TER FRUSTRA COMPRENSA: EMBRACES IN THE *AENEID*

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ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;
ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.
Aeneid 2.792–794 = 6.700–702[1]

ON SEVEN OCCASIONS in the *Aeneid*, Aeneas embraces, or longs to embrace, members of his family: 1.407–409, 1.715–717, 2.792–794, 5.741–742, 6.700–702, 8.615, and 12.432–434. A comparison of these passages reveals one way in which Vergil portrays an emotional change in Aeneas.

The three lines cited above describe Aeneas' futile attempts to embrace the ghosts of his wife (Book 2) and father (Book 6). Aeneas also longs in vain to embrace his father's spirit in Book 5 (741–742). Each of these ghosts flees from him: *effugit* (2.793 = 6.701), *quem fugis?* (5.742). Even the living elude his embrace. His mother will not clasp hands with him as he wishes (1.407–409), but flees (*fugientem* 1.406) like the ghosts. Again, Aeneas' only successful embrace of a member of his family in Books 1–6 is a deception, for the child he believes is Ascanius is actually his brother Cupid, disguised by Venus as part of her plan to delude Dido. Thus, on five occasions in the first half of the *Aeneid*, Vergil stresses Aeneas' longing to express his love for the members of his family and the frustration of this desire. After his meeting with Anchises in the underworld, however, Aeneas is so changed emotionally that he does not ask for more than the two iron embraces he receives. Venus embraces her son when she presents Vulcan's armor to him (8.615), and Aeneas in turn, wearing this same armor, embraces Ascanius (12.432–434). In these passages in the second half of the poem, armor representing the *famamque et fata nepotum* (8.731) is an integral part of Aeneas' physical expression of love for his family. Aeneas' attachment to individuals is included within a more impersonal devotion to his race as a whole.

Throughout the first half of the poem, Aeneas is emotionally attached to objects of traditional *pietas*: an ancestral fatherland, household gods, and the individuals of his family. He must, however, subordinate these attachments to an impersonal *pietas* towards a broader destiny.[2] *Pietas* requires Aeneas to

[1]All citations are from R. A. B. Mynor's OCT (Oxford 1969; rpt., with corrections, 1972).

[2]B. Otis, *Virgil. A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963), notes that "to the Roman mind neither family nor local gods . . . could properly exist without a *patria*" (245), and that "a radical shift in his [Aeneas'] whole conception of duty and *pietas* is demanded" (244). Aeneas must, with Anchises' guidance, redirect his *pietas* towards the Roman future (299).

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leave his country and wife, to go into exile with his household gods, to bury his father far from both his old and his new home, to marry a foreign woman he does not know, and to establish a new race and nation he will never see. He cannot initiate his son into civic, religious, and family life in the traditional manner, and is not able to train Ascanius in the art of ruling a settled nation or to give him an inheritance of ancestral wealth. Again *pietas* commands Aeneas to respect and obey his divine mother as one of the gods, but he cannot enjoy the warm human relationship with her that he might have had with a mortal mother.[3] Even the final reward of *pro patria mori* is denied him. *Pietas* thus imposes on Aeneas an isolation from his own family that parallels the loss of human contact he suffers in parting from Dido, whom *pietas* forbids him to love. Verbal echoes call attention to the parallel. Aeneas' plea to Dido's ghost

> *siste gradum teque aspectu ne subtrahe nostro.*
> *quem fugis? extremum fato quod te adloquer hoc est.* 6.465–466

echoes his cry to his father (*quem fugis?* 5.742) and anticipates his plea to Anchises in Book 6: *teque amplexu ne subtrahe nostro* (698). Aeneas' separation even from those *pietas* bids him to love is especially apparent in the scenes of frustrated embraces.

In Book 1, Aeneas' mother, disguised as a huntress, tells her son Dido's story and prophesies the safe return of his lost companions (314–401). As she disappears she is revealed as a goddess (402–405), and Aeneas grieves that she will not clasp hands with him and speak to him openly:

> *quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis*
> *ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram*
> *non datur ac veras audire et reddere voces?* 407–409

While *totiens* may well be an exaggeration, it nevertheless indicates the depth of Aeneas' grief and frustration.[4] Venus loves her son in her own divine way. She aids and encourages him, and gives authority to her prophecy by revealing her divinity at the end of the encounter. Aeneas, however, does not rejoice either at his companions' safety or at his mother's divine favor. His cry, *crudelis tu quoque*, reveals only his longing for the speech and embracing he is denied.[5]

[3]As A. Wlosok, *Die Göttin Venus in Vergils Aeneis* (Heidelberg 1967), writes, Venus "belongs to another order of being" (87). A similar point is made by W. S. Anderson, *The Art of the Aeneid* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1969) 27. The tensions created by this situation are reflected by the fact that *pietas* is never used of Aeneas' attitude towards Venus, as is noted by W. D. Anderson, "Venus and Aeneas: The Difficulties of Filial *Pietas*," *CJ* 50 (1954–1955) 236.

[4]Conington rightly explains that *totiens* refers to Aeneas' "feeling that he has been generally mocked and baffled:" J. Conington and H. Nettleship, *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*[4] (London 1884; rpt. Hildesheim 1964) Vol. 2, *ad loc.*

[5]See Anderson (above, note 3) 236 for a good disussion of Aeneas' reactions.

Soon after, Venus again deceives Aeneas with a disguise. She sends his brother Cupid, disguised as Ascanius, to arouse Dido's passions as he embraces his deceived father:

> *ille ubi complexu Aeneae colloque pependit*
> *et magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem*
> *reginam petit.* 715–717

In this perversion of the familial love Aeneas longs for, he not only fails to embrace his son, but he also embraces yet fails to recognize his own brother, thus innocently but ignorantly indulging his paternal affection, and thereby helping to inspire Dido's destructive sexual passion—all of which is contrived by his own family. Venus has again played him false (*falsi* 716).[6] This time, however, the game is deadly, for Venus tells Cupid to poison Dido with his kisses:

> *cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet,*
> *occultum inspires ignem fallasque veneno.* 687–688

Aeneas' meeting with the ghost of Creusa in Book 2 is in many ways similar to his meeting with Venus in Book 1. For one thing, Creusa, like Venus, is a representative of the gods. Her reference to herself as Venus' daughter-in-law (*divae Veneris nurus* 787) connects her with the goddess. She is further associated with divinity as the revealer of Jupiter's will (777–779) and as the servant of the *magna deum genetrix* (788). Again, like Aeneas' mother, his wife helps and guides him. She tells him that he will encounter happy circumstances (*res laetae* 783), a kingdom, and a royal bride, and she reveals that she herself is fortunate in death. More openly affectionate than Venus, Creusa addresses her husband as *dulcis coniunx* (777) and speaks of the love they both have for Ascanius (789). But Creusa, like Venus, will not allow Aeneas to express his love for her as an individual. She tells him not to weep for her: *lacrimas dilectae pelle Creusae* (784), and she will not stay to hear his reply:

> *haec ubi dicta dedit, lacrimantem et multa volentem*
> *dicere deseruit, tenuisque recessit in auras.* 790–791

Three times he tries to embrace her and three times she slips away (792–794). As he tells this story to Dido, Aeneas shows that personal loss is still more important to him than his duty to the future revealed by the ghost. He calls Creusa *infelix* (772), though her own words show that this is false. His comment, *deseruit*, reminds us of his cry to his mother, *crudelis tu quoque*.

[6]Cf. Venus' instructions to Cupid, *falle dolo* (684), and Aeneas' complaint to Venus, *falsis ludis imaginibus* (407–408). In line 716 *falsi* means, as R. G. Austin notes, both "the father who was not his own," and "deceived:" *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber primus* (Oxford 1971) 214.

Aeneas' description of his wife's "desertion," *lacrimantem et multa volentem / dicere deseruit*, anticipates Dido's bitter parting from Aeneas: *linquens multa metu cunctantem et multa parantem / dicere* (4.390–391).[7] The echo underlines the similarity of the two situations. Aeneas's legitimate marriage ends as abruptly and painfully as his love affair.

We again see the contrast between duty and emotion in Aeneas' meeting with his father's spirit in Book 5. Like Venus and Creusa, Anchises, as an agent of the gods, aids and encourages his son. He is a loving father, as his first words to Aeneas indicate: *nate, mihi vita quondam, dum vita manebat, / care magis* (724–725). But he is also a representative of Jupiter (*imperio Iovis huc venio* 726)[8] helping the instrument of future glory. After telling Aeneas that Jupiter at last pities him (726–727), Anchises tells him to obey Nautes and leave some of his people behind. He then bids him to descend to the underworld to learn about his "whole race," *genus omne tuum*, and future cities (737). Aeneas, however, does not respond emotionally to this encouragement, for he feels only the loss of his father as an individual and longs to embrace him: *quem fugis? aut quis te nostris complexibus arcet?* (742).

The different attitudes of father and son are also evident when Anchises and Aeneas first meet in the underworld. Anchises rejoices:

> *venisti tandem, tuaque exspectata parenti*
> *vicit iter durum pietas? datur ora tueri,*
> *nate, tua et notas audire et reddere voces?*
> . . .
> *quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora vectum*
> *accipio! quantis iactatum, nate, periclis!*
> *quam metui ne quid Libyae tibi regna nocerent!*
>
> 6.687–689, 692–694

Aeneas, however, still grieves for the love he is denied:

> *". . . da iungere dextram,*
> *da, genitor, teque amplexu ne subtrahe nostro."*
> *sic memorans largo fletu simul ora rigabat.*
> *ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;*
> *ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,*
> *par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.* 697–702

Verbal echoes remind us of Aeneas' previous failures to embrace those he loves. The same words described his attempts to embrace Creusa's ghost (2.792–794 = 6.700–702). *Teque amplexu ne subtrahe nostro* (6.698) reminds us of 5.742, where Aeneas complained to Anchises' spirit, *quis te nostris complexibus arcet?*, as well as of his words to Dido in the underworld,

[7]Noted by R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber II* (Oxford 1964) 286.
[8]Anchises' dual role in this passage is pointed out by Otis (above, note 2) 278.

teque aspectu ne subtrahe nostro (6.465). Aeneas' plea that his father clasp hands with him, *da iungere dextram* (6.697),[9] also recalls his complaint to his mother that she would not do so: *cur dextrae iungere dextram / non datur . . . ?* (1.408–409).[10]

Anchises' speech also echoes Aeneas' words to Venus. Aeneas had complained in Book 1 that his mother would not speak openly with him: *non datur ac veras audire et reddere voces?* (1.409), but what Anchises now says is *datur . . . notas audire et reddere voces* (6.688–689). The speeches of father and son thus recall the same earlier passage, Aeneas' in a negative repetition, Anchises' in a positive contrast.

Vergil also stresses the positive aspects of this meeting in his allusion to Catullus 101. *Aeneid* 6.692–693 (*quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora vectum / accipio!*) is a well-known allusion to the first lines of Catullus' poem: *Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus / advenio.*[11] But Vergil's readers would have remembered that Catullus goes on to write of the futility of speaking to the "mute ashes" of his brother: *ut . . . mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem* (3–4). Anchises, however, begins his speech with an expression of joy that he can now speak with his son.

Like Aeneas, Anchises weeps when they meet (6.686). But his broader

[9]A. Cartault, *L'art de Virgile dans l'Énéide* (Paris 1926) 1.521, sees a contradiction between Anchises' outstretched arms in 6.685 and Aeneas' complaint in 698 that his father withdraws from his embrace. C. P. Segal, "*Aeternum Per Saecula Nomen*: The Golden Bough and the Tragedy of History, Part II," *Arion* 5 (1966) 34–72, correctly observes that Vergil uses the discrepancy to call attention to Anchises' acceptance of his status as shade and Aeneas' lack of understanding (43–44).

[10]For some recent discussions of the verbal echoes, literary sources, and thematic interconnections of the passages of futile embraces see: W. Clausen, "An Interpretation of the *Aeneid*," *HSCP* 68 (1964) 139–147; rpt., with substantial revisions, in S. Commager, ed., *Virgil. A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1966) 75–88; M. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Cambridge, Mass. 1966) esp. 41–48; R. A. Hornsby, *Patterns of Action in the Aeneid* (Iowa City 1970) 45–46; E. Harrison, "The Subtlety of the Oral Poet," *Eranos* 69 (1971) 166–168; C. P. Segal, "'Like Winds and Winged Dream:' A Note on Virgil's Development," *CJ* 69 (1973–1974) 97–101; *id.*, "Vanishing Shades: Virgil and Homeric Repetitions," *Eranos* 72 (1974) 34–52; M. Di Cesare, *The Altar and the City* (New York 1974) 233–235; C. Monteleone, "Catullo e 'l'Odissea' dell'Eneide," *RSC* 24 (1976) 190–216, with its excellent discussion of the parallels between Aeneas' meeting with Venus in Book 1 and with Anchises in Book 6 (195–197).

[11]E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro, Aeneis Buch VI*[5] (Stuttgart 1970; rpt. of 4th ed.) *ad* 692 ff., also calls attention to Pacuvius' Teucer (319 R) and believes (*ad* 335) that the phrase *multa per aequora vectus* is Ennian rather than Catullan. M. Wigodsky, *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry, Hermes* Einzelschriften 24 (Weisbaden 1972) 126, note 632, and R. E. H. Westendorp-Boerma, "Vergil's Debt to Catullus," *AClass* 1 (1958) 60–61 see a Catullan reminiscence in *Aeneid* 6.692. See also, among the recent studies of Vergil's debt to Catullus 101, Monteleone (above, note 10) 201–206; S. V. Tracy, "Catullan Echoes in *Aeneid* 6.333-336," *AJP* 98 (1977) 20–23, with the bibliography in note 1; R. Schmiel, "A Vergilian Formula," *Vergilius* 25 (1979) 37–40; U. Boella, "Adnotatiunculae," *RSC* 27 (1979) 324–325.

perspective allows him to transcend personal sorrow. Anchises, as he had told Aeneas in Book 5, inhabits not *impia Tartara* but the *amoena piorum concilia* (733–735). The kind of *pietas* that earns one a place in Elysium, we learn at 6.660–665, is exemplified in devotion to country and society.[12] Anchises himself demonstrates this concern for his race when he orders Aeneas to descend to the underword to learn about the future: *tum genus omne tuum et quae dentur moenia disces* (5.737). When he first meets Aeneas in the underworld, Anchises is again concerned with his *carosque nepotes / fataque fortunasque virum* (6.682–683). He is *pater Anchises* (679) not only to Aeneas but also to the "whole number of his own" (681–682). It is clear from his speech at 687–694 that Anchises has a deep personal love for his son. But this love is included within a devotion to the future, to the race and country that entirely occupy father and son after this brief personal interlude. For Anchises, individuals are figures in an overarching panorama: past and future exist in a timeless present, in which he weeps for the death of his unborn descendant Marcellus as though it had already occurred.

Within this context, the *pietas* to which Anchises refers in his question to Aeneas, *vicit iter durum pietas?* (688), is far from narrowly personal. Aeneas, however, has undertaken the *iter durum* over land and sea more out of *pietas* towards his father than towards the future race. As we see in his interview with the Sibyl, he does not long for knowledge of the *caros nepotes* Anchises is preoccupied with, but for the sight of his *cari genitoris* (108), the companion of his journey, the aged and infirm individual whom he carried from Troy (110–114).[13] In his prayer to the Sibyl, Aeneas names others whose descent to the underworld was motivated by love for individuals: Orpheus for his wife, Pollux for his brother, Theseus for Persephone (119–123).[14] Even Aeneas' mention of Hercules may be connected with this theme, if he is thinking of the rescue of Alcestis.[15]

[12]See N. Barbu, "Valeurs romaines et idéaux humains dans le livre VI de l'Énéide," in H. Bardon and R. Verdière, edd., *Vergiliana: Recherches sur Virgile* (Leiden 1971) 12–34, for a good discussion of the virtues rewarded in Vergil's underworld and of the importance of social values in *Aeneid* 6.

[13]The significance of the phrase *cari genitoris* is pointed out by R. Brooks, "*Discolor Aura:* Reflections of the Golden Bough," *AJP* 74 (1953) 266, and Segal (above, note 9) 68.

[14]The Theseus example has bothered commentators since the time of Servius, who called it a *durum exemplum*. I suggest that Theseus is mentioned by Aeneas because he fits the pattern of those whose descent is associated with love, and that, at the same time, Vergil uses this example to warn his readers of the impiety to which excessive attachment to individuals can lead.

[15]This is admittedly speculation. Alcestis is never mentioned in the *Aeneid*, though at 6.392–397 Charon alludes to Hercules' theft of Cerberus. On the other hand, there is no reason why Aeneas could not be thinking of Alcestis at 119–123. This exploit would fit the pattern of descents associated with love, and would be a deed more worthy of the hero of *Aeneid* 8. For an excellent discussion of Hercules' role in the *Aeneid* (which does not suggest that there is any reference to Alcestis in *Aeneid* 6), see K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme* (Oxford 1972) 126–152.

Vergil is far from explicit about Aeneas' thoughts while his father guides him through Elysium (703–892). All he says is that Anchises "inflamed his spirit with love of future glory:" *incenditque animum famae venientis amore* (889). In this and in other ways Vergil suggests that Aeneas has acquired his father's broader conception of *pietas*, in which attachments to the individual members of his family are included within a devotion to the future.[16] The beginning of a change in Aeneas is suggested by the abrupt shift from his attempt to embrace his father's ghost (700–702) to his sight of the abode of his people (703): *Interea videt Aeneas . . . . Interea* serves here, as often, to mark a transition,[17] and means "then," not literally "through."[18] However, the literal meaning, of which the reader is also conscious, does help to convey a sense of the insubstantiality of the spirit and of Aeneas' shift in focus from the nearer to the farther perspective. Vergil's transformation of one of his Homeric models, Odysseus' meeting with the ghost of his mother in *Od.* 11.150–224, also calls attention to a change in Aeneas. In the *Odyssey*, private, family affairs occupy mother and son until, at the end of the encounter, Odysseus attempts in vain to embrace Anticleia and asks her, "My mother, why do you not stay?" (210). Vergil, however, replaces this personal question with Aeneas' inquiry about the souls he sees ("*o pater* . . ." 719–721)[19] and substitutes Anchises' revelation of Rome's future for the domestic conversation of the *Odyssey*.[20] Aeneas' parting from his father at the conclusion of Book 6 also suggests a change. The emotional intensity of futile embraces marked Aeneas' earlier partings from his family (Venus, Creusa, and Anchises in Book 5), and his meeting with his father at 6.679–702. Now, in contrast, emotional intensity is reserved for the Marcellus scene. The leave-taking of father and son in the underworld is remarkably causal:

> *his ibi tum natum Anchises unaque Sibyllam*
> *prosequitur dictis portaque emittit eburna.* 897–898

Except for the setting, Anchises might be an ordinary host seeing his guests off, and if Aeneas wants a warmer parting, we are not told of it. We are

[16]That Aeneas' mission entails emotional isolation is generally accepted but variously interpreted and analyzed. A. Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*," *Arion* 2, no. 4 (1963) 66–80, writes: "Pious Aeneas . . . cannot maintain even his piety in a personal way" (77). Putnam (above, note 10) discusses "the elimination of emotional attachment in favor of the broader perspective of history" (48). For some other stimulating discussions of this topic see Clausen (above, note 10); Brooks (above, note 13); J. R. Wilson, "Action and Emotion in Aeneas," *G&R* 16 (1969) 67–75.

[17]R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber sextus* (Oxford 1977) *ad* 703, calls the term a "transition-formula."

[18]Cartault (above, note 9) 1.521 mentions this possible meaning of *interea* only to call it "bizarre."

[19]Segal (above, note 10) 41.

[20]Austin (above, note 17) 212–213.

instead left with *incenditque animum famae venientis amore* (889) as a final description of Aeneas' emotional state.[21]

Aeneas never again attempts to embrace his ghosts. In the second half of the *Aeneid*, he embraces his mother and son, but he is now engaged with the future of his race as well as with his family as individuals.

In Book 8 Venus appears to her son without disguise, as she did at Troy (2.589–623), speaks to him and embraces him as she gives him the armor made by Vulcan:

> *talibus adfata est dictis seque obtulit ultro:*
> *"en perfecta mei promissa coniugis arte*
> *munera. ne mox aut Laurentis, nate, superbos*
> *aut acrem dubites in proelia poscere Turnum."*
> *dixit, et amplexus nati Cytherea petivit,*
> *arma sub adversa posuit radiantia quercu.* 611–616

Aeneas' meeting with Venus is similar in many ways to his meeting with Anchises in Book 6, but Vergil now replaces Anchises' spoken words with visible and tangible counterparts. The settings are similar. Venus meets Aeneas *in valle reducta* (8.609), while the souls about which Anchises tells his son are also *in valle reducta* (6.703).[22] Venus gives her son a visual representation of the *famamque et fata nepotum* (8.731), contained in the "indescribable"[23] work of the shield, just as Anchises gave him a spoken description of the *carosque nepotes / fataque fortunasque virum* (6.682–683) and explained the future in words (*per singula duxit* 888). Again, Venus' gift is a tangible weapon for the wars in Italy (8.613–614), which Aeneas bears physically (*attollens umero* 731), while Anchises' speech gives him knowledge of these wars (6.890–892) and strength to bear them spiritually (*incenditque animum* 889).

The parents' expressions of affection are also analogous. Anchises' speech to Aeneas is an expression of love. But it is a means of helping a son bring the future into being as well as a personal display of love for an individual. Similarly, when Venus embraces her son she is not only giving him a sign of human warmth, but also arming him.[24] Vergil uses *hysteron*

[21]My remarks above Aeneas' emotional change concern only his relations with his family and should not imply any more general theory of "character development." For a bibliography on the debate about this "development" see W. Kühn, *Götterszenen bei Vergil* (Heidelberg 1971) 95–96.

[22]See Otis (above, note 2) 341, and Putnam (above, note 10) 145–147.

[23]P. T. Eden, *A Commentary on Virgil, Aeneid VIII* (*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 35, Leiden 1975) 163, offers the excellent suggestion that *enarrabile* (8.625) not only refers to the material composition of the shield but also hints at "the 'indescribability' of the pictures."

[24]Thus Kühn (above, note 21) 123 sees only half the picture when he calls Venus' embrace a "menschlich-warmen Gebärde." Di Cesare (above, note 10) 256 sees the other half when he notes that Venus gives her son human contact "not in the role of mother so much as the role of arms-bringer, and thus in the name of the dynasty promised her by Jupiter."

proteron in lines 615–616 (quoted above) to help make this point:[25] the embrace is enclosed, linguistically, within the armor.

The meeting of mother and son in Book 8 is in striking contrast to that of Book 1. In the earlier meeting, Venus speaks and turns aside (*dixit et avertens* 1.402), fleeing his embrace, while in Book 8 she speaks and embraces him of her own accord (*dixit, et amplexus . . . petivit* 8.615). Nevertheless, Aeneas' response shows how greatly he has changed since his meeting with Venus in Book 1. There, he longed for her to speak openly with him and clasp his hand, but now that she does this, he does not reply and he hardly seems to notice her physical presence. He attends to the arms alone and is pleased not by his meeting with his mother but by "the great honor of the goddess:"

> *ille deae donis et tanto laetus honore*
> *expleri nequit atque oculos per singula volvit.* 8.617–618

In the later scene, in fact, Vergil blurs the distinction between the arms and the goddess, whose presence, as W.-L. Liebermann notes, continues in the arms she brings.[26] As the scene closes, Aeneas' earlier pain at being deceived by "false images" (*falsis imaginibus* 1.407–408) of Venus herself is replaced by joy in the tangible *imago* of the shield (8.730).[27] He has accepted the divine viewpoint.

In Book 12, Aeneas gives his son the same armed embrace he received from his mother:

> *postquam habilis lateri clipeus loricaque tergo est,*
> *Ascanium fusis circum complectitur armis*
> *summaque per galeam delibans oscula fatur:*
> *"disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,*
> *fortunam ex aliis. nunc te mea dextera bello*
> *defensum dabit et magna inter praemia ducet.*
> *tu facito, mox cum matura adoleverit aetas,*
> *sis memor et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum*
> *et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector."* 432–440

Vergil emphasizes the armor and human emotion equally. Edwards notes some ambiguities that stress the armor: line 433 can mean either "throwing his arms around him" or "having donned his armour."[28] Other linguistic

[25]Eden (above, note 23) 161.

[26]"Die Präsenz der Venus dauert dort fort in den überbrachten Waffen, besonders im Schild mit seinen zukunftshaltigen Bildern, den Aeneas dann symbolträchtig auf die Schulter nimmt (8.729 ff.)," "Aeneas—Schicksal und Selbstfindung," in H. Görgemanns and E. Schmidt, edd., *Studien zum antiken Epos* (Meisenheim 1976) 191. See also his discussion of the parallels between the two meetings of Venus and Aeneas, 190–192. (I owe this reference to an anonymous referee of *Phoenix*.)

[27]This contrast was pointed out to me by the referee of *Phoenix*.

[28]M. Edwards, "The Expression of Stoic Ideas in the *Aeneid*," *Phoenix* 14 (1960) 163.

peculiarities contribute to this effect. *Fusis* might also be construed as an ablative absolute with *Ascanium*: "he embraces Ascanius, who has armor (or arms) thrown about him." *Complectitur* can mean "surround" as well as "embrace," and the word itself is enclosed, linguistically: *fusis circum complectitur armis*. In this way, Aeneas' embrace echoes that of Venus in Book 8, which was, as we have seen, similarly enclosed, linguistically, by armor. The armor is also emphasized by the fact that four words for it occur in the first three lines: *clipeus, lorica, armis,* and *galeam*, while the father's name is postponed until line 440. Aeneas' embrace and speech, however, are so vivid and moving partly because they are contained within this inhuman setting. They are given at a crisis in battle, when Aeneas, who has just been cured of his wound, longs for war (*avidus pugnae* 430) and hastens (*oditque moras* 431) to defend his discouraged friends. The temporal sequence of the rush to battle is thus briefly interrupted by the embrace, just as, in line 434, the physical continuity of Aeneas' helmet is broken, just barely, by the kiss given through it: *summaque per galeam delibans oscula*. These physical and temporal constraints on Aeneas' expression of affection greatly enhance the emotional intensity of the scene. Two striking words also emphasize the almost erotic tenderness of the kiss itself: *delibans*, which occurs only here in Vergil, and *oscula*, which occurs only three other times in the *Aeneid*.[29]

The parallel passage in *Iliad* 6 (466–481) has a very different tone.[30] Hector, returning briefly from battle, meets Andromache and the infant Astyanax on the walls of Troy. When the father's helmet frightens the child, both parents laugh (471). Hector takes off his helmet and places it on the ground before picking up his son and kissing him. He then prays to "Zeus and the other gods" that Astyanax may one day be like his father, outstanding among the Trojans, brave and strong and the ruler of Ilium. The boy, Hector hopes, will be called a better warrior than his father, and will please his mother by bringing bloody spoils from battle. Human feeling

[29]*Oscula*: 2.490, 1.687, and 1.256 where Jupiter kisses Venus (*oscula libavit natae*). I owe these points about Vergil's vocabulary to the referee of *Phoenix*.

[30]The parallel has been too little studied, though it offers excellent support for V. Pöschl's belief that "the most excellent way to an understanding of Vergil is by comparison with Homer;" *The Art of Vergil*, trans. G. Seligson (Ann Arbor 1962) 7. G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Hypomnemata 7, Göttingen 1964) 352, mentions it briefly. W. Fowler's *The Death of Turnus* (Oxford 1919) is typical in that it notes the parallel with Soph. *Ajax* 550–551 and does not mention Homer. L. A. Feldman's "Ascanius and Astyanax: A Comparative Study of Virgil and Homer," *CJ* 53 (1957–1958) 361–366 is still the best study of the comparison. W. Kühn, "Rüstungsszenen bei Homer und Vergil," *Gymnasium* 64 (1957) 28–59, also has some excellent remarks, especially on pages 37–39. For some other literary sources of *Aeneid* 12.432 ff. see C. G. Heyne and G. P. E. Wagner, *P. Vergilii Maronis Opera*[4] (Leipzig and London 1883) 3.770–771; L. A. MacKay, "Achilles as Model for Aeneas," *TAPA* 88 (1957) 15; G. Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton 1972) 31–32.

relieves for a moment the tension and horror of war. As Hector's helmet is put aside, the warrior is replaced by a human father who laughs and kisses his child. Moreover, in Hector's prayer, war itself is put into a human perspective, as an opportunity for individual *aristeia* and as part of the rewards and duties of a traditional devotion to an ancestral fatherland (Ἰλίου ἶφι ἀνάσσειν 478), countrymen (ἀριπρεπέα Τρώεσσι 477), and family (μήτηρ 481).

Vergil deliberately calls attention to Homer's passage with his mention of Hector (12.440) and the similarity of the setting. In both passages, an armed father embraces his son and expresses his hopes for the boy's future. Moreover, Ascanius has previously been identified with Astyanax.[31] But Vergil stresses his departure from Homer in a number of ways. His language, as we have seen, emphasizes armor as well as human emotion. Again, Hector takes off his helmet; Aeneas puts his on before kissing Ascanius. Hector laughs, but we are given no description of Aeneas' emotions, and his face is hidden behind the iron mask. Aeneas does not invoke the gods, and he does not think of war as an opportunity for *aristeia*.[32] He does not, and of course cannot, pray that his son may rule over his fatherland among his countrymen and please his mother. Ascanius' mother, ancestral *patria*, and fellow Trojans are dead. Again, Aeneas' hope that Ascanius will learn *virtus* and *labor* (12.435) recalls Hector's ὥδε βίην τ'ἀγαθόν (478). But the second half of Hector's line, καὶ Ἰλίου ἶφι ἀνάσσειν, is replaced, in Vergil, by *fortunam ex aliis* (12.436).[33]

Vergil's passage thus replaces *aristeia* with duty, the human community of country and family with *exempla* of *virtus* and *labor*: armor encloses humanity. As Edwards observes, "the embrace is one in which both of them [Aeneas and Ascanius] are surrounded not only by the arms of the loved one but by the horrors of war."[34] This does not, however, exhaust the symbolism of Aeneas' armed embrace. Hector's is an ordinary crested helmet, but Aeneas' armor is that made by Vulcan and given him by Venus. The shield, prominently mentioned at 12.432, depicts and represents the *famamque et fata nepotum* Aeneas has shouldered, literally and figuratively, at the end of Book 8. When Aeneas embraces Ascanius, then, both father and son shoulder the duty to the future represented by the armor.

When Aeneas parted from Venus in Book 1 he longed to "join right hand

[31]At 3.489 Andromache calls Ascanius *Astyanactis imago*. Pöschl (above, note 30) 149 quotes F. Mehmel, "Virgil und Apollonius Rhodius," *Hamburger Arbeiten zur Altertumswissenschaft* 1 (1940) 50, on the identification of the two boys.

[32]Feldman (above, note 30) 364 has some good remarks on the contrast.

[33]Heyne (above, note 30) 3.771 correctly explains the sense of 12.435–436: *disce ex me veram virtutem in tolerando labore; exemplum verae virtutis me tibi habe propositum; at fortunae secundae exempla pete ab aliis.*

[34]Edwards (above, note 28) 163.

to hand" and to "hear and give back speech." In Book 12, he reserves his right hand for war (436–437) and gives Ascanius no chance to reply. In the course of the poem, Aeneas moves from a narrowly personal love of individuals whose embrace he is denied, to a vantage point from which he can speak the words to his son that Clausen terms "curiously impersonal."[35] His embrace and words are "impersonal" yet loving, in the same way Venus' embrace and Anchises' words, though given out of love, were given not only to an individual but also to a son whose duty it was to contribute to the future of the race. Aeneas' embrace, while he wears Vulcan's armor, recalls his mother's embrace in Book 8, and symbolically passes on to Ascanius the shield and all it represents. Aeneas' speech to Ascanius also recalls Anchises' speech to his son in Book 6, which was a spoken counterpart of Venus' tangible gift. In particular, Anchises finished his speech with advice to Aeneas about the *virtus* and *labor* the shield also represents: *bella viro memorat quae deinde gerenda* (890); *quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem* (892). These are the only duties and rewards of Aeneas' *pietas* towards the future. When Aeneas embraces Ascanius, speaking to him the one time in the poem, he offers his son the iron inheritance he has himself received from his parents. This iron embrace is the only possible expression of his love.[36]

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[35](above, note 10) 82.

[36]I am much indebted to Prof. John Miller and to the anonymous referees of *Phoenix* for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.