Greeks and the gods are in the process of destroying. In this famous scene, Aeneas calls out for his father to grab him by the neck as the city burns: *ergo age, care pater, cervici imponere nostrae; / ipse subibo umeris nec me labor iste gravabit* (Aen. 2.707-708, "Therefore, dear father, come and grab hold of my neck, and I will carry you on my shoulders; this labor will not be too hard for me"). Aeneas takes his father on his back and grabs little Iulus by the hand with his wife trailing behind, as Aeneas tells Dido (2.723-725). One of the themes of

the poem is about passing a tradition from father to son, and Virgil emphasizes cherishing tradition and transmitting it to the youth who will build upon it, and this handing on is done from father to son. Anchises himself is a model father for Aeneas who will pass his authority down to Iulus, who will continue the teaching all the way down to Octavian himself. In Book 3, Virgil provides a key to understanding this method of tradition and example.

Andromache, the widow of Hector and current wife of Helenus, notes that it is the role of Anchises and Aeneas to teach Iulus how to be a man according to the ancient ways; she asks Aeneas, *ecquid in antiquam virtutem animosque virilis / et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitat Hector?* (*Aen.* 3.341-343, "Do father Aeneas and uncle Hector excite him to antique virtue and virile spirits?"). Andromache gives the idea of emulation that is one of the keys to understanding Virgil's project in the *Aeneid*. Hector and Aeneas are the older examples for Iulus and thus the model for him. Hector is dead by this point, so Andromache must be asking if Aeneas tells stories with Hector as the *exemplum*. Moreover, Aeneas and Hector are the forefathers, allegedly, of Augustus and thus are models for him and the other Roman people. Aeneas makes a similar point to Iulus in Book 12: *disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem...* (*Aen.* 12.435, Son, learn virtue from me and what real toil is). Aeneas is not perfect, but he frequently serves as a model of virtue for other characters as well as the reader. Aeneas' *pietas* is further manifested in his reverence for the gods.

As the *Aeneid* progresses, Aeneas puts his own desires behind the will of the gods. In Book 4, *pius Aeneas* (*Aen.* 4.393) wants to comfort Dido but returns to his

ships out of obedience to the gods: *iussa tamen divum exsequitur classemque revisit* (*Aen.* 4.396). Among many other instances of devotion to the gods, Aeneas prays to Jove to save his ships from the fire in Book 6 and sacrifices to Juno the white pig in Book 8. Virgil makes it clear that the Romans will later inherit this piety from Aeneas. In Book 12, Jove refers to the Romans, Aeneas' descendants as pious even in their worship of Juno: *hinc genus Ausonio mixtum quod sanguine surget, / supra homines, supra ire deos pietate videbis / nec gens ulla tuos aeque celebrabit honores* (*Aen.* 12.838-840, "Hence, you will see this race, mixed with Ausonian blood, arise above all men, above all gods in piety, and no race will celebrate your honors more"). Aeneas is pious and reverential toward to the gods. He also expresses a great deal of tenderness and mercy at times.

Aeneas, a very complicated and very human *exemplum*, has a rich interior life and expresses sorrow and pity throughout the *Aeneid*. Some critics see Aeneas as being part of Virgil's deeply pathetic outlook, that is, the *Aeneid* is a poem brimming with emotion.⁸⁰ There are a number of points in the poem at which Aeneas expresses deep emotion. When he encounters his mother, Venus, in disguise on the shores of Libya, Aeneas is overwhelmed with emotion as he narrates his story of his journey from Troy (*Aen.* 1.370-384). Aeneas also cries and sighs upon seeing the depiction of the Trojan War in Juno's temple (*Aen.* 1.453-493). In Book 3, he also sheds tears, *lacrimis ... obortis* (*Aen.* 3.492), when he and the Trojans depart from

⁸⁰ Gian Biagio Conte writes, "Virgil, as a 'pathetic' poet of feeling, *reflects* on the impression which things make upon him: this gesture of reflection is the focus that he himself experiences and conveys to the reader" (*Poetry of Pathos* 30-31). Yasmin Syed even suggests that, on one level, the *Aeneid* is a book designed to inspire pity and catharsis in Virgil's readers (50).

the prophet Helenus and Andromache's settlement at Buthrotum. One of Aeneas' most famous lamentations then follows in which he seems to despair of reaching Italy, telling Andromache and Helenus:

vivite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta
iam sua; nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur.
vobis parta quies; nullum maris aequor arandum,
arva neque Ausoniae semper cedentia retro
quaerenda. (*Aen.* 3.493-497)

Live well, you whose fortune has been achieved; we are still called by fate from one thing to another. Your rest is won; you will not need to plow the broad fields of the sea; you do not have to follow the ever-retreating fields of Ausonia.

Here, Aeneas seems to deplore his lot bitterly and expresses his jealousy for those Trojans who have settled. Aeneas experiences a similar sadness after the Trojan women, having been encouraged by a disguised Iris, who was sent by Juno, burn their ships in despair in Book 5:

At pater Aeneas, casu concussus acerbo,
nunc huc ingentis, nunc illuc pectore curas
mutabat versans, Siculisne resideret arvis,
oblitus fatorum, Italasne capesseret oras. (*Aen.* 5.700-704)

But father Aeneas, struck by bitter calamities, shifted about, now here now there, thinking over cares in his heart, forgetful of his fates, wondering whether he would reside in Sicilian fields or capture Italian shores.

Virgil makes it clear that Aeneas is not completely devoid of emotion; his emotions are not simply placed as a pathetic spectacle for the reader; they reveal the richness of Aeneas' character and show his moral complexity, making Aeneas a dynamic *exemplum*. One must, of course, read these passages in light of Aeneas' later violence in the Italian wars. Nonetheless, the ferocious warrior often demonstrates a tender heart as one can see through his many acts of mercy.

There are also a number of points at which Aeneas shows mercy. In Book 3, he and his crew find a Greek trapped on the Cyclops' island. This man is emaciated and approaches the Trojans in humility (*Aen.* 3.590-592). The man, whose name is Achaemenides, presents himself to Aeneas and his crew. The Trojans have encountered a Greek in such a position before, so it would make sense for the Trojans to spurn Achaemenides.⁸¹ Sinon, the Greek who led the horse into Troy, also appeared as an abandoned straggler. Indeed, there are many parallels between Sinon and Achaemenides. Like Sinon, Achaemenides has a connection with the vile architect of the horse, Ulysses; he is a *comes infelicis Ulixi* (*Aen.* 3.613 "a friend of unlucky Ulysses"). Nonetheless, Aeneas and his men welcome the man and rescue him from the Cyclops. Anchises, without a second thought, *haud multa moratus* (*Aen.* 3.610), embraces Achaemenides and welcomes him. Additionally, in Book 8, Aeneas expresses some sympathy for the Italians whom he will encounter in war:

heu quanta miseris caedes Laurentibus instant!
 quas poenas mihi, Turne, dabis! quam multa sub undas
 scuta virum galeasque et fortia corpora volves,
 Thybri pater! poscant acies et foedera rumpant. (*Aen.* 8.537-540)

Oh what great havoc will befall you miserable Laurentines! What a price will you pay to me Turnus! Father Tiber, how many shields and swords and strong bodies will you turn beneath your waves! Let them demand battle and break the treaty.

Aeneas does call for battle, but additionally expresses sympathy for the dead Italians. Lyne suggests that here Aeneas may "well have sympathy for those who are

⁸¹ The status of the Greeks in the poem can be nebulous. They are often wicked and guileful, but some of them are noble. Greeks, such as Evander, Salius, and Patron, however, will become part of Rome in the poem as J.D. Reed notes (4).

to be his people” (192). Aeneas continues a similar generosity and kindness in Book 11 when a group of Italians asks permission to bury their dead. Aeneas responds:

quaenam vos tanto fortuna indigna, Latini,
implicuit bello, qui nos fugiatis amicos?
pacem me exanimis et Martis sorte peremptis
oratis? equidem et vivis concedere vellem.
nec veni, nisi fata locum sedemque dedissent,
nec bellum cum gente gero: rex nostra reliquit
hospitia et Turni potius se credidit armis.
aequius huic Turnum fuerat se opponere morti.
si bellum finire manu, si pellere Teucros
apparat, his mecum decuit concurrere telis;
vixet, cui vitam deus aut sua dextra dedisset.
nunc ite et miseris supponite civibus ignem. (*Aen.* 11.108-121)

What wicked fate has got you involved with such a terrible war that you flee from us who are your friends? Do you ask me for peace for those killed by the lot of Mars? Indeed, I would give it to the living too. I would not have come here, but Fate had ordained a place and home here, nor would I have waged war with your people. It is the king who revoked the alliance and trusted in Turnus’ weapons. It would have been better for Turnus to die. If he wants to end the war with his hand, and if he wants to drive out the Teucrians, he should have fought with me with spears. Let one of us live to whom God or his own right hand had given life. Now, go and burn your unfortunate comrades.

Aeneas shows a number of characteristics here. First of all, he demonstrates his kindness and sympathy for the Latins. Secondly, he states that he does not come to Italy on his own initiative; Fate has driven him here. Finally, he places the blame for the war on Turnus and Latinus. Aeneas will even express sympathy for those he kills. Later, in Book 10, Aeneas looks on the dying Lausus, the son of the violent Etruscan leader Mezentius, with pity and even refuses to take Lausus’ arms (*Aen.* 10.819-830). Virgil thus seems to present Aeneas as a model; he is someone of high moral character who frequently spares his enemies and exercises mercy toward

them. In addition to his rich interior life, Aeneas often exerts self-control when it is needed to calm his men.

For much of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas exerts self-control, perhaps the essential quality of a classical *exemplum*,⁸² which is based upon the self-control exhibited by many of the gods. Virgil makes a much commented on and revealing simile about Neptune calming the waters that Juno had Aeolus stir up:

ac veluti magno in populo cum saepe coorta est
seditio saevitque animis ignobile volgus;
iamque faces et saxa volant, (furor arma ministrant),
tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
conspexere, silent arrectisque auribus adstant;
ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet:
sic cunctus pelagi cecidit fragor... (*Aen.* 1.148-154)

And just as when sedition often springs up in a great people, and the vile masses rage, and brands and rocks fly (anger providing weapons), but if a man strong in piety and duty is seen by them, they quiet down and stand with erect ears, and the great man governs their souls with words and softens their spirits; thus did the great crash of the sea subside.

This passage is extremely dense and rich and reveals one of the central ideas of the *Aeneid*. First of all, it is important to note that it was Juno who inspired Aeolus to stir up the waters. Aeolus has made the waters like a crazy violent mob or a republic that has come unraveled and is embroiled in civil war. On the other hand, Virgil refers to Neptune as a father who is calm and reasonable. He is like the great *princeps* who has grabbed the reigns of the wild horses of moral vice and civil discord and tamed them.⁸³ On a simpler level, storms, chaotic emotions, and a

⁸² Cicero praises, in *De Officiis* 1.15, temperance, *temperantia*, one of what will be called the cardinal virtues, which has its precedents in Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics.

⁸³ The reading of icons of Augustus in the poem is ancient. Bell writes, "...Virgil draws parallels between the actions of his hero in found and a nation and the *princeps* Augustus, who rebuilt Rome following generations of civil unrest" (20).

rampaging populace are bad things; tranquil nature, self control, and an ordered, peaceful populace are good things. Moreover, as Shadi Bartsch demonstrates, the great man in this scene accomplishes the calming of the crowd through oratory or art (323).⁸⁴ This ruler-orator serves as an *exemplum* for Aeneas himself who often demonstrates self-control.

Aeneas exercises calm and courage often. This self-control, as some critics have noted, is part of the *Aeneid*'s bigger picture of the destiny of Rome. Parry points to the transition from the introduction of "arms and the man" to the foundation of Rome in 1.1-7 as Virgil's emphasis on the superiority of Rome's destiny to the life of one man: "Aeneas from the start is absorbed in his own destiny, a destiny which does not ultimately relate to him, but to something later, larger, and less personal: the high walls of Rome, stony, and grand, the Augustan Empire" (72). R. O. A. M. Lyne sees Aeneas as being a hero who follows "a duty imposed upon him by fate" and who "clearly bears a resemblance to an aspiring Stoic in a world of Stoic truths" (1991). The presentation of Aeneas as a Stoic is debated, but it is clear that he must learn to put his personal desires aside for the sake of Rome.⁸⁵ Virgil provides numerous examples of Aeneas' self-control. After the shipwreck on the shores of Libya in Book 1, Aeneas scouts out the area and then brings calm to his men, softening their hearts: *vina bonus quae deinde cadis onerarat Acestes / litore*

Trinacrio dederatque abeuntibus heros / dividit et dictis maerentia pectora mulcet

⁸⁴ Helduk relates this scene to Jove's calming of Venus and Juno in Book 10. For a reading of this scene and its effect on a tradition of visual arts, see Brower.

⁸⁵ See Galinsky's "The Anger of Aeneas" for a discussion of the influence of Aristotle and Plato's ideas of anger and self-control on Aeneas vis a vis Stoicism. See also Putnam's *Virgil's Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence* for a criticism of Aeneas from a Stoic perspective.

(*Aen.* 1.195-197, “Aeneas then gives out wine from the jars that good Acestes had loaded on the Trinacrian shore, which that hero had given them upon the Trojans’ departure, and, by his words, Aeneas softens his people’s grieving hearts”). Aeneas explains that everything is going to be all right because his people have made it through similar problems before, and Fate is on their side. Virgil adds to the complexity of Aeneas, his *exemplum*, for Aeneas is genuinely upset, but he merely gives the appearance of calm to help his men: *Talia voce refert, curisque ingentibus aeger / spem voltu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem* (*Aen.* 1.208-09, “He spoke, and, although sick with great cares, put on the appearance of hope on his face and pressed his great sadness deep into his heart”). Like a good leader, Aeneas controls his emotions and gives his people hope even if he himself is afraid. Aeneas further exhibits self-control and urges his men to do so in Book 12. He tells the troops to hold off from war, announcing, *o cohibete iras!* (*Aen.* 12.314 “Hold back your anger!”). Aeneas plans to fight Turnus himself and prevent further war. However, in the end, the Trojans and Italians resume the fighting, for in war, Aeneas must let loose of his self-control and exercise acts of violence to defeat his enemy. This issue of Aeneas’ self-control is one of the most debated issues in Virgilian criticism.

Aeneas usually, but not always, follows the idea of self-control. This point has been an issue of some contention in Virgil scholarship over the past century. Drawing from the theories of anger in philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle as well as their followers in Rome such as Cicero, Karl Galinsky makes the case in his “The Anger of Aeneas” that Virgil’s Roman audience would see Aeneas’ anger as just:

To the contemporary Greek and Roman ... the picture of the avenging Aeneas, who is stirred to anger and meting out punishment in proportion to the

crime, would have looked anything but odd or out of place. He is not asked to make a determination of whether Turnus has committed a crime or not; that record is clear. The question is how to punish. To see Aeneas do so without the emotion of anger would have been repugnant to any ancient audience except for the Stoics. As so much of the *Aeneid*, the final scene is rooted not in abstract ideology, but in real life, practice and custom. (327)

Despite Galinsky's point, Aeneas' violence is pronounced throughout the poem. In his book on the poem, *Madness Unchained*, Lee Fratantuono sees Aeneas' furor as a form of madness that fulfills Helenus' injunction to worship Juno: "...Aeneas takes the admonition quite seriously: he worships Juno by taking on the weight of her furious madness" (XVII). Virgil certainly presents many examples of Aeneas' violence throughout the *Aeneid*. In Book 10, Aeneas violently kills Tarquitus who begs for mercy to no avail (*Aen.* 10.552-556). Aeneas even gloats over him, telling him that no mother will bury him in the ground; rather, Tarquitus will be food for the birds or fish (*Aen.* 10.557-560). Virgil also uses the simile of Aegaeon, one of the terrible hundred-handers, for Aeneas when he goes upon a rampage in war (*Aen.* 10.565-570). Virgil even goes so far as to depict Aeneas as having a violent blood-lust. When Aeneas kills Mezentius, Virgil notes that the sight of the Tuscan's blood, *viso Tyrrheni sanguine*, pleases Aeneas (*Aen.* 10.787). One of the most pronounced scenes of Aeneas' brutality is found in his immolation of the sons of Sulmo and Ufens on Pallas' pyre (*Aen.* 10.517-519).⁸⁶ There is a further point at which, in Book 12, Aeneas seems to go into a psychotic rampage upon seeing Turnus' chariot and remembering the broken treaty: *iam tandem invadit medios et Marte secundo / terribilis saevam nullo discrimine caedam / suscitatur irarumque omnis effundit*

⁸⁶ According to Suetonius, Augustus himself killed three hundred prisoners on the altar of Julius (2.15).

habenas (*Aen.* 12.497-499, “He now finally rushes out into the midst of war and terribly awakens horrible carnage without discrimination and lets go the reigns of anger). Aeneas’ violence seems to be a return to his earlier days in Troy of seeking to revenge the destruction of his city on Helen. Losing a dear friend, Pallas, has reignited the earlier, more violent Aeneas. The violence is greater in the latter half of the poem that Virgil even goes so far as to ask if it was Jove’s will that these peoples would clash so violently only to be later reconciled:

quis mihi nunc tot acerba deus, quis carmine caedes
diversas obitumque ducum, quos aequore toto
inque vicem nunc Turnus agit, nunc Troius heros,
expediat? tanton placuit concurrere motu,
Iuppiter, aeterna gentis in pace futuras? (*Aen.* 12.500-504).

What god could now tell me such bitter things? Who in song could tell of so much carnage and the death of leaders, whom across the entire field of battle, now Turnus now the Trojan hero drives and dispatches? Did it please you Jove that, with so great a motion, nations should fight that later would be joined in eternal peace?

Virgil had asked a similar question earlier in Book 1.11 regarding the anger of Juno. Virgil occasionally questions how the gods can themselves be so violent or tolerate such anger. This is not to suggest that Virgil’s epic is a theodicy, a justification of gods’ ways to men and women; however, Virgil does question the place of violence in a world ruled by a just god.⁸⁷ Aeneas, Virgil’s *exemplum*, is himself capable of incredible anger and violence. One of the most pronounced examples is the death of Turnus at the end of the poem.

⁸⁷ The theodicy, or justification of the ways of the gods to men, is an issue that has been the topic of much criticism. See Alvis, Baily, Bacon, Coleman, Goins, Perkell’s “The Lament of Juturna: Pathos and Interpretation in the *Aeneid*”, Smolenaars, Wilkinson, and Woodworth among others.

The final and most discussed scene of Aeneas' anger is his killing of Turnus.⁸⁸ This scene is, for Galinsky, "a microcosm of the epic in that it is complex and has multiple dimensions" (323). Some critics take a sympathetic view of Turnus in the scene. Adam Parry perceives the last books of the poem as containing a vision of Turnus as being "the embodiment of a simple valor and love of honor which cannot survive the complex forces of civilization" (68). There is much to be said for this view even though it does not necessarily suggest what many pessimistic Virgilians think it suggests: that Aeneas is a villain and his descendent Augustus is a villain. It is important to take a look at the passage in order to gain a sober reading of it.

Aeneas is angry with Turnus, and his killing of Turnus is not the result of a rational decision. Virgil uses a number of phrases that connect Aeneas with other savage or raging characters in the poem such as Juno. On the other hand, as Peter Knox notes, many characters in the poem are called angry (227-230). The Furies, Allecto, Circe, Mars, and Dis are savage, but so too are Minerva and Jove as well as even the Trojan Hector. Minerva is *saevaeque ... Tritonidis* in 2.226 and *Pallas ... saeva* in 2.615-616. Virgil refers to Jove as savage, *saevique*, in 12.849, and, finally, Hector is *saevus* at 1.99. Thus, both heroes and villains are capable of anger and savagery. Furthermore, anger is not necessarily a bad thing in the *Aeneid*; Aeneas is justly angry when he finds the city in ruins in Book 2.314-317. Aeneas further expresses what he sees as a just anger to avenge the death of Priam and the fall of Troy later in Book 2: *exarsere ignes animo; subit ira cadentem / ulcisci patriam et*

⁸⁸ For the view that the Turnus episode reveals Aeneas's villainy or, at least, moral complexity, see Michael Grant's *Virgil's Aeneid* and Richard Thomas's *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*.

sceleratas sumere poenas (*Aen.* 2.575-576, “Fires kindled in my heart, and anger uprose to avenge my fallen fatherland and seek revenge”). Aeneas is overwhelmed with anger, but, in his mind, his anger here is just: it is a righteous desire to avenge his dying country.⁸⁹ Aeneas further revels in the thought of killing Helen even if it may be dishonorable; it is, regardless, just:

namque etsi nullum memorabile nomen
feminea in poena est nec habet victoria laudem
extinxisse nefas tamen et sumpsisse merentis
laudabor poenas, animumque explesse iuvabit
ultricies flammae et cineres satiasse meorum. (*Aen.* 2.583-587)

Truly, even if there is no memorable renown for punishing a woman, and such a victory would not deserve praise, nevertheless, I will be praised for getting rid of that wicked thing, and it will be helpful for me to fill my soul with avenging fires and to have satisfied my people’s ashes.

Aeneas’ bloodlust here seems just, for he is avenging what is due, in piety, for the death of his kinsfolk.⁹⁰ His mother, however, disagrees. Appearing to her son, Venus does then chastise Aeneas for his impetuosity. She asks him what the source of all of his anger is: *nate, quis indomitas tantus dolor excitat iras? / quid furis?* (*Aen.* 2.594-596 “Son, what sorrow excites such great anger in you? Why do you rage?”). She further reminds him of his duties to his father and his people. Moreover, Venus explains that it is the will of the gods that causes the fall of Troy not the adultery of Paris and Helen (*Aen.* 2.602-603). Venus provides a key to the poem: it is the will of the gods that drives the action of the poem; humans only have some effect on what happens. It is thus unclear to what degree Aeneas is justified in his anger over Troy.

⁸⁹ Bowra writes that Aeneas’s words would “condemn him before any tribunal of Roman moralists...” (13), but Aeneas is not fighting for individual glory but that of his country.

⁹⁰ The status of this passage as being written by Virgil is open to contention. See Estevez and Fairclough.

Did he make a mistake in seeking to avenge the city? From the divine view, perhaps, but he lacked the knowledge of the reason for the fall of Troy or the will of the gods, so, from Aeneas' view, revenge seems reasonable. Aeneas is thus not an unhinged barbarian; he has a rationale for his violence; moreover, many other characters in the poem exhibit wrath. Consequently, the death of Turnus is not necessarily an example of Aeneas' barbarism.

Aeneas' violence against Turnus thus must be read in light of these earlier passages; Aeneas is exacting a just punishment in revenge of his friend's death, and only the death of Turnus can bring peace to Italy, for Turnus has determined to fight to the bitter end. Moreover, as Anderson notes, the intensity of Aeneas' fighting increases after the death of Pallas ("Virgil's Second *Iliad*" 26-27).⁹¹ Aeneas thus returns to savagery in response to his friend's death and the need to avenge it. Many characters recognize the savagery in Aeneas. Mezentius calls Aeneas *saevissime* in 10.878. Aeneas is savage in arms, *saevus in armis* in 12.107. Virgil describes him as a wild man with an "angry heart", *saevo...pectore* (*Aen.* 12.888). Like Juno, Aeneas has an angry heart. Virgil had earlier asked if it was possible for a goddess such as Juno to have such anger in her heart: *tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* (*Aen.* 1.11 "Can such fierce rage dwell in heavenly spirits?"). While Aeneas' anger is intense and associates him with such villains as Juno, his anger in the end of the poem has the quality of piety. Virgil does call some furor pious—when the Etruscans rise up against Mezentius, Evander calls the event an example of *furiis ... iustis* (*Aen.* 8.494, "just ... rage"). Thus, not all anger is bad in the *Aeneid*. However,

⁹¹ Lyne points to the fact that Turnus "despoils" Pallas as being the driving force behind Aeneas' anger (193).

Turnus himself is not a complete villain in the poem, and he shares many qualities in common with Aeneas.

Like Aeneas, Turnus is often overwhelmed with rage throughout the poem. Many critics have noted that Turnus' anger does differ in quality from Aeneas'. Thomas Van Nortwick notes that while "[f]uror has many victims in the *Aeneid* ... Turnus alone is said to embody *violentia*" (306). Virgil also associates Turnus with angry characters of the Greek world. The Sibyl herself refers to Turnus as a new Achilles in Book 6: *alius Latio iam partus Achilles, / natus et ipse dea* (*Aen.* 6.89, another Achilles will arise in Latium, and he himself is born from a goddess). Galinsky points to Turnus' anger as being different than Aeneas' for Turnus' rage is "habitual and maniacal" ("The Anger of Aeneas" 334). Virgil provides a number of examples of Turnus' anger. Looking at the walls of the Trojan camp, Turnus is overwhelmed with anger, and anger rages in his hard bones, *duris dolor ossibus ardet* (*Aen.* 9.66). Virgil further describes Turnus as being proud, *superbum*, as a result of his murder of Pallas (*Aen.* 10.514-515). Turnus' anger is so great that it actually prevents him from achieving victory. At one point, Turnus could gain victory by breaking down the doors the Trojan fort, but the Rutulian is so overwhelmed with anger he rushes out to the front lines, seeking new slaughter (*Aen.* 9.760-61). Turnus' mutilation of Pallas's corpse in Book 10 as well is another example of the Rutulian chief's violence. As Galinsky points out, "there is no justification for his insolent treatment of the slain enemy" ("The Anger of Aeneas" 332). In Book 12, Virgil refers to Turnus as a lion that ferociously turns on a hunter

(4-9). Turnus further attaches the heads of his victims onto his chariot in Book 12.511-515, which, as Willcock notes, is “reminiscent of the habit of Cacus” (94).

Turnus exhibits a number of admirable qualities throughout the poem. First of all, Turnus views his cause as just. In 9.136-138, he states that it is fate to kill Aeneas and the wicked race, *sceleratam ... gentem* (*Aen.* 9.137), who robbed him of Lavinia. After killing Pallas, whom Turnus’ says dies because of Evander’s welcoming of Aeneas, the Rutulian chief takes the war gear but gives the body back to Evander to bury, signaling some respect for Evander (*Aen.* 10.491-495). Turnus exhibits further piety in Book 12. After Aeneas taunts Turnus and encourages him to fight back, Turnus responds, *non me tua fervida terrent / dicta, ferox: di me terrent et Iuppiter hostis* (*Aen.* 12.894-895, “Your angry words do not frighten me; the anger of the gods and Jove, my enemy, frightens me”). Furthermore, some critics suggest that Turnus’ anger is complex, a mixture of the desire to protect his people while, at the same time, engaging “in action which pits him against the interests of his community and which results in his complete isolation from it” (Panoussi 116). Virgil does give hints that Turnus is not exclusively concerned with his own glory. In Book 10, Turnus worries over the fate of his men, asking, *quid manus illa virum, qui me meaque arma secuti?* (*Aen.* 10.672, “What of that company of men who followed me and my flag?”). He also announces to Latinus that he seeks to avenge the people’s guilt, *crimen commune* (*Aen.* 12.16), not just his own honor. Thus, Virgil does not depict Turnus as an irredeemable villain. On the other hand, just as Aeneas must sacrifice his personal desires, so too must Virgil sacrifice Turnus for the sake of Rome’s destiny. Virgil makes it clear that Jove and the gods are on Aeneas’ side and

have abandoned Turnus: *sic Turno, quacumque viam virtute petivit, / successum dea dira negat* (*Aen.* 12.913-914, “Thus, however Turnus tries to make his way by his own power, the terrible goddess denies him success”). Turnus’ efforts are useless and the terrible goddess, *dea dira*, has denied him his desire. Thus, divine favor is upon Aeneas despite his rage.

Additionally, there are a number of points throughout the poem in which Turnus’ death is predicted or called for. In Book 7, Latinus prophesizes Turnus’ death (*Aen.* 7.596-97). Aeneas also predicts Turnus’ death, announcing to the Rutulian, *quas poenas mihi, Turne, dabis!* (*Aen.* 8.537-8, “What penalties you’ll pay to me, Turnus!”). In addition to Latinus and Aeneas’ prediction, Evander adds his in Book 11 at Pallas’ funeral. Evander shouts that his son would be alive, and Turnus would be dead if Turnus were equal in age to Pallas. Lamenting that his life has become miserable because of his son’s death, Evander then calls out to Aeneas to avenge Pallas’s death for him (*Aen.* 11.176-79). There are points in the poem at which characters attempt to assuage Turnus’ wrath or reason with him. In Book 12, Latinus tells Turnus to calm his anger, for there are other girls to be found, and the war has caused much damage to Italy (*Aen.* 12.18-44).⁹² Turnus, however, obstinately pursues carnage. He is concerned about the good of the Italian people; however, his concern for his community is tied to his personal honor and pride, which weigh more heavily upon him. In Book 12, he asks:

excindine domos (id rebus defuit unum)
perpetiar, dextra nec Drancis refellam?

⁹² Anderson points to this scene as well as the one in which Amata comforts Turnus as paralleling Priam and Hecuba’s attempt to dissuade Hector from fighting Achilles (“Vergil’s Second *Iliad*” 29).

terga dabo et Turnum fugientem haec terra videbit?
usque adeone mori miserum est? vos o mihi, Manes,
este boni, quoniam superis aversa voluntas.
sancta ad vos anima atque istius inscia culpa
descendam magnorum haud umquam indignus avorum. (*Aen.* 12.643-49)

Am I to see our houses raised (the one thing I have been spared)? Should I not refute the words of Drances with my right hand? Will I turn tail? Will this land see Turnus running away? Is death really that terrible? Be good to me, O Manes, for the gods have turned their will against me. I will descend to you as a holy soul and with no known wickedness, nor will I be unworthy of my great ancestors.

Turnus looks to the good of his people whose houses are threatened, but he also looks to the well being of his own honor, which he perceives as unsullied, and his last statements seem to suggest that he does not fear death, for he has succeeded in maintaining his family honor. Panoussi sees this concern for personal honor as being welcome in the Homeric world but not in the Virgilian in which the good of the community supersedes that of the self: "Unable to adjust to the kind of moral relativism which would enable a peaceful coexistence with the Trojans, he also embodies a heroic ideal which, though laudable, can have no rightful place in the Roman future" (116). Turnus, like Aeneas, at times, is pulled toward the old heroic ideal of personal glory and honor, yet, unlike Aeneas, he is not fated to build the Roman Empire. Many of the predictions of Turnus' death seem to suggest that it is just; there is one notable exception, however.

On the other hand, not all of the prophets of Turnus' death view it as just. Juno, who protects and supports Turnus in the poem, must accept his death. Responding to Jove's command for Aeneas' victory, Juno humbles herself and admits that she is worn out, and her love no longer has the power to move Jove (even though she wishes that it still did), so she will let Turnus die in atonement for the

Trojans, telling her husband, *nunc pereat Teucrisque pio det sanguine poenas* (*Aen.* 10.617, “Now let him perish and pay the price to the Teucrians with pious blood”). Juno, here, suggests that Turnus is innocent, but she agrees to let him die. Despite Juno’s support of him, it is Turnus himself who recognizes that his death is just.

Turnus states that he justly deserves to die but nonetheless asks mercy from Aeneas:

ille humilis supplexque oculos dextramque precantem
protendens ‘equidem merui, nec deprecor,’ inquit:
‘utere sorte tua. miseri te si qua parentis
tangere cura potest, oro (fuit et tibi talis
Anchises genitor), Dauni miserere senectae
et me, seu corpus spoliatum lumine mavis,
redde meis. vicisti et victum tendere palmas
Ausonii videre; tua est Lavinia coniunx:
ulterius ne tende odiis. (*Aen.* 12.930-938).

Turnus, humble and suppliant, turns up his eyes and stretches out his right hand, saying ‘Indeed, I deserved this. I do not ask for mercy. Use your chance. But, if the suffering of a parent might touch you, I beseech you—you had such a parent, Anchises—have mercy on old Daunus and give me back to him, or, if you so choose, give back my body, robbed of life, to him. You are the victor, and the Ausonians have seen me hold out my hands to you. Lavinia is your wife. Do not carry on in further hate.

Turnus is on his knees as a suppliant, but he oddly both does and does not ask for mercy. He recognizes that his death would be just but asks that he might be spared or at least have his body spared for the sake of his father. Moreover, Turnus tells Aeneas that he is the victor and has won the prize of Lavinia. Aeneas initially is moved by Turnus’ words.

Aeneas is not a total savage. He does waver in his decision and thinks the matter over. Virgil describes him as having been in an animal-like rage until he is moved by Turnus’ words:

stetit acer in armis
Aeneas, volvens oculos, dextramque repressit;
et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo
coeperat... (*Aen.* 12.938-941)

Fierce in his armor, Aeneas stands, turning around his eyes, stopped his hand
and now, more and more, as he hesitated, the speech began to move him...

Aeneas is wild with anger, but Turnus' words have some effect on him. Virgil demonstrates the ability of words to shape individuals and peoples and even the course of history. Jove, Aeneas, and Virgil himself are all great orators who mould the world with their words. However, in the *Aeneid* there is something more powerful than words; something that the poet uses: the image.⁹³

The sight of Pallas' swordbelt on Turnus' shoulder makes Aeneas angry, and he brutally kills Turnus.⁹⁴ There is clearly a small commentary on the power of words versus images. The oratorical power of Turnus' words does move Aeneas. However, the image of the belt, which contains the story of the Danaids who murdered their husbands on their wedding night, is more powerful and deeply moves Aeneas. Virgil reminds us that this belt belonged to Pallas whom Turnus had killed, and, seeing the belt, Aeneas kills Turnus out of rage, *furiis accensus et ira / terribilis* (*Aen.* 12.946-947, "enraged with fury and terrible in his anger"). On the other hand, he also kills Turnus as a sacrifice of atonement for Pallas's death; Aeneas thus makes a rational, calculated decision. Aeneas tells Turnus that it is Pallas himself who will perform the act through Aeneas as a means of settling the score:

Pallas te hoc volnere, Pallas / immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit (*Aen.*

⁹³ Shadi Bartsch writes that "artistic representation in Virgil often has precisely an uncivilizing effect upon its audiences: it does not check violence, but spurs it" (334).

⁹⁴ Even though Turnus has despoiled Pallas, Pallas had hoped to do so to Turnus in 10.449f.

12.948-949, “It is Pallas, Pallas, who, with this wound, sacrifices you and punishes the crime with your blood”). Aeneas then drives the sword into Turnus’ breast. Sharon L. James notes that the verb that Virgil uses, *condit* (12.950), connects the end of the poem with the beginning in which Aeneas is traveling until he should found a city, *dum conderet urbem* (1.5): “In linking the slow founding of Rome to the swift stabbing of Turnus, Vergil suggests that the former rests on the later. Thus he shows the violence and fury beneath the founding of Rome” (624). Rome must be founded by violence if necessary. In this death that serves both as the just atonement for Pallas’ death and a necessary sacrifice for the creation of Rome, Turnus dies and passes to the shades below as Aeneas kills him with fervor, *fervidus* (12.951). The poem ends with the phrase, *sub umbras*. There is thus an ironic twist that for all of the glory of the heroes and the empire, all ends in death. Virgil’s poem is a triumphant celebration of Rome, but Virgil is also aware of the limits of all human activity. Some critics acknowledge that Aeneas perhaps is just in killing Turnus, but they suggest that Aeneas’ role as peacemaker and civilizer are more important. Lyne writes that Aeneas “loses sight of the final purpose of his war. To avenge the dishonor of Pallas is a high aim, but ‘peace’ is a higher aim, *his* aim, and the former is arguably incompatible with the latter”(194). Aeneas should learn to spare the humble, but he chose to avenge his friend’s death instead. This desire for personal honor, again, is something Aeneas does not seem to get away from, although some critics see the killing of Turnus as Aeneas’ final act of personal honor. Thomas Van Nortwick makes the interesting suggestion that, by killing Turnus, “...Aeneas may be said to be putting to rest in Turnus and in himself that

anachronistic Achillean heroism which is to be replaced by *pietas*, the cornerstone of the new civilization of Rome" (314). Both Turnus and Aeneas are attracted to individual glory, but only one man will live to father an empire.

The pessimistic school does make a number of salient points in their criticism of the idea of Aeneas as a hero. Turnus himself has some heroic qualities. Susanne Wofford writes that "Turnus' effort to fight against the slowly increasing daemonic control make him seem heroic in a special way..." (208). Turnus is not a monstrous character, like Cacus, who must be destroyed; rather, he has noble qualities. Aeneas, as well, has some defective attributes; Michael Putnam associates Aeneas' anger with Juno's anger at the beginning of the poem ("Some Virgilian Unities" 22).⁹⁵ Additionally, some critics have noted that the final scene of Aeneas' brutal sacrifice of Turnus seems to detract from Aeneas' heroic character. Maggie Kilgour writes that the killing of Turnus suggests "that the hero is relapsing into barbarism," and the "abrupt ending of the poem—which focuses on the slaying of the defeated Turnus—calls the progress of Rome into question" (179). However, one should not too readily impose a contemporary sensibility on the scene. Furthermore, Virgil gives elaborated and detailed spectacles of violence without any seeming qualms as some critics have noted.⁹⁶ Virgil seems to enjoy presenting the spectacles of violence, but the Roman poet also has a moral purpose as some critics

⁹⁵ Putnam writes elsewhere in *Interpretation and Influence* that the final scene reveals that "Aeneas is finally, after all, a human being" (19).

⁹⁶ Shadi Bartsch suggests that Turnus' death is "a dramatic illustration of Virgil's fascination with the human passions and their control" (322).

note, presenting Aeneas' act as just.⁹⁷ Aeneas is an imperfect *exemplum*, but he is an *exemplum* nonetheless. He retains many of the classical, Homeric traits such as a lust for battle and glory; however, throughout the poem, Virgil also presents Aeneas as a character with a deep emotional life who is pious and serves as the father of his people. Moreover, Virgil paints an image of Aeneas as a man who exhibits self-control, but, like many characters in the poem, becomes justly angry. Aeneas represents one aspect of Virgil's crafting of the *Aeneid* as a unique imperial *exemplum*. The *Aeneid* also contains a number of prophecies that present a justification for the Roman Empire.

Virgil's Prophecies and Community

There are multiple prophetic moments in the *Aeneid*. Commenting on T.S. Eliot's discussion of the *Aeneid* in "What is a Classic," Duncan F. Kennedy writes that in Eliot's reading the story, "which the *Aeneid* purports to narrate emerges as a suprapersonal, providential order of history (History with a capital 'H'), named in the *Aeneid* as *fatum* ('an utterance') and articulated in the utterances of Jove" ("Modern Receptions and their Interpretive Influences" 47). The *Aeneid* is not just the story of Aeneas; it is the story of Rome. In the *Aeneid*, Jove helps to shape the history of Aeneas and Rome. Aeneas often only sees Jove's will through a glass darkly; however, he receives hints of his destiny. Aeneas' actions do shape the outcome of his wanderings, but, ultimately, there is a god who is ordering his life and who will pave the way for the emergence of the Roman Empire. There are four

⁹⁷ Galinsky contrasts the killing of Turnus with Achilles' killing of Hector, seeing Aeneas' act as being an instrument of divine vengeance ("The Anger of Aeneas" 345).

important prophecies in the poem, which shape the imperial *exemplum*, that Virgil presents to justify Aeneas' actions as well as the very existence of the Roman Empire that will grow later.

One of the initial imperial prophecies is found in Book 1; Virgil frames this prophecy as a consolation for a worried mother. Seeing her son shipwrecked, Venus petitions Jove on behalf of Aeneas in Book 1. At the very beginning of this speech, Virgil shows Jove as being in a state of tranquility: *Olli subridens hominum sator atque deorum / voltu, quo caelum tempestatesque serenat, / oscula libavit natae...* (*Aen.* 1.254-256, "Smiling on Venus with the countenance by which he calms the sky and storms, the father of men and gods kissed his daughter's lips...). Jove here is joyfully smiling, and Virgil emphasizes his role as father of gods and men. He is not only calm himself, but he is able to calm the natural world. Jove tells Venus to put away her fears: *parce metu* (*Aen.* 1.257), and the fates of Venus' descendents remain unmoved: *manent immota tuorum / fata tibi* (*Aen.* 1.257-258, "The fates of your people remain unmoved"). Moreover, Virgil makes it clear that Jove is in control of the fates: *neque me sententia vertit* (*Aen.* 1.260, "No thought has turned me"). Jove's decree removes Venus' fears (*Aen.* 1.261). Virgil thus seems to present the first prophecy as a therapeutic consolation for Venus and possibly his contemporary audience who were worried about the success of their empire.

Furthermore, in this prophecy, Virgil has Jove establish Rome's mission of conquest. Venus' descendents will establish a city: *cernes urbem et promissa Lavini / moenia, sublimemque feres ad sidera caeli / magnanimum Aenean...* (*Aen.* 1.258-259, "You will see the city and promised walls of Lavinium, and you will carry great-

souled Aeneas to the stars of heaven..."). Aeneas will found a new city, and Venus' descendents will exercise a civilizing influence on the land. Jove informs Venus that her Trojans also have the task of civilizing others: *bellum ingens geret Italia populosque feroces / contundet moresque viris et moenia ponet...* (Aen. 1.263-264, "Aeneas will wage a great war in Italy and crush a ferocious people, giving customs and walls to men...). The Trojans will wage a war; however, this war is not waged for sadistic reasons; the war is to be waged against a savage, *feroces*, people who will be disciplined with laws and customs, *mores*, and become civilized by being urbanized and bound within walls. The Trojans and their Roman descendents have a task given by a god to improve a savage people by bringing civilization. This conquest will not be restricted to Italy. Jove presents no limit to the new Roman Empire: *his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono; / imperium sine fine dedi* (Aen. 1.278-279, "I set neither boundaries of territory nor a set amount of time. I have given them an empire without end"). Again, it is Jove and not a blind act of chance that gives the Romans their empire; additionally, this empire is infinite and thus has a divine quality.

The limitless bounds of the Roman Empire are not the only things that connect the Romans to heaven. Two famous Romans will be apotheosized. For his efforts, Aeneas will rise to heaven (Aen 1.259-260). One of Aeneas' descendents will be taken up to the stars as well: Julius Caesar. Caesar will descend from Iulus, and he will have an empire that stretches to the oceans, and his fame will resound to the stars: *nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar, / imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris, / Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo* (Aen 1.286-288, "A Trojan

Caesar will be born from your splendid line who will limit his empire with the ocean and his glory with the stars. He will be Julius, a name sent down from great Iulus”).

There is some debate as to which Caesar this prophecy refers. However, Robert F. Dobbin suggests that it refers to Julius Caesar whose Eastern exploits Virgil mentions in the line *spoliis Orientis onustum* (*Aen* 1.289, “Laden with Eastern spoils”). These two heroes of the same line, one Trojan and one Roman, will receive the ultimate honor of becoming gods, for they do the work of the gods in glorifying the Roman Empire, which the chief god, Jove, favors.

Finally, in the first prophecy, Jove explains that the periods of violence and civil war will be over as the new ruler brings peace (*Aen* 1.291). During this period of peace, law and right rule will flourish, and Jove finally gives the most graphic image of the prophecy, projecting war as a monster that the new ruler will bind:

cana Fides, et Vesta, Remo cum fratre Quirinus,
iura dabunt; dirae ferro et compagibus artis
claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus,
saeva sedens super arma, et centum vinctus aënis
post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento (*Aen.* 1.292-296)

Silvery Faith and Vesta, Quirinus and his brother Remus will hand out laws. The Gates of War, worked with hard iron and their bound hinges, will be closed. Deep inside, impious Furor, sitting on savage armor, will have his hands tied behind his back with a hundred bronze knots, and he will rage horribly with his bloody mouth.

The terrible monster of civil war will have its arms tied behind its back although it may roar with its monstrous jaws. This period of peace and prosperity under Caesar Augustus seems to be the culmination of the work of Aeneas and his people.⁹⁸

Finally, after all of the journeying and all of the labor of their offspring, there will

⁹⁸ Servius, one of the principal ancient commentators on Virgil, writes that a picture of the chained Furor could be found in Augustus’ Forum (Bartsch 332).

come the height of the Roman Empire under the Julian clan. In addition to the prophecy in Book 1, there are a number of other prophecies throughout the *Aeneid*, which foretell Augustus' regime.

One of the most famous and detailed prophecies is found in Book 6 when Aeneas reaches his father among the dead. In the underworld, Anchises explains that a new race will be sprung from Aeneas. He and Lavinia will give birth to Silvius who results from Aeneas' joining with Italian blood, *Italo commixtus sanguine* (*Aen.* 6.762). Anchises explains that the new child is sprung from Aeneas' loins and brings honor to the family, which is united in blood.

Anchises then begins a long genealogy. He stops at various points to note various virtues of a descendant as well as to mark when a descendant has achieved a conquest. The grandfather names Silvius Aeneas as one who is both pious and skilled in battle: *qui te nomine reddet, / Silvius Aeneas, pariter pietate vel armis / egregius...* (*Aen.* 6.768-770, "he who will revive your name, Silvius Aeneas, like you, without equal in *pietas* and battle..."). Anchises praises two of Aeneas' principle virtues: piety and martial skill. The mission of Aeneas and his descendants is, from the beginning, civilizing. Anchises tells Aeneas to pay heed to Romulus who has a special task of building the walls of Rome as well as expanding her empire:

en huius, nate, auspiciis illa incluta Roma
imperium terris, animos aequabit Olympo,
septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces,
felix prole virum...(*Aen.* 6.781-784)

Look here son! See how under his auspices, glorious Rome will bound her empire by the earth, and her spirits will reach to the heavens. She will enclose her seven hills with a single wall, and her men will be happy...

As Jove announces in his prophecy to Venus, Anchises notes that there is no limit to the Roman Empire, and the Romans will be divine and blessed.

Anchises then unveils the new people, the Romans: *hanc aspice gentem / Romanosque tuos* (*Aen.* 6.788-789, “here are your people and your Romans”).

Anchises refers to the Romans as Aeneas’ people, *Romanos tuos*. Aeneas’ father had used a very dramatic image to introduce this theme: Cybele, the mother of the gods, gathering together all the gods. Likewise, the image of the Roman people is compared to the shimmering pantheon of the gods. The message is clear: the Romans are a holy, god-like people. Furthermore, as Jove does, Anchises singles out the current rulers: Caesar Augustus and his adopted father, Julius Caesar: *hic Caesar et omnis Iuli / progenies, magnum caeli ventura sub axem* (*Aen.* 6.789-790, “Here is Caesar and all of Iulus’ progeny who will come under the great axis of the heavens”). Like Jove, Anchises emphasizes the idea that Caesar is welcomed into the heavens.

Anchises then praises Caesar Augustus as the ultimate civilizer who brings peace through war:

hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, Divi genus aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, super et Garmantas et Indos
proferet imperium (iacet extra sidera tellus,
extra anni solisque vias, ubi caelifer Atlas
axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum):
huius in adventum iam nunc et Caspia regna
responsis horrent divum et Maeotia tellus,
et septemgemini turbant trepida ostia Nili. (*Aen.* 6.791-800)

Here is the man. Here he is. The one about whom you have often heard promised. Caesar Augustus, son of a god, who will build the golden age in Latium, to the land Saturn formerly ruled. He shall advance the empire beyond the Garamants and Indias. He will stretch the empire over land beyond the stars and past the tracks of the years and the sun where Atlas,

bearing the heavens on his shoulder, turns the sphere dotted with burning stars. He at whose coming the realms of Caspia and the lands of Maeotia even now tremble, and the seven mouths of the Nile shake with fear.

In this panegyric to the *principis*, Virgil takes up a number of themes common in tributes to Augustus in this period. The archenemy of Augustus and Rome, Egypt, is represented by the Nile, which trembles at Augustus' approach. Also, Virgil refers the struggle in the Middle East against the Parthians, which Augustus will soon overcome as legions march past India. Finally, Anchises' speech reveals the same hyperbole used by Jove in his prophecy: the Roman Empire will not have any limits.

In his prophecy, Anchises also predicts a civilizing mission for the Romans, although he does acknowledge the superiority of the Greeks in some matters such as poetry, sculpture and oratory (*Aen.* 6.846-850). On the other hand, despite the greatness of the Greeks, the Romans will be the great rulers of the nations. Anchises ends his speech with the famous lines that show that this peaceful age will be brought to Rome, and the lands that she conquers through war will be crowned with peace and justice as Anchises tells the reader, *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento / (hae tibi erunt artes) pacique imponere morem, / parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* (*Aen.* 6.851-853, "Remember, Roman, to rule the people with your empire (these will be your arts), to bring peace and law, to spare the conquered and conquer the proud"). If these subjects readily submit to Roman rule, they will be spared; however, if they are proud and rebel, the Romans will crush them. The Romans have the right to rule because of a divine command as well as because of their superior culture and moral sense. Michael Putnam reads this passage as being a prophecy that Anchises presents that Aeneas cannot fulfill in

reality as Virgil shows in Turnus' death.⁹⁹ However, Aeneas' seeming lapse does not invalidate his role as an *exemplum* or the prophecies that form the *exemplum* of the empire. Virgil, two books later, will present another prophecy in the form of ekphrasis.

The third major prophecy is found on the shield of Aeneas, which Venus gives him in Book 8. Venus had to seduce her husband for this shield, and some critics have noted that such a transaction is bawdy and cheapens the image of the shield, for it is a trinket purchased by sexual exchange (Putnam, *Virgil's Aeneid* 43). On the other hand, Venus is Vulcan's wife. Venus is seducing her husband, to whom, she, admittedly, has not remained faithful, but the scene is essentially a wife coming to her husband at home and having sex with him as a way of encouraging him to make the shield. Vulcan had fashioned a history of Rome on the shield. His work was the result of inspired prophecy as Virgil writes:

Illic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos
haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi
fecerat Ignipotens, illic genus omne futurae
stirpis ab Ascanio pugnaeque in ordine bella. (*Aen.* 8.626-629)

Not ignorant of the prophets or unaware of the coming age, the Lord of Fire had made there the deeds of Italy and the triumphs of Rome. He wrought every generation that would come from the line of Ascanius as well as each one of the wars they fought.

The shield contains depictions of the moral order that the Romans bring. The underworld is found on one part of the shield:

hinc procul addit

⁹⁹ "The conclusion of the *Aeneid*, then, doubly uncloaks the deceptiveness of art. Aeneas cannot fulfill his father's idealizing, and therefore deceptive, vision of Rome, and Virgil, the artisan of his tale, cannot show him as so doing" ("Daedalus, Virgil, and the End of Art" 197).

Tatareas etiam sedes, alta ostia Ditis,
et scelerum poenas, et te, Catilina, minaci
pendentem scopulo Furiarumque ora trementem... (*Aen.* 8.666-669)

Then, far from these, he also added the realms of Tartarus, the towering gate of Dis, the punishments of crimes, and you, Catiline, hanging from a nasty rock and trembling at the faces of the Furies.

The enemies of Rome, such as Catiline, are the wicked who are punished in the underworld. The good, represented by Cato, are far away from the wicked:

secretosque pios, his dantem iura Cantonem (*Aen.* 8.670, "And set apart are the pious with Cato giving them laws"). Cato is rewarded for his virtue. There is thus an association between Roman law and the laws of the gods: the two laws correspond. There are further gigantomachic images on the shield that associate Rome's enemies with monsters.

In the depiction of the battle of Actium, the battle fought between the forces of Octavian against Marc Antony and Cleopatra, which is found on the shield, Vulcan had carved a number of personified evils. Vulcan depicts Mars as working together with the Furies: *saevit medio in certamine Mavors / caelatus ferro, tristesque ex aethere Dirae* (*Aen.* 8.700-701, "Carved out of iron, Mars rages in the midst of the contest, and from the sky come the miserable Furies"). In this scene, there are a number of menacing characters that portend possible disaster. Two other goddess show up: Discord and Bellona: *et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla, /quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello* (*Aen.* 8.702-703, "Discord comes, rejoicing, with torn robe, and Bellona follows with her bloody whip"). This scene is charged with terror, and civil war appears as monstrous. Octavian and Marc Antony are engaged in civil war, which is not good for Romans including Virgil. Virgil, therefore, does not

depict war and violence as desired ends, and he especially disapproves of civil war. There is someone on the shield, however, who will tame this monster.

On the shield, Virgil further depicts the peace that Augustus' victory brings. Virgil makes a connection between Augustus and Aeneas' virtues; Augustus offers sacrifices to the gods upon returning to Rome: *at Caesar, triplici invectus Romana triumpho/ moenia dis Italis votum immortale sacrat, / maxima, ter centum totam delubra per urbem* (*Aen.* 8.714-715, "And Caesar, entering Roman walls in three-fold triumph, was offering an immortal sacrifice at three hundred great shrines throughout the entire city). The emperor is as pious as his ancient Trojan ancestor. The people in the city rejoice, and the emperor, who sits in the threshold of Apollo's temple, receives the gifts of the suppliant nations:

ipse, sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi,
dona recognoscit populorum aptatque superbis
postibus; incedunt victae longo ordine gentes,
quam variae linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis. (*Aen.* 8.720-723)

Augustus, seated on the white threshold of radiant Phoebus, examines gifts of nations and hangs them on the proud posts. The subject races march in a long line—as variant in languages as they are in clothes and weapons.

All the nations will bow before Rome and Augustus, offering their gifts; Rome will become master of the world. Thus, Virgil does not simply celebrate the peace that Augustus brings; he celebrates Rome's domination of foreign peoples. There is one final major prophecy in the poem that tempers the militaristic and aggressive tone of the earlier prophecies of the poem.

The last major prophecy is to be found in Book 12.791-842 in which Jove ameliorates his earlier prophecy to appease Juno. This prophecy has generated some controversy. James O'Hara points to this reconciliation as a place at which Jove

and perhaps Virgil contradicts himself (79). Additionally, in this final prophecy, Susanne Wofford sees Jove's compromise as a defeat for Aeneas (204). D.C. Feeney suggests that his prophecy is ambiguous, for Juno will rise up again against Aeneas' descendents in the Punic Wars only to be finally reconciled with Rome as Ennius illustrates in his *Annales*¹⁰⁰ Feeney points to the scene in Book 10 in which Jove reprimands the gods for their meddling in the Italian wars but promises them that they will fight in Rome's later wars (180). Jove states:

caelicolae magni, quianam sententia vobis
versa retro tantumque animis certatis iniquis?
abnueram bello Italiam concurrere Teucris.
quae contra vetitum discordia? quis metus aut hos
aut hos arma sequi ferrumque lacescere suasit?
adveniet iustum pugnae, ne arcessite, tempus,
cum fera Karthago Romanis arcibus olim
exitium magnum atque Alpibus immittet apertas:
tum certare odiis, tum res rapuisse licebit.
nunc sinite et placitum laeti componite foedus. (*Aen.* 10.6-15)

Great gods, why have you changed your minds? Why do you contend with such violent spirits? I had forbidden Italy to rush to war with the Trojans. Why is there rebellion against what was forbidden? What fear has persuaded these on this side or the others to assail with arms or follow with the sword? A right time for war will come—now refrain—when savage Carthage will send a great calamity upon the towers of Rome and open up the Alps. Then compete in hatred, then it will be fitting to destroy. But, now, let it be, and happily assent to the treaty.

¹⁰⁰ "At various points in the poem... it is plain that Vergil does indeed adhere to this Ennian tradition: by referring back to his predecessor's *Annales* he looks forward to the time when Juno will once again take up arms against the Aenaeidae, on behalf of her favored city Carthage" (Feeney, "The Reconciliations of Juno" 179).

In this new war, Juno will take the side of Carthage, so the reconciliation that Jove will effect with her in Book 12 is thus only temporary.¹⁰¹ The prophecy in Book 12 is, nonetheless, a reconciliation.

Jove had earlier stated that Aeneas and the Trojans and their Roman descendents would crush savage peoples and give them laws and customs. However, Jove tells Juno in Book 12 that the Italian people will keep their names and customs and will absorb the Trojans into their culture:

sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt,
utque est, nomen erit; commixti corpore tantum
subsident Teucri. morem ritusque sacrorum
adiciam faciamque omnis uno ore Latinos.
hinc genus Ausonio mixtum quod sanguine surget,
supra homines, supra ire deos pietate videbis
nec gens ulla tuos aeque celebrabit honores. (*Aen.* 12.834-7)

The Ausonian people will retain their fathers' language and customs, and, as it is, there will be one name, and the Teucrians will bow and sink into one body with them. I will add their customs and sacred rites and make all Latins, speaking the same language. Henceforth, mixed with Ausonian blood, a race will rise up above all men and gods, and you will see that no race will celebrate your honors as much as they do.

The Trojans will become part of the Latins and take their name.¹⁰² However, they have subdued the Latins and have brought them their household gods. The Trojans are also coming home, and adopting the Latins' customs is returning to their own customs; they had migrated to Asia minor and adopted some Asian customs but shed them upon arrival in Italy.¹⁰³ Aeneas himself had predicted such a compromise earlier in 12.189-94 in which he suggests that the Italians and the Trojans join in an

¹⁰¹ Feeney further points to this passage as reflecting the "great anxieties that surround the first beginnings of the Roman state..." (184).

¹⁰² As Feeney notes, Juno gets the upper hand over Venus who wanted Troy to be rebuilt in Book 10 ("The Reconciliation of Juno" 182).

¹⁰³ See Bittarello, Pogorzelski, Reed, Starks, and Syed.

eternal treaty, *aeterna in foedera* (*Aen.* 12.191) in which the Trojans will provide the religion, *sacra deosque* (*Aen.* 12.192), the Latins will retain their power, and Lavinia will give her name to the city, *dabit Lavinia nomen* (*Aen.* 12.194). Thus, there is a comprise that Jove effects that seems to please Aeneas and others. However, O'Hara's point is certainly valid: perhaps Virgil is trying to inform the reader that Jove is a sneaky character and his prophecies are unreliable. On the other hand, it is possible to look at the matter from a different perspective. Jove, who has been read as a model for Augustus, is capable of compromise. He makes a severe decree and then errs on the side of clemency. Regardless, there is a sense that this new race will triumph and conquer all and even be restored to friendship with Juno. The prophecies that Virgil presents and the community that he shapes into his imperial *exemplum* also include the idea of an Other, someone who must be pushed aside to make way for Rome. This Other, however, is someone for whom Virgil expresses a great deal of sympathy.

Virgil's Other

The other is essential to Virgil's imperial *exemplum*. Many critics have taken up the issue of the other in Virgil. In his *Virgil's Gaze*, J.D. Reed suggests that Virgil tries to reconcile the Trojans' Eastern and Hellenic identities with their Romanness and sees Romanness as fundamentally ambiguous.¹⁰⁴ Other critics perceive a greater contrast between the Trojans and the other peoples that they encounter. Panoussi sees the other in the Aeneid, specifically the Carthaginian Dido and the Rutulians, as being characters "who find themselves in conflict with and unable to

¹⁰⁴ "The Roman has an ambivalent place wherever in the world he stands... belonging everywhere, he belongs nowhere" (Reed 3).

adapt to the new social and political structure of Aeneas' Rome" (97). Without a doubt, Virgil posits the superiority of the new Roman character of the Trojans. However, Reed and others like him are largely correct in that, as Virgil's fourth major prophecy in Book 12 demonstrates, Virgil sees the Romans as being an amalgamation of various identities. On the other hand, as Reed himself points out, while the others are absorbed into Rome, the identity that triumphs in Virgil is fundamentally Roman: "The Roman, above all, is the subject, not the object of a domineering gaze" (38). The Trojans are becoming Roman and must change, combining with other ethnic groups to form a new identity. Some critics even see the Trojan identity in the *Aeneid* as being something that Virgil depicts as undesirable. D.C. Feeney suggests that "the Trojan past dwindles while the epic progresses" for in Virgil "...Troy represents, at the least degeneracy and moral shabbiness" ("The Reconciliations of Juno" 192). Trojan identity is decadent and corrupt and must be shed in favor of a more civilized Italian one. Ultimately, it is clear that Virgil celebrates Roman identity and does, as the prophecies in the poem reveal, see the other peoples of the poem as being inferior to Rome. One of the most pronounced examples is to be found in on the shield of Aeneas on which Virgil depicts the Other, in this case, the East, as monstrous and grotesque. However, Virgil seems to sympathize with the other throughout the poem. One of the principal others in the poem is Dido, queen of Carthage, who welcomes Aeneas and his crew when they land on her shores. The Italians, another group with whom the Trojans clash, themselves are very diverse, and Aeneas does reconcile with them to form the Romans, yet Virgil does depict some of the Italians as savage and wild. Virgil thus

treats the other in the poem with a paradoxical mixture of sympathy and contempt, presenting them as complex negative *exempla*, that is, examples not to follow.

The most pronounced example is the depiction of the battle of Actium on Aeneas' shield. In Book 8, Virgil describes Antony as being allied with foreign and barbaric elements:

hinc ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis,
victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro,
Aegyptum viresque Orientis et ultima secum
Bactra vehit, sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx.

Henceforth, Antony with barbaric strength and diversity of arms, victorious from the people of Aurora and the Red Sea, leads Egypt with him and all those Eastern men—even those from distant Bactra, and (o horrible!) that Egyptian consort follows behind! (*Aen.* 8.685-688)

Virgil emphasizes that Antony brings with him a barbaric, *barbarica*, troop composed of diverse groups, *variisque ... armis*. It is especially despicable that Antony has an Egyptian wife. Virgil further notes that Antony's troops bring chaos with them, churning up the sea: *una omnes ruere ac totum spumare reductis / convulsum remis rostrisque tridentibus aequor* (*Aen.* 8.689-690, "All surge as one, and the entire sea convulses, stirred up by the rowing oars and the triple beaks"). The sea is a raging cauldron of chaos, which the Easterners have stirred up. The forces of order, represented by Augustus, bring order and harmony, while the forces of evil bring chaos to both human society and nature. Moreover, the gods of the Egyptians are bestial and frightening and fight against the noble, anthropomorphic gods of the Romans: *omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis / contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam / tela tenent* (*Aen.* 8.698-700, Monstrous forms of gods of every race and the dog god, barking Anubis, hold their spears against

Neptune, Venus, and Minerva). The war is not simply a conflict between two feuding Roman leaders (one of which has “gone native”); it is war between civilization and barbarism, between East and West, and continues the struggle that had been framed by Herodotus in his *Histories*: the forces of Eastern chaos held at bay by Western rationality.¹⁰⁵ The scene on the shield of Actium is one of few images that is of Virgil’s direct, contemporary period in the poem, and it is also one of the most demeaning of the Other, in this case, the people of the East. Virgil sculpts a number of images of the East in the poem and not all of them are negative.

However, there are a number of sympathetic portraits of the East in the *Aeneid*. Dido, the queen of Carthage on whose shores Aeneas is stranded in Book 1, is among the most prominent examples, and Virgil, as he does with Aeneas, modifies the received tradition of the character. Previous incarnations of Dido have her as a resident of Tyre, known for her chastity, who flees the city but kills herself to avoid marrying an African king (Perkell, Introduction 13). Also, according to Servius, in Cato’s *Origines*, it is Dido’s sister Anna who kills herself out of love for Aeneas (Perkell, Introduction 13). There are also Greek models with which Virgil worked to create his Dido. Panoussi points to Medea in Euripides’ play of the same name as well as her role in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius and Catullus 64 as models for the Carthaginian queen (101).¹⁰⁶ However, Dido’s love for Aeneas is possibly Virgil’s invention. In Virgil, Dido is complex character that, in many ways, is like Aeneas, but

¹⁰⁵ Syed sees Virgil’s battle of Actium as “a founding text for the Western discourse of orientalism” (178). See also A.J. Bell’s “Virgil and the Drama,” Kimberly Bell’s “*Translatio* and the Constructs of a Roman Nation in Virgil’s *Aeneid*,” Gale, Hardie’s “Virgil’s Ptolemaic Relations”, Jenkyns’ “Virgil and the Euphrates”, and Thomas’ “Virgil’s Ecphrastic Centerpieces”.

¹⁰⁶ For further treatment of Medea as a basis for Dido, see Henry.

she is ultimately destroyed by a divinely inflicted madness. Like Aeneas, she is the victim of a sacrilegious violation (the murder of her husband by her brother). Also, like Aeneas, she is an exile from her homeland. Furthermore, the separation of Aeneas and Dido is not the result of their personal decisions. Dido is a victim of Cupid (Wofford 155), and later Venus and Juno conspire to have an affair develop between the two, so that Juno's beloved Carthage will be honored instead of Rome. Furthermore, after Mercury tells him in a dream that he must leave Carthage, Aeneas states that if he had his choice he would have stayed in Troy (*Aen.* 4.333-361). However, Apollo decrees that Rome must be founded, so Aeneas sacrifices personal interests for the good of the state.

On the other hand, Dido has a number of faults that a Roman in the Augustan Age would be quick to identify. As Reed and Syed note, Virgil associates Dido with excess and luxury.¹⁰⁷ Certainly, Dido is the victim of bad luck, and Venus and Cupid are the ones who implant in her the crazed desire for Aeneas. Additionally, according to many schools in the philosophic milieu of the Augustan age, Dido has a moral fault.¹⁰⁸ She describes her love for Aeneas as being the result of desire overcoming her will, telling her sister Anna:

Anna, fatebor enim, miseri post fata Sychaei
 coniugis et sparsos fraterna caede Penates
 solus hic inflexit sensus animumque labentem
 impulit. (*Aen.* 4.20-23)

¹⁰⁷ See Reed (73-100). Syed compares luxurious, Eastern Dido to luxurious, Eastern Cleopatra, writing that "like Cleopatra, Dido enters the Roman discourse of imperialism as the representative of the vanquished, the Other, the East" (191).

¹⁰⁸ She lacks the Ciceronian cardinal virtues, especially temperance, that Aeneas (imperfectly) embodies.

Anna, for I will admit it, since the fate of poor husband Sychaeus, and the shattering of a home by a brother's murder, only this one has been able to move my mind and impelled my swooning spirit.

She describes her love in terms of fire, raging through her: *adgnosco veteris vestigia flammae* (*Aen.* 4.22-23, I recognize the traces of the old flame). Although she is overwhelmed with desire, Dido still desires to remain faithful to modesty, *Pudor* (*Aen.* 4.27) and would not wish to break her vows, *iura* (*Aen.* 4.27). On the other hand, while she initially wants to remain faithful to her previous husband's memory, Dido is won over by her sister who convinces her to join with Aeneas. Her love then becomes madness. After offering sacrifices to the gods, Dido runs wildly through the city; Virgil again uses the image of flames burning through the Punic queen as well as the image of a wound: *est mollis flamma medullas / interea et tacitum vivit sub pectore volnus* (*Aen.* 4.66-67, "The flames eat through her soft marrow, and in her heart the silent wound lives"). Virgil then elaborates on this image, comparing Dido to a deer struck by an arrow who runs madly through the city (*Aen.* 4.68-73).

uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur
urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta,
quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit
pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum
nescius; illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat
Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis harundo. (*Aen.* 4.68-73)¹⁰⁹

Unlucky Dido burns and wanders throughout the city, raging, just like a deer, hit by surprise by an arrow shot from far away by a shepherd, hunting the woods of Crete hit by surprise. Leaving in it the swift steel, she flies through the Dictaeon the woods, seeking out safety, but in her side clings the deadly shaft.

¹⁰⁹ See Fratantuono's *Madness Unchained* for an analysis of this passage in which the "huntress is now hunted" (103)

The image here is extremely pathetic. Dido is helpless as the shaft of the arrow has been thrust into her side, and she runs wildly through the city. There is some sympathy here. As Gian Biagio Conte has noted, Virgil has sympathy for the characters that get in the way of Rome's progress but nonetheless recognizes the necessity of subduing the desire of individuals for the greater glory of Rome (*Poetry of Pathos* 45). Vassiliki Panoussi further notes that when Dido gives into her passion, "she does so in the belief that she puts her personal desire at the service of her city and people" (105). Like Turnus and Aeneas himself, Dido is torn between her personal desire and her duty toward her people. Despite Virgil's sympathetic portrait of Dido, nonetheless, Dido's love for Aeneas is crazed. She wants to hear him repeat the Trojan story over and over again and even seems to harbor a perverted desire for Ascanius who bears Aeneas' image as his son (*Aen.* 4.83-85), fondling the young boy in her lap and thinking of his father. Dido seems to have a perverted desire for the young Ascanius, pretending as though he is his father as she holds him. Dido's love for Aeneas, although the result of a divine interference, is ultimately unnatural, excessive, and perverted. This intemperate love has an effect on Dido's kingdom.

Additionally, through Dido, Virgil reveals one of the essential themes of the *Aeneid*: the connection between the moral and psychological health of the ruler and the city. Since Dido has fallen in love with Aeneas, the entire city has ceased its growth as its queen lounges around, pining for Aeneas. Excessive desire produces laziness, which makes the people weak and unable to build; the towers of Carthage

no longer rise, *non coeptae adsurgunt turrets* (*Aen.* 4.86). Also, the youth do not prepare for war:

non arma iuventus
exercet portusve aut propugnacula bello
tuta parant; pendent opera interrupta minaeque
murorum, ingentes aequataque machina caelo. (*Aen.* 4.86-88).

The youth do not exercise in arms nor dig the harbors nor prepare the bulwarks for war. All the work is left hanging and interrupted: the great, threatening walls and the cranes unmoving stood against the sky.

The power of the city to raise towers and train for war is dependent upon the ability of the Sidonian queen to control herself; if she degenerates, then the people will degenerate. Anna herself recognizes that the good of the city relies upon Dido's health, telling her sister that she has destroyed the city, *exstinxi te meque, soror, populumque patresque / Sidonios urbemque tuam* (*Aen.* 4.682-683, "You have destroyed your self and me, sister, and the people, the Sidonian Senate, and your city").¹¹⁰ Aeneas, however, has momentarily taken up Dido's task; he is constructing towers and building new houses, *fundantem arces et tecta novetem* (*Aen.* 4.260), when Mercury visits him, but Aeneas' construction is short lived. This mad love that cripples the city has its roots in the cave love scene.

The cave love scene has created a great deal of controversy; however, Virgil seems to urge his readers in one direction of interpretation.¹¹¹ Going out hunting, Dido and Aeneas find themselves trapped in a cave while a storm, which Juno and

¹¹⁰ Anna's list of the Carthaginian government sounds strangely Roman. See Asmis for a discussion of Cicero's view of the mixed Roman constitution (377), which seems to parallel Dido's government here.

¹¹¹ For discussion of this scene, see Anderson's "Ancient Illustrations of the *Aeneid*: The Hunts of Books 4 and 7", Dyson's "Dido the Epicurean", Gutting, Henry, Moorton, Nappa, Phinney, Quinn, Schmalfeldt, Segal, and Weber, Welch.

Venus have orchestrated, rages. The two then have sex, and trouble ensues. There are a number of important points in this situation. First of all, Juno orchestrates the whole event. Secondly, Juno gives the excuse that Dido is in love with Aeneas, so their lovemaking would be proper. In conversation with Venus, Juno explains that Dido burns with love for Aeneas and is even mad with love: *ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem* (*Aen.* 4.101, “Dido burns with love and has drug the madness through her bones”). A fire and madness burn through Dido’s bones, and she is ripe to be manipulated by the goddesses. Virgil displays his brilliance as he presents Dido to the reader on many levels. On the most basic level, she is an occasion for spectacle: Virgil presents Dido as an opportunity for catharsis for the reader and even almost sadistically displays the wounded queen and her inner life for the reader. However, tied to this spectacle, Dido is presented as a sympathetic character; she is an exile like Aeneas, who is a victim of the plotting of the gods and is overwhelmed by love, which Venus and Cupid craftily send. Finally, although Dido is crushed under the wheels of fate, her dissolution is necessary for the founding of Rome. Virgil provides some hints in his description of the love scene that something is wrong with it.

While the two are in the cave, Virgil uses images and language that are often associated with the underworld: *prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno / dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius Aether / conubiis, summoque ulularunt vertice Nymphae* (*Aen.* 4.166-168, “For the marriage, Primal Earth and matronly Juno give the sign, heaven flashes with fire, and nymphs howl on the heights”). The narrator also provides the gloss that the event is the cause of much wrong: *ille dies primus leti*

primusque malorum / causa fuit (*Aen.* 4.169-170, “That day was beginning of death and the primal cause of evils”). The result, here, is, of course, not only the discord between Dido and Aeneas, but also the struggle between the Romans and Carthaginians. Dido is not entirely to blame, but the narrator does depict her as a proud and vain person who is moved by her pride to call the abrupt encounter between Aeneas and her marriage: *neque enim specie famave movetur / nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem; / coniugium vocat; hoc praetexit nomine culpam* (*Aen.* 4.170-172, “For Dido is no longer moved by appearance or rumor, nor does she now meditate on a furtive love. She calls it marriage and adorns her sin with that name”). Dido is, to a certain degree, culpable for her actions; she thinks that their encounter was a commitment to marriage instead of a chance occurrence. On the other hand, despite Dido’s irrational behavior, there are a number of similarities between Dido’s Carthaginians and Aeneas’ Roman descendents.

Although Carthage is the traditional enemy of Rome, Virgil shows a number of similarities between the Carthaginians and the Romans. Recent critics such as J.D. Reed in his *Virgil’s Gaze* have emphasized the Oriental nature of the Trojans. Indeed, there are a number of times throughout the *Aeneid* when a character links Aeneas and the Trojans with the East in a pejorative manner. Turnus refers to Aeneas as an effeminate Easterner (12.95-106). Dido, in turn, demonstrates qualities similar to Aeneas, giving a speech like his (1.561-78). There are thus similarities between the Trojans and Carthaginians. Michael Putnam points to the murals in Dido’s temple as a point in which the reader sees with Aeneas “the shared experiences, and parallel sympathies, that might unite the two *duces* of their exiled peoples” (“Dido’s Murals”

244). Like the Romans, the Carthaginians view themselves as superior to the people around them, for Anna describes the numerous tribes around them as being savage. The Gaetulians are unconquerable in war, *genus insuperabile bello* (*Aen.* 4.40). The Numidians are like wild animals and are described as being unbridled, *infreni* (*Aen.* 4.41). And, finally, she refers to the Barcaeans as being wild, *furentes* (*Aen.* 4.42). What is interesting is that the arch-enemies of the Romans, the Carthaginians, are identifying themselves as an outpost of civilization amidst barbarians, and Anna sees the marriage of Dido and Aeneas as a unification of two civilized peoples, telling Dido, *quam tu urbem, soror, hanc cernes, quae surgere regna / coniugio tali* (*Aen.* 4.47-48 “Sister, what a city, what realms you will see rising up from such a marriage!”).¹¹² The unification of the two would produce a glorious civilization, if, that is, it is the will of the gods. Moreover, Anna emphasizes that Troy would be subsumed into the Punic people as opposed to the Italic: *Teucrium comitantibus armis, / Punica se quantis attollet gloria rebus!* (*Aen.* 4.48-49, “Accompanied by Trojan arms, by such exploits will Punic glory grow!”). Dido and the Carthaginians are in many ways very civilized, and the Carthaginian queen has some similarities with Aeneas.

Like Aeneas, Dido is pious. When seeking the favor of the gods for her proposed union with Aeneas, Dido and Anna make a number of sacrifices. Virgil even presents Dido in the role of a priestess:

ipsa tenens dextra pateram pulcherrima Dido
candentis vaccae media inter cornua fundit
aut ante ora deum pinguis spatiatur ad aras,

¹¹² Panoussi points out that Anna’s words appeal “to the queen’s strong commitment to the welfare of her city...” (104).

instauratque diem donis pecudumque reclusis
pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta. (*Aen.* 4.60-63)

Exquisite Dido herself, holding a cup with her right hand, pours it out between the horns of a white cow, and before the faces of the gods, she walks to altars, and daily offers the gifts of animals, and examining the opened breasts of beasts, she consults their quaking guts.

Dido prepares a ritual for the gods as both Anchises and Aeneas do. However, immediately following this passage, Virgil writes how ridiculous it is for Dido to attempt augury, for she is blinded by love: *heu vatum ignarae mentes! Quid vota furentem, / quid delubra iuvant!* (*Aen.* 4.65-66, “Oh, empty heads of prophets! What help do prayers or temples give to a madwoman?”). On the other hand, Dido is often associated with magic and the underworld, and she is mad.

As the poem progresses, Dido’s sanity begins to unravel as desire overwhelms her, and she turns to worship strange gods, becoming a definitively negative *exemplum*. The madness reaches a culmination in Dido’s death. After she kills herself, her sister and the other maid are overwhelmed with grief. The house becomes a madhouse:

it clamor ad alta
atria; concussam bacchatur Fama per urbem.
lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu
tectae fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus aether,
non aliter, quam si immissis ruat hostibus omnis
Karthago aut antiqua Tyros, flammaeque furentes
culmina perque hominum volvantur perque deorum. (*Aen.* 4.665-668)

A clamor rises to the high roof; *Fama* riots through the shaken city. The roofs tremble with a cry of lament and feminine howling; the sky resounds with great rumblings. It is like all of Carthage or ancient Troy collapsed before the oncoming enemy and raging flames rushed over the roofs of men and gods.

Just as with Aeneas, Rome, and Jove, there is a connection between the leader, the people, and the heavens. Dido goes mad with love, and her people rage madly as

well; it is even as if Carthage were falling as Troy did. Even Anna recognizes this, telling her sister that the queen, fathers, *patres*, as well as the people, *populum*, have been destroyed (*Aen.* 4.682-683). The heavens as well are filled with the shouts. While it would be wrong to style Virgil a misogynist or anti-feminist, he does here associate the feminine with the irrational; it is a distinctly female scream, *femineo ululatu*, that fills the house.

The death of Dido reveals, however, Virgil's ultimate judgment upon her. Dido is overwhelmed by her grief, and Virgil writes that Dido did not earn her death and was not subject to fate; rather, she went mad and thus remains a sympathetic character (*Aen.* 4.696-699). Juno pities her and sends Iris, one of the messenger gods, to free Dido's soul. She ends up as dust in the wind and is completely destroyed. After Iris takes Dido's lock of blonde hair, Dido's life passes away into the winds: ... *omnis et una / dilapsus calor atque in ventos vita recessit* (*Aen.* 4.704-705, "... and all the heat left her, and her life went with the wind").¹¹³ Dido disappears to later reappear in the underworld in the field of those who died of love. Dido's curse of Aeneas in 4.607-629, however, is successful as Aeneas must suffer greatly, and Dido's descendents will fight Aeneas' in the Punic Wars. Virgil's portrait of the Carthaginians and their queen thus contains a mixture of sympathy and condemnation. Virgil does depict Dido and the Carthaginians as decadent Easterners. Moreover, Dido herself often acts in a hysterical and irrational fashion. On the other hand, the Carthaginians are a people, like the Trojans, who are in flight, and further, like the Trojans, the Carthaginians view themselves as civilized people

¹¹³ This scene parallels the death of Turnus and Camilla who both return to the shades, *sub umbras* (Reed 83).

among barbarians. Dido herself is the victim of plotting gods and serves to elicit sympathy from Virgil's audience. The Carthaginians are not the only Other in the poem, however. Virgil often presents the Italians as containing a mixture of civilization and barbarism.

Like the Carthaginians, the Italian people against and with whom Aeneas and the Trojans fight, are objects of sympathy and interest as well as savage enemies who must be conquered.¹¹⁴ Virgil, at times, associates some of the Italians with the pastoral life. Latinus, king of the Latins, describes his people as being children of Saturn who are not subject to laws but live in primitive natural virtue and tells the Trojans not to be afraid of their welcome: *ne fugite hospitium neve ignorete Latinos / Saturni gentem, haud vinclo nec legibus aequam, / sponte sua veterisque dei se more tenentem* (*Aen.* 7.202-204, "Do not flee our hospitality. Know that the Latins are of the race of Saturn—just, not by constraint or laws, but by their own free will and by the custom of the old god"). The Latins, whose blood the Romans will inherit, are noble savages free from the constraint of harsh laws, only following those given under the reign of Saturn. Evander, the Greek exile, confirms this story in Book 8, telling the story of how in Italy there was a group of primitive people.¹¹⁵ Then, when

¹¹⁴ Adam Parry sees a paradox in Virgil's depiction of the Italians: "The explicit message of the *Aeneid* claims that Rome was a happy reconciliation of the natural virtues of the local Italian peoples and the civilized might of the Trojans who came to found the new city. But the tragic movement of the last books of the poem carries a different suggestion: that the formation of Rome's empire involved the loss of the pristine purity of Italy" (68).

¹¹⁵ See Papaioannou for an extensive discussion of the history of Evander and Virgil's reworking of him as "prominent hero of the Roman pre-history" (682) and whose welcoming of Aeneas "emphasizes the necessity of reconciliation between Greeks and Trojans, and familiarizes Augustus' new ancestor with the history and

Saturn fled to Italy, the father of Jove taught the people how to live: *is genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis / composuit legesque dedit, Latiumque vocari / maluit, his quoniam latuisset tutus in oris* (*Aen.* 8.321-323, “Saturn gathered together the wild race that was dispersed throughout the high mountains and gave them laws; he called the land Latium because on these shores he was safely hidden”). Saturn civilized the wild, indigenous Italian people, and a new golden age began: *aurea quae perhibent illo sub rege fuere / saecula: sic placida populos in pace regebat...* (*Aen.* 8.324-325, “The golden ages, which men still discuss, were under his reign, and he ruled the people in tranquil peace...”). Evander admits that this golden age did not last, but there is thus an association between the Italy and the golden age. Evander further has a shared plight with Aeneas; he too is an exile who is impelled by Fate and the gods (*Aen.* 8.333-336). Just as Fate and Jove drive Aeneas to his homeland, so too do Apollo and Fate drive Evander. Like Aeneas, Evander is following the will of the gods. Moreover, paralleling Aeneas, Evander is a civilizer whose site “flourishes under his wise rule” (Papaioannu 688). However, Virgil does not depict all of people in Italy in this noble light.

Although many of them have noble qualities, some of the Italians, like Dido herself, are cursed by the gods and deserve to be conquered, becoming negative *exempla*. Virgil even plays with cultural stereotypes in his depiction of the East. There are points at which Virgil identifies the Italians with the East (*Aen.* 9.30-32), using the simile of the Ganges and the Nile rising to describe the rise of Italian

rituals of the community destined to become the heart of the new Roman nation” (701).

armies.¹¹⁶ Additionally, Camilla, the Italian warrior, wears an Eastern cloak made from a tiger's skin (*Aen.* 11.576-577) as well as purple and gold garments worn by Easterners (*Aen.* 7.812-17). As he does for the Easterners in the poem, Virgil seems to express sympathy for the Italians, but he also recognizes that they must too yield to Rome. Furthermore, the Italians often represent irrationality. There are three central scenes of Juno spreading madness among the Italians. Turnus and Amata go mad, and the country people are driven mad with anger after Iulus kills a beloved stag.

Amata had initially opposed the union of Aeneas and Lavinia, but Juno makes Amata go completely mad with rage, becoming a negative *exemplum* of vice. Juno fetches Allecto, the Fury, to drive Amata mad, and Amata comes and flings a snake upon Amata's breast; the poison seeps through her, driving her mad with rage at her daughter's proposed marriage to Aeneas. Virgil uses language very similar to that used to describe Dido's madness: Amata begins to go mad, and fire fills her bones (*Aen.* 7.354-356). Virgil also uses the same image of fire traveling through Amata's breast that he used with Dido. Amata attempts to stir up war against the Trojans, but her husband Latinus will not listen and plays the role of the calm, rational ruler, standing strong against her empty words and divine madness (*Aen.* 7.373-374). Amata then gathers together the women of Latium and feigns a Bacchanalian festival, stirring up war against the Trojans. Virgil then makes another comparison to Dido, calling her *infelix* (*Aen.* 7.376), unhappy or unlucky. Virgil describes Amata as wildly raging like a spinning top: *torto volitans sub vertere turbo* (*Aen.* 7.378). As

¹¹⁶ Reed notes that these rivers are not part of Rome but are places "to which Augustan imperial ambitions claimed title" (57).

Dido's madness spread to the people of Carthage, Amata's madness spreads to other women of Latium: *fama volat, furiisque accensas pectore matres / idem omnis simul ardor agit nova quaerere tecta* (Aen. 7.392-393, "The word spreads, and mothers, their breasts ignited by fire, all together are pushed by the same fury and seek new homes"). Amata has driven all of the women of Latium into a Bacchic frenzy that disturbs the peace and order of the city. Virgil makes it clear that there is thus a divine prerogative that drives Amata: *talem inter silvas, inter deserta ferarum / reginam Allecto stimulis agit undique Bacchi* (Aen. 7.404-405 "Out in the woods, among the deserted places of beasts, such is the queen, who is driven by Allecto with Bacchic goad"). Amata has become like a wild beast, traveling amidst the places of beasts, yet Allecto drives her to this state. Regardless, Virgil presents a chaotic situation that must be subdued. However, Amata is not the only Italian whom Juno drives mad.

Turnus, while offended at Lavinia's proposed union with Aeneas, is driven further mad by Allecto's flaming torch and also, on a certain level, is another negative *exemplum* of vice. Allecto appears to Turnus disguised as Calybe, one of Juno's priestesses, and, at first chastises Turnus for not trying to fight for Lavinia's hand. Turnus' first response is mockery, telling the old woman that she is getting too excited: *sed te victa situ verique effeta senectus, / o mater, curis nequiquam exercet, et arma / regum inter falsa vatem formidine ludit* (Aen. 7.440-442, "But you, mother, old age, worn down and barren of truth, worries you uselessly and, among the wars of kings toys teases your prophetic person with false alarms"). It is interesting to note that Turnus initially appears calm and reasonable, warning the

supposed Calybe not to stir up unwarranted trouble. After further informing the apparent Calybe that war is the work of men, and she should not concern herself with it, Turnus is attacked by Allecto who dissolves her disguise, terrifying him. Allecto throws a torch unto Turnus' breast, which inflames him with desire for war. Virgil describes Turnus' state as being a mad lust for war: *arma amens fremit, arma toro tectisque requirit; / saevit amor ferri et scelerata insania belli / ira super...* (Aen. 7.460-462, "Mad, he roars for weapons; he searches for arms on his couch and under his roof. Love of iron rages and the cruel insanity of war, and anger above all..."). He, like the two women, is overcome by a divine madness, and the previously calm man now shouts for blood and war: *tutari Italiam, detrudere finibus hostem, / se satis ambobus Teucrisque venire Latinisque* (Aen. 7.469-470 "Protect Italy! Drive the enemy from her shores! I am coming and shall be enough for both Teucrians and Latins!"). Turnus is driven to such madness that he threatens war against both the Trojans and the Latin people. The culpability of Turnus is alleviated by the fact that he is possessed by madness from the gods, but, nonetheless, Virgil presents another situation with which Aeneas must deal. Turnus even admits that he is mad later on: *hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem* (Aen. 12.680, "This one thing I ask: let this madness rage before I die"). Turnus' madness, however, is not the last fire that Juno stirs up.

The third scene of divinely inspired madness occurs when Iulus wounds a stag beloved of the Italian people. Again, Allecto, who has been sent by Juno, is responsible for the misdeed. With the scent of a stag, Allecto drives Iulus' hunting dogs mad. This stag, however, is no ordinary stag; it is the beloved pet of Tyrrhus,

the man in charge of the Latins royal herds, and his children, especially his daughter Silvia. After the mad dogs, *rabidae ... canes* (*Aen.* 7.493-394), track the stag, Ascanius wounds it. The stag then runs away wounded to his barn and is found by Silva, who calls for help. The local woodsmen come to her aide with a variety of crude weapons:

olli (pestis enim tacitis latet aspera silvis)
improvisi adsunt, hic torre armatus obusto,
stipitis hic gravidi nodis; quod cuique repertum
rimanti, telum ira facit. (*Aen.* 7.505-508)

They (for the vile pest hides in the quiet woods) unexpectedly arrive; this one is armed with a burnt torch, that one armed with a knotted stick; everyone grabs whatever he can in the search. Anger provides a weapon.

The Italians are, by in large, good and noble people. It is the machinations of the goddess Juno that lead to these wars. There are some especially wicked Italians, however.

The Etruscan Mezentius is one of the most explicitly wicked of the Trojans' enemies, and Virgil does not provide him with the excuse of a madness infected by a Fury. In Book 8, Evander explains that Mezentius is a cruel king who ruled over the city of Agylla with savage arms, *saevis ... armis* (*Aen.* 8.482). Mezentius is clearly among the most wicked characters in the poem, and he does not have the excuse of being cursed by the gods. Evander provides an especially disgusting example of Mezentius' cruelty:

mortua quin etiam iungebat corpora vivis,
componens manibusque manus atque oribus ora,
tormenti genus, et sanie taboque fluentis
complexu in misero longa sic morte necabat. (*Aen.* 8.485-488)

He would even join dead to living bodies, pressing them together, hand to hand and face to face (a terrible torture!), and, in the oozing gore and vile embrace, he would kill them in a protracted death.

Mezentius' crimes ultimately made him unbearable to his own people who expelled him from his city: *at fessi tandem cives infanda furem / armati circumstant*

ipsumque domumque, / obtruncant socios, ignem ad fastigia iactant (*Aen.* 8.489-491,

"However, finally, worn down, the armed citizens assault the house and person of the monstrous madman; they cut down his crew and launch fire onto his roof").

Mezentius' misdeeds led to civil disorder, and he is forced to seek help from Turnus, who is his friend. Mezentius is thus an anti-type of Aeneas, for Mezentius also flees a burning city and seeks refuge in a foreign land, yet, unlike Aeneas, Mezentius was forced to flee because of his misdeeds not because of Fate. Mezentius stands out as a strong negative *exemplum* of vice. In addition to those whom he must fight on earth, Aeneas has gods who fight against him.

From the beginning of the poem, one learns that Aeneas has an enemy in the heavens. Within the first five lines of the poem, Virgil introduces Juno who has been angered by the Trojans and seeks to punish them and thwart the destiny of Rome.¹¹⁷

Virgil makes it clear that many of Aeneas' misfortunes have their origin in the machinations of Juno. Aeneas is a man who must endure much at her hands, being tormented on land and sea because of cruel Juno's wrath, *saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram* (*Aen.* 1.4). Virgil concludes his introduction of Juno with his invocation of the Muse, asking her how it is that the queen of heaven is so angry with the Trojans:

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso
quidve dolens regina deum tot volvere casus

¹¹⁷ See Parry for a discussion of Juno as a "magnified" Poseidon or Athena (74).

insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores
impulerit. (*Aen.* 1.8-11)

Recall for me, Muse, the cause, how thwarted in will or angered by an old wound, the queen of heaven could compel such a good man to undertake so many challenges and groan under such labors.

There is a paradox here that Virgil will answer throughout the poem: how is it that a goddess can torment a man who is so good? Thus, one of the many things that the poem is about is the problem of why the just man must suffer. Virgil then asks the question: *tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* (*Aen.* 1.11, "Is there such anger in heavenly spirits"). Virgil later explains that Juno has a number of reasons for hating the Trojans. First of all, they will someday overthrow Carthage, Juno's beloved city. They also fought against Juno's beloved Argos, *caris ... Argis* (*Aen.* 1.24). Juno is not primarily concerned with protecting her allies in war; she also is upset about the judgment of Paris at which she was slighted, and she is angry at the presence of Trojan Ganymede in heaven as Jove's lover. Juno is thus positioned as the protecting goddess of Rome's Eastern rivals as well as a jealous goddess who seeks vengeance.¹¹⁸ Virgil treats the savagery of Juno throughout the poem.¹¹⁹ In Book 2, Virgil refers to most ferocious Juno, *Iuno ... saevissima* (612), who summons the gods to destroy Troy. Juno is the fierce wife of Jove, *saeva Iovis coiunx*, who returns from Argos to find the Trojans in Italy (7.287). Furthermore, it is the will of cruel Juno, *saevae nutu Iunonis*, which drives the wars in Italy (7.592). Knox notes that the depiction of Juno as such a savage character was difficult for ancient readers of

¹¹⁸ Peter Knox notes that only Latins and Carthaginians call Juno *regia* in the poem (229).

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of the concept of savagery in the poem, see Peter Knox's "Savagery in the *Aeneid* and Virgil's Ancient Commentators."

Virgil such as Servius who “could not conceive of savagery as an inherent characteristic of one of Rome’s most important gods, Juno Regina, a member of the Capitoline triad” (228). However, Knox points out that earlier readers of the *Aeneid* from Virgil’s own time would remember Juno as the patroness of other Italian cities against whom the Romans had only recently fought (228). Juno, who had schemed to unite Dido and Aeneas, and who had stirred up the anger of the Italians upon Aeneas’ arrival, is perhaps the most determined and persistent enemy of the Trojans. However, like all of the enemies of the Trojans and the descendants, the Romans, Juno must yield before the divine mission that Jove has entrusted to Rome. Juno is the queen of heaven, but she serves as one of the primary negative *exempla* in the poem, for her irrationality and violence cause much suffering.

Ultimately, within his *Aeneid*, Virgil, despite the complexity of the work and the diversity of “voices” in the poem, presents a work that is decidedly didactic; he has the goal of shaping the moral character of the reader. Virgil introduces a series of examples, or *exempla*, that have a teaching purpose. Aeneas is the primary hero of the poem whom Virgil presents as an *exemplum*. Aeneas is a flawed character; however, one must not read him with a view prejudiced by the sentimentality of a post-modern reader. Aeneas’ violence and killing, especially that of Turnus, is not to be viewed as some deep flaw in his character. Rather, Aeneas’ violence is necessary for the creation of Rome. Moreover, Aeneas’ seemingly cruel dismissal of Dido is, again, necessary for the creation of the Roman Empire as much as Cleopatra’s death is. Virgil further presents a series of prophecies that show divine favor upon the Trojans; these prophecies undergo changes and modification due to the

machinations of gods and goddesses such as Juno, yet they, nonetheless, herald Rome as an empire with a civilizing mission. Additionally, Virgil posits an Other in the poem that the Romans must subdue. On the other hand, Virgil is sympathetic to many of the people conquered by Rome and killed by her soldiers, and the complexity and depth of Virgil's vision is revealed by his ability to see the goodness as well as the flaws of the other. The Other in the *Aeneid* primarily takes the form of irrational Easterners as well as vicious Italic peoples. However, Virgil strongly emphasizes the moral qualities of those who have failed as well as the influence of the gods on their lives. Characters such as Dido, Turnus, and Amata fall because they have lost divine favor or were driven mad by the gods in addition to whatever moral failing they have. The *Aeneid* inaugurates a tradition of an imperial epic composed of *exempla* that echoes throughout European history; one of the foremost imitators of this genre is Dante Alighieri.

Chapter Three

Dante's Use of Virgil's Epic: The Sacred and the Secular

Dante Alighieri is one of the most self-consciously Virgilian poets of the Middle Ages and is a poet who carried Virgil's banner of imperialism mixed with self-criticism and humanism. Dante's work is influenced by the imperial *exemplum* in Virgil's *Aeneid*, which presents an imperial vision that modifies the *Aeneid* according to the expectations of medieval Christianity in both its orthodox and heretical variants. In his work, Dante appropriates Virgil on two levels. The first is in the universal monarchy that Dante hoped would be successful and bring about a period of orderly peace. In this level of monarchy, those who are part of the imperial community are those who support the emperor as well as those who are virtuous, and the Others are those who are vicious and seek division in the empire. Dante also singles out Rome's traditional cultural enemies such as Easterners and Greeks as Others. The second level of the empire is theological, and Dante creates a kingdom of the redeemed that stretches across earth, purgatory, and heaven. Those who have the correct moral virtues as well as those who have been redeemed by grace are in purgatory or heaven. The Others are not defined by their ethnicity or culture but rather are identified on a moral and theological level. Additionally, Dante takes issue with Islam, which Dante condemns because of its theological error.¹²⁰ However, contemporary critics have reevaluated Dante's theological views.

¹²⁰ Dante's relationship to Islam is contentious. See Rudolph Altrocchi's "Dante and Tufail", Leonardo Olschki's "Mohammedan Eschatology and Dante's Other World", Miguel Palacio's *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, and Greg Stone's *Dante's Pluralism and the Islamic Philosophy of Religion* for discussion of the influence of Islam on Dante. Brenda Deen Schildgen attempts to explain Dante's crusader rhetoric as being

Recently, there have been a number of works written that reexamine Dante's role as the standard-bearer of Orthodox Christianity. In a seminal work of Dante criticism, Miguel Palacios suggests that Dante was greatly influenced by Islamic narratives of the afterlife. Contemporary scholars such as Teolinda Barolini and Greg Stone have sought to explore Dante from a secular perspective, focusing on his poetics in the case of Barolini as well as his use of Aristotle and Islamic philosophy in the case of Stone.

In his work, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, Miguel Palacios makes a strong case that Dante was influenced by Islamic mystical stories of the afterlife inspired by the passage in the Koran in which Mohammed travels at night from Mecca to Jerusalem in a journey, which is called the *Isra* and *Miraj*. Palacios, who was a Spanish Catholic priest, seeks to provide an antidote to what he sees as the Eurocentricism of Dante scholars who dismiss Islamic influence. At one point, Palacios says, "If imitation [of Islamic sources] by Dante can be disproved, the manifest similarity is either an insolvable mystery or a miracle of originality" (172). Palacios believes that the influence of Islam upon Dante is obvious and only obscured by prejudice. Palacios points to the Koran, Islamic philosophy as well as several cycles of *hadiths* that depict Mohammed's *Isra* and *Miraj*. In these cycles, Mohammed makes a journey that passes by hell in which he sees sinners being tortured justly in a way that resembles Dante's notion of *contrapasso*: those punished include Sodomites who are burned, schismatics who are cleaved in two, and usurers who swim in rivers of blood. Mohammed further travels through a

principally directed toward the Christian West not the Islamic East in "Dante and the Crusades."

heaven in some versions of the story that is, like Dante's *Paradiso*, based upon the Ptolemaic universe. Palacios makes special note of the seeming influence on Dante's *Paradiso* of the *Ishraqi* school "so addicted to the usage of similes of light and geometric circles in the illustration of metaphysical" (24). Palacios further points out that there could be a prototype to Beatrice in the "Heavenly Betrothed" in the writings on the Islamic afterlife by mystics who thought to spiritualize the Hourī whom devout Muslims would gain in heaven (130). At the end of his work, Palacios establishes himself as Christian and does not reject Dante's own personal Christianity, writing "[i]n the end we find that it is that perennial source of poetry and spirituality, the Divine religion of Christ, that furnishes the real key to the genesis of Dante's poem and its precursors, both Christian and Moslem" (277). Although he suggests that Dante's literary sources were often Islamic, Palacios does not see Dante himself as a radical. Palacios explains, "Dante could without altering the essence of Christian teaching on that life, draw for the purposes of his poem on the artistic features furnished by Moslem legends" (277). Dante was thus primarily deriving his artistic form from Islam, not his beliefs. Palacios ends his book with a statement that suggests that Dante was "reclaiming" for Christianity the "property that was by rights his own, heirlooms that had lain hidden in the religious lore of the East until restored to the stock of Western culture greatly enhanced by the imaginative genius of Islam" (277). Palacios recognizes the intelligence of Islam, but sees the mystical legends as ultimately having a Christian origin, which Dante appropriates. Following Palacios, there has been an increase in reading Dante's work that seeks to distance the poet from Christianity.

Teolinda Barolini is a contemporary critic who seeks to develop a secular reading of Dante. In her *Detheologizing Dante*, Barolini explains that her goal is to free Dante from being over determined by theology: “detheologizing is a way of reading that attempts to break out of the hermeneutic guidelines that Dante has structured into his poem, hermeneutic guidelines that result in theologized readings whose outcomes have been overdetermined by the author” (DD 17). Barolini seems to hold that Dante was, in fact, a Christian; however, she believes that Dante’s theology gets in the way of the appreciation of his poetry. In doing so, Barolini claims that she is privileging “form over content” (DD 17). In *Detheologizing Dante*, Barolini views Dante as a poet who is following Ulysses in traversing in areas where no human has gone before. Dante is trying to represent the impossible, and Dante seeks “to find the language that will eliminate difference, traversing the space between what the *De vulgari eloquentia* calls the rational and the sensual aspects of language, i.e., the meaning and the sound, the signified and signifier...” (Barolini, DD 92-93). Barolini does not question Dante’s Christianity; she rather seeks to read the Italian poet from a formalist perspective, discarding the historical, philosophical, and theological baggage. Barolini’s work has been complemented by other readings of Dante that seek to reexamine the poet’s material.

In his *Dante’s Pluralism and the Islamic Philosophy of Religion*, Greg Stone continues the contemporary trend of reevaluating Dante from a secular standpoint. However, Stone takes an even more radical stance than Barolini or Palacios. His goal is to demonstrate that Dante was not an orthodox Christian but rather a Christian humanist who was inspired by Islamic philosophy. Stone acknowledges that Dante

uses Christian ideas and vocabulary, “[b]ut this does not mean that Dante’s *aim*, the guiding orientation of his project is necessarily Christian” (2). Stone points to a number of inconsistencies in the theological reading of Dante. The *Commedia* was not called “divine” until it was so by a Venetian printer in 1555 to indicate the beauty of the work not its subject matter. Moreover, Dante’s *Monarchia* remained on the Church’s Index for over three hundred years. Stone suggests that Dante was rehabilitated by Leo XIII to buttress his project of enforcing Neo-Scholasticism. Stone additionally suggests that the theological school of Dante criticism “has managed to hide Dante’s openness to other faiths” (41). Stone proposes that the current reading of Dante as an orthodox Christian may be unappealing to readers hostile to or indifferent toward Christianity, and “there are undoubtedly various communities of readers who, hearing that the *Comedy* is a Christian poem (or, for some, simply hearing it called *The Divine Comedy*), will turn away from it—assuming that it might speak to Christians or to the spiritually inclined but not to others” (2). According to Stone, Dante only gives the appearance of being a Christian, and Dante only uses Christian language to further his political ideas(10). Drawing from Marsilius of Padua, Dante holds that the people of earth make up the real church for which Dante is advocating (Stone 11). Dante further follows a rhetorical tradition expressed by some Islamic philosophers such as Averroes that uses religion to teach the masses who are not intelligent enough to understand true philosophy. The images of hell, purgatory, and heaven are thus just that: images used to keep the masses in order: “Our reward for being governed by justice is the peaceful social order, the ideal human community (represented in the poem as Heaven); our

punishment for disregarding the guidance of justice is the community fractured by violence (represented in the poem as Hell)” (Stone 18). Therefore, the multivariate key that Dante provides in his letter to Can Grande della Scala reveals that Dante meant his Christianity to only be a vehicle for his ideas. Stone explains that the “poem is a ‘political allegory’ in a more general sense: it appears to be concerned with the fate of individual souls in the afterlife but is in fact concerned with the *polis*, the fate of human community in this life. It appears to be primarily theological but is primarily philosophical. It appears to be primarily religious but is primarily secular” (19). Dante’s view is then to build a terrestrial community and seek an earthly good using the language of eternal dwelling places. Stone further holds that Dante is a universalist, and, for Dante, “Christ does not save by offering some new doctrine; rather, he ratifies and grants legitimacy to models of ethical excellence that may be found throughout human history” (23). Dante thus does not believe in the uniqueness of Christ or Christian revelation; rather, he sees Christ as one teacher among many. Dante’s way of solving the problem of warfare and lack of peace is to unite the human race into one political body: “The driving thought of *Monarchy*, and of the *Comedy*, is this: the necessity of the establishment of what we would call ‘one-world government’” (Stone 26). In order to accomplish this goal, Stone seeks to prove that Dante prefers philosophy to theology (32).

Recent criticism of Dante as a secular poet makes a number of strong points. There is much in Dante’s thought that diverges from orthodox Christianity. Also, there is a need for an honest examination of the effect of Islamic thought on the Italian poet. However, there needs to be a response to the secular critics of Dante.

There should be a dialogue between both the secular and theological schools of Dante criticism that seeks to provide a coherent reading of the poet.

It is possible to reconcile the two visions as Gian Biagio Conte has done for Virgil. It is inaccurate to view Dante as simply a propagandist for orthodox Christianity who simply puts St. Thomas Aquinas into verse. On the other hand, it would be equally misguided to see Dante merely as a radical who only uses Christian theology as a vehicle for his radical Aristotelianism. Dante's political vision is tied to a long tradition in Christianity that sees the emperor as a ruler who derives his power from God, and thus the empire is a holy institution.¹²¹ Furthermore, the structure of hell, purgatory, and heaven are incomprehensible without the work of grace; thus, Dante's Aristotelianism is a decidedly Christian Aristotelianism. In both his secular and his spiritual vision, Dante utilizes Virgil's imperial *exemplum* and its components of a hero, prophecies, and Other.

Dante's Hero

In the *Commedia*, Dante's hero, who is an image of himself as a pilgrim traveling from hell to heaven, is a synthesis of the classical hero along with the traditional Christian pilgrim.¹²² Dante is not a warrior, but is not exclusively a philosopher or an artist either. In order to engage in dialogue with the secular critics of Dante, it must be demonstrated that Dante's journey through hell, purgatory, and

¹²¹ For treatment of development of politics in the Middle Ages, see Walter Ullmann's *A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages* as well as Joseph Canning's more recent work, *A History of Medieval Political Thought: 300-1450*.

¹²² A number of critics attempt to explore the nature of Dante as a hero in the *Commedia*. For a reading of Dante as a new Paul, see Marsha Daigle-Williamson's "Dante: A New Pauline Apostle." See also Rachel Owen's "The Image of Dante, Poet and Pilgrim", James Finn Cotter's "Dante and Christ: The Pilgrim as *Beatus Vir*", and Theresa Federici's "Dante's Davidic Journey: From Sinner to God's Scribe."

heaven in the *Commedia* is not simply an intellectual transformation; it is a religious conversion. Dante is first and foremost a Christian pilgrim who must find his way to heaven. In doing so, Dante crafts a portrait of himself that paradoxically both builds off the image of Aeneas while rejecting it. In *Inferno* 2, Dante rejects the images of Paul and Aeneas, saying, “*Io non Enëa, io non Paulo sono*” (32, “I am not Aeneas, nor am I Paul”).¹²³ Dante is going to write a new type of epic; this epic will be of a different sort than the martial epic, although there are a great deal of structural references to Aeneas and the sea voyage. Dante compares his ancestor Cacciaguida to Anchises in *Paradiso* 15: “*Sì pïa l’ombra d’Anchise si porse, / se fede merta nostra maggior musa, / quando in Eliso del figlio s’accorse*” (25-27, “With such affection did Anchises’ shade reach out, / if our greatest muse is owed belief, / when in Elysium he knew his son”). Just as Aeneas is greeted by his dead father in the after life, so too is Dante greeted by his dead ancestor. Additionally, Dante frames his poem as a sea voyage in the *Paradiso*. In *Paradiso* 2, Dante sets the tone for the rest of the poem. He does so using the image of a ship. This ship will have traveled where even Ulysses’, Jason’s, or Aeneas’ has gone. Dante establishes the experience of his journey in heaven as an elite experience:

O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
 Desideriosi d’ascoltar, seguiti
 Dietro al mio legno che cantando varca,
 Tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
 Non vi mettete in pelago, ché forse,
 Perdendo me, rimarreste smarriti.

O you, eager to hear more,
 who have followed in your little bark

¹²³ For the quotes from the *Commedia*, I use Robert and Jean Hollander’s Italian text and their English translation.

my ship that singing makes its way,
turn back if you would see your shores again.
Do not set forth upon the deep,
for, losing sight of me, you would be lost. (*Par.* 2.1-6)

Dante frames his experience in mystical language, drawing from both pagan and Christian sources. His voyage is different from Aeneas even if it retains some traits.

Dante must undergo the transformation of his mind, will, and emotions.

Dante is a definitively Christian hero who does not achieve his victory by fighting. Rather, his journey is the journey of the soul from a state of dissolution and despair through conversion, penance, and ultimately healing and unity with God. Before he reaches God, Dante grows in courage, is purified of his pity, and undergoes a change of will.

One of Dante's first tasks is to grow in courage.¹²⁴ Dante faints frequently throughout the *Inferno*. Virgil explains in *Inferno* 2 that Dante is a coward:

l'anima tua è da viltade offessa
la qual molte fiata l'omo ingombra
sì che d'onrat impresa lo rinvolve,
come falso veder bestia quand' ombra.

Your spirit is assailed by cowardice,
Which many a time so weighs upon a man
It turns him back from noble enterprise,
The way a beast shies from a shadow. (*Inf.* 2.45-48)

Dante has become like a cowardly beast afraid of its shadow, and Virgil has come to free him from this vice and effect a conversion: "*Da questa tema a ciò che tu ti solve, / dirrotti perch'io venni e quell ch'io 'ntesi / nel primo punto che di te mi dolse*" (*Inf.* 2.49-51, "To free you from this fear/ I'll tell you why I came and what I heard when

¹²⁴ For a book-length treatment of Dante's emotional growth (in *Purgatorio*), see Jeremy Tambling's *Dante in Purgatory: States of Affect*.

first I felt compassion for you"). Virgil has come to make Dante into a virtuous man. Virgil then explains how Beatrice came via Lucy and the Virgin Mary to save Dante's soul. Beatrice comes to Virgil and tells him that the Virgin Mary was worried about Dante's condition (*Inf.*2.94-9). Mary had worried of the state of Dante's soul, so she sent Lucy to Beatrice to tell Virgil to become Dante's guide. The change in Dante is going to be a healing of his soul through a variety of sources: pagan, Islamic, and Christian. He is however in a poor state at the beginning of the poem.

There are a number of additional moments when Dante faints, demonstrating his cowardice. Dante faints in *Inferno* 3 when he experiences the burning wind:

La terra lagrimosa diede vento,
che balenò una luce vermiglia
la qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento;
e caddi com l'uom cui sonno piglia.

From the weeping ground there sprang a wind,
flaming with vermilion light,
which overmastered all my senses,
and I dropped like a man pulled down by sleep. (*Inf.* 3.133-136)

Dante is also pale with fear in *Inferno* 9, and Virgil hurries to comfort him: "*Quel color che viltà di fuor mi pinse / veggendo il ducca mio tornare in volta, / più tosto dentro il suo novo ristrinse*" (1-3, "The pallor cowardice painted on my face / when I saw my leader turning back/ made him hasten to compose his features"). Dante is further described as being afraid when he mounts Geryon in *Inferno* 17 and then experiences shame:

Qual è colui che sì press ha 'l riprezzo
de la quartana, c'ha già l'unghie smorte,
e triema tutto pur guardando 'l rezzo,
tal divenn' io a le parole porte;

As a man in a shivering-fit of quartan fever,

So ill his nails have lost all color,
Trembles all over at the sight of the shade,
So I as stricken at his words. (*Inf.* 17.85-88)

Virgil's guidance provides peace for Dante, and Virgil's teaching shows Dante the true nature of sin. However, Dante expresses his fear again when he and Virgil take off on Geryon (*Inf.* 17.107-114). In *Inferno* 21, Dante is overwhelmed with fear at the sight of the devils and attempts to flee (25-30), expressing his great fear at having these devils as guides (*Inf.* 21.127-132). Once again, Virgil consoles him: *Non vo' che tu paventi; lasciali digrignar pur a lor senno, / ch' e' fanno ciò per li lessi dolente*" (*Inf.* 21.133-135, "Don't be afraid. / Let them grind on to their heart's content— / they do it for the stewing wretches"). Virgil has the courage of a virtuous pagan while Dante doesn't even have that.¹²⁵ Virgil even carries Dante like a mother does her child in *Inferno* 19 and 23 as Aeneas carried his father.

In addition to fear, Dante also experiences pity for many of the sinners in hell. Dante weeps with pity for the diviners who have their bodies contorted in *Inferno* *Inf.* 20.19-25. Dante addresses the reader and informs him or her that Dante is so upset at the distortion of the human figure that he must weep. However, Virgil again reprimands him, asking Dante,

Ancor se' tu de li altri sciocchi?
Qui vive la pietà quand' è ben morta;
chi è più scellerator che colui
che al giudicio divin passion comporta?

Are you still witless as the rest?
Here piety lives when pity is quite dead.
Who is more impious than one who thinks

¹²⁵ For a recent treatment of Dante and Virgil's friendship, see Guy Raffa's "A Beautiful Friendship: Dante and Virgil in the *Commedia*" and Lloyd Howard's *Virgil the Blind Guide: Marking the Way through the Divine Comedy*.

that God shows passion in His judgment? (*Inf.* 20.27-30)

Virgil explains that it is God's justice that condemns these sinners, so Dante should have no pity for them. Dante continues to feel sympathy for the sinners as he expresses in *Inferno* 26 as he sees the false counselors enflamed (19-20).

In hell Dante the pilgrim is still in an impure state; he must wait to the next section, *Purgatorio*, before he is purified of his sins. Dante begins the journey with a great deal of sympathy for the damned as well as being a coward. In addition to the minor scenes, there are three key scenes in which Dante expresses sympathy for the damned person. Each of these damned are given long dialogues to express his or her situation. The first of the damned by whom Dante is enthralled is Francesca who shared an adulterous kiss with Paolo, her husband's brother. Francesca describes how reading the story of Lancelot inspired her and Paolo to kiss, trembling, Francesca's husband apprehends the two and kills them (*Inf.* 5.127-138). Dante, through Francesca, is providing a proof of the power of the literature. Paolo and Francesca were inflamed by desire from the book they were reading, which served as a sort of aphrodisiac for them. Francesca, however, is also a poet and is telling Dante a story. This story has the power to overwhelm Dante as he says,

Mentre che l' uno spirto questo disse,
L'altro piangëa; sì che di pietade
Io venni men così com' io morisse.
E caddi come corpo moto cade.

While the one spirit said this
the other wept, so that for pity
I swooned as if in death.
And down I fell as dead body falls. (*Inf.* 5.139-142)

Dante is seduced by Francesca's tale and is moved by pity, fainting.

Another sinner who is given a very long speaking role is Brunetto Latini in *Inferno* 15. The affection that Dante shows for his former teacher is often read as being possibly a vindication of the homosexuals who are punished in this section of hell.¹²⁶ Indeed, the exchange between Latini and Dante is very intimate. Latini frequently refers to Dante as “figliuol” or “son” throughout the exchange. Dante responds with equal affection, telling him that he wishes that he would not have died and gone to hell:

‘Se fosse tutto pieno il mio dimando,
respuos’ io lui, “voi non sareste ancora
de l’umana natura posto in bando;
ché ‘n la mente m’è fitta, e or m’accora,
la cara e buona imagine paterna
di voi quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
m’insegnavate come l’uom s’eterna... (*Inf.* 15. 79-85)

If all my prayers were answered
I said to him, You would not yet
be banished from mankind.
For I remember well and now lament
the cherished, kind, paternal image of You
when, there in the world, from time to time,
You taught me how man makes himself immortal...

Dante is thankful for what Latini has taught him, and he holds the dear, good, paternal image, “*imagine*,” of Latini close. It is important to note that Dante refers to his remembered *imagine* or memory of Latini and is not referring to him as a damned sinner. Additionally, the logic of the poem seems to identify pity for the damned as being a bad thing.

¹²⁶ Camille seeks to defend Latini from the charge of sodomy. Verdicchio argues that Latini is punished because of his lax views on sin that are contained in his writings. Kay argues that Dante is punished because of his hostility to monarchy not his sodomy. See also Della Terza for a commentary on the entire scene.

Dante's pity is not sound according to the moral scheme of the *Commedia*. First of all, on the arch of the gate of hell, are the words "*Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore*" (*Inf.* 3.4, "JUSTICE MOVED MY MAKER ON HIGH"). The punishments in hell are just, and the damned do not deserve sympathy. Secondly, Dante the poet often describes the sympathy of Dante the pilgrim as being incorrect. When the pilgrim awakens in *Inferno* 6, the narrator says that he had awakened from a fainting spell brought on by the story which had confused him with sadness, "*che di trestizia tutto mi confuse*" (3). The story had muddled his mind, and he did not accurately judge the situation.

Furthermore, Virgil chastises Dante for expressing too much sympathy for the sinners in hell and congratulates him on his contempt for them. One of the most pronounced of these scenes is in *Inferno* 8 when Dante encounters Fillipo Argenti, an extravagant thirteenth century Florentine who had given his horse silver shoes. Dante curses Fillipo: "*Con piangere e con lutto, / spirito maladetto, ti rimani; / ch' I' ti consco, ancor sie lordo tutto*" (*Inf.* 8.37-39, "In weeping and in misery, / accursed spirit, may you stay. / I know you, for all your filth"). Dante mocks Argenti, noting his terrible suffering. Argenti then lunges at the boat, but Virgil stops him, affirming, again, Argenti's punishment, telling him, "*Via costà con li altri cani!*" (*Inf.* 8.42, "Away there with the other dogs!"). Virgil then comforts Dante, who then expresses to Virgil how he would enjoy seeing Argenti further punished (*Inf.* 8.52-54). Dante thus seems to enjoy the suffering of this sinner, and Virgil approves of it.

Another scene in which Dante exhibits violence toward a sinner is in *Inferno* 32. Frozen in the ice, Bocca degli Abati refuses to tell Dante his name. In response,

Dante violently seizes his hair (*Inf.* 32.103-105). Again, Dante presents violence toward a sinner without punishment. He thus seems drawn between false pity and righteous indignation toward the sinners. In addition to learning how to wean himself from pity, Dante must undergo a change of the will.

Within the *Commedia*, Dante develops a notion of human free will. In *Purgatorio* 16, the spirit called Marco explains to Dante that, while the stars may have some effect on human behavior, humans still have free will:

Lo cielo I vostri movimenti inizia;
Non dico tutti, ma, posto ch'ì' l dica
Lume v'è dato e bene e a malizia,
E libero voler...

Yes, the heavens give motion to your inclinations.
I don't say all of them, but, even if I did,
You still possess a light to winnow good from evil,
And you have free will. (*Purg.* 16.73-76)

Humans have free will even if it is affected by other determining influences; thus, humans will be rewarded or punished for their choices. In *Purgatorio* 16, Virgil emphasizes the ability for humans to determine their behavior and control their love, for we have the noble power “*nobile virtù*” (*Purg.* 16.73) of free will “*libero arbitrio*” (*Purg.* 16.74). In *Purgatorio*, Dante finally undertakes his process of purification and undergoes the process of having his will purified.

Dante's conversion is near completion in *Purgatorio* when he expresses contrition in front of Beatrice and renounces his false loves. He explains that he once followed inferior loves when Beatrice died: “*Le presenti cose / col falso lor piacer volser miei passi, / tosto che 'l vostro viso si nascose*” (*Purg.* 31.34-36, “Things set in front of me, / with their false delights, turned back my steps / the moment that your

countenance was hidden"). Beatrice explains that Dante should have sought true love from her, which leads to Christ, and should not have loved false loves: "*Non ti dovea graver le penne in giuso, / ad aspettar più colpo, o pargoletta / o altra novità con sì breve uso*" (*Purg.* 31.58-60, "You should not have allowed your wings to droop, / leaving you to other darts from some young girl / or other novelty of such brief use"). Dante allowed himself to be struck with the darts of lust instead of the true dart of love. After he confesses his sin and is chastised by Beatrice, Dante experiences deep remorse within himself and then is repulsed by his former loves: "*Di pentar sì mi punse ivi l'ortica, / che di tutte alter cose qual mi torse / più nel suo amor, più mi si fé nemica*" (*Purg.* 31.85-87, "The nettle of remorse so stung me then / that whatever else had lured me most to loving / had now become for me most hateful"). It is only at this point that Dante truly repents of his sins to which he had been attached throughout the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. Dante then encounters the four cardinal virtues, which take the form of four beautiful women "*le quattro belle*" (*Purg.* 31.104). These four women bring Dante to the eyes of Beatrice, but Dante will need three more virtues, the three theological ones to finally enjoy the light that Beatrice does, The Holy Trinity, as they tell Dante, "*Merrenti a li occhi suoi; ma nel giocondo / lume ch'è dentro aguzzeranno i tuoi / le tre di là, che miran più profondo*" (*Purg.* 31.109-111, "We will bring you to her eyes. But to receive / the joyous light they hold, the other three, / who look much deeper into things, shall sharpen yours"). Dante will, a little bit later, give the theological virtues primacy; he explains that they are of a higher quality, "*alto tribo*" (*Purg.* 31.130). Dante is then led to the Beatrice and the Griffin, and Dante is drawn to Beatrice's eyes: "*Mille disiri*

più che fiamma caldi / strinsermi li occhi a li occhi rilucenti, / che pur sopra 'l grifone stavan saldi" (*Purg.* 31.118-120, A thousand desires hotter than any flame / bound my eyes to those shining eyes, / which still stayed fixed upon the griffin"). Dante must see the Griffin through Beatrice's eyes; she thus acts as an icon for the Griffin, who seems to represent Christ. Dante's view of the Griffin through Beatrice ignites his soul and causes him to desire the Griffin even more intensely: "*Mentre che piena di stupore e lieta / l'anima mia gustava di quell cibo / che, saziando di sé, di sé asseta*" (*Purg.* 31.127-129, While my soul, filled with wonder and with joy, / tasted the food that, satisfying in itself, / yet for itself creates a greater craving").¹²⁷ Dante here uses the language of mysticism and is preparing for a feast of love that he will undertake in *Paradiso*.

Dante's will has become perfected by the end of *Paradiso*. He desires God above all things and states that it is the desire for God, which pulls him upward to God: "*La concreata e perpetuä sete / del deiforme regno cen portava / veloci quasi come 'l ciel vedete*" (*Par.* 2.19-21, The innate and never-ending thirst for God / in His own kingdom drew us up, / almost as swiftly as you know the heavens turn"). Additionally, in *Paradiso* 3, Piccarda Donati explains to Dante that the souls in heaven all have their wills united to God's: "*Anzi è formale ad esto beato esse / tenersi dentro a la divina voglia, / per ch'una fansi nostre voglie stesse*" (79-81, "No, it is the very essence of this blessed state / that we remain with in the will of God, /so

¹²⁷ Peter Armour attempts to show that Dante's griffin is not a symbol of Christ but rather of the Roman Empire in *Dante's Griffin and the History of the World: A Study of the Earthly Paradise*.

that our wills combine in unity"). The souls in heaven are able to be in heaven because their wills are united to God's will.

Dante does not encounter Aristotle's God.¹²⁸ Dante's vision is a type of Christian contemplation. Certainly much of Dante's language is Aristotelian, but it is a baptized Aristotelianism. In *Paradiso* 31, Dante refers to the object of the souls' contemplation as a threefold light: "*Oh trina luce che 'n unica stella / scintillando a lor vista, sì li appaga!*" (28-29, "O threefold Light, which, in a single star / sparkling in their sight, contents them so!"). Before he reaches his final mystical union, Dante meditates on another image of the Trinity:

Ne la profonda e chiara sussistenza
De l'alto lume parvermi tre giri
Di tre colori e d'una contenenza;
e l'un da l'altro come iri da iri
parea riflesso, e 'l terzo pareo foco
che quinci e quindi igualmente si spiri. (*Par.* 33.115-120)

In the deep, transparent essence of the lofty Light
there appeared to me three circles
having three colors but the same extent,
and each one seemed reflected by the other
as rainbow is by rainbow, while the third on seemed fire,
equally breathed forth by one and by the other.

God here is described as a light, and in this light are three circles that have three different colors, representing the three persons of the Holy Trinity. This very intimate and anthropomorphic image is decidedly Christian.

Dante then has a vision of the incarnate Christ, another markedly Christian idea. He states that in the light he sees humanity:

Quella circolazion che sì concetta

¹²⁸ For an exploration of Dante's journey toward God via the smiles of his beloveds, see Hawkins. For a discussion of Dante's idea of God, see also Fasolino and McNair.

Pareva in te come lume riflesso,
Da li occhi miei alquanto circunspetta,
Dentro da sé, del suo colore stesso,
Mi parva in te come lume riflesso,
Per che 'l mio viso in lei tutto era messo.

That circling which, thus conceived,
appeared in you as light's reflection,
once my eyes had gazed on it a while, seemed,
within itself and in its very color,
to be painted with our likeness,
so that my sight was all absorbed in it. (*Par.* 33.127-132)

The experience is not the comprehension of an idea but rather the unity with the light. There is a mystical union that occurs with this humanity visible in the light.

Another distinctly Christian moment occurs when Dante is given the grace to enter into communion with God. The pilgrim cannot grasp the Trinity; Dante refers to the attempt to being like when a geometer tries to square the circle (*Par.* 133-135). He is given a bolt of lightening or a symbol of some sort of divine intervention: "*ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne: / se non che la mia mente fu percossa / da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne*" (*Par.* 33.139-141, "But my wings had not sufficed for that / had not my mind been struck by a bolt / of lightning that granted"). Dante's process is not simply an intellectual ratiocination as it is Aristotle or Averroes; it is Christian contemplation, which is the result of grace.

The final section in which Dante is absorbed into the light has, like much of this passage, become an object of debate.¹²⁹ Dante describes the experience as the complete failure of imagination and the unity of his will and his desire with the love that moves the universe:

¹²⁹ See Freccero's "The Final Image: *Paradiso* XXXIII, 144." See also McNair, Boitani, and Ciardi.

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
Ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle,
sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,
l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

Here my exalted vision lost its power.
But now my will and my desire, like wheels revolving
with an even motion, were turning with
the Love that moves the sun and all the other stars. (*Par.* 33.142-145).

The language that Dante uses is indicative of a mystical union. His will "*velle*" and desire "*disio*" are united with God, who is framed here in both Aristotelian and Christian language. The height of human experience is not to be found in killing for one's country and becoming immortalized through one's descendants and their fame, although this idea is certainly present in Dante. Moreover, Dante regularly refers to his progress in specifically Christian terms. For Dante and the Medieval Christian tradition, the end of humans is to become divinized and share in the Divine Nature. Dante's hero, however, is not on a solitary journey; he dwells in a temporal kingdom while on earth and an eternal kingdom in heaven. These kingdoms are manifested through Dante's own personal vision of prophecy.

Dante's Prophecies and Community

Dante's vision is based on a three-fold manifestation of divine revelation. God reveals himself in Dante's world through the Christian Scriptures and the Church; on the other hand, God also works through pagan literature as well as through the movement of history. Within his works, Dante presents both a secular and a sacred vision for his idea of community. However, his secular understanding is part of strong theological tradition, and heaven and earth are not so distinctly divided in Dante.

Dante clearly uses Christian imagery in his poem, but his use of pagan imagery in the poem seems odd. In *Paradiso* 29, Beatrice condemns preachers who depart from the Gospels: “*Per apparer ciascun s’ingegna e face / sue invenzioni; e quelle son trascorse / da’ predicatori e ’l Vangelio sit ace*” (94-96, “Each strives to gain attention by inventing new ideas, / expounded by the preachers at some length— / but the Gospel remains silent”). Throughout his work, Dante emphasizes the importance of right Biblical teaching (even though Dante himself challenges the Bible’s authority at times). Dante’s use of classical literature as revelation is especially odd considering Virgil’s description of his age in *Inferno* 1.70-72 as being full of false and lying gods. Even Virgil, who serves as Dante’s guide throughout most of the poem, calls the gods of his time false and lying, yet Dante himself seems to find the pagan deities as a source of teaching that even God employs.

Some of the most pronounced examples of Dante’s use of pagan literature as a site of divine revelation are found in *Purgatorio*. On the terraces of *Purgatorio* are various positive and negative *exempla*, which are used to mold the sinners into saints. These *exempla* are created by God who works as a divine artist; what is rather strange is that God uses *exempla* of virtue and holiness drawn from the Old and New Testament with examples drawn from pagan literature.¹³⁰ These *exempla* are incredibly beautiful and realistic. Dante asks who the master is who carved this works and comments upon how realistic they looked: “*Morti li morti e i vivi parean vivi: / non vide mei di me chi vide il vero, quant’io calcai, fin che chinato givi*” (*Purg.* 12.67-69, “Dead seemed the dead, living seemed the living / He who beheld the real

¹³⁰ See Barron’s “God as Artist.”

events on which I was / head bent, saw them not better than did I"). Dante hints that these events—both the Christian and pagan—did actually happen. Lucifer really was thrown out of heaven and Arachne really was turned into a spider. Additionally, in *Purgatorio* 22, Dante demonstrates the power of reading pagan literature through the story of Statius's conversion. Statius explains to Virgil and Dante that he was guilty of prodigality but repented when he read Virgil's denunciation of gold in the *Aeneid*. Statius then reforms his life and repents, as he says: "*Allor m'accorsi che troppo aprir l'ali / potean le mani a spendere, e pente'mi / così di quell come de li altri mali*" (*Purg.* 22.43-45. "Then I learned that we can spread / our wings too wide with spending hands, / and I repented that and other sins"). Pagan literature contains truth and has the power to reform the lives of those who read it; even God thinks so, for God uses classical literature to reform the souls in Purgatory. The art of men and women, regardless of their religion, mimics nature, which is God's daughter, and thus art is the granddaughter of God: "*che l'arte vostra quella, quanto pote,/ segue, come 'l maestro fa 'l discente; / sì sua vita e avanzar la gente*" (*Inf.* 11.103-106, "that human toil, as far as it is able, / follows nature, as the pupil does his master/ so that it is God's grandchild, as it were"). All art ultimately comes from God in some way.

In the *Paradiso* as well, Dante uses pagan images for Christian realities. In *Paradiso* 1, Dante calls out to Apollo to come into him and inspire him, making him capable of writing of the things of heaven (*Par.* 1.13-15). Dante further says in *Paradiso* 2 that Minerva, Apollo and the Nine Muses are leading him (*Par.* 2.7-9). Dante uses pagan image to depict Christian realities, for he does not arrive at Apollo,

Minerva or the women of Mt. Parnassus but rather Christ, Mary, and the Holy Spirit. Dante further compares the change that he undergoes while making his way to God as being like Glaucus's deification by means of eating grass: "*Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei, / qual si fé Glauco nel gusatr de l'erba / che 'l fé consorto in mar de li altri dèi*" (*Par.* 1.67-99, "As I gazed on her, I was changed within, / as Glaucus was on tasting of the grass / that made him consort of the gods in the sea"). Dante's deification is analogous to the metamorphoses of Glaucus, a pagan character. In the final canto of the poem, Dante makes another reference to a pagan deity, noting that his shock upon seeing God was like that of Neptune's when he saw humans traveling over water in a boat for the first time (*Par.* 33.94-96). However, in Christianity, there is a long tradition of recognizing truth in classical works.¹³¹ Dante's use of such a simile would seemingly provoke scandal among critics, but it is important to look at the background of the idea of allegory in the later Middle Ages as many critics have done.

Many critics have attempted to explain Dante's use of secular images for allegorical purposes. Ernest Fortin suggests that Dante's use of the allegory method does not reduce the stories to mere fables but "builds on a literal sense that has nothing in it of fables or lies" (63). Fortin admits that much of Dante's use of allegory is to present a Christian message; in one sense, Dante makes "the teachings of the Christian faith more attractive by clothing them in images and allegorical garb" (70). On the other hand, Dante is "less orthodox than he is usually thought to be" (70).

¹³¹ The Christian idea of truth and revelation being present in pagan Antiquity is an idea as old as St. Paul who wrote in the book of Romans, "When Gentiles who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a laws to themselves" (2:14).

Teolinda Barolini takes up this theme in her *Detheologizing Dante*. According to Barolini, Dante views himself as an artist who is mimicking God's art in his creations. Commenting on the art work on the terrace of *Purgatorio*, Barolini notes that "In God's representation art and truth, seeming and being, have merged, have become one, so that there is ultimately no difference between a sign in God's reality and a sign in his art" (130). According to Barolini, Dante himself seeks to present the works as real: "the various techniques for blurring the boundary between art and life employed in the representation of the reliefs also serve to blur the distinction between God's representation and the representation that represents it (130). Dante tries to communicate to the reader that his art is God's art: "Dante celebrates himself as the poetic correlative of Giotto, an artist who was celebrated for aspiring to total verisimilitude, because he knows—perhaps better than we—what is at stake in his imitation of the divine mimesis" (134). Thus, according to Barolini, Dante attempts to make himself into a divine artist who channels God's creative power, and whatever images Dante uses—whether Christian or pagan—are divine. Dante himself calls his work a sacred poem, "*sacrato poema*" in *Paradiso* 23.62 and "*poema sacro*" in *Paradiso* 25.1. While Dante's work is full of theological allegories drawn from many sources, he is primarily concerned with the well being of Italy and the empire throughout the poem.

The first understanding of how Dante's city should be structured is laid out in the *Monarchia*. In *De Monarchia*, Dante gives a reason for a universal empire. Dante describes many of the reasons why he believes that there should be a universal world empire. Dante first says that the goal of the universal empire is for

humankind as a whole to “actualize the full intellectual potential of humanity” (1.4, *est actuare semper totam potentiam intellectus possibilis*).¹³² Dante also stresses the importance of unity among humankind. He explains that humankind “most closely resembles God when it is most a unity” (1.8.2-4, *Sed genus humanum maxime Deo assimilatur quando maxime est unum*). He uses an image from Aristotle, which Aquinas had also appropriated in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Politics*. This image is of the micro-macrocosm in which the soul, state, and universe all parallel one another in structure. Dante takes the political structure to a higher level than either Aristotle or Aquinas. Aristotle had used the city state, which Aquinas had extended to the kingdom. Dante envisions the entire world. He discusses how concord relies upon unity and “mankind in its ideal state represents a kind of concord; for just as one man in his ideal state spiritually and physically is a kind of concord (and the same holds true of a household, a city, and a kingdom), so is the whole of mankind; thus the whole of mankind in its ideal state depends on the unity which is in men’s wills” (1.15.8, *genus humanum optime se habens est quedam concordia; nam, sicut unus homo optime se habens et quantum ad animam et quantum ad corpus est concordia quedam, et similiter domus, civitas et regnum, sic totum genus humanum; ergo genus humanum optime se habens ab unitate que est in voluntatibus dependet*). Dante further states that one person is needed to discipline the people and form them so they will choose the good: “But this cannot be unless there is one will which controls and directs all the others to one goal...” (1.15.9, *Sed hoc esse non potest nisi sit voluntas una, domina et regulatrix omnium aliarum in unum...*).

¹³² For the quotes from *Monarchia*, I use the 1965 Latin text edited by Pier Giorgio Ricci and Prue Shaw’s English translation.

He recognizes that humankind cannot engage in philosophical contemplation in the midst of war and conflict among divided polities (although many great works have been composed in wartime). Dante uses very powerful words to describe humankind's problem:

O genus humanum, quantis procellis atque iacturis quantisque naufragiis agitari te necesse est dum, bellua multorum caput factum, in diversa conaris! Intellectu egrotas utruque, similiter et affectu: rationibus irrefragabilibus intellectum superiorem non curas, nec experientie vultu inferiorem, sed nec affectum dulcedine divine suasionis...

O human race, how many storms and misfortunes and shipwrecks must toss you about while, transformed into a many-headed beast, you strive after conflicting things. You are sick in your intellects, both of them, and in your affections; you do not nurture your higher intellect with inviolable principles, nor your lower intellect with the lessons of experience, nor your affections with the sweetness of divine counsel... (1.16.4-5)

In a state of divided principalities, the human race is plagued with war and chaos and civilization cannot progress.

Dante views the Holy Roman Empire as the heir to the classical Roman Empire. In *De Monarchia*, Dante notes that the Roman Empire was a divinely instituted organization. He presented a number of reasons why. First of all, the Romans were the noblest race, and "the reward of a position of authority is appropriate to the noble by reason of the cause of their nobility" (2.3.2-3, *Ergo nobilibus ratione cause premium prelationis conveniens est.*). Dante explains that the Romans were the most intelligent and virtuous people; therefore, they were the best. The Romans exhibited virtue and were rewarded for it. Dante further notes that the Roman Empire was helped by miracles, which is a sign that the empire was instituted by God: "the Roman empire was aided by the help of miracles to achieve supremacy; therefore it was willed by God; and consequently it was and is founded

by right” (2.4.4-5, *romanum Imperium ad sui perfectionem miraculorum suffragio est adiutum; ergo a Deo volitum; et per consequens de iure fuit et est*). Even through the Roman Empire was pagan, God provided miracles to support its growth. Dante expresses a third reason why he believes that the Roman Empire was so successful. It is because it sought the good of the community under its rule, and “whoever has the good of the community as his goal has the achievement of right as his goal” (2.5, *Quicunque preterea bonum rei publice intendit, finem iuris intendit*). The Romans brought law and order to the world that they conquered:

Quod autem Romanus populus bonum prefatum intenderit subiciendo sit orbem terrarum, gesta sua declarant, in quibus, omni cupidate summoti, que rei publice semper adversa est, et universali pace cum libertate dilecta, populus ille sanctus pius et gloriosus propria commoda neglexisse videtur, ut publica pro salute humani generis procuraret.

That the Roman people in conquering the world did have the good of which we have spoken as their goal is shown by the their deeds, for, having repressed all greed (which is always harmful to the community) and cherishing universal peace and freedom, that holy, dutiful and glorious people can be seen to have disregarded personal advantage in order to promote the public interest for the benefit of mankind. (2.5.5)

Dante celebrates the Romans as bringing peace and order and disciplining the people in virtue. Here, the imperial program is blessed as a divinely instituted organization that seeks to make the people good. Dante sees the Roman Empire as being a force for order as opposed to a predatory and destructive: “‘protection’ of the world might be a more appropriate term than ‘domination’.” Dante also, like Virgil, (and probably because of Virgil) views Augustus as a great ruler who brings peace to the entire world. He writes that only under Augustus who united the Mediterranean world was the world at peace: “That mankind was then happy in the calm of universal peace is attested by all historians and by famous poets; even the

chronicler of Christ's gentleness deigned to bear witness to it; and finally Paul called that most happy state the 'fullness of time'" (1.16.2, *Et quod tunc humanum genus fuerit felix in pacis universalis tranquillitate hoc ystoriographi omnes, hoc poete illustres, hoc etiam scriba mansuetudinis Cristi testari dignatus est; et denique Paulus «plenitudinem temporis» statum illum felicissimum appellavit*). As Dante has done throughout *De Monarchia*, the poet notes that secular and religious luminaries both celebrate the greatness of Rome. This peace and concord that Rome brings is essential to moral and even spiritual development for Dante. Dante's view was not uncommon, for other medieval writers understood that "all natural or historical reality possessed a *signification* which transcended its crude reality and which a certain symbolic dimension of that reality would reveal to man's mind" (Chenu 102). Dante, like many medieval thinkers, believed that wisdom was to be found in the pagan writers, especially those of classical antiquity, who could serve as authorities.

Although he segregates secular from sacred power, Dante views the Catholic Church as a divinely instituted organization as well. Dante notes that the Pope is "Peter's successor" and "assuredly holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven" (3.1.5, *qui vere claviger est regni celorum*). In the end, Dante writes that there is a certain sense in which the emperor is subject to the pope:

Que quidem veritas ultime questionis non sic stricte recipienda est, ut romanus Princeps in aliquo romano Pontifici non subiaceat, cum mortalis ista felicitas quodammodo ad immortalem felicitatem ordinetur. Illa igitur reverential Cesar utatur ad Petrum qua primogenitus filius uti ad patrem: ut luce paterne gratie illustratus virtuosius orbem terre irradiet, cui ab Illo solo prefectus est, quis est omnium spiritualium et temporalium gubertnator.

But the truth concerning this last question should not be taken so literally as to mean that the Roman Prince is not in some sense subject to the Roman

Pontiff, since this earthly happiness is in some sense ordered toward immortal happiness. Let Caesar therefore show that reverence towards Peter which a first born son should show his father, so that, illumined by the light of paternal grace, he may the more effectively light up the world, over which he has been placed by Him alone who is ruler over all things spiritual and temporal. (3.16.17-18)

Dante recognizes at this point that the earthly good of men and women is not the exclusive good, and people are directed to transcendent good in heaven. The pope is in charge of spiritual matters while the ruler or king is in charge of the civic realm. Dante's *Monarchia* thus presents the image of the empire as a divinely ordained institution meant to bring peace and harmony to the world. He develops this community throughout his *Commedia* as well.

The first crucial point at which Dante's theological as well as his secular imperial communities become conjoined is in Virgil's prophecy of the hound that will save Italy from the vicious allegorical animals in *Inferno* 1. Virgil denounces the wolf whose appetite is never satiated and will be allowed to roam until the coming of the hound (*Inf.* 1.101-102). This hound will be free of the desire for spoils, "*Questi no ciberà terra né peltro, / ma sapienza, amore e virtute*" (*Inf.* 1.103-104, "He shall not feed on lands or lucre / but on wisdom, love, and power"). Dante gives the image of the classical emperor who does not desire riches like the tyrant but rather seeks to promote virtue and wisdom. This emperor will save Italy, for it is the home for which the Virgilian figures of Camilla, Euryalus, Turnus, and Nisus died (*Inf.* 1.106-108). Dante's vision of the emperor is not necessarily Christian here other than the verb *salute*. However, in the next three lines, Dante reveals evil as something from hell: "*Questi la caccerà per ogne villa, / fin che l'avrà rimessa ne lo 'nferno, / là onde 'nvida prima dipartilla*" (*Inf.* 1.109-111, "He shall hunt the beast through every town

/ till he has sent her back to Hell / Whence primal envy sent her loose"). The hound will save Italy through a specific moral reform; he will destroy the wolf and then send her to the Inferno from which she came. This moral reform is in the classical tradition, but the idea of evil emanating from hell, into which Dante is about to enter, is a decidedly Christian idea. In *Inferno* 2, Dante notes that God had chosen Aeneas to father dear Rome: "*ch' e' fu de l'alma Roma e di suo impero / ne l'empireo ciel per padre eletto*" (20-21, "For in the Empyrean he was chosen/ to father holy Rome and her dominion"). Another scene in which there is a combination of both the secular and sacred images of the emperor is in *Inferno* 8-9. The devils prevent Dante from entering the city of Dis, so Virgil promises that an help from above will grant them entrance into the city (*Inf.* 8.128-130). A messenger from heaven comes and opens the gate with a wand decrying the foolishness of the demons for resisting the will of God: "*Perché recalcitrare a quella voglia / a cui non puote il fin mai esser mozzo, / e che più volte v'ha cresciuta doglia?*" (*Inf.* 9.94-96, "Why do you kick against that will / which never can be severed from its purpose, / and has so many times increased your pain?"). The messenger is a combination of an angel and the god Mercury and also has a strong political resonance in that he opens the gates of an impenetrable city.

Dante further ties together the secular empire with the sacred in *Paradiso* 6. In this canto, Justinian tells the history of Rome. Justinian refers to the "bird of God" (*Par.* 6.4, "l'uccel di Dio") that dwelt at the borders of Europe close to the mountains from which it first came (*Par.* 6.5-6,). The eagle is both the bird of Rome and the bird of God who is here typified in Jove. Justinian further describes himself as a Christian

emperor who is impelled by God after Justinian converts from Arianism: “*Tosto che con la Chiesa mossi i piedi, a Dio per grazia piacque di spirami / l’alto lavoro, e tutto ‘n lui mi diedi*” (Par. 6.22-24, “As soon as my footsteps moved at the Church’s side, it pleased God, in His grace, to grant me inspiration in the noble task to which I wholly gave myself”). Here Dante reveals with greater clarity his understanding of the Roman emperor. The Roman Emperor is a divine right monarch who is guided by God; he is not a secular ruler. The emperor must be an orthodox Christian and must be guided by grace “*grazia*.” Justinian further emphasizes the sacral character of the empire by referring to the sacred standard, “*sacrosanto segno*,” of the empire (Par. 6.32). Justinian even goes so far as to emphasize that Pallas was given as a sacrifice for the empire in the *Aeneid*: “*Vedi quanta virtù l’ha fatto degno / di reverenza; e cominciò da l’ora / che Pallante morì per darli regno*” (Par. 6.34-36, “Consider how much valor has made it worthy of reverence, beginning with the hour / when Pallas gave his life to give it sway”). As Dante explained in *De Monarchia*, the Roman Empire was great because it facilitated virtue; it was governed by virtuous men, and it made men and women virtuous. Justinian continues to emphasize the holiness of the pagan Roman Empire. He notes that Julius Caesar’s mission to subdue the Gauls and bring universal peace was commissioned by God (Par. 6.55-57). Caesar was sent by God to seize the reins of power and make the world serene “*modo sereno*.”

In *Paradiso* 30, Dante emphasizes the moral and spiritual character of the emperor. Beatrice tells Dante that a seat is reserved in heaven for the Holy Roman Emperor who failed to unite Italy,

prima che tu a queste nozze ceni,
sederà l’ alma, che fia giù agosta

de l'alto Arrigo, ch' a drizzare Italia
verrà in prima ch' ella sia disposta.

Before you shall dine at this wedding feast,
Shall sit the soul of noble Henry,
Who on earth, as emperor, shall attempt
To set things straight for Italy before she is prepared. (*Par.* 30.135-138)

Even in the greatest heights of heaven, the Empyrean, Dante is still concerned with his immediate political situation. The Holy Roman emperor who would heal Italy of her fragmented torment, which is the result of her blind avarice "*La cieca cupidigia*" (*Par.* 30.139). Boniface VIII, in turn, will be punished in hell (*Par.* 30.145-147).

This Boniface is unworthy of heaven, which is filled with the souls of the perfect.

Dante has much praise for the Roman Empire, its precedent in Troy, and its later incarnation in the Middle Ages; however, he makes several comments throughout his writings that there is a higher and greater community, the Church. In *Purgatorio* 12, one of the exemplars of pride is the towers of Troy. Dante states, "*Vedeva Troia in cenere e in caverne; / o lión, come te basso e vile / mostrava il segno che lì si discerne!*" (*Pur.* 12.61-63, "My eyes beheld Troy in ashes and in ruins / Ah, Ilion how reduced and shamed you were / now was shown within the carving"). The once proud towers of Troy have fallen, and Dante is very concerned about temporal affairs even up until the end of *Paradiso*. However, he is also aware that all will end up in ashes and ruins, "*in cenere e in caverne.*" There is an additional point at which Dante looks at the world and acknowledges its futility. After looking at the heavens, Dante looks down on the earth and notices how pathetic the globe is: "*Col viso ritornai per tutte quante / le sette spere, e vidi questo globo / tal, ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante*" (*Par.* 22.133-135, "With my eyes I returned through every one / of the

seven spheres below, and saw this globe of ours to be such that I smiled, so mean did it appear"). The earth and its troubles pales in significance to the majesty of heaven. Dante further learns in the *Commedia* that all humans are united by love and charity in the after life, and ethnic ties are loosened.

Throughout his work, Dante exerts a great deal of affection for Florence, Tuscany, and Italy. However, Dante is given a very valuable lesson in *Purgatorio* 13 when Sapia, a redeemed Siennese noblewoman, tells him that upon death the divisions in culture, language, and ethnic identity will cease. Dante is looking for an Italian but Sapia chastises him, telling him "*O frate mio ciascuna è cittadina / d'una vera città; ma tu vuo' dire / che vivesse in Italia peregrina*" (*Pur.* 13.94-96, "Oh my brother, all of us are citizens / of the one true city. What you meant to say is, / 'who, while still a pilgrim, lived in Italy"). Life on earth is pilgrimage, and in this pilgrimage division in language is part of the way things are, but in the afterlife, all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve will be united.

Dante conveys a similar idea through his exchanges with his ancestry Cacciaguida in *Paradiso* 15-18. There is a tension throughout this section in which there is a tender familial affection for one another tied to a vociferous rejection of pride in family honor. However, at the beginning of *Paradiso* 16, Dante cries out"

O poca nostra nobiltà di sangue,
se gloriâr di te la gente fai
qua giù dove l'affetto nostro langue
mirabil cosa non mi sarà mai:
ché là dove appetito non si torce,
dico nel cielo, io me ne gloriâr. (*Par.* 16.1-6)

O insignificant nobility of blood,
If you make us glory in you here below,
Where our affections are ephemeral,

I will not ever think it strange,
For there, where appetite is never warped—
In, I mean, the heavens themselves—I gloried in you too.

Even after having undergone the purification of *Purgatorio*, Dante still feels affection for his family in heaven; there thus seems to be some divine approval of a sense of honor in one's family. However, he still recognizes that attention for honor is fleeting pursuit: "*Ben se' tu manto che tosot raccorce: / sì che, se non s'appon di dì in die, / lo tempo va dintorno con le force*" (*Par.* 16.7-9, "You are indeed a cloak that quickly shrinks, / so that, if we do not add to it day by day, / time trims the edges with shears"). The desire for family honor seems to be both natural and absurd. Cacciaguida seems to speak in a similar vein; he both boasts of his ancestry and then condemns the interest in one's bloodline (*Par.* 16.43-45). Cacciaguida extols modesty in regard to ancestry right after he spoke proudly of his ancestry. While his secular empire is also sacred, Dante thus recognizes the limits of earthly empire.

In addition to his secular empire, Dante presents a divine community that is united by grace, love, and virtue. God is referred to as an emperor in *Paradiso* 12.40, referring to God as "*lo 'mperador che sempre regna...*"; God is an emperor who reigns forever. In *Paradiso* 25, St. James refers to God as our emperor "*nostro Imperadore*" (41) who has willed for Dante to come to heaven. Furthermore, all truth comes from God as the Eagle explains in *Paradiso* 19 64-66: "*Lume non è, se non vien dal sereno / che non si turba mai; anzi è tenèbra / od ombra de la carne o suo veleno*" ("No light is never overcast unless it comes / from that clear sky which always shines. All other / darken in the shadow or the bane of flesh." God himself is the source of all justice

and truth. This divine and eternal emperor has created two eternal kingdoms in the afterlife, heaven and hell—and one temporary one, purgatory.

Virgil, in *Inferno* 1, provides a blueprint for how hell, purgatory, and heaven are structured. He tells Dante that he will take Dante through a place full of suffering souls who endure their second death (*Inf.* 1.115-117). This place of suffering is beyond the political realm and has a specific theological quality. Virgil then tells Dante that this second place is full of those who suffer but are nonetheless happy because of their sure hope of redemption (*Inf.* 1.118-120). Dante introduces a new community, the “*beate genti*” or happy people who are united by their holiness, love, grace, and knowledge. Virgil then describes the heavenly kingdom which is ruled by a divine emperor. Virgil explains that he is not allowed to go into this kingdom: “*ché quello imperador che là sù regna, / perh’ i’ fu’ ribellante a la sua legge, / non vuol che ’n sua città per me si vegna*” (*Inf.* 1.124-126, “for the Emperor who has His seat on high / wills not, because I was a rebel to His law, / that I should make my way into His city”). Virgil is not allowed to go to this kingdom because he was disobedient to God’s law. As some unbaptized classical figures are granted entrance to heaven, it is not quite certain at this point why Virgil is not allowed. Virgil then further gives a clue to this high emperor and who is allowed into his kingdom: “*In tutte part impera e quivi regge; / quivi è l’alto seggio: / oh felice colui cu’ ivi elegge!*” (*Inf.* 1.127-129, “In every part he reigns and rules / There is His city and His lofty seat. Happy the one whom He elects to be there!”). The empire of heaven is ruled by God who rules all as an emperor, and those who enter this kingdom are truly happy.

Dante also refers to Purgatory as a kingdom; it is, in fact, the second kingdom, “*secondo regno*” (*Purg.* 1.4), that he and Virgil visit. The key to the logic of the true community is found in *Purgatorio* 29-30. After having been purged of his sins Dante has his first taste of eternal joy: “*de l’eterno piacer tutto sospeso*” (29.32). This taste of eternal joy is a peace that transcends all earthly delight. Dante finds his true joy and satisfaction in God. He then presents a triumphal march of the true empire in the Garden of Eden. Dante further gives priority to heaven at the expense of the earthly kingdom when he praises the cart that the griffin rides in as being superior to that of any chariots of the Roman emperors or even the classical gods themselves:

Non che di carro così bello
rallegrasse Affricano, o vero Augusto,
ma quell del Sol saria pover con ello;
quel del Sol che, sviando, fu combusto
per l’orazation de la Terra devota,
quando fu Giove arcanamente giusto.

Never did Rome give joy to Africanus,
nor indeed Augustus, with such a splendid car.
Compared to it, the sun’s would seem but poor—
the chariot of the sun, which, gone astray,
at the pious prayer of Earth
was quite consumed in Jove’s mysterious justice. (*Purg.* 29.115.120)

Despite all of the continuous praise that Dante has for the Roman Empire as well as his continuous allegorical appropriation of classical myth, Dante gives the Church pride of place above the empire, for the saved members of the Church will live forever in heaven.

Dante views the highest unity of all humans in heaven. In *Paradiso* 31 he sees the souls in the Empyrean in the form of a brilliant white rose: “*In forma dunque di candida rosa / mi si mostrava la milizia santa / che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa*”

(1-3, “In form, then, of a luminous white rose / I saw the saintly soldiery that Christ, / with His own blood, took as His bride”). Dante describes this troop as soldiers, but it is important to note that these soldiers are redeemed by the blood of Christ; they are not killing others. Those redeemed in heaven achieve a peace that Virgil never knew. This heavenly kingdom is centered around the highest common good, the Holy Trinity: “*Questo sicuro e gaudiooso regno, / frequente in gente antica e in novella, / viso e amore avea tutto ad un segno*” (Par. 31.25-27, “This sure and joyful kingdom, / thronged with souls from both the old times and the new / aimed sight and love upon a single goal”). The travails of earthly life are over. The function of Dante’s eternal empires can only be understood in terms of grace.

Dante’s theories on grace have been the topics of some debate among critics. In *Dante’s Journey of Sanctification*, Antonio Mastrobuono, takes to task Charles Singleton, John Freccero, and others who have misread Dante’s understanding of grace. Mastrobuono sees Dante as being a fundamentally Christian poet writing a fundamentally Christian poem: “No atheist poet, however, no matter how brilliant, could ever have written the *Divine Comedy*; the transcendent reality of the *Comedy* is a projection of Dante’s faith” (250). Mastrobuono makes the point that “Dante’s journey under Virgil’s guidance through Inferno and Purgatory is an effect of (not a preparation for) sanctifying grace, which Dante has already received before entering the world beyond” (v). Dante’s journey was inaugurated by grace from heaven through The Virgin Mary, Lucy, and Beatrice. According to Mastrobuono Dante was moved by grace even before he delved into the *Inferno*, and “by the time Dante meets Beatrice, not only has he received justification in the Prologue scene, but he

will also have gone through a process of personal sanctification under cooperating grace on the mountain which, is itself a preparation for the transhuman process of deification that takes place with Beatrice in Paradise” (xiii). The reason why Dante had to go through hell is because he had the effects of sin in his soul which result from the “loss of grace including [s]tain on the soul,...[c]orruption of the good of nature,” and “[d]ebt of eternal punishment” (3). Dante’s journey through the *Commedia* is thus a journey from sin to salvation although Dante is in a state of sin through much of the poem, and “Dante must then receive the sanctifying grace, which removes the stain of sin, have his nature restored, and experience the remission of the eternal punishment due to his sin” (3-4). This process of sanctification is what repairs Dante’s soul, which has been corrupted: “One important aspect of justification is constituted by a reestablished harmony whereby Dante’s reason is made obedient to God (order of part to whole), and his lower powers are made obedient to his reason (order of part to part)...” (27). Dante’s will is thus healed. “Therefore, Dante’s will, already actually willing the final supernatural end, converts itself to willing the means conducive to that end, and the means conducive to that end is the journey itself that he now wills to undertake” (34). His mind as well must learn the truth from God: “The subjection of Dante’s reason to God and the subjection of his lower powers to his reason take place in an instant, and has already taken place in the Prologue scene” (53). Dante’s journey to God will involve both faculties of the intellect and will. Mastrobuono sees Dante’s work as being meritorious, for it follows the criteria established by Thomas Aquinas; Dante’s acts are free, good, under obedience to Him who will reward, the

“act of a wayfarer,” proceed from sanctifying grace, and “ordained by God toward a promised reward” (105).

As Mastrobuono and others recognize, grace is essential to the entire functioning of the *Commedia*. In fact, the integral place that Dante gives to grace in his epic seriously calls into question the attempts to read the work as merely a vehicle for Dante’s doctrinaire Averroism or unbaptized Aristotelianism. The plan for grace can be found in *Inferno*. In *Inferno* 2, Dante provide an image for grace for his regeneration after hearing of the three ladies’ concern for him. Dante writes that just as flowers open to the sun, so did his strength and courage revive (127-135). This idea is especially pertinent in purgatory in which grace is essential for change. In *Purgatorio* 4, Belacqua announces that he will not be able to ascend along purgatory without the prayers of grace:

Prima convien che tanto il ciel m’aggiri
di fuor da essa quanto fece in vita,
perch’io ‘ndugiai al fine I buon sospiri
se orazione in prima non m’aita
che surga sù di cuor che in grazia viva...

I must wait outside as long in my lifetime
the heavens wheeled around me
while I put off my sighs of penance to the end,
unless I’m helped by prayers that rise
from a heart that lives in grace. (*Purg.* 4.130-134)

Like the other souls in purgatory, Belacqua will not be able to get out of purgatory without the prayers of a soul in the state of grace. In *Purgatorio* 7, Sordello asks what merit or grace brings Virgil to him: “*qual merito o qual grazia mi ti mostra?*” (19). Nino Visconte calls to Currado Malaspina, telling him to see what God has willed by his grace, “*che non li è guado*, (*Purg.* 8.66). Dante further tells the sinners

in purgatory that it is grace that cleanses them of their sin: “*se toso grazia resolvable le schiume / di vostra coscienza...*” (*Purg.* 13.88-89). Guido del Duca tells Dante that the has made it thus far because of God’s grace, which makes Dante’s case unique: “*tanto maravigliar de la tua grazia, / quanto vuol cosa che non fu più mai*” (*Purg.* 14.14-15). Guido further agrees to answer Dante’s question because God’s grace shines through him: “*Ma da che Dio in te vuol che traluca / tanto sua grazia, non ti sarò scarso...*” (*Purg.* 14.79-80). Dante recognizes that he has been able to travel thus far because of a special grace from God: “*...Dio m’ha in sua grazia rinchiuso, / tanto che vuol ch’l’ veggia la sua corte / per modo tutto fuor del moderno uso...*” (*Purg.* 16.39-42). Dante further explains to the lustful in *Purgatorio* 26 that it is through the grace mediated by Beatrice that he has made it so far: “*donna è di sopra che m’acquista grazia, per che ’l mortal per vostro mondo reco*” (59-60). Grace is essential to the functioning of *Purgatorio*.

The structure of *Paradiso* is entirely dependent upon grace and merit, two theological concepts, in order to function. Dante states that it is *grace*, “*grazia*” (*Par.* 1.72), that will enable one to share his experience of heaven. In *Paradiso* 3, Dante explains that everyone enjoys bliss in heaven even if they do not receive the same levels of grace, “*etsi, la grazia / del sommo ben d’un modo non vi piove*” (89-90). In *Paradiso* 5, Justinian notes that it is grace that has allowed Dante to reach heaven (115-117). Justinian also notes that it was God’s grace that guided him in his political actions: “*a Dio per grazia piacque di spirarmi / l’alto lavoro, e tutto ’n lui mi diedi...*” (*Par.* 6.23-24). Beatrice tells Dante that it is by His grace, “*per sua grazia*” (*Par.* 10.54) that the Sun has allowed him to come through heaven. In the same

canto, Thomas Aquinas informs Dante that it is by the ray of grace, "*lo raggio de la grazia*" (83), that he has made it thus far into heaven. In *Paradiso* 12, St.

Bonaventure explains that it is by God's grace, "*per sola grazia*" (42), that St.

Dominic was sent into the world.

Beatrice is often a theologian of grace. In *Paradiso* 25, Beatrice prays that God's grace, "*la grazia di Dio*" (63) will come to Dante's aid in his examination. In his responses, Dante explains that the theological virtue of hope comes from grace and merit won, "*grazia divina e percedente merto*" (*Par.* 25.69). Beatrice explains throughout the *Paradiso* that it is through grace as well as merit that angels and humans are able to receive the vision. Grace and a right will, "*grazia partorisce e buona volgia*" (*Par.* 28.113), are what determine where an angel will be in heaven. In her explanation of angelology, Beatrice notes that those angels and humans who make it to heaven do so through grace and merit:

Per che le viste lor furo essaltate
Con grazia illuminate e con lor metro,
Sì c'hanno ferma e piena voluntate;
E non voglio che dubbi, ma sia certo,
Che ricever la grazia è meritorio
Secondo che l'affetto l'è aperto.

Thus their vision was exalted
by illuminating grace, along with their own merit,
so that theirs is a will both whole and steadfast.
And I would not have you doubt, but rather be assured,
that there is merit in receiving grace
in measure as the heart inclines to it. (*Par.* 29.61-66)

The language here used explains that God gives supernatural grace, which is required to reach the highest echelons of heaven. Dante refers to Beatrice as the source of his grace, telling her, "*di tante cose quant' I' ho vedute, / dal tuo podere e da*

la tua bontate / riconosco la grazia e la virtute” (*Par.* 31.82-84, “of all the many things that I have seen, / I know the grace and virtue I’ve been shown / come from your goodness and power”). Beatrice serves as *mediatrix* of grace for Dante throughout the *Commedia*; she does not just impart information to him.

St. Bernard, Dante’s final guide, also emphasizes grace. After Dante has been cleansed of his sin, St. Bernard refers to him as a “child of grace,” “*Figliuol di grazia*” (*Par.* 31.112). St. Bernard includes the Virgin Mary in the economy of grace in *Paradiso* 31-33. St. Bernard states that Mary will grant Dante and him grace because of St. Bernard’s devotion to her (*Par.* 31.100-102). In *Paradiso* 32, St. Bernard gives an explanation of the logic of grace; God gives grace to whomever he wills (*Par.* 32.64-66). God’s grace is given based on God’s inscrutable will; God here is not a mechanistic God of radical Aristotelianism. St. Bernard tells Dante that he will need to pray to Mary for grace: (*Par.* 32.147-148). In *Paradiso* 33, St. Bernard appeals to the Queen of Heaven again twenty lines later:

Or quesit, che da l’infima lacuna
de l’universo infin qui ha vedute
le vite spiritali ad una ad una
supplica a te per grazia di virtue
più alto verso l’ultima salute.

This man who, from within the deepest pit
the universe contains up to these heights
has seen the disembodied spirits, one by one,
now begs you, by your grace, to grant such power
that, by lifting up his eyes,
he may rise higher toward his ultimate salvation. (*Par.* 33.22-27)

St. Bernard asks the Virgin Mary for the grace to rise higher in salvation, thus indicating that Dante is not arising by reason alone. In *Paradiso* 33, Dante comes to the source of grace and exclaims, “*Oh abbondante grazia ond’ io presunsi / ficcar lo*

viso per la luce eterna, / tanto che la veduta vi consunsi" (82-84, "O plenitude of grace, by which I could presume / to fix my eyes upon eternal Light / until my sight was spent on it!). Dante has reached the source of all grace: God, whose grace, mediated through a number of intermediaries, has guided Dante to Himself.

Dante primarily understands prophecy in the terms of divine revelation. This revelation for Dante and many other medieval thinkers is to be found both in traditionally Christian as well as pagan sources in addition to the movement of God in history. Dante does take a seemingly radical position in his presentation of temporal empire. However, this empire ultimately derives its authority from God and will be subject to the Church in some matters. Additionally, while Dante remains attached to the temporal world almost to the end of *Paradiso*, he does present two eternal empires as being the true and ultimate destinations for human beings. There will either be hell for the damned or purgatory and heaven for the redeemed. These latter kingdoms will be eternal and will be structured around ethics and grace. There must be, in the end, however, an Other to exclude from Dante's imperial *exemplum*.

Dante's Other

Within the twofold understanding of the empire there are two sets of others. These two sets are integrally intertwined as an enemy of the emperor is also an enemy of God. Dante condemns Rome's and Italy's enemies in the *Commedia*. There is a rivalry between Romans, the heirs of Troy, and the Greeks in hell. Additionally,

the traitors to Rome as well as Rome's Eastern enemies are especially signaled out. Dante further signals out Islam as both a cultural and religious enemy of Roman Christendom. The second group of enemies consists of those eternal enemies of God who, through their own free will, have rejected God's grace and embraced their eternal damnation. In his explanation of these evil people, Dante uses language drawn from classical sources, but he uses an explicitly Christian framework for the words he uses.

Rome's traditional Eastern enemies are singled out in the *Commedia*, although Dante does present some Easterners in a positive light. Dante places Averroes, Avicenna and Saladin with the virtuous pagans in Limbo. Dante does include Easterners, in this case, Hindus in his plan of salvation in a remarkably heretical view (*Par.* 19.70-90). Yet, most of the depiction of the East in the poem is negative as Easterners primarily are depicted as irrational savages. An anonymous Florentine suicide mentions Attila the Hun as a destructive force in *Inferno* 13, noting that Florence was rebuilt on the ashes that Attila left behind (149). When Dante and Virgil approach the city of Dis, they spot flaming mosques as Dante tells Virgil (*Inf.* 8.67-69). Virgil responds that the reason why they are red is because they are burned in an eternal fire.

Furthermore, the explicit, traditional Eastern enemies of Rome are punished in the deepest recesses of Hell. Cleopatra and Dido are found in the section of intemperate lovers. Both Eastern women are shoved aside as immoral strumpets in Virgil's view as he tells Dante, "*L'atra è colei che s'ancise amorosa, / e ruppe fede al cner di Sicheo; / poi è Cleopatràs lussuriosa*" (*Inf.* 6.61-63, "Here is she who broke

faith with the ashes / of Sichaeus and slew herself for love. The next is wanton Cleopatra"). Virgil chastises Dido for abandoning her oath to remain faithful to the ashes of Sichaeus, and Cleopatra is dismissed as being lascivious "*lussuriosa*". Cleopatra appears again in Canto 6 of *Paradiso*, for Justinian tells Dante that Cleopatra is punished in hell because of her resistance to Rome: "*Piangene ancor la trista Cleopatra, / che, fuggendoli innanzi, dal colubro / la prese subitana e atra*" (76-78, "Wretched Cleopatra still weeps for it [Rome] / She, fleeing before its advancing front / took from the asp a quick and baleful death"). Cleopatra is ground under the march of the Roman Empire, which is itself guided by God. Furthermore, in *Paradiso*, Dante even has Justinian refer to the Carthaginians as the Arabs and thus conflates Rome's cultural enemy with medieval Christendom's religious enemy. In Canto 6 of *Paradiso*, Justinian states that the Roman Empire defeated the "Arabs": "*atterò l'orgoglio de li Aràbi / che di retro ad Anibale passaro / l'alpestre rocce, Po, di che tu labi*" (49-51, "It brought the pride of Arabs low / when they followed Hannibal along the Apline crags / from which O river Po, you fall"). The Romans were able to conquer the proud North African people who attempted to defeat them. While he is probably influenced by Eastern art and poetry, Dante still seems to see the East as Christendom's cultural and religious rivals. The Greeks are another enemy.

The Greeks, who are one of the traditional enemies of the Romans, are also condemned frequently in hell. Helen and Achilles are punished for their love affairs in Canto 5 of the *Inferno* (64-66). Helen is blamed for her love affair, which caused so much suffering for the Trojans. Paris, who is guilty of falling for Helen and causing the Trojan war is also found here. Dante also condemns Ulysses in hell in

Inferno 26. Virgil describes Ulysses and Diomedes as deserving their punishment (*Inf.* 26.55-57). The two are justly punished, and Virgil explains specifically why. Their punishment seems to be two-fold. They are punished for their crime against Rome as well as their vice: treachery. Virgil explains, “*e dentro de la lor fiamma si geme / l’agguato del dval che fé la porta / onde uscì de’ Romani il gentil seme*” (*Inf.* 26.58-60, “In their flame they mourn the stratagem / of the horse that made a gateway / through which the noble seed of Rome came forth”). Although they carved out the way for Aeneas’ escape and the foundation of the Roman Empire, the two are guilty of treachery. Virgil further notes that since Diomedes and Ulysses are Greeks, they may not approve of Dante’s language (*Inf.* 26.74-75). Yet, Ulysses is transformed; he is not punished solely because he is a cultural rival to Rome or because he has a Platonic unjust soul or Aristotelian vicious soul. Ulysses is punished for his excessive curiosity and pride. The Greek hero explains that he had a tremendous appetite for knowledge, which was greater than any other love:

né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta
 del vecchio padre, né ’l debito amore
 lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta,
 vincer potero dentro a me l’ardore
 chi ’i’ ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
 e de li vizi umani e del valore.

not tenderness for a son, nor filial duty
 toward my aged father, no the love I owed
 Penelope that would have made her glad,
 could overcome the fervor that was mine
 to gain experience of the world
 and learn about man’s vices, and his worth. (*Inf.* 26.94-99)

Ulysses's sin is against charity and justice; he is punished in hell for his moral faults not because he is of a rival culture or tradition. Dante also singles out Islam as a political and religious enemy of Christianity.

Mohammed and Ali make an appearance in the schismatic section.

Defenders of Dante's sympathy to the East seek for alternative explanations to why the founders of the two major branches of Islam are punished in hell. However, the text seems to suggest that they are punished for dividing Christendom. First of all, Dante makes it clear in this section that he is going to show an especially gruesome punishment in *Inferno* 28, saying that words fail in describing the torments: "*Ogne lingua per certo verra meno / per lo nostro sermone e per la mente / c'hanno a tanno comprender poco seno*" (4-6, "Surely every tongue would fail, / for neither thought nor speech / has the capacity to hold so much"). Following this initial disclaimer, Dante gives a comparison to other imperial victories. He first mentions the victory of the Trojans in Italy, then the defeat of the Romans at Cannae, then the victory of Robert Guiscard against Islamic forces in Italy, and finally the defeat of Manfred by Charles of Anjou. In each of these military incidents, some version of the Roman Empire is at war with an enemy; sometimes the Romans win; sometimes they lose. Dante gives a poetic and political simile to describe how awful the horror of the ninth pit is as well as how skilled he is in depicting it. Dante's description of Mohammed is especially gruesome:

Già veggia per mezzul perdere o lulla,
Com' io vidi un, così non si pertugia,
Rotto dal mento infin dove si trulla.
Tra le gambe pendevan le minugia;
La corata pareva e 'l tristo sacco
Che merda fa di quell che si trangugia.

No cask ever gapes so wide for loss
of mid- or side- stave as the soul I saw
cleft from the chin right down to where men fart.
Between the legs the entrails dangled. I saw
the innards and the loathsome sack
that turns what one has swallowed into shit. (*Inf.* 28.22-27)

Dante's use of obscenities here, which he withholds for especially detestable sins, as well as the graphic anatomical description may suggest that a particularly vile villain is being punished here. Ali, Mohammed's nephew, is given an equally gruesome punishment "*fesso nel volto dal mento al ciuffetto*" (*Inf.* 28.33, "his face split open from his chin to forelock").¹³³ The reading of Mohammed and Ali as two who are punished because of their division of the empire of the world state still is not explicitly challenged until Mohammed explains why those in this part of hell are punished: "*E tutti li altri che tu vedi qui, / seminator di scandalo e di scisma / fuor vivi, e però son fessi così*" (*Inf.* 28.34-36, "And all the others whom you see / sowed scandal and schism while they lived, / and that is why they here are hacked asunder"). Mohammed uses an image that harkens back to Christ's parable of the sower or "seminator."¹³⁴ Mohammed caused a specifically religious cleaving. Schism specifically means the rending of the Church and scandal is defined by St. Thomas Aquinas who, in II-II, Q. liii, A. 1, of the *Summa Theologicae* defines scandal as what causes another's spiritual fall. Dante's principal enemy in the *Commedia* is the sinner.

¹³³ Edward Said is unnerved about Dante's depiction of Mohammed in hell: "Mohammed's punishment, which is also his eternal fate, is a peculiarly disgusting one: he is endlessly being cleft in two from his chin to his anus like, Dante says, a cask whose staves are ripped apart" (68) and reads the scene as a denigration of Islam.

¹³⁴ Matthew 13:1-20.

In the end, the greatest enemies are those who are enemies of God and thus outside the heavenly imperial community. The triumphal arch standing outside of the kingdom of hell is a further sign of who is included in hell. The first three lines of the arch read: "*Per me si va ne la città dolente, / Per me si va ne l'eterno dolore, / Per me si va tra la perduta gente*" (Inf. 3.1-3, "THROUGH ME THE WAY TO THE CITY OF WOE, / THROUGH ME THE WAY TO EVERYLASTING PAIN, / THROUGH ME THE WAY AMONG THE LOST"). The race here punished is a lost or fallen people "*la perduta gente*"; it is not a specific culture. This city is further marked by suffering; it is "*la città dolente*" in whose inhabitants suffer eternal pain "*l'eterno dolore*." The emphasis on eternity in arch weighs against Dante's vision of the divine monarch who rules with divine power but whose kingdom is finite. The arch further indicates that God is the maker of hell who made it in justice, wisdom and love: "*Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore; / fecemi la divina podestate, / la soma sapienza e 'l primo amore*" (Inf. 3.4-6, "JUSTICE MOVED MY MAKER ON HIGH. / DIVINE POWER MADE ME, / WISDOM SUPREME, AND PRIMAL LOVE). The image of God is not Platonic or Aristotelian but rather the Thomistic synthesis of a divine creator who orders through wisdom and love.¹³⁵ Those in hell are thus correctly punished by God and such a punishment is done out of a love for the good of the universe.

Virgil explains that those in hell are a race of people who have lost the good of the intellect "*...le genti dolorosa / c'hanno perduto il ben de l'intelletto*" (Inf. 3.17-18, "...the miserable sinners / who have lost the good of the intellect"). Again, Dante

¹³⁵ For Dante's use of St. Thomas Aquinas, see Balsamo, Boyle, Mazzotta, and Yearly.

emphasizes on the moral and intellectual failings of the people who form a race of degenerates united by evil.

God is the emperor of heaven and even to a certain degree hell in as much as he is the efficient cause of hell. The devil is the viceroy of hell who rules in pathetic impotence. The introduction to the first sinners in hell, the lukewarm, gives an illustration of the two political boidies which humans have the option of joining. These sinners follow a banner around aimlessly and are covered with insects because they refused to join a side; these sinners are further joined with the angels who refused either to take God or Satan as an emperor. Virgil explains, “...*Questo misoro modo / tregon l'anime triste di coloro / che visser sanza 'nfamia e sanza lodo*” (*Inf.* 3.34-46, “This miserable state is borne / by the wretched souls of those who lived / without disgrace yet without praise”). The race here is expelled from the empires of both heaven and hell because of the indifference of its members.

Virgil later explains to Dante more of the structure of hell, using Aristotle's *Ethics*, yet Virgil uses a distinctly Christian reading of Aristotle. The Roman poet asks Dante,

Non ti rimembra di quelle parole
Con le quai la tua Etica pertratta
Le tre disposizion che 'l ciel non vole,
Incontenza, malizia e la matta
Bestialitade? e come incontenenza
Men Dio offende e men biasimo accatta?

Do you not recall the words
your *Ethics* uses to expound
the three dispositions Heaven opposes,
incontinence, malice, and mad brutishness,
and how incontinence offends God less
and incurs a lesser blame? (*Inf.* 79-84)

“[T]ua Etica” is usually taken to refer to Aristotle’s ethics. However, where in the *Ethics* does Aristotle say that incontinence, malice and bestiality offend heaven and God? Aristotle’s ethical argument is that vice is bad for the individual and the polis in as much as it prevents the individual from reaching happiness and the polis from having peace. Aristotle’s God does not seem to be offended by the misdeeds of mortals; therefore; one must look to Aquinas and other Christian writers for evil as an offense against God.

Virgil gives a further explanation of the logic of hell in *Inferno* 11. It is important to note that Virgil’s explanation is from a distinctly Christian perspective. Virgil explains that all wicked acts are essentially unjust and that this injustice is offensive in heaven: “*D’ogne malizia, ch’ odio in cielo acquista, / ingiuria è ’l fine, ed ogne fin cotale / o con forza o con frode altrui contrista*” (*Inf.* 11.22-24, Every evil deed despised in Heaven / has as its end injustice. Each such end / harms someone else through either force or fraud”). Malicious deeds are held in contempt by heaven and are unjust and either the result of force or fraud. Virgil continues, explaining that those sinners who commit a sin of fraud are punished even more harshly because fraud is more offensive to God: “*Ma perché frode è de l’uom proprio male, / più spiace a Dio; e però stan di sotto / li frodolenti, e più dolor li assale*” (*Inf.* 11.25-27, “But since the vice of fraud is man’s alone, / it more displaces God, and thus the fraudulent / are lower down, assailed by greater pain”). There is a classical precedent of understanding immoral human acts as being offensive to the gods. Yet, Virgil’s ideas are distinctly Christian; he explains the different types of violence: “*A Dio, a sé, al prossimo si pone / far forza, dico in loro e in lor cose, / come udirai con*

aperta ragione" (*Inf.* 11.31-33, "Violence may be aimed at God, oneself,-- / or at one's neighbor—thus against all three / or their possessions—as I shall now explain").

There are three types of violent sinners in hell: those who have hurt God, themselves, or their neighbor. Virgil analyzes the idea of violence against God, noting that such violence can be committed through blasphemy or through unnatural acts such as usury or Sodomy:

Puossi far forz ne la deïtade,
Col cor negando e bestemmiano quella,
E spregiando natura e sua bontade;
E però lo minor giron suggella
Del segno suo e Soddoma e Caorsa
E chi, spregiando Dio col cor favella.

Violence may be committed against God
When we deny and curse Him in our hearts,
Or when we scorn nature and her bounty.
And so the smallest ring stamps with its seal
Both Sodom and Cahors and those
Who scorn Him with their hearts and tongues. (*Inf.* 11.46-51)

Critics debate what exactly Dante means by Sodomy here, but in the context, it makes sense that he is referring to homosexual acts, for these sinners scorn nature's bounty.¹³⁶ Dante later asks why usury is punished as blasphemy, and Virgil gives a distinctly medieval response. Virgil tells Dante to go to Aristotle's *Physics* as well as the book of Genesis. Virgil explains that human work imitates God's work: "*che l'arte vostra quella, quanto pote, / segue, come 'l maestro fa 'l discente; / sì che vostr' arte a Dio quasi è nepote*" (*Inf.* 11.103-105, "that human toil, as far as it is able, / follows nature, as the pupil does his master, / so that it is God's grandchild, as it were.").

After his scientific explanation, Virgil gives his Biblical: that humans must work as

¹³⁶ See Ahern, Boswell, Burgwinkle, Cestaro, Holsinger, Noakes, Pequigney, and Pugh.

part of their punishment in a fallen world: “*Da queste due, se tu ti rechi a mente / lo Genesi dal principio, conviene / prender sua vita e avanza la gente*” (*Inf.* 11.106-108, “By toil and nature, if you remember Genesis, / near the beginning, it is man’s lot / to earn his bread and prosper”). The usurer thus contradicts the laws of nature as well as divine command, which is mediated through Christian revelation: “*e perché l’usuriere altra via tene, / per sé natura e per la sua seguace / dispregia, poi ch’in altro pon la spene*” (*Inf.* 11.109-111, “The usurer, who takes another path, / scorns nature in herself and her follower, / and elsewhere sets his hopes”). Dante’s combination of Christian revelation and Aristotelian science is not radical; rather, it is something that finds its model in Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.

There are a number of sinners in hell who don’t fit into the secular scheme as well. First of all, limbo does not make a great deal of sense if Dante is merely providing an allegory for political action. The heretics in *Inferno* 10-11 are another example. The Epicureans who denied the immortality of the soul are buried upside down in graves as Virgil explains to Dante (*Inf.* 10.13-15). These heretics do not seem to be a threat to the secular order; their sin seems to be believing a teaching a false teaching that led souls astray.

Another specifically Christian understanding of punishment in hell is to be in the example of the suicides. Suicide in the classical world was considered, at times, an honorable way out. Virgil, however, explains suicide in distinctly Christian terms:

Puote omo avere in sé man vïolenta
E ne’ suoi beni; e però nel secondo
Giron convien che sanze pro si penta
Qualunque priva sé del vostro mondo,

Biscazza e fonde la sua facultade,
E piane là dov' esser de' giocondo.

A man may lay injurious hands upon himself
or on his goods, and for that reason
in the second ring must repent in vain
who robs himself of the world above
or gambles away and wastes his substance,
lamenting when he should rejoice. (*Inf.* 11.40-45)

There are two types of self-destruction: one can either literally kill him or herself or one can destroy his or her own goods. Virgil frames suicide here in terms of Christian justice: the sinner who steals or prodigal who spends forfeits heaven as a result of his or her acts. The most pronounced Other in hell is, however, those who committed the greatest offense against God.

The empire of hell has its emperor, and Dante's description of Satan gives a further key to the logic of hell. Dante describes Satan as the emperor of a kingdom of suffering: "*Lo 'mperador del doloroso regno*" (*Inf.* 34.28). Just as those in the secular world cause misery through their rebellion, the devil who, through his rebellion, has caused such suffering to the universe and has waged war against the eternal kingdom of heaven is here eternally punished with his fellow rebels, human and angelic. Like all of those in hell, the devil is further grotesque (*Inf.* 34.34). He has three diseased heads that mock the trinity, and his wings are like those of a bat (*Inf.* 34.49-50). Like all those in hell, the devil suffers a *contrapasso*. Since he was so proud and sought to mock God, he has been mutated into a monster that parodies God, and is buried upside down, stuck in ice. Moreover, like those in hell, the devil is still proud, raising his eyebrows against God (*Inf.* 34.35). The devil raises his eyebrows at heaven in defiance of God; however, he is helplessly stuck in ice. The

devil is punished because of his pride and rebellion against God who is the true emperor of the universe in the Christian calculus.

Dante views himself as a radical poet; however, he seems to punish those of radical politics in hell. It is important that Judas, Cassius, and Brutus are punished together in the devil's mouth, for rebellion against the Roman Empire, which even in its pagan form, Dante sees as a divine work, is ultimately rebellion against God. Even though he is especially critical of Rome's traitors, Dante saves the worst punishment for Christ's betrayers. Judas, lodged in Satan's mouth, is, as Virgil says, the sinner who must experience the greatest pain: "*Quell' anima là sù c'ha maggior pena, ' disse 'l maestro, 'è Giuda Scariotto, / che 'l capo ha dentro e fuor le gambe mena*" (Inf. 34.61-63, "'That soul up there bears the greatest pain' / said the master 'is Judas Iscariot, who has / his head within and outside flails his legs"). Dante gives the greatest punishment for the greatest human crime: an offense against the emperor of the universe. Despite whatever prejudices Dante may or may not have had toward Greeks and Easterners, the greatest enemies in his poem are Judas and Satan, who receive the worst punishments for the ultimate crime: rebellion against the divine emperor.

In the end, recent scholarship that has sought to detheologize, update, or reevaluate Dante's life and works has ignited a serious and intense dialogue. The attempt by Barolini to read Dante from a formalist or reader oriented perspective has brought greater attention to the craft of the poet whose ideas often eclipse his art. Moreover, recently criticism of Dante's supposedly orthodox Christian beliefs has helped to bring out the understanding of how diverse and often contradictory

the Italian poet's ideas are. On the other hand, despite the points made by secular critics, there is still a strong theological voice in Dante. This voice takes the Virgilian idea of the imperial *exemplum*, the hero, prophecies, and the Other and brings them into a medieval setting, Christianizing them in Dante's unique, often heretical fashion. Dante's imperial community is two-fold. Dante believes in a secular emperor; on the other hand, Dante's understanding of the secular emperor comes from a unique Christian tradition. The superior imperial community, however, is the kingdom of heaven to which those elected by God are admitted. Dante's hero undergoes a conversion of his mind and will that is largely affected through grace mediated from a variety of sources. Finally, the Other in Dante's understanding is two-fold. Despite his generosity, Dante still is affected with a touch of prejudice, and he often punishes his personal enemies as well as those that he sees as Italy's cultural rivals. More importantly though, Dante sees the Other as being the unredeemed sinner or fallen angel whose corrupted will and refusal of grace has damned him or her.

Chapter Four

Edmund Spenser and the National Christian Epic

The English Renaissance poet Edmund Spenser adapts a Virgilian imperial *exemplum* with its imperialism, self-criticism and humanism throughout *The Faerie Queene*, his elaborate, incomplete epic chronicling the stories of various characters that represent Christianized Aristotelian virtues. Borrowing elements from romance, ancient Greek philosophy, most notably Plato and Aristotle, and Protestant and Catholic theology, Spenser seeks to shape his reader, making a new England composed of virtuous and holy Englishmen and women.¹³⁷ In doing so, Spenser follows the imperial *exemplum* laid down by Virgil.¹³⁸ In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser presents several heroes who exemplify various virtues and thus serve as heroic *exempla*. Like Dante and Virgil, Spenser is careful to note that these heroes are fallible.¹³⁹ Furthermore, there is the view in *The Faerie Queene* that God is England's side and will guide her through Elizabeth. Spenser further mimics Virgil and Dante in as much as he is aware of the fragility of temporal existence and the fact that satisfaction is only found in heaven. Finally, he establishes a border between the

¹³⁷ Like Dante, Spenser is another self consciously Virgilian poet; he models his career after Virgil's, publishing a pastoral work, *The Shepheardes Calendar*, followed by his epic, *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser also translated the possibly apocryphal *Culex* of Virgil as *Virgils Gnat*.

¹³⁸ For Spenser's relation to Virgil, see David Scott Wilson Okamura's "Problem's in the Virgilian Career" and William Stanford Webb's "Vergil in Spenser's Epic Theory." See also Cheney, Gregerson, Mares, and Watkins. Miller treats the wider issue of Spenser's idea of his role as a poet in "Spenser's Vocation, Spenser's Career."

¹³⁹ Anthea Hume notes that Spenser's characters' fragility is a reflection of his Calvinist view of the corruption of human nature, and all virtues come from God (109).

community and the Other as Virgil does in the *Aeneid*, yet like Dante, Spenser sees sin and evil as the primary Others.

Spenser, like many of the prime poets of the English Renaissance, was deeply influenced by Neo-Platonism.¹⁴⁰ The history of Neo-Platonism and Platonism in general, like the history of Aristotelianism in the Middle Ages, is muddled with some controversy. One of the primary debates is the issue of how greatly Christianity influenced the Neo-Platonism of the Renaissance. Edmund Spenser appropriates a great deal of occult and Neo-Platonic images in his work; however, he is a Christian who uses Platonic ideas and images to construct his imperial *exemplum*. Recently, some Renaissance scholars have attempted to trace the genealogy of Christian Neo-Platonism in the English Renaissance to roots in the patristic period in which the Church fathers and mothers attempted to harmonize Neo-Platonic thought with Christian doctrine. In his work *Sidney's Poetics: Imitating Creation*, Michael Mack attempts to show the great influence of early Christian ideas on Renaissance poets, honing in on Sir Philip Sidney's *Apologia*, which had a great deal of influence on Spenser's thought.

In his *Apologia*, Sidney compares the work of the poet to God and, although this idea is commonplace in Renaissance poetics, Sidney makes some very bold claims about the poet's power. Sidney's comment that the poet has the "force of divine breath" suggests that the poet wields the power of the Holy Spirit (Mack 7).

¹⁴⁰ For discussions of Shakespeare and Platonism, see Gray. For treatment of the impact of Platonism on the English Renaissance in general, see Sears Jayne's "Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance" as well as her book-length study, *Plato in the Renaissance in England*. See also Kristeller's *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains* and his article "Ficino and Renaissance Platonism."

Sidney further emphasizes poetry's didactic power; it has a special power to shape the moral character of the audience. Mack notes that Sidney reveals poetry as something, "which not only mirrors the Incarnation by providing humanity an ideal model for imitation, but also resembles grace in its ability to move humanity to embrace the good it presents" (29). Thus, Christian Neo-Platonism moves above Plato's poetics to an idea of poetry as being like a sacrament, that is, a source of grace. Mack defines the idea of English Renaissance poetry's Neo-Platonism: "Rather than looking to creatures in order to learn about God—St. Paul's recommended method—they look to God in order to learn about creatures" (27). Mack further notes that, in Renaissance Neo-Platonism "the world is an allegorical mirror, a glass in which we see a reflection of the Idea in the mind of God" (43). According to Sidney, the image of the hero is important, for it "informs with counsel how to be worthy" (139). Spenser seeks to follow the same method in his work through his own version of Christian Neo-Platonism.

Spenser and Sidney were among the first to embrace Plato when the Greek philosopher firmly took root in England in the sixteenth century.¹⁴¹ Both Sidney and Spenser were living with Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, in 1579 when a new translation of Plato, which was composed by the Huguenots Henry Estienne II and Jean de Serres arrived in England. The two French Protestants had dedicated the work to Elizabeth in return for her granting of succor to Huguenots fleeing France after the St. Bartholomew's day massacre in 1572, and courtiers soon began reading

¹⁴¹ For general treatment of Spenser's Platonism, see Bieman, Bhattacharya, and Ellrodt. For a specific discussion of Platonic natural history in Spenser, see Quitslund. For a work that seeks to distance Spenser's work from Plato's, showing that Spenser believed the Platonic political ideal as being unattainable, see Suttie.

Plato, hoping to impress the queen (Jayne, *Plato in Renaissance England* 115).

Edmund Spenser likewise attempted to add some of Plato's ideas to *The Shepheardes Calender* on which he was working at the time (Jayne, *PRE* 115).

Spenser went on to read more deeply into Plato, and the English poet incorporates his thought more in his *Fowre Hymns* and *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser is heavily indebted to the Platonic tradition, but his work is also decidedly Christian.

Yet, even the character of Spenser's Christianity is debatable. Writers such as Robert Ellrodt in his *Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser* hold that Spenser was fundamentally a moderate Anglican who was critical of excesses in the government of the English Church. Others, however, such as Anthea Hume have recently pointed out that Spenser was a radical Puritan who sought to undermine any Catholic element in the Anglican Church; Hume identifies Spenser poems in *The Shepheardes Calender* as being "Puritan in their impetus" (40) and points to aspects of *The Faerie Queene* as being influenced by radical Puritanism.¹⁴² Jeffrey Knapp, in "Spenser the Priest" suggests that Spenser often adopts a priestly persona in the poem: "...Spenser remained committed to pastoral in order to retain pastorship as a possible, allegorical decoding of his vocation" (71). In assuming the role of a priest, Spenser is following Sidney's argument for the poet as a *vates* in the tradition of Homer and Virgil (Knapp 72). Spenser was further deeply engaged with the political issues of the Elizabethan era, and this political turmoil is reflected in his work. Thus, in addition to dealing with his religious identity, many critics have focused on Spenser's engagement with the immediate political issues of his day.

¹⁴² For the influence of Luther's ideas on Spenser, see Richey.

Many critics have attempted to read Spenser through the lens of historicism, examining the importance of English politics to Spenser's works of poetry such as *The Faerie Queene*. In *Edmund Spenser's War on Lord Burghley*, Bruce Danner reads Spenser's work as being primarily a critique of the Cecil family. Critics such as Thomas Heron attempt to read *The Faerie Queene* and the rest of Spenser's *oeuvre* as principally having to do with the colonial issues of Spenser's time, namely, the colonization of Ireland of which Spenser was a part. In his *Spenser's Irish Work: Poetry, Plantation and Colonial Reformation*, Herron writes, "Spenser's genius flourished, and Irish culture—blood and soil—are his constant preoccupation" (1). Ireland as well as England figures largely in Spenser's epic. Herron explains that Ireland "is frequently allegorized as either a maiden-in-distress or a mutable, treacherous, female-gendered-yet-fertile land to be conquered by a male hero" (6). Herron sees the various characters of *The Faerie Queene* as serving the function of being historical allegories of specific contemporaries of Spenser. For example, Arthur in the poem is Arthur Lord Grey, one of Spenser's patrons (18). Herron consistently ties the allegorical with the historical; Book 1 has to do with Protestant warfare against the Irish, and temperance in Book 2 corresponds "with the need for self restraint on behalf of opportunistic colonists: they must temper their desire for Mammon-like wealth and resist Acrasia-like sensual temptations" (18). Herron suggests that *The Faerie Queene* "catalogues the woes and hoped-for onward progress of the Protestant New English gentlemen in Ireland: so-called 'adventurers' who discovered a lucrative and dangerous opportunity in fertile soil at the behest of their famous queen, Elizabeth I" (2). Herron's work is very polemical, and he, at

times, seems to place too much emphasis on Spenser's history as opposed to his philosophy.

A critic who also takes a historicist approach to Spenser is Stephen Greenblatt. Greenblatt sees Spenser's colonial interests as being tied to his sexual ones: "Spenser, who participates with Freud in a venerable and profoundly significant intertwining of sexual and colonial discourse, accepts sexual colonialism only with a near-tragic sense of the cost" (173). Greenblatt then qualifies his statement, explaining:

Even when he most bitterly criticizes its abuses or records its brutalities, Spenser loves power and attempts to link his own art ever more closely with its symbolic and literal embodiment. *The Faerie Queene* is, as he insists again and again, wholly wedded to the autocratic ruler of the English state; the rich complexities of Spenser's art, its exquisite ethical discriminations in pursuit of the divine in man, are not achieved in spite of what is for us a repellent political ideology—the passionate worship of imperialism. (175)

Greenblatt recognizes that Spenser's work is primarily concerned with the British imperial project. However, *The Faerie Queene* is more than a catalogue, and the work is not bound to its historical period. Critics also have read the *The Faerie Quene* as a work that primarily presents a moral allegory.

Critics such as Julian Lethbridge attempt to read Spenser as someone concerned with Christian ethics and theology primarily but who nonetheless treats the issue of the colonization of Ireland as an essential and integral part of *The Faerie Queene's* program. According to Lethbridge, in *The Faerie Queene*, "Historical allegory, if indeed casually present, gives way to moral allegory, and whether the historical allegory is elusive, allusive, or illusive, it is moral allegory which guides

the poem" ("Raleigh" 55). Spenser's work is, according to Lethbridge, primarily a work that is hoping to shape the moral character of the audience.¹⁴³

Many of the contemporary approaches to Spenser's work make strong arguments. Herron's arguments in support of a historical reading of Spenser have a persuasive appeal. Spenser's discussion of the colonization of Ireland and the New World as well as his understanding of Great Britain as the great champion of Protestant Christianity at home and abroad are major issues in *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁴⁴ However, *The Faerie Queene* is essentially a textbook set in verse on how to live the virtuous life and how to construct the model imperial *exemplum*.

As Dante does in his "Letter to Can Grande della scala," Spenser provides a clue to how his epic should be read in a letter addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh that has been published at the beginning of *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁴⁵ Spenser writes to Walter Raleigh that his plan is to form the reader through the *exemplum* of virtue found in King Arthur in *The Faerie Queene*. He writes that use of *exempla* is more

¹⁴³ There are many critical trends in contemporary Spenser studies. There is a movement to read Spenser as containing subversive voices. Susanne Wofford writes, "The name 'Spenser' at work throughout seems to attach itself to the morals provided by the not-always-helpful narrator of *The Faerie Queene*, though there clearly is another 'Spenser,' at work throughout, a 'Spenser' who at moments cagily identifies that narrator with such evil geniuses as Busyrane and Archimago while laughing at the poem's own formal need to round out its action in often moralizing alexandrines" (11). There are also attempts to read Spenser as an artist primarily concerned with the aesthetic qualities of the work. Frances K. Barasch places Spenser in a tradition of "grotesque composition" that begins in the Middle Ages and continues through the Renaissance and into the Baroque (60). This tradition, Barasch notes, undergoes some changes, but Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is part of a "classical revival" that "may be identified as 'early baroque'" (60).

¹⁴⁴ For a dated but thorough explanation of Spenser's imperial ideas, see Greenlaw.

¹⁴⁵ See Hamilton's "Spenser's Letter to Raleigh" for an argument in favor of the authenticity of the letter and Baker for a list of discrepancies between the letter and *The Faerie Queene*.

effective in accomplishing this task than philosophy although he recognizes that some would prefer philosophy:

To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in a way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they vse, then clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with use of these Dayes seeing all things accounted by their shoves, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one in the exquisite depth of his iudgement, formed a Commune welth as such it should be, but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians fashioned a gouernement such as might best be: So much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule (14).

Spenser writes that Arthur will be the *exemplum* of all of the virtues, which will be diffused throughout twelve characters: "But of the xii. other vertues, I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history..." (*FQ* 16). Spenser was only able to write six of the books and some fragments of later ones, but he lays out the plan of the poem as being the presentation of virtues symbolized by various heroes who embody them. Spenser's work is very Virgilian in as much he seeks to establish a model for his reader to follow.

Spenser's Hero

The Spenserian hero draws from both Virgil and Dante, but he is unique.¹⁴⁶ He is a protestant English Courtier who is the heir of the Christian, classical, and Celtic traditions.¹⁴⁷ Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, like some readings of the *Aeneid* and the *Commedia*, can be read as a progression in civilization. There is a movement from the very brutal and medieval world of the first books to the later books in

¹⁴⁶ Greenblatt notes that in the later 16th century, "we must now consider more complex and seemingly autonomous characters in fully realized fictional worlds" (161).

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion of Spenser's use of indigenous British mythology including fairy and elf stories, see Matthew Woodcock's *Fairy in The Faerie Queene*.

which courtesy and manners are groomed and the more metaphysical and ethereal later books and *mutabilitie* fragments.¹⁴⁸ The work itself has often been read as a poetic manual on how to be an Elizabethan courtier (West 1025). Yet, there is much in this work that is anti-heroic, and Spenser's characters cannot be understood exclusively as archetypes or models of the ideal Christian Renaissance hero.¹⁴⁹ Jacqueline T. Miller, for example, takes a look at Callidore, the alleged hero of Book 6 and allegory for courtesy, as being a dubious hero as a result of his seemingly duplicitous behavior (53). Some critics have attempted to read Spenser's heroes as being based on classical models. According to Susanne Wofford, Spenser's heroes are often based on Hercules: "Just as Hercules was a giant among men, so, metaphorically, are those of Spenser's heroes who take after him" (340). However, Spenser's hero has a distinctly Christian character who serves as his heroic *exemplum*; in *The Faerie Queene*, the exemplar of virtues is King Arthur.

Arthur is a principal character in *The Faerie Queene*. There are a number of parallels between Arthur and Aeneas; for instance, both are the ancestors of the ruler whose regime the poem champions. Arthur further ties Spenser's poem to the indigenous mythological tradition, and it is important to remember that Spenser, unlike Dante, is not trying to build another Mediterranean empire; his empire,

¹⁴⁸ For Spenser's relationship to the Middle Ages, see Bond, King, and Watkins' "Polemic and Nostalgia: Medieval Crosscurrents in Spenser's Allegory of Pride."

¹⁴⁹ While the idea of a hero in the renaissance is multivariant, there is a general idea of a warrior who embodies Platonic and Aristotelian virtues as well Biblical piety in addition to the *Sprezzatura* that Castiglione describes in *Il Libro del Cortegiano*. See West's "Spenser and the Renaissance Ideal of Christian Heroicism."

although linked to the Trojans, is a distinctly English empire.¹⁵⁰ In *The Faerie Queene*, Arthur is both an allegory of moral and theological virtues; he is also the historical king Arthur. In the Elizabethan period, Arthur was considered the greatest of British monarchs, a Celtic warrior king who repelled the Anglo-Saxon invaders.¹⁵¹ Spenser thus, on one level, is a representation of a specific historical British character and serves a political purpose of defending England against her enemies.

Arthur partakes in various political events contemporaneous with Spenser. Arthur has a dream in Book 1 in which he has a dream that the “Queene of Faeries” appears beside him (*FQ* 1.9.14). From thenceforth, he is on a quest to find her “face divine” again (*FQ* 1.9.15). This quest is to protect her as a great warrior as Una, the symbol of the Anglican Church in Book 1, notes, “O Happy Queene of Faeries, that has found / Mongst many, one that with his prowess may / Defend thine honour, and thy foes confound...” (*FQ* 1.9.16). Arthur is seeking out the Fairy Queen in order to serve her. This service will be carried out throughout *The Faerie Queene* as Arthur helps to battle Britain’s foes. In Book 5, which focuses on justice, he goes to war against Geryoneo who represents England’s arch nemesis: Spain. Arthur’s victory of Geryoneo is a prefiguring of Elizabeth’s eventual victory over Philip in Belgium and the Netherlands. Mercilla sends Arthur to defeat Geryoneo and save Belge, who here

¹⁵⁰ For a treatment of Spenser’s idea of the British Empire as the heir of Troy, see Rebeca Heifer’s “Falling into History: Trials of Empire in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*.” See also James Carscallen’s “How Troy Came to Spenser.”

¹⁵¹ For a reading of Spenser’s use of Arthur as an imperial colonist in America see Artese. Hodges explains how Spenser changes Arthur from a Catholic to a Protestant hero in “Making Arthur Protestant: Translating Malory’s Grail Quest into Spenser’s Book of Holiness.” For general treatment of Arthur in *The Faerie Queene* see Hughes as well as Mazzola’s “The Implied Arthur: Mass Publics and Splintered Subjects in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*”.

represents Belgium or perhaps all the Low Countries. So, it is not incorrect to read Arthur as a historical allegory, for he represents, on a certain level, the British Empire at war.

Arthur as a hero is important to Spenser, and Spenser's Arthurian tale provides the English poet with a distinctly nationalist myth for his nationalist poem. Michael Mack explains Spenser's use of Arthur: "In Arthur, Spenser provides both an allegory and a model for his Christian and English readers. For Spenser's readers, understanding Arthur the allegory is the same as understanding Arthur the exemplar—and is the same as understanding themselves. Formulated more simply, Arthur is the type of the Christian and the type of England" (42). The exemplar here is both political and religious, and the political vision is narrower than in Virgil and Dante, i.e., Arthur is not an international hero. However, while he serves as a historical allegory, King Arthur is also an exemplar of Christian virtue.

In his letter to Raleigh attached to the beginning of the work, Spenser explains why he has chosen Arthur as one of the principal heroes of his story: "...I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of enuy, and suspition of present time" (FQ 15). Arthur is to serve as a model of virtue for the reader as "antique Poets historical" (FQ 15) such as Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, and Tasso had done.¹⁵² Spenser writes that he will follow their model: "By ensample of which excellent Poets, I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, an image of a braue knight, perfected in the twelue priuate morall vertues, as Aristotile

¹⁵² For a discussion of Spenser's use of poetic rhetoric for moving the reader to virtue, see Lewalksi.

hath deuised, the which is the purpose of these first twelue bookes..." (FQ 15).¹⁵³

Spenser lays out the blue print for *The Faerie Queene* in very Platonic fashion: the purpose of *The Faerie Queene* is the formation of the soul of the reader through *exempla*, i.e., positive models of virtue for the soul to copy. He further states that "*in the person of Prince Arthure I seette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that booke*" (FQ 16). D. Douglas Waters reads this passage as giving an explanation of Arthur as an *exemplum* of specifically Christian virtue, noting that Arthur appears like grace to resolve problems for the other characters in the poem ("Prince Arthur as Christian Magnanimity in Book One of *The Faerie Queene*." 58). Waters' reading is largely correct, and Arthur is magnanimous and the culmination of all the virtues and thus serves as one half of the cardinal *exempla* of *The Faerie Queene*.

This use of Arthur as a moral allegory is frequent throughout *The Faerie Queene*; in the poem, he appears as helper, serving as a symbol of Christian virtue received through God's grace. Una, Spenser's image of the Anglican Church, first encounters Arthur in Book 1 where he is dressed in fantastic apparel. On his helmet is a dragon, which is so terrifying that "suddeine horror to faint harts did show" (FQ 1.7.31) and his shield is made of "Diamond perfect pure and cleene..." (FQ 1.7.33). This shield is blessed and against it "Nor magicke arts hereof had any might..." (FQ

¹⁵³ Greenblatt notes that the "poem rests on the obvious but by no means universal assumption that a gentleman can be so fashioned, not simply in art but in life" (169).

1.7.35). This shield has traditionally been read as a symbol of faith.¹⁵⁴ In Book 2, Arthur helps Guyon, the allegorical symbol of temperance, who is attacked by two pagans.¹⁵⁵ These pagans are full of anger; when one is killed, the other “gan to rage, and rayle, / Cursing his Gods, and himself damning deepe...” (FQ 2.8.37). However, Arthur keeps his cool and remains temperate, killing both of the pagans. Arthur further defends the house of Alma, an allegory of the human body, which is assailed by Maleger and the enemies of temperance, including such characters as *Impotence* and *Impatience* (FQ 2.11). Arthur also reconciles Guyon and Britomart, the chaste female warrior whom Spenser uses as a symbol of Elizabeth I, in Book 3, symbolizing the harmonizing of the virtues of chastity and temperance.¹⁵⁶ Guyon is overwhelmed with rage and approaches to strike Britomart, but Arthur stops him: “the Prince like treaty handeled, / His wrathfull will with reason to asswage...” (FQ 3.1.11). Arthur teaches Guyon to use his reason, and the Prince himself performs the allegorical role of reason or temperance that cools and controls wrath. Arthur continues this role through of helper and healer throughout the poem. In Book 4, he mends Amoret’s injury with a “pretious liquour” and “vnto strength restor’d her soone anew” (FQ 4.8.20). Arthur further protects Poena and Placidus from “sterne *Druon*, and lewd *Claribell*, / Love-lavish *Blandamour*, and lustfull *Paridell*” (FQ 4.9.20). These four villains represent the four vices that are given as adjectives to

¹⁵⁴ Arthur’s shield has been a topic of some discussion; see Allen, Mitsi, and Pienaar.

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of Guyon and the importance of temperance to *The Faerie Queene*, see Cooney and Mazzola.

¹⁵⁶ Greenblatt criticizes this temperance: “The fashioning of a gentleman then depends upon the imposition of control over inescapably immoderate sexual impulses that, for the survival of the race, must constantly recur: the discriminations upon which a virtuous and gentle discipline is based are forever in danger of collapsing” (177).

describe them, and, once, again, Arthur plays his role as an allegory of virtue. Arthur is thus a moral and political allegory; as in Plato, politics and morality are not separated. Arthur plays the role of Christian virtue protecting the soul and body.

In a scene that reflects Arthur's role as both a historical and a moral allegory, Arthur fights the Souldan, an image of a possibly Islamic ruler who attempts to overthrow legitimate Christian authority, in Book 5. The Souldan fights "with furie" and is "Swearing and banning most blasphemously" (*FQ* 5.8.28); his countenance is "insolent" and he "sought onely slaughter and auevengement" (*FQ* 5.8.30). The Souldan is thus associated with vice. He further rides a "charret" (*FQ* 5.8.28) and is called a "Pagan" (*FQ* 5.8.39), which associates him with the East. The Souldan also has horses that are "head-strong steeds" full of "furie" (*FQ* 5.8.41). There is thus a reference to the horses as passions pulling a chariot, an image used by Plato and mythologists like Ovid as a symbol for the passions. In contrast to the Souldan, Arthur fights "for honour and for right / Gainst tortuous power and lawless regiment, / In the behalf of wronged weake..." (*FQ* 5.8.30). Arthur fights virtuously for the sake of honor and avenging the wrongs of the weak. Arthur is able to defeat the Souldan only by unveiling his "victrious shield" and showing them its radiance (*FQ* 5.37.37). This shield startles the horses and sends them running. Grace thus scatters wild passions. Arthur and Artegall, one of Spenser's knights who represents justice, fight together against Malengin, as symbol of evil scheming as well as rebellious Irish peasantry, in Canto 9 of Book 5, and Arthur defeats Disdain and Turpine in Book 6. In all of these battles, Arthur primarily plays the role of the victory of grace and virtue over the passions. The woman whom Arthur seeks,

Gloriana, who represents Queen Elizabeth, is the second cardinal *exemplum* in the poem.

Spenser praises Queene Elizabeth as another cardinal *exemplum* of virtue throughout *The Faerie Queene*, and like his praise of Arthur, Spenser primarily prizes Elizabeth for her Christian virtue.¹⁵⁷ Spenser had written of Elizabeth in his earlier poetry. In the month of *Februarie* of the *Shepheardes Calender*, the shepherd Thenot champions Elizabeth as the Tudor union of the Lancaster and York, using the image of red and white flowers, which are “Colours meete to clothe a mayden Queene” (134). The image of Elizabeth as a peacemaker and reconciler is important for Spenser who sees her as the hopeful reconciler of religious as well as political feuds. The Fairy Queen herself (a symbol of Elizabeth) is a character of capital importance in *The Faerie Queene*. In the letter to Raleigh, Spenser makes it clear that the Fairy Queen is Elizabeth. As Elizabeth styles herself, Spenser refers to the queen as an empress who should rightly rule over an empire, which she is in the process of making. Spenser writes:

In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two person, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most virtuous and beautifull Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belpheobe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent conceipt of Cynthia, (Phoebe and Cynthia being both names of Diana). (16)

¹⁵⁷ For the image of Elizabeth in Spenser, see David Lee Miller’s “Spenser’s Poetics: The Poem’s Two Bodies.” See also Paola Baseotto’s *Fighting for God, Queen and Country: Spenser and the Morality of Violence*.

Spenser is drawing upon the king's or in this case queen's two bodies theory common in the Middle Ages.¹⁵⁸ Queen Elizabeth is God's vice-regent on earth and is represented by Gloriana while Elizabeth Tudor is represented by the chaste character Belphebe. Elizabeth appears throughout the poem in various forms including Belphebe, Britomart and Mercilla.

Some of Spenser's strongest language of praise is given to Belphebe who serves as an icon of Elizabeth.¹⁵⁹ He refers to her "stately portance" and "heavenly birth" (*FQ* 2.3.21). She is the epitome of classical beauty: her complexion is "like roses in a bed of lillies shed" (*FQ* 2.3.22). She further has a radiant soul that shines through her eyes: "In her faire eyes two liuing lamps did flame..." (*FQ* 2.3.23). Her face is literally an icon of heaven, a "glorious mirrhour of celestially grace" (*FQ* 2.3.25). However, Belphebe is not simply a beautiful soul in a beautiful body. Belphebe and her twin sister Amoret have a divine birth; they were born of Chrysogone who conceives by the power of the Sun in the Garden of Adonis in Book 3, Canto 6. She is a warrior, she carries "a sharpe bore-speare" as well as a "bow and quiuer gay, / Stuft with steele-headed darts..." (*FQ* 2.3.29). Like Diana, Belphebe uses these weapons to kill "saluage beastes" (*FQ* 2.3.29). However, Belphebe uses these weapons to kill enemies such as Lust in Book 4, Canto 7. Additionally, like Arthur Belphebe cures Timias, a symbol of desperate love, in Book 2, but rejects his suit; here Belphebe mirrors Elizabeth's own rejection of suitors. Belphebe is

¹⁵⁸ See Kantorowicz's *The Kings Two Bodies*.

¹⁵⁹ For recent exploration of Belphebe, especially her relationship to Elizabeth, see David Scott Wilson-Okamura's "Belphebe and Gloriana." For a discussion of Belphebe having a possible predecessor in Virgil's Venus in the *Aeneid*, see Merritt Y. Hughes' "Virgilian Allegory and *The Faerie Queene*." See also Berleth, English, Villeponteaux, and Woodbridge.

beautiful warrior who represents Elizabeth on one level and divine chastity on another. She is not alone as an example of a chaste warrior in the poem.

Britomart further serves as an image of Elizabeth.¹⁶⁰ In Canto 2 of Book 3, Spenser explains that in the past women were warriors:

But by record of antique times I find,
That women wont in warres to beare most sway,
And to all great exploits them selues inclind:
Of which they still the girlond bore away... (2)

In a passage that is obviously flattering to Elizabeth whose forces defeated the mighty Spanish Armada of Philip II, Spenser notes that women were once celebrated for their prowess in war. Spenser then explains that it was the work of jealous men who prevented them from acting in liberty: “Till enuious Men fearing their rules decay, / Gan coyne streight lawes to curb their liberty...” (*FQ* 3.2.2). Having been prevented from war, women now use their talents in “artes and pollicy” (*FQ* 3.2.2). Spenser then enters into a praise of Elizabeth whose wisdom rules England and whose majesty excels the humble pen of the poet:

But of all wisdom be thou precedent,
O soueraigne Queene, whose prayse I would endite,
Endite I would as dewtie doth excite;
But ah my rimes too rude and rugged arre,
When in so high an object they do lye... (*FQ* 3.2.3)

Spenser joins Britomart’s warlike power to Elizabeth’s wisdom. Britomart’s warrior prowess is seen throughout *The Faerie Queene*. She hunts Ollyphant, a monstrous symbol of lust, rescues Amoret, Belphoebe’s twin and an image of marital love in *The Faerie Queene*, from the house of Busirane, and wins the tournament of Satyrane in

¹⁶⁰ For treatment of Britomart and her relationship to Elizabeth, see Anderson’s “Britomart’s Armor in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*”, Bean, Bowman Brill, Burchmore, Grund, Lanham, Olmsted, and Walker among others.

Book 4 as well as in her various conflicts with Artegall. Additionally, Britomart finally defeats the Amazonian Radigund in Book 5. Although she is a virgin, Britomart is to marry Artegall whom she sees in three prophecies. In addition to the images of the two virgin warriors, Spenser presents Mercilla as an image of Elizabeth as well as an image of the Christian idea of mercy.

In Book 5, Artegall and Arthur visit the court of Mercilla. Mercilla stands as an image for Elizabeth, for she is the model Christian queen and has the Christian virtue of mercy.¹⁶¹ Spenser defends his Christian position at the beginning of Canto 10, stating that mercy is a part of justice and is found in God's courts:

sure she is as great,
And meriteth to haue as high a place,
Sith in th'Almighties euerlasting seat
She first was bred, and borne of heauenly race;
From thence pour'd down on men, by influence of grace. (*FQ* 5.10.1)

Mercy comes from heaven and is given to men via grace. Spenser further explains that mercy is better than strict justice, for it is better to save and make others better than to eliminate them: "it is greater prayse to saue, then spill, / And better to reforme, then to cut off the ill" (*FQ* 5.10.2). While mercy is a virtue that is often associated with humility, Spenser here ties it to Mercilla's imperial honor. Mercilla-Elizabeth is honored by heaven and by all those who fall under the sway of her rule. The rule of Mercilla is praised by a "heauenly Muse" and extends "From th'vmost brinke of the *Armericke* shore, / Vnto the margent of the *Molucas*?" (*FQ* 5.10.3). The subject nations praise the justice of Mercilla, and her own Englishmen and women praise her mercy: "Those Nations farre they iustice doe adore: / But thine owne

¹⁶¹ See Nelson and Staines for Mercilla's relationship to Elizabeth.

people do thy mercy prayse much more" (FQ 5.10.3). Elizabeth derives her power from heaven, and she governs her own English people and stretches her authority to shores of America.

Moreover, Mercilla's acts of mercy and justice serve as models for others in future generations. Mercilla provides "...Royall examples of her mercies rare / And worthie paterns of her clemencies..." (FQ 5.10.5). These examples present models for posterity: "...Which till this day mongst many liuing are, / Who them to their posterities doe still declare" (FQ 5.10.5). In addition to Arthur and Elizabeth, Spenser uses a number of other exemplars of virtue in his works; however, the most prominent and distinctly Christian is Redcrosse.

Redcrosse is the first representative of the virtues encountered in *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁶² The virtue that Redcrosse exemplifies is holiness; however, he is not Christ and commits a number of sins and has to undergo the process of redemption. When the reader is first introduced to Redcrosse, he seems to be knight who has a history. He is "cladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde, / Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine, / The cruell markes of many a bloody field..." (FQ 1.1.1). Yet, strangely, he has never fought in any wars: "...Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield..." (FQ 1.1.1). In addition, he is riding upon a wild horse: "...His angry steede did chide his foming bitt, / As much disdainning to the curbe to yield..." (FQ

¹⁶² For a fascinating discussion of Redcrosse as hero in the vein of archetypal criticism, see Jos A. Johnson's "The Journey of the Redcrosse Knight and the Myth of the Hero." For further discussion of Redcrosse and his theological significance, see Anderson's "Redcrosse and the Descent into Hell." See also Beecher, Broadus' "A Galenic Reading of the Redcrosse Knight's 'Goodly Court' of Fidessa/Duessa" and Spenser's Redcrosse Knight and the Order of Salvation" as well as Dughi, Falls, Levin, Prescott, among others.

1.1.1). The horse here is a clear traditional symbol of unbridled passion. The message here is fairly apparent. The Redcrosse knight appears to be a seasoned veteran, but, in reality, he is just a tenderfoot. In the next stanza, Spenser makes it clear that there is something given to Redcrosse, and it is not his own virtue that merits the holiness: it is the grace of God. Redcrosse is adorned with the cross of Christ on his breast and his shield:

But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead as liuing ever him ador'd
Vpon his shield the like was also scor'd
For soueraine hope, which in his helpe he had... (FQ 1.1.2).

The Redcrosse knight wears the armor of Christ that has born the wounds and dents of the battles that Christ has fought. This armor is commonly identified with the armor of faith mentioned by St. Paul in Ephesians 6.10-17. Redcrosse's holiness ultimately comes from Christ. Spenser ends the first stanza with an ironic statement: "...Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt, / As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt" (FQ 1.1.1). The reader will soon become aware that appearances are very deceiving in *The Faerie Queene*, and Redcrosse will have to learn his lesson.

Redcrosse is allied with Una, the one true English church, and thus we see the intimacy between Church and state that Spenser and other Anglicans envisioned.¹⁶³ While Una is often discussed, correctly, as an image of the Anglican Church, it is interesting to note that Spenser describes her in royal and political terms as well. She is described as being pure and innocent as Christ: "So pure an innocent, as that

¹⁶³ See Wall's "The English Reformation and the Recovery of Christian Community in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*."

same lambe, / She was in life and euery virtuous lore..." (*FQ* 1.1.5). The image here is clearly theological; Una has been washed in Christ's blood and is holy Church of Christ. However, Spenser continues:

And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Western shore,
And all the world in their subiection held...(*FQ* 1.1.5)

Una is not simply a religious body; she is a political body as well who once had an immense empire. The use of the once great empire image here initiates Spenser's plan to reestablish his empire in his poem and through his poem in the real world. Redcrosse must learn to undergo trials in order to be a suitable husband for Una.

After a series of trials, Redcrosse eventually lets his guard down and takes off his sacred armor when in the presence of Duessa, a temptress who disguises herself as a "damsel in distress." The scene evokes a movement into the pastoral world of terrestrial and sensual love. Redcrosse is lying in the heat next to a fountain with his armor removed, "Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate" (*FQ* 1.7.3). In this scene, Redcrosse is exhausted, disarmed of his spiritual armor, and near a fountain, an often sensual image. Duessa arrives and trouble then unfolds. Redcrosse drinks of the stream and becomes enchanted or intoxicated: "Eftsoones his manly forces gan to faile, / and mightie strong was turnd to feeble fraile" (*FQ* 1.7.6). Redcrosse is then weakened and commits a sin of the flesh with Duessa: "Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame, / Poured out in loosness on the grassy grownd, / Both careless of his health, and of his fame..." (*FQ* 1.7.7). Redcrosse is overrun by Orgoglio, a giant phallic monster, and imprisoned in his dungeon only to be rescued by Arthur. What is important here is that, like Virgil and Dante, Spenser sees sin and redemption as

part of the human economy. Other than God, Spenser does not have any perfect characters. The imperfect Redcrosse must then travel to the House of Holiness in order to be revived and redeemed.

In his treatment of Redcrosse, Spenser provides a model of Christian virtue in the house of Holiness in Canto 10 of Book 1.¹⁶⁴ At the beginning of the book, Spenser provides a further clue to the theology and philosophy that animates *The Faerie Queene*. In doing so, he rejects a Herculean or Homeric vision of the epic in which physical power is primarily celebrated. He asks,

What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might,
And vaine assurance of mortality,
Which all so soone, as it doth come to fight,
Against spirituall foes, yeelds by and by,
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly? (*FQ* 1.10.1)

The idea of temporal glory or brute strength in combat is inadequate for Spenser who here provides a critique of Redcrosse's previous vision. Redcrosse had been proud and thought that he could defeat his enemies with brute force. However, the knight was overcome by his own desires in his spiritual fight. Spenser explains,

Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That through grace hath gained victory,
If any strength we have it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will. (*FQ* 1.10.2)

Human good comes from God who inspires the human will with grace; all evil in the world comes from the perversion of the human will.

¹⁶⁴ For further discussion of this scene, see Judith H. Anderson's "The July Eclogue and the House of Holiness: Perspective in Spenser." See also Borris' "Flesh, Spirit, and the Glorified Body: Spenser's Anthropomorphic Houses of Pride, Holiness, and Temperance" and Reid.

The house of holiness has some association with heaven. Dame Coelia is the mistress of the house who is “thought / From heauen to come, or thither to arise...” (FQ 1.10.4). What is further strange in the work of a poet who is so bitterly opposed to Roman Catholicism is that Coelia does good works during the day while “All night she spent in bidding of her bedes...” (FQ 1.10.3). Redcrosse has to enter past the lowly and simple Humiltá and passes Zele, Reverence and meets Coelia. Coelia introduces Redcrosse to *Fidelia*, *Speranza*, and *Charissa*, the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. She further educates Redcrosse with her book, “And heauenly documents thereout did preach, / That weaker wit of man could neuer reach, / of God, of grace, of iustice, of free will...” (FQ 1.10.19). Here, Spenser makes it clear that one must receive the gift of faith and be educated in Christian revelation in order to live rightly. *Speranza* teaches him how to “take assured hold / Vpon her siluer anchor, as was meet...” (FQ 1.10.22). Spenser affirms the importance of what Thomas Aquinas would call infused virtues that are given by God and not obtained through habit as are the Aristotelian virtues. Yet, something is still lacking.

There is still an “Inward corruption, and infected sin” (FQ 1.10.25) in Redcrosse: “And festering sore did rankle within, / Close creeping twixt the marrow and the skin” (FQ 1.10.25). In order to free himself from this menace, Redcrosse must repent and undergo the punishment of Penance, Remorse, and Repentance who perform a violent surgery on him to clean him, so he is finally ready for the gift of *Charissa* or charity. He then counters mercy and seven “Bead-men”; these Bead-men are representative of good works. Redcrosse is then given the vision of the hermit and his prophecy. Spenser reveals a number of points in the first book.

Spenser's hero is a wounded Christian who must undergo suffering and repentance. Moreover, holiness empowered by grace is the basis of all of the other virtues. Spenser's *exempla* are thus *exempla* of Christian virtue.

Throughout *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser's heroes are presented as *exempla* for the reader to view. Spenser's characters have a twofold allegorical function; they often represent historical personages as well as moral virtues. Moreover, in Spenser, these characters are to be read through a distinctly Christian lens. Arthur is the primary *exemplum* in the poem who represents the twelve virtues and magnanimity in the poem. The historical Queen Elizabeth further plays a central role in the poem as she is embodied in a number of characters including Gloriana, The Fairy Queen, Britomart, Belphebe, and Mercilla. Furthermore, holiness is the prime virtue that results from grace and can thus only be achieved through God's help. This Christian understanding of virtue, finally, fans out into the other characters in the poem. In order to buttress his *exempla*, Spenser, drawing from Virgil, presents the image of an imperial community forged by various prophecies throughout *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser's Prophecies and Community

As in the *Aeneid* and the *Commedia*, there are several prophecies in *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁶⁵ These prophecies define the ethnic identity of the British as an amalgamation of Trojan, British, and Saxon, and Norman blood. These prophecies additionally define the English as God's chosen people who have the divine imperative to spread Protestant Christianity and defeat the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁶⁵ For a discussion of prophecy in *The Faerie Queene*, see Borris' *Spenser's Poetics of Prophecy in The Faerie Queene V*. See also Es and Henry. For the connection between Spenser's prophecies and those of ancient Rome, see Bull and Bellamy.

Consequently, these prophecies define Britain's right to rule over and conquer her enemies. Spenser's sources for these prophecies are manifold. In addition to being the heir to the Roman Empire, Spenser's hero is the heir to the tradition of the Arthurian legend and the indigenous British traditions. The Biblical images of the chosen people and the heavenly Jerusalem are also present in Spenser's prophecies. There are five main scenes of prophesy in *The Faerie Queene*. The first is Redcrosse's visit to the mount of contemplation after he has been purged of his guilt and done penance. The second is found in Arthur and Guyon's reading of British history and the creation story. The last three are to be found in Britomart's discovery of her mission. All of these prophecies seem to be modeled on Virgil's prophecies in the *Aeneid* and thus perform the same function within Spenser's imperial *exemplum*: giving divine sanction to Spenser's empire.

In Book 1, Canto 10, the hermit takes Redcrosse up unto a "mount of contemplation" to show him the destiny of race after Redcrosse has been purged of his sins in the house of holiness.¹⁶⁶ Spenser links this event with several Biblical sources, drawing from the Old and New Testament as well as from classical imagery. Spenser compares the mountain to the one Moses ascended when he received the Ten Commandments on which the "mighty man of god" received "...writ in stone / With bloudy letters by the hand of God, / The bitter doome of death and balefull mone / ... whiles flashing fire about him shone (*FQ* 1.10.53). Redcrosse is like a new Moses who receives a codified law from God, and thus, by extension, the English are the new Israelites, God's chosen people. Other nations are then not God's chosen

¹⁶⁶ For treatment of this scene, see Prescott's "Hills of Contemplation and Signifying Circles: Spenser and Guy Le Fèvre de la Boderie" and Kaske.

people. What is interesting here, especially when compared to Virgil and Dante, is the idea that England is not to be one who gathers into her fold other nations under an empire (at least not yet); she is to be a chosen people *set apart* from others. The Biblical resonance continues as Spenser compares the mount of contemplation to one from the Gospels. The mountain of contemplation is like the Mount of Olives on which Christ gave prophetic revelation. It is “like that sacred hill, whose head full hie, / Adorn'd with fruitfull Olives all arownd...” on which “that deare Lord ... oft ... was fownd” (*FQ* 1.10.54). Here, Redcrosse is like Christ, the English nation that he will later found, which he will see in a just a few lines, is then like the Church that Christ founded, and if the analogy fits, the enemies of England are the enemies of Christ. Finally, England is to be the heir of the classical tradition, and the mountain is like Mt. Parnassus, “that pleasaunt Mount.../ ... / On which the thrise three learned Ladies play / Their heavenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay” (*FQ* 1.10.54). England is the heir of the tradition of classical art, specifically poetry, so Redcrosse is a Christ-like holy warrior poet.

However, despite the emphasis that Spenser places on the greatness of England, he, at the same time, places greater emphasis on the heavenly Jerusalem. Upon climbing the mountain, Redcrosse is first shown a city “of the great king ... Wherein eternall peace and happiness doth dwell” (*FQ* 1.10.55). This city is then called the “new *Hierusalem*” and has been built by God “For those to dwell in, that are chosen his, / His chosen people purg'd from sinfull guilt, / With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt...” (*FQ* 1.10.57). Those who gain entrance to this city are those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and they are united in

equality: "Now are they Saints all in that Citie sam, / More deare vnto their God, then younglings to their dam" (*FQ* 1.10.57). Those who are saved are loved by God.

Spenser thus seems to be very generous, initially in his prophetic vision, for he moderates his British Imperialism with a vision of many different saved souls united by love and grace. As in Dante and in Virgil to a lesser degree, the true home of not just the members of the community but all of those who are or the eternal city of God is heaven. For Redcrosse, this New Jerusalem is an epiphany, a paradigm-shattering vision that alters his vision of what a community is. Redcrosse explains that this Heavenly Jerusalem outshines even *Cleopolis* (London) home of the Fairy Queene (Elizabeth) in which there is Panthea, the "bright towre all built of christall cleene" (*FQ* 1.10.58). Redcrosse says that this vision of heaven has changed his mind: "But now by prooffe all otherwise I weene; / For this great Citie that does far surpas, / And this bright Angels towre quite dims that towre of glas" (*FQ* 1.10.58). In this passage, the fragility of the temporal kingdom is strangely underscored before what will be a triumphal celebration of Englishness. The city of heaven eclipses the Faerie Queene's Cleopolis, i.e., Elizabeth's London. In fact, Cleopolis is just a "towre of glas" compared to the "bright Angels towre" of heaven (*FQ* 1.10.58). The hermit, however, quickly reassures Redcrosse that the early kingdom of the Fairy Queen is very important: "Yet is *Cleopolis* for earthly fame, / The fairest peece, that eye beholden can..." (*FQ* 1.10.59). The kingdom of England is the best kingdom on earth, for its ruler is the most virtuous, noble, and holiest, and those knights who seek for an eternal reward would do well to serve the Fairy Queen:

And well beseemes all knights of noble name,
That couet in th'immortall booke of fame

To be eternized, that same to haunt,
And doen their seuce to that soueraigne Dame,
That glorie does to them for guerdon graunt:
For she is heauenly borne, and heaven may iustly vaunt. (*FQ* 1.10.59)

The Fairy Queen derives her power from God, and service to her is service to God.

Spenser further carries the Virgilian idea that, although wars will come, peace is the ultimately the goal, "For bloud can nought but sin, & wars but sorrowes yield" (*FQ* 1.10.60). Spenser does not revel in violence or war; in taking this stance, he mirrors Virgil and Dante; none of these poets seek violence as an end in itself, yet he recognizes the need to use violence for good. The greater good in *The Faerie Queene* is to perform righteous acts upon earth to get to heaven.

There is further an apotheosis of sorts awaiting Redcrosse. Redcrosse, according to the hermit will become St. George, the Patron Saint of England:

For thou emongst those Saints, whom thou doest see,
Shalt be a Saint, and thine owne nations frend
And Patrone: thou Saint *George* shalt called bee,
Saint *George* of mery England, the sign of victoree. (*FQ* 1.10.61)

There is, again, not the sense of the graduation out of national and ethnic identity in *The Faerie Queene* as there is in Dante. Redcrosse will get to heaven by serving England, and while, in heaven, he will protect England. Redcrosse then informs the hermit that he would like to stay in this state of contemplation of the heavenly Jerusalem, but the hermit tells him that Redcrosse still has his chore of protecting Una and the Faerie Queene: "That may not be (said he) ne maist thou yit / Forgo that royall maides bequeathed care..." (*FQ* 1.10.63). Redcrosse must remain a pilgrim and fulfill his duties on earth. The hermit further assures Redcrosse that he will be able to accomplish his task because of his noble lineage. Redcrosse asks why

he, a Saxon, has been chosen for the task since he is not a fairy: "But now aread, old father, why of late / Didst though behight me borne of English blood, / Whom all a Faeries sonne doen nominate?" (FQ 1.10.64). The hermit responds that it is because of Redcrosse's noble back ground: he is drawn from the highest class, kings, of one of the highest races, the Saxons, and he was captured as young man and brought to Fairy Land:

For well I wote, thou springest from ancient race
Of *Saxon* kings, that haue with mightie hand
And many bloudie battailes fought in place
High reard their royall throne in *Britane* land,
And vanquisht them, unable to withstand... (FQ 1.10.65)

Redcrosse is from a warrior people, the Saxons, who conquered the indigenous British and established their monarchy on British soil. The hermit further tells Redcrosse that he was abducted by a fairy that brought him into fairyland, placing him in a furrow for a ploughman who gave him the name of George. Redcrosse has his mission as well as his promised reward: heavenly bliss. As he is leaving, he thanks the hermit for showing him "the way that does to heaven bound..." (FQ 1.10.67). This first prophecy is laden with religious language and imagery, tying service to England to Redcrosse's salvation. Other prophecies in the poem have a more militant edge to them.

In the second major prophesy, located in Book 2, Spenser takes a more triumphal and nationalistic tone, recounting the history of British kings and queens.¹⁶⁷ In this scene Guyon is reading a history of Fairyland and Arthur is reading a book called *Briton Monuments* in the library of the House of Alma. In this

¹⁶⁷ For treatment of this scene, see Berger's *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Fairie Queene*. See also Kobayashi, Mills, and Summit.

scene, Spenser is so nervous about dealing with such a magnificent subject that he needs to invoke the muses. The speaker in *The Faerie Queene* asks how he will be able to undertake “this haughtie enterprise” and notes that he needs “More ample spirit” to recount “the famous auncestries” of the “most dreaded Soueraigne,” for “all earthly Princes she doth farre surmount” (*FQ* 2.10.1). For Spenser, the ruler derives his or her authority from God. The Christian ruler even more so is an image of Christ, and thus Elizabeth’s majesty derives from her likeness to Christ. It is clear, however, that Elizabeth is vastly superior to any other monarch—specifically because he holds the true faith, Anglican Christianity, and because of her holiness as well as her lineage—there is nothing under the sun “that to her linage may compaire” (*FQ* 2.10.2).

As he did in the first prophecy, Spenser emphasizes the blood lineage of those prophesized. The ancestors of the Fairy Queen are great because of their warlike prowess. She is descended from Brutus and the Trojans, “mightie kings and conquerors in warre” (*FQ* 2.10.4). In the beginning of the chronicle, Spenser gives the image of a savage Britain, which Brutus conquers. Without human interaction the land was “saluage wilderness, / Vnpeopled vnprov’d, unpraysd” (*FQ* 2.10.5). The land is unculvited and unredeemed. Even worse, it was not a place of business then: “ne was it sought / Of marchants farre, for profits therein praysd...” (*FQ* 2.10.5). Spenser lays the scene for England’s honor being tied to her commerce. Spenser further describes the primitive people who live on the island before the arrival of Brutus as being physically grotesque: “hideous Giants, and halfe beastly men” and morally degenerate; they “neuer tasted grace, nor goodnesse felt” (*FQ*

2.10.7)—two qualities that went hand-in-hand in the classical tradition. These giants are contrasted with Brutus who comes with the “sonnes of men” (*FQ* 2.10.7). Spenser further explains that these giants are the sons of the fifty daughters of Diocletian who mated with “feends and filthy Sprights / Through vaine illusion of their lust vnclene...” (*FQ* 2.10.8). They are associated with decadent Romanity and evil spirits. Spenser further describes these giants as being diseased: “They held this land, and with their filthiness / Polluted this same gentle soyle long time: / That their owne mother loathd their beastliness” (*FQ* 2.10.9). The Others are filthy; they are diseased and need to be cleansed.

Spenser describes Brutus’s conquering of Britain in an aggressive and triumphal tone; Brutus “fought great battels with his saluage fone; / In which he them defeated evermore, / And many Giants left on groning flore...” (*FQ* 2.10.10). The speaker seems to have little or no sympathy for the Giants whom Brutus massacres. Brutus establishes a realm of bliss and peace after having subdued the savage people in Britain: “Thus *Brute* this Realme vnto his rule subdewd, / And raigned long in great felicitie, / Lou’d of his friends, and of his foes eschewd...” (*FQ* 2.10.13). Yet, the peace of Brutus’s rule is not held for long as Trojanized Britain comes under attack from a savage dark people:

a nation straung, with visage swart,
And courage fierce, that all men did affray,
Which through the world then swarmed in euery part,
And ouerflow’d all countries farre away... (*FQ* 2.10.15)

These savage people, whom Spenser intentionally calls swarthy to contrast them with the white Albions, are compared to flood at the time of Noah in their destructive capacity. Locrine, one of Brutus’s sons, rises to defend Britain from the

savage menace and “with courage stout / He them defeated in victorious fight...” (*FQ* 2.10.16). Spenser later reveals in stanza 61 that these dark people are Huns. These people, allied with the Picts, attack a Christianized England that is ruled by the Roman governor Maximian. Spenser contrasts the Christian, Romanized English with the “Pagans” (*FQ* 2.10.62). Spenser further refers to them as violent and grotesque, insect-like people, calling them, “Those spoilefull Picts, and swarming Easterlings” (*FQ* 2.10.63). Spenser describes the enemies of the nascent English as being disgusting monsters as well as dark, savage people who deserve to be conquered or eradicated.

On the other hand, the British are not immune from fault or criticism. Locrine’s victory provides an occasion for Spenser to give a moral lesson, for, in his pride, the son of Brutus, “pround of victorie” is overcome with lust and “fell to vaine voluptuous disease,” committing adultery with the Lady Estrild and abandoning his wife Gwendolyn who “always faithfull prov’d” (*FQ* 2.10.17). Locrine is guilty of the capital sin of pride, which leads to effeminate slothfulness, which then breeds adultery and the dissolution of Locrine’s lawful marriage. The destruction of the marriage of the king then leads to civil war, and *Guendolene*, with “courage valorous” leads a force that defeats her licentious husband in battle “In which him vanquisht she to fly constraind: / But she so fast pursewd, that him she tooke, / And threw in bands, where he till death remaind...” (*FQ* 2.10.18). The health of the nation rests on the moral goodness of the ruler. If the ruler is intemperate and degenerate, the state itself will rot and become subject to another ruler who is truly virtuous. Gwendolyn becomes the first female ruler of Britain and serves as an obvious

prototype of Elizabeth: “During which time her power she did display / Through all this realme, the glorie of her sex, / And first taught men a woman to obey...” (FQ 2.10.20). Gwendolyn commands obedience to her through power.

Cordelia, daughter of King Leyr, who appears later in the chronicle is another example of a militant female ruler. She raises an army to reclaim land for her father Leyr and, after having restored his kingdom, rules in peace “And all mens harts in dew obedience held” (FQ 2.10.31-32). Cordelia, who unfortunately loses her kingdom to her rival sisters, nonetheless serves as a prototype for Elizabeth of a strong warrior queen. Boedecia, the Celtic queen, is another exemplar and prototype of Elizabeth who arrives later in the chronicle to wage war against the oppressive Romans. England is divided in civil strife “Whilest *Romanes* dayly did the weake subdew...” (FQ 2.10.54). Fortunately, the great warrior queen comes to the rescue: “Which seeing stout *Bunduca*, vp arose, / And taking armes, the *Britons* to her drew; / With whom she marched straight against her foes...” (FQ 2.10.54). The queen, as Elizabeth will be, is a great warrior and unifier of her people. She is not quite successful in her battle against the Romans because of treachery, and Boadicea dies in a blaze of glory, taking her own life:

Gathering againe, her Host she did renew,
And with fresh courage on the victour seru’d:
But being all defeated, saue a few,
Rather than fly, or be captiu’d her selfe she slew. (FQ 2.10.55)

Boadicea dies as a martyr of British liberty and is memorialized, becoming a “famous moniment of womens prayse” (FQ 2.10.56). Moreover, her relics are preserved and are carried into battle to march with the renewed British resistance: “Her reliques *Fulgent* having gathered, / Fought with *Severus*, and him overthrew”

(*FQ* 2.10.57). When the British are on the imperial march, they are in the right, and when they are leading a resistance against an imperial force, they are in the right. Furthermore, they have had a great many leaders both male and female.

The rest of the historical prophecy contains distinctly Virgilian elements of the domination of foreign savages through military force and moral uprightness.

The second Brutus to rule Britain attacks France and

He with his victour sword first opened,
The bowels of wide Fraunce, a forlorne Dame,
And taught her first how to be conquered
Since which, with sundrie spoiles she hath beene ransacked. (*FQ* 2.10.23)

The image here is disturbing, and Spenser uses very erotic imagery of France as being like a woman who is subdued and conquered with sword, literally being torn open and robbed.¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the success of Britain is predicated upon her discipline and education. Spenser lets the reader know that this discipline is learned from the Greeks, for the ruler Bladud brought arts to England; he “Exceld at *Athens* all the learned preace, / From whence he brought them to these saluage parts, / And with sweet science mollifide their stubborne harts” (*FQ* 2.10.25). Human nature in its raw state is savage, and education is necessary to harmonize human nature.

Spenser is very aware of the limits of temporal success, and he reveals that nothing lasts forever. Eventually Brutus’s line dies out because of civil war which is prompted by cruelty and greed as two brothers, Ferrex and Porrex, kill their imprisoned father Gorbogud and then fight it out among themselves for the throne.

¹⁶⁸ For a discussion of the relationship between violence and imperialism in Spenser, see Baseotto.

“[A]ssembling forreine might” (*FQ* 2.10.35), Porrex kills Ferrex and their mother, Wyden, kills Porrex to avenge her other son’s death. Spenser makes it clear again that lack of discipline of emotion and a lack of respect for ties of kinship lead to civil war and then the dissolution of the state.

Out of the wreckage of the degeneration of the line of Brutus, an Augustus-like figure arises, Donwallo, who fits the image of the great emperor. This great ruler is a warrior who is also intelligent: “a man of matchlesse might, / And wondrous wit to menage high affaires” (*FQ* 2.10.37). Donwallo gathers together the disparate kingdom and defeats her enemies. Once having established the kingdom, he begins to order the people through law and becomes a sort of religious leader. He defeats his rivals:

He overthrew through his owne valiaunce;
Whose countreis he reus’d to quiet state,
And shortly brought to ciuill governaunce,
Now one, which earst were many, mad through variaunce.

Then made he sacred lawes, which some men say
Were vnto him reueald in vision. (*FQ* 2.10.38-39)

As Caesar Augustus did, Donwallo unites the people through law and makes declarations on sacred affairs as Elizabeth will do. The political narration of the story is a chronicle of the greatness of the British people who have both just male and female rulers. The prophecy is also a warning that immorality will lead to civil discord. Finally, the Other in the poem is composed of demonized monsters and racial enemies who must be destroyed.

In addition to the political narration, Spenser presents the religious story of the one true Anglican Church. Spenser provides the standard renaissance Anglican

story that Joseph of Arimathea came to England to establish the true Church which is later gobbled up by Roman Catholicism: "Hither came *Ioseph of Arimathy*, / Who brought with him the holy grayle (they say) / And preacht the truth, but since it greatly did decay" (FQ 2.10.53). It is essential that the British be both the heirs of a political and religious prophesy, for so much of *The Faerie Queene* is about the triumph of the English Church over Catholicism.

Attached to the end of the story, Guyon reads of a creation story that uses the classical images of Prometheus and Jove. Spenser writes that Prometheus created humankind by drawing from many different animal parts and then animating this creature with fire. This creature is called man but also Elf:

That man so made, he called *Elfe*, to weet
Quick the first authour of all Elfin kind:
Who wandring through the world with wearie feet,
Did in the gardins of *Adonis* find
A goodly creature, whom he deemd in mind
To be no earthly wight, but either Spright,
Or Angell, th'authour of all woman kind;
Therefore a *Fay* he her according hight,
Of whom all *Faryes* siring, and fetch their lignage right. (FQ 2.10.71)

It is important to note, that, for Spenser, the British are the elves, and thus the story has a very pagan, nationalist ring to it as opposed to the Christian idea that God created all of humankind who spring from Adam. The race produced by the elf and the fairy will become a great and mighty people, and Spenser switches into Celtic mythological allegory from the historical narrative that had proceeded in the first sixty-nine stanzas. In this allegory, the elves are depicted as a great and powerful race that will subdue the entire world:

Of these a mightie people shortly grew,
And puisaunt kings, which all the world subdew:

The first and eldest, which that scepter swayd,
Was *Elfin*; him all *India* obeyd,
And all that now *America* men call:
New him was noble *Elfinan*, who layd
Cleopolis foundation first of all:
But *Elfiline* enclosed it with a golden wall. (*FQ* 2.10.72)

Cleopolis, the image for London that Spenser uses, is a great city whose golden walls mirror the heavenly Jerusalem mentioned in Book 1. Furthermore, this great race will conquer the savage peoples of the Americas and make them obey the British scepter. The enemies of the Elves are, of course, monstrous; Spenser calls them “*Gobbelines*” and “*gyants*” (*FQ* 2.10.72)—some of whom have two or three heads. The offspring of the elves will become famous and deserving of artistic monuments, for their great skill in war as well as their just administration of the state:

Even seven hundred Princes, which maintaynd
With mightie deedes their sundry governments;
That were too long their infinite contents
Here to record, ne much materiall:
Yet should they be most famous moniments,
And braue ensample, both of martiall,
And ciuill rule to kings and states imperiall. (*FQ* 2.10.74)

These great elfish kings will be immortalized in art and serve as *exempla* of virtue for future rulers. Just as in Virgil and Dante, art serves the purpose of telling a people who they are by showing them the great deeds of their ancestors, the idea that Heidegger develops in “The Origin of the Work of Art.”

There is no surprise that the genealogy of the elves culminates in an allegory of Elizabeth, the perfect and model of all holiness and virtue:

Fairer and nobler liveth none this howre,
Ne like in grace, ne like in learned skill;
Therefore they *Glorian* call that glorious flowre,
Long mayst thou *Glorian* lieu, in glory and great power. (*FQ* 2.10.76)

Elizabeth is the crown of all English history and even the culmination of Spenser's mythological creation history. Spenser encourages Elizabeth to be more militant. The prophecy that Arthur and Guyon read in Book 2 accomplishes several tasks essential to the imperial project. It presents the British as a master race with divine favor who will crush her political and religious enemies, establishing a global empire. Moreover, it provides a buttress for and justification of Queen Elizabeth's regime. The other prophecies in the poem are just as imperialistic.

Britomart receives three further prophecies as well in Book 3. Judith Owens explains these prophecies as being mercantile as opposed to aristocratic: "In Britomart's vision, an urban commercial ethos, rather than martial struggle, underwrites empire. Her refining of epic values also reconfigures epic conflict as struggle between humanity and nature, not between nations, and in consequence seems to purge the epic process of the sin and guilt attendant upon martial struggle" (78). Owens is partially correct; these prophecies are more intimate, but they are very martial and are intimately tied to the Elizabethan imperial project.

The first of Britomart's prophecies is found in Canto 2 of Book 3.¹⁶⁹ In this canto, Britomart looks into a looking glass "The great Magitian *Merlin* had deuiz'd / By his deepe science, and hell-dreaded might..." (FQ 3.2.18), which she finds in her father's closet. In this mirror, she sees "A comely knight, all arm'd in complet wize" with a "manly face, that did his foes agrize, / And friends to termes of gentle truce entize..." (FQ 3.2.24). This very handsome knight who inspires fear in his enemies and admiration in his friends is Artegall whose crest she sees "couered with a

¹⁶⁹ For treatment of this scene see Griffith and Taiji

couchant Hound" (*FQ* 3.2.25) on which was written "*Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win*" (*FQ* 3.2.25). This future marriage of Artegall who represents justice and Britomart, the chaste warrior princess, is most probably a prophecy of Elizabeth's reign. What is further important is that Britomart is drawn by a deep love for Artegall; eros finds its fulfillment in divinely-approved political stability.

Merlin is the source of the second prophecy given to Britomart. He explains the prophecy of Britomart's line to the heroine. From her womb, will come "a famous Progenie" "out of the auncient *Troian blood*" (*FQ* 3.3.22). This noble line will bring back the glory of the Mediterranean past and "shall reuiue the sleeping memorie / Of those same antique Peres, the heauens brood, / Which *Greeke* and *Asian* rivers stained with their blood" (*FQ* 3.3.22). Spenser here glorifies the classical past and uses a violent imagery in doing so. Merlin further explains that "Renowned Kings," "sacred Emperours," and "Brave Captaines," and "most mighty warriours" will descend from Britomart (*FQ* 3.3.23). These mighty warriors will "their conquests through all lands extend, / And their decayed kingdomes shall amend..." (*FQ* 3.3.23). They will build great empires and revive dying ones, protecting the "feeble Britons" from the "forrein foe, that comes from farre" and bringing "vniversall peace" (*FQ* 3.3.23). Merlin thus provides a miniature chronicle that condenses the one given to Arthur and Guyon in Book 2. Merlin continues stating that Britomart will marry Artegall who is not a fairy but is "the sonne of *Gorlois* / And brother vnto *Cador* Cornish king" (*FQ* 3.3.27). Artegall will rise up and defend England against "the powre of forrein Paynims" who are coming to invade the land (*FQ* 3.3.27).

In this miniature chronicle of Britomart's descendents, Merlin emphasizes the same points that Guyon found in the other chronicle. Not all of the descendents will be competent or good. However, many will extend British power. Malgo will conquer six islands around Britain and cause their kings to "do their homage seuerall" to Britain (*FQ* 3.3.23). Gorgmond will subdue Ireland "with high mightiness" (*FQ* 3.3.23). Merlin's chronicle contains the story of the true English Church. It will be attacked by pagan Vikings (*FQ* 3.3.34) and threatened by "th'ambitious will of *Augustine*" (*FQ* 3.3.35). Spenser presents the noble English forces as Christians and the others are usually pagans. The Britons will attack "their Paynim foes" (*FQ* 3.3.36), "good king *Oswald*" will fight against his enemies with the help of angels, "All holding crosses in their hands on hye" (*FQ* 3.3.38). The good rulers will furthermore be civilizers, and there will be union among the British, Saxons, and Danish invaders: "Thenceforth eternall vnion shall be made / Betweene the nations different afore..." (*FQ* 3.3.49). This union will bring about peace, which "shall louingly perswade / The warlike minds, to learne her goodly lore, / And ciuile armes to exercise no more..." (*FQ* 3.3.49). In this period of peace, there will be a great "royall virgin" who will "Stretch her white rod ouer the *Belgicke* shore" (3.3.49). Merlin stops soon after this point in the prophecies, but Glauce, the nurse takes over explaining that, in addition to this civilizing royal virgin, there will be many other female rulers.

Glauce says that "Bards tell of many women valorous / Which haue full many feats aduenturous / Performed, in pargarone of proudest men" (*FQ* 3.3.54), listing Boedica, Gwendolynn, Martia, and Emmilen as well as "Faire *Angela* ... No wight

lesse faire, then terrible in fight" (*FQ* 3.3.56). This beautiful warrior is the queen from whose name the Angles derive their name according to Glauce. Glauce then provides the key to these prophecies when he tells Britomart to follow Angela's example: "Therefore faire Infant her ensampe make / Vnto thyselpe, and equall courage to take" (*FQ* 3.3.56). The prophecies are presented as catalogues of *exempla* for both the characters that encounter them such as Redcrosse, Guyon, and Britomart, but they are further prophecies for the audience, especially Queen Elizabeth. Spenser writes that the *exempla* in the prophecies have the intended effect upon Britomart, for the Glauce's "words so deepe into the mynd / Of the young Damzell sunke, that great desire / Of warlike armes in her forthwith they tynd..." (*FQ* 3.3.57). The words penetrate into Britomart's soul, and she is filled with "generous stout courage" and she gets ready for war (*FQ* 3.3.57). This scene is critical to understanding the prophecies and their intended effect on the reader. They are meant to inspire action and right conduct just as they were in Virgil and Dante.

The third prophecy is the dream vision that Britomart has in Isis' church in Book 5, Canto 7.¹⁷⁰ This dream takes place in Isis's church and elaborates upon Britomart's childhood vision. Spenser begins the canto by introducing the Egyptian god and goddess whose marriage will serve as a typological prediction of Elizabeth's reign. Spenser uses Osiris as the image of justice, which is the most divine virtue: "Nought is on earth more sacred or diuine, / That Gods and men doe equally

¹⁷⁰ This scene has been the topic of some discussion. For a discussion of the (ironic) influence of Catholic art on the Isis scene, see Delsigne. For this scene's connection to Queen Elizabeth, see Graziani and Stump.

adore..." (FQ 5.7.1). God uses justice and "contains his heavenly Common-weale: / The skill whereof to Princes hearts he doth reueale" (FQ 5.7.1). Justice is the virtue used to govern heaven, and God reveals this virtue to the princes who follow His rule. Osiris himself was the god of justice which the "antique world" (FQ 5.7.2) invented.

Spenser further introduces Osiris' wife Isis as "A Goddess of great power and souerainty" (FQ 5.7.3). Furthermore, when Britomart enters the temple and sees the idol Isis, the description is that of a queen who destroys vice, represented by a crocodile. The statue is "clothed all in garments made of line, / Hemd all about with fringe of siluer twine" and on "her head she wore a Crowne of gold, / "To shew that she had power in things diuine" (FQ 5.7.6). She further holds a "long white sclender wand" (FQ 5.7.7). The image here is a divine and just feminine ruler who derives her power from the heavens and crushes vice. The priests of Isis are further associated with Elizabeth's rule. They wear "rich Mitres shaped like the Moone" (FQ 1.7.4), a symbol of their dedication to virginity: "For by the vow of their religion / They tied were to stedfast chastity..." (FQ 5.7.9). These are celibate priests dedicated to the worship of a feminized version of justice.

Britomart goes to sleep in the temple and has a dream that foretells the future of her line: "There did appeare to vnto her heauenly spright / A wondrous vision, which did close implie / The course of all her fortune and posteritie" (FQ 5.7.12). In this dream, Britomart is dressed as a priest of Isis and is offering sacrifice when a fire breaks loose in the temple. The crocodile awakens and eats the flames and then turns on Britomart. She fights him back and then, rather strangely, the

crocodile repents and then seduces her, conceiving a child, and “of his game she soone enwombed grew, / And forth did bring a Lion of great might; / That shortly did all other beasts subdew” (*FQ* 5.7.16). Britomart is understandably very shaken by the dream, but a priest of Isis explains it to her. The crocodile represents Artegall who will sire children with her and bring justice and order to her kingdom:

That Knight shall all the troublous stormes asswage,
And raging flames, that many foes shall reare,
To hinder thee from the iust heritage
Of thy sires Crowne, and from thy countrye deare.
Then shalt thou take him to thy loued fere,
And ioyne in equall portion fo they realme:
And afterwards a sonne to him shalt beare,
That Lion-like shall shew his power extreame. (*FQ* 5.7.23)

Artegall and Britomart will create the race of Tudors who, although having to undertake a series of trials, will nonetheless create a just and noble kingdom. This just and noble kingdom, however, will have enemies that threaten it and who must be eradicated.

Spenser's Other

In order to complete the prophecies and the community and to counterbalance the hero, there must be an Other in *The Faerie Queene* as there is in Virgil and Dante. The Others in *The Faerie Queene* are defined according to ethnic as well as religious lines. While Spenser is attracted to elements of sacramental Christianity and even various magical elements of paganism, when he so chooses, the English poet associates Roman Catholicism with magic and superstition.¹⁷¹ In *The Faerie Queene* almost all of the enemies are associated with darkness and the

¹⁷¹ For Spenser's relationship to Catholicism, see Brand, Hadfield's "Spenser's Description of the Execution of Murrough O'Brien: An Anti-Catholic Polemic," Heale, Rust, and Weatherby

race of night. They further are deceptive and often are disguised and/or practice some form of magic. They are also uncivilized and are part of an alien or foreign culture. Furthermore, Spenser projects the Other as having traditional Eastern trappings.¹⁷² Moreover, Spenser depicts the Other as monstrous and grotesque. However, Spenser does not restrict himself to denunciations of Protestant England's tribal and religious enemies. The true enemies of the English hero are the vices that he or she must overcome.

The first challenge that Redcrosse must encounter is Errour, who is a monstrous dragon who spews out papers. Errour is a combination of several elements of Spenser's Other, for it is a monstrous creature that represents Roman Catholic propaganda and is further compared to an Eastern phenomenon. The dragon Errour vomits out a mixture of loathsome creatures and papers: "Her vomit full of bookes and papers was, / With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke / And creeping sought way in the weedy gras..." (*FQ* 1.1.20). In the new print culture of the Renaissance, books and pamphlets can be dangerous threats to the Protestant hero. Spenser associates Errour and her offspring with the East, using a Homeric simile of the Nile overflowing its banks and leaving a mess of mud and reptiles "vgly monstrous shapes," behind, comparing the scene to the time "As when old father *Nilus* gins to swell / With timely pride about the *Aegyptian* vale, / His fattie waues do fertile slime outwell..." (*FQ* 1.1.21). The image here is a combination of the masculine and the feminine, but it is set in an Eastern setting; indeed, many of

¹⁷² For Spenser's mixed views on the East, see Feinstein and Heberle.

Spenser's monsters are dark and in some way associated with the East. Spenser's principal concern, however, is Roman Catholicism.

Archimago is one of the principle characters who represent the inherent duplicity of Catholicism as well as its association with magic and false symbolism, thus serving as a sort of anti-poet.¹⁷³ Archimago arrives soon after the Errour episode and thus is associated with deceptive propaganda. Archimago appears to be a humble and pious intellectual. He appears as "An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad / His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray..." (*FQ* 1.1.29). He further carries a book and has the look of a penitent man (*FQ* 1.1.29). Archimago appears simple and sober, but he is really devious. His "tongue" is "soomth as glas" (*FQ* 1.1.35), and he speaks of the accoutrements of Roman Catholicism and prays to the Virgin Mary: "He told of Saintes and Popes, and euermore / He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before" (*FQ* 1.1.35). Spenser soon reveals that, behind his pious exterior, Archimago is a necromancer. When Redcrosse and Una have gone to bed, the magician turns to "His Magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes, / [and] He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes" (*FQ* 1.1.36). Archimago raises malicious spirits to trouble Redcrosse and Una in their sleep, thus threatening their purity as well as the stability of Fairy Land.

One of Archimago's primary roles is as one who deceives. In Book I, Canto 2, Archimago, using "his mightie science" is referred to character who is able to take "

¹⁷³ For treatment of Archimago, see Berger's "Archimago: Between Text and Countertext." See also Folsom, Quint, as well as Waters' "Errour's Den and Archimago's Hermitage: Symbolic Lust and Symbolic Witchcraft."

As many formes and shapes in seeming wise, / As ever *Proteus* to himselfe could make" (*FQ* 1.2.11). Like the classical *Proteus*, the magician has the power to change himself into a bird, fish, fox or dragon—all symbols of evil in Spenser. In Canto 2 of Book one, Archimago disguises himself as Redcrosse. He wears Redcrosse's silver shield "vpon his coward brest" and upon his "craven crest" he has a bunch of hairs (*FQ* 1.2.11). Archimago dresses like a warrior, but he is clearly lacking in warrior virtues. Regardless, he could easily be mistaken for Redcrosse or another noble knight: "Fully iolly knight he seemed, and well addrest, / And when he sate vpon his courser free, / *Saint George* himselfe ye would have deemed him to be (*FQ* 1.2.11). Archimago's transformation is a warning that underneath the seemingly noble Christian knight, there could be a Catholic menace.

Spenser further emphasizes Archimago's role as a mischievous plotter in Book 2 as he deceives Guyon. Spenser here refers to him as the "cunning Architect of cancred guile" (*FQ* 2.1.1) and writes that Archimago has a "malicious mind" with which he works "mischiefe" (*FQ* 2.1.2). He spies Guyon and seeks to harm him by using his "prattick wit" to conceive "subtile engins" with "forged treason" (*FQ* 2.1.3), inspiring Guyon with rage. Archimago simply disappears from the poem in Book 2. Archimago is one of the principle symbols of Roman Catholicism in the poem as well as of a diseased plotting mind. He shares this role with the duplicitous Duessa.

Duessa is the second principal image of the false Roman Catholic Church that presents itself as the true Church.¹⁷⁴ Duessa is, as her name implies, duplicitous.

¹⁷⁴ Discussion of Duessa can be found in Broadbush, Carter, as well as Smith's "Una and Duessa" and "A Further Note on Una and Duessa." See also D. Douglas Waters' book-length study *Duessa as Theological Satire* as well as Waters' "Duessa and

The initial description of Duessa-Fidessa's appearance associates her with the East. Duessa is traveling with the Saracen, *Sans foy*, and Spenser provides a description of her as being decadent. She is dressed in "scarlot red / Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay", she and wears crown "like a *Persian* mitre" (*FQ* 1.2.13). She is an image of the scarlet lady, the false Roman church in the Protestant reading of the *Book of Revelation*.

This scene is repeated in 1.8.6 when, like the whore of Babylon in the *Book of Revelation*, Duessa appears in decadent dress, riding on top of a beast. The "proud *Duessa*" comes "High mounted on her many headed beast" with "every head crowned and every mouth full of blood and fire" (*FQ* 1.8.6). The image here is typical of Reformation Protestant tracts against the Roman Catholic Church, which identified the Catholic Church with various demonic images in the Book of Revelation.¹⁷⁵ There are additional images of Duessa's decadence. After the defeat of Orgoglio, Arthur finds an abundance of treasure in Orgoglio and Una's castle: "There all within full rich arayd he found, / With royall arras and resplendent gold" (*FQ* 1.8.35). The Church is part of the decadent East. Duessa further is promiscuous and is constantly having some erotic encounter with a man. For example, she dallies with Sansfoy in Book 1, Canto 2: "With faire disport and countering dalliaunce / She intertaine her louer all the way..." (*FQ* 1.2.14). Duessa is depicted as a lascivious figure; her attractive figure is merely a disguise, for she is one of the many grotesque figures in the poem.

Orgoglio: Red Crosse's Spiritual Fornication" and "'Mistress Missa,' Duessa, and the Anagogical Allegory of *The Faerie Queene*, Book I. For Duessa as an image of Mary Stuart, see Hadfield's "Duessa's Trial and Elizabeth's Error," McCabe, and Neill.

¹⁷⁵ See, for example, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*.

Unlike the beautiful bodies of the heroes as well as the apparently beautiful bodies of many of the temptations that the heroes have to encounter, Duessa's body is grotesque. Fradubio, a man who had been transformed into a tree and whom Redcrosse injures by breaking off one of his branches, tells the knight Redcrosse that he had seen Duessa bathing. He discovered that she was really "A filthy foule old woman" with "[h]er neather partes misshapen, monstrous" (*FQ* 1.2.40-41). Spenser here associates moral depravity with ugliness. Duessa further has a dubious ancestry; she calls herself "daughter of Deceipt and Shame" (*FQ* 1.5.26), and Night is her mother as she says, kissing her in Book 1, Canto 5. Additionally, Spenser associates Duessa with the occult

Duessa, like Geryneo and Archimago is associated with the occult and human sacrifice. In her struggle against Arthur, she attempts to use magic. Spenser calls her an "angrie witch" who has a "golden cup" "replete with magick artes" (*FQ* 1.8.14), which she uses to poison men and, "after charmes and some enchauntments said" (*FQ* 1.8.14), sap them of their courage. When Arthur destroys Orgoglio's castle and finds murdered children and a pagan altar, similar to Geryneo's. Arthur finds the floor dirtied "With bloud of guitlesse babes, and innocents trew, / Which there were slaine, as sheepe out of the fold" (*FQ* 1.8.35). The butcher of children for sacrifice was an integral part of Protestant polemics against Catholics, which associated them with previous tyrants. Moreover, there is an elaborate altar "On which true Christians bloud was often spilt, / And holy Martyres often doen to dye, / With cruell malice and strong tyranny (*FQ* 1.8.36). The elaborate ritual of the Catholic mass and Catholic use of heavy images here associate them with paganism and blood sacrifice.

Like Archimago, Duessa is deception and lies frequently. She insists in Book 1, that she is to marry “a most mighty king, most rich and sage” who “fell from high honours staire, / Into the hands of his accursed fone, / And cruelly was slaine” (*FQ* 1.2.23) who seems to be a figure who can be compared to Christ. She further claims to have lived as “a virgin widow” (*FQ* 1.2.24) until she was captured by Sansfoy. She later claims to be a virgin whom Redcrosse raped, telling Guyon that she was a “virgin cleene” on whom a “lewd ribauld with vile lust aduauunst” (*FQ* 2.1.10). In a letter written to the Fairy King, Duessa says that Redcrosse had sworn himself to her, making “sacred pledges” sworn on “burning Altars” in front of “guiltie heavens” (*FQ* 1.12.27). Duessa complains of a previous consecrated relationship with Redcrosse. Roman Catholicism is not the only religious and/or ethnic group that Spenser ties to vice; the English poet further attacks the East as a cultural enemy, which is represented most prominently by the trio of Saracen brothers.

The three brothers whom Redcrosse must fight, Sansloy, Sansjoy, and Sansfoy are called Saracens, a blanket term applied to much of the Islamic world up until fairly recently.¹⁷⁶ The three brothers are associated, like Archimago, with darkness and the night. In Duessa’s prayer to night in Book 1, Canto 5, Spenser reveals that three Saracens are grandsons of night and the sons of Aveugle or “blindness” in Duessa’s prayer to Night. Again, there is the association of the other with ignorance and deception; they are blind, and they blind others to the truth.

¹⁷⁶ For Spenser’s views on the three brothers, see Benedict Robinson’s “The Secret Faith of Spenser’s Saracens.” For views on Islam in Renaissance England, see Robinson’s book-length study *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: The Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton*.

One of the primary roles the three Saracens, motivated by their passions, perform in the poem is to provide occasions of sin for other characters.

The three Saracen brothers further have many vices. Sansfoy engages in battle with Redcrosse in Book 1, Canto 2. In this fight, both Redcrosse and Sansfoy are filled with rage and the two warriors fight with “their forces hideous” (*FQ* 1.2.15). Redcrosse is enraged with jealousy because he thinks that Sansfoy is the man with whom Una allegedly had an affair. The two fight so fiercely that they are surprised by their own power. However, one later learns that Redcrosse will repent and undergo a conversion. While both Sansfoy and Redcrosse are filled with rage, Sansfoy is also a blasphemer, telling Redcrosse, “Curse on that Crosse.../ That keepes thy body from the bitter fit” (*FQ* 1.2.18). Sansfoy is vicious and a blasphemer, and he is ultimately defeated by Redcrosse and sent to hell: “Greeting his graue: his grudging ghost did strive / With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is, / Whither the soules do fly of men, that live amis” (*FQ* 1.2.19). Sansfoy returns to his mother, night, in hell.

Like his brothers, Sansloy lacks and the power of self-control, which could be associated political anarchy as well. Sansloy especially cannot control his anger. Seeing Una riding with Archimago, Sansloy comes “pricking toward them with hastie heat” (*FQ* 1.3.33). Spenser makes it clear that Sansloy is out for vengeance: “His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat / Cruell reuenge, which he in hart did hyde...” (*FQ* 1.3.33). After having defeated Archimago and the lion who was protecting Una, it is implied that Sansloy intends on raping her: “Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid / From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?” (*FQ* 1.3.43).

However, while certainly Sansloy proves capable of greater violence, he resorts to taunting Una, “He now Lord of the field, his pride to fill, / With foule reproaches, and disdainfull spight / Her vildly entertaines...” (FQ 1.3.43). Una must remain a virgin for her later marriage with Redcrosse, but Sansloy’s character should also be revealed.

Sansloy later attempts to steal Una from Satyrane, a noble savage character who protects Una. This time Sansloy is stealthily hiding in a “secret shadow by a fountaine side” (FQ 1.6.40) until Satyrane calls him out, noting how Sansloy, the “cursed Miscreant” has “Faire knighthood fowly shamed” by lying and deception” (FQ 1.6.41). Duplicity and guile are two defects that are especially denigrated in *The Faerie Queene*. Both Satyrane and Sansloy fight fiercely for revenge as did Redcrosse and Sansfoy: “Therewith they gan, both furious and fell, / To thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile / Each other ben his enemy to quell” (FQ 1.6.43). Furthermore, as in the latter battle, Spenser uses the Homeric simile of the two fighting like “two Bores with rankling malice” (FQ 1.6.44). This animal madness continues; in the midst of battle, Una arrives, and Sansloy, reminded of “his lewd lusts, and late attempted sin” (FQ 1.6.46), is overwhelmed with desire for her, leaving the fight to attempt to rape the woman. The three brothers are at least human, if vicious. In addition to Spenser’s use of historical allegories, he introduces the traditional, Medieval allegory of vices in the House of Pride episode in Book 1.

The House of Pride shows the reader the catalogue of sins, stemming from pride and guided by the devil, here depicted as the feminine Lucifera.¹⁷⁷ The house

¹⁷⁷ For discussion of this scene, see Blythe and Hankins

of pride is extravagant, “a goodly heape for to behould, / And spake the praises of the workmans wit” and thus its intricacy hides its evil; it is a “great pittie, that so faire a mould / Did on so weak foundation ever sit...” (FQ 1.4.5). Spenser further associates the house with the east; the house is so extravagant that “Ne *Persia* selfe, the nourse of pompous pride / Like ever saw” (FQ 1.4.7). Lucifera is associated with pride, the root of all sins. She has a “dreadfull Dragon” (FQ 1.4.10) at her side and holds a “mirrhour bright” (FQ 1.4.10) in her hand. Like Archimago, she is associated with the underworld: “Of griesly *Pluto* she the daughter was, / And sad *Proserpina* the Queene of hell...” (FQ 1.4.11). She claims to be a queen whose power exceeds even that of Jove, the image for God the Father. However, she lacks the proper ancestry and authority to be a queen. She “made her selfe a Queene” but “rightfull kingdome she had none at all, / Ne heritage of natiue souveraintie...” (FQ 1.4.12). Lucifera had usurped her rule, and does not rule by law but with “pollice / And strong aduizement of six wizards old, / That with their counsel bad her kingdome did vphold (FQ 1.4.12). Lucifera here is a direct anti-type to Mercilla and Gloriana, drawing her power from proclamation as opposed to law shaped by tradition and custom.

Furthermore, the catalogue of sins here links Spenser’s Virgilian reading of the Other as monstrous, foreign, immoral, sensual, Eastern, and in Spenser’s case, Catholic. The six wizards of Lucifera ride six beasts, which the sages make follow their “bestial beheasts” (FQ 1.4.18). Idleness rides on a “slouthfull Asse” (FQ 1.4.18) and is dressed like a Catholic monk: “Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin, / Like to an holy Monck...” (FQ 1.4.18). Gluttony is given an even more grotesque description.

He rides “on a filthie swine” (*FQ* 1.4.21) with his gut protruding upward and “like a Crane his necke was long and fyne” (*FQ* 1.4.21). He is further a drunkard: “And in his hand did beare a boozing can, / Of which he sup so oft, that on his seat / His drunken corse he scarce upholden can” (*FQ* 1.4.22). Gluttony is a model of intemperance, and Spenser makes the further important point that his vice makes him unsuitable for political affairs: “Not meet to be of counsel to a king, / Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so, / That from his firend he seldome knew his fo...” (*FQ* 1.4.23). Gluttony here has the effect of corrupting one’s ability to function in a political realm and to cooperate in friendship. Spenser retains Plato’s connection between individual soul and the body politic. Lust rides on a “bearded Goat” (*FQ* 1.4.24) and is identified with deception “In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire, / Which underneath did hide his filthinesse” (*FQ* 1.4.25) and childish behavior “Full of vaine follies, and new fanglenesse” (*FQ* 1.4.25). Spenser again makes the connection between insanity, vice, and political instability. Lust would not “his looser life be tide to law” (*FQ* 1.4.26); he enjoys evil “That rots the marrow, and consumes the braine” (*FQ* 1.4.26). Spenser emphasizes the disastrous effects vice and sin have on the human soul as well as the human community, and the other sins such as avarice and envy have similar characteristics. Each of the sins like the monster Envy is pregnant with other filth. Moreover, the list of capital sins provides a blueprint for the rest of the poem; Guyon, Scudamour, Callidore, Artegall, Britomart are among the other characters who will have to encounter these vices in some form or another. Spenser’s Other is thus principally a moral other, that is, his heroes must conquer vice.

Spenser is a very self consciously Virgilian poet. He intentionally models his career after the Mantuan. He further constructs an imperial *exemplum* in his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, utilizing the Virgilian formula of hero, prophecies, and the Other. This *exemplum* is drawn from Virgil's own project of defining Rome in the *Aeneid*. In *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser seeks to define Britain as the proper heir to the classical world; she is a new Rome. However, Spenser further seeks to make a nation. His project is unlike Virgil or Dante's in that his vision of empire does not unite together disparate people, but rather celebrates the triumph of Britain over her enemies; thus Spenser yokes his idea of England as the proper heir to the classical tradition with Britain's own Celtic and Germanic heritage, which finds its most pronounced symbol in Arthur. Spenser seeks to establish England as the defender of the true faith through her national Protestant Church, which is headed by Elizabeth. The model of Elizabeth is one of a wise and virtuous virgin queen who derives her authority from God. Her courtiers, in turn, are to be virtuous and holy Christian knights who defend her from threats at home and abroad. Spenser's primary enemy is the Roman Catholic Church. The presence of the Catholics in England creates insecurity for the English Protestants who must establish their legitimacy to rule in light of the Catholic claim to tradition. Spenser further associates Catholicism with unjust violence, sexual intemperance, and uses monstrous and grotesque images for Catholic figures. While not all of the vices and vicious characters in *The Faerie Queene* are Catholic, the Church is a breeding ground for vice and political instability, which go hand-in-hand. Furthermore, although Spenser has many positive images of the East, most notably, Isis's temple,

he generally associates the East, including Islam, with decadence, immorality and godlessness. Spenser, finally, bases his empire and its right to rule on a number of prophecies that predict a coming period of justice and peace in and through England. However, Spenser, like Dante, is profoundly aware of the limits and fragility of the temporal world, and true happiness is ultimately found in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Chapter Five

Ezra Pound and the Disastrous End of The Imperial Vision

The American modernist Ezra Loomis Pound continues Virgil's tradition of the imperial *exemplum* with its triumphalism and self-critical humanism in his epic, *The Cantos*, which Pound published in fragments throughout his life.¹⁷⁸ *The Cantos* contain fragments and references cultures from ancient Egypt to W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot. *The Cantos* consist of a journey throughout the underworld through various metamorphoses to reach a paradise section in which Pound presents various ideal models of government. Unlike Dante and Spenser, Pound rejected Virgil and the idea of empire in his youth.¹⁷⁹ However, the formula of the Virgilian imperial *exemplum* can be found in Pound's *Cantos*. Pound's work contains a hero who wears various costumes and takes a number of forms. Pound's idea of prophecy and community takes significant departure from the deeply theological character of writers such as Dante Alighieri, Edmund Spenser, and even Virgil himself. For Pound, it is the great man who makes the community through his deeds. Finally, in Pound's epic, there is

¹⁷⁸ Pound began *The Cantos* in 1915 and published the first three "UR Cantos" in the June through August issues of *Poetry* magazine. Pound then reworked the "Ur Cantos," publishing *A Draft of XVI Cantos* in 1925. He published *A Draft of XVI CANTOS 17-27* (1928) and *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1930).¹⁷⁸ He then published *ELEVEN NEW CANTOS XXXI-XLI* (1934), *The Fifth Decad of Cantos* (1937), and *Cantos LII-LXXI* (1940). *The Pisan Cantos*, which Pound composed while he was being held in a detention center in Italy at the end of World War II, were published in 1948. *SECTION ROCK-DRILL DE LOS CANTARES* (1955) were published while Pound was being held in St. Elizabeth's hospital. Upon Pound's return to Italy, he published *Thrones: 96-109 de los Cantares* (1959). Finally, three years before his death, *Drafts and Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII* were published in 1969.

¹⁷⁹ In a letter to the editor of the *English Journal*, Pound explains that his reason for writing *Homage to Sextus Propertius* is because of his desire to express "certain emotions" he experienced when faced with "the infinite and ineffable imbecility of the British Empire" (Selected Letters 231).

the third key component of the Virgilian *exemplum*: the Other. Pound's *Cantos* thus contains the essential elements of Virgilian imperial *exemplum* although his ideas have had the most brutal real world consequences among the works of the writers who follow Virgil's model.

Critics have battled over the role of Pound's politics in his poetics.¹⁸⁰

Through much of his middle and later life, Pound was attracted to Nazism and Fascism. Pound was disgusted with both liberal, bourgeois capitalism and Soviet Marxism and saw militant right wing movements as being contemporary incarnations of great ideals of previous centuries. In *The Genealogy of Demons*, Robert Casillo has documented Pound's racial mythology. According to Casillo, Pound bases his hero on a tradition of Aryan or Indo-European great men combined with Chinese rulers who followed the Confucian model. Pound derives his material from nineteenth and early twentieth century racial theorists such as L.A. Waddell whose *Egyptian Civilization: Its Sumerian Origin and Real Chronology and Sumerian Origin of the Egyptian Hieroglyphs* Pound read during his hospitalization at St. Elizabeth's after World War II (Casillo, *Genealogy* 96).¹⁸¹ In this work, Waddell

¹⁸⁰ See David Barnes' "Fascist Aesthetics" and "'Ct/Volpe's Neck': Re-approaching Pound's Venice in the Fascist Context;" Casillo's "Fascists of the Final Hour;" Cockram's "Hypertextuality and Pound's Fascist Aesthetic." David Murray's "A Reply to John Lauber's 'Pound's Cantos: Fascist Epic,'" Paul's "Italian Fascist Exhibitions and Ezra Pound's Move to the Imperial" and "Ezra Pound, Alfredo Casella, and the Fascist Cultural nationalism of the Vivaldi Revival;" Sicari's "Reading Pound's Politics: Ulysses as Fascist Hero;" and Leon Surette's *Dreams of Totalitarian Utopia*. See also Feldman, Matthew; Glicksberg; Lauber; and Selby.

¹⁸¹ See Michael André Bernstein for a discussion of a number of other influences on Pound's racial and cultural ideas, ranging from John Ruskin and Jacob Burckhardt to Leo Frobenius and Louis Agassiz (166-169). Jean-Michael Rabaté also notes Pound's ideas of seeing culture as "organic and 'totalitarian'" (47), deriving his ideas from Leo Frobenius.

creates a mythology of a core Aryan race and civilization that was responsible for the creation of all of the accomplishments of human civilization in the Near East and Europe. Casillo writes that Pound's entire corpus is infected with this racist ideology:

Many Poundian values which critics do not consider fascistic—among them his anti-monotheism, his agrarian paganism, his solar worship, his phallocentrism, his anti-feminism, his attacks on abstraction, his anti-usury, his longing for mythical rather than historical time, his demand for ritualized and hierarchical society—are characteristic of many versions of fascist ideology. (22)

According to Casillo, Pound has a distinct racial mythology that is developed throughout *The Cantos* and can even be found in his minor works including the radio broadcasts. In this mythology, Aryan culture has certain defining characteristics such as agriculture, rule by a masculine solar king, and the offering of grain sacrifices in addition to celebration of healthy fertility as well as an economic system that does not include usury and does not exult capital. In contrast to this allegedly pure and noble Aryan civilization, Casillo sees Pound viewing Semitic people as “a symbol of virtually every form of dangerous otherness—the threat of disease, labyrinthine inwardness, instinctual passion, the vagina dentata, a plague of vermin, satanic magic, divine violence...” (*Genealogy* 326). Casillo's reading of Pound is fairly sound, and he is not the only critic to explore Pound's racism, which is often clearly pronounced in his poetry and prose as well as the radio broadcasts that he did for Rome Radio, an organ of Mussolini's fascist government, during the 1940s. It must be admitted, that rather than being restricted to incidental passages and references, Pound's Aryanism is, in fact, *part* of the backbone of his *Cantos*. Pound admits this himself. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound explains, “There is no mystery about

the Cantos, they are the tale of the tribe—give Rudyard credit for his use of the phrase” (194). Pound thus meant for *The Cantos* to be the great epic of his idea of the Aryan Race. Pound’s imperial *exemplum* is thus, in many ways, an *exemplum* an empire that would find currency among the Nazis. However, Casillo’s reading of Pound tells only one side of the story.

While Casillo’s characterization of Pound is largely accurate, Pound does not restrict his catalogue to what he would define as Aryan civilization; Pound includes Chinese examples as well and expresses admiration for many different world cultures. A number of critics thus read Pound’s work as a means to overcome the narrow bounds of nationalism. *The Cantos* are, according to Forrest Read, “the first epic poem of a post-Renaissance One World” in which Pound promotes “both peaceful interaction and mutual enrichment among the world’s peoples, whether by cultures or by persons” (3). Despite Pound’s heavy use of Indo-European mythology, he does use other material including African and Hebrew—two races Pound tends to denigrate at times. Some critics go even further than Read, suggesting that *The Cantos* show a lack in Western or Indo-European mythology. Eva Hesse sees Pound’s incorporation of Eastern thought as being a sign that Pound sought to transcend Western ethnocentrism:

The Cantos as a whole are conceived as a poem written from outside of Western civilization, their point of departure being Pound’s break with narrow Western thinking and their goal a cultural renewal. Any such break must inevitably lead back to East, i.e., Asia Minor and the Far East, which throughout the history of European ideas has been envisaged as the antipode to Western colonizing rationality that holds out the promise of a return to beginnings, a rejuvenation of the mind and a broadening of outlook. (26)

Throughout Pound's prose writings, he sees Confucius as a means of reviving European thought that has been encrusted by liberalism and usury. However, Hesse may be reading too much into Pound's use of Confucius. Pound clearly did not see European or Western thought as such as being inadequate; rather it had degenerated from its wellspring. Some scholars even suggest that Pound's work is a deeply ethical work, which seeks to emphasize love of and compassion for the Other. Wendy Flory writes, "Pound's 'epic autobiography' is a poem about good and evil as they manifest themselves in human society..." (7). Peter Liebrechts develops this point even further, "*The Cantos*, then, is a deeply religio-ethical poem in which the responsibility of man towards others outweighs everything else" (110). Liebrechts also suggests that Pound's use of various gods and goddesses is indicative of his fundamentally pluralist and multicultural poetics:

Their names [the gods] are those of the Western tradition, but these gods may be known under different names in other parts of the world: although each individual experiences these states of mind within himself or herself, these gods are the same ever recurring manifestations of a hither reality, that is, a reality beyond our ordinary daily consciousness, which one may call the subconscious or a Platonic Ideal world or a vital universe full of divine energies. (Liebrechts 51)

Flory and Liebrechts's views are supported by much material that is found in the later cantos; however, their views must be weighed with the violent, egotistical and prejudicial components of Pound's work. It is thus clear that there are other readings of Pound's work outside of ethnographic ones.

There is much evidence to point to the reading *The Cantos* as mystical. Pound himself gives a plan in a letter to his father that indicates his borrowing from mythology:

- A. A. Live man goes down into world of Dead
- C. B. The “repeat of history”
- B. C. The “magic moment,” or moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidian into “divine or permanent world.” Gods, etc. (SL 210)

While Pound will continue his *Cantos* for forty more years, the information that Pound provides in his letter is one of the structures of *The Cantos*—although critics debate to what extent there is a structure at all and how it can be traced.¹⁸² *The Cantos* begin with Pound’s adaption of Andreas Divus’ Latin translation of the *Odyssey* in which there is a journey into the dead. This descent to the dead leads to a Hell section, spanning *Cantos* 15-16. Christine Froula notes that most epics involve wandering to a homecoming but Pound’s epic’s “wandering is unclosed by any such redemption” (143). Additionally, there are a multitude of *Cantos* that are based on the metamorphoses and contain metamorphoses. In a certain sense, the structure of *The Cantos* parallels Ovid’s work in which one story of a metamorphosis leads to another.¹⁸³ There are also the epiphanies or “magic moments” in the poems in which there are epiphanies and manifestations of the divine. However, Pound’s epic contains points at which there is a deeper occult structure to the poem.

Critics have also pointed to the presence of an occult tradition in Pound that Pound derives from the nineteenth and early twentieth century occultist G.R.S. Mead among others, such as his friend W.B. Yeats and Pound’s wife Dorothy. Demetres P.

¹⁸² For discussion of the structure of *The Cantos*, see Michael André Bernstein’s “Identification and Its Vicissitudes: The Narrative Structure of Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*.” See also Baumann; Clark; Davis, Kay; Fogelman; Goodwin; Scappettone among others.

¹⁸³ Demetres Tryphonopoulos sees the use of Ovid in the poem as being “an account of initiations, of palingenesis of the soul. On this reading the transformation of animals in Ovid would be representations of the soul’s apotheosis or *soteria*” (4).

Tryphonopoulos, one of the foremost champions of the occult reading of Pound, writes that from Mead, Pound takes a number of his central ideas, including:

the 'celestial tradition'; the belief in the persistence of the light from Eleusis through the Middle Ages, and its re-surfacing in the songs of Provence and Italy; the desire for a 'pagan revival,' leading to the gathering of the forgotten fragments of ancient mystery rites so as to recapture a polytheistic consciousness which is now all but lost to Modern man; the expectation for the dawn of a 'New Age'; and palingenesis. (95)

There is a general consensus among critics that Pound believed in a secret tradition of a love cult, descended from antiquity, which Pound sought to revive.¹⁸⁴ There is, consequently, a spiritual backbone to Pound's epic that is not restricted to race.

Tryphonopoulos even goes so far in his book length study of the occult aspect of *The Cantos* as to say that the poem "is structured on the model of an initiation rather than a journey, ... and ... does not so much describe an initiation rite as enact one for the reader" (*The Celestial Tradition* i). According to Tryphonopoulos, *The Cantos* is a book of magic that "can be the bridge ... through which the initiate can attain revelation, the unmediated vision of the deity" (*The Celestial Tradition* 7). It is thus a literal book of spells. Tryphonopoulos further sees Pound's occultism as being linked to his Neo-Platonism in which the reader is given an insight into a nominal realm: "For Pound the purpose of poetry is to help the reader arrive at the 'full Εἰδωλόν'; the aim of the poetics of the ideogram is to give the reader 'a sudden insight'" (*The Celestial Tradition* 10). Pound's use of specific phrases and characters especially those drawn from Egyptian and Chinese characters can lead to an

¹⁸⁴ See Flory, Liebrechts, and Makin for more moderate readings of Pound's idea of the Eleusian tradition that avoid Tryphonopoulos' reading of Pound as a sincere occultist.

experience with a deity or the Deity—literally. Other critics moderate Tryphonopoulos' radical occult reading. Peter Liebrechts takes a more moderate view seeing Pound principally as a Neo-Platonic philosopher who "became a sort of modern Ficino as he in turn conflated various stages and different doctrines of the Neoplatonic tradition, although he restricted himself to certain aspects, namely the psychological-mystical, the aesthetical, and the epistemological" (23). Pound was more concerned, according to Liebrechts, in philosophy and psychology. The occult reading of the poem shows that Pound's thinking is not reducible just to materialistic racialism. In fact, some critics go so far as to read Pound's work as being primarily concerned with aesthetics.

Other critics have emphasized a reading of *The Cantos* as a work primarily concerned with aesthetic needs. Hugh Kenner is one of the principle critics of this school.¹⁸⁵ In Michael North's essay, the author seeks to see Pound's descriptions of Sigismundo Malatesta's temple as a basis for the Cantos because the Tempio is "multitudinous, minute, full of anecdote" (380).¹⁸⁶ Some critics view Pound's work as being an exercise in comparative literature. In *Reading Pound Reading: Modernism after Nietzsche*, Kathryn Lindberg writes that Pound's work "seems... to posit poetry as a unifying force if not the Truth before and between languages. Throughout his reading text, Pound emphasizes the incomplete, unequal, and plural state of *languages* and *poetries*" (74). Other critics point to the status of the work as being both a work of dealing with concrete physical action such as the Homeric epic

¹⁸⁵ See *The Pound Era* in addition to Kenner's numerous articles.

¹⁸⁶ North is uncertain whether the Tempio as well as *The Cantos* themselves are meant for the people or are just monuments to the men who commissioned them (375).

and a psychological and personal epic such as a Romantic work: "Pound's poem is an example of an intermediate genre that falls between the *Odyssey* or the *Commedia* and the *Prelude*, sharing both" (Flory, *Ezra Pound and The Cantos* 1). Wendy Flory further points out that Pound seems to vacillate back and forth between intellectual exploration and a battle against real material forces in the world: "Pound originally intended his 'epic struggle' to be an intellectual one. He saw himself not like Odysseus, sailing to face physical dangers and trials, but 'sail[ing] after knowledge'; not like 'Dante the hero,' traveling through Hell, but driven by a visions of his own times as a 'hell' to give battle to the monster *Usura* through the power of the written word" (*EP and C* 2). Pound's work and its structure is deeply influenced by Homer and Dante, and thus there is a strong aesthetic element to the work. Liebrechts also suggests that the work is called *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* because such a title underlines "how the poem is in essence a meditation, with the aid of epical, lyrical and dramatic techniques, on Pound's own self and his own literary, political historical, and economical beliefs" (100). Despite the overtures to other works of literature, Pound's work is deeply psychological and deals with an interior exploration of Pound's mind and heart. However, Pound makes it clear that throughout out his work, he eschews aestheticism, and his epic is meant to teach and shape a new human being and a new civilization.

In the end, it appears that Pound wanted his *Cantos* to serve a didactic purpose, that is, he wanted to use them to teach and shape his readers. At one point in *The Cantos*, Pound dismisses aestheticism: "Aestheticism comme politique

d'église, hardly religion" (*The Cantos* 94:671)¹⁸⁷. Just as religious politics is not true religion, so too is art for art's sake not truly art. Liebrechts reads this passage as an emphasis on the didactic quality of art: "beautiful art must also be didactic, that is, incite us to pursue an ideal we can believe in, otherwise it will be like a church ritual devoid of meaning and belief" (330). Pound suggests that his *Cantos* have a didactic purpose with the fragment "FORMANDO di disio nuova persona" (*Cantos*. 27:129), that is, "forming a new person from love." As we will see, Pound's work is to be an education in love that is meant to get the reader to know and love the right things, and Pound's erudition is "a tool to make the reader think..." (Rabaté 38). At one point in *The Cantos*, Pound humorously gives a personal anecdote that points to the didactic character of Pound's work: "'You damn sadist!' said mr. cummings, / 'you try to make people think'" (*C* 89:623). Pound wished to reinvent modern man as well as modern woman. He believed that modernity had retarded the development of Westerners, and he looks to the past for models. He provides a hint at his program with the quote from John Adams that inaugurates canto 32: "THE revolution,' said Mr. Adams, / "'Took place in the minds of the people'" (*C* 32:157). As many critics note, Pound sought to change the thinking of modern man as earlier artists and intellectuals had spurned revolutions and built great civilizations through art.¹⁸⁸ Throughout his poetry, prose, and even in the most crude and vicious

¹⁸⁷ Critics have used multifarious ways of citing *The Cantos*. I will use the number of the canto followed by a colon and then the page number from the New Directions 1970 edition of the complete cantos.

¹⁸⁸ Stephen Sicari sees Pound as crafting an epic in which Pound seeks to "master Western history" (ix). Pointing to cantos 62-81, Liebrechts writes, "The main thread of the Adams Cantos is John Adam's integrity in his search to create possibilities for the advancement of human happiness in an ordered society" (243). Pound's poem is

moments of his radio broadcasts, Pound presents himself as the Homer or Tiresias of Western civilization, guiding it toward a secular salvation. Pound wants to teach and shape Westerners through his epic, which will make the new man and the new *imperium* for the twentieth century. Pound turns to the imperial epic model, originally shaped by Virgil. Virgil, however, was not Pound's favorite poet.

Ezra Pound's Reluctant Use of Virgil

Pound does not have a great deal of admiration for Virgil specifically, but his works are full of Virgilian allusions.¹⁸⁹ Some critics attempt to tie Pound's use of Virgil with his occult interests.¹⁹⁰ Pound famously comments that a sixteenth

a way of dredging up the past to create a better future:" This poem, he hoped, would connect the present cultural present is seen as both a result of that past and the beginning of a movement to another end still in the future" (Liebregts 1). Edwin Fussell classes Pound's work being "simultaneously a secularized and re-paganized version of the *Commedia*..." (76) and sees Pound's goal as the "salvation of souls through economic and other kinds of historical realism" (77). Pound is primarily a secular poet despite his interest in mythology and theology; he sees salvation in a reform of the here and now. Thomas Jackson suggests that Pound, along with Yeats and Eliot, turned his mind "more and more to civilization as a concept" (987) and, after his musings, attempts to return to the People "as the sagacious spiritual guide of his *communitas*—if the *communitas* will listen" (1011).

¹⁸⁹ See Davidson for a brief discussion and list of Virgilian allusions in *The Cantos*. Davidson explains, "Pound's use of Virgil is inadvertent testimony to Virgil's classic status: to the way in which certain images, individual lines, and bits of the plot of the *Aeneid* get into the mind and stick like a burr; thus even though Pound was convinced that Virgil was an Establishment poet, lacking both in passion and sincerity, some parts of the *Aeneid* had patently joined his mental furniture without his conscious consent." (130). For Pound's relationship to Virgil, see also Dasenbrock's "Constructing a Larger Iliad: Ezra Pound and the Vicissitudes of Epic"; Davie; Katz; Lind; McMahon; Morrow; Thomas, Ron; and Wacker.

¹⁹⁰ Tryphonopoulos writes the Pound's desire to bring in a New Age parallels Virgil's: "...*The Cantos* reflect the occult belief in the imminence of a New Age prophesied by occultists at the turn of the century. Indeed it would appear that the poem was to be the epic expression of the New Age, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* expressed the Augustan Empire" (*The Celestial Tradition* 102). Tryphonopoulos also sees Virgil's Book 6 as being part of Pound's occult education (*The Celestial Tradition* 105).

century translation of Virgil by a Scottish Bishop is superior to the Roman poet himself: “Gavin Douglas re-created us Virgil, or rather we forget Virgil in reading Gavin’s *Aeneids* and know only the tempest, Acheron, and the eternal elements that Virgil for most men glazes over” (Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* 249). Pound also praises Gavin Douglas’s Scottish translation of Virgil “because Gavin Douglas knew the sea better than Virgil” (*ABC’s of Reading* 45). Pound sees one of Virgil’s translators as being superior to Virgil himself, dismissing the Roman poet on aesthetic grounds as well as for practical matters. Gavin Douglas is for Pound a better artist than Virgil because of a supposedly great breadth of real world knowledge: Douglas knows the sea better than Virgil—supposedly. In his letters, Pound refers to Virgil “a second-rater, a Tennysonianised version of Homer” (*SL* 138). Pound also dismisses Virgil on ideological grounds, seeing the Roman poet as a straight-laced toady for Augustus.

In his minor poetry, Pound further rejects the Virgilian model and adopts the voice of the radical anti-imperialist. As critics note, Pound was attracted more to Catullus and Propertius among the Roman poets.¹⁹¹ Instead of writing of war and the great man, Pound in his youth will celebrate art itself, which is the primary message of *Homage To Sextus Propertius*. In his “Homage to Quintus Septimius Florentius Christianus”, the speaker celebrates the fall of Rome:

Whither, O city, are your profits and your gilded shrines,
And your barbecues of great oxen,
And the tall women walking your streets, in gilt clothes,
With their perfumes in little alabaster boxes?
Where is the work of your home-born sculptors? (4.1-5)

¹⁹¹ See Angus Fletcher

Pound sees the fall of Rome as a subject for both lament and celebration. Pound looks to the past for regeneration of the present, but the image of collapsing Rome is surely meant to serve as analogue for the collapse of the British Empire, which Pound sees as doomed.¹⁹² Pound's life and work is full of contradictions, and one of the foremost is his fascination with civilization and tradition coupled with his desire to destroy that same civilization and rebuild it. *Homage to Sextus Propertius* also contains a stinging criticism of imperialism, Roman or otherwise. Pound's speaker rejects Roman epic for the songs of amorous play. The speaker dismissively says of Virgil:

He can tabulate Caesar's great ships.
He thrills to Ilian arms,
He shakes the Trojan weapons of Aeneas,
And casts stores on Lavinian beaches. (*HSP* 12.32-35)

Pound often identifies Virgil as a sort of Victorian character who celebrates the established order, which, in Pound's era, is run by finance and has killed many of the poet's friends in wars to protect the imperial system.¹⁹³ Pound would like to become the new Propertius and write of love and art as the empire surges and then crumbles around him. The speaker announces that "a much larger Iliad is in the course of construction / (and to Imperial order) / Clear the streets, O ye Greeks" (*HSP* 12.38-40). Pound could be referring to his own work as the "larger Iliad..."

Pound, in his youth, sees himself as a potentially great poet who will craft his work as the rotten empire dies around him. Pound further derides Virgil as the official

¹⁹² "Pound makes Propertius's ability to write poetry of lyric passion and satiric exposure within the hostile Augustan empire (and get away with it) a mirror (or a "persona") of his own achievement within the twentieth-century British Empire" (Read 59).

¹⁹³ Pound's friend Henri Gaudier Brzeska was killed in World War I.

textbook Latin of the middle ages but notes that “ ‘everybody’ went on reading Ovid” (*ABC* 45). Ovid was the rebel in a period of formality and rigidity as Pound identified himself as being. Pound praises the affinity between life and art in his passage.

Pound has this advice for Virgil lovers: “The lover of Virgil who wishes to bring a libel action against me would be well advised to begin his attack by separating the part of the *Aeneid* in which Virgil was directly interested (one might almost say, the folk-lore element) from the parts he wrote chiefly because he was trying to write an epic poem” (*ABC* 45). Pound does not condemn Virgil; he condemns the artificiality of parts of Virgil. In his earlier poetry and writings, Pound primarily identifies with the trickster or rebel whom he finds in the character of Odysseus.

While he later would become an apologist for Mussolini and his attempt to recreate the Roman Empire, Pound often identifies with Odysseus, the rebellious trickster. Pound holds Odysseus as being superior to Aeneas, “You can’t tuck Odysseus away with Virgil’s Aeneas. Odysseus is emphatically ‘the wise guy’ the downy, the hard-boiled Odysseus. His companions have most of them what must have been the Greek equivalent of shell-shock” (Pound, *ABC* 44). Odysseus is more interesting than Aeneas because the Greek hero, like Pound himself, is a rough and tumble rebel. Pound further gives the story of Yeats’ anecdote of the sailor who attempted to learn Latin and read the *Aeneid*: “A plain sailor man took a notion to study Latin, and his teacher tried him with Virgil; after many lesson he asked him something about the hero: “Said the sailor: ‘What hero?’ / Said the teacher: ‘What hero, why, Aeneas, the hero.’ / Said the sailor: ‘Ach, a hero, him a hero? Bigob, I t’ought he waz a priest” (*ABC* 44). Pound seems to sympathize with this sailor, for

Pound's hero is a man of action not a religious or intellectual figure as Aeneas seems to be read here. In his essay, "The Renaissance," Pound condemns Virgil further as a straight-laced character:

Not Virgil, especially not the Aeneid, where he has no story worth telling, no sense of personality. His hero is a stick who would have contributed to *The New Statesman*. He has a nice verbalism. Dante was right to respect him, for Dante had no Greek, and the Aeneid would have stood out nobly against such literature as was available in the year 1300. (Eliot, *Literary Essays* 215)

Virgil's Aeneas is too uptight for Pound; he does not have the vibrant personality of Odysseus or any of the other characters whom Pound upholds in *The Cantos*. As Stephen Sicari writes, in the early cantos, "Aeneas is not... a figure congenial to Pound because he eschews passion in love in favor of a public mission, a choice this poet does not want to be forced to make" (*Pound's Epic Ambition* 75). However, for Sicari, Aeneas later does appear as a model for Pound's heroes in the later cantos in which Pound, after the fall of Fascism, establishes "a role for himself in the process of history, the role of the prophet of the ideal city" (*Pound's Epic Ambition* 115).¹⁹⁴

One of the things that Pound attempts to do in *The Cantos* is to present a new model of community, and he seems to borrow from the *Aeneid*. One of Pound's clearest references to himself as being like a new Aeneas is found in the section:

Slow lift of long banners
Roma profugens Sabinorum in terras
and belt the citye quahr of nobil fame
the lateyn peopil taken has their name
bringing his gods into Latium
saving the bricabrac
'Ere he his goddis brocht in Latio'
'each on in the name' (C 78:498-499).

¹⁹⁴ In *Pound's Epic Ambition: Dante and the Modern World*, Sicari has an entire chapter titled "The Wanderer as Prophet: Aeneas and the Ideal City."

Pound uses Douglas' translation but presents the image of the creation of the new city of Latium that the Romans will construct with the aid of the Latins, forming a new people. Pound wrote this Canto when he was kept in the Discipline Training Center near Pisa, Italy while awaiting trial for treason. The Fascist experiment had failed for the time being, but Pound saw hope for a new model city and turned to Virgil for his model. Pound's reading and use of Virgil is clearly selective, Aeneas is a strong presence in *The Cantos* and many of the heroes in the poem follow him. Consequently, while Pound rejects the epic model in his youth, he employs it in his *Cantos* and follows the classical model of presenting the image of a hero whom the reader is invited to emulate.

Pound's Hero

The Cantos contains many voices: some heroic and some villainous.¹⁹⁵ Pound himself had given a hint that heroes were essential to his understanding of poetry in his early work, *The Spirit of Romance* in which he wrote, "the study of literature is hero-worship" (5). Many critics have taken up the issue of Pound's heroes. Peter Liebrechts argues that in *The Cantos*, Pound's heroes change from being renegade outsiders to fathers of the nation:

In *The Cantos*, the heroes, although still solitary, increasingly have a *public* aspect to them. These fictive personalities are each no longer the man alone on the *outside*, but the man alone at the *top*. The Poundian quester in *The Cantos* thus becomes the Homeric Dantean—Tennysonian wanderer sailing after knowledge, using his intelligence to overcome evil and ignorance in his search for paradise, at the same time presenting himself as a model to us and exhorting us to share his knowledge. (140)

¹⁹⁵ Some critics see Pound's catalogue of heroes as being based on Pound's interest in the Malatesta temple at Rimini, which contains a collection of heroes' sarcophagi including a poet, a philosopher and a warrior (North 373).

Other critics notice this change. Wendy Flory writes that throughout *The Cantos* “Pound has been steadily moving away from an Odyssean ideal and toward a Confucian one...” (184). Pound’s heroes do follow his own life and interests, and as Pound becomes increasingly interested in politics, so does the political leader become more important in his characters. This biographical association between Pound and his heroes is something on which critics have picked up.

Forrest Read suggests that Pound viewed himself as “a revolutionary protagonist or epic hero, enacting the role of a revolutionary statesman constituting the laws and try to complete the latest versions of ‘an epic is a poem containing history’ or ‘the tale of the tribe’” (8). Edwin Fussell sees the main hero in the poem as being Pound himself: “...Pound is Aeneas, St. Paul, Christ, descending into Hell (history) to perform good (literary) works...” (85). For Sicari, Pound’s emphasis on the hero is an integral part of his Fascism: “Pound’s Fascism, which is really a sophisticated and elaborate form of ‘hero-worship,’ takes its character from his attempt to execute a poem in the epic mode which traditionally features the role of heroic will in the realm of public affairs” (*Pound’s Epic Ambition* 89). Pound’s hero is both a mystic and a man of action.¹⁹⁶

Other critics note the prevalence of heroes from antiquity. Cowan writes, “Generally speaking, figures from classical antiquity constitute archetypes of the factive personality and present the ethical norm, and heroic figures throughout history function as variants of these archetypes, usually as degeneration from the

¹⁹⁶ “Pound is careful to establish the centrifugal wanderer who reaches, or at least glimpses and aims for, Dantesque heights as the model for our understanding of the achievements of the political hero” (Sicari 91).

norm" (26). These archetypes or *exempla* reach their culmination in periods of greatness, usually in Antiquity and then degenerate in more corrupt periods. Thomas Jackson, however, takes the opposite view that "at various points in Pound's work the central creative figures become persons of ever widening competence, or persons of ever increasing social relevance" (995). Tryphonopoulos views Pound's use of heroes as being a literal summoning of long dead spirits similar to Odysseus' conjuring of the dead in the *Odyssey*: "Like the souls summoned by Odysseus in the *nekuia*, Pound "calls up' the souls of enlightened individuals, both dead and alive, and it is these souls which populate his epic" (*The Celestial Tradition* 102). Other critics such as Robert Cassillo see Pound's great man as being drawn from Waddell's vision of the solar king: "Where Pound celebrates a European 'grain god' and agrarian and solar traditions, Waddell reproduces Aryan images of the solar deity, champion of good over evil, and his son, the 'Corn-god' and 'patron of agricultural life' (*Genealogy* 99). However, even though Casillo acknowledges the contradictions and exceptions within Pound's thinking, he places too much of an emphasis on the Aryan mythology as being the center of *The Cantos*. There is a philosophical underpinning for Pound's idea of the error that follows Classical Greek and Confucian ideas on order and self-control. Pound's hero is founded on a classical model. Pound himself remarks that one of the traits of the great man is the "will toward order" (Pound, *Jefferson AND/OR Mussolini* 99).

Other critics emphasize the influence of Neo-Platonic philosophers on Pound's idea of the hero. Eva Hesse sees Pound's hero as derived from the theories of Giordano Bruno who conceived of the hero as follows:

the man of exceptional sensibility capable of apprehending the primary shape of things, is passionately in quest of 'divine objects,' which represent in turn to the heroic philosopher truth, to the heroic poet beauty, and to the heroic statesman order. These objects—platonic ideas or, as Pound would say, *formae*—are not so much rational and abstract entities existing on a higher plane of being as traditional Neoplatonic thinking would have it, but rather modes of seeing which lay hold of man, spiritual forces which act upon him to endow with creative power. (30)

Pound's hero is paradoxically, according to Hesse, a great man who is bitterly lonely but, at the same time, the leader of his people (31). The Poundian hero thus is a great man who orders and channels the wildness of nature, a "fertilizer", a builder, a patron of the arts, and a reformer of economies and is presented in such a way that transcends the narrow limits of Aryanism.

Pound's hero is first and foremost a man of action, and Odysseus is the first hero that Pound presents in the poem. Many critics have treated the role of Odysseus in *The Cantos* as being an ideal man of action for Pound.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, some critics see Pound as transcending Odysseus.¹⁹⁸ Odysseus is a traveler and man of action, but he is also a priest and religious leader like Aeneas:

¹⁹⁷ Bacigalupo points to *The Cantos* as being the story of "untiring Odysseus, exploring everything..." (92). Cowan sees Pound's Odysseus as being "the archetypal soldier-lord and explorer-adventurer ... who embodies the active and questing male principle in sexual, political, military, and cultural dominance through direct action" (26). Read sees Pound's journey as following an "Odyssean thread" in which there are "changes of mode from traditional to personal to justicial to poetic" (10). Read also writes, "For Pound the *Odyssey* marked the passage in European values from the brute force and war of the *Iliad* to intelligence and peace. The Nekromanteia, which Pound considered the oldest part of the *Odyssey*, not only caught that shift at its earliest but also represented the European mind's passage from myth to historical consciousness as a guide to intelligence" (Read 109).

¹⁹⁸ The noble if fallible, hero of ancient Greek culture is replaced by a representative figure making it sway through the perils of modern history. Whereas Odysseus, as king and captain, possessed for the Greeks a recognized social position and authority, and Homer, the bard, had mystified and mythified social authority of the

Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour.
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods,
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep. (C 1:3)

This beginning to the poem is an invocation to the dead, the demonic muses with whom Pound struggles and with which he seeks to reconcile his gods of light throughout the poem. Pound signifies that he will have religion as an essential component of *The Cantos*. Yet, this religion will be distinctly pagan and will demand blood sacrifice. Further in Canto 1, Odysseus calls out for more bulls to be sacrificed: "Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts; / Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze..." (C 1:4). The massive blood sacrifice will be a reoccurring theme in *The Cantos*, and the connection with the resurrection of the dead, which is an essential theme in Pound. Odysseus cries out to "Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine" (C 1:4) while trying to "keep off the impetuous impotent dead" (C 1:4). Pound had previously praised Odysseus, but he had acknowledged the Greek Hero's trickster character in the same breath that he condemned Aeneas for his piety. There thus seems to be a growth in Pound's thought here as, despite himself, he takes up the Virgilian epic. In addition to heroes from the classical world, Pound is attracted to figures from the Italian Renaissance.

Muse for his tale, Pound as poet-protagonist can claim for his poem only the authority of experience (Froula 147-148).

Sigismundo Malatesta is another important figure for Pound.¹⁹⁹ Malatesta was a fifteenth century Italian ruler from Rimini, who dedicated a temple to his beloved as well as to St. Francis of Assisi (Rainey 34). One of things that Pound found so attractive about Malatesta was the synthesis of pagan and Christian elements—with a preference for the former. Pound praises Malatesta as a man of action and warrior in *Guide to Kulchur*, a work that Pound composed in 1938 to serve as an educational guide: “Malatesta and the late condottieri, their mouths watering over the designs, in Valturio, of war engines, tanks, superior catapults, as damn’d frost now latches after a Vickers’ advertisement or a farm boy over automobile ads” (115). Here, Pound criticizes the modern world as having degenerated into the worship of accumulated goods and compares it to the Renaissance in which great men supposedly waged heroic wars. Pound further praises Sigismundo Malatesta for his insistence on beautiful wax seals: “You get civilization in the seals. I mean it was carried down and out into details. The little wafer of wax between the sheets of letter paper in Modena is, culturally, level with the Medallions ... All that a single man could, Malatesta managed *against* the current of power” (GK 159). Malatesta insisted upon beauty as an essential element to his work, which Pound frequently contrasts with modern world’s insistence on “function over form.” The idea of the great man as a builder of culture and

¹⁹⁹ See Michael André Bernstein for a discussion of Malatesta’s seeming misdeeds including the destruction of many of Giotto’s paintings (163). For further discussion of Pound’s view of Malatesta, see Bennett, Chapman, Harper, Kimpel’s “Pound’s Research for the Malatesta Cantos,” Rainey’s “The Malatesta Cantos and the Making of Ideology” and *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos*, and Rhodes among others.

civilization is a central feature in Pound's structure. This creativity is not restricted to the arts but is found in other forms of action.

Malatesta is found throughout the *Cantos*, but he occurs primarily in the early ones. Pound inaugurates a long section on Malatesta in which he quotes from a letter that Malatesta wrote while in army camp in the midst of a war with Cremona. In this letter Malatesta addresses politics and the patronage of an artist who was painting some chapels for Malatesta:

And tell the *Maestro di pentore*
That there can be no question of
His painting the walls for the moment,
As the mortar is not yet dry
And it wd. be merely work chucked away
(buttato via)
But I want it to be quite clear, that until the chapels are ready
I will arrange for him to paint something else
So that both he and I shall
Get as much enjoyment as possible from it... (C 8:28-29)

Here is a more detailed explanation of Pound's idea of a strong man. Malatesta is a warrior as well as a patron of the arts as Pound hoped Mussolini would be. Pound also celebrates Malatesta's construction of the Franciscan Church at Rimini, which also served as a pagan temple for his lover: "He Sigismundo, *templum aedificavit...*" (C 8:32). Pound's Malatesta is not simply some barbarian warrior; he is also a builder of civilization. Malatesta further is, like Odysseus, an outlaw character who is at war with the world of established commerce and established religion: "With the church against him, / With the Medici bank for itself..." (C 8:32). Although the Medici bank often serves as a foil for modern usury, here it stands in for the forces of capital; Malatesta is thus an economic reformer. Malatesta further discusses Greek mythology and Platonic philosophy and even writes a love poem to Isotta delgi Atti,

his lover. However, he is not clearly a total hero as Thomas Jackson notes; he seems incontinent throughout his life in his sexual relation and dishonest in his dealings with others (1004).²⁰⁰ Pound's heroes, like Virgil, Dante, and Spenser's are complex and imperfect *exempla* of virtue

Other strong men appear throughout Pound's work. Pound praises the Chinese emperor Chao-Kung, for he

Gave each man land for his labour
not by plough-land alone
But for keeping of silk-worms
Reforested the mulberry groves
Set periodical markets
Exchange brought abundance, the prisons were empty.
'Yao and Chun have returned'
sang the farmers
'Peace and abundance bring virtue.' (C 52:268).

Chao-Kung is a great man, for he provided for the material and moral needs of his people; he was a man of action who brings life to the people through agricultural reform as well as giving each man the ability to keep silk worms so that he could make fine clothes.²⁰¹ There are a whole host of historical figures and literary characters that embody Pound's idea of a hero.

There is a passage dedicated to El Cid in *Canto* 3. Pound's anti-Jewish character surfaces here as the passage taken from El Cid is the section in which he pawns a trunk allegedly full of treasure to two Jews who soon discover that it is full of sand: "And left his trunk with Raquel and Vidas, / That big box of sand, with the pawn-brokers, / To get pay for his menie..." (C 3:12). Here, Pound does not seem to

²⁰⁰ Jackson agrees with North that the Tempio Malatesta then is incomplete and "a correlative of inner failure, of lack of inner order" (1006).

²⁰¹ For Pound's use of Chinese culture, see Eastham, Musca, Nolde, Wellen, and Wilson among others.

emphasize the Jewishness of the pawnbrokers although one could label the passage as anti-Semitic. What Pound emphasizes is El Cid's strength and craftiness—a trait that he shares with Odysseus. One of the characters that Pound greatly celebrates in loose translation is Bertrams de Born, a French baron who lived in Limousin in the twelfth and thirteenth century.²⁰² Bertans de Born was a man of action who celebrates war and carnage in his poetry. Makin writes, "Pound in his earlier work used Bertrams as an *exemplum*, a demonstration of a possible way of living... Pound's Bertrams was a model for a certain dynamic confidence in pouncing on the pleasures of life" (42). Throughout his work, Pound seems to have a fetish for violence—something that he shares with many Fascists. Pound also mentions Marco Polo in Canto 18 as well as Cadmus, founder of Thebes, Theseus, who slew the minotaur, Adonis, beloved of Venus, and even Hermes with whom Pound himself identifies (Cowan 26). Leo VI of Byzantium, Louis VII of France, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and the "founding father" of the troubadours, William IX of Aquitaine also appears in *The Cantos*:

And that Guillaume sold out his ground rents
 (Seventh of Poitiers, Ninth of Aquitain).
 'Tant las fotei com auzirets
 'Cen e quatre vingt et veit vetz...'
 The stone is alive in my hand, the crops
 will be thick in my death-year... (C 6:21)

William was a crusader, lover, and musician whom Pound associates with agricultural renewal and life. He is a creator and disseminator of life. Pound also

²⁰² Pound had praised de Born in his earlier poetry. In a poem titled, "SESTINA: ALTAFORTE", Pound's Bertrams complains of the peace that has settled in Provence: "Hell grant soon we heart again the swords clash! / And the shrill neighs of descriers in battle rejoicing, / Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing" (Personae 27).

praises Sordello da Goito, another troubadour poet from Lombardy who lived in the thirteenth century

E lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana
Son of a poor knight, Sier Escort,
And he delighted himself in chançons
And mixed with the men of the court
And went to the court of Richard Saint Boniface
And was there with love for his wife
Cunizza, da Romano... (C 6:22)

Sordello, like William IX, is a man who makes art, engages in politics, and courts women. Despite his impoverished background, he is a man driven by a desire to act and do great things, fertilizing the world around him.

There are a number of heroic *exempla* whom Pound mentions for their financial skill. Pound praises Alexander the Great who “paid the debts of his troops” (C 85:568). Alexander was fiscally sound in addition to being a great leader; Alexander also built a great empire stretching into India in which the “Tigers mourn Sikander” (C 87:596) after his death. Galeazzo Sforza, a fifteenth century Duke of Milan, is a hero who is honored in his time and produces noble children:

And the Sultan sent him an assassin, his brother;
And the Soldan of Egypt, lion;
And he begat one pope and one son and four daughters,
And an University, Pisa; (Lauro Medici)
And nearly went broke in his business,
And bought land in Siena and Pisa,
And made peace by his own talk in Naples. (C 21:98)

Galeazzo created a university and engaged in politics that brought peace in addition to raising noble children. One of the primary characteristics of Pound’s hero is the ability to be fertile and produce noble offspring in art as well as life, that is, to cause things to grow. This idea of fertility is important to Pound’s monetary ideas. He

praises Duke Leopold of Siena, for he recognized “the true basis of credit, that is / the abundance of nature / with the whole folk behind it” (C 52:257). Duke Leopold’s financial reforms are another sign of fertility and life given power. Pound also includes figures such as Talleyrand, the French diplomat of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, who “saved Europe for a century” (C 105:766). Moreover, Pound praises female rulers who were concerned with art and economics such as Elizabeth I and Cleopatra: “That Queen Bess translated Ovid, / Cleopatra wrote of the currency...” (C 85:563). These two women who are noted for their strong personalities were also patrons of the arts and economic reformers. Sordello’s wife Cunizza is also praised:

That freed her slaves on a Wednesday
Masnatas et servos witness
Picus de Farinatis
And Don Elinus and Don Lipus
 sons of Farinto de’ Farinati
‘free of person, free of will
‘free to buy witness, sell testate.’ (C 6:22-23)

Despite Pound’s preference for aristocracy and Fascism, he found slavery abhorrent. Pound’s primary concern is with masculine rulers; however, he does point to a “small group of high-powered women who spread order and destruction with equal effectiveness” (Makin 130). The emphasis here is on aristocratic women who build and reform culture. However, Pound does not look exclusively to European, Egyptian, and Chinese strong men and women for his *exempla*; he also praises a list of American presidents.

Pound draws *exempla* of virtue from American figures. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson are the most salient examples.²⁰³ Pound wrote a booklet comparing the thinking of Thomas Jefferson with that of Benito Mussolini titled *Jefferson AND/OR Mussolini*. Pound further quotes from the writings of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson throughout *The Cantos*, but the most concentrated occurrence of Jefferson and Adams takes place in the section published as “Eleven New Cantos.” Like Pound’s other great men, Jefferson is a builder. He writes to George Washington, expressing his concern for the construction of canals: “I consider this canal, / if practicable, as a very important work” (C 31:153). Jefferson also forbids slavery in at least one section of the country: “no slaves north of Maryland district” (C 31:153) and engages in horticulture: “flower found in Connecticut that vegetates when suspended / in air...” (C 31:153). Pound’s Jefferson is also a radical builder of culture who sees the United States as a new model state, which contrasts with the degenerate European monarchies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pound quotes from a letter from Thomas Jefferson to General Washington written in 1788 in which Jefferson celebrates the new American: “I can further say with safety there is not a crowned head / in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him / to be elected a vestryman by any American parish” (C 31:154-155). The early America that Pound sees in Jefferson is free from the decadence and corruption of

²⁰³ For Pound’s treatment of Adams, see Ahearn, Cody, Dasenbroch’s “Jefferson and/or Adams: A Shifting Mirror for Mussolini in the Middle Cantos” Davis, McDonald, and Terrell’s “John Adams Speaking: Some Reflections on Technique” among others. For Pound and Jefferson, see Eiselein, Knight, Leon, Little, Marsh, and Selby’s “Revolutionary Figures in Canto XXXI,”

an old Europe that has lost its spirit. Jefferson is also depicted as a great civilizer of the Indians as he writes to a Judge Johnson:

for civilizing the indians, great improvement on the
ancient ineffectual...which began with religious ministrations.
The following has been successful. First, to raise cattle
whereby to acquire a sense of the value of property...
arithmetic to compute that value, thirdly writing, to
keep accounts, and here they begin to labour;
enclose farms, and the women to weave and spin...
fourth to read Aesop's Fables, which are their first delight
along with Robinson Crusoe. (C 32:158).

While the general thrust of Pound's work is hostile to imperialism, he does praise the strong man who can tame the savage natures of humans. Here Jefferson suggests both intellectual and practical improvement, arguing that the Indians should be taught Greek and English literature and raise cattle. In fact, the American Indians are contrasted with the Europeans under monarchies who "let everything bend before them and banish whatever might / lead them to think. and thus are become as mere animals.... / Cannibals of Europe are eating one another again..." (C 32:158-159).

Jefferson then gives a list of current European monarchs who supposedly exhibit stupid, violent, or unstable traits. In this passage Pound demonstrates that he tends to see qualities in terms of morality, that is, at least some non-European people can become civilized while Europeans themselves can degenerate into savagery.

Another American hero for whom Pound has a great deal of admiration is John Adams.

Pound has extended praise for John Adams as well in *The Cantos*—cantos 62-71 are called the "Adams Cantos"—praising him as the father of the country:

But for the clearest head in the congress
1774 and thereafter

pater patriae
the man who at certain points
made us
at certain points
saved us
by fairness, honesty and straight moving
ARRIBA ADAMS (C 62:350)

Pound sees Jefferson and Adams as being *exempla* of virtue because of their insistence on justice, the development of the country, the patronage of the arts as well as their stands against a federal bank.²⁰⁴ Pound sees the Jeffersonian tradition continuing in Andrew Jackson whom Pound compares to Sigismundo Malatesta

And in the time of Mr Randolph, Mr Benton, Mr Van Buren
he, Andy Jackson
POPULUM AEDIFICAVIT
which might end this canto, and rhyme with
Sigismundo. (C 89:616)

In addition to being a strong man and military leader, Jackson was a man of the people who fought against the attempt by a private bank to cease control of the currency. Pound further praises Martin Van Buren: "THOU shalt not," said Martin Van Buren, "jail 'em for debt" (C 37:181). Pound's great American presidents are those who enact monetary reform, protecting the people from creditors and bankers as well as those who encourage the flourishing of the arts and liberty. While Pound could have stopped with an admiration for the past, he also makes many references to his contemporaries, whom he sees as supposedly great men, who, in fact, were among the most egregious mass murderers in history, Benito Mussolini and Adolph Hitler.

²⁰⁴ For Pound's views on banking and monetary policy, see Jang, Kenner's "Ezra Pound and Money," Kimpel's "How the Medici Went Bust," Marsh, David Murray's "Pound Signs: Money and Representation in Pound," Sieburth, and Walkiewicz among others.

Pound's admiration for Mussolini was as much cultural as economic.²⁰⁵

Critics have made the connection between the Roman Empire and Virgil with the Fascist regime in Pound's work; Tryphonopoulos sees Mussolini as "the Aeneas of the New Age" (*The Celestial Tradition* 102). Pound sees in Mussolini a great father of the fatherland, that is, a builder who seeks the common good. Mussolini combined action and building with an aesthetic flair, according to Pound. Pound has extended praise for Mussolini in the beginning Canto 41. Mussolini drains swamps, creates a supply of water, as well as houses:

Ma questo,
 said the Boss, 'è divertente.'
 catching the point before the aesthetes had got there;
 Having drained off the muck by Vada
From the marshes, by Cicero, where no one else wd. have
 drained it.
Waited 2000 years, ate grain from the marshes;
Water supply for ten million, another one million 'vani'
that is rooms for people to live in.
 XI of our era. (C 41:202)

Pound praises his "Boss" as a great shaper of the literal physical contours of Italy. Mussolini succeeds where even the Roman Emperors have failed, draining a swamp. From the swampland, comes grain land and fresh water for the people. The Duce also constructs houses for the people to live in. Pound further praises Mussolini for seeing money as serving action:

Story told by the mezzo-yit:
That they were to have a consortium
and one of the potbellies says:
 will come in for 12 million'
And another: three millyum for my cut;
And another: we will take eight;

²⁰⁵ For discussions of Pound's relationship to Mussolini, see Geltman, Rainey's "Between Mussolini and Me," Redman, and Woodward.

And the Boss said: but what will you
DO with that money?'
'But! But! Signore, you do not ask a man
what he will *do* with his money.
That is a personal matter.
And the Boss said: but what will you do?
You won't really need all that money
because you are all for the *confine*.' (C 41:202)

Especially in his later writings, money becomes extremely important to Pound. He sees the purpose of money being to serve a good; printing too much money for Pound is a waste like using too many words to write a poem. In this passage, Pound refers to Mussolini as the Boss, a term he uses in praise for those leaders who exerted a strong presence and were able to get things done. Mussolini is contrasted with the capitalists of liberal democracy, the "potbellies" who are motivated by individual greed and do not seek the common good of the people. The use of money is not a "personal matter," according to Pound; it is something that effects the greater economy of the people. Mussolini further seeks economic reform through the abolition of taxes and regulation of the currency of the nation:

'No longer necessary,' taxes are no longer necessary
in the old way if it (money) be based on work done
inside a system and measure and gauged to human
requirements
inside the nation or system

....
and canceled in proportion
to what is used and worn out
à la Wörgl. Sd/ one wd/ have to think about that
but was hang'd by the heels before his thought in proposito
came into action efficiently. (C 78:501-502)

Mussolini was unable to enact his monetary reforms: abolishing taxes, canceling debt and printing only enough money as necessary, for he was killed before doing

so. Pound laments Mussolini's fall before the right fascist government was able to grow and develop, so he is stuck musing and hoping to "dreameth the Republic" (C 78:498). Pound repeatedly returns to his idea of Mussolini as a great martyr for justice, culture and economic reform:

and as to poor old Benito
one had a safety-pin
one had a bit of string, one had a button
all of them so far beneath him
half baked and amateur
or mere scoundrels
To sell their country for half a million
hoping to cheat more out of the people
bought the place from the concierge
who could not deliver
But on the other hand emphasis
an error or excess of
emphasis
the problem after any revolution is what to do with
your gunmen... (C 80:515-516).

In Pound's mind, Mussolini is a juggernaut who towers over the mediocre alternatives of liberalism and Marxism. Those who sought to bring down the "Boss"—whether capitalists or communists—were mere scoundrels who sought to make a profit from the country while Mussolini sought to serve the common good. The violent acts committed by his regime as well as the horrific violence committed by his German allies are here dismissed by Pound as excesses that are brought about by the residual effects of having the leftover elements of the revolution run amok. Pound repeatedly returns to the image of Mussolini whom he sees as a Christ figure or a sacrificial bull. He sees Mussolini as a crucified martyr who died for the sake of the people:

The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's bent
Thus ben and la Clara *a Milano*

By the heels at Milano
That maggots shd/eat the dead bullock... (C 74:425).

Mussolini was the dream of the peasant; he wasn't like the Allied leaders, who, according to Pound, were concerned with the interest of bankers and who fought both World War I and World War II simply to sell arms. Mussolini, according to Pound, was a tragic hero and distinctly a man of the people as opposed to the decadence of liberal capitalists and communists who are the maggots who feed off of his flesh. Jean-Michel Rabaté comments on Pound's fascination with Mussolini's corpse: "The interaction of substitutes is endless: the corpse of Mussolini has now become a castrated bull, a bullock eaten by maggots from which vital has been substracted..." (Rabaté 150). Mussolini's words echo through the cantos in which Pound continues to give tribute to him:

'werein is not responsible person
 having a front name, a hind name and an address'
'not a right but a duty'
 those words still stand uncanceled,
'Presente!'
 and merrda for the monopolists
 the bastardly lot 'em... (C 78:499).

Pound again emphasizes Musolini's opposition to the "bastardly" capitalist whose works are impersonal and unidentifiable without a "front name", "hind name", or "address." Pound makes it clear that even though Mussolini is dead, he is "Presente" (a word used by Fascists to signify the presence of a decease comrade or leader) in that his ideas are still sound. Mussolini is even present in the final cantos. Pound writes, "Muss., wrecked for an error..." (C 116:815). Mussolini's error previously had been an excess of violence, but Read reads this section as being a comparision of Mussolini and Justianian and sees Pound as dismissing Mussolini for having "no sane

letters" (427), that is, Mussolini was not able to generate the law and culture necessary to sustain his empire:

'Have made a mass of laws'
(mucchio di leggi)
Litterae nihil sanantes
Justinian's,
a tangle of works unfinished. (*C* 116:815)

Pound seems to compare his work and himself with that of Mussolini. Both Pound and Mussolini have been unable to construct a great and lasting work like Justinian did with his codification of law. Mussolini is not the only one of Pound's contemporary right wing dictators with whom he identifies.

While he identifies primarily with Italian Fascism's leader, Pound also makes mention of other Axis leaders such as Adolf Hitler and Phillip Pétain, as well as Pétain's premier, Pierre Laval, and Vidkun Quisling, who administered Norway under Nazi rule. However, it is Hitler who has the largest presence—only second to Mussolini. In his Radio Broadcasts, Pound announces that “And every sane act you commit is committed in homage to Mussolini and Hitler. Every reform, every lurch toward the Just Price, toward the control of the market is an act of homage to Mussolini and Hitler. They are your leaders, however much you think you are conducted by Roosevelt or told by Churchill. You follow Mussolini and Hitler in every constructive act of your government” (Rome Radio, May 26, 1942). Adolph Hitler and Eva Braun are also found in Canto 90. In this passage, Eva Braun is associated with virgin goddesses as Diana; Pound mentions how Eva is a muse for Hitler:

Castalia like the moonlight
and the waves rise and fall,

Evita, beer-halls, semina motuum,
to parched grass, now is rain. (C 90:626)

Eva Braun is combined with Castalia, the nymph whom Apollo changed into a fountain and who was a muse for poets, as Castillo suggests. It is uncertain if Cassillo is correct. Read suggests that the Evita here is Perón's wife and the reference to "beer-halls" seems to be the only explicit tie to Nazism. In Casillo's reading, Hitler's wife is further combined with the image of *semina mottum* or the seeds that move set things in motion as well as rain to parched grass. In light of the destructive effects that Nazism has had on Europe, which last until the present day, Pound's ideas are abhorrent, but Pound, like Heidegger, saw Hitler as a great leader who would raise Europe out of the decadence of liberalism and protect her from the menace of Soviet Communism. According to Casillo, Pound continues in this passage calling Hitler a great prophet and spiritual leader:

not arrogant from habit,
but furious from perception,
Sibylla,
from under the rubble heap
m'elevasti
from the dulled edge beyond pain,
m'elevasti
out of Erebus, the deep-lying
from the wind under the earth
m'elevasti
from the dulled air and the dust,
m'elevasti. (C 90:626)

Casillo's identification of at least the first two lines of this passage with Adolf Hitler is shared by other critics. Sicari explains Pound's reference to Hitler: "It is remarkable that Pound can make this apology for the Nazi leader, that he became furious (certainly an acknowledgement of excess and loss of control) only because

he saw so clearly. Hitler fell into the error of genocide, it is implied, because he was a visionary whose efforts toward creating a different nature and destiny for humanity than those present were blocked by the forces of usury" (159). The reference to the rubble heap is also one Pound uses to describe the state of Europe after the Second World War. According to Cassillo, in this rhythmic chant, Pound seems to be calling out to Adolf Hitler to redeem him and the rest of Europe from the destruction of the first war and the misery of their situation.²⁰⁶

The tradition of the civilizer and strong man is one of the primary *exempla* that Pound employs in *The Cantos* and other writings. Pound's hero-worship is distinctly tied to his Fascism, but there is a religious and philosophic tradition behind Pound's view. Unlike the heroic *exempla* of Virgil, Dante, and Spenser, Pound's great man is not impelled in his duty by the gods directly. There is an erotic experience of inspiration from a beautiful woman that draws the great man into the Divine Mind or *Nous* in which he learns of the right model of life and then puts that model of life through his will and must shape the *imperium* himself.

Pound's Prophecy and Community

Pound's strong man is someone who must shape the community himself and who does not follow the commands of the gods. Pound's religious beliefs are

²⁰⁶ Cassillo reading of the passage as an invocation of Adolf Hitler. Fussell sees this passage as Pound's own magic incantation, raising himself up into the *Paradiso* of the later *Cantos*, thus reading the passage as an "aesthetic salvage of world-renowned sinners" (84). However, if it is a reference to Eva Braun or Hitler, then it is a cry to the Third Reich to bring about a *Paradiso* from the Inferno of Liberalism. Materer also points to m'elevasti as being a passage from Dante and suggest that the Sibylla is drawn from Thaddeus Zielinski's *La Sibylle* (120-121). Tryphonopoulos sees these lines as pointing to pagan spring rites and Christian Easter (*The Celestial Tradition* 167).

nebulous, but he seems to believe in both a supreme God and in gods. However, God and the gods do not shape the society through prophecies in the manner in which they do in Virgil, Dante, and Spenser. Rather, it is the great man himself who is inspired to shape the society through an experience of love and an ascent to the Platonic form of justice. The great man then becomes like an artist, for he shapes and molds the society after meditating on the beautiful form of right government. Art for Pound, as for Heidegger and Plato, has the ability to shape and mold a society. Embracing Italian Fascism, Pound initially emphasizes the violent component of the need to clear away the dead and corroded aspects of Western Civilization, but he takes a softer tone later in *The Cantos*. Pound sees the Western world as being in a state of corruption under bourgeois liberal capitalism, and he sees it as his duty to “*épater le bourgeois*” and awaken Europe from her slumber. Pound sees it as his task in his work as it is the task of the great leader who will build a new order to go back in time and seek out models from disparate cultures. In doing so, Pound weaves a delicate balance between the ideal and the real. Pound seeks to incarnate the past into reality and set in motion a new era, drawing from works and figures that can be found both in and outside the canon of Western civilization.²⁰⁷ Pound sees certain periods of greatness in human history that can be repeated and emulated in the present time. Additionally, Pound’s frantic violence is balanced with his own version of Neo-Platonism, especially his use of the image of the *nous* as well his ideas of justice and order, which he takes from Classical,

²⁰⁷ Read suggests that “Pound’s mythology is not *devised* from history by eclectic personal selection, like Yeats’ system, but claims to be found in history in both matter and form” (51).

Medieval, and Chinese sources. The great man reaches this contemplation through his mediation upon a beautiful woman. There seem to be for Pound certain ideas of justice that permeate the universe; it is up to the great man to put these ideals in himself, his household, and his country.

Pound's religion is largely his own creation. In his early poems, classical themes are common. Some critics have suggested that "Pound understood literary or aesthetic symbolism as a mixture of occultism, spiritualist mysticism, and magic couched in a language of emotional reverberation and suggestiveness (Tryphonopoulos, "Ezra Pound's Occult Education" 81). Bacigalupo points to the later Cantos especially as being part of Pound's plan for "presenting the model of a new religion, or 'European Paideuma,' for the benefit of Americans..." (96). Pound had announced to H.L. "the Christian Era ended at midnight on Oct. 29-30 of last year. You are now in the year 1 p.s.U" (*SL* 174). In Pound's early poems such as "PAN IS DEAD," "BEFORE SLEEP," and "TEMPORA," Pound seems to genuinely believe in the existence of ancient deities. Pound further explains in *Guide to Kulchur* "I assert that a great treasure of verity exists for mankind in Ovid and in the subject matter of Ovid's long poem, and that only in this form could it be registered" (299). Religion over all is essential for the flourishing of culture for Pound: "Without gods, no culture. Without gods, something is lacking" (*GK* 126). However, Pound does not simply want the mythological gods and goddesses; he also longs for the supreme intelligence of the universe, and the "worship of the supreme intelligence of the universe is neither an inhuman nor bigoted action" (*GK* 189). Pound longs for both the gods of the poets and the God of the philosophers. Additionally, Pound's

paganism is tied to sexuality that is dominated by masculinity: “Color, polysemy, and sexuality are certainly not condemned in *The Cantos*. Indeed, they are seen as vital components of full human realization—but only as long as they are bounded and made serviceable by the shaping, linear, and phallic order” (Bernstein 173). Pound saw the balance between masculine strength and feminine fertility to be achieved in love and sex in which new people and thus a new civilization is made.

In his epic, Pound celebrates a cult of love and fertility associated with various mother goddesses as Casillo notes (87). In *The Cantos*, Pound celebrates the new spring, which will come about through Odysseus’s union with Circe:

With one measure unceasing:
 ‘Fac deum!’ ‘Est factus.’
Ver novum!
 ver novum!
Thus made the spring.... (C 39:195)

The merger of the hero with the goddess will bring about a new order of the ages; they also make a god inasmuch as they conceive a child. This experience is holy act of lovemaking. Pound uses a magic incantation to describe his ideal sex: “Sacrum, sacrum inluminatio coitu” (36:180). This lovemaking is tied to the creation of human life in a more specific sense and being in general: “Being is the consequence of the fusion of feminine beauty and masculine will” (Rabaté 27). Pound rarely emphasizes the pleasure component of sex; his emphasis is on the life-giving aspect, which he further ties to the creation of art, agriculture, and the prosperity of a people. Pound ties fertility in sex to right monetary policy and precise poetry:

poetry too is a means of facilitating the ‘movement’ of certain energies in nature; it must never be broken off from its concrete living sources.... Money and language facilitate a ‘movement’ founded in nature; they must be subordinate to the needed goods or experiences conveyed, for only in such

concreteness can true values be reliably discerned, and on this *discernment* rests the spiritual level of our life. (Jackson 1000)

Pound is a poet of fertility in the economic as well as sexual realms, and he longs for the rebirth of a society that is rooted in natural fertility. There is a beloved woman who inspires many of Pound's heroes as well as Pound himself when he uses a personal voice with a love that energizes and enables the hero to ascend to a mode of contemplation. Pound provides many examples of this amorous inspiration, writing at one point in *The Cantos*, "You are tender as a marshmallow, my Love, / I cannot use you as a fulcrum. / You have stirred my mind out of dust" (C 93:652). The beloved inspires thinking and creativity in the lover, for she is an image of the divine *nous*, which Pound derives from Plotinus: "Pound 'found an ally in Plotinus, who propounded that sexual intercourse reflects in certain respects a proper desire for the divine' (Liebrechts 32). Eroticism, for Pound is as much a spiritual drive as it is physical. This mystic experience is, for Pound essentially sensual and fertile.

Pound frequently uses images derived from classical pagan marriage ceremonies:

Torches melt in the glare
 set flame off the corner cook-stall
Blue agate casing the sky (as at Gourdon that time)
 the sputter of resin,
Saffron sandal so petal the narrow foot:Hymenaeus Io!
 Hymen, Io Humenaeae! Aurunculeia! (C 4:15)

Pound gives a pagan marriage scene complete with torches and songs to the god Hymen, for Pound perceives a hidden cult of sex that derives from the ancient Eleusian mysteries, arising periodically through the Western tradition cultural manifestations such as the Troubadours and Tuscan love poetry, but this love is always distinctly sensual as well as spiritual as Wendy Flory writes, "...Pound sees in

Eleusis the idea that one comes to the divine *through* the senses, by refining the emotions” (18). This experience is a moment of illumination:

Pound believed that erotic sensibility and the religious urge were truly bedfellows, and that orgasms were expressions of as well as means to divine ecstasy in which one would see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*. Pound believed with Plotinus that is through contemplative ecstasy that one may receive insight into the vital universe—hence Pound’s interest in the Eleusian-Dionysian visionary celebration of the forces of nature, which he also used as an image of the interrelation between sexual energy, artist creation and intellectual advancement. It is in this sense that he adapted ancient philosophical and mythical formulations of sexual and religious ecstasy (Liebrechts 69).

It is also part of a deeper tradition that is rooted in pagan fertility festivals:

By this door have I entered the hill.
Falleth,
Adonis falleth.
Fruit cometh after. (C 47:238)

Pound here reflects the milieu of modernism, which was heavily influenced by writings of Sir James Frazer.²⁰⁸ The earlier ritual of Adonis and the spring god is resurrected in human sex. This sexual act is further tied to the new life that comes through human agriculture:

When the almond bough puts forth its flame,
When the new shoots are brought to the altar,
Τὸ Διώννα, Καὶ Μοῖραι
Tu DIONA, KAI MOIRAI
Καὶ Μοῖραι ’ Ἀδονιν
KAI MOIRAI’ ADONIN
That hath the gift of healing
that have the power over wild beasts (C 47:239)

There is a threefold fertility connection between the divine, the human, and the agrarian. Pound celebrates all three aspects. Commenting on this passage,

²⁰⁸ See Ackerman and Adams.

Tryphonopoulos writes, "In placing the spring act of ritual worship (the almond tree is the first plant to flower in Italy and Greece) beside the autumnal *threnos* of the fates for the death of Adonis, Pound emphasizes once more the correspondence between human and natural palingenesis" (*The Celestial Tradition* 152). Human sex is part of a wider concert in which there is a pagan incarnation (Tryphonopoulos, *The Celestial Tradition* 148). Sex for Pound can lead to unity with the divine. Love, for Pound enables a vision as he writes, "UBI AMOR IBI OCULUS EST" (90:629).

This love is only able to appear in flashes and then leaves a pattern on the soul or memory and "leaves a permanent trace in the mind of the perceiver (Sicari 181):

LOVE, gone as lightning
 enduring 5000 years.
Shall the comet cease moving
 or the great stars be tied in one place!
"Consonantium demonstratrix" (95:663)

There is a legacy of love throughout Pound's life and the history of Pound's mythology.²⁰⁹ Love appears again and again in flashes in the lives of Pound's heroes and Pound's own life. A man is able to have this experience by looking into the eyes of his beloved woman. The eyes can be a source of light from which lover draws strength:

²⁰⁹ Love moves everything, even the stars of the Dantean or Plotinian visions, and it remains still; moving other beings, it brings them closer to the division which the object of desire causes in them, and heals it at the same time, 'drawing all to his stillness'. When gold rhymes with god's love, it gathers and divides the light radiating about and against the gloom.

Such a movement of division within a totality slowly leads the subject to the ecstasy of time, time which 'gives' itself as identical with loving *logos* which disseminates the *semina mottum* and the characters on the page." (Rabaté 269).

that the body of light come forth
 from the body of fire
And that your eyes come to the surface
 from the deep wherein they were sunken,
Reina—for 300 years
 and now sunken
That your eyes now come forth from their caves
 & light then
 as the holly-leaf (*C* 91:630)

In this nebulous passage, the beloved's eyes emit light in a manner suggesting reincarnation. This beloved queen has returned in the eyes in a contemporary beloved and the light that shone out in an earlier period three hundred years ago has now returned. As Makin writes, "The idea of reincarnation, a little better fleshed out, stayed with Pound: certain types of soul recur in the *Cantos*' view of history, and Pound's myth of the justice of the universal order shows states of mind enduring beyond death. A fairly profound Platonism is at the center of Pound's later religious cult: woman is the manifestation of Wisdom" (Makin 14). Whether or not Pound actually believed in reincarnation, he does have a form of a woman appear repeatedly through various great historical figures that ultimately is a revelation of divine wisdom. Pound derives his idea of the adulation of a beloved woman from the Troubadours and Medieval Italian poetry which balances the sensual and spiritual: "For the troubadours and Tuscan poets a lady is as much a Muse in the flesh as an idealized version of feminine beauty as she is an embodiment of a vision of heavenly splendor" (Liebrechts 72).²¹⁰ This character is a queen who leads the lover to heaven:

²¹⁰ “By perceiving the image of a mortal lady in his lower *phantastikon*, the poet’s ability to use his higher faculty and its concomitant memory of a higher reality is stirred. Hence he is able to perceive Beauty in beauty, because the lady is the image of Beauty...” (Liebregts 76).

'And if I see her not,
 no sight is worth the beauty of my thought.'
 Then knelt with the sphere of crystal
 That she should touch with her hands,
 Coeli Regina,
 The four altars at the four coigns of that palace,
 But in in the great love bewildered
 farfall in tempesta (C 92:639).

This queen of heaven, a title given to the Virgin Mary, is a supreme beauty associated with the Neo-Platonic *nous*; she takes many forms in *The Cantos*. The line "farfall in tempesta," or "butterfly in a tempest," which is a reference to *Purgatorio* 10 in which Dante treats the idea of a soul being purged to reach the Beatific Vision is like a worm turning into a butterfly. However, Pound's mixture of Catholicism and Troubadour poetry forms his own distinctive love cult. In further developing this cult, Pound gives the example of Queen Elizabeth's inspiration of Sir Frances Drake:

The GREAT CRYSTAL
 doubling the pine, and to cloud
 pensar de lieis m'es ripaus
 Miss Tudor moved them with galleons.
 from deep eye, versus armada
 from the green deep
 he saw it,
 In the green deep of an eye:
 Crystal waves weaving together toward the gt/
 healing (C 91:631)

Elizabeth was a great warrior whose greatness of soul radiates from her eyes; she moves the English fleet against the Spanish galleons, and in her green eyes, Francis Drake sees the divine crystal and is inspired with love for the divine form that he sees in her. The great warrior Drake receives his power and inspiration to do great deeds by meditating on the eyes of his beloved ruler. Additionally, Elizabeth is tied

to a legacy of queens and goddesses who find their archetype in Pound's "Princess Ra-Set".²¹¹ "Princess Ra-Set" appears to be a primary form of the beloved goddess:

Light *compenetrans* of the spirits
The Princess Ra-Set has climbed
 to the great knees of stone ,
She enters protection,
 the great cloud is about her,
She has entered the protection of crystal
 convien che si mova
 la mente, amando (C 91:631)

"Princess Ra-Set" is Pound's creation, but Wendy Flory sees in Ra-set a Beatrice figure (250). But the image here is of goddess entering into a cultic erotic act that transports her into a mystic experience. The goddess ascends and descends from the realm of the crystal or the *nous*. Peter Liebrechts points to this experience as being a subjective philosophical experience derived from Pound's reading of Neo-Platonism: "Love for the essence of things purges away everything inessential, and stores their *virtù* in the memory as a means to recall the world of Paradise" (Liebrechts 282).²¹² Through the love of the lover for the beloved, he can reach heaven and is given the power or *virtù* in the soul of the lover, which makes an imprint on the lover's memory, which, in turn can be revisited. Pound explains that Drake sees gods, light, and crystal in the eyes of his beloved Elizabeth:

Light & the flowing crystal
 never gin in cut glass had such clarity
That Drake saw the splendour and wreckage

²¹¹ The name "...Princess Ra-Set...combines two Egyptian male deities into a female priestess or Sibyl (Materer 124). It is "made up of Ra, the Egyptian sun-god, and Set, the moon god, who is also the evil male deity whose association with moistures and passivity may be taken as feminine qualities" (Tryphonopoulos *The Celestial Tradition* 177).

²¹² Pound's appropriation of Plotinus was through his occult friends such as G.R.S. Mead who owned a copy of Thomas Tylor's *Select Works of Plotinus* (Liebrechts 31).

in that clarity
Gods moving in crystal
ichor, amor (C 91:631).

Elizabeth's eyes are a portal to heaven in which the gods dwell.²¹³ There are other gods that Drake sees in her eyes including Helen, Ελεναμζ (C 91:632), a woman who also inspired war with her beauty, and Diana a brutal virgin huntress:

He asked not
Nor wavered, seeing, nor had fear of the wood-queen, Artemis
that is Diana
nor had killed save by the hunting rite,
sanctus. (C 91:632)

Drake sees the moving of Diana, Ra-Set, and Helen in the eyes of Elizabeth; additionally, Pound envisions Artemis not as a the cruel goddess who rejects pity but as queen of the woods who kills justly according to "rite" just as Elizabeth supposedly fights just and holy wars. Elizabeth is not simply a portal to the world of the gods; she reflects the divine image of justice for her people:

ELIZABETH
Angliae amor,
ad valorem reducta
To take wood to melt ore
non extat memoria
... ardendam, fundendam
& souls of the dead defrauded
35 Edward
send or cause to be sent out of the
Kingdom
and that seal be in custody of four men dignioribus... (C 108:788-789)

²¹³ Peter Makin sees this love cult as being derived from the Troubadours: "Woman is in Pound's troubadours both the 'magnet' that focuses the troubadour's perception on the divine order, and a pre-eminent example of that order; and thus we return to the 'cult of orgy and of ecstasy' that Pound implies behind the whole troubadour culture" (252).

Elizabeth is not simply the beloved of Drake; she is the love of the English, *Angliae amor*—a title that Pound gives to her three times in the Cantos. She is beloved of her whole people who are grateful for the monetary reforms and other acts of justice that she has done and which Pound proceeds to enumerate. This ascent is facilitated by light, for “[i]n medieval poetry the lady is often described as surrounded by a dazzling bright light, shining from her face and eyes, symbolizing her *virtù* and serving as a source of literal and figurative illumination” (Liebregts 73). Light is not only found surrounding the women of *The Cantos*, but it is found permeating *The Cantos*. All of the individual images in the poem are illuminated by light. This light shines from heaven.

Pound uses the image of light and to denote moments of insight into the divine. Pound explains the connection between memory, light, and his own version of Platonism:

Where memory liveth
 it takes its state
Formed like a diafan from light on shade
Which shadow cometh of Mars and remaineth
Created, having a name sensate,
Custom of the soul,
 will from the heart;
Cometh from a seen form which being understood
Taketh locus and remaining in the intellect possible
Wherein hath he neither weight nor still-standing,
Descendeth not by a quality but shineth out... (C 36:177)

In Pound’s thinking, one must have an epiphany of beauty or greatness. This experience is ultimately an experience of some heavenly realm that Pound describes in terms borrowed largely from Neo-Platonism and writers like Dante and Guido

Cavalcanti. After having this experience, which shapes the soul of he or she who experienced it, that person works out the experience in his or her own creation. When one of Pound's speakers has a moment of clarity, Pound often uses the image of light: "a little light / in great darkness" (C 116:815). Amidst the collapse of European civilization, there were great minds in which there were momentary flashes of greatness.

The light flashes only in sporadic periods, and it ultimately is derived from the Divine Mind:

Le paradis n'est pas artificiel
but is jagged,
For a flash,
for an hour.
Then agony,
then an hour,
then agony,
Hilary stumbles, but the Divine Mind is abundant
unceasing
improvisatore
Omniformis
unstill... (C 92:640).

The divine light takes many forms and appears only in limited periods. This experience will ultimately lead to the moment in which the human person is elevated "from the ephemeral to the permanent world of the gods" (Tryphonopoulos *The Celestial, Tradition* 107). These are little glimpses of beauty, which can lead to an ascent to the divine mind.

These brief moments in which one encounters light in the simple things or in grand visions of empire are then inscribed in one's memory:

nothing matters but the quality
of affection—
in the end—that has carved the trace in the mind

dove sta memoria... (C 76:477)

Pound celebrates these impressions that are given often of a beautiful woman through light and leave an imprint of a divine form on his mind. The light itself is a source of power or *virtù*:

Letizia, Dante, Canto 18 a religion
Virtù enters.
 Buona da sè volontà.
Lume non è, se non dal sereno
 stone to stone, as a river descending
the sound a gemmed light,
 form is from the lute's neck. (C 100:736)

The light that shines here is associated with justice, which is one of the issues raised In Canto 18 of the *Paradiso*: in this section of Pound's Canto 100, Pound is listing many of the positive attributes of Jefferson and Adams' administrations.

The form of justice or any other virtue can shine in and through the great man who is in touch with the *Nous* and divine justice. This new order will be a period of moderation and justice and contemplation of the *nous* or divine mind.²¹⁴ The gods who appear are moods or an interaction with a state of mind.²¹⁵ It is because of the connaturality of man's mind with the divine *nous* that he is able to know it. "Deo similis quodam modo / hic intellectus adeptus" (51:251).²¹⁶ Pound

²¹⁴ In his book on Pound's Neoplatonism, Peter Liebrechts explains that in Neoplatonic through the *Nous* is "Pure Thought or Intellect, ... the Intellectual-Principle, as well as the world of the intelligibles, the Platonic Forms" (24).

²¹⁵ In Pound's view, then myths are 'explications of mood,' and only intelligible to the people 'to whom they occur,' that is for those who have 'met' and 'understand Persephone and Demeter' and Artemis' (SR 92)(Liebrechts 49)"

²¹⁶ "That is why Albertus called the 'adept intellect,' which makes man godlike, because he then may, through the *nous*/adept intellect, know the divine" (Liebrechts 209). From Albert the great (Flory 21).

provides a basis the foundation of his philosophical system on the idea of a divine order and justice.

The divine mind in which justice and beauty dwell is the source of justice:

SHINES
in the mind of heaven God
who made it
more than the sun
in our eye. (C 51:250)

Pound again uses the image of light to describe God's radiance, so according to Pound's logic, just as the sun radiates through the world, so too does God's justice, which is derived from the divine mind. Pound further uses the image of a ghost, which seems to be applicable for both the ghosts of the dead heroes as well as the gods: "Ghosts dip in the crystal, / adorned" (91:637). The adornment of the ghosts is to be done by Pound and other artists including the political artists who set the gods in motion by making beautiful things.

After having undergone contemplation, Pound's hero seeks to make order in himself, his household and his community. This order is drawn from the love of the Nous:

Beyond civic order:
 l'AMOR.
Was it Frate Egidio—"per la mente"
 looking down and reproving
'who shd/mistake the eye for the mind'.
Above prana, the light,
 past light, the crystal.
Above crystal, the jade! (C 94:654).

There is a distinct hierarchy here based on Neo-Platonic astronomy, and this Neo-Platonic scheme is paired with the idea of self-control and order. The idea of moderation is one of the central themes of *The Cantos*. He writes, "I am for balance"

(70:413). This idea is tied to Aryan people in Pound, who, in Casillo's reading, are supposedly natural moderate, but like much of Pound's ethical values, it is not exclusive to a race. He ties moderation to law or balance or harmony in his discussion of English history in the later cantos. Celebrating the *Magna Carta* and the Statutes of Merton, and English constitutional agreement between a group of barons and Henry III, Pound writes:

vide Bracton
sub colore donationis
his testibus . . .
were call'd chartae.
That is our PIVOT
Statue de Merton... (C 107)

Pound here is not drawing from L.A. Wadell or Adolf Hitler. He is borrowing from Confucius and the Platonic idea of the intimacy between law and ethical formation, which is also found in medieval English Law. The pivot is an image or ideogram of order for the Chinese, and thus the system of order is not to be found exclusively in the West; it is a human ideal. This idea is further contained in Pound's praise of John Scotus Erigena, a ninth century Irish monk, who held: "Authority comes from right reason, / never the other way around" (C 36:179). Here is a selection that radically differs from Fascism. Authority is not based on violence or arbitrary will; it is based upon right reason and there is thus a central order to the cosmos to which human behavior should conform.

Pound praises interior order through the mouth of Confucius in Canto 13:

If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order;
And if the prince have not order with him

He can not put order in his dominions. (C 16:59)

In a passage that seems at home with Plato and Aristotle, Pound celebrates the need for self-control and the ordering of one's passions and desires. Pound further writes, "A man's paradise is his good nature" (C 93:643); Pound, of course, sees the private ethical virtues as being tied to the social ones, but he recognizes the importance of self-control and virtue as the basis of happiness. If one is able to control himself, he will be able to control his house. Pound further praises moderation: "Anyone can run to excesses, / It is easy to shoot past the mark, / It is hard to stand firm in the middle" (C 13:59). If one is able to control his household and he is a ruler, then he will control his kingdom. In Confucian philosophy, this is an essential relationship between ethic self-mastery and political order, as there is in Plato, Aristotle and their followers including Plotinus, who held a belief in the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice (Liebrechts 309).

Pound further celebrates the Confucian virtues or four Tuan of Love, Duty, Propriety, and Wisdom in Cantos 85-6 and 99:

no mere epitome without organization.
The sun under it all:
Justice, d'urbanité, de prudence
wei heou Σοφία
the sheltered grass hopes, chueh, cohere.
(No, that is *not* philological)
Not led of lusting, not of contriving
but is as the grass and tree
eccellenza
not led of lusting,
not of the worm, contriving
THE FOUR TUAN...(C 85: 564-565)

There are a number of points throughout *The Cantos* in which Pound seems to revel in unbridled desire or at least allows his heroes to do so. However, at this point,

Pound seems to place the emphasis on achieving excellence or “*eccellenza*” not through “lusting” or “contriving” that is not through excess of desire or fraud—a sin that Pound frequently praises Dante for condemning—but through justice, prudence, and sincerity or honesty and courtesy, which can be found in both Chinese and European philosophy. These virtues are ultimately part of the fabric of the universe or the nature of things and above the nature of things is the divine mind, which men can know.

The order of the city is ultimately based upon divine justice. After having obtained insight, the great man builds a “cosmos” or imperium: a new great society. Pound provides an allegorical neoplatonic image of a classical god to serve as the form of the great maker.

Came Neptunus
his mind leaping
like dolphins
These concepts the human mind has attained.
To make Cosmos—
To achieve the possible— (C 116:815).

After this section, Pound mentions Mussolini and Justinian who stand in for the “form” of Neptune or Poseidon, the “earth shaker.” Pound’s earth shakers in Canto 116 include two men who attempted to rebuild the Roman Empire: one was successful to a degree. The other was not. Mussolini and Justinian were able to see the true form of justice and thus derive power from the divine *Nous*. Mussolini and Justinian were able to harness the power of the *Nous* and become germinators of culture. Pound uses the image of the throne from Dante, which is associated with various precious gems to describe the realm of the great ruler:

Belascio or Topaze, and not have it squish,

a 'throne,' something God can sit on

without having it squish

With greek tags in his excellent verse,

Erigena... (C 88:601).

The throne is an image of the hard concrete realm necessary for the ruler who rules with divine power. As Sicari notes, Pound here makes reference to Dante's *Paradiso* in which the Italian poet develops the idea that "The Measure of justice in any particular act is the degree to which it accords to the Primal Will which always is united to Supreme Good; it is the act of vision revealing the Supreme Good ever will by God that inspires the ruler to will that good (*Pound's Epic Ambition* 191). Pound makes it clear that the thrones derive their power from God: "That it is of thrones, / and above them: Justice" (C 94:660). Justice here is the pure form of justice, which the great man finds in the mind of God. However, Pound does not long for a retreat into contemplation. As Wendy Flory notes, "We begin to realize that in *Thrones* he is still hoping that 'the truth' about the human condition will manifest itself in some objective way and specifically in the working of just laws" (46). Pound's goal throughout much of *The Cantos* is to present a model city even if he does admit, at times, that such a city may not be obtainable.

However, Pound's ultimate goal is the creation of beautiful and divine city. He longs "[t]o build the city of Dioce whose terraces are the colour of stars" (C 74:445). Dioce was a judge of the Medean people and was chosen to be king because

of his noted justice; he built the city of Ecbatan. Pound explains that in his city there is justice, love, and the gods:

Great bulk, huge mass, thesaurus;
Ecbatan, the clock ticks and fades out
The bride awaiting the god's touch; Ecbatan,
City of patterned streets; again the vision:
Down in the viae stradae, toga'd the crown, and arm'd
Rushing on populous business
and from the parapet looked down... (C 5:17)

Pound's image here is aesthetic and mystical; he focuses upon the beauty of the city, but Pound also praises divine sex in which the woman awaits the coming of her husband, the god who will, with his divine power, make a child in her. Also, the streets of Ecbatan have been ordered by Dioce and thus, like Mussolini, the king is an orderer. Pound's beloved city is a work of art and perhaps may only exist in the form of art as he suggests in passages in *The Cantos*.

There are points at which Pound seems to long for a retreat into an ethereal realm and relinquishes his idea for a community to be made on earth. Pound's later cantos contain a reflection on the permanence of his work and the spiritual values it contains: "A blown husk that is finished / but the light sings eternal/ a pale flare over the marshes..." (C 115:814). Above the swamp and messiness of life, Pound reaches up for the light, an image used in Platonism and Christianity among other philosophies that focus on the spiritual and intellectual qualities of the universe as opposed to biological determinism. Having seen the collapse of Fascism, Pound is ultimately looking for "a nice quiet paradise / over the shambles" (C 116:816). He presents his paradoxical situation when he writes, "I don't know how humanity stands it / with a painted paradise at the end of it / without a painted paradise at

the end of it" (C 74:456). Pound both rejects and longs for the comfort of heaven presented in art. In the end, despite the emphasis on a just community derived from erotic, philosophical contemplation and his points of resignation of his dream of a Fascist utopia, Pound's vision is often, extremely and brutally restrictive, and the vitriol that Pound directs toward his Other is much more violent than Virgil, Dante, or even Spenser.

Pound's Other

Pound's demonization of the Other is harsh and very violent, and it has had the most disastrous real world consequences of all the poets herein treated. Pound's primary enemy is the Jews, as Casillo has noted, and the ills of the West for which Pound blames the Jews are manifold.²¹⁷ On the other hand, Pound does express some admiration for Jewish thought and Jews themselves in some of his early work. Even though he continued to attend post World War II fascist rallies, at the end of his life, Pound told Allen Ginsburg that the biggest mistake of his life is the "stupid suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism" (qtd. in Tytell 337). Whatever Pound may have meant by this statement, any cursory reading of *The Cantos* or the Radio Broadcasts reveals a strong hatred for the Jews. Some critics further attempt to mitigate the intensity of Pound's contempt for the Jews. Liebrechts notes that Pound in

²¹⁷ For a discussion of Pound's own "Jewish" identity as a outsider and wanderer as well as his anti-Semitism see Pearlman's "Ezra Pound: America's Wandering Jew." For further discussion of Pound's relationship to the Jews, see Casillo's many works on the issues, especially his *Genealogy of Demons* and "The Desert and the Swamp: Enlightenment, Orientalism, and the Jews in Ezra Pound." See also Breslin and Moody.

his prose writings...adapted the stereotype of the usurious Jew because it served his polemic in his fight against anyone and anything he regarded as acting against 'nature' and obstructing what he regarded as the implementation of 'good economics.' However, this subtle distinction between the individual Jewish financier and the Jews as a race gradually got lost in Pound's exploitation of anti-Semitic rhetoric and his war against usury and fight for order and economic justice... (227)

Liebregts takes a philosophical and economic perspective on anti-Semitism. Jean-Michel Rabaté sees the conflict in regard to money as not being racist but being a ideological conflict between the unnatural increase of wealth versus the Greek idea of a balanced cosmos (188). Pound attacked the Jews because he veered from his attack upon a just economy. A note that Pound added to the collection of his selected writings suggests that Pound may have repented of his singling out of the Jews as the source of usury:

re Usury:
I was out of focus, taking a symptom for a cause.
The cause is AVARICE.
Venice, 4th July, 1972. (SP 6)

This passage was written at the end of his life and in it Liebregts' and Rabaté's views seems accurate; Pound attempted to root out a moral ill but got caught up in taking select members of a specific ethnic group who happened to be guilty of banking practices of which Pound disapproved. Pound also makes a similar statement in "Addendum for C" of *The Cantos*:

The Evil is Usury, *neschek*
the serpent
neschek whose name is known, the defiler,
beyond race and against race (C Addendum for C:818)

At the end of his life, Pound realized that the enemy is not a race but an economic and moral vice. It is something “beyond race,” that is, it is not something endemic to a specific race or a characteristic of a specific race.

In his earlier writings, Pound does seem to reject racism. He condemns racism in *Guide to Kulchur*: “Race prejudice is red herring. The tool of the man defeated intellectually, and of the cheap politician. No one will deny that the jews have racial characteristics, better ones and worse ones” (242-243). Also, seemingly contradicting what he has said in *The Cantos* Pound says, “My predisposition (at least in youth) being nomadic. It is not for me to rebuke brother semite for similar disposition” (GK 243). Pound identifies himself, at times, as a wandering Jew or outsider. Pound further comments that the fall of Adam and Eve is at heart an economic issue and distinguishes between the two types of usury in the Old Testament:

the forbidden fruit of hebrew story is a usury parable. At least that wd. make sense, the distinction between *neshek*, corrosive usury, and *marbit* (or pronounce it marbis if you prefer) is clear in the Pentateuch. If you take it that the age of abundance ended when the *marbit* swelled out into *neshek* you wd. avoid a number of troublesome contradictions. (GK 42)

At this point in his career, Pound recognizes that the Jews themselves distinguish between two types of lending money: one that is predatory and one that is not.

Pound expresses similar sentiments in *The Cantos* in which he praises the writings of the prophet Isaiah: “To redeem Zion with Justice / Sd/ Isaiah” (C 74:449). He also praises Old Testament monetary policy:

and there is also the XIXth Leviticus.
“Thou shalt purchase the field with money.”
signed Jeremiah
from the tower of Hanael unto Goah

unto the horse gate \$8.50 in Anatoth
which is in Benjamin, \$8.67
For the purity of the air on Chocorua
in a land of maple
From the law, by the law, so build yr/ temple
with justice and mete yard and measure (C 74:460).

Pound is clearly aware that some Jewish writings condemn usury and advocate a just economic system. He also relates in *The Cantos* some positive personal experiences with Jews.

In *The Cantos*, Pound tells the story of an experience in a synagogue in Gibraltar in which a group of Jews seem to recognize Pound as a fellow exile (Pound was having his first experience as an ex-patriot) and share some snuff with him. The scene is humorous and even warm-hearted:

And then the rabbi looked at the stranger, and they
All grinned half a yard wider, and the rabbi
Whispered for about two minutes longer,
An' the kid brought the box over to me,
And I grinned and sniffed up my thumb-full. (C 22:105)

Pound who lived as an outsider in America and Europe all his life gives a very personal story here of being welcomed by a group of Jews. Even in *The Cantos*, Pounds writes with sympathy for the Jews who are subject to Nazi persecution. Pound laments the fact that insignificant lower-class Jews have to pay for the supposed crimes of bankers like the Rothschilds: "Stinkschuld's sin drawing vengeance, poor yitts paying for / Stinkschuld / paying for a few big jew's vendetta on goyim" (C 52:257). Pound steps out of his mold of racial determinism and recognizes that all the members of one ethnic group are not responsible for the crimes of a few. He distinguishes between lower class and peasant Jews who have no relationship to the supposed international banking cabal. However, Pound does

not make such careful moral discriminations, and throughout Pound's work is a current of hatred directed toward the Jews that reaches outrageous proportions.

Semites, especially Jews, are Pound's primary enemy. Whatever his positive writings on Jews, Pound sees Semitic people as being the eternal enemies of the Aryans. Pound creates a whole catalogue of negative qualities that he attributes to Jews. This contempt for Jews is present from Pound's earliest writings. In "An Anachronism at Chinon" a dialogue that includes the medieval writer Rabelais, Pound has Rabelais state an imaginary plaint of journalists "Where s. . . . , s. . . . and p. . . . on jews conspire, and editorial maggots" (*P&D* 87). The Jews are here associated with the newspaper, which Pound sees as a corruption of language and thinking. In another work in *Pavannes and Divagations*, "Aux Etuves de Wiesbaden," One of the characters in the dialogue, Maunsier, says, "Being clean is a pagan virtue, and not part of the light from Judaea" (99). Jews are often associated with filth in Pound and in this dialogue paganism is championed over both Christianity and Judaism. Pound further seems to revel in his various speakers' acts of violence against Jews. In an early loose translation of Bertans de Borns, Pound quotes Bertrans telling his lord to pawn their castle and the "Let the Jews pay" ("Near Perigord" 38).

In the radio broadcasts, Pound even seems to suggest exterminating some Jews:

Don't start a pogrom. That is, not an old style killing of small Jews. That system is no good whatsoever. Of course if some man had a stroke of genius and could start pogrom UP AT THE top, there might be something to say for it.

But on the whole legal measures are preferable. The sixty Kikes who started this war might be sent to St. Helena as a measure would prophylaxis. And

some hyper-kike, or non-Jewish kikes along with 'em. (*Ezra Pound Speaking* March 30, 1942)

Pound again differentiates between “big Jews” and “small Jews” or those whom Pound sees as responsible for modern war and modern economic injustice and Jews who were unjustly killed in fits of peasant violence in the Middle Ages. Pound also refers to “non-Jewish kikes,” so his idea of the “kike” is someone who is guilty of economic and political injustice is not a member of a particular race but rather the holder of a moral fault. There is thus a see-saw in Pound’s writings in which he seems to be attacking the Jews as a race sometimes and attacking economic crooks regardless of their race at others.

In his most brutal moments, Pound sees the Jews as part of a wider ethnic group of Semites whose thinking and way of life is essentially different from Aryans. Pound writes, “The near-eastern races that have evolved code-worship in lieu of truth worship, form, or could be categorized as a group to themselves—to be treated either re tropism pure, or as examples of arrested development” (*GK* 164). Pound views Jewish culture as essentially formalistic as opposed to the supposedly more adaptable Aryan people. Throughout much of his work, Pound perceives the Jews and other people from the near east as having predominately negative racial qualities.

The *Cantos* are also full of depictions of the Jews as vile enemies of Western civilization; they are, according to Pound, principally responsible for the degeneration of Western civilization, primarily through their manipulation of the banking system. In his discussion of John Adams, Pound associates the Jews with manipulation of currency:

After conversing with Mr. Calhoun, Adams reflected:
Paper currency...reductions of fictitious capital...
Accumulation of debts as long as credit can be strained...
Mr. Noah has a project for colonizing jews in this country
And wd. like a job in Vienna.... (C 34:168).

In this passage, Pound seems to be associated the “Mr. Noah” with the corrupt economic policies that John Adams was seeking to abolish from America. Additionally, Vienna and MittelEuropa is a breeding ground for Jewish perversity according to Pound. Pound uses the images of incest and corruption to describe the Jews of Vienna whose most powerful representative is Sigmund Freud:

 this is Mitteleuropa
 and Tsievitz
 has explained to me the warmth of affections,
 the interamural, the almost intervaginal warmth of
 Hebrew affections, in the family, and nearly everything else.... (C 35:172)

In many passages of *The Cantos* in addition to Pound’s other writings, the poet associates Jews with degenerate behavior such as incest—here represented by the “intervaginal warmth of / Hebrew affections” and concludes that such behavior is an integral part of Jewish character. In Canto 42, Pound presents an image of the Jews as vile bacteria that are eating away at Western Civilization. Pound begins the section by noting that Benjamin Franklin warned against Jewish immigration: “Remarked Ben: better keep out the jews / or yr/ grand children will curse you...” (C 42:257). For Pound, the earlier Anglo-Saxon period of America’s history—of which Pound’s family itself was a part—was a better, purer and most just time that has been wiped away by immigration—especially Jewish immigration. Pound then provides a litany of Jewish types that presents Jews as catalogued insects or animals: “jews, real jews, chazims, and *nechek* / also super-neschek or the

interactional racket..." (C 42:257). Pound dehumanizes the Jews in this passage as an entire race, and this catalogue seems like a list of insects or animals. Moreover, Pound has special contempt for the Rothschild family whom he refers to as a "fat slug with three body-guards" (C 42:257) and provides the image of the Rothschild yacht defiling the Mediterranean sea, the *mare nostrum* that belongs, supposedly, to Aryan people: "soiling our sea front with a pot bellied yacht in the offing..." (C 42:257). Pound sees the Jewish Rothschilds as being part of an international conspiracy to profit from war and destroy the health of Europe:

governments full of their gun-swine, bankbuzzards, poppinjays.
Did commit, that he did in the Kingdom of Italy...
of the two usuries, the lesser is but down.
that he did in the Kingdom of Britain etc/ (C 42:258).

Jewish bankers, in Pound's thinking, have taken over Great Britain and now influence Britain's war policy, driving the country into wars that are waged solely for the purpose of selling munitions. Mussolini has already rid usurious Jewish influence from Italy, and Pound implies that someone should do the same for Great Britain. According to Pound, the Jews are not only responsible for all of the economic problems and wars of the modern world; he connects them with liberal democracy, Marxism, and Freudianism and religious indifference:

*Democracies electing their sewage
till there is no clear thought about holiness
a dung flow from 1913
and, in this, their kikery functioned, Marx, Freud
and the American beaneries
Filth under filth,
Maritain, Hutchins,
or as Benda remarked: 'La trahison' (C 92:633-634).*

Pound sees modern psychoanalysis represented by Freud and Marxism as well as being part of the “filth” of democratic liberalism. Incidentally, he also mentions the Catholic French Neo-Thomist Jacques Maritain as being part of the “dung flow” of modern liberalism.²¹⁸ Thus, again, a French Catholic is tied to “the Jews” and thus Pound seems to be attacking ideas and not a specific race. Ultimately, Pound’s logic is confuted by his racism. At times, he seems to tie all the responsibility for the world’s ills onto all of the Jews; other times, he suggests that only the wealthy Jews are responsible for these crimes. Even more strangely, Pound seems to speak as though he is talking about universal human vices to which all humans are subject. While the Jews are Pound’s primary ethnic enemy, he also expresses extreme contempt at times for Africans

Pound has a nebulous relationship with Africa. On one level, Pound engaged in correspondence with African American poets such as Langston Hughes and admired African poets, even using an African American voice in his poems (Tytell 299).²¹⁹ At times, Pound ridicules the stupidity of modern bourgeois whites who think of themselves as superior to Africans: “The kow-tows and genuflections of savages to a witch charm are NOT more idioti than Caucasian snooting at “*papiers*” (GK 187). Pound seems to have some admiration for African American folk culture. In one passage in the unpublished essay “FOR THE AFRO=AMERICAN LANGUAGE,” Pound writes that African American speech is superior to the artificial and vapid

²¹⁸ In *Ezra Pound: The Tragic Years 1925-1972*, James Wilhelm notes that Pound especially detested Maritain (234)

²¹⁹ For a discussion of Pound’s effect upon black American poets, see the collection of essays in Michael Coyle’s *Ezra Pound and African American Modernism* as well as Marsh’s “Letting the Black Cat Out of the Bag.” For the influence of African culture on Pound, see Egudu and Faherty.

speech of Anglo-Saxons: "God damn it I wish the yellow octaroons quadroons and spittoons wd. stop talking like the cheap whites....There is only one time I really want to kick a black man and that this when I hear him blahing like a Haavud sophomore. Damn it, nigguh; when you got som'thin' better n the white man; why the hell can't you keep it" (qtd. in Gill 84). This passage is obviously not flattering to African Americans; nonetheless, Pound recognizes that African American culture has certain rich aspects that are superior to boring American Yankee culture. Pound was always attracted to the folk elements of human culture and detested the bourgeois culture that had become encrusted upon Western Civilization; thus genuine African American speech is much richer and more authentic than the artificial diction of New Englanders in Pound's thinking. Pound makes similar statements in his poetry; Pound quotes from Apollonius in *The Cantos*: "The Africans have more sense than the greeks' (C 94:660). Pound further praises the African city of Wagadu which he discovered in the work of Leo Frobenius. He refers to the "4 giants at the 4 corners" (C 74:449), which supposedly guarded the city. He also associates Wagadu in another place with his ideal city of Ecbatan:

4 times was the city rebuilt, Hooo Fasa
Gassir, Hooo Fasa dell' Italia tradita
now in the mind indestructible, Gassir, Hooo Fasa
With the four giants at the four coners
and four gates mid-wall Hooo Fasa
and a terrace the colour of the stars
Pale as the dawn cloud, la luna
Thin as Demeter's hair
Hooo Fasa, and in a dance the renewal
with two larks in contrappunto
at sunset...(C 74:450)

Pound here compares the African city of Wagadu with Italian Fascism which is “now in the mind indestructible” (even though it has been defeated at the point of the composition of this passage) and which Pound hopes will be rebuilt. Pound repeats this point again in the same canto: “I believe in the resurrection of Italy quia impossibile est / 4 times to the song of Gassir/ now in the mind indestructible” (*C* 74:462). While Pound does denigrate black Africans, he here refers to an African city as a model for the rebirth of fascist Italy.

On the other hand, Pound often dismisses black African people as irredeemable savages. Pound had met with White Supremacist leaders such as John Kasper and had worried about desegregation (Tytell 306). There are a number of points in *The Cantos* at which Pound uses the word “nigger” and describes blacks as cartoonish. Additionally, within his writings, Pound often views Africa as a place of savagery, and Pound sees the decline of Western civilization as a degeneration into black Africa. Pound further has harsh and cruel words for sub-Saharan Africans in the *Cantos*. Pound versifies a section from the narrative of the Carthaginian explorer Hanno making a journey along the coast of Africa. The Carthaginians encounter a group called the Lixatae whose city Lixos “Pours down out of High Libya” (*C* 40:199) and is thus still associated with Mediterranean culture. However, Pound makes a distinction between the North African and sub-Saharan people who are called by their classical name, Aethiopians: “Up country be aethiopians living with untamed beasts / shut in by the Lixtus mountain / whereupon are misshapen men swifter than horses” (*C* 40:199). Here Africans are associated with wild animals. When Hanno encounters the people, he provides this description: “Their folk wear the

hides of wild beasts / and threw rocks to stone us" (C 40:200). Another encounter is even more demeaning and, this time, takes the character of violence. The Carthaginians encounter an island full "of folk hairy and savage / whom our Lixtae said were Gorillas" (C 40:200). The Carthaginians then take some of the women who fight back like wild animals and who are skinned by the Carthaginians: "...we took three women / who bit, scratched, wd. not follower their takers. / Killed flayed, brought back their pelts into Carthage" (C 40:200). Pound here celebrates the adventuresome and strong Carthaginians who prey upon black Africans who are depicted as being basically animals. When the Carthaginians return to the Mediterranean, they journey into the *nous* or mind of God:

Out of which things seeking an exit
To the high air, to the stratosphere, to the imperial
calm, to the empyrean, to the baily of the four towers
The NOUS, the ineffable crystal:
Karxèdoniōn Basileos
hung this with his map in the temple (C 40:201).

Just as he does with the Jews, Pound returns to a philosophical or aesthetic image in a passage that is extremely derogatory toward black Africans. Pound's racism is again buried within his aesthetic and philosophical concerns. His philosophy ultimately wins the day.

Despite his explicitly racist, anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish statements, there are a number of passages, especially in *The Cantos* in which Pound condemns usury and the degenerate liberal civilization that it breeds as a vice or bad idea and does not exclusively associate it with a specific race. Pound's understanding has a philosophical heritage as well. Throughout his work Pound condemns a variety of people from a host of different races and religions who are immoral in Pound's eyes.

Pound points to previously devious historical figures who perceived the world in terms of commodity and profit:

The murderers of Pearse and MacDonagh,
 Captain H. the chief torturer;
The petrified turd that was Verres,
 bigots, Calvin and St. Clement of Alexandria!
black-beetles, burrowing into the sh-t,
The soil a decrepitude, the ooze full of morsels,
lost contours, erosions. (C 14:62)

In the catalogue presented are yes, Jews, but also Roman pagans, Protestant reformers as well as Catholic bishops. While Pound's ideas are clearly informed by nineteenth and early twentieth century racism, his notions are found in Aristotle and Dante. Wendy Flory explains Pound's views, "his only real concern is that the arts be allowed to flourish for the benefit of the whole society, and that ordinary people have decent food and shelter, be forced to work and raise their families, and have access to some life-affirming form of religion" (*Ezra Pound and The Cantos* 152). Pound longs for an economic, political and cultural reform and wants to find the source of the modern person's predicament. For Pound, the source of evil is usury. Pound sums up his understanding of the effects of usury in a passage from *The Cantos*.

Usura rusteth the chisel
It rusteth the craft and the craftsman
It gnaweth the thread in the loom
None learneth to weave gold in her pattern;
Azure hath a canker by usura; crimson is unbroidered
Emerald findeth no Memling
Usura slayeth the child in the womb
It stayeth the young man's courting
It hath brought palsy to bed, lyeth
between the young bride and her bridegroom
 CONTRA NATURAM
They have brought whores for Eleusis

Corpses are set to banquet
at behest of usura. (C 45:230)

Usury prevents the production of art as well as craftsmanship. Usury also procures abortions. Usury prevents marriage and turns religion into prostitution. Pound's primary enemy is an economic one not a racial one.

Usury on interest on loans and inflated prices are Pound's primary complaint. Usury is the principle of evil in the world that has yet to be truly exposed: "All other sins are open, / Usura alone not understood" (C Addendum for C:819). In his *Cantos*, Pound sees it as his task to expose usury. Throughout his writings, Pound strongly identifies usury with the Jews. However, he does not always exclusively tie usury to Judaism and, at times, seems to attack usury as an intellectual or moral vice. Other critics point to a psychological reading of Pound's contempt for usury: "Pound associated usury with hoarding, and both with fear stemming from lack of faith in oneself and in the abundance of nature; there was a hoarding of money which caused art treasures to gather dust 'in the dealer's cellar', and a hoarding of knowledge which caused professors to sit 'on piles of stone books'" (Makin 33). Usury cripples the life of the people for it prevents the fertile increase of life and culture. Pound takes his cue from Aristotle and Dante, stating in *Guide to Kulchur* that, "Usury is *contra naturam*" (281). Usury is unnatural for it is charging for a thing twice: once for that thing and once for the use of that thing. Usury destroys the health and abundance of a society:

Poisoner of the fount,
of all fountains, *neschek*,
The serpent, evil against Nature's increase,
Against beauty... (C Addendum for C:818).

Usury prevents a society from growing and producing beautiful things because it chokes the people with debt and reduces all things to commodities. Usury has made the modern world.

Pound condemns liberal democracy and the politicians who support it. In his *Draw on Dante*, in the cantos where hell is depicted, Pound describes an extremely grotesque vision of the Britain under liberal democracy, capitalism, and bourgeois culture. He has the politicians of liberal democracy hanging upside down with “their wrists bound to / their ankles, / standing bare bum” (*C* 14:61). Where their face should be, contemporary politicians have their backsides through which they communicate to “the multitudes in the ooze, / newts water-slugs, water maggots” (*C* 14:61). This image of the masses is one which Pound commonly employs; while Casillo rightly notes that Pound, especially in the radio broadcasts, associates Jews as being biologically linked to vermin, here the masses seem to be the common British man or woman who elects the rulers. Capitalism and bourgeois democracy, for Pound, cripple the ability for the people to act. In *Jefferson And/Or Mussolini*, Pound notes that money in the period before Mussolini “did not drain swamps, improve crops, restore buildings that had been knocked cock-eyed by Napoleon, by the Austrians, and by nature the gradual destroyer of roofs” (71). He further notes that democracy and liberalism bred chaos and, at the same time, lethargy in the community, defending Mussolini’s censorship of the press: “A squishy and unstable state, particularly in the Italian peninsula, is not an aid to the health of Europe” (*J/M* 75). Pound sees order as being a necessity for the health of a civilization even if this order abrogates liberal rights. Pounds sees the Victorian period, the American

presidents of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as the late Hapsburg monarchs as being degenerate: “in the low and vile era ‘of usury’ the century of Victoria and Frantz-Josef reaching its Maximum squalor in such administrations as that of U.S. Grant, Herbert Hoover and Baldwin” (*GK* 149). It is not just liberal democracy that is corrupt; the monarchies of Europe are too. One of the primary acts of modern liberal democracy is to wage war: “War, one war after another, / Men start ‘em who couldn’t put up a good hen-roost” (*C* 18:83). The modern politician is not a hero for Pound. He is not skilled at even the most basic crafts, but has the ability to wage enormous wars. It is thus clear that Pound’s condemnation of usury and the bourgeois civilization he so greatly detested cannot be bound to the biological determinism that Pound does, at times, adopt. Pound’s Other has moral vices that are the product of character not one’s blood. Pound further writes, “Liberalism is a running sore, and its surviving proponents are vile beyond printable description” (*GK* 254). Pound sees the problems with the modern world to be essentially tied to liberal politics, which cause the degeneration of a civilization.

With the politicians in “The Hell Cantos” are “Profiteers drinking blood sweetened with sh-t / and behind them f and the financiers / lashing them with steel wires” (*C* 14:61). Pound’s vision of parliamentary democracy being rotten with usury is demonstrated here. Those who profit from modern industry and war drink the blood of their employees and behind the profiteers themselves are the bankers who are urging on modern industry and war –both of which feed on the common people. These profiteers are fundamentally against the order in oneself,

one's home, one's country and in the wider universe; he writes, "Always the undertow, / gold-bugs against ANY order" (*C* 87:592). Those who seek to profit from hyper-capitalism profit from chaos not order.

In the "Hell Cantos," Pound places the press with the politicians and the financiers:

And the betrayers of language
..... n and the press gang
And those who had lied for hire;
the perverts, the perverters of language,
the perverts, who have set money-lust
Before the pleasures of the senses;
howling, as of a hen-yard in a printing-house,
the clatter of presses... (*C* 14:61).

Journalism is tied to finance and liberalism. The goal of the press, like the goal of the elected officials, is to serve finance. Pound also criticizes modern critics: "Among all these twerps and Pulitzer sponges / no voice for the Constitution..." (*C* 95:665).

Pound strongly advocates against pure philology as much as he condemns pure aestheticism, for both are alien to life. Usury further is a way of strangling human thinking and learning: "It is not merely in opposition to nature's increase, it is anti-thetic to discrimination by the sense. Discrimination by the senses is dangerous to avarice. It is dangerous because any perception or any high development of the perceptive faculties may lead to knowledge. The money-changer only thrives on ignorance" (*GK* 281). Usury and capitalism can only function when people are too dumb to see anything more than sensual pleasure from which usurious capitalist benefits. Pound further explains that the degeneration of modern art is tied to usury: "Any form of 'entertainment' that debases perception, anything that profanes the mysteries or tends to obscure discrimination, goes hand in hand with drives

toward money profit" (GK 281-282). Pound believes that art should be mysterious and mystical, transcending mere sensory delight; usury has the affect of closing down human perception, so humans can only see the crudest things. Pound continues, noting that usury creates a false hierarchy of decadence in place of beauty: "Usury always trying to supplant the arts and set up the luxury trades, to beat down design which costs nothing materially and which can come only from intelligence, and to set up richness as a criterion. Short curves etc. 'opulence' without hierarchy" (GK 282). Usury establishes a new criterion of art: opulence, which overshadows traditional forms of beauty; what is good is what is most expensive not what is most beautiful. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound emphasizes the debilitating effect capitalism and liberalism have on the intellectual life of a people: "Usury endows no printing press. Usurers do not desire circulation of knowledge" (62). The goal of usury, for Pound, is not an increase in culture; rather, the point is the accumulation of more money.

Pound also ties usury and the modern banking system to the education system of a nation: "A few 'financiers unjailed are enough in a few generations to pervert the whole press of a nation and to discolour its education" (GK 163). Pound sees the way people think and learn as being integrally tied to the economic system. If finance is placed as the highest good in a civilization, then the whole civilization will only prize the things of the market place. Pound further notes that in the modern world there is a divorce between lived experience and culture; most moderns see a work of art as an artifact in a museum: "The setting of the museum above the temple is a perversion. Setting preservation of dead art above the living

creation is a perversion. The avoidance of past work because a living present exploiter of past discovery fears comparison with past mastery is obscene, it is *vigliaccheria* or jackal's cowardice" (GK 197). Pound's goal is to revive European civilization through the creation of new art and culture in which the people will dwell. Pound sees museum pieces as merely fossilized images of the past. Pound narrates an anecdote that illustrates his division in right and wrong action:

And (on the other foot) as a fast as a clean man builds up a sane consciousness, or the state spends a few million on beautifying the highroads at their borders, some foetid spawn of the pit puts up a 30 foot wooden advertisement of synthetic citronade to defile man's art in road-making and the natural pulchritude of the vegetation. (GK 187)

Natural beauty and human workmanship are united together in contrast to advertisements, which corrupt life, turning beautiful beings into commodities. Like many Fascists, Pound sees the monarchies of Europe having gone completely corrupt: "Edward VIIth's reading matter wd. have been taken as a joke by Lorenzo Medici" (GK 260). The problem with the modern world is that there is not the culture to sustain a way of life that existed in other periods such as Renaissance Florence. Pound sees liberal democracy and bourgeois society as causes the downfall of European culture. He laments how "The pianola 'replaces' / Sappho's barbitos" (HSM 3.3-4). Art and life have become tame and domesticated; there is no longer the violent originality of the classical world. The bourgeois society is also anti-religious, something Pound detests:

Faun's flesh is not to us,
Nor the saint's vision.
We have the press for wafer;
Franchise for circumcision. (HSM 3.17-20).

Pound is not a Christian but sees Christianity as a vessel for beauty, and capitalism and the newspaper has replaced it. The magic world of the past has been drowned under the complacency and intellectual mediocrity of liberal democracy. Usury is further an attack against life.

Usury also is unnatural and infertile. Pound further makes a connection between capitalism and abortion, according to Pound, a crime against fertility against which Pound rails in *The Cantos* and other works. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound writes, “abortion, which is the last crime any normal or healthy woman wd. commit SAVE UNDER ECONOMIC PRESSURE. The punishment is, I agree, sufficient without the law’s interference. The law for two centuries has been pimp for the usurer” (157). Pound sympathizes with the woman who commits an abortion and sees the extermination of pre-natal human life as being tied to the unnatural increase of usury and the capitalist system in which usury festers. Despite his radical views on sexuality and eugenics and his hostility to bourgeois marriage and the corruption of Christianity under democratic, capitalistic liberalism, Pound often writes disparagingly about acts against infertility such as contraception, abortion, and homosexuality.²²⁰ Pound describes ancient Ephesus as being “full of pipers, buggars & noise” (C 94:658). Whatever Pound’s personal views of homosexuality may have been, in his poetry, he seems to tie them with usury, for they are not generative of life. Pound does tone down his vitriol toward the Other in the later cantos.

²²⁰ “The images of abortion, abortive love, sterility, and the analogy between whores and corpses are thus succinct statements of Pound’s belief that usury debauches what is sacred” (Tryphonopoulos, *The Celestial Tradition* 145).

At the end of his *Cantos*, Pound seems to express remorse for what he has done and written even though he continued to appear at Fascist rallies and make statements that were hostile to Jews (Tytell 330). Pound feels strongly impelled to renounce or at least question much of his earlier violence and cruelty in the poem and seems to point the reader toward a more humanistic reading of *The Cantos*.²²¹ In Canto 114, he writes, “Fear, father of cruelty, / are we to write a genealogy of the demons?” (C 114:813). There are profound moments of recollection in the later *Cantos*; Pound questions his earlier celebration of the gods of violence and hatred. Pound writes in Canto 80, one of the *Pisan Cantos*, that Pound composed while being held a prisoner in a cage in Italy before being transported to the United States to be tried for treason:

The ant’s a centaur in his dragon world.
 Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
 Made courage, or made order or made grace,
 Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
 Learn of the green world what can be thy place
 In scaled invention or true artistry,
 Pull down thy vanity,
 Paquin pull down!
 The green casque has outdone your elegance. (C 81:541)²²²

One of the key revelations that Pound experiences is the need to focus on a small world. In his confinement, Pound is comforted by little things such as a blade a grass, an ant, or a spider. Pound further rejects his hatred and pride that had animated much of his life:

²²¹ Bacigalupo refers to these later *Cantos* as containing a “final softening as ‘Old Ez’ approaches death” (90). Wendy Flory points to the later *Cantos*, beginning with the *Pisan Cantos* as being “involved in an intense personal struggle that cannot have been a part of his original plan for the poem” (1).

²²² Forrest Read describes this “diatribe against human pride” as “going back to the Chaucerian moral tradition” (336).

“Master thyself, then others shall thee beare”

Pull down thy vanity
Thou are beaten dog beneath the hail,
A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
Half black half white
Nor knowst’ou wing from tail
Pull down they vanity

How mean thy hates
Fostered in falsity,
Pull down thy vanity,
Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
Pull down thy vanity,
I say pull down. (C 81:541)

Quoting from Ecclesiastes from the Bible as well as Chaucer, Pound has become humble and turns to charity as opposed to violence and will-to-power. He turns to charity again in the last complete canto of *The Cantos* where Pound takes a humble posture and recognizes that his life and work has been broken by his errors:

Tho’ my errors and wrecks lie about me.
And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.
If love be not in the house there is nothing. (C 116:816)

This section contains a number of key points that illuminate Pound’s life and work. His quest for divinization has failed, and he seems to look with regret at his entire project in *The Cantos*, which was, in many ways a long catalogue of demigods and goddesses. His life and work both seem to consist of “errors and wrecks” and neither his life nor work seem able to “cohere.” His calling for love could be a call for a return of erotic love. He again emphasizes that he has learned that it is through charity that he can reach heaven:

Charity I have had sometimes,
I cannot make it flow thru
A little light, like a rushlight
to lead back to splendor. (C 116:817)

Pound takes a very Christian persona here. He realizes that it is not through his will and sheer creativity that he will reach the heights of “splendor”; it is through charity or divine love. Throughout his entire life and through his many voices in *The Cantos*, Pound has celebrated the great man who conquers through his will, violence and hatred, but here Pound recognizes as Dante does in the *Paradiso* that the house of one’s life and work will collapse if love does not dwell there, for men are not gods. Pound confesses that his Neo-Platonic cult of *amor* has collapsed and his desire for order has collapsed within himself as he has tried to put it into action in the world:

M’amour, m’amour
 what do I love and
 Where are you?
That I lost my center
 fighting the world.
The dreams clash
 and are shattered—
and that I tried to make a paradiso
 terrestre. (C “Notes for CXVII et seq.”: 822)

Pound expresses a possible lament for his attempt at trying to make a terrestrial paradise “paradiso / Terrestre” in this passage in which he has lost his first love. If the readings of Pound’s search for an Ur woman who takes the form of the Virgin Mary, Venus, Diana, Eleanor of Aquitaine and a host of other mythic and historical women including his wife, Dorothy Shakespeare; his lover, Olga Rudge; and his daughter Mary de Rachewiltz, then the lost love here could be that ideal beloved that he lost in his support of Fascism and the accompanying anger and bitterness that it entailed.

What thou lov’st well remains,
 the rest is dross
What thou lov’st well shall not be reft from thee
What thou lov’st well is thy true heritage... (C 81:541).

Pound recognizes, again, the importance of love as opposed to violence, and there is a further emphasis on Pound's domestic sphere, for he recognizes the value of interpersonal love as opposed to dreams for the creation of a utopia. He further writes in the "Notes for CXVII et seq." that he attempted to make a beautiful work of art in *The Cantos* but recognizes that he has made egregious errors in his life and work:

I have tried to write Paradise
Do not move
 Let the wind speak
 that is paradise.
Let the Gods forgive what I
 Have made
Let those I love try to forgive
 what I have made. (*C Notes for CXVII et seq.*: 822)²²³

Pound's lament is eerily similar to Heidegger's *Der Spiegel* interview; both men call out for redemption for themselves from some god. There is also a personal lament in Pound's apology: he asks for forgiveness from those whom he loves. Pound's last cantos, like the last years of his life, are full of contradiction; there is still a lingering attachment of Fascism, but he also, paradoxically, seeks to distance himself from his past. The reference to paradise further gives the hint that Pound attempted to make the end of *The Cantos* parallel the end of Dante's *Comedy*. Pound's final words in *The Cantos* are perhaps his most civilized. He seems to reject the previous violence and hatred toward which he was attracted and seek strength in some form of humanism. The last line of *The Cantos* before the ending dedicated to Olga Rudge is the line "To

²²³ For Froula, "The lines express the failure of the ("totalitarian") idea of paradise with which he began, the dream of an encompassing poetics, of a writing, an authority, adequate to 'make Cosmos' (157).

be men not destroyers" (C Notes for CXVII et seq). Pound sees that all of his adulation of the strong man and militant aristocratic systems has caused terrible consequences for his own life and for Europe. Pound, in fact, sees himself as a survivor standing upon the wreckage of Europe, writing in *The Pisan Cantos*, "As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill / from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor" (C 86). Pound cries out one last time for redemption and puts a capstone on his monumental work, which inspires the reader to look for what is best and most human in *The Cantos*.

Despite his youthful dismissal of Virgil and his attempt to follow the models of Propertius and Ovid and be a mystic-love poet amidst a decadent and dying Europe, Ezra Pound eventually crafts a distinctly Virgilian vision in *The Cantos*, following the model of the imperial *exemplum* that Dante Alighieri and Edmund Spenser follow. Pound sees the remedy for the modern malaise of a weakened, enfeebled and usurious West in the models of the past. Pound further looks to a legacy of strong men who will serve as leaders of the people and put economic justice as well as beauty into the imperial space that they shape. Pound creates his own mythology drawn from his immense study as well as his reading of racial theorists like L.A. Waddell. However, Pound's thought is not bound by his racism; Pound employs a cosmology in *The Cantos* and his other work that follows a mode of living that draws from Neo-Platonic mysticism and his own breed of neo-paganism mixed with Confucianism. Pound sees redemption in a new society that is free from capitalism and usury and is centered on art, beauty, and order. For Pound, justice and beauty are knowable divine attributes that permeate the universe and are often

revealed in a beloved woman. Additionally, Pound demarcates a space between his renewed civilization and the Other. This Other is associated with usury, capitalism, vice, disorder, and decadence. While he does draw from various cultures and traditions to craft his imperial vision, Pound is often pulled by a narrow-minded racialism. At times, the poet identifies his positive values with Aryan or Indo-European people and casts his image of the other upon Semitic people. Pound further attached himself to some of the twentieth century's most notorious political groups: National Socialism and Italian Fascism. Pound's work ultimately transcends his narrow and destructive prejudices, but his yoking of the Western tradition onto the monstrous backs of totalitarianism detracts from his work and only confirms many of the strongest criticism of Western civilization by Marxist, Post-Colonial, and Frankfurt School theorists.

Conclusion

Largely inspired by the horrors of the Second World War, the primary thrust of Post-Modern philosophy is an attack on metaphysics as interpreted by thinkers of the Enlightenment. All values are perceived as manifestations of the will, and existence is a power struggle between bodies and ideas mediated through language. The way in which the ruling class has maintained power is, according to many Post-Modernists, through ideology, that is, the creation of a fantasy world in which the ruled are governed. Ideology in various forms dominated from the most primitive periods; however, there has been an explosion of ideology in the modern period. The Post-Modern critique, beginning with Marx, initially focused upon the condition of the proletariat in the industrial revolution. However, it later was taken up by others in the twentieth century and directed toward peoples who were colonized by European countries as well as minorities who have been persecuted in the West.

The moment in the twentieth century that defines the whole project of Western ideology is, according to many critics, the Holocaust perpetrated by members of the Nazi party and collaborators. For many Post-Modern critics, the Nazis with their cult of the strong man, claim to divine sanction as well as support from the laws of evolution, and its demonization of the Other define what Europe is in its core. All of the artifacts of Western Literature from Homer to Wagner were used by the Nazis to support their ideology and thus are tainted with Nazism.

One of the primary artifacts of European civilization is the epic, and the most dangerous form of epic is the imperial epic, which the Roman Virgil presents in his *Aeneid*. This epic contains the formula for the hero who must be worshipped and

obeyed, and thus Aeneas can be considered a prototype of the *Führer*. The *Aeneid* also contains prophecies from the gods that support the rule of Rome: Rome is justified in dominating the world because the gods ordain it. The idea of the Other also is very pronounced in Virgil, and the Roman poet sets aside groups of people who need to be conquered. Thus, a tradition that had already begun was buttressed by the Roman poet and repeated through the Western tradition by poets, philosophers, artists, and filmmakers. The end result was Auschwitz, which in turn, opened Westerners' eyes to the centuries of brutality and oppression they had wrought on the earth.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that this view is entirely wrong, for one can trace a tradition of Western imperialism throughout the artifacts of the West, and it is true that the Nazis attempted to use these artifacts to support their regime. However, this view, in the end, is unjust. Virtually every people create works of art that trumpeted their supposed supremacy. What has highlighted the West's crimes is precisely the self criticism that is contained within the triumphal works of the West—especially Virgil's *Aeneid*. Moreover, there has been in the West a philosophical tradition, which takes both religious and secular forms, that posits a common humanity among all people, and this philosophic view is present in the *Aeneid* and the works that the poem inspires. The answer to Post-Modern criticism is thus in the criticized texts themselves.

Virgil's *Aeneid* is a foundational text of Western Civilization. In Virgil's epic, philosophic and theological ideas are tied to the Romans who are the stewards of self-control and justice and are destined by the gods to rule the known world. Virgil

upholds his Aeneas as a hero who, however, has flaws. These flaws have generated fierce debate in the twentieth century over Virgil's attitude toward Aeneas as well as toward Augustus' regime. Recent criticism has also highlighted the seemingly amorphous and ambiguous character of the prophecies from Jove, Apollo, Anchises and others that seem to bless Aeneas and his Roman descendants. Critics have also emphasized the unclear view that Virgil has of the Other in the poem. However, what recent criticism has done, unintentionally, is provide and answer the errors in the Post-Modern critics of ideology themselves. Virgil clearly seems to believe, on one level, in the rectitude of the Roman Empire. Aeneas is a good character, and the gods (whatever Virgil may have actually thought of them personally) do support Rome, but Virgil is smart enough to realize the imperfection of Rome and its flaws. Aeneas has a problem with anger and has a taste for blood. Also, the gods make compromises in their plans for Rome, just as the *princeps*, Augustus, should make in his. Moreover, Dido and her Carthaginian people are in many ways like Aeneas and the Trojans just as the Italians are objects of sympathy—especially characters like Amata and Turnus whom Juno drives mad. Virgil's work has inspired numerous replicas in a multitude of times and cultures. Some of the most prominent poets who have been influenced by Virgil are Dante Alighieri, Edmund Spenser, and Ezra Pound.

Dante receives Virgil's vision of an imperial *exemplum* and modifies it according to the Christian and medieval conditions of his time. Drawing from classical as well as Islamic sources in addition to his Christian ones, Dante creates a moral and theological empire of the saved and the damned that stretches across

earth, hell, purgatory, and heaven. In addition to his theological empire, Dante is deeply concerned with the historical empire. The imperial community for Dante is, at first glance, those who were morally upright and received the grace necessary for heaven. Thus Dante's Others, initially, are those who have failed morally or who lack the grace necessary for heaven. However, throughout the *Comedy*, Dante cannot escape from contemporary politics. He sees the world empire, free from direct political control of the papacy, as the necessary precondition for the peace, order, and stability necessary for the City of God to unfold. Thus, those who advance Dante's vision of a world empire are good, and he condemns those who oppose it. Dante upholds his pilgrim self as the hero of the story. This hero must undergo a change in what he knows, how he feels, and what he chooses; he must become a Christian, undergoing purgation of his sins and moral faults through grace mediated from heaven. Recent criticism of Dante has highlighted his secular interests and has provided a compliment to the dominance of theological criticism; however, the future of Dante criticism should be marked by tangential readings between the two schools of critics in order that one is not obscured by the other.

Like Dante, Edmund Spenser is concerned with his political milieu and, on one level, his empire is much more exclusive than Virgil or Dante's. Spenser's idea of the imperial community is tied to the nation of Great Britain as the Protestant savior of Europe. While Spenser does engage in demonization of the Other as an ethnic other, his primary focus is religion and the Other is principally identified with Roman Catholicism. This Other is destined to be conquered by England and possibly exterminated if need be. Much of the contemporary criticism of Spenser focuses on

his engagement with his historical milieu. On the other hand, like Dante, Spenser's focus is not exclusively historical; his vision is founded upon his own distinct reading of Plato and Aristotle as well as his theology, and *The Faerie Queene* is a handbook for fashioning a Christian knight as much as it is a polemic in support of Elizabeth. Spenser's primary hero is Arthur who contains all of the Aristotelian virtues but who also acts as a channel of grace in the poem and often serves as an allegorical symbol of Christian virtue. Redcrosse also is hero of the first book and is the basis of all of other allegorical characters in the poem such as Guyon and Callidore. Redcrosse primarily must learn to be holy, that is, undergo penance and conversion and become a Christian. It is true that Spenser's Others serve as historical allegories for Protestant England's enemies such as Ireland and Spain, but these historical allegories are always moral allegories as well, and the primary purpose of enemies in the poem is to serve as vices that a Christian must overcome with the help of grace.

Although he dismisses Virgil, the American Poet Ezra Pound is deeply influenced by the Mantuan. Pound further has the most determined and fixed divide between the imperial community and the Other. Pound wrote his massive volume, *The Cantos* over the period of several decades, and Pound expresses a wide variety of seemingly contradictory opinions in his epic. On one level, Pound's epic is deeply philosophical. The imperial community consists of those who subscribe to Pound's mixture of Neo-Platonism and neo-paganism mixed together with Confucian ideas of moderation and the just management of a kingdom. Pound celebrates a cult of love in which the love of the beloved woman leads to contemplation of the ideal form.

This lover, who is Pound's *exemplum* of a hero, is someone who will fashion the community according to the image of the divine mind or *nous* that the hero obtains through contemplation. In Pound's philosophic plan, there is a great deal of sympathy for the persecuted Other, and Pound seems to express the view that the faults of certain individuals or of particular races or cultures are the results of their moral or intellectual failings, and other individuals should not be burdened with the crimes of those who share a similar culture or ethnic lineage. Through his philosophical vision, Pound transcends the other voice in the *Cantos*: that of the militant racist.

In addition to his personal Neo-Platonism, Pound takes a decidedly fixed vision of biological determinism. Pound bases his theory upon nineteenth and early twentieth century racist theories. In his racism, Pound crafts a vision of the Aryan race, which he sees as incorporating a huge swath of diverse peoples and cultures. Pound further includes the Chinese in his vision of a rightly ordered, logical race. These races have specific religious and cultural modes of dwelling and embody all of the principal Virgilian virtues such as piety, self-control, and justice. The Others in Pound's second vision are also determined by their biology. They are primarily Semitic people; Pound famously holds particular animosity toward the Jews. In his second voice, Pound expresses a great deal of admiration for Nazism and Fascism and demonstrates a strong fetish for violence. Pound also expresses sympathy for the idea of extermination of Jews. This second voice pulls on the first in Pound and provides the most narrow and dangerous use of Virgil out of the three successors of the Roman poet. Additionally, Pound's vision seems to have the most brutal

historical consequences as well as the most profound psychological consequences upon the author.

In the end, the diagnosis of the Western tradition by Post-Colonialists and cultural Marxists is, in a certain sense, largely accurate. While virtually every human culture believes itself to have the support of the gods or God and be the great civilizing force in the universe while, at the same time, demonizing the Other as demonic, vicious, and worthy of conquest, the West has been able to dominate and even, in some cases, exterminate the Other via the addition of technology and science with myth. However, those who have attempted to deconstruct the West and its epics often miss the fact that the cultural artifacts of the West contain a philosophic and theological tradition that claims to be universal and is not tied to a specific people or power. The Greek philosopher Plato first articulates this tradition in a pronounced fashion, seeking to develop a community and education system that forms the souls of the citizens for the sake the greater good of the *polis*. Martin Heidegger, despite his own faults, also emphasizes the importance of the formation of community via art. Moreover, in the Western tradition, there is an emphasis on the sympathy for the Other as well as self-criticism. The Roman poet Virgil crafts one of the first great Western imperial epics, which mixes of philosophic universality and self-criticism with domineering violence. In the history of the West, Virgil has served as a basis for later attempts to project the imperial idea upon various subject cultures and people. This imperial ideal has often had disastrous consequences; however, each work that champions the imperial ideal considered in this dissertation is also self-critical and contains a generous humanism.

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Vita

Jesse Russell was born in Bozeman, MT and spent his adolescence in Livingston and Billings, MT. He graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with two BA's, English and Philosophy, from the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio. He received his master's degree in philosophy from Franciscan University as well. He also has a master's degree in English from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. While working on his Ph.D., he has taught for the past four years at River Parishes Community College in Sorrento, LA. When he is not reading poetry and philosophy, he enjoys spending time with his family.