Poetic Appropriations in Vergil’s *Aeneid*: A Study in Three Themes
Comprising Aeneas’ Character Development

by

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Abstract

In Vergil’s *Aeneid*, Aeneas’ character development into the leader of the new Roman race is depicted in light of three significant themes: the bees, whether they appear in the epic’s similes or in the prophetic vision in book 7, the theme of passion, particularly *ira*, and the theme of reason, whether in Aeneas’ spoken commands or in his increasingly purposeful actions in founding his intended city. These themes, I argue, are interdependent and together highlight Aeneas’ character development into a model Roman leader, as well as highlight significant depictions of Vergil’s vision of the model Roman state.
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Introduction: Towards the *Aeneid*’s Tripartite Themes

Of the numerous themes that comprise Vergil’s *Aeneid*, the development of the epic’s hero, Aeneas, is one of the most prominent. Aeneas’ wanderings and his uncertainty about his fate gradually evolve over twelve books to the point where his movements and resolve clarify into his focused purpose for establishing the Roman people. Although the labor of establishing Rome in the epic’s latter six books is dramatized as no easier than are Aeneas’ travails in the epic’s first six books, Vergil accentuates the development of Aeneas’ character and his authority to rule with three related themes: the bee similes and imagery, the theme of the human passional element, particularly *ira*, and the dual theme of speech and action.

Each theme bears in important ways on the other two themes. The imagery of the bees represents Aeneas’ longed-for citizens who labor obediently to fulfill their leader’s governance, whether they do so as peaceful citizens constructing their city, or as relentless soldiers who destroy the cities of others. The bees first appear in one of the epic’s earliest similes, when Aeneas has his first view of an established city, Carthage. Here, the bees reflect Aeneas’ distant hopes for founding a city as well as his uncertain ability for achieving such a goal. The simile then resolves into a depiction of more actual figures in Aeneas’ mission when in book 6 the bees represent the future Romans which Aeneas will eventually engender. The bees next become, in a prophet’s interpretation, images for a conquering army which turns out in the epic’s narrative to be Aeneas’ own army taking its first major step in claiming Italy by invading Latium. The bees occur a fourth time in
another simile which depicts the comparably small event of a shepherd smoking bees out of a rocky den, in contrast to Aeneas’ purposeful and fierce charge against the Latins in the scene.

The passional element is, naturally, an important motivator for key events in the narrative. Not only does passion, particularly *ira*, drive Juno to harass Aeneas to such an extent, but passion also motivates Aeneas in an important way: his rage (*ira*) at seeing Helen seeking protection at the altar of Vesta (I argue, following Jeffrey Fish, that the scene is authentic, and take the scene as a significant depiction of Aeneas’ ability to control passion for his more purposeful goals of managing a people rationally) is effectively deferred throughout the epic until Aeneas murders Turnus at the epic’s conclusion, thereby asserting his superiority as a leader. Vergil depicts passion as an especially destructive force when passion overrules Dido. Though Vergil does not exempt Aeneas from passion, he does emphasize a leader’s need to govern and even utilize passion in accordance with reason.

Reason, Vergil’s third theme considered here, has what I take to signify a dual concept. Following the Greek *logos*, I take reason to mean both rational capacity and speaking capacity, or authority by reason and authority by speech. Vergil depicts Aeneas’ authority with respect to both uses of *logos*: initially by his ability to govern his men by speaking, then by his ability to govern them through action alone. The emphasis on *logos* evolves from the sort of performed rhetoric of speech—or, put another way, action effected through speech—to the more natural and cooperative understanding between citizens and their leader of their shared purpose. That Aeneas speaks more and acts less—or at least acts less purposefully—in the epic’s first half contrasts diametrically his ability to act more and
speak less in the epic’s latter half demonstrates, as Gilbert Highet has noted, Aeneas’
evolution into a leader whose purpose is so effective that his followers share this purpose
naturally and without the need for speech—that is, they share it with their own innate
reason as civilized individuals. Speech—logos, reason—evolves into action as Vergil
depicts his model civilization—Rome—being founded and operating as easily as the bees
in the first simile work in building up their metaphoric city.

Scholars have written on these themes extensively, and their dialogue overlaps and
interweaves in surprising and provocative ways. Sarah Spence’s discussions of both
speech and passion provide valuable insights into Vergil’s development of these correlated
and codependent if irreconcilable ideas. Karl Galinsky’s analysis of language and of the
epic’s structure brings to light the ways in which Vergil highlights his important themes of
language and speech at key moments in the narrative. Michael Putnam’s close treatment of
important passages where Vergil looks both forward into his own epic’s development as
well as backward to his predecessor Homer’s epics amplifies Vergil’s themes. Gilbert
Highet describes crucial aspects of the epic’s speeches, which represent Aeneas’
development in telling ways. Yvan Nadeau emphasizes the theme of Aeneas’ character
development into the ideal Roman leader by highlighting crucial links between Aristaeus’
character development in the fourth Georgic and Aeneas’ development in the Aeneid.
Yasmin Syed opens an important dialogue regarding the epic’s potential effects on its
audience, which underscores Vergil’s development of the two-part theme of speech and
reason by suggesting the epic has a didactic purpose. Blending these and other scholars’
insights in the manner which I offer highlights a theme that is critical to Vergil’s apparent
purposes for his epic, whether narrative or political. My focus here on logos and
civilization underscores a theme that would seem to be vital to any enduring work of epic poetry.
Chapter 1: Bees and Politics

Vergil employs bee similes and imagery at four significant points in the *Aeneid*—at 1.418-38, at 6.706-12, at 7.59-70, and at 12.574-92—both in order to advance the narrative and to depict various stages of the development of Aeneas’ character. The similes are worth considering at length for the way they reflect Aeneas’ evolving resolve to found the Roman nation, as well as his capacity for governing it. This capacity consists largely in Aeneas’ dual ability both for utilizing passion, *ira*, and for controlling this passion, and the bees are a key image of this dual capacity, particularly with respect to their capacity for *logos* (speech or reason) as it bears on their function as a metaphor for citizens. As the epic’s narrative develops and the prospect of founding the Roman nation becomes increasingly clearer, the bee simile and imagery evolve into a focused depiction of the state of Aeneas’ character at certain key moments. The simile’s first occurrence emphasizes civilization, as shown at 1.418-38 in Aeneas’ distant gaze from the hill above Carthage, where he admires the civilizing activity which he sees the Carthaginians accomplishing in building up their city. In the second occurrence, at 6.706-12, Aeneas observes the spirits of the future Roman race as bees while he is still a spectator of the future which, he learns in this book, he will engender. The bees recur again in the prophecy at 7.59-70, where they are interpreted as the focused, purposeful force of a conquering army. Because this depiction comes in a prophet’s vision, from the perspective of the Latins whom Aeneas has not yet reached, the force of the imagery remains at a remove, although this occurrence is a significant shift in the development of the simile throughout the epic from Aeneas’
primarily imaginative vision of his future nation to his more concrete means of effecting this vision by means of military force. The simile’s fourth occurrence comes at 12.574-92, where Vergil compares Aeneas’ and his army’s charge against the Latins to a shepherd smoking bees out of their hive. The movement from the bee image as Aeneas’ vision of peaceful, civilized creatures to the bees as embodiments either of a conquering army or as agents of chaos bears in significant ways both on Aeneas’ developing consciousness as leader of a nation, and on a second significant theme in the epic: the relationship between speech and civilization.

In book 1, Vergil employs the bee simile in order to represent Aeneas’ civilizing consciousness, which, at this point in the narration, is still a distant ambition. Lacking a location for founding his city, and lacking as well a body of citizens either to construct or to defend his city, Aeneas and the bee simile first occur at a remove from one another. When Aeneas and Achates have their first view of the city, Vergil describes the Carthaginians working on their city as bees at work in summer, and Aeneas’ wistful admiration:

Corripuere viam interea, qua semita monstrat.
Iamque ascendebant collem, qui plurimus urbi imminet adversasque aspectat desuper arces.
Miratur molem Aeneas, magalia quondam,
miratur portas strepitumque et strata viarum.
Instant ardentes Tyrii: pars ducere muros
pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco;
iura magistratusque legunt sanctumque senatum.
Hic portus alii effodiunt; his alta theatris
Meanwhile the two men
are hurrying on their way as the path leads,
now climbing a steep hill arching over the city,
looking down on the facing walls and high towers.
Aeneas marvels at its mass—once a cluster of huts—
he marvels at gates and bustling hum and cobbled streets.
The Tyrians press on with the work, some aligning the walls,
struggling to raise the citadel, trundling stones up slopes;
some picking the building sites and plowing out their boundaries,
others drafting laws, electing judges, a senate held in awe.
Here they’re dredging a harbor, there they lay foundations
deep for a theater, quarrying out of rock great columns
to form a fitting scene for stages still to come.

As hard at their tasks as bees in early summer,
that work the blooming meadows under the sun,
they escort a new brood out, young adults now,
or press the oozing honey into the combs, the nectar
brimming the bulging cells, or gather up the plunder
workers haul back in, or close ranks like an army,
driving the drones, that lazy crew, from home.
The hive seethes with life, exhaling the scent
of honey sweet thyme.

“How lucky they are,”
Aeneas cries, gazing up at the city’s heights,
“their walls are rising now!”

(I have used Fagles’s translation throughout except where a more literal
translation clarifies the argument, and I note my translation ad loc.)

The bees’ peaceful industry represents Aeneas’ ambition, yet this ambition remains some
distance from his means for achieving it, for at this point in the epic, he lacks both a clear
understanding of his fate, and lacks also the means for effecting this fate: specifically a
building site, and a military.

In book 6, where Aeneas sees the souls of the future Roman race like bees in
meadowlands on a summer day, the imagery likewise represents a distant vision, although
in this passage they become more concrete as Aeneas learns the future histories of these Roman souls from Anchises some lines later in the book:

And now Aeneas sees in the valley’s depths
a sheltered grove and rustling wooded brakes
and the Lethe flowing past the homes of peace.

Around it hovered numberless races, nations of souls

Aen. 6.703-18
like bees in meadowlands on a cloudless summer day
that settle on flowers, riots of color, swarming round
the lilies’ lustrous sheen, and the whole field comes alive
with a humming murmur. Struck by the sudden sight,
Aeneas, all unknowing, wonders aloud, and asks:
“What is the river over there? And who are they
who crowd the banks in such a growing throng?”
His father Anchises answers: “They are the spirits
owed a second body by the Fates. They drink deep
of the river Lethe’s currents there, long drafts
that will set them free of cares, oblivious forever.
How long I have yearned to tell you, show them to you,
face-to-face, yes, as I count the tally out
of all my children. So all the more
you can rejoice with me in Italy, found at last.” Aen. 6.812-30
The bees here, as it turns out, have narratives and life histories as told by Anchises, and as such, they become more substantive for Aeneas and embody in more concrete ways his ambitions for founding Rome than could his wistful admiration at the Carthaginian citizens, about whom Aeneas knows almost nothing. Likewise, the simile also becomes more concrete for Vergil’s Roman audience, who would have recognized that the histories of these figures had already been realized, and that they represented the Roman ethos.

The civilizing element in both these scenes represents, among other things, Vergil’s key departure from his predecessor Homer’s depiction of bees, at least in the first half of
the *Aeneid* where Aeneas has yet to fully realize and embody his civilizing mission. The parallel between the two scenes consists mainly in that Aeneas’ intentions for founding Rome remain vague, since he lacks both the means for establishing the Roman race as well as lacks a physical site to settle, and also consists in that Aeneas lacks a clear vision for establishing his people. Once Aeneas does resolve his intentions and begins to gradually realize his mission following Anchises’ prophecy in book 6, the simile returns to closer parallels with Homer’s use of the bee similes. However, Vergil’s modification of the simile in his epic’s first half—to include the peaceful business of constructing and managing a city—is in clear contrast to Homer’s use of the bee simile in the *Iliad*, and is a more elaborate development of Homer’s use of the simile in the *Odyssey*. Homer uses the bee simile in books 2 and 12 of the *Iliad*, both times within the context of the extended Trojan War that is never concluded within the epic:

> ἥτις ἔθνεα εἰςι μελισσάων ἀδινάων
> πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομενάων,
> βοτρυδόν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ᾽ ἀνθεσιν εἰαρινοίσιν:
> αἱ μὲν τ᾽ ἔνθα ἀλίς πεποτήμαται, αἱ δὲ τε ἔνθα:
> ὡς τὸν ἔθνεα πολλὰ νεῶν ἀπὸ καὶ κλισιάων
> ἴμισός προπαροθε βαθείς ἐστιχόντο
> ἱλαδὸν εἰς ἀγαρίν: μετὰ δὲ σφισιν ὅσσα δεδήμει
> ὀτρύνουσ’ ἰέναι Διός ἀγγελος: οἱ δ᾽ ἀγέροντο.
> τετρήχει δ᾽ ἄγαρη, ὑπὸ δὲ στεναχίζετο γαῖα
> λαὸν ἱζόντων, ὅμαδος δ᾽ ἦν: ἐννέα δὲ σφεας
> κήρυκες βοῶντες ἐρήτουν, εἰ ποτ᾽ ἀὔτῆς

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11
Rank and file

streamed behind and rushed like swarms of bees
pouring out of a rocky hollow, burst on endless burst,
bunched in clusters seething over the first spring blooms,
dark hordes swirling into the air, this way, that way—
so the many armed platoons from the ships and tents
came marching on, close-file, along the deep wide beach
to crowd the meeting grounds, and Rumor, Zeus’ crier,
like wildfire blazing among them, whipped them on.
The troops assembled. The meeting grounds shook.
The earth groaned and rumbled under the huge weight
as soldiers took positions—the whole place in uproar.
Nine heralds shouted out, trying to keep some order,
“Quiet, battalions, silence! Hear your royal kings!”
The men were forced to their seats, marshaled into ranks,
the shouting died away . . . silence.

King Agamemnon

rose to his feet, raising high in hand the scepter
The image here is of an unruly yet a furious and powerful force charging out, and checked by the authority of a leader preparing to speak. (However impulsive Agamemnon is characterized in the epic, the Achaeans do obey him as their leader.) Here, Homer depicts the soldiers as a furious swarm capable of destruction, incited by Rumor like wildfire. Their purpose is not the steady labor of constructing a city, but the headlong force of destroying one. Significantly, their force is checked and directed by a leader’s speech, Agamemnon’s. This model of action checked by speech also informs Vergil’s depiction of a core dynamic at work in civilization: the relationship between passion and logos (speech or reason), which also bears in important ways on his depiction of the bees and Aeneas’ evolution.

Homer’s second use of the bee simile, in book 12 of the Iliad occurs in a similar martial context, although here the emphasis is on the force and power of the soldiers who are represented as bees, rather than on the relationship between headlong force (passion) and speech or reason (logos). In this simile, the Achaeans’ ferocity in defending the wall against the Trojan onslaught parallels wasps or bees defending their homes:

δὴ ῥά τότ᾽ ὀμωξεν καὶ ὃ πεπλήγετο μηρῶ

Ἅσιος Ὑρτακίδης, καὶ ἀλαστήσας ἔπος ἤδη:

‘Ｚεῦ πάτερ ἢ ῥά νυ καὶ σὺ φιλομενίδης ἐτέτυξο

πάγχω μάλ᾽ : οὗ γὰρ ἐγωγ’ ἐφάμην ἢρωας Αχαιοὺς

σχῆσειν ἡμέτερόν γε μένους καὶ χεῖρας ᾧπτους,

οἱ δ’, ὡς τε σφῆκες μέσον αἰώνοι ἥε μέλισσαι

οἰκία ποιήσωται ὃδϊ ἐπὶ παιπαλοέσση.
οὐδ᾽ ἀπολείπουσιν κούλον δόμον, ἄλλα μένοντες
ἀνδρας θηρητήρας ἀμύνονται περὶ τέκνων,
ὁς οἳ γ’ οὐκ ἐθέλουσι πυλῶν καὶ δὺ’ ἐόντε
χάσσασθαι πρίν γ’ ἥ κατακτάμεν ἥ ἁλῶναι.  

Il. 12.162-72

And now with a deep groan and pounding both thighs
Asius son of Hyrtacus cried in anguish, “Father Zeus—
so even you are an outright liar after all!

I never dreamed these heroic Argive ranks
could hold back our charge, our invincible arms.

Look, like wasps quick and pinched at the waist
or bees who build their hives on a rocky path,
they never give up their hollow house, they hold on,
keep the honey-hunters at bay, fight for their young.

So these men will never budge from the gates
though they’re only two defenders—
not till they kill us all or we kill them!”

Il. 12.188-99

Here, again, is absent the sense of calm progress which Vergil depicts as a city’s proper
activity in connection with Aeneas’ distant dream of founding a city. Rather, here the sense
of fierce deadlock dominates the immediate context of Polypoetes and Leonteus defending
the Achaean wall while Asius and his soldiers storm it, as well as represents the broader
deadlock in the war for Troy. This scene would also appear to inform Vergil’s development
of the human element of passion, which Aeneas learns to control and utilize productively in
his own presentations of martial contexts. More to the point, each of Homer’s uses of the bee simile in the *Iliad* informs a distinct aspect of Aeneas’ development throughout the *Aeneid*: the first use informs Aeneas’ need to govern his passion with *logos* if he is to lead effectively, and the second use informs Aeneas’ proper use of passion as a force for effecting his ambitions. I consider each aspect in respective chapters below.

Homer’s use of the bee simile in book 13 of the *Odyssey* also informs Vergil’s narrative development, although in this case Vergil utilizes it for his more general theme of civilization than for any particular aspect of Aeneas’ character. Homer’s simile in *Odyssey* book 13 functions to trigger what William Scott calls a “simileme,” which is meant as a trigger for an audience’s associations with particular images which appear in the simile. Scott defines a simileme as “the nonverbal background material shared by poet and audience” (19), which a particular simile or image evokes when it appears in the poetry. In book 13 of the *Odyssey*, the bees and the olive tree suggest imagery associated—albeit retroactively, after Odysseus has spent some time in his halls—with Odysseus’ homestead when Odysseus, asleep, is brought to Ithaca by the Phaecians, and they land at the special harbor of Phorcys and the cave which the nymphs hold sacred:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{αὐτάρ ἐπὶ κρατός λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη,} \\
\text{ἄγχόθι δ’ αὐτῆς ἄντρον ἐπήρατον ἡροειδές,} \\
\text{ἱρὸν νυμφάδον αἱ νηώδες καλέωνται.} \\
\text{ἐν δὲ κρητηρές τε καὶ ἁμφιφορῆς ἔσιν} \\
\text{λάνυνι: ἔνθα δ’ ἔπειτα τιθαίωσουσι μέλισσαι.} \\
\text{ἐν δ’ ἰστοὶ λίθοι περιμήκες, ἔνθα τε νύμφαι} \\
\text{φάρε’ ψφαίνουσιν ἄλπορφυρα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι:}
\end{align*}
\]
At the harbor’s head a branching olive stands
with a welcome cave nearby it, dank with sea-mist,
sacred to nymphs of the springs we call the Naiads.
There are mixing-bowls inside and double-handled jars,
crafted of stone, and bees store up their honey in the hollows.
There are long stone looms as well, where the nymphs weave out
their webs from clouds of sea-blue wool—a marvelous sight—
and a wellspring flows forever. The cave has two ways in,
one facing the North Wind, a pathway down for mortals;
the other, facing the South, belongs to the gods,
no man may go that way . . .
it is the path for all the deathless powers.

In this scene, the bees “storing up honey, τιθαίβωσοντι and the “long-leaved olive tree,
tανύφυλλος ἑλαίη“ suggest Odysseus’ homestead with the olive tree bedpost, and his
long-settled estate which the suitors have been devouring. The bee imagery here provides
Vergil a parallel for his use of the simile in book 1 of the Aeneid, where Aeneas’ first
association with the bees occurs in the context of his lacking, although imagining or
dreaming that he might have, the capacity for founding the city he envisions. Of further
interest is that Homer’s bees here remain “offstage”: they do not move or act within the scene as concrete agents, but rather they serve as symbols or triggers for the civilizing and domestic themes surrounding Odysseus. Vergil develops the civilizing theme in parallel to Homer’s use of the bee image here especially in the first half of the Aeneid, where Aeneas’ civilizing mission is still his indefinite aspiration. A noteworthy parallel to Odysseus’ arrival in Ithaca is that once Aeneas’ mission has become clear to him at the end of book 6, he leaves the underworld through one of the “geminae Somni portae, twin Gates of Sleep” (6.893), to ascend in full knowledge and resolve towards his certain fate.

In the second half of the Aeneid, which dramatizes Aeneas actualizing his civilizing mission through military activity, Vergil develops the bee simile around his new theme of war in keeping with Homer’s use of the simile in his epic of war, the Iliad. The shift in Vergil’s depiction of the bees begins in book 7 of the Aeneid, where the imagery there mirrors Aeneas’ prophetic visions in the underworld when the imagery represents the Latins’ prophecy for the invading people who will conquer them:

Laurus erat tecti medio in penetralibus altis,
sacra comam multosque metu servata per annos,
quam pater inventam, primas cum conderet arces,
ipse ferebatur Phoebus sacrasse Latinus
Laurentisque ab ea nomen posuisse colonis.
Huius apes summum densae (mirabile dictu),
stridore ingenti liquidum trans aethera vectae,
obanedere apicem, ex pedibus per mutua nexit
examen subitum ramo frondente pependit.
Continuo vates: “Externum cernimus,” inquit,
“adventare virum et partis petere agmen easdem
partibus ex isdem et summa dominarier arce.”

Far in the palace depths there stood a laurel,
itst foliage sacred, tended with awe for many years.
Father Latinus, they say, had found it once himself,
building his first stronghold, hallowed it to Phoebus
and named his settlers after the laurel’s name, Laurentes.

Now sweeping toward this tree from a clear blue sky—
a marvel, listen, a squadron of bees came buzzing
to high heaven, swarmed in an instant, massed
on the tree’s crown and hooking feet together,
bent the laurel’s leafy branches down.

A prophet cries at once: “A stranger—I see him!
A whole army of men arriving out of the same quarter,
bent on the same goal, to rule our city’s heights!”

Vergil’s “mirabile dictu” is an interesting aside that would seem to support O’Hara’s
discussion that Vergil threads his epic with subtle warnings about the possible failure of
Augustan order (129-32). More to the point, while in this scene the civilizing theme
persists in the bee image, following Anchises’ revelations in book 6, the bee imagery has
shifted to suggest the purposeful and direct activity of a military. Like the simile in book 1,
where the Carthaginians as bees represent civilization at a remove from Aeneas’ capacity
for effecting the civilization he envisions, the bees in book 7, suggesting an invading military, also stand at a remove for being the interpretation of a prophet. Although Vergil has shifted his epic’s emphasis from a focus on homecoming to a focus on war—or at least, to a focus on the struggle inherent in Aeneas’ homecoming to his rightful land—he retains his basic pattern of distance between the theme and his protagonist. Just as in the epic’s first half Aeneas’ vision becomes increasingly concrete when he learns the prophecy of the Roman race he will engender, in the second half the prophet’s interpretation of the bees solidifies from the vision of an omen into Aeneas’ actual army and direct action upon Latins which culminates in book 12.

In book 12, the simile of bees becomes immediate and fierce as Aeneas and his troops charge Laurentum and the citizens panic under the charge:

Exoritur trepidos inter discordia civis:
urbem alii reserare iubent et pandere portas
Dardanidis ipsumque trahunt in moenia regem,
arma ferunt alii et pergunt defendere muros.
Inclusas ut cum latebroso in pumice pastor
vestigavit apes fumoque implevit amaro:
illae intus trepidae rerum per cerea castra
discurrunt magnisque acuunt stridoribus iras;
volvitur ater odor tectis, tum murmure caeco
intus saxa sonant, vacuas it fumus ad auras. Aen. 12.583-92

And Discord surges up in the panic-stricken citizens,
some insisting the gates be flung wide to the Dardans, yes, and they hale the king himself toward the walls. Others seize on weapons, rush to defend the ramparts . . . Picture a shepherd tracking bees to their rocky den, closed up in the clefts he fills with scorching smoke and all inside, alarmed by the danger, swarming round through their stronghold walled with wax, hone sharp their rage to a piercing buzz and the black reek goes churning through their house and the rocks hum with a blind din and the smoke spews out into thin air.

_Aen._ 12.679-89

Here, the bees are the victims of the _pastor_ who has tracked them, wittingly and intentionally with the purpose of smoking them out of their hive, in a clear act of aggression. An interesting inversion of Aeneas’ initial admiration at the Carthaginians occurs here, with Aeneas’ vague wistfulness transformed into his direct action of conquering a city. With his resolve having solidified following Anchises’ prophecy, the bees and the citizens they represent become transformed from distant figures about which Aeneas dreams, into actual figures whom Aeneas must either assimilate into his civilization or conquer.

A predecessor for the theme of civilization in Vergil’s bee imagery is found in the fourth _Georgic_, which also depicts a comparable character development in the figure of Aristaeus. Significantly, that the bees there lack the passional element of human nature is Vergil’s way of emphasizing the element of _logos_, particularly reason or speech as an
ordering and governing force. But just as with Aeneas, who must develop his rational capacity to the point where he can use it to govern effectively, Aristaeus must comprehend his moral error in order to manage his bees effectively. It is through Proteus’ narration (another meaning of logos), rather than through experience and action (as is the case with Aeneas), that Aristaeus’ knowledge develops to the point where he may earn back his bees, but a chiastic pattern around civilization and government remains nonetheless. Aeneas is the future founder of the Roman people, and he must be or become worthy of such a high honor as the Roman moral paradigm. Aristaeus is also the figure of a leader, albeit the leader of a metaphorical civilization as represented in the bees. Vergil highlights the theme of civilization within the bee imagery in the fourth Georgic, depicting them as highly civilized. They have, as Jasper Griffin points out (Latin Poets 165), domus, lar, sedes, statio, tectum, fores, limina, portae, aula, oppidum, patria, penates, sedes augusta, and urbs, as well as “naturas . . . quas Iuppiter ipse / addidit, characters . . . which Jupiter himself gave [them]” (Georg. 4.149, my translation). Their characters given by Jupiter are not unlike the Romans’ imperium sine fine, also given at Jupiter’s decree (Aen. 1.279). Being depictions of the ideal citizens, the bees in the fourth Georgic are so dedicated to their labor that they will die for it (saepe etiam errando in cotibus alas / attrivere ultroque animam sub fasce dedere [Georg. 4.203-04], Griffin, Latin Poets 165). That Vergil also describes them as Quirites at line 201 suggests they are a kind of prototype (if a problematic one) of Roman civilization, not unlike Aristaeus as a kind of prototype of Aeneas. The bees also possess the “characteristic Roman virtues” of labor, fortitudo, and concordia (Griffin, Latin Poets 165). Significantly, the society which the bees represent altogether lacks the arts. Griffin asserts that Vergil intentionally did not connect the bees
with poetry or song, despite the ubiquitous association of bees with poetry in antiquity (167-68). This is perhaps because Vergil wished to depict the ideal Roman society as lacking—or at least being able to control—passion, which is what causes Orpheus, the model poet, to commit such an error in the fourth Georgic when his *dementia* (*Georg.* 4.488) and *furor* (*Georg.* 4.495) overwhelm his reason and the command (both being versions of *logoi*) of Proserpina and Pluto, and which also influences key events in the *Aeneid*, particularly those of Juno and Dido. But in light of Vergil’s emphasis on speech as a civilizing force, particularly in the *Aeneid* a force that can govern and steer the passional element of human nature, the bees’ apparent lack of passion would suggest not a simple lack, but rather a control of passion for the purposes of constructing their civilization.

Vergil’s depiction of the bees in books 1 and 6 as peaceful civilizers, then his depiction of them in books 7 and 12 as military forces, suggests he viewed them as flexible and as complex as he viewed human nature, which requires for its civilization both martial prowess and power, and reason and order. In this light, it is worth turning to a few examples of Vergil’s depiction of the human passional element and how it evolves throughout the epic, particularly the element so characteristic of Aeneas and Juno from early in the epic to the concluding scene, the element of *ira*. 
Chapter 2: Passion and Speech

Vergil depicts the passional element of human nature, particularly *ira*, as highly ambiguous. It motivates both destructive actions, as in Juno’s case, and it motivates constructive actions, as in Aeneas’ case. While the overarching goal of the narrative is Aeneas’ establishment of the Roman race, Vergil highlights a balance between the themes of reason and passion, particularly *ira*. Aeneas must develop into the model founder and leader of his race partly through developing his capacity for speech and for reason above and beyond his susceptibility to passion. Vergil depicts Aeneas’ developing rational capacities in tandem with his increasing control over his passions, particularly *ira*, and this passional element is as important to the narrative as is the element of reason. As Putnam suggests, the epic cycles around the themes of wrath, grief, resentment, and passion:

“Virgil . . . establishes a careful cycle between the beginning and the conclusion of the epic, centered among other specific ways on anger, which itself contains a strong passional component” (104). In this light, Aeneas parallels Juno with her *memor irae* and her obsession for vengeance, especially considering his obsession at the epic’s conclusion with avenging Pallas’ death, and his impulsive act of doing so. This impulsiveness colors Aeneas’ final act with the passional element which Vergil depicts as ambiguous and highly suspect throughout the epic (Putnam 104). This parallel with Juno, even in light of Aeneas’ resentment and obsession with vengeance, situates Aeneas in a relatively divine position over the Latins. Regarding Aeneas’ character as it evolves throughout the epic, and
regarding his developing capacity for action, this position has further significance in light of the theme of speech as a civilizing force, below.

An important aspect of this passional element within Aeneas’ actions is Aeneas’ killing of Turnus at the epic’s close, which comes across as an impulsive act of rage fired by seeing Pallas’ belt across Turnus’ shoulders, rather than as an action achieved through the kind of rational deliberation one might expect from the leader of a race. The action does, however, have important implications for and make important commentaries upon both Aeneas’ capacity for leadership, and his implied position as model Roman:

_Stetit acer in armis_

_Aeneas, volvens oculos, dextramque repressit;_

_et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo_

coeperat, infelix umero cum apparuit alto

_balteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis_

_Pallantis pueri, victum quem volnere Turnus_

_straverat atque umeris inimicum insigne gerebat._

_Ille, oculis postquam saevi monimenta doloris_

_exuviasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira_

terribilis, “Tune hinc spoliis indute meorum_

eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc volnere, Pallas_

_immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit,”_

hoc dicens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit_

_fervidus._

_Aen. 12.938-51_
Aeneas, ferocious in armor, stood there, still,
shifting his gaze, and held his sword-arm back,
holding himself back too as Turnus’ words began
to sway him more and more . . . when all at once
he caught sight of the fateful sword-belt of Pallas,
swept over Turnus’ shoulder, gleaming with shining studs
Aeneas knew by heart. Young Pallas, whom Turnus had overpowered,
taken down with a wound, and now his shoulder flaunted
his enemy’s battle-emblem like a trophy. Aeneas,
soon as his eyes drank in that plunder—keepsake
of his own savage grief—flaring up in fury,
terrible in his rage, he cries: “Decked in the spoils
you stripped from one I loved—escape my clutches? Never—
Pallas strikes this blow, Pallas sacrifices you now,
makes you pay the price with your own guilty blood!”

In the same breath, blazing with wrath he plants
his iron sword hilt-deep in his enemy’s heart.  

In light of Vergil’s reliance on Homer for both certain patterns of his narrative
development and for key details of his epic, Vergil’s Roman readers would be shocked
both by the killing, and by the epic’s sudden close. The sharp contrast suggests that Vergil
was acutely aware of the expectation that he develop some version of the ending to the
Iliad, yet deliberately undermined that expectation in order to emphasize his own original
ending. One explanation for Vergil’s departure from Homer is that Vergil intentionally
incorporates the human passional element, specifically *ira*, into his hero’s character because Vergil understands the usefulness of the passional element, and perhaps also the necessity for it, in effecting human ambitions. An alternative perspective would suggest that Vergil preferred to emphasize the larger arc of the history of his race—both the actual arc of which he and his society were living elements, and the ideological arc described in Roman literature, in Roman legend, and in his Homeric model—that was driven in part by bloodshed and war. The history of the race which his hero will found in Italy depends on this race’s expulsion from burning Troy, which in turn depends on Menelaus’ vengeance upon that city (as well as on Achilles’ rage), which, in its turn, is due to Paris’ erotic seduction of Helen. Within this basic causal chain, which is the background story of Vergil’s hero and of the race he will found, there is little room for clemency if this chain is to reach a meaningful depiction of the Roman race as strong and worthy to rule. Vergil, bearing these things in mind, sets up his epic’s unexpected conclusion by threading his narrative with the passional elements which, paradoxically, both result in disaster at key moments in the epic, and which also lead eventually to Roman glory. Significant, too, is that Aeneas acts impulsively just as “Turnus’ words began / to sway him more and more, *et iam iamque magis cunctantem flectere sermo / coeperat*” (12.1096-97; 12.940-41), suggesting both the power of speech and the importance of proper *action* despite the influence of persuasive (and perhaps corruptive) speech. Although Aeneas’ final act is impulsive and violent, and perhaps also abrupt and shocking to readers of Vergil’s day, it does serve the dual purposes of both conquering Latium so that the Roman race can eventually be founded, and asserting Aeneas’ own dominance and superiority over his enemy.
Although Aeneas’ impulsive murder of Turnus directly contradicts Anchises’ advice in book 6 that he “parcere subiectis, spare the defeated” (6.853), the murder would seem to be justified within Vergil’s epic in light of Aeneas’ evolution into the ideal leader, and in light of Turnus’ position as an example of an inferior leader. As Gransden suggests, Turnus represents an “outdated concept of personal heroism,” being “the focus . . . of a structurally and morally significant antithesis” (180) to Vergil’s depictions of Rome’s ideal hero and leader. Putnam, too, suggests that Turnus represents “an earlier Aeneas who is challenged by a stronger power” (91), not only Aeneas but also the will of Jupiter, and who has not yet evolved into one who can control or embody that power himself. This would suggest Vergil’s emphasis on Aeneas’ evolution into a divine-like power, or at least into a power sanctioned by divinity and who can be justified in determining the fates of certain mortals. However, insofar as clementia was another means of exercising superiority over one’s enemies, and even represented a form of personal nobility, one also sees how Vergil offers his Roman readers the opportunity to judge Aeneas as inferior and less morally evolved than they by committing the impulsive murder. If Turnus represents an underdeveloped Aeneas, then perhaps Aeneas represents in part an underdeveloped Roman as measured by the ethos of Vergil’s day.

As though preparing his readers to grasp the importance of Aeneas’ final impulsive act, Vergil insinuates the necessity of the passional element at a key moment in his epic: in book 2 where Aeneas spares Helen. Although the passage’s authenticity is highly contested (though Jeffrey Fish makes a valuable case for including it in the epic as Vergil’s composition, below), taking the scene as a parallel to Aeneas’ murder of Turnus marks key points in Aeneas’ character development that demonstrate his evolution from a leader who
lacks both the material means for founding his nation—specifically land and a body of forces—and also lacks the rational and speech capacities necessary not only for governing a people, but also for utilizing *ira* effectively, into a leader who possesses and governs both of these elements. The bees illustrate this development by showing in the final simile the way that Aeneas has evolved into a leader who has been able to reverse the destruction he suffered initially at Troy—turning himself from the victim of conquerors into a conqueror—and who finally is able to accomplish, and even be justified in accomplishing, the destruction of a city and the conquest of a people in the name of establishing his race.

The scene with Helen is one of the earliest instances of Aeneas’ *ira*, and parallels the scene with Turnus to the extent that Aeneas’ *ira* there is similarly impulsive and unreasoned; for it is not Aeneas who decides he should not kill Helen, but Venus who advises him away from doing so, and Aeneas simply obeys her. The scene with Helen also provides a valuable contrast to the scene with Turnus in light of the fact that Aeneas’ impulsive murder of Helen would serve no purpose except vengeance, rather than the more effective purpose of conquering Latium and opening the way for founding the Roman race.

When during Troy’s burning Aeneas discovers Helen “*limina Vestae / servantem et tacitam secreta in sede latentem*, protected by Vesta’s threshold and hiding silently in her secret spot” (2.567-68), he burns to kill her and to avenge (*ulciscor*) his country:

> “Exarsere ignes animo; subit *ira* cadentem
ulcisci patriam et sceleratas sumere poenas.

…………………………………………………

> Non ita: namque etsi nullum memorabile nomen
feminea in poena est, nec habet victoria laudem,
extinxisse nefas tamen et sumpsisse merentis
laudabor poenas, animumque explesse iuvabit
ultricis flammae, et cineres satiasse meorum.” Aen. 2.575-76, 583-87

“Out it flared,
the fire inside my soul, my rage ablaze to avenge [ulcisci]
our fallen country—pay Helen back, crime for crime.

………………………………………………………………
Not for all the world. No fame, no memory to be won
for punishing a woman: such victory reaps no praise
but to stamp this abomination out as she deserves,
to punish her now, they’ll sing my praise for that.
What joy, to glut my heart with the fires of vengeance,
bring some peace to the ashes of my people!” Aen. 2.712-14, 722-27

As Aeneas rationalizes his options, Venus appears and advises him away from
misdirecting his effort onto the wrong target, and instead to flee the burning city with his
father, wife, and son, thus turning his efforts in more productive directions. Although the
passage’s authenticity is contested, including it in the epic does highlight Aeneas’
evolution into the ideal leader of the Roman race, especially in light of his ability to, in the
first scene, resist acting impulsively on his ira and instead heed the words of one wiser than
he (a goddess), and, in the second scene, resist the words of one who is lesser than he (the
conquered Turnus) and act—impulsively albeit purposefully—on his ira. In this light, Karl
Galinsky’s suggestion that “the final scene is a microcosm of the epic” (323) is especially
provocative, not only for being another example of ring composition within the epic, but also for further highlighting Aeneas’ parallel acts of ira at the epic’s beginning and its conclusion, which demonstrates his capacity for judging speech (Venus’ good advice versus Turnus’ bad advice) and for using ira to effect desirable purposes. Both of these components come to light in Fish’s analysis of the passage’s authenticity.

Fish’s argument centers around the evidence that, in the scene with Helen in book 2, Vergil worked partly to dramatize Philodemus’ points in his treatise On Anger. In addition to addressing the authenticity of the passage describing the scene with Helen, Fish’s analysis raises a number of interesting points regarding Aeneas’ ira, and his development into the kind of rational leader who can govern such a strong passion as ira at the same time that he governs speech, logos, whether his own active use of it or his passive understanding of it. (Aristotle’s description in the Nicomachean Ethics, below, of the dual nature of logos, that is, its active-passive characteristics, facilitates this perspective.) Fish points out that “Aeneas’ attempt to kill Helen is the last of a series of foolish actions that he undertook the night Troy was falling” (123), which actions also include disregarding the ghost of Hector’s advice at 2.289-95 to take the city’s gods and flee, disregarding the figure of Panthus who carries images of the Trojan gods in his hands (sacra manu victosque deos . . . / ipse trahit, 2.320-21) and thus who might serve as a reminder of Hector’s command (Fish 123), and urging his comrades to rush into arms and die (“moriamur et in media arma ruamus. / Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem, But let us die, go plunging into the thick of battle. / One hope saves the defeated: they know they can’t be saved!” [2.353-54]), which incites furor into their hearts (Sic animis iuvenum furor additus [2.355]) and leads to numerous deaths for both armies in the chaotic struggle that follows. Another implication
of Fish’s observation that Aeneas’ encounter with Helen is the last of a series of foolish actions is that, by not killing Helen in rage, Aeneas’ *ira* is deferred throughout the narrative until the epic’s conclusion, when Aeneas can employ this *ira* at an opportune and effective moment when he murders Turnus and conquers Latium. In light of these perspectives, Aeneas’ *ira* would seem to be as significant a component of his character as his *logos*, that is, his reasoning and speech capacity, especially when *ira* is exercised in tandem with *logos*. When exercised in accordance with his *logos* at the epic’s conclusion, Aeneas’ *ira* results in the Trojan conquest of Latium and the eventual founding of Rome. The act is not an empty one of vengeance upon a figure who can serve no purpose for founding Rome (Helen), and who in fact has served the negative purpose of destroying Troy. Neither is the act a feeble one of accommodating or assimilating into his nation a weaker figure such as Turnus who cannot control his passions with reason. Rather, it is a purposeful act upon a figure who serves a clear purpose: a king whom Aeneas dominates and whose people and land Aeneas conquers in the name of his own (and his audience’s) people.

Another implication of Fish’s argument for the passage’s authenticity is that Vergil deliberately modified Homer’s depiction of Odysseus’ wanderings, depicting Aeneas’ parallel wanderings not as the result of Odyssean moral error (his *hubris* with Polyphemus), but rather as the result of divine intervention (Fish 124) and, by implication, of divine plan. It is, after all, Jupiter’s decree that the Roman race be given *imperium sine fine*. In contrast to the plans of the gods who shape the broader arc of Roman civilization, Aeneas’ moral error of murdering Helen, had he committed it, would represent the complete breakdown of civilization had he violated a fundamental moral law of sparing suppliants at an altar. Although Vergil’s management of his narrative with the *deus ex*
machina device steers his epic towards a more politically purposeful conclusion, the immediacy of Aeneas’ rage at Helen nonetheless remains a vivid moment in the narrative and in Aeneas’ characterization, particularly with the keyword *ira* in line 2.575 recalling the *ira* of savage Juno in line 1.4, and also anticipating Aeneas’ *ira* at Turnus’ murder in line 12.946. In the Helen scene, with the passional element that is vivid in it, Aeneas’ impulse to “*animumque explesse iuvabit / ultricis flammae, et cineres satiasse meorum,* glut my heart with the fires of vengeance, / bring some peace to the ashes of my people!” (2.586-87, 2.726-27) takes place within the context of Troy’s destruction and the dissolution of the Latin race, as well as with the threat of the collapse of the key civil ethos of sparing supplicants at an altar. In the parallel scene with Turnus, Aeneas’ similar emotions occur within the more productive, albeit violent, context of the founding of his city and the establishment of the Roman race.

Galinsky argues that Vergil strove to depict Aeneas’ anger as not only desirable, but even more effective than clemency, especially in light of two key influences: Roman rhetoric, especially Cicero, and Greek philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle. As Galinsky points out (327), Cicero determined that the orator’s principal aim was to arouse the *ira* of the judge, largely so that that *ira* could be directed against the accused defendant: “*orator magnus et gravis cum iratum adversario iudicem facere vellet*” (*De Orat*. 1.220). Galinsky’s point would suggest Vergil’s awareness, even perhaps his expectation, that his audience would judge Aeneas’ actions, and that their act of judgment might serve as a way by which the Roman ethos could be solidified, and even exercised insofar as his audience’s mental act of judgment served as a mode of civic participation. In Greek philosophy, Galinsky points out, two major sources for Vergil both discuss anger favorably: Plato and
Aristotle. Plato in book 4 of the *Republic* depicts anger, θυμός, as a motivator for courage (one of Plato’s four cardinal virtues) for spurring the individual to action, and even depicts anger as aligned with reason, logos (Galinsky 328). This alignment with logos is important partly for the way it leads the individual to “fight for what he believes to be just, συμμαχεῖ τῷ δοκοῦντι δικαίῳ” (*Republic* 440c). Elsewhere in book 4 of the *Republic*, where Plato discusses the three components of the soul and the four cardinal virtues, he elaborates on his pattern of justice, δικαιοσύνη, within the individual as analogous to justice within the city (435a-435c). In Vergilian—or, more specifically, Aeneidic—terms, one might say that the ideal leader (Aeneas) stands as a microcosm of the ideal city (Rome), just as justice in the individual citizen is a microcosm of justice in the city. Plato also discusses in book 4 anger as being a useful motivator to action, particularly the preservative emotion of courage (429c). In this light, his description at 439e-440d of anger as aligned with reason, logos, is especially useful:

\[\text{τὸ δὲ δῆ τοῦ θυμοῦ καὶ ὁ θυμοῦμεθα πότερον τρίτον, ἢ τούτων ποτέρῳ ἢν εἴῃ ὀμοφυές;}
\]

\[\text{ίσως, ἔφη, τῷ ἔτερῳ, τῷ ἐπιθυμητικῷ. . . .}
\]

\[\text{oὐκοῦν καὶ ἄλλῳ, ἔφην, πολλαχοῦ αἰσθανόμεθα, ὅταν βιάζονται τίνα παρὰ τὸν λογισμὸν ἐπιθυμίαι, λοιδοροῦντά τε αὐτὸν καὶ θυμοῦμενον τῷ βιαζομένῳ ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ ὅσπερ δυοῖν στασιαζόντοι σύμμαχον τῷ λόγῳ γιγνόμενον τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ τοιοῦτοῦ; ταῖς δ᾽ ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτὸν κοινωνήσαντα, αἱροῦντος λόγον μὴ δεῖν ἀντιπράττειν, οἶμαι σε οὐκ ἃν φάναι γενομένου ποτὲ ἐν σωτῷ τοῦ τοιοῦτοι αἰσθέσθαι, οἶμαι δ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἐν ἄλλῳ. . . . τί δὲ, ἢν δ᾽ ἐγώ, ὅταν τις οὐρται ἄδικεῖν; οὐχ ὃς ἃν γενναῖότερος} \]
Now, is the spirited part by which we get angry a third part or is it of the same nature as either of the other two?

Perhaps it’s like the appetitive part. . . .

Besides, don’t we often notice in other cases that when appetite forces someone contrary to rational calculation, he reproaches himself and gets angry with that in him that’s doing the forcing, so that of the two factions
that are fighting a civil war, so to speak, spirit \( \thetaυμός \) allies itself with reason \( \lambdaόγος \)? But I don’t think you can say that you’ve ever seen spirit, either in yourself or anyone else, ally itself with an appetite to do what reason has decided must not be done. . . . What happens when a person thinks that he has done something unjust? Isn’t it true that the nobler he is, the less he resents it if he suffers hunger, cold, or the like at the hands of someone whom he believes to be inflicting this on him justly, and won’t his spirit, as I say, refuse to be aroused? . . . But what happens if, instead, he believes that someone has been unjust to him? Isn’t the spirit within him boiling and angry, fighting for what he believes to be just? Won’t it endure hunger, cold, and the like and keep on till it is victorious, not ceasing from noble actions until it either wins, dies, or calms down, called to heel by the reason \( \lambdaόγος \) within him, like a dog by a shepherd \( νομεύς \)?

Spirit is certainly like that. And, of course, we made the auxiliaries in our city like dogs obedient to the rulers, who are themselves like shepherds \( ποιμήν \) of a city.

You understand well what I’m trying to say. But also reflect on this further point. . . . The position of the spirited part seems to be the opposite of what we thought before. Then we thought of it as something appetitive, but now we say that it is far from being that, for in the civil war in the soul it aligns itself far more with the rational part.

The argument moves, as Socrates explains, from anger as part of the appetitive, irrational part of the soul to the rational part of the soul, the part harboring \textit{logos}, and the part that
governs the leader’s governance of the city. Similarly, as Galinsky points out, in the *Timaeus* Plato aligns anger with *logos*, and describes *logos* as a sort of governor or manager of the anger boiling up within the soul: “Throughout this process [of desires being controlled and restrained], anger is linked to *logos*: Plato goes on to say that when the μένος θυμοῦ [power of anger] boils up, *logos* passes the word around that an unjust action has taken place that affects them. . . . While anger in itself is not a rational part of the *psyche*, the immortal or reasoning part of the soul produces the evaluation which is essential to the emotion of anger” (329). The interaction between *thumos* and *logos* is one that makes *thumos* a motivator for just action that is ultimately controlled by the rational capacity of *logos*. This pattern occurs in Aeneas, especially in light of the parallel scenes with Helen and with Turnus, where Aeneas demonstrates the extent to which he can control *ira* by the use of *logos*, using *ira* as a motivator for purposeful action that is in accord with reason—the plan for founding the Roman race—both Aeneas’ own and that of the gods.

Galinsky also points out a comparable pattern in Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1149a25 - 1149b27, where Aristotle discusses lack of restraint with respect to anger (θυμὸς) as less blameworthy than lack of restraint with respect to the desires (ἐπιθυμία, Galinsky 331), especially because anger is based on judgment (*logos*) and is even governed by *logos*. Two key points in this passage from Aristotle pertain to Aeneas’ *ira*: that *thumos* is blameworthy for exhibiting unrestraint when it hears reason wrong (“ὁ θυμὸς ἀκούειν μὲν τι τοῦ λόγου, παρακούειν δὲ”), and that *thumos* is excessively hasty when it “hears, but does not hear the order given, and rushes off to take vengeance, ἀκούσας μὲν, οὐκ ἐπίταγμα δ’ ἀκούσας, ὀρμᾶ πρὸς τὴν τιμωρίαν.” In Aeneas’ series of actions which culminate in his scene with Helen, Aeneas could be said to hear reason wrong when he ignores first
Hector’s order to take the gods and flee, and then ignores the implicit reminder which his encounter with Panthus provides, and instead orders the soldiers to take hope in the fact that they are defeated and cannot be saved (*Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem*, 2.354). Although in one respect Aeneas could be said to be enacting Plato’s form of courage as a preservative quality, in another respect, the fact that his murder of Helen would be doubly negative depicts the would-be event in a doubtful light—first, it would be a sacrilege to kill a supplicant at an altar, and as such it would represent the breakdown of Trojan society, and second, it would be Aeneas’ misdirected effort of expending his energies in a useless act of rage, rather than the more purposeful effort of laboring to establish his city or asserting his dominance over a vanquished enemy. Similarly, Aeneas’ *thumos* would be blameworthy were he to hear reason wrong by heeding the inferior Turnus’ plea to be spared, rather than heed his own reason and rightfully avenge Pallas’ murder. More to the point, what these patterns demonstrate is that Vergil initially depicts this *ira* in a negative and destructive light when Aeneas’ *ira* appears largely within the context of a burning city and the destruction of his people, and threatens to break down the key civic ethic of sparing supplicants at an altar, and then later Vergil depicts his *ira* in a more positive and constructive light when it is a motivator for the action of conquering his enemy and opening the way for the founding of the Roman race. Although still perhaps ambiguous at the epic’s conclusion, Aeneas’ *ira* there is less blameworthy and more purposeful than when it occurs in the scene with Helen.

A further way of highlighting Vergil’s emphasis on the development of *ira* in the epic is to consider how *ira* operates in the two most prominent characters who experience *ira*: Aeneas and Juno. Both of these characters utilize the emotion in order to effect their
wills, although Vergil depicts their actions in opposition to one another: Juno negatively, and Aeneas positively. Sarah Spence argues that Vergil develops a sort of circular transformation of participants in the epic, particularly Aeneas and Juno, and her case sheds light on Aeneas’ justifiable use of *ira*; for insofar as Aeneas’ experience of *ira* in the scene with Helen depicts his *ira* negatively were he to act on it there, then we see a somewhat more positive depiction of *ira* when Aeneas utilizes it in the final scene with Turnus once he has learned to govern his *thumos* with *logos*. Part of Spence’s argument consists in what appears to be a deliberate parallel between Juno’s actions and Aeneas’, which is meant to describe a circle wherein both characters and the sentiments they represent are depicted as both inevitable and as justifiable for being agencies or elements within inevitable, prescribed patterns. That Vergil omits Juno from the epic’s closing scene is meant, Spence argues, to absolve her from the ethical ramifications of the scene, and to show her as more of “a victim than a perpetrator” (48) of her *ira* and its subsequent disasters. Insofar as Juno does stand as “a victim” of her *ira*, she could be said to represent Plato’s spirited part of the soul, which lacks the active capacity for *logos* but nonetheless serves as a powerful motivator for the individual as well as, in Plato’s scheme, for the city. In Juno’s case, her example of civilization would represent the unjust city where the components are out of balance for as long as *ira* is governed irrationally, whereas in Aeneas’ case, his example would represent the just city where the three components are in balance once Aeneas learns to govern his *ira* according to *logos*. In this light, the omission of Juno from the epic’s closing scene also serves to underscore Aeneas’ own agency in his final actions, and to depict him as more wholly in control of his choices: a diametric contrast to “a victim.” Evidently, what Vergil works to accomplish is a picture of Rome as a model for the ideal
civilization, with Aeneas as a microcosm of Rome, a leader who develops his rational capacities to the extent that he can govern such a powerful emotion as *ira* in a directly productive manner. In contradistinction to this pattern, just as Vergil provides a foil with his example of Juno and her *ira*, Vergil also provides a foil to Aeneas’ capacity to govern his passion productively with a counter example of a leader who governs destructively as “a victim” of another passion: Dido.

Vergil underscores the destructive aspect of passion, especially for the passive victim of it who cannot manage passion productively, with the Dido episode. This episode also reinforces Vergil’s evolving emphasis on the need for action, especially action connected to rational calculation and to speech and reason, *logos*. The destruction which Aeneas causes—albeit inadvertently—to Carthage is reminiscent of the destruction which the Greeks cause to Troy, so that the first depiction of Aeneas as leader of a city (or potential leader) is of an inept one, a city destroyer. But this depiction serves both to parallel Aeneas with Juno, who cannot or does not manage her passion rationally, and to emphasize the power of passion, especially its destructive power when it is poorly managed. This emphasis especially serves to underscore the productive use of passion—Aeneas’ *ira*—when the agent has developed sufficient reason to be able to control and direct this passion. Aeneas’ ineptitude appears in his seeming to bring with him to Carthage the destruction he suffered at Troy, ruining the city which he at first so admires, and ruining Dido who so admires him. His response to Dido’s burning pyre and to the burning Carthage as he ships away from the land at the beginning of book 5 would seem to suggest his own insensitivity and inability to fully humanize his experience. But Vergil uses these elements as ways of emphasizing Aeneas’ development from an
inadequate leader who is the victim of destruction perpetrated by others, to a capable leader who knows when and in what manner to perpetrate destruction. Vergil does this primarily by presenting both Dido as, like Juno, a passive victim of the passion that destroys her, and Aeneas as passive or at least unknowing, *inscius*. Vergil underscores these developments in two ways: by alluding to Aeneas as *pastor inscius* at two key moments, and by presenting Dido as wholly the victim of Juno’s scheme to infatuate her with Aeneas.

The scene where Dido’s infatuation begins depicts her as wholly the victim of passion, and also presents a crucial link to Aeneas’ character in its early, underdeveloped state:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Praecipue infelix, pesti devota futurae,} \\
\text{expleri mentem nequit ardescitque tuendo} \\
\text{Phoenissa, et pariter puero donisque movetur.} \\
\text{Ille ubi complexu Aeneae colloque pependit} \\
\text{et magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem,} \\
\text{reginam petit haec oculis, haec pectore toto} \\
\text{haeret et interdum gremio fovet, inscia Dido,} \\
\text{insidat quantus miserae deus;} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[Aen. 1.712-19\]

But above all, tragic Dido, doomed to a plague about to strike, cannot feast her eyes enough, thrilled both by the boy and gifts he brings and the more she looks the more the fire grows.

But once he’s embraced Aeneas, clung to his neck
to sate the deep love of his father, deluded father,

Cupid makes for the queen. Her gaze, her whole heart
is riveted on him now, and at times she even warms him
snugly in her breast, for how can she know, poor Dido,
what a mighty god is sinking into her, to her grief?  

_Aen_. 1.850-59

Dido as *inscia Dido* in line 718 links directly to Aeneas as *inscius pastor* later in the narrative, where he is party to actions which end in tragic results, below. But the more telling parallel is between Dido’s passion and Aeneas’ *ira*: whereas Dido is consumed with passion which she does not know how to govern and which leads to her and her city’s destruction, Aeneas in the scene with Helen is consumed with *ira* which he defers at Venus’ command and gradually learns to manage productively in accordance with *logos*.

The adjective *inscius* serves as a clear link between Aeneas and Dido, and Vergil underscores the emphasis on civilization by twice linking *inscius* to *pastor* when describing Aeneas’ actions. Both of these links occur within the dual context of passion and civilization: in book 2 where Aeneas relates the destruction of Troy and describes himself as *nescius pastor* when he first hears the sounds of the city’s destruction (2.307-8), below, and in book 4 where Dido is like the victim of a *nescius pastor* who unwittingly has wounded a doe (4.68-73):

_Uritur infelix Dido, totaque vagatur_

urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta,

quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit

pastor agens telis, liquitque volatile ferrum
nescius; illa fuga silvas saltusque peragrat

Dictaeos; haeret lateri letalis arundo.  

Aen. 4.68-73

The unfortunate Dido is burned, and wanders
raving throughout her city, like a doe struck by an arrow
whom a shepherd bearing arrows through the Cretan forest
struck from far away, and, unknowing, leaves his winged iron
forgotten in her flesh; she flees the forests and
wanders the Dictean woodland, the deadly shaft fixed in her side.

(my translation)

Putnam suggests that this simile depicts Aeneas as mostly innocent of the damage he
causes Dido and her city, for the hero, as pastor in this simile, not venator, is
“unintentionally harmful,” having pursued “a career that would not be usual for one who
was essentially a guardian of tame animals,” though Putnam acknowledges that the pastor
is at fault for having strayed into “a more treacherous, threatening sphere of endeavor
where deadly violence is the order of the day [that is, hunting] . . . with tragic results” (78).
Although Vergil’s emphasis here would seem to be on the results of blended passion and
judgment (logos) or the absence of judgment, Vergil does modify the nescius pastor theme
in a similar context: in book 12 where Aeneas realizes that his army has been betrayed
again by the Latins, and turns his army on the offensive in order to conquer the city, below.

Vergil establishes the parallel between the figure of the pastor and
civilization—whether its destruction or construction—in book 2 when Aeneas relates the
story of the Trojan horse. This is the first occurrence of the work pastor, when pastores
lead towards the king the young Greek soldier who has “given himself up, with one goal in mind: / to open Troy to the Greeks and lay her waste, hoc ipsum ut strueret Troiamque aperiret Achivis” (2.77-78, 2.60): Sinon. Similarly, Aeneas first describes himself as pastor in book 2, where he relates to his Carthaginian audience the moment when he first realizes his city has begun to fall to ruin:

“Diverso interea miscentur moenia luctu,
et magis atque magis, quamquam secreta parentis
Anchisae domus arboribusque obtecta recessit,
clarescunt sonitus, armorumque ingruit horror.
Excutior somno, et summi fastigia tecti
ascensu supero, atque arrectis auribus adsto:
in segetem veluti cum flamma furentibus austris
incidit, aut rapidus montano flumine torrens
sternit agros, sternit sata laeta boumque labores,
praecipitisque trahit silvas, stupet inscius alto
accipiens sonitum saxi de vertice pastor.”  

“But now, chaos—the city begins to reel with cries of grief,
    louder, stronger, even though father’s palace
stood well back, screened off by trees, but still
the clash of arms rings clearer, horror on the attack.
I shake off sleep and scrambling up to the pitched roof
I stand there, ears alert, and I hear a roar like fire
assaulting a wheatfield, whipped by a Southwind’s fury,
or mountain torrent in full spate, flattening crops,
leveling all the happy, thriving labor of oxen,
dragging whole trees headlong down in its wake—
and a shepherd perched on a sheer rock outcrop
hears the roar, lost in amazement, struck dumb.”

As Putnam (76-77) and other commentators indicate, this passage draws heavily on
Homer, where in the *Iliad* the clashing armies resound like the crash of two rivers
converging, which a shepherd hears from the distance:

\[
\text{ὡς δ’ ὅτε χείμαρροι ποταμοὶ κατ’ ὀρεισφὶ ρέοντες}
\[\text{ἐς μισγάγκειαν συμβάλλετον ὅβριμον ὕδωρ}
\[\text{κρουνὸν ἐκ μεγάλων κούλης ἐντοσθὲ χαράδρῃς,}
\[\text{τῶν δὲ τὴν τηλὸσε δοῦσθον ἐν οὐρεσίν ἐκληε ποιμήν:}
\]

Wildly as two winter torrents raging down from the mountains,
swirling into a valley, hurl their great waters together,
flash floods from the wellsprings plunging down in a gorge
and miles away in the hills a shepherd [ποιμήν] hears the thunder—
so from the grinding armies broke the cries and crash of war.

*Il.* 4.524-28

Vergil does, however, add his own modifications as he establishes his theme of *logos* and
civilization. His placement of the shepherd simile within Aeneas’ narrative (another
meaning of *logos*) to Dido frames Aeneas’ knowledge around the destructive events he describes, as well as makes him the agent who brings these events to light by means of his narration. Here, one sees Aeneas utilizing a description of destruction in order to shape a narrative, just as he will later use *ira* (a potentially destructive force) to assert his dominance over his vanquished enemy as he establishes the model civilization. As Putnam speculates, the placement of the shepherd also suggests Aeneas’ underdeveloped knowledge of himself as the very *inscius pastor* caught in the grip of overwhelming forces: he is “the inert victim of violent circumstances which he appreciates only through hearing and over which he has no control” (Putnam 77). But the emphasis appears to be on Aeneas’ lack of knowledge at this stage in the epic; he is a shepherd who is doubly unknowing: first of nature’s ways of handling man’s attempts at ordering the earth through agriculture and civilization, and next of these very ways of ordering the earth, for a *pastor* is after all one who watches over relatively domesticated animals, and not one who forges a civilization on top of uncultivated nature. Vergil once again draws the contrast in the simile in book 2, where the “*agros, fields*” (2.306) are the territory of the farmer, not of the unknowing shepherd who “*stupet inscius alto / accipiens sonitum saxi de vertice pastor*, perched on a sheer rock outcrop / hears the roar, lost in amazement, struck dumb” (2.307-08; Putnam 77).

In light of the triple themes of passion, knowledge, and leadership (this last embodied most obviously in the figure of the shepherd), one sees a correspondence between the epic’s opening and its conclusion, similar to what Spence calls the circular development of the epic’s participants. The cycle is significant primarily for illustrating the figure of the leader’s development around the themes of passion and *logos*, in a highly
suggestive analogue to Plato’s concept of justice in book 4 of the Republic, where justice in
the city is a macrocosm of justice in the individual, and justice in the individual consists in
him or her balancing the three parts of the soul as much as the city balances its three
classes, the merchants, the auxiliaries, and the guardians. Putnam’s indication that Aeneas
and Juno are both in the process of carrying out “a destructive vendetta of vengeance”
(104)—Juno at the beginning, Aeneas at the conclusion when he pursues Turnus to avenge
Pallas (disregarding his deferred vengeance upon Helen)—emphasizes the theme of
passion as a motivator for action, with the ultimate emphasis being on the model leader’s
rational control of passion. Putnam’s observation would support Spence’s that the epic is
cyclical, and would also suggest a sort of organic progression within the epic that extends
towards Vergil’s Roman audience. That Juno fails to achieve her goal whereas Aeneas
succeeds suggests Aeneas’ (and, perhaps, by extension, Rome’s citizens’) righteousness or
at least justification for his activities. Similarly, Gransden sees a comparable pattern,
describing the Aeneid as having two endings which are each parallel to the other (208-9):
Aeneas’ murder of Turnus in the epic’s final lines, and Juno’s departure from the war at
12.976-77. As Gransden points out, Jupiter’s promise to Juno that the honors which the
future Romans will pay to her will remain forever unmatched (nec gens ulla tuos aeque
celebrabit honores, 12.840) forms a “settlement” which appeases Juno and “reverses her
spirit to joy” (mentem laetata retorsit, 12.841). With Jupiter’s promise that the future
Romans will honor her beyond all others, Juno “Adnuit his Iuno et mentem laetata retorsit.
/ Interea excedit caelo nubemque relinquit, Juno nodded assent to this, her spirit reversed
to joy. She departs the sky / and leaves the cloud behind” (12.841-42, 12.975-76). This
scene marks an inversion of Aeneas’ murder of Turnus 110 lines later, particularly with
Turnus’ life fleeing “with a groan of outrage / down to the shades below, \textit{vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras}” (12.1112-13, 12.952). In parallel to these two events, as Gransden indicates, another correlation lies between the scene with Jupiter and Juno in book 12, and the scene with Jupiter and Venus in book 1, where Jupiter promises Venus a race of people with \textit{imperium sine fine} (1.279). A significant link, as Gransden points out, is in Jupiter’s smile to Juno at 12.829: \textit{Olli subridens hominum rerumque repertor}, which mirrors his smile to Venus in at 1.254: \textit{Olli subridens hominum sator atque deorum}. One is tempted to note parallels between several important moments of reverses of emotion in the epic: Aeneas’ initial \textit{ira} reverting (so the reader imagines) to satisfaction at avenging Pallas, Turnus’ aggressive raging (\textit{fremere}) for arms at 7.460-62 (\textit{arma amens fremit, arma toro tectisque requirit; / saevit amor ferri et scelerata insanias belli, / ira super}) reversing to his single despairing \textit{gemitus} when Aeneas murders him (\textit{fremere} has, among other meanings, two which bear significantly on our analysis: the verb suggests a continual grumbling or groaning, such as that of crowds or assemblies [def. 1c], like the \textit{gemitus} echoed back from the hills when Turnus’ army groans when Aeneas’ spear fatally strikes Turnus [\textit{Consurgunt gemitu Rutuli, totusque remugit / mons circum}, 12.928-29]; the verb also suggests the inarticulate sounds of animals, “especially in a state of anger or excitement” [def. 1b] as well as those of an individual [def. 2a], perhaps the sounds of those who have not yet learned how to govern passion by \textit{logos}, and thus who are not yet developed into the ideal political creatures as Aristotle defines them; \textit{gemitus}, like the noun \textit{fremor}, has similar connotations [def. 1 and 1b]), Aeneas’ groaning (\textit{ingemere}) at 1.93 when he first perceives Juno’s storm and which reverses to his (so the audience imagines) satisfaction at avenging Pallas. What patterns such as these serve to do, Gransden suggests,
is to create an “Aeneid sine fine” (210) wherein the reader’s “interaction with the poem will in the end be more than the sum of any particular passages read or translated” (210) due to the recurrence of motifs that allow for new combinations of elements, themes, and interpretations that are possible with each reading.

In a similar vein, Griffin describes the murder as “morally dubious” (Mirror 123) for being so abrupt and unexpected, and argues that the abruptness is meant to shock readers into reflecting deeper into the events (124). The lack of any conclusion following the murder also serves to reinforce this suggestion, for with no clear parallel to his predecessor in the Iliad, Vergil thrusts his readers out of the epic onto their own capacities for invention: “There is no humane aftermath of the killing, in which Aeneas can come to terms, as Achilles does in the Iliad, with the survivors, the world, and himself” (123). Yasmin Syed argues in a comparable vein that the Aeneid deliberately works to engage its readers by “its visuality and its sublime style” (35) in order to create a place for a reader within the poem who finds an identity by referring to the poem’s various characters as “figures of identification” (35). This was meant to exert a formative influence on readers, Syed argues, particularly regarding their identities as Romans responsible for upholding civic mores and norms. Although Syed acknowledges her position as controversial, her case is useful for illustrating the poem’s abrupt conclusion, especially in light of the recurrent patterns noted here, and the two instances of deferment: Aeneas’ deferred ira, and his deferred satisfaction which the audience experiences on his behalf.

The passional element of human nature is crucial in Vergil’s depiction of Aeneas’ character, especially to the extent that Vergil’s audience could react to his character and, in particular, to his murder of Turnus. Regarding the murder and the possible chain of
development from Aeneas at the epic’s beginning to its end, to the audience both during the
epic’s recitation and after it, Yvan Nadeau points out that Aeneas’ murder of Turnus was in
accordance with the ethos of the Roman Civil Wars, which expected that the victor should
“show no mercy to the vanquished king, who is to be killed” (77). For Aeneas to abide by
such an ethos depicts him as the relic of a former era, not one who acts in accordance with
the ethos of the era of Caesarian *lementia*, but of a more savage era where war was the
order of the day and where war set the expected motives of the nation. The passional
element of human nature is, however, a necessary experience for Aeneas’ evolving ability
to establish Rome as the nation’s ideal leader, and parallels, as Nadeau suggests, the case
with Aristaeus’ development in the fourth *Georgic*: “before Aristaeus can be told the secret
of how his bees can be restored, he has to be told the cautionary tale of Orpheus, whose
excess love brought about his downfall. It is only when he has heeded the story and done
expiation that he can win immortality and become a ‘founder,’ the inventor of ‘bougonia’”
(68). Just as Aristaeus and Orpheus must lose their prized possessions in order to transcend
the passional elements that bind them to their possessions, Aeneas must experience
passion, specifically *ira*, in order to transcend it as Rome’s ideal leader. As Nadeau points
out, the image of the bees in book 7 of the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas reaches Italy at last,
recalls the rejuvenation of the bees in the fourth *Georgic* (70). This is significant partly for
justifying Aeneas’ experience with Dido as a necessary step in his evolution into Rome’s
ideal leader. Just as Orpheus looks back and in doing so loses Eurydice for the rest of his
mortal life, Aeneas too looks back to Dido’s funeral pyre, which signifies that he, likewise,
can never recover her. Of further significance is that Aeneas’ irrecoverable loss of Dido
and of that passional experience help to establish him as Rome’s ideal leader.

49
Chapter 3: Politics, Passion, and Reason

Another significant parallel between Vergil’s and Homer’s epics, and related to Vergil’s development of Homer’s bee similes and imagery, arises through the theme of speech and civilization. Perhaps the most pronounced depiction of this correlation occurs in book 2 of the epic, where Aeneas prepares to narrate his travails to his Carthaginian audience. Although Vergil models the scene on Homer’s scene in the *Odyssey* where Odysseus narrates his struggles to the Phaecians, Vergil’s emphasis is clearly on *pater Aeneas* who possesses the authority to command an audience at the outset of his narration, rather—as is Homer’s emphasis—on the force of speech in its own right. Odysseus’ ability to reach Ithaca at last—where he accomplishes his (albeit violent) civilizing act of eliminating the suitors—comes from the Phaecians, who provide him with passage back to his land partly because they are so impressed with his skill at narrating his travails. Vergil in book 2 inverts the authority of speech and grants this authority to Aeneas when he places his audience’s spellbound silence before Aeneas’ narration rather than after, as in Homer. Odysseus’ Phaecian audience is “κηληθμῷ δ’ ἔσχοντο, held in enchantment” (Od. 11.334) after Odysseus’ narration:

> ὃς ἔφαθ’, οἱ δ’ ἀρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ,  
> κηληθμῷ δ’ ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιώντα.  

*Od. 11.333-34*

Odysseus paused . . . They all fell silent, hushed, his story holding them spellbound down the shadowed halls. *Od. 11.378-79*
By contrast, Vergil at the beginning of book 2 inverts Homer’s depiction of the speaker-audience dynamic—the power of speech to instill enchanted (or, in Vergil’s scene, obedient) silence—into a more purposeful and commanding force when Aeneas addresses the Carthaginians:

Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant.

Inde toro pater Aeneas sic orsus ab alto.

Silence. All fell hushed, their eyes fixed on Aeneas now as the founder of his people, high on a seat of honor . . .

While the scenes evince obvious parallels of setting and action, they also demonstrate a striking chiasmus. The scenes are parallel to the extent that each hero is narrating his similar travails to an audience who hosts him at a banquet, but each scene is chiastic around the theme of speech and silence. In Homer, the spellbound silence results from Odysseus’ completed narration, whereas in Vergil, the silence results from Aeneas’ preparing to narrate: the silence is on opposite sides of each narration. The chiasmus is further evident in light of each speaker’s identity at the moment he begins his narration: when Odysseus begins his narration in book 9 of the Odyssey, he is still the anonymous guest of Alcinous, and only announces his identity eighteen lines into his narration, at 9.19. By contrast, Aeneas is very specifically pater Aeneas at the outset of his narration. Although this epithet with its full authoritative force is retroactive from Vergil’s Augustan perspective, Aeneas’ identity becomes public many lines before Dido asks him to tell of his journeys. (It becomes public at 1.586-96 where “circumfusa repente / scindit se nubes et in aethera purgat apertum, all at once the mist / around [Aeneas and Achates] parted, melting into
open air” and Aeneas stands in full view.) Vergil’s suggestion at the moment of Aeneas beginning his narration in the opening lines of book 2 is that Aeneas possesses the authority to speak by virtue of his identity, and not by virtue of the impact of his tale or his social position as banquet guest, as is the case with Odysseus. Throughout the *Aeneid*, Vergil reinforces Aeneas’ authority with his many uses of the epithet *pater Aeneas* and his numerous comparisons of Aeneas and Augustus, whereas Odysseus at the moment of his narration is still in the process of earning his authority as king of Ithaca as he struggles to reach and reclaim his land. Though the clear parallel between Aeneas’ ongoing struggles and Odysseus’ might also suggest that Aeneas’ speech has no particular authoritative quality to it, it should be noted that Vergil establishes the epithet much earlier in the epic, at 1.580 when Aeneas and Achates emerge from the mist in the middle of Dido’s grove. The epithet’s occurrence when Aeneas begins his narration is the third occurrence, so that it is well-established at the beginning of book 2. There would seem to be no special emphasis on the epithet at this point, but rather on the theme of speech as a civilizing force following Vergil’s chiastic construction around the theme of speech and silence. This depiction becomes a pivotal theme both within the political purposes of his epic and within his artistic relationship to Homer.

Vergil’s theme of speech as a powerful civilizing force occurs early in the epic, with three depictions in the first book of speech and civil order, arranged nearly one after the other (Spence 11-21): Neptune’s appearance to calm the waves (1.124-56), Aeneas’ speech to calm and encourage his shipwrecked men (1.198-207), and Jupiter’s speech first to assuage Venus that the fate of her race remains unchanged, and then to decree the fate of the Roman race (1.257-96). In all three cases, a speaking leader calms an audience, with
Neptune’s and Aeneas’ speeches being most closely aligned for being public speeches to a
crowd, and Jupiter’s decree serving to reinforce this paradigm as the supreme example of
speech and authority. By such a sequence of leaders calming an audience with their speech,
Vergil establishes a paradigm for the ideal leader as one who possesses speech and who
exercises this capacity to achieve order (Spence 12).

That this paradigm operates not only in the public sphere, as in the scenes with
Neptune and Aeneas, but also in the private, as in the scene with Jupiter and Venus,
suggests Vergil’s emphasis on speech as a powerful force in its own right, and not
dependent on any particular circumstance or setting. While he does depict speech as having
the potential to be misused to achieve disorder and confusion, as when Juno incites Aeolus
to release the winds from the mountain at 1.65-75 (Spence 19-20), its proper use as Vergil
depicts it is as an ordering force, hence Neptune’s quick correction at 1.132-41 of the chaos
which Juno incites. Vergil both intensifies this chaos and elaborates on his theme of speech
as most effective when used as an ordering force with Aeneas’ first words in the epic as he
loses heart when looking on the rising storm:

“O terque quaterque beati,
quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
contigit oppetere! O Danaum fortissime gentis
Tydide! Mene Iliacis occumbere campis
non potuisse, tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra,
saevus ubi Aeacidae telo iacet Hector, ubi ingens
Sarpedon, ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis
scuta virum galeasque et fortia corpora volvit?”

_Aen._ 1.94-101
“Three, four times blest, my comrades
lucky to die beneath the soaring walls of Troy—
before their parents’ eyes! If only I’d gone down
under your right hand—Diomedes, strongest Greek afield—
and poured out my life on the battlegrounds of Troy!
Where raging Hector lies, pierced by Achilles’ spear,
where mighty Sarpedon lies, where the Simois River
swallows down and churns beneath its tides so many
shields and helmets and corpses of the brave!”

_Aen_. 1.113-21

The scene of Aeneas’ despair is meant to be tragic as the _stirps_ of the Roman people quakes in his boots and figuratively surrenders his ambitions to his conquerors, the Greeks, as the miniature city of his fleet is shipwrecked. This speech has little effect beyond expressing Aeneas’ despair, and this negative or ineffectual purpose provides an example of misused or misguided speech, and is in line with what Sarah Spence calls Juno’s seductive speech of _cupiditas_ (19-20) to bribe Aeolus, at lines 1.65-75. Vergil underscores the impotence of this speech when Aeneas begins it with a groan: “_ingemit, et duplicis tendens ad sidera palmas / talia voce refert_” (1.93-94), and then quells the chaos of such non-reasoned speeches which lack civilizing intentions by presenting the calm and authoritative Neptune who quickly restores order (1.124-41). To reinforce his theme of speech as a civilizing power, Vergil quickly follows Neptune’s speech of order with Aeneas’ first speech to encourage his crew once they have landed in Libya:
“O socii—neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum—
O passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem.
Vos et Scyllaeam rabiem penitusque sonantis
accestis scopulos, vos et Cyclopea saxa
experti: revocate animos, maestumque timorem
mittite: forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.
Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum
tendimus in Latium; sedes ubi fata quietas
ostendunt; illic fas regna resurgere Troiae.
Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.”

“My comrades, hardly strangers to pain before now,
we all have weathered worse. Some god will grant us
an end to this as well. You’ve threaded the rocks
resounding with Scylla’s howling rabid dogs,
and taken the brunt of the Cyclops’ boulders, too.
Call up your courage again. Dismiss your grief and fear.
A joy it will be one day, perhaps, to remember even this.
Through so many hard straits, so many twists and turns
our course holds firm for Latium. There Fate holds out
a homeland, calm, at peace. There the gods decree
the kingdom of Troy will rise again. Bear up.
Save your strength for better times to come.”

Aen. 1.198-207
Aen. 1.233-44
As an echo of Neptune’s authority and his control over both the sea and over Juno’s angry instigation, Vergil positions Aeneas’ speech immediately after Neptune’s. This complimentary position suggests Aeneas’ growing authority by means of his increasing capacity both for effective speech and for controlling emotion, for in the case of both Neptune and Aeneas, logos wins out over passion. Vergil again reinforces the theme of speech and authority by following both Neptune’s and Aeneas’ speeches with Jupiter’s at 1.257-96, which describes Aeneas’ coming conquests and his progeny, the Roman people whom Jupiter grants imperium sine fine (1.279).

For Vergil, speech as an ordering force is more than a raw political tool or a private activity, as would be suggested by the very different natures of the public speeches of Neptune and Aeneas, and the more private, domestic speech of Jupiter to Venus, and Aeneas’ monologue of despair at 1.94-101. Rather, speech is an aspect of both spheres of human activity, and as such it is characteristic of the human being, whether princeps or obedient citizen. The complication seems to arise when a person misuses or misunderstands the power of speech, and allows emotion to rule action rather than reason. Vergil’s emphasis on speech as a political force is significant especially in light of Aristotle’s Politics, where Aristotle determines speech to be the unique characteristic of the human being when he describes the polis as the natural development of all political creatures:

ἐκ τούτων οὖν φανερὸν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστί, καὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον, καὶ ὁ ἄπολις διὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐ διὰ τύχην ἦτοι φαῦλος ἐστιν, ἢ κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος: ἡσπέρ καὶ ὁ ὑρ´ Ὀμήρου λοιδορθείς “ἀφρήτωρ ἀθέμιστος ἀνέστιος“ [Il. 9.63]; ΄άμα γὰρ φύσει τοιοῦτος καὶ
From these things therefore it is clear that the city-state is a natural growth, and that man is by nature a political animal, and a man that is by nature and not merely by fortune citiless is either low in the scale of humanity or above it (like the “clanless, lawless, hearthless” [Il. 9.63] man reviled by Homer, for one who is by nature unsocial is also ‘a lover of war’) inasmuch as he is solitary, like an isolated piece at draughts. And why man is a political animal in a greater measure than any bee or any gregarious animal is clear. For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech. The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well (for their nature has been developed so far as to have sensations of what is
painful and pleasant and to indicate those sensations to one another), but speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state.

Trans. H. Rackham

Insofar as Aeneas’ character develops from a would-be leader with at first only a vague understanding of where and how to direct his ambitions, into a leader whose vision and resolve have grown so focused that he scarcely needs speech to control his followers, but instead needs only action, one sees in Aeneas’ development Aristotle’s pattern of the polis as a natural development of the anthrōpos. Further, Aristotle’s emphasis on speech as an example of nature’s purposefulness parallels Aeneas’ growing authority by means of his speaking ability as he resolves his purpose in founding the Roman race. But an unexpected irony appears when one considers how Aeneas develops into more of an actor than a speaker. One explanation for this irony is that the bees, who lack logos, represent model citizens at the same time that they represent the model leader, both of whose natures are so attuned to the workings of their polis that they no longer need speech or reason to communicate or comprehend their morality, but simply act according to their fully-developed rational natures. In this light, Aeneas’ development from a leader who needs speech to effect his purpose, into one whose purpose has become so effective and aligned with his reason that speech would be superfluous, represents the natural development of the larger Roman race which Vergil depicts Aeneas representing.
In light of the clear distinction between those who rule and those who are ruled—another characteristic of human civilization—speech functions as a powerful dynamic. Spence gives some attention to the tradition on which Vergil draws for his depictions of speakers, the tradition of the classical humanistic rhetorician, from Isocrates’ *Antidosis* to Cicero’s *De inventione* (Spence 12-21), both of whom treat speech, which they term “eloquence,” as a force for reason, order, and morality:

Eloquence, then, is a means by which animals become men, differences are erased, and chaos is transformed to order as the morality of the speaker is communicated and transferred to the audience. Such a process with its emphasis on morality and virtue, also includes an implicit pattern of choices. The association among eloquence, virtue, and reason, certainly a venerable cluster of qualities, asserts its superiority even as it establishes a clear hierarchy of good and bad, right and wrong.

Central to Spence’s consideration of Vergil’s development of this tradition is the necessity for the audience in the rhetorician’s activity. While the orator must be a force for morality by being a person of goodness and of virtue—in the humanist tradition as well as in Aristotle—it is crucial, both in the classical humanistic tradition and in Vergil, that the orator have an effect on an audience: “that morality [the morality of the speaker] is defined, in both Isocrates and Cicero, by its effect on the audience. Far from being a self-directed goal, the link between good rhetoric and good men includes a notion of community” (Spence 14). In this light, language as action in the *Aeneid* would seem to evolve from Aeneas’ ability speaking to his followers, to his ability governing their actions directly in
accordance with right *logos*, that is, the right plan for founding the Roman race once Aeneas understands this as his mission.

Another occurrence of what would seem to be Vergil’s irony in his depiction of speech and civilization is his simile of the Carthaginians as bees at 1.418-38, above. There, his emphasis is on the citizens’ peaceful obedience as a productive force for civilization, and this obedience would seem to be largely passive and *alogos*, “without speech.” However, Aristotle’s consideration of the passive, receptive quality of *logos* is important in viewing both this simile and Vergil’s broader theme of speech and civilization. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes:

οὕτω δὴ καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τῶν φίλων φαμέν ἔχειν λόγον, καὶ οὐχ ὀσπερ τῶν μαθηματικῶν. ὁτι δὲ πείθεται πως ὑπὸ λόγου τὸ ἀλογον, μηνύει καὶ ἡ νουθέτησις καὶ πᾶσα ἐπιτίμησις τε καὶ παράκλησις. εἰ δὲ χρὴ καὶ τοῦτο φάναι λόγον ἔχειν, διττὸν ἔσται καὶ τὸ λόγον ἔχον, τὸ μὲν κυρίως καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ, τὸ δ’ ὀσπερ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀκουστικόν τι.   

So it [the element of the soul lacking reason but nonetheless partaking in it] has reason in the sense that a person who listens to the reason of his father and his friends is said to have reason, not reason in the mathematical sense. That the element without reason is in some way persuaded by reason is indicated as well by the offering of advice, and all kinds of criticism and encouragement. And if we must say that this element possesses reason, then the element with reason will also have two parts, one, in the strict sense,
possessing it in itself, the other ready to listen to reason as one is ready to
listen to the reason of one’s father. 

Trans. Roger Crisp

Here, reason (*logos*) functions passively as well as actively; *logos* is not only the active
ability to speak and to persuade, as in the rational part of the soul, but it is also the capacity
for being persuaded, the capacity for understanding and for listening. Though Aristotle is
here considering the more primitive parts of the soul—those closer to the vegetative and
the appetitive than to the rational—he does hold that these parts possess some share of
*logos* insofar as these parts are capable of responding to the active capacity for *logos*.

Vergil depicts the passive capacity in his similes and imagery of the bees, whose proper
place in the natural hierarchy— the hierarchy of nature and of what Aristotle calls the
greatest development of nature, the *polis*—is in obedience to a leader’s reason and to his
speech. Though bees are political animals, as Aristotle tells us in the *Politics*, their lack of
*logos* in either its active or passive sense would seem to render Aeneas’ speech authority
ineffective, until one considers that Aeneas at the moment of apprehending the bee-like
Carthaginians is still adrift and still in the process of realizing and thus of effecting his fate
as founder of the Romans. Gilbert Highet considers Aeneas’ authority in this light in
considering Aeneas’ character development throughout the epic: “The development of
Aeneas’ spirit comes out in his speeches, book by book. He speaks much less often in the
second half of the epic than in the first, even if we exclude his narrative at the Carthaginian
banquet. As the conflict moves toward its close, he says less and acts more” (33). Highet’s
analysis opens two valuable avenues for the study of speech in the *Aeneid*: first, speech as a
surrogate for action, and second, speech as an indicator of or a vehicle for the creation of
character—what Highet calls “the development of Aeneas’ spirit.”
First, speech is Aeneas’ surrogate force for action in the first half of the poem, when his authority as pater Aeneas is largely rhetorical and not yet substantiated in action. The action in the second half revolves around not only Aeneas’ own activities and knowledge, but, importantly, also the activities of first his followers and later his military force. These are effectively extensions of Aeneas’ will just as Rome’s citizens were political extensions of both the virtues of pater Aeneas and those of pater Augustus. In the second half of the epic, once Aeneas has gained the alliance of the Latins, his authority expands to include the bodily military force of this people. As a result, he needs speech less since his action has begun to take on a different kind of momentum—a more physical and public momentum that is embodied in an army—or so Vergil depicts this movement toward the fulfillment of the Roman people’s fate. This pattern of authority confirmed in action continues to the epic’s conclusion as Aeneas’ authority increasingly consists in action and decreasingly in words. The more focused development of the epic’s plot following Anchises’ prophecy to Aeneas reflects both the predetermined fate of the Roman people as well as Aeneas’ authority as leader of a physical body of people. It could also be said that Anchises’ prophecy, as divine utterance, supplies sufficient words for the rationale (the reason, logos) for the epic’s action and for the authority of the Roman people, and that following his prophecy, no more words (logoi) are needed, only the action of the narrative and the dramatization of Aeneas’ mission.

Second, Aeneas’ character develops into the authoritative pater Aeneas largely through speech and the confirmation of his authority in and by his various audiences, whether his audience consists of his crew, of the Carthaginians, or of any other party. The reciprocal relationship of speaking and listening develops Aeneas’ authority throughout
the epic as he speaks and his audience responds to his words. An important example is Aeneas’ first speech to his crew at 1.198-207, where his men “gird up for game” and prepare the feast that restores them (*victu revocant vires*, 1.214). The verb *revocare* is an important choice that signifies the men as speech agents of Aeneas’ speech, capable of “calling back” the parts of their human nature that lack the active capacity for *logos*, once they themselves have been called upon by Aeneas. This demonstrates Aristotle’s description of the dual nature of *logos* being its active and passive capacities. What makes it unique in this situation is that Aeneas’ men become active agents of their own *logos*—the restoration of their strength—after they have been the passive recipients of Aeneas’ *logos*—to “call up your courage again, dismiss your grief and fear, *revocate animos, maestumque timorem / mittite*” (1.202-03). This pattern which Highet identifies helps to clarify Vergil’s emphasis on Aeneas’ development from a leader who initially governs through speech, to a leader who governs so effectively that speech is superfluous since his followers act wholly in accord with his own reason.
Conclusion

The *Aeneid*’s three themes considered here, the bee similes and imagery, the human passional element with the focus on *ira*, and the theme of *logos* as action—whether action through reasoned speech or action governed by reason—together comprise a major element of Vergil’s epic that helps to illuminate other aspects of the epic’s narrative. Seeing Aeneas’ character development in this way helps to situate him in relation to other major characters in the epic, particularly his most significant antagonists, Juno and Turnus. An inviting chiastic pattern emerges in seeing both these antagonists as the major factors shaping Aeneas’ development: Juno’s eventual withdrawal from the narrative contrasts Turnus’ eventual approach, and insofar as Turnus stands as a surrogate Helen—who is the target of Aeneas’ early, underdeveloped *ira*—then Turnus serves to underscore Aeneas’ proper employment of *ira* once he has developed his reasoning capacity to the point where he can control his *ira* in what would seem to be a just act of vengeance. Additionally, Aeneas’ reasoning capacity comes into sharper relief when one sees how initially he must force his orders through speech, in contrast to the later pattern of Aeneas managing his orders so effectively that they become second nature to both himself and to his followers, without the need for speech. Vergil clarifies this chiasmus, too, with the first picture of the bees as Carthaginians constructing their city in accordance with all the natural laws of nature, in contrast to the later depictions of the bees when they appear in more martial contexts. By the time they do appear in these martial contexts, particularly their relatively minor appearance in book 12, they have become nearly as superfluous as Aeneas’ speaking
authority, which has evolved into authority as action by Aeneas himself, and action by his followers. These patterns and their interrelations show the interdependence of the themes Vergil weaves into his epic, which he presents as both a cultural artifact to the audience of his day and later days, and as a sort of “artifactum” or work crafted by the cultural work that influenced him, both Greek epic and philosophy, and the Roman morals—natural or artificial—of Vergil’s own day.
Works Cited


