AETERNUM PER SAECULA NOMEN, THE GOLDEN BOUGH AND THE TRAGEDY OF HISTORY: PART II

Charles Paul Segal

THE VERY NATURE OF THE GOLDE
Bough poses an essential dichotomy in the Sixth *Aeneid*: death
and permanence, the certainty of the individual's end and the
tragically distant hope for something that may survive him:
aeternum per saecula nomen (6.235). At a deeper level the
Bough's presence in VI juxtaposes the uniqueness of man's his-
torical creation with the inalterable, cyclical, nameless movement
of nature. Hence the complementary relation of the fertilit
symbolism, so fully traced by Frazer, in the first part of the Boo
and the pageant of the great names of Roman history at its end

In an earlier essay[1] I sought to trace the connection betwee
Misenus, Palinurus, and Daedalus in terms of the unifying func
tion and symbolism of the Bough. In this essay I shall follow th
themes that center about the Bough through the rest of VI an
shall explore some of their implications for the *Aeneid* as a whole

I. The Underworld: From Charon to Anchises

Although the Golden Bough appears only twice more in V
after Aeneas grasps it in lines 210–211, the dichotomies it symbo
izes persist, ever widening, to the end. In the encounter wit
Charon (385 ff) the Bough serves to contrast the specialness o
Aeneas' passage with the tragic limitations suffered by Palinuru
Here the Bough shows its efficacy for the first time. The Sib
addresses Charon as follows:

> 'si te nulla movet tantae pietatis imago,
> at ramum hunc' (aperit ramum qui veste latebat)
> 'agnoscas.' tumida ex ira tum corda residunt.
> nec plura his. ille admirans venerabile donum
> fatalis virgae longo post tempore visum
> caeruleam advertit puppim ripaeque propinquat (405–10)

("If the form of such piety moves you not at all, this Boug
at least" [she reveals the Bough which lay hidden in he
dress] "you may recognize." His swelling heart then settle
back from its anger. Nor more to them [is said]. He, won
dering at the sacred gift of the fated branch seen after s

long a time, directs [to them] his dark craft and brings it near the bank).

The asyndeton of 407, *tumida ex ira*, the clipped *nec plura his*, the simplicity and brevity of these two sentences after the broken and rather involved sentence of the Sibyl's address (405–7) all underline how quickly the Bough overcomes Charon's objections and how easily Aeneas is granted what Palinurus so desperately and futilely longs for.

In Charon is reflected once more the vast gulf between life and death. He bears in reverse the Bough's magical fusion of life and death. He is old, but enjoys a "green old age": *iam senior, sed cruda deo viridisque senectus* (304). One is reminded of the "greenness" of the Bough's ever-renewed life, refreshed at the very moment of the year's death (205–6). Charon's "greenness," however, flourishes not in the upper air, but in the darkness of Hades. It is connected, furthermore, not with the brilliant permanence of gold, but with the dullness and corruptibility of rust and iron:

> et ferruginea subvectat corpora cumba,
> iam senior, sed cruda deo viridisque senectus (303–4)

> (And in his bark, color of iron-rust, he ferries over the bodies,
> old now, but, as a god, he has a fresh and green old age).

The immediate juxtaposition of rust and green life is interesting. *Ferrugo*, rust, suggests, of course, *ferrum*, iron; and it is noteworthy that iron is associated throughout VI with the grimmest aspects of the Underworld: the iron chambers (*ferrei thalami*, 280) of the Eumenides, Tartarus' iron tower (*ferrea turris*, 554) and grating noises (*stridor ferri*, 558), even the iron voice (*ferrea vox*, 626) that the Sibyl would need to relate all the crimes punished here. It may be more than coincidence that the Golden Bough cannot be cut by iron (*nec duro poteris convellere ferro*, 148). As gold is traditionally associated with immortality, iron has long associations with the hard fate of mortality. In the *Georgics* (2.341 if the text is right) Vergil took over Hesiod's "age of iron" in describing man as the *ferrea proles*, condemned to constant toil.

It is significantly directly after this description of Charon that there occurs the famous and beautiful simile, superbly adapted by Dante in the *Inferno* (iii.112 ff), which compares the dead to leaves falling at the first cold of autumn, *autumni frigore primo* (309). In its reference to the movements of the seasons this simile again points back to the Bough which, like the mistletoe, conquers with its renewed life the cold of the winter equinox, *brumali frigore* (205 ff). Charon and Hades thus reverse the life-in-death symbolism of the Bough.

This reversal bears upon the Palinurus episode, for it is framed by Charon and his boat: they occur just before and just after Palinurus (298 ff and 385 ff). Just before showing Charon the Palinurus, the Sibyl addresses to him these scornful words about Bough, the Sibyl addresses to him these scornful words about Cerberus:

> licet ingens ianitor antro
> aeternum latrans exsanguis terreat umbras (400–401)

> (Let the huge gatekeeper bark eternally in his cave and frighten the bloodless shades).

Here, twenty lines after the glorious promise of the "eternal name" in 381, we are reminded once more of the horrors that surround Palinurus. He too is one of the "bloodless shades," and the "eternity" (*aeternum*, 401) of Hades is a curse rather than a blessing: pallid, static, without time because without life. Like Charon's green vitality (304), this eternity is the opposite of the bright permanence embodied in the Bough and imparted, in tragic terms, to Palinurus and Misenus in the upper air.

Between Charon and the deposition of the Bough in 637 Aeneas has two more significant encounters with his past, Dido and Deiphobus. Both of these again emphasize the dominant antithesis of the Book, transience and permanence, failure and hope, and both deepen Aeneas' experience of the negative half of the antithesis.

After the Charon-Cerberus scene (385–425) Aeneas plunges into still deeper gloom:

> At once are heard voices and a vast wailing and the souls of infants, weeping, whom on the threshold of sweet life, but with no share in it, the black day tore away from the breast and drowned in bitter death (426–29).

Soon appear the dismal *lugentes campi* (440 ff), of vast extent (*partem fusi monstrantur in omnem*, 440). They are, fittingly, the bleak setting for Aeneas' interview with Dido:

> inter quas Phoenissa recens a vulnere Dido
> errabat silva in magna; quam Troius heros
> ut primum iuxta stetit agnovitque per umbras
> obscuram, qualem primo qui surgere mense
> aut videt aut vidisse putat per nubila lunam,
> demisit lacrimas dulcique adfatus amore est (450–55)

> (Among these Phoenician Dido, her wound still new, was wandering in a great wood; and the Trojan hero, as soon as he stood next to her and recognized her through the shadows, a dim figure—as one who sees, or thinks he sees, the moon rise through the clouds at the first of the month—let go his tears and with sweet love addressed her . . .).

The difficulty of recognition, emphasized by the effective enjambment, *agnovitque per umbras/obscuram* (452–53), links this scene closely with Palinurus, also discerned dimly in the murk of Hades: *vix multa maestum cognovit in umbra* (340). But the simile, one of the finest in the Book, points back also to the very essence of Hades as Aeneas first encountered it:

> Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram
> perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna:
> quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
> est iter in silvis, ubi caelum condidit umbra
> Iuppiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem (268–72)

> (They went on, dim, through the shadow and through the empty house of Dis and his empty realms under a lonely night: a road such as there is in forests by an unsteady moon under a jealous light, when Jupiter has hidden the sky in shadow, and dark night has taken away color from things).

The repetition is one of the most surely intentional in the Book, although in Vergil's manner the variations are subtly significant. The echo both of the entrance to Hades and the Palinurus passage stamps Dido with the insubstantiality, the shadowy nothingness, that is the fundamental tragedy of those in Hades. It also marks another contrast between the solidity of Aeneas illustrated shortly before (*gemuit sub pondere cumba*, "The bark groaned under his weight," 413) and the purposeless emptiness of the dwellers in these *inania regna*.

In Dido, center of his recent trial by the attractions of sensual love, female immanence, oblivion of transcendent purpose in the intensity of the momentary and the immediate, the life of the abandoned past becomes especially close and pressing: she is *recens a vulnere Dido*. Aeneas' old love revives, and he addresses her *dulci amore*, as a lover (455). This episode, unlike the others, has no resolution, indeed can have none. Aeneas for the moment becomes the more helpless and pathetic of the two, left trailing behind the queen who abandons him in determined silence, as he once abandoned her:

> nec minus Aeneas casu concussus iniquo
> prosequitur lacrimis longe et miseratur euntem (475–76)

> (Nor did Aeneas, hard struck by her unjust fate, cease to follow after her with his tears a long way, and he pities her as she goes).

Nothing in the general introduction to Hades provided by the Sibyl at the beginning, when she "instructed him that empty lives without a body flitted about in the hollow appearance of their shape" (292–93), has prepared Aeneas for such an experience.

Decisively different too from the emotional objectivity with which he met Palinurus is this reaction to Dido. In the case of Palinurus his first response was an intellectual one: he questioned the contradictions in the oracles (341 ff). Here he is shaken to the core: *casu concussus iniquo* (475). The adjective *iniquo* makes this scene a confrontation not only with his past love, but with tragedy and injustice—injustice of which *he* is the cause. He sees reflected in Dido the effects of the suffering he has himself inflicted. In the echo of the Daedalus passage, *magnum reginae sed enim miseratus amorem* ("pitying the great love of the queen," 28) here in line 476, there is perhaps also the suggestion that Aeneas comes to experience in his own life what lay remote in myth and symbol in the past.

The *ultima arva* that follow (477 ff) belong to Aeneas' yet remoter past. It is here that he meets Deiphobus, whose cenotaph he erected at Troy:

> tunc egomet tumulum Rhoeteo litore inanem
> constitui et magna manis ter voce vocavi.
> nomen et arma locum servant; te, amice, nequivi
> conspicere et patria decedens ponere terra (505–08)

> (Then I set up a funeral mound on the Rhoetean shore,
> empty, and thrice I called your shade with a loud voice.
> Your name and your arms keep the place; you, my friend, I
> could not descry nor place you in the earth of your fathers
> as I departed.)

Troy and the theme of burial connect Deiphobus with Misenus and Palinurus.[2] But unlike Misenus, Deiphobus' grave is empty, *inanem*. It partakes of the emptiness of Hades itself, the *inania regna*. Here, in the darker reaches of Hades, Aeneas meets death as utter negation, death without fame, consolation, the rewards of history. Aeneas has left the *nomen* and *arma* on the grave (507); but this *nomen*, unlike Misenus' and Palinurus', is not *aeternum* and does not commemorate a unique and famous place. The grave lies lost somewhere on the "Rhoetean shore" of the abandoned land. The *terra* in which Deiphobus lies buried belongs to this vanished past, unlike the *terra* of the future in which Palinurus rejoices (*gaudet cognomine terrae*, 383).

In Deiphobus, then, Aeneas has another direct, powerful experience of the frustration of death. He confesses the futility of his efforts at a full burial. In the pathetic simplicity of his last words,

> nomen et arma locum servant; te, amice, nequivi
> conspicere et patria decedens ponere terra (507–08),

Aeneas himself now expresses something of the helplessness and resignation in the tone of Palinurus: ***nunc me fluctus habet versantque in litore venti*** (362).

Like Palinurus, Deiphobus is aware of the extraordinary circumstance of Aeneas' presence:

> an quae te fortuna fatigat,
> ut tristis sine sole domos, loca turbida, adires? (533–34)

> (What fortune drives you on so that you should approach
> the sad, sunless abodes, the disturbed places?)

The question sharpens again the success-failure antithesis, and the following lines enlarge to cosmic proportions this division between Aeneas and the dead:

> hac vice sermonum roseis Aurora quadrigis
> iam medium aetherio cursu traiecerat axem;
> et fors omne datum traherent per talia tempus,
> sed comes admonuit breviterque adfata Sibylla est (535–38)

> (At this exchange of conversation Aurora had now crossed
> with her rosy chariot the middle axle [of heaven] in her
> course in the aether, and perchance they would be expending all the time that had been granted in such matters, but
> his companion, the Sibyl, chided him and addressed him
> briefly . . .).

This passage is one of the most effective collocations of the Book. Not only does dawn, with its bright, hopeful colors, contrast with the sad, sunless realm of Hades (***tristis sine sole domos***, 534), but *movement*—the ever-renewed movements of organic life—contrasts with staticity. Aeneas as a living being feels the pressure of time: ***nox ruit, Aenea; nos flendo ducimus horas***, the Sibyl admonishes him in the next line ("Night rushes on, Aeneas; we are spending the hours in weeping," 539). In this demanding pulse of life, measured by the remote spheres of the upper world, Aeneas feels also the pressure of his purpose. He has a goal, an object, as the empty, wandering shades have not. The purposiveness of life is part of its preciousness; and both are defined by the pressures which are absent in the vacant timelessness of death. The color, speed, definiteness of the dawn, itself described in concrete and active words (*quadrigis, traiecerat, axem*) contrast too with the unreal, evanescent moon that twice characterizes Hades' unreality (270, 454). The dawn here at the very nadir of Hades resumes the antinomies fused in the Bough: darkness and light, death and life.

It is significantly just after the juxtapositions of dawn and darkness in 533–39 that the road diverges between Tartarus and Elysium: ***hic locus est partis ubi se via findit in ambas*** (540). The division between opposites thus widens: one road leads to the static emptiness of eternal doom; the other to the realm of the blest where the future may still be enjoyed and purpose still con-

templated. It is here, then, at this place of division between damnation and hope, that Aeneas is to put down the Bough.

It is also significant that this parting of the ways should take place in the presence of Deiphobus. The Trojan past, the atmosphere of the curse (*scelus exitiale*, 511) of the Trojan war, is what Aeneas has most fully to overcome. It is out of the darkness of Troy's destruction that the new city will arise. Deiphobus is the lacerated, tortured victim of the past, a victim not only of war, but of treachery and passion. He belongs to the uttermost darkness of what Hades can hold. After the passage through this darkness Aeneas can again begin to move toward the light. After meeting again all the horror of Troy, Aeneas may look to the brighter half of the Bough's antithesis.

Deiphobus is thus a turning-point in the descent, and after the dawn there is a change to a more hopeful atmosphere. For all its grimness, the Deiphobus scene is, strangely, the first of the Hades encounters to end happily. Mildly admonished of the pressure of time by the Sibyl, Deiphobus breaks off of his own accord and cheers Aeneas on his way:

> 'ne saevi, magna sacerdos;
> discedam, explebo numerum reddarque tenebris.
> i decus, i, nostrum; melioribus utere fatis.'
> tantum effatus, et in verbo vestigia torsit (544–47)

("Be not harsh, great priestess; I shall depart and be returned to the shadows and fill out their number. Go on, onward, our glory; enjoy better fates than ours." So much he spoke, and on the word he turned his steps about).

The Sibyl's interruption of a dialogue between Aeneas and a companion marks a formal affinity between this episode and the Palinurus scene. But Deiphobus' voluntary withdrawal is a noteworthy difference. He does not need a rebuke. Far from standing in the way of the laws of destiny, he seeks to further them.

As Aeneas, now having crossed beyond the *scelus* of Troy, penetrates closer to Elysium, the forces of order and divine law become stronger and more visible. The Sibyl's description of Tartarus that follows upon Deiphobus' farewell illustrates not the pointless misery of death, but the working of divine justice: *discite iustitiam moniti et non temnere divos* ("Learn justice by this warning and not to scorn the gods," 620). Here too Aeneas meets again in Theseus the *negative* eternity of the underworld: *sedet aeternumque sedebit* (617). This grim use of *aeternum* recalls the fruitless rage of Cerberus, *aeternum latrans* (401). But in encountering these sinners as examples of justice, Aeneas experiences the order as well as the horror of Hades, the divine plan on which depends his own descent.

The paradoxical nature of the Bough seems related to the

paradoxical nature of Hades itself: an ultimate justice in the midst of these torments (see 620). Order out of suffering, hope out of misery: the promise of the Bough. Aeneas may put down the Bough only when he has reached this turning point in Hades, the point at which its moral structure becomes clear. He has now absorbed its meaning—or at least as much of its meaning as it is given to him to absorb.[3]

As the Bough first marked the transition from life to death, from the upper to the lower world, so here in 630 ff. it marks the transition from death to life, from the damned to the blest, from the curse of the dead past to the hopeful future to be announced in Elysium. The Bough is placed here at the center of Hades not, as has been suggested,[4] because it belongs to the Underworld (that explanation is, in any event, untenable since it is the essence of the Bough to stand between worlds), but because its essence is transition and complexity. Its natural place is at the midpoint between the contradictions of existence, the point where opposites converge.

The deposition of the Bough, like the initial act of possessing it, involves a serious ritual act: here at the entrance to the palace of Dis, "Aeneas reaches the entrance and sprinkles his body with fresh water and fastens the Bough in the threshold opposite" (*occupat Aeneas aditum corpusque recenti / spargit aqua ramumque adverso in limine figit* (635–36). His action marks another crucial passage by water (cf. 174, 355 ff., 415 ff.) and closely recalls the ritual of burial required for Misenus before he could attain the Bough:

> ter socios pura circumtulit unda
> spargens rore levi et ramo felicis olivae (229–30)

(Thrice he encircled his companions with the pure water, sprinkling them with the light spray and the branch of a fruitful olive).

The rite of fastening the Bough thus recalls the recent actuality of death in the upper world and that poignant contrast between the Bough and the "fruitful olive." But this passage (from death to life) is the inverse of that earlier one (from life to death). As before, success and life hark back to their opposites. The achievement looks back to its cost.

Having put down the Bough, Aeneas enters Elysium, or at least its outer borders:

> His demum exactis, perfecto munere divae,
> devenere locos laetos et amoena virecta
> fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas.
> largior his campos aether et lumine vestit
> purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt (637–41)

(When they finally accomplished these duties and performed the due service to the goddess, they came to the joyous places and the pleasant thickets and blessed abodes of the happy groves. Here a broader aether [extends] over the fields and clothes them in rosy light, and they know a sun and stars of their own).

Vergil obviously intends as sharp a contrast as possible. Tartarus on the one side (548–627), Elysium on the other (638 ff.), and the Bough (628–37) again between the extremes of suffering and happiness. Not only the joy and light, but the expansive, open at-mosphere—*largior hic campos aether*—stand out against the con-straints and the anxious imprisonment of Tartarus: *inclusi poenam exspectant* ("shut in they await their punishment," 614). The contrast is not only with the scene immediately preceding, but also with Hades in general. Unlike the joyless, sunless realms, summed up in Deiphobus' description, *tristis sine sole domos, loca turbida* (534), the inhabitants of Elysium have their own sun and stars (641) and occupy places full of joy (*laetos, amoena, fortun-atorum, beatas*, all within two lines, 638–39).

And yet this Elysium is not Aeneas' goal. The happiness it offers is only partial. Musaeus, when asked about Anchises, even calls this part of Elysium "dark" (*lucis habitamus opacis*, 673) by comparison with the "shining fields" where Anchises dwells (*campos nitentis*, 677). Along with light and dark this passage resumes another antithesis: that of past and future. The dwellers in this region of Elysium belong, in part, to Troy before its fall (648 ff.). They existed in a happy state prior to suffering and the demands of historical destiny. They were "born in better years" (*nati melioribus annis*, 649). Hence their present existence is but a repetition of their activities in life (642 ff)—an empty repetition. Their chariots are *inanes* (651). The adjective, recalling the general character of Hades (*inania regna*, 269), suggests futility as well as insubstantiality (see, e.g., 568, 885). Anchises, on the other hand, is numbering his future descendants. His valley is *virens* (679), green with life, the word used of the Golden Bough (*fronde virere nova*, 206). The flourishing and renewal of life again confront a hopeless staticity at the same time as dark con-fronts light (673 and 676) and past confronts future (648 ff and 680 ff).

The promise of life through death held out in the Bough is thus partially fulfilled in Anchises, the dead father who in his "green valley" numbers the souls who are to ascend into the light. These souls, like those in Tartarus, are "shut in" (*inclusae*), but in the expectation of future action, "to go to the light above" (680), not in eternal condemnation for the past (*inclusi poenam exspectant*, 614). The rebirth awaited by these souls is expressed by another important simile:

ac velut in pratis ubi apes aestate serena
floribus insidunt variis et candida circum
lilia funduntur, strepit omnis murmure campus (707–9)

(. . . just as in meadows when bees in peaceful summer alight on all the different flowers and white lilies are spread all about, the whole field hums with murmuring sound).

The souls of Aeneas' first encounter in Hades in the dismal scene of 305 ff were presented through a simile of leaves falling in the cold of autumn and birds fleeing the approach of winter storms 309 ff.). Now the souls destined for rebirth are introduced amid suggestions of the peace of summer and the variegated bloom of flowers. Winter and summer, life and death articulate again the major contrast of the Book and of the Golden Bough (205 ff) and relate it in a widening circle to the themes of past and future, failure and hope, father and son.

But before Aeneas is to reach the vision of the future, he deepens once more his experience of death. As in the *Odyssey* the hero's recognition by his father is saved to the end, so here the lived encounter with the reality of his father's death is the final point in Aeneas' experience of the Underworld. He is made to grasp the painful law of the succession of generations at the same time as he is shown hope of what may transcend this law. The tragic antinomies of the *aeternum nomen* and the Golden Bough operate even in this favored and sheltered place.

The intensity of this experience comes to Aeneas in part through the revelation of the irony contained in his original state-ment of his purpose, "to go to the sight of my dear father and see his face" (108), for that is precisely what death permits: to ap-proach and to see, but no more. Anchises himself expects no more. He stretches out his arms, but speaks only of sight and speech: *datur ora tueri, / nate, tua et notas audire et reddere voces?* ("Is it given, my son, to behold your face and to hear and return a voice well-known?" 688–89). He knows what it is to be a shade, as Aeneas so far does not. Aeneas seeks to embrace his father:

ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;
ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno (700–02)

(Thrice he tried to put his arms around his neck; thrice the image, grasped in vain, escaped his hands, like to light wind and a winged dream).

Aeneas now enacts himself the experience of death endured by Daedalus, death unrelieved by a lasting creation:

bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro,
bis patriae cecidere manus (33–34).

These lines on Aeneas' frustration obviously imitate Odysseus' meeting with his mother in Hades (*Od.* 11.206 ff)—a relevant instance of a son experiencing the succession of generations. But they also echo a great loss in his own past, that of Creusa (6.700–702 = 2.792–94). Thus this culmination of the general experience of mortality in Hades reevokes the most intense of the special losses that Aeneas suffered on his journey.[5]

This longed for meeting, then, begins quite differently from what Aeneas had hoped. Vergil stresses the change by an abrupt shift of tone: first Anchises eagerly reviewing his future descendants (679–83) and joyfully welcoming Aeneas (note 685, "he stretched out both his eager palms"); later, Aeneas weeping (699) and grasping at empty shadow (700–02). It is a dramatic contrast between individual suffering and historical destiny, and the contrast is made clearer by Anchises' first words to his son:

> venisti tandem, tuaque exspectata parenti
> vicit iter durum pietas? (688–9)
>
> (Have you finally come and your devotion, awaited by your parent, conquered the hard road?).

Aeneas' spontaneous love for the *cari genitoris* of his earlier longing (108) meets this demanding, purposive figure. No wonder Aeneas at first replies not with words of affection, but with a realistic statement of what his father's presence has been for him:

> tua me, genitor, tua tristis imago
> saepius occurrens haec limina tendere adegit (695–96)
>
> (It was your sad image, yours, father, coming often to my mind, that drove me to reach these gates).

Tuaque exspectata parenti / vicit iter durum pietas: a tribute to Aeneas, to be sure, but a reflection also of a stern expectation. Nothing else in the Book—perhaps in the poem—brings out so well as this *iter durum* the fact that the aim of Aeneas' journey is not personal happiness. It is rather the experience and acknowledgement of what his destiny will cost. The *iter durum* sums up the entire journey, from Troy to Rome; and from an Augustan point of view it can characterize the whole course of Roman history as well, the history poetically enacted by Aeneas throughout the poem, but especially in VI. The inward and personal aspect of this "journey" is equally the subject of VI: the passage across the wastes of one man's bereaved past.

The contrasts of tone in this first meeting between father and son recur in different terms in the next scene. Anchises is again all eagerness: *iam pridem hanc prolem cupio enumerare meorum* ("Now for a long while I have been desiring to number this race of my descendants, so that you may rejoice all the more with me

when Italy is found," 717–18). But Aeneas' first reaction on seeing the souls awaiting reincarnation had been a shudder of horror (*horrescit*, 710), and the verb makes a jarring and unexpected contrast with the gentle, life-filled simile which immediately precedes it (707–709). When Aeneas learns who these souls are, he asks

> o pater, anne aliquas ad caelum hinc ire putandum est
> sublimis animas iterumque ad tarda reverti
> corpora? quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido? (719–21)
>
> (O father, must one think that any of the lofty souls must depart from here to the sky and again return to the sluggish bodies? What so darkly strange desire for the light can they have, unhappy ones?)

The contrast between Aeneas' *dira cupido* and Anchises' *cupio* in 717 resumes with sudden sharpness the contrast between the feeling individual and the forces of destiny that pervades the whole scene.

Quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido? comes significantly after Aeneas experiences the emptiness of death in 700–702. It looks back, of course, to Palinurus' *tam dira cupido* in 373 and thus reflects the accumulation of the suffering that Aeneas has encountered in Hades. As 635–36 look back to Misenus, as 700–702 echo Daedalus' sufferings, so 721 makes Aeneas a bearer of the extreme misery suffered by Palinurus. Aeneas is thus identified for a moment with the mortals who have been lost as well as with the future which will survive. Anchises, though dead, stands firmly in the service of history. Aeneas is still a man, indeed never more human than at this moment.

Line 721 is perhaps the saddest question of the *Aeneid*. It is the point of Aeneas' greatest despair in his encounter with death; but it is also the acme of his humanity. It marks his fullest recognition of the price of his destiny. After the grim panorama of Hades, that destiny—and perhaps all of history—is tinged with the sense of futility, of the fearful absoluteness of death which is a leitmotif of VI: the Sibyl's words in 131 ff (note *tanta cupido*, 133, preceding her grim details), Misenus, the nameless crowd of 305 ff, Palinurus, the empty embrace of Anchises. *Dira cupido* echoes later in the poem to mark the tragic waste of life (cf. the *dira cupido* of Nisus in 9.185 and the *caedis insana cupido* of Turnus in 9.760). And within VI itself it resounds in Rome's future in the *patriae laudumque immensa cupido* (823) of Brutus: *infelix*!

Anchises replies to Aeneas' question with a long discourse on the *anima mundi*, purification, and reincarnation. This speech, while answering the question literally, does not come to grips directly with its emotional intensity or tragic tenor.[6] Yet despite

Anchises' eagerness there is a gentler, more benign note, a subtle touch of paternal understanding in his wish to spare his son further anxiety. *Dicam equidem nec te suspensum, nate, tenebo* ("I shall speak at once and not hold you in suspense, my son," 722) follows at once upon Aeneas' painful question. And the large terms in which Anchises approaches the issue,

> principio caelum ac terram camposque liquentis
> lucentemque globum lunae Titaniaque astra
> spiritus intus alit . . . (724 ff)

> (First a [divine] breath from within nourishes the sky and the earth and the watery fields [of sea] and the light-giving orb of the moon and the Titan's star . . .),

breathe a calm, expansive wisdom.

This speech of Anchises (724–51) immediately precedes his exposition of Roman history (756–853). The order is significant, for the two speeches together form, in an indirect way, a composite answer to Aeneas' question of 719–21. Aeneas' *Quae lucis miseris* . . . is tantamount to a question about the total meaning of existence. Anchises must then answer him in comparable terms. A full answer requires nothing less than a statement of man's place in the universe, his destiny after death, the meaning of his suffering. This large, philosophical answer measures time in terms of millenia (748), and both contrasts with and complements the narrower "historical" answer of 756 ff. After what Aeneas has seen in Hades—the transience of all things mortal, the grim end awaiting all human endeavor, the negative pole of life that finds expression in the question of 721—an answer in terms of historical destiny alone would be inadequate. So far has the Book moved beyond the consolation of the *aeternum nomen* offered to Misenus and Palinurus.

The philosophical and historical answers, however, must be taken together, for they modify one another. Their implicit connection lies in Anchises' notion of purgation. The deepest answer to the problem of suffering is given in his cosmology with its purgatorial movement:

> aliae panduntur inanes
> suspensae ad ventos, aliis sub gurgite vasto
> infectum eluitur scelus aut exuritur igni—
> quisque suos patimur manis; exinde per amplum
> mittimur Elysium et pauci laeta arva tenemus—
> donec longa dies perfecto temporis orbe
> concretam exemit labem, purumque relinquit
> aetherium sensum atque aurai simplicis ignem (740–47)

> (Some souls are spread, empty, suspended to the winds; for others the taint of crime is washed off under the vast deep or burned away by fire—we endure each his own ghost; then we are sent over broad Elysium and a few of us keep the happy fields until a long period, when the circle of time is fulfilled, takes out the congealed stain and leaves pure our heavenly substance and the fire of unstained spirit).

The vision is indeed worthy of Aeneas' question: the world gradually moving to good by facing and purging off the curse (*scelus*, 742) of the past, of our coarsened, tainted selves: *quisque suos patimur manis*. Death and suffering are not denied, but made the instruments of a higher and purer attainment. And the end of the process is also a transcendence of the division between mortality and divinity that so deeply pervades the Book. The souls that have purged off the impurities acquired on earth return to the purity of their divine nature, rejoin the *aurai simplicis ignem* (747) of their *caelestis origo* (730), the divine world-soul in which all living things have a share,

> hominum pecudumque genus vitaeque volantum
> et quae marmoreo fert monstra sub aequore pontus (728–29)

> (the race of men and of cattle and the lives of flying things and the monsters that the sea bears beneath its marble surface).[7]

Yet Anchises only intimates this philosophical solution. One would like to think that it comes close to Vergil's own thought; and a closely related passage in the *Georgics* (4.219–27), given on the poet's own authority, seems to confirm this possibility. A possibility only it must remain, however, for Vergil's own thoughts are veiled by his dramatic sense and his artistic distance. His "philosophy" cannot be derived from any single passage: it rests in the poem as a whole. Anchises' view here is defined by what he is. His philosophy reflects his character as the patriarchal progenitor of a great people. His answer to the problem of suffering posed in 721 is ultimately the foundation of the Roman empire. Thus it is not accidental that his second, and far longer, speech, the pageant of Roman history, begins with an echo of Aeneas' question: *inlustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras / expediam dictis* ("the glorious souls, destined to enter into our name, I shall set forth in my speech," 758–59; compare Aeneas' *aliquas ad caelum hinc ire putandum est / sublimis animas*, 719–20).

It is at this point that the full meaning of Aeneas' question passes Anchises by, and his echo of it in 758 points to the limitation of his answer.[8] He falls back again on the now familiar consolation of the *nomen*, fame in history (758, 768, 776). His repetition of this *nomen*-motif in 776 makes another reference back to Palinurus:

> haec tum nomina erunt, nunc sunt sine nomine terrae

(These will be the names then; now the lands are without name.) (cf. *gaudet cognomine terrae*, 383).

It will be remembered that the misery of Palinurus was vividly evoked in the very question which Anchises is answering, the *tam dira cupido* of 721 and 372. That earlier context, made present here through the verbal echoes of 721 and 776, reminds us that Aeneas has lived through an encounter where the *nomen* was far from a full resolution to the problem of suffering.

One should make clear, of course, that Vergil does not show us Aeneas as sensitively taking in and formulating this tragic gulf between his experiences in Hades and his father's answers. Instead, Vergil handles the situation with a dramatic objectivity that is the more powerful for its restraint. He keeps Aeneas silent and passive save for the telling question of 719–21. Perhaps it is the weight of paternal *auctoritas*, perhaps Vergil's own doctrinal commitment to Augustan optimism that keeps Aeneas from further questioning, indeed, it would seem, from further awareness. It is perhaps from this failure to question further at this crucial point that his stoical silence in the remaining books derives. This lack of further probing, this silent acceptance of Anchises' answer (Aeneas utters nothing else in the book—except, significantly, another difficult question, that about Marcellus, 863–866) is doubtless in part responsible for his lack of popularity with modern readers. To our minds, his refusal to push beyond the question of 721 is a major limitation. Searching rather than stable certainty, agony at the absurdities of existence rather than pallid *pietas* is what we seek in a hero. And in Aeneas we are, after all, disappointed. He is cast in the mold of the Augustus from Primaporta, not that of Hamlet.

But fortunately the poet is greater than his hero. If Aeneas suffers from his political responsibilities and his Augustan model, Vergil's thought has been enriched by other strains in the Graeco-Roman world. It is not Augustus who stands most deeply behind the poem, but the spirit of Homer, Sophocles, Epicurus, Lucretius. Thus while Vergil has not given his hero a moral sensitivity that would go beyond his function in the poem, he has himself far transcended any doctrinal interpretations or merely "historical" explanations of suffering. He has presented the discrepant elements in the meeting between Aeneas and Anchises, between the individual and history, with a faithfulness to human truth that is enough to answer criticisms of his hero. The greatness of Vergil is not to be sought in his characters, but in the totality of his poetry: its complex structure, rich symbolism, and the beauty of the verse which always suggests a depth of feeling and humanity far beyond what an individual character may say or do.

Anchises' "historical" answer culminates, naturally, in Augustus:

hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam . . . (791–94)

(Here is the man, he whom you have often heard is promised to you: Augustus Caesar, of the race of a god, who will found once more for Latium the Golden Age over the fields ruled once by Saturn.)

Augustus who will "found" (*condet*) the Golden Age is to be the final fruit of Aeneas' efforts to "found" the Roman race (1.5, 1.33). In Augustus too the boundaries of mortality are crossed: he is a man (*vir*, 791), yet *divi genus* and worthy of comparison with the divinized hero, Heracles (801).

The Golden Age should perhaps be related to the Golden Bough. In both gold marks a transcendence of the common limits of mortality. As the Golden Bough lies in the mysterious no-man's land between worlds, accessible only to the chosen few, so the Golden Age is veiled in an atmosphere of mystery and inaccessibility. When Vergil in Book VIII again refers to the Golden Age, it lies in the hopelessly remote, legendary past:

primus ab aetherio venit Saturnus Olympo . . .

aurea quae perhibent illo sub rege fuere
saecula: sic placida populos in pace regebat,
deterior donec paulatim ac decolor aetas
et belli rabies et amor successit habendi (8.319, 324–27)

(First from heavenly Olympus came Saturn . . . Under that king was the Age they call Golden: so did he rule his peoples in gentle peace until little by little a worse and off-color age advanced and the madness of war and the love of gain.)

The Age of Gold seems to lie either in this remote past or in the remote future, but is never there to be enjoyed in the present. The hope it offers lies in the shadowy distances of another time, like the *aeternum nomen* of those who have died creating it. Elusive by its very nature, it is, like Italy itself in the early books, *semper cedentia retro*. And Aeneas himself will bring the *belli rabies* that is to disturb the Saturn-like reign of old King Latinus: *urbes iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat* ("Old now, he ruled cities quiet in a long peace," 7.46; cf. 8.325 above). Even the possible return of this age of innocence is clouded by the love of gain, of tangible, not symbolical gold: the *amor habendi* of 8.327 which looks back in turn to *auri caecus amore* in I (349) and *auri sacra fames* in III (57). Indeed a little later in VIII, when Evander shows Aeneas the site of the future city, the language

which describes the Capitoline leaves a certain ambiguity about the way in which the Augustan Age is to be "golden":

> hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem et Capitolia ducit
> aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis (8.347–48)

> (From here he leads him to the place of Tarpeia and the Capitoline, now of gold, once bristling with forest thickets).

If one thinks of Vergil's almost satirical contrast between country life and the luxury of the city at the end of the Second *Georgic* (458 ff, 495 ff), the *aurea nunc* of 8.348 may appear in a not entirely favorable light.

What follows shortly upon this praise of Augustus and the Golden Age here in VI is another qualification of man's divinity in history. For history itself is suffering. After the early kings of Rome there is unhappy Brutus with his *immensa cupido* (819 ff).[9] Then Vergil surprisingly interrupts the chronological progression to point out Julius Caesar and Pompey:

> illae autem paribus quas fulgere cernis in armis
> concordes animae nunc et dum nocte premuntur,
> heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitae
> attigerint, quantas acies stragemque ciebunt . . . (826–29)

> (Those shades whom you see shining brightly in equal arms, harmonious now and for as long as they are held down by night, alas what strife between them, what battles and slaughter will they stir up if they reach the light of life . . .).

The phrase *nocte premuntur* is a striking expression to use of Elysium with its "own sun" and "shining fields" (640 ff, 677). The contradiction is underlined by the grim associations of *bellum, acies, stragem*, in juxtaposition with *lumina vitae*. The contrasts of dark and light within this passage (*fulgere, lumina*) (*nocte*) correspond to the complexity of this contrast in the Book generally. One descendant of Anchises will bring the Golden Age; another, equally *sanguis meus* (835) and equally of the race of the gods (*genus qui ducis Olympo*, 834; cf. *divi genus*, 792) will plunge the world into war and suffering. And this antithesis between Augustus and Julius is another instance of the tragic father-son antithesis throughout the Book: Daedalus and Icarus, Anchises and Aeneas, Brutus and his son.

This pattern of a tragic relation between father and son is taken up in the last of Aeneas' encounters in Hades and the final figure of Roman history pointed out by Anchises. It is highly significant for Vergil's sense of the tragic in history that the death of Marcellus (860 ff) should close the glorious procession of Roman heroes and should follow so immediately upon the famous summary of Rome's achievement, *excudent alii* . . . (847–53). Like Icarus early in the Book, Marcellus is a youth of promise cut off before his time and destined to leave grief to those who survive him. Icarus at the beginning, Marcellus at the end: reminders of suffering and unfulfilled hope span the statement of rebirth and achievement that constitutes the positive side of the Book.

The parallel between Marcellus and Icarus also continues the interplay between individual suffering and public commemoration. Icarus' death is totally unconsoled and left tragically without memorial. Marcellus, though grandly celebrated, is no less intense a loss to his adoptive parent. Indeed his memorial is not the "eternal name" of an Italian rock or promontory, but the delicate, ephemeral lilies that Anchises gives as his "empty tribute" (*inani munere*, 885 f). Vergil's lack of emphasis on any lasting memorial to this loss (he refers to the Mausoleum of Augustus only obliquely in 872–74) thus links Marcellus more closely with Icarus (his equal in age) rather than with Misenus or Palinurus, although the first appearance of Marcellus, *frons laeta parum et deiecto lumina vultu* ("a brow of little joy and a countenance with downcast eyes," 862) is a glance back at Aeneas' sorrow at Misenus' death: *Aeneas maesto defixus lumina vultu* ("Aeneas sad of countenance, with downcast eyes," 156).

But Marcellus differs in another significant regard from the other figures shown by Anchises. It is not Anchises who introduces him. It is Aeneas himself who sees him first and asks who he is:

> quis, pater, ille, virum qui sic comitatur euntem?
> filius, anne aliquis magna de stirpe nepotum?
> qui strepitus circa comitum! quantum instar in ipso!
> sed nox atra caput tristi circumvolat umbra. (863–66)

> (Who is that, father, who thus accompanies the man as he goes on? Is it his son or some one from the great stock of his descendants? What a press of companions about him! How great a form in the man himself! But black night flies about his head with sad shadow).

Aeneas' observation is, as it were, the logical consequence of his question of 719–21. We are shown no reaction of his to the successful Romans: those he looks upon in silence. But he is quick to discern this sad form—*frons laeta parum*—among the effulgent victors of the future.

Aeneas' sensitivity to the tragic figure, to the unsuccessful rather than the successful of his descendants, is perhaps to be understood as one result of what the journey through Hades has taught him. With his infinite tact in saying "much in little and often in silence," Vergil keeps Aeneas silent after his poignant question of 721. Indeed, after such a perception, how can he respond with unmixed joy to the lesson of his destiny? It is fitting,

then, that his only utterance after 721 and his only overt response to Anchises' descriptions should be this short speech with its mixture of wonder and pity. What could be more in accord with the tone of the Book and with Aeneas' "education" in Hades?

Aeneas' last spoken line in the Book is thus of a deep sadness: *sed nox atra caput tristi circumvolat umbra* (866). Darkness is again strongly present in the midst of light. Though now in the heart of Elysium, Aeneas experiences the gloom of what lies behind him:

> Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram
> perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna:
> quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
> est iter in silvis, *ubi caelum condidit umbra*
> *Iuppiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem.* (268–72)

> (They went on, dim, through the shadow and through the empty house of Dis and the empty realms under a lonely night: a road such as there is in forests by an unsteady moon under a jealous light, when Jupiter has hidden the sky in shadow and dark night has taken away the color from things).

Line 866 is clearly a reminiscence of the descent in 271–72. Through this observation of "grim night" and "sad shadow" lurking even in the radiant future, Aeneas is made to live out to the full the horror of the realm of the dead. Those first terrible steps (268 ff) into this sunless region are relived symbolically and more deeply in his pity for a remote descendant of his own.

Inania regna: the opposite of the glorious *regna* (cf. 798) promised to Rome under Augustus. The gloom of Hades on the one hand, the brightness of the *aurea saecula* on the other. Even at the end, when the Book's tragic tension between these extremes would seem to be resolved in favor of the hopeful future, Marcellus appears, bright with his "shining arms" (861), but, like Caesar and Pompey (827), surrounded by night.

And now even the confident Anchises seems affected and touched by the sense of unresolved suffering so sharply expressed by his son in 721. True, unlike Aeneas he looks to the brighter side. From his commitment to history and his vantage-point surveying the whole course of Rome's future, the losses appear in a perspective of achievement:

> nimium vobis Romana propago
> visa potens, superi, propria haec si dona fuissent (870–71)

> (Too strong would the Roman race have seemed to you, gods above, if these gifts had been firmly theirs).

Yet Vergil does not portray Anchises as entirely insensitive to the suffering nor does he allow him to explain it all away as divine *invidia*. He ends his answer to Aeneas with a sympathetic tribute which is the more touching as it is surprising:

> heu, miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas,
> tu Marcellus eris. manibus date lilia plenis,
> purpureos spargam flores animamque nepotis
> his saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani
> munere (882–86)

> (Alas, pitiable boy, if ever you break through the hard fates, you will be Marcellus. Give lilies with full hands; may I scatter bright flowers and heap these gifts at least on the shade of a descendant and perform an empty service).

Inani munere: these are Anchises' last words in the poem and the last words of spoken discourse in the Book. *Inanis* conjures up the essence of Hades, *inania regna*. It suggests not only the insubstantiality of the ghostly shades which Aeneas has just experienced (700 ff), but also the fruitlessness of death, the inconsolable in life, that over which man can only weep: *sunt lacrimae rerum*. As noted earlier, *inanis* throughout the *Aeneid* suggests futility and tragedy. In a closely parallel passage, Aeneas will use it of another tragic youth, Pallas, whose death robs his father of "empty hope" (*spe . . . captus inani*, 11.49).

The *inane munus* of Anchises contrasts with the *perfectum munus* of the Golden Bough (637). *Munus* is thrice used of the Bough (142, 624, 637);[10] and thus Aeneas' accomplishment of his task, his *perfectum munus*, creates still another opposition of success and failure. The half-divine hero, bearing the magical token, passes through death and beyond it. The mortal bearer of history meets the full brunt of his condition.

The sadness of Anchises' final phrase is not just a qualification of the optimism of the pageant of Roman history. It extends now to the father the son's painful insight of 719–21 and validates its truth. Vergil might have given Marcellus a more pompous and monumental tribute, such as that he gives to Nisus and Euryalus:

> Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
> nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,
> dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
> accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit (9.446–49)

> (Happy both! If my songs have any power, no day will ever take you away from the memory of time, as long as the house of Aeneas shall inhabit the steadfast rock of the Capitol and as long as the Roman elder has the power of empire.)

But Anchises' *inane munus* at this crucial point only confirms the

qualification of history's other commemorations, the *aeternum nomen* of Misenus and Palinurus.

Anchises' *munus* remains "empty." Vergil will not give solace where solace cannot be given. In having Anchises conclude on such a hesitant, suspended note (emphasized by the enjambment in 885–86 and the abrupt, unstable effect of ending his speech after the first dactyl), the poet states his own refusal to falsify the tragic facts of existence. Nothing in Anchises' earlier discourses leads us to expect such concluding lines. They contain nothing of the stern, driving tone of the earlier books, the *tristis imago* (695) which drove Aeneas from Dido. Instead there are a gentleness and simplicity, personal and intimate, indeed, in a phrase like *manibus date lilia plenis* almost lyrical.

It is, of course, possible that Vergil is here speaking more in his own than in Anchises' character. Yet this softening of Anchises has its artistic function as well, and one need not assume that Vergil is willing to break his aesthetic frame to curry personal favor with the rulers. The change in Anchises' mood serves as a necessary corrective to the harsher figure of the earlier books and brings his survey of Roman history more fully into line with the pervasive tone of VI.

The change also implies that Aeneas' search for his father has after all been fulfilled, but in a fuller and more significant way than he could himself have anticipated. Despite the emptiness of his embrace in 700–02, Aeneas finds at last, in Anchises' closing words, the image of the beloved father, the *cari genitoris* (108), which he set out to find. After the initial disappointment of the physical greeting in the manner of the upper world in 700 ff, he meets at the end not the *tristis imago* of Book IV, not the harsh overseer of his progress toward Latium, but a spirit, finally, as sensitive as he has himself become. It is, in a sense, Anchises' modest tribute to Marcellus, with its avowal of frustration (*inani munere*), and not the lofty philosophical and historical explanations, that answers Aeneas' *Quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?*

Aeneas will himself come to know this spirit of commiseration even more fully than his father in paying to Lausus (*miserande puer*, 10.825; cf. 6.882) and especially to Pallas (*miserande puer*, 11.42) a tribute of lamentation that echoes that of Anchises to Marcellus:

> et nunc ille quidem *spe* multum captus *inani*
> fors et vota facit *cumulatque altaria donis*,
> nos iuvenem exanimum et nil iam caelestibus ullis
> debentem vano maesti comitamur honore (11.49–52)

> (And now he [Evander] greatly deceived by empty hope perchance makes vows and heaps up the altars with gifts, but we in sadness accompany in futile honor a youth who now owes nothing to any of the heavenly gods).

The reference back to the end of Anchises' speech is clear: *his saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani / munere* (6.885–86). Not only does Aeneas' sense of Evander's "empty hope" echo Anchises' "empty office," but his recognition that his own tribute to Pallas is futile, *vano maesti comitamur honore*, strongly recalls Anchises' sentiments. Yet Aeneas' phrase *nil iam caelestibus ullis / debentem* contains a suggestion of a cruelty and indifference on the part of the gods. Anchises, to be sure, intimates a kind of divine envy as the cause of the future sufferings of Rome (870–71); but Aeneas goes further. Anchises, looking at history in terms of the final achievement, does not feel the suffering with the intensity of the individual who enacts the process.

It is not, then, only for the personal commemoration of a member of the ruling family that the pageant of Roman heroes closes with Marcellus. As an instance of intense grief in the present, he sums up for Vergil and his audience the previous sufferings in Rome's past and points ahead to the sufferings to come. He exemplifies the persistence in history of an element which negates the possibility for total happiness, a degree of suffering built into the structure of things. Aeneas has encountered this element before in the gods who appear at the destruction of Troy (2.608 ff) and again in Misenus and Palinurus.

In the theme of the parent's loss of his child, Marcellus embodies an intensely personal and universal aspect of the tragedy of history. As such he renews the sense of loss present in Daedalus, Brutus, Anchises himself, and anticipates Pallas, Lausus, and Nisus and Euryalus. In this last case Vergil, despite his grand tribute (9.446 ff), especially emphasizes the paralyzing effect of a parent's grief on the surviving warriors: they are left *concussi*, like Aeneas at Palinurus' death (5.869) and at Dido's shade (6.475):

> hoc fletu concussi animi, maestusque per omnis
> it gemitus, torpent infractae ad proelia vires (9.498–99)

> (By this weeping [of Euryalus' mother] their spirits are shaken and a sad groaning goes through them all: their battle-strength drops limp, broken).

Here, as throughout VI, the Roman sense of glory is strong in Vergil, but does not override his larger humanity. Beside the *praemia laudi* (1.461) are the *lacrimae rerum* (1.462); beside the *decus* of Pallas (11.155), the *dolor* of Evander (11.159).

The parallel between Icarus and Marcellus marks a certain circularity in the structure of VI. The Book moves from the helpless, empty grief of Daedalus to Anchises' *inane munus*. And this circularity parallels that of Aeneas' journey in Hades: there is a forward progress, but also a return, a continued reenactment of a similar experience. Through Marcellus the deaths of the young

and innocent stand at the opposite ends of Aeneas' experience of Hades (note the *pueri innuptaeque puellae*, 305 ff). Within Hades itself there is another circular pattern of importance, namely the cycle endured by the souls of Elysium: death, purgation, and the reentrance to life. It is significant that it is the completion of this cycle, the return to life, that Aeneas finds most difficult (719–21). Aeneas needed the Bough, itself an image of the cyclical return from death to life, to reach this point. But once arrived at his goal, he is given a view of another, more difficult kind of circularity. Instead of the eternal recurrence which characterizes nature, or the stable permanence of divinity—both suggested in the Bough—he attains a view of purgatorial return and endurance: *quisque suos patimur manis*: an image for his own journey, the journey which is already past and that which is yet to come.

II. Caieta and the Final Voyage (Book VII. 1–36)

This pattern of purgation and endurance is one of the most important results of Aeneas' descent. But the juxtaposition of individual suffering with historical destiny out of which this pattern grows does not end in VI. It is carried on to Book VII, the beginning of which (up to the "second proem" in 37–45) goes closely with the atmosphere of VI. After passing through the Gate of Ivory (to be discussed below), Aeneas returns to the harbor of Caieta (6.900). It is with Caieta that Book VII begins:

> Tu quoque litoribus nostris, Aeneia nutrix,
> aeternam moriens famam, Caieta, dedisti;
> et nunc servat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen
> Hesperia in magna, si qua est gloria, signat (7.1–4)

> (You too, nurse of Aeneas, in dying gave to our shores eternal fame, Caieta; even now your glory keeps the place, and a name in great Hesperia, if that is any honor, marks your bones.)

Not only the *aeterna fama*, but the subsequent burial,

> at pius exsequiis Aeneas rite solutis
> aggere composito tumuli . . . (7.5–6)

> (But dutiful Aeneas, after duly performing the funeral rites and heaping up a funeral mound . . .)

hark back to Misenus (see 6.232–33, *at pius Aeneas ingenti mole sepulcrum / imponit . . .*). All the tragic ambiguities that have clustered around this theme of "eternal fame" in VI are thus carried over into the final movement, the *maior rerum ordo* (7.44), of the poem.

In so connecting the final movement of Aeneas' search for his new city with these themes of VI, Vergil suggests in advance the

confirmation of the Sibyl's terrible prophecy, that Aeneas will not leave behind in his new land the sufferings of the past. Hence his own "second proem," *dicam horrida bella*, ("I shall speak of fearful wars, 7.41) echoes the Sibyl's words, *bella, horrida bella* (6.86), with her explicit warning that the past will still haunt the future:

> non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra
> defuerint; alius Latio iam partus Achilles,
> natus et ipse dea . . . (6.88–90)

> (Not the Simois or the Xanthus nor the Greek camp will you lack; another Achilles has now been born in Latium, himself too the son of a goddess . . .).

Yet Caieta's death does not merely repeat the themes of Misenus and Palinurus. Through her, Aeneas comes closer to his own death. Or, to put it differently, in his preparation for and completion of his passage through Hades, the reality of death moves continually closer to him: first his companion at Troy, Misenus; then the helmsman of the years of wandering and the woman who kept him from his goal; later his father, his initial goal; and finally his nurse. Here the death of a childhood companion who leaves behind an *aeternam famam* fuses the two separate themes of the Underworld journey: individual death for the sake of historical destiny and the common mortality of the unnamed dead (see 6.305 ff, 426 ff).

The loss of Caieta completes Aeneas' experience of death. It occurs with his return to the world of living men and follows naturally upon his encounter with the physical emptiness of Anchises' shade. As his nurse, Caieta takes the place of his real mother who cannot die. She restores to Aeneas the missing half of his mortality. In the shadow of this complete knowledge of death he enters upon the final stage of his labors.

It is with this renewal of the tensions between mortality and eternity, *aeternam moriens famam* (7.2) that the second half of the *Aeneid* begins. As Aeneas approaches closer to his goal, the very place-name, immutable as the rock it identifies, signs the seat of the coming *aurea saecula* with the memories of losses and funeral rites. And the same questions raised throughout VI are subtly reechoed here in the lines on Caieta:

> et nunc servat honos sedem tuus, ossaque nomen
> Hesperia in magna, si qua est gloria, signat (7.3–4).

Si qua est gloria; "if that is any glory": the phrase weighs again the unresolved antitheses of the recent past.[11]

The approach to the destined land, however, is made not only in the shadow of death, but also in the promise of fulfilment. The first thirty-six lines of VII are one of Vergil's finest successes in

creating this suspense between disaster and hope, past and future. The lines reflect in small the general tenor of VI. Characteristically Vergil attains his effect not directly in the words or actions of any single figure, but in the suggestive atmosphere of the whole.[12] He draws again on the symbolism of light and dark so important in VI:

> aspirant aurae in noctem nec candida cursus
> luna negat, splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus (7.8–9)

> (The winds breathe into the night, nor does the bright moon refuse them passage; the sea shines under the wavering light).

Though now in the upper air (*aspirant aurae*), Aeneas and his companions experience an interplay of darkness and light almost as mysterious as that of the Underworld itself. The fine lines on the moon (8–9), with their deliberate indirectness of statement (the litotes, *nec luna negat*), brings into the world of action something of the vague unreality of Hades and its ghosts (see 6.268 ff). The fleet slips by the mysterious island of Circe, daughter of the Sun (11), who yet performs nocturnal rites (*nocturna in lumina*, 13). The sounds too shift between opposites: on the one hand the lovely singing of Circe herself (12, 14); on the other the roaring of lions and the howling of wolves (15–18), recalling the obscene howlings at the entrance to Hades (6.257).

Yet Aeneas' involvement in the mysterious and the magical is over now. Neptune brings the fleet safely past Circe's island (21–24). Immediately there is another dawn, their first in the new land and one of the most brilliant of the *Aeneid*:

> iamque rubescebat radiis mare et aethere ab alto
> Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis (25–26)

> (And now the sea was growing red with the rays of light and from the lofty heavens Aurora shone forth orange in her rosy chariot).

The lines recall the dawn of the previous day, of which the Sibyl reminded Aeneas in the depths of Hades:

> Hac vice sermonum roseis Aurora quadrigis
> iam medium aetherio cursu traiecerat axem (6.535–36).

This dawn of VII, however, is bright with the hope of a new world. No Styx or Cocytus here, but a real river, the Tiber, pleasant and colorful, full of birds of varied song (32 ff; contrast the birdless entrance to Hades, 6.239 ff). Yet in the darkness of the stream which Aeneas will penetrate in his last journey by water, there lies still the dim foreboding of the future:

> . . . terraeque advertere proras
> imperat et *laetus* fluvio succedit *opaco* (35–36)

> (He gives order to turn the prows toward land, and *joyfully* he comes up to the *dark* stream).

And there follows the proem to the six final books with the prophecy of "fearful wars."

This contrast between the idyllic beauty of Italy's virgin landscape and the suffering and wars to be endured there, the contrast of "dark" and "joyful" in 36, anticipates the whole tone of the last six books and much of their tragedy. In VII and VIII this contrast is especially marked: Sylvia's stag, Virbius, Camilla all participate in it; and Allecto's flight over these quiet woods and lakes forms its symbolic climax:

> At saeva e speculis tempus dea nacta nocendi
> ardua tecta petit stabuli et de culmine summo
> pastorale canit signum cornuque recurvo
> Tartaream intendit vocem, qua protinus omne
> contremuit nemus et silvae insonuere profundae;
> audiit et Triviae longe lacus, audiit amnis
> sulpurea Nar albus aqua fontesque Velini,
> et trepidae matres pressere ad pectora natos. (7.511–18)

> (But the cruel goddess, seizing from her look-out the time for doing her damage, seeks the steep roof of the farm and from its very top sounds the rustic note of war and with curving trumpet strains forth her infernal voice at which at once every grove trembled and the deep forests resounded. The lake of Diana heard it far off and the stream of the Nar, white with sulphurous waters and the springs of Velinus, and trembling mothers pressed their children to their breasts).[13]

The first thirty-six lines of VII present the point of momentary achievement, still tranquil with the present success, but full of hovering forebodings. The calm sea surely looks back to Book I. Neptune there calmed the storm (1.124 ff); but here in VII he intervenes even before danger can appear. Yet the calm of this last sea-voyage is mysterious and precarious, almost as unreal and unstable as the tremulous moonlight that plays on the water, *splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus* (7.9). Caieta's death too is in the foreground. The shadows of VI trail behind the advancing ships.

These lines perform another function: they link the mythical elements of VI, the mysterious and the supernatural, with the practical necessities which Aeneas faces from VII on. Vergil has here successfully and subtly combined two motifs from the *Odyssey*: he has united the mysterious transition from the Phaeacians to Ithaca in *Odyssey* XIII (a night journey over the sea)

with the return of Odysseus from Hades to Circe in *Odyssey* XII (hence perhaps the appearance of Circe in Vergil's narrative, 7.10 ff). In so doing he has made this important transitional point in the poem significant at several levels: it is a transition from sea to land, from myth to fact, from past to future, from dead to living. These multiple transitions help complete and bring to bear on the future the experiences through which Aeneas has moved in VI. In VI he made the journey alone; and his experiences of Hades, up to Anchises' discourses, affect him as an individual. In VII, after the personal reference to Caieta, *Aeneia nutrix*, he is again leader and future ruler, surrounded by his men. With Caieta dies also much of the personal life of Aeneas.

Along with these personal ties of his past, Aeneas now leaves fully behind the Odyssean world of the previous books with its openness, mysteriousness, uncertainties. The passage is marked symbolically in his uneventful sailing past Circe (7.10 ff). At the end of V he had passed by the Sirens:

> iamque adeo scopulos Sirenum advecta subibat,
> difficilis quondam multorumque ossibus albos
> (tum rauca adsiduo longe sale saxa sonabant) (5.864–66)

> (And now [the fleet] was gradually sailing toward the reefs of the Sirens, difficult once and white with the bones of many men—at that time the rocks resounded hoarsely afar off with the steady breaking of the sea).

But the Sirens lay in the remote past (cf. *quondam, tum*), whereas Circe in VII is very much alive and still enough of a danger to require Neptune's protection (*ne monstra pii paterentur talia Troes*, 7.21). The atmosphere of VI has temporarily reawakened the reality (and the danger) of such mythical figures; and, more to the point, Vergil wishes thus to dramatize Aeneas' definitive movement out of the mythical realm into the historical realities foretold in Anchises' discourse (6.756 ff). The open, preparatory stage of his task is over; the *maius opus* (7.45) lies ahead. What Aeneas now faces in his own lived experience is the reality posed by Misenus, Palinurus, and most recently by Caieta: action strung between death and the promise of eternal fame.

Neptune's role here is significant. He obviously marks the fulfilment of the trials begun in Book I (124 ff). As god of the sea and a rather remote and austere divinity (note his role in 2.610), he appears benignly when the Aeneadae have made their peace with the sea. That aspect of their trials is finished. But Neptune also recalls the price that was paid for their safety on his element, the sacrifice he demanded in V (see 813–15).

Neptune's aid also marks a return to the familiar intervention of the divine machinery and brings Aeneas' journey once more under the tutelage of the Olympian deities. In VI, the descent to the chthonic realm, the Olympian gods (aside from Venus' preliminary help in locating the Bough) are, of course, absent. Yet it is noteworthy and a bit surprising that the divine machinery in VI receives as little emphasis as it does. After Venus' aid in securing the Bough, the references to divine help are few and vague (like Palinurus' *neque . . . sine numine divum*, 368). The very fact of such a journey implies, of course, special favor. Yet the lack of emphasis on external divine aid, taken together with the nature of the magical talisman which is the hero's major source of help, suggests that Aeneas' experiences in Hades are of an inward rather than an outward nature, pertain to his inner understanding rather than any clear effect on the world. If so, the return of explicit Olympian aid through Neptune in VII marks still another transition: after an interior penetration to the depths of life and death, the hero moves back to the demands of action and history; after individual insight, communal responsibility.

The opening of VII is an ascent to the light. Yet the shadowy atmosphere of the moon and Circe are survivals of the Hades of VI and forebodings of the darker future. Here too there will soon be a magical tree (7.59 ff), like those of VI (see 6.136 ff, 203 ff, 282 ff). Juno will soon reappear and seek aid from the powers of the lower world that Aeneas has just left (7.312), and the minister she calls up will evoke again Hades' most sombre and ghastly aspects:

> hic specus horrendum et saevi spiracula Ditis
> monstrantur, ruptoque ingens Acheronte vorago
> pestiferas aperit fauces, quis condita Erinys,
> invisum numen, terras caelumque levabat (7.568–71)

> (Here are shown a fearful cavern and the breathing-holes of cruel Dis, and here where Acheron is broken a vast whirlpool opens its noxious jaws; in this the Erinys, hateful power, was received into concealment and gave relief to earth and heaven).

Here, unlike VI, the Underworld does not present elements of universal experience to be worked through by the hero in search of deeper understanding. The Stygian associations of Allecto only release violence and discord.

The deliberate mysteriousness of the opening of VII re-evokes the uncertainty and ambiguity of life as experienced in Hades and symbolized in the Golden Bough. It is paradoxical that, as Aeneas emerges to the place of his destiny, the field of decisive action, his first experience is the indistinctness and wavering luminescence of moonlit water. The Underworld, for all its shadows, seems almost more lucid, or at least more definite. The ultimate realities of life appear more clearly from its other side. In meeting life's absolute negation in Hades, Aeneas reaches an

intense perception of reality such as he is not to know again in the poem. Once involved in the concrete implementation of his goal, he leaves behind the poignant perceptions of VI.

The bright light of action renders pale and unreal the shadows which such questions as those of 6.721—*quae lucis tam dira cupido?*—cast upon success and history. The shadows remain in the first thirty-six lines of VII. After the invocation in 37–45, with the clarion call to the heroic tradition of kings and battles (*dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges*, "I shall sing of battles and kings driven by high passions to their deaths," 7.42), the dim but powerful realities of VI—Hades, the ghosts, the strange sheen of the Golden Bough—are put far behind. The poem turns decisively from inward to outward achievement.

III. The Ivory Gate and the Golden Bough: Conclusion

To understand more fully the opening of VII we must return to the end of VI, for it is the hero's mysterious passage through the Ivory Gate which prepares for the atmosphere in the introduction of the following book. After the tribute to Marcellus, Anchises and Aeneas wander over the rest of Elysium. Anchises inflames his son with love for future glory (*incenditque animum famae venientis amore*, 6.889) and then instructs him in what he will find in Latium. Vergil then breaks off abruptly with the famous *sunt geminae Somni portae*, the twin gates of Sleep, and has Aeneas leave Hades through the Gate of Ivory, the gate of *false* dreams (*sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia manes*, 896). The passage has troubled critics from Servius to the present. It is almost certainly a case of intentional ambiguity no final resolution of which is perhaps possible. An eighteenth-century commentator put the difficulty well: "Vergil having shone out with full splendour through the Sixth Book, sets at last in a cloud."[14]

The Ivory Gate belongs to the same sphere of poetic reality as the Golden Bough. Like the Bough, it marks a passage between worlds. Its function is narrower than that of the Bough; but, because it stands at the cardinal point of transition between the two halves of the *Aeneid*, it is obviously important.

Unlike the Bough, the Ivory Gate looks back rather than forward; it closes rather than opens an episode. But the way in which it closes the Hades-episode reflects on the meaning not only of VI, but of the whole poem. At the point when Aeneas is about to return to the action and commitments of the living, the Ivory Gate provides a final glimpse into the futility and suffering he has encountered in the Underworld. It evokes the tragic insubstantiality, the dream-like quality of these *inania regna*, from the heavy shadows of the entrance to the elusiveness and faintness of figures once so real and important as Dido and Anchises. Thus it creates a regression, as it were, into the emptiness of death, a

regression also into the mythical atmosphere from which the narrative is now emerging. This effect is all the more striking because of the juxtaposition with what precedes: not only the historical discourse of Anchises (756–886), but more immediately, his precise instructions about the imminent future:

> quae postquam Anchises natum per singula duxit
> incenditque animum famae venientis amore,
> exin bella viro memorat quae deinde gerenda,
> Laurentisque docet populos urbemque Latini,
> et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem (888–92)

> (After Anchises has led his son through all these things one by one and inflamed his mind with love for the coming glory, he then sets forth to the hero the wars which he must wage and teaches him of the Laurentian people and the city of Latinus and how he should flee and endure each labor).

Anchises speaks again as the patriarchal dynast, and the summary suggests the hard clarity and order of a Roman general. Action and fame are his themes. It is directly after these lines that the double gates are described: *sunt geminae Somni portae*, 893. Dreamy myth and Homeric reminiscence after a tactical conference. The Ivory Gate, pointing back to the atmosphere of the previous narrative, once more sets an aura of unreality against the promise of fame in history (*famae venientis amore*, 889).

Yet the Ivory Gate adds a new element to this antithesis. It seems to point back to the Tree of False Dreams at the entrance to Hades:

> in medio ramos annosaque bracchia pandit
> ulmus opaca, ingens, quam sedem Somnia vulgo
> vana tenere ferunt, foliisque sub omnibus haerent (282–84)

> (In the middle an elm, dark and vast, spreads its branches and ancient arms; this they say is the abode held by empty Dreams which cling there under every leaf).

False dreams thus stand at the two ends of Aeneas' underworld journey. He passes from the *Somnia vana* of the dim elm (283–84) to the *falsa insomnia* (896) of the Ivory Gate. In so framing the journey, Vergil subtly stresses the difference between the nature of Aeneas' perceptions in the Lower World and the demands of the "real" world, of action and history.

From the point of view of the active hero addressed by Anchises, the questions and realizations formed between the Golden Bough and Elysium are an impediment. The founder of a new city and eventually of an empire should not think too much of the individual dissolution that, in one sense, negates all human endeavor. Hence after VI Aeneas must become increasingly a man

of action, with even fewer reflective moments than he has had in the first six books. Feeling and compassion he does possess and will display again. These qualities are given probably their broadest scope in VI; but they must of necessity lose something in frequency and intensity as the hero turns from the calm of inner growth, the luxury (and necessity) of inner experience in VI, to the exigencies of VII–XII. The Marcellus-episode is really the conclusion (and a significant conclusion) to Aeneas' formative, reflective experiences in the poem. Anchises' instructions soon afterward (888–92), with his stress on the future achievement and the means to its realization, already mark Aeneas' departure from the atmosphere of VI.

The "false dreams" at both extremes of the underworld journey (cf. 282 ff.) help make clear that the descent has been a special interlude, a suspended period. Aeneas did not undertake it with the hope of advancing his mission (see 106 ff), nor aside from Anchises' advice does it aid him concretely. The realities revealed by the descent (as far as Elysium) are of a spiritual and emotional, not a practical nature. When Aeneas returns to the demands of *gerenda* and *labor*, therefore (888 ff), the visions opened in Hades begin to fade "into the light of common day." Shut behind the Ivory Gate, they are looked back upon through the unreality of dream.

The ambiguity of the Ivory Gate leaves it at least problematical which is the higher "reality," the passive, inward experiences of Hades or the *gerenda* of the following books, awareness or action. Here the Ivory Gate is closely akin to the Golden Bough: both belong to the realm of myth and vision which now closes behind Aeneas, and both disappear at the point where Aeneas confronts his historical mission. He gives up the Bough just before entering Elysium where the glorious future will be revealed, and he passes through the Ivory Gate immediately before rejoining the "ships and companions" with whom he will enter upon the new land:

> his ibi tum natum Anchises unaque Sibyllam
> prosequitur dictis portaque emittit eburna,
> ille viam secat ad navis sociosque revisit (897–99)

> (When Anchises with these words escorted his son and the Sibyl with him and sent them out through the Ivory Gate, Aeneas directs his way to the ships and finds again his companions).

Ending with the gate of false dreams need hardly mean, as Servius thought, that Vergil "wishes everything that he has said [about Hades?] to be understood as false" (*vult autem intelligi falsa esse omnia quae dixit*). It may imply rather that there are different orders of reality. The exit through the Ivory Gate commits Aeneas to the realm of action; and Vergil is to repeat this

commitment in his "second proem" (7.41 ff) which carries the poem firmly away from the visionary mysteriousness of VI and the moonlit voyage of 7.1–36 to the harsh clarity of the battlefield.

Vergil does not explicitly say that history and the kind of humane awareness that Aeneas achieves in VI are incompatible. As is his manner, he simply suggests the differences, the two orders of reality, and does this partly through the contrasts between the mythical and the historical just discussed. Aeneas is certainly not an uncompassionate hero: his humanity, in fact, is what often distinguishes him from the Homeric hero. But his mission does force him to put action before feeling. In the case of Lausus (10.802 ff) he strikes first and pities afterward. In the battle with Turnus which closes the poem emotions other than pity master him: *furiis accensus et ira / terribilis* ("inflamed by furies and fearful in his anger," 12.946–47). The care which Vergil has taken to mark the movement—the tragically necessary movement—away from the emotion-filled, actionless ambience of VI to the action of the remaining books is only another indication of his sensitivity to the heavy tax that historical achievement levies on our humanity.

The last line of VI makes conclusive this movement into history and action:

> tum se ad Caietae recto fert litore portum.
> ancora de prora iacitur; stant litore puppes (900–901)

> (Then he proceeds straight along the shore to the harbor of Caieta. The anchor is let down from the prow; the ships stand by the shore).

The lived, concrete reality returns to claim its own. After the *inania regna* come the tangible instruments of search and effort; after the gate of false dreams, ships and anchors. *Stant litore puppes*: history, foreshadowed in outline in the empty forms of the spirit world, waits to be fulfilled in flesh and blood. The half-line is another superb instance of Vergil's saying "much in little." Like the dawn in 535 ff, it reminds us that the hero is still subject to the laws and demands of corporeal substance. Anchises can take Aeneas out of time into the achieved future, but Aeneas must still create that future by his own toil. The simplicity of 901, a conspicuously modest close to perhaps the most complex and poetically rich book of the poem, deepens the contrast between Anchises and Aeneas, idea and concrete realization. But it also confirms Aeneas in his task and, with the invocation of 7.41 ff, sets the tone for what follows. The questionings and searchings of the first half of the journey are left behind with the Ivory Gate—too soon and too irrevocably, many will feel. And yet the laconic firmness of the closing line is necessary. It reflects confidence and

strength in the commitment to the future, simplicity of action after the complexities of vision.

It is in large part the Golden Bough which weaves together these strands of vision and reality, dream and substance. The Bough and its magical tree, however important for the mythical and dream-like quality of the Book, are yet distinct from the tree of false dreams and the Ivory Gate. The latter belong entirely to the lower world, to the fabulous and imaginary. The tree of false dreams is explicitly connected with the chimaerical figments of the mythical imagination (285–89), and they frighten Aeneas only until the Sibyl informs him that they are empty and bodiless (*tenuis sine corpore vitas*, 292). The Golden Bough, however, not only belongs *both* to upper and lower worlds, but images the fundamental reality of man's position between the two. It does indeed have a visionary character, but it is that degree of the visionary which is necessary for a clear view of the realities of life and death. It is, along with its other qualities, a symbol of the moral imagination.

But even more, the mythical, imaginary quality in the Bough is essential to its meaning in the Book. The fact that the origins of the Bough fuse both primitive, folkloristic elements and philosophical tradition, as pointed out in Part I of this study, is vital to its role in presenting the tragedy of history. We must, then, return to our starting point.

The two sides of the Bough, the "mythic" and the "philosophical," are the roots from which spring the tragic antinomies of Book VI and, in a sense, of the whole *Aeneid*: on the one hand the desire to explain life, to offer consolation in terms of history, philosophy, religion; and on the other the irreducible surd fact of individual suffering. Both sides have equal claims, though different forms of expression. Naturally the frame of the plot, the explicit structure of purposes that drive the poem and its hero to the fated conclusion, express the "philosophical" and "historical" side, present life as a construct of clear meanings and ends. But the other elements in the poem—the emotional coloring, symbols like the Bough, the unexpected reactions of characters, like Aeneas' *horrescit* (710) and his *quae lucis tam dira cupido*?—present the other side, raise questions without answers. Paradoxically, it is the function of VI to present this other side and raise the unanswerable questions. Paradoxically, because VI is also the fullest statement of the purposive, meaningful aspect of Aeneas' journey. It lies at the core of Vergil's humane greatness that purpose and questioning cross and confront one another each at its highest point. Life is never solely one or the other. Suffering and explanation are never in equal balance. The Golden Bough is the symbolical expression of this complexity.

It has been observed that the underworld journey proceeds in a progression from more primitive to more philosophical views of death.[15] The Book moves from the bleak fact of death in 305 ff, connected through the simile with the cycles of nature, to the Platonizing Stoicism of Anchises' *anima mundi* (724 ff) and finally to the demonstration of historical destiny in 756 ff which is the explicit "philosophy" of the whole poem. The "primitive" part of the Bough's origins qualify these increasingly philosophical answers: it points back to what is anterior to philosophical or historical constructions, the fundamental mystery of life and death. When Aeneas gets closer to the more "philosophical" interpretations of death, he leaves behind the Bough. His passage through the Ivory Gate, then, with its Homeric echoes, marks a return to the primitive and mythical realm of the Bough and perhaps suggests that Anchises' lessons are in some sense a palliation of what the Bough contains. Aeneas has gained the necessary grounding for his further efforts, but has lost the vital, exposed contact with the mysteries of existence embodied in the Bough.

The Bough can be grasped only once, at the point between wandering and certainty, between the trial and the attainment. Once this point is passed, as it is in VI, there is no going back. Aeneas cannot refuse to proceed, for his journey is the upward path of all human civilization, out of myth into history. What he can do is to pity those who are left behind in the past, in the lower, less "explained" parts of Hades; and he can find pity too for those who lie in the future (719–21), their appearance in history sanctioned by the explanations of Anchises.

In VI and the opening of VII Aeneas leaves behind the realm of myth and magic; and the following books contain of necessity a narrower focusing of energy and experience. At the end of V he sailed past the Sirens; and at the beginning of VII Neptune will be present to see that he will not, like Odysseus, investigate the charms of Circe. He will soon take up another symbolical emblem, also made of gold: the shield on which the history of his people is embossed. His destiny becomes now even more tangible than in Anchises' discourse and visible to his companions and his enemies. This shield is entirely the work of the gods of the upper world. It has no contact with the fundamental ambiguities of the Bough. Its essence is purpose and destiny, not mystery. It belongs to the realm of action, war, not that of suspension and vision. Venus presents it to Aeneas in solitude, to be sure—in fact in a "removed valley," *in valle reducta*, 8.609, which recalls the setting of Anchises' discourses, *in valle reducta*, 6.703; but the importance of the shield lies in public communication, not private experience. Unlike the Bough which belongs partly to the Lower World and Juno (6.138), the shield is entirely the gift of the hero's Olympian mother and is a heavy and responsible burden (see 8.731, *attollens umero famamque et fata nepotum*, "lifting up on his shoulder the fame and fates of his descendants"). Once having passed the Ivory Gate, Aeneas will never again know the thrilling

touch of the Golden Bough, never again hold in his hands that elusive mediator between the two worlds of man's existence.

The mixture of purpose and questioning, necessity and mystery, which has been here traced throughout VI is an essential part of the meaning of the Bough and its bearing on the poem as a whole. Ambiguous in itself, it yet leads the hero to a vision of the final purposes which steel him for his remaining task. Divinely fated to be plucked, it yet holds back. Its meaning lies close to the poetic sensitivity which animates the entire work: definiteness of goal, but hesitation; acquiescence in action, yet a clinging to reflection, contemplation, feeling. Its ambiguities intimate the questions subtly raised at this crucial point of the journey: is the end of the *durum iter* sufficient compensation for its hardness, and why is the journey so hard anyway, why so many losses on the way: *tantaene animis caelestibus irae*? Or, in the personal terms of a Palinurus, is the *aeternum nomen* enough? Palinurus' *parumper* (382) and the *si qua est gloria* of Caieta (7.4) suggest reservations. The heart of the reservation, it has here been suggested, may lie in the "primitive" levels of the Bough, the impenetrable, primal intensity of its life. Even in yielding—*avidusque refringit / cunctantem*—the Bough enacts Life's immense reticence to man and draws back into the residual mysteries of existence.

In the course of the Book the symbolical antitheses of the Bough expand and take on substance. They appear in Misenus and Palinurus, in the contrast between the grimmer parts of Hades and Elysium, and especially in the meeting of Aeneas and Anchises. The son is mortal and subject to the movement of the seasons and the day (cf. 535 ff); the father, a shade, sees life *sub specie aeternitatis*, or at least *sub specie imperii Romani*. On the level of character and emotion the antithesis appears in the movement from Aeneas' desire to find his father of the flesh, the *carus genitor* of 108, to his discovery instead of a shadow whom he cannot embrace, a figure who has passed beyond his concern with his timebound son to a vision of a far larger progeny (680 ff, 717) which stretches over the centuries to the *aurea saecula*.

There are really two Anchises in the Book: the personal father initially sought by Aeneas and the representative and exponent of Rome's destiny. Aeneas begins with the first and finds the second, the stern image who drives him on to his goal (*tua tristis imago . . . adegit*, 695–96), fills him with "love of future fame" (889), and advises him of his destiny. *Te tua fata docebo* ("I shall teach you your fate," 759): Aeneas receives instruction when he originally sought a filial embrace and affection. These two roles of Anchises—the father as generative parent, as the biological source of life, and the father as spiritual guide—are the two hinges on which the Book turns. They form essentially the same antithesis as the Golden Bough: involvement in the cycle of life and transcendence of the biological cycle. In the Bough the two sides are simultaneously present. In Aeneas they stand at opposite ends of a progression, the movement from what a man necessarily is as a creature of nature to what history can offer a mortal being: *aeternum per saecula nomen*.

The antithesis between Aeneas and Anchises, or between the two images of Anchises, reflects, with the Bough, the other antinomies of the Book. The Anchises of Elysium regards history as a journey toward a goal, a *durum iter* which effort and sacrifice will eventually traverse to its end. This teleological view of history contrasts with the lived experience of the individual who carries it out in flesh and blood and questions its cost (719–21). In the meeting between Aeneas and Anchises history as purpose and unity confronts history as the tangible succession of painful events in the lives of the individuals who suffer them. The antithesis, as noted above, is resumed at the very end of VI: Anchises guides Aeneas over all of Elysium with images of future success (cf. 886–92) while in the upper world Aeneas' ships stand ready to bear him off to further toils: *stant litore puppes* (901).

But behind this antithesis lies that deeper antinomy in the nature of the Bough: mystery and meaning, magic and philosophy, closeness to the movements of organic life and transcendence in a goal which reaches toward permanence and divinity. The antithesis is the tragedy of history presented in the Sixth Book. By returning in the motif of the Ivory Gate to the realm of myth and mystery after the clarity of revealed purpose in Anchises' discourse, Vergil keeps the antithesis alive for the rest of the poem and restates it in the atmosphere that opens VII. Within VI Aeneas can question his spiritual guide with the utmost poignancy (719–21) just before the purposes of destiny are revealed and can remark with sympathy on the sadness of Marcellus just after. Certainty of purpose does not cancel the question torn from the individual who surveys the cost as well as the reward. The green life of the Bough poses one set of these questions, for it symbolizes the intensity of mortal existence which neither eternity nor history can give back.

What emerges from this study of the Sixth Book is Vergil's sense of the inestimable preciousness of the individual life, the irreducible and ultimately inconsolable nature of such losses as those embodied in Icarus, Misenus, Palinurus, Marcellus, Caieta. History and philosophy in the discourses of Anchises can present answers; but the compelling image of the Bough, with its evocation of centuries of human experience condensed into primeval symbolism, presents a still more basic reality.

Connected with the mystical and esoteric symbolism of Eleusinian cult, Pythagorean and perhaps Platonic philosophy, the Golden Bough yet harks back to the realm of fertility rites and magic, the undying, ever-potent mistletoe at the low ebb of cosmic vitality in the winter solstice. It thus stands ambiguously between

civilized man's philosophical solutions to the basic problems of existence and a more direct, unmediated apprehension of the mystery of life and death. In different terms, its supernatural union of opposites marks the gulf between the consolations and rationalizations for existence as given by society and history and the fact of immersion in the ebb and flow of life as experienced by the individual and grasped by the poetic or mythical understanding. Bright with the ageless, unwearing metal of its leaves, it grows on a living tree, not touching the earth, yet sharing in the fundamental laws of change, process, death. It thus partakes of and symbolizes the conditions of existence in which all human creation begins and ends. From its first occurrence, interwoven with the death of Misenus, to its deposition at the center of Hades, the Bough creates a large symbolic frame of reference for the tragedy of those deaths that pose the complex dualism of the *Aeneid*, the poem's strategic hesitation between history and nature, success and failure, Rome and humanity.

If, as Poeschl has remarked, it is in Book VI that Aeneas is "introduced to the tragic fate of this world,"[16] then the Bough is the key to this tragic fate. It marks a unity of opposites which within the framework of ancient thought can never come to man, by its very definition of man as *mortalis, θνητός*. Guided by the Bough to the realms of death, Vergil's hero, himself the offspring of a mortal and a god, endures its divided nature, green and gold, in his own and his companions' fate. The dichotomies of the Bough correspond to the dichotomies within Aeneas, save that he has a compassion, born from his mortal limitations, which goes beyond the objective realities contained in the Bough. The symbolism of the Bough, however, is essential for deepening Aeneas' tragic stature. He retains this tragic stature as long as he retains his larger consciousness. This consciousness, growing throughout VI and enhanced by the contrast with mysterious, "mythical" elements like the Sibyl, the Bough, the Ivory Gate, wanes amid the efforts of the later books. And that is perhaps a still deeper tragedy.

NOTES

[1] *Arion*, IV, No. 4 (1965).

[2] There is perhaps another link between Deiphobus, Misenus, and Palinurus in Deiphobus' expression, *his mersere malis*, 512. Deiphobus uses metaphorically the verb which is applied literally to the other two deaths (*spumosa immerserat unda*, 174; *aequora mersit*, 342 and 348). On the other hand, the verb is also used metaphorically of unnamed dead: 329, 615.

[3] For a somewhat different interpretation of the deposition of the Bough see R. A. Brooks, "*Discolor Aura.* Reflections on the Golden Bough," *AJP* 74 (1953) 271, who connects it with "the hopelessness of Aeneas' own mortal experience, . . . the eternity of evil." But this view neglects the positive elements in the sinners, the signs of divine order and justice. It is hope out of suffering, life out of death, not just suffering and death, that Aeneas experiences here.

[4] So *ibid.*, 272–73: "In fact, the bough is not so much given to Proserpina as returned to her. When the Sibyl carries it down to Hades, it is recognized by Charon as something *longo post tempore visum*. I suggest that this does not refer to any previous heroic journey with the bough, but rather to the fact that it *belongs* in Charon's world underground. Its existence in the upper air is considered here to be temporary and unnatural."

[5] With Aeneas' empty embrace of Anchises contrast a closely parallel passage in Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*: the younger Scipio meets his father among the celestial spheres: (the elder Scipio addresses the younger) '*Quin tu adspicis ad te venientem Paulum patrem?' Quem ubi vidi, equidem vim lacrimarum perfudi; ille autem me complexus atque osculans flere prohibebat* ("Behold your father Paulus coming toward you!' When I saw him I poured forth an abundance of tears; but he, embracing and kissing me, forbade that I weep." *De Re Publ.* 6.14). The Anchises episode of VI seems to have drawn deliberately on the *Somnium* and with its Homeric echoes to have strongly qualified Cicero's optimistic emphasis on Roman glory. Hence the idea of purgation, though present in the *Somnium*, receives only passing attention by comparison to its place in Anchises' discourse. And Vergil's gate of false dreams (898ff) is perhaps also an ambiguous commentary on the dream-situation of the *Somnium*, which ends, *ille discessit; ego somno solutus sum* ("He departed; I was loosed from sleep").

[6] See e.g. B. Otis, *Virgil* (Oxford 1963) 300: "The 'answer' is in one sense disappointing. We are given no *reason* for the whole procedure of reiterated reincaration save that the god ordains it (deus evocat)."

[7] The *ignem* of 747 clearly refers back to the divine fire, the *igneus vigor*, of the *anima mundi*, 730. So Servius, *ad loc.*: *Ignem: sensualem, i.e. Deum; per quod quid sit anima ostendit.*

[8] Note also that these words of Anchises introducing the pageant of Roman history, *inlustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras*, 758, echo the language used to describe him at his first appearance in 680–81, *inclusas animas superumque ad lumen ituras / lustrabat studio recolens*. The repetition stresses Anchises' concern with the future generations, as opposed to Aeneas' concern, hitherto, with the past.

[9] The place of Brutus in the scheme of VI, the mixture of praise and pity which Vergil expresses toward him, was keenly appreciated by St. Augustine: *posteaquam laudabiliter commemoravit, continuo clementer exhorruit* ("After making mention of him with praise, he at once gives a shudder of compassion," *De Civ. Dei* 3.16). Useful summaries of various interpretations of the Ivory Gate will be found in H. E. Butler, *The Sixth Book of the Aeneid* (Oxford 1920) and in F. Fletcher, *Virgil, Aeneid VI* (Oxford 1941) *ad loc.* Also Otis (above, note 6) 173 ff. More recently see W. Clausen, *HSCP* 68 (1964) 146–47 and M.C.J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Cambridge, Mass. 1965) 48.

[10] Aside from being used of Aeneas' mission with the Bough (142, 629, 637) and of Marcellus (886), *munus* is used only one other time in VI, namely of the treachery of Helen as described by Deiphobus (526), another contrast of failure with success.

[11] On the importance of 7.1–36 and its transitional function see Eduard Fraenkel, "Some Aspects of the Structure of Aeneid VII," *JRS* 35 (1945) 1–2. He finds in the *si qua est gloria* of Caieta "a note of mellow resignation" which "thus makes us see the glory of earthly things in true perspective." Also K. J. Reckford, "Latent Tragedy in *Aeneid* VII. 1–285," *AJP* 82 (1961) 254–55, with note 9, p. 254, on Caieta.

[12] For this type of "atmospheric" transition compare the opening canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*, where the situation has certain analogies with *Aeneid* VII. In emerging from "the deep night that always darkens the infernal valley" (*Purg.* i.44–46), Dante encounters a light as richly exotic as the dawn of *Aen.* VII:

> Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro
> che s'accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
> dal mezzo puro infino al primo giro,
> Agli occhi miei ricominciò diletto
> tosto ch' i' uscii fuor dell'aura morta,
> che m' avea contristati gli occhi e 'l petto (*Purg.* i.13–18).

In Dante the unqualified brightness of the progress of the purged Christian soul contrasts significantly with the ambiguously shifting light which meets the Roman hero of this-worldly achievement in his "secondo regno."

[13] Note the significant use of the adjective *pastoralis* here (7.513) and at the end of the book, *et pastoralem praefixa cuspide myrtum* (7.817), the only two occurrences of the word in Vergil. The latter line, with its interlocking work order, pointedly focuses the basic antithesis of pastoral peace and war: ***pastoralem myrtum–praefixa cuspide.***

[14] Jortin, *apud* Gibbon, *Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Aeneid,* cited by Fletcher (above, note 9) 101–2.

[15] For this progression of eschatological views in VI see L. A. MacKay "Three Levels of Meaning in *Aeneid VI,*" *TAPA* 86 (1955) 188 ff. He speaks of VI as "the Pilgrim's Progress of the Mediterranean mind in its search for an understanding of the problem of death and life and man's place in the Universe" (p. 188).

[16] V. Poeschl, *The Art of Vergil*, tr. G. Seligson (Ann Arbor 1962) 59.

AESCHYLUS IN TRANSLATION*

D. S. Carne-Ross

THERE IS AN APPROACH TO TRANSLATION WHICH MAY BE DESCRIBED as The More the Merrier. Let us have as many versions as possible, it is said, of *Faust, The Divine Comedy* and the *Oresteia* and perhaps one day someone will come up with a good one. It sounds desperate, yet some such hope must inspire the publishing houses that ceaselessly bring out new translations of Greek tragedy. Gresham, it seems, has lived in vain. A surer way of calling down the punitive effects of his Law is hard to imagine.

For the sake of controversy and, hopefully, of clarity, let me advance three propositions into this stricken field:

1. The main need now is for good *prose* translations. Prose translation is at least useful. Translations into mediocre verse serve no purpose.

2. Only a poet can translate poetry. A poet perhaps in some way *manqué*, but still a poet. It is plain impertinence for a man who has written no good verse of his own to offer the public a verse translation of a great poet.

3. A new translation of a much-translated work should consciously aim to *surpass* existing versions—if not in every respect, at least in some. A translation which lacks this ambition—or clearly lacks the means to realise it—should not be published.

The reader is invited to consider the first two propositions at his leisure. The third is now to be tested against a couple of recently published versions of the *Oresteia*: one by George Thomson (a revised form of the translation which faced his Greek text in the 1938 Cambridge edition), one by Peter Arnott. The proper air of scientific impartiality will best be achieved if we use the method of comparative quotation. Here, then, are some versions of *Choephoroe* 1021–27, the point where Orestes' hour of triumph is threatened by intimations of disaster. I quote first from the well-known translation by Richmond Lattimore:

> I would have you know, I see not how this thing will end.
> I am a charioteer whose course is wrenched outside
> the track, for I am beaten, my rebellious senses
> bolt with me headlong and the fear against my heart

* *Aeschylus: The Oresteia Trilogy, Prometheus Bound.* Edited, with an introduction, by Robert W. Corrigan. Translated, with a special introduction, by George Thomson. (Dell Publishing Company, New York, 1965. 60 cents.)

Aeschylus: The Oresteia. Translated and edited by Peter D. Arnott. Two volumes. (Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1964. 50 cents each volume.)