

Humanities 2

Lecture 2

Review from Lecture 1

Major themes and approaches: LOVE as a literary and cultural theme

LITERATURE: authorial intention / reader response

character/ interpretation of signs / narrative / empathy

4 axes of the course:

duty / desire

piety / politics

memory / action

rhetoric / reality

Virgilian Epic: literary and literate; narrative self-consciousness; poetry as a form of imperial formation; nation and narration

How does narration make the nation?

How does narration make the state?

Are we the sum of the stories we tell?

These are the questions that the first books of the Aeneid ask.

TODAY: Book I as a book of narrations
(M = Mandelbaum translation)

Opening sentence: statement of argument; origin of causes; question of character; question of proof; the epic begins as legal discourse. “Tell me the reason, Muse”: rhetorical cause (Musa, mihi causas memora)

Juno: memory; M 41-42

Aeolus’s speech (M.110ff); rhetorical causes; question of “task” (Lat. labor).
Notice the first mention of Aeneas’s name, M 131

Sonic effects: M’s translation 144-61; notice alliteration, rhyme, assonance; use of sonic effect to mime the subject of the action.
(I will compare with the Latin original).

The uses of the simile: M 155-61, and then Neptune, at M 200-22

Aeneas as a public orator (M 276-89); notice how Aeneas seeks to capture the attention, benevolence, and docility of his audience.

Forsan et haec olim memnissime juvabit: M: Perhaps one day you will remember even these, our adversities, with pleasure (M 283-84)

Rhetoric and cookery: M 290-311; association of public speechmaking and eating

Venus speaks: legal argument; Olympus as a law court (M 320-53)

Her questions: “What is his crime?” and later “What motive, Father made you change.” Notice the uses of **anaphora** here: the repetition of the opening word (in the Latin, quid). Jupiter responds and tells a future history of Rome: “I will unroll the secret scroll of the fates”: In Latin his word is volvens, unrolling: history here is something already literate; the imagery of writing and reading is central to the Aeneid. It is up to Jupiter to tell the story of Roman history that is the political purpose of why Virgil was asked to write the poem in the first place.

SO: Venus appears to Aeneas, there in Carthage, in disguise (M 445-460); Aeneas does not recognize her (M 461-74)

Venus’s story of Dido: M 474-523. Notice her appeal to effective arrangement of arguments; the uses of fabulation, the uses of dream and vision imagery; the uses of aphorism. Venus’s phrase dux femina facti – a woman leads.

Aeneas’s response; his self presentation and narration; Sum pius Aeneas (M 535); notice the imagery of the way

Venus responds: “follow where this pathway leads” (M 572); the idea of the way (Latin via) is central to rhetoric and forensic argument; it is at the core of the treatises used in the Roman schoolroom. In fact, the Latin translation of the Greek word methodos [method] was via et ratio: literally, the way and the reason.

THE BEES: M 610-620: THE BEE SIMILE IS CENTRAL TO CIVILIZATION

Aeneas looks at the illustrations of the Trojan war on the walls of Carthage (M645-697); this is called Ekphrasis: the narrative of events as told through the description of a pictorial representation of those events.

Notice Aeneas' response: "With many tears and sighs he feeds / his soul on what is nothing but a picture (M 658-659): Latin: inani pictura

AND DIDO IS WATCHING HIM: ANOTHER SIMILE, M 702

Then, Ilioneus speaks (M735-788): this is the speech of the oldest member of the Trojan group; he is charged with explaining them: "We do not come . . . M742: Again, a reason why things are done; a story representing a group's actions.

Dido responds: my kingdom is new (M793); who has not heard of Troy? (M796) You guys are already famous. And so, when Aeneas appears, it's like a rebirth emerging from the clouds into a glittering bright light (M 825):

"The man you seek is here" (M836)

Notice how Dido names him; memory and fame (are you that Aeneas? tunc ille Aeneas; M 865)

At the end, the harpist Iopas is asked to sing a tale of creation (M 1033 and following). How is this story a fitting end to Book I? How does it compare to the request to Aeneas to "tell us all things from the first beginning"?

SO: KEY POINTS ABOUT BOOK I:

HOW PEOPLE TELL STORIES

HOW CHARACTERS ARE DEFINED BY THEIR WAYS OF SPEAKING
JUNO, AEOLUS, VENUS, AENEAS, DIDO, ILIONEUS, IOPAS

HOW THE NARRATOR OF THE POEM EMERGES BY MAKING
SIMILES, BY STATING CAUSES AND PURPOSES

THE LANGUAGE OF LEGAL ARGUMENT THROUGHOUT THE POEM

Some Latin phrases from Book I that you should know:

Arma virumque cano: I sing of arms and of a man: the opening phrase; the assertion of the poet's voice and his purpose in the poem; the synthesis of the Iliad and the Odyssey. (M 1)

Dux femina facti: a woman leads; Venus's description of Dido taking political control of Carthage; the question of female power and rule; the way in which a female speaker (Venus) describes a female character (Dido) (M 516).

Sum pius Aeneas: I am pious Aeneas; the way the hero announces himself with an epic epithet; the notion of piety as a Roman virtue and a character trait. (M 5335); notice that he's talking to his MOTHER!

Forsan et haec olim memnise juvabit: perhaps, one day, it will be pleasurable to remember even this; Aeneas in his first speech to his men; the question of memory and experience; the transformation of an activity as something already, potentially, to be remembered and celebrated; turning life into epic. (M 283-84)

Looking ahead to next classes:

For Tuesday, April 11: Books II and III

For Thursday, April 13: Book IV

Key things to look at in upcoming readings and lectures

In Book II Aeneas tells the story of the fall of Troy, the guile of the Greeks in the making of the “Trojan Horse,” and of the speeches and discussions among the Trojans themselves.

In Book III Aeneas tells the story of the flight from Troy, the storms, the exile, and the adventures.

Book II is the Iliad in miniature; Book III is the Odyssey in miniature

Books II and III are in Aeneas’s voice: very important: they are records of his performance at Dido’s court.

QUESTION: IS THE HERO HIS OWN BEST POET???

SPECIFIC THINGS FOR TUESDAY

1.

The story of the Trojan Horse in Book II: In Homer's Odyssey, the story of the Trojan Horse is told as a story of narrative exploit, of heroic guile on the part of Odysseus, and as a way of remembering Odysseus's actions and turning them into a good story. In the Aeneid, the story of the Trojan Horse is a story about speechmaking and storytelling itself. Virgil transforms the story of action into a tale of rhetoric. Aeneas focuses on the speeches of the various Trojans debating the horse as a gift. The Aeneid transforms a story about the craftiness of one hero (Odysseus) into a story about the straightforward verbal performance of another hero (Aeneas).

THINK ABOUT THIS: WHAT DOES THE TROJAN HORSE REPRESENT? WHY IS IT SUCH A BIG PART OF BOOK II? HOW IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE BOOK AS A WHOLE AND TO THE POEM AS A WHOLE? HOW DOES IT REFLECT ON AENEAS HIMSELF?

2

The Loss of Creusa. Aeneas's wife dies during the burning of Troy. In the course of Book II, Aeneas retells this story.

Aeneas tells this story in a complex way. One of the most powerful moments in Book II is when he tells the story of how his mother, Venus, came to him and told him to man up and stop freaking out and go home and rescue his family (M 793-842)

Aeneas then tells of how he goes home and finds his father Anchises, his son Ascanius (also called Iulius) and his wife Creusa.

Notice how, in the course of the final sections of Book II, Aeneas describes how he loses his wife. Notice also this important passage at M 974-984. In this passage what ancient hero does Aeneas remind you of???

3

Book III: How is this book about fate? How is it like or unlike the Odyssey (if you've read it; if not – well, is it a good adventure story?); how is Aeneas like Hercules? How are his journeys like labors. Central question: is being a good person (here, man, Trojan, son, father) the biggest labor of all???