THE CONCEPTS OF HEROISM IN VIRGIL, SPENSER AND MILTON

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ABSTRACT

THE CONCEPTS OF HEROISM IN
VIRGIL, SPENSER AND MILTON

By

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When Virgil, Spenser and Milton set out to write their respective epics, each embarks on a quest toward a new definition of heroism. In the Aeneid Virgil dramatizes the death of the Homeric hero and heroic code of exaggerated individualism, which finds its greatest significance within the transcient bounds of its own experience. He then defines and exemplifies its replacement; a new heroic ideal in which the emphasis moves from an isolated individualism to the symbolic significance of individual acts in both an historical, or social, and religious context. The principal theme of the Aeneid is centered around Aeneas' conversion from an Homeric to a Roman code of heroism. Virgil shows that ideally humility and sacrifice, historical and social responsiblity, can be integrated to form a concept of heroism to which Spenser and Milton respond actively, primarily because if its ready adaptability to Christian thought.

The heroism of Virgil's Aeneas may be described as pious resignation. In Spenser's Faerie Queene this pious resignation gains an intensified religious significance. The almost fatalistic resignation of Aeneas becomes

in Red Cross Knight contrite submission. This submission of the Christian hero is so extreme, that the hero not only acts in the name of God, but is able to do so only with the grace of God. Evil is accomplished by man, good by God through man. The Christian hero, ego dissolved, receiver of grace, stands as the purified will of God manifest in a corrupt world.

Milton repeats the themes of Virgil and Spenser, integrating what Virgil saw as pious resignation in the character of Aeneas and what Spenser developed as the allegorical decline and rise of Red Cross Knight on the path of righteousness, to form a hero of mild humility and peaceful nobility. Adam is not a warrior, nor the founder of a race; neither is he meant to confront Satan with the explicit end of liberating men. Rather as the father of men, Adam represents a model of heroic submission to divine justice and mercy. He is what every man should be, a leader of a family, a man of self-knowledge. Adam is what Milton envisions as the ideal Christian hero in a sinful world.

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Preface

The intent of this essay is to explain the concepts of heroism in the epic poetry of Virgil, Spenser and Milton. Each poet in his epic defines and exemplifies a concept of heroism in the gradually unfolding moral, religious, and usually national consciousness of the hero. This essay opens with an explanation of Virgilian heroism, and is followed by an explanation of its consequent influences on, and similarities and dissimilarities to, Spenserian heroism. The essay concludes with an explanation of the heroism of Milton and its thematic relationship to the heroism of Virgil and Spenser.

I

The Aeneid is a solemn, highly ritualized poem of heroic death and rebirth. It is addressed specifically to the necessary, though in some important ways regretful, even remorseful, death of the Homeric hero and heroic code as Virgil presents it, a code of elevated individualism which finds its greatest significance (indeed its only significance) within the transcient bounds of its own experience. In the Aeneid Virgil defines and embodies its replacement: the birth of a Roman civilization in which the heroic emphasis moves from the isolated significance of individual events to the symbolic significance of isolated events in both an historical or social and cosmic context. The central theme of the Aeneid is built on Aeneas' conversion from an Homeric to a Roman code of heroism.

The essential problem with the Homeric world-view, which places it in a radical contrast to a Virgilian world-view, is the lack of any long-range sense of social or historical significance surrounding particular events. Each sequence is uniquely separate from the next. There is no particular concern for historical consequence, nor sense of responsibility to future generations. And, of course, there is lacking any sense of personal commitment to a just divine influence directing history. Because of the absence of a just, divine influence, the individual and the moment provide the only constant, fleeting as it may be, and are elevated to supreme importance.[1]

The strength of this hero comes from his ability to stand up

against a meaningless world and give it meaning in terms of his own accomplishments. How he withstands the indiscriminate flaying about of misfortune, while retaining his own self-respect and courage, distinguishes his greatness, his aretḗ. Central to the Homeric hero is an immense courage sustained by a necessarily self-centered pride which spurs the quest for glory and the fame born of glorious deeds, a fame that lends immortality to a short and otherwise insignificant life. The emphasis is, then, on the self, for life is short, and there is much to be done for glory's sake. Brooks Otis points out that the thrust of any Odyssean speech stresses "My aretḗ, my metis, which carries me (and hence you) through."[2] Consistent with this emphasis on the self is Kitto's description of aretḗ, which he sees in terms of self fulfillment:

> What moves him [Homeric hero] to deeds of heroism is not a sense of duty as we understand it--duty towards others: It is rather a duty towards himself. He strives after that which we translate 'virtue' but is in Greet aretḗ, 'excellence.'[3]

Aretḗ is a self-sustaining force, it provides an heroic identity. Without it there is mere existence, life without semblance of meaning or purpose. Of course this notion of aretḗ becomes in Virgil a mixture of personal dignity and self-glory, which finally he assesses as a threat to a tranquil society. This, then, is a primary difference between the two codes of heroism which are at odds in the Aeneid: whereas the actions of Homeric heros are self-motivated, the actions of Aeneas are for the benefit of all ancestors, families and gods. Otis says correctly that Aeneas, unlike Odysseus, has no mission without his men, that without

his men there is no reason for the survival of Troy, that the heroic moment is no longer only one fleeting unrecapturable moment, but in the Aeneid gains an historical significance because it is social: "it is the moment of a people symbolized by a man."[4]

Most of the drama of the Aeneid is built on the conflict between these two codes which takes place both within Aeneas, as he converts to the Roman code of piety, and around him, as he confronts various representations of the now-dying heroic code. Examples of the old standard are constantly placed in both the foreground and background of the action, always in juxtaposition with Aeneas and the new age he represents. But the Aeneid is not so free of complexity, so obviously didactic as this polarity suggests, for the two codes are not always so clearly distinguishable that one appears righteous and the other does not. The old code is not made unheroic in comparison as much as it is dispelled as no longer viable in a sophisticated and complex social structure, where a certain degree of restraint is needed to preserve a common good will and peace. When Otis says the mission of Rome is peace, "the driving spirit of Turnus, Camilla, Nisus, Mezentius, Amata, as well as of Dido, is passion, and through passion, violence,"[5] he captures the important distinction between the two codes. A distinction that, despite Virgil's genuine admiration for these unique and extra-ordinary individuals, an admiration most evident in his mixed treatment of Turnus, leaves him nevertheless wary of their methods and motives. Virgil creates a new hero, a hero with a social and spiritual

responsibility, whose world-view is dominated no longer by feelings of futility and meaninglessness, but rather is directed by a sense of purpose and history, a hero who is cognizant of the direct influence each action of his life bears on lives of future men, aware that the personal drama of his life is no longer exclusively his own but carries a greater significance to which he must address himself. The birth of this new hero is no easy task, and reluctantly begins in the midst of death and bitter destruction.

The Aeneas of Book II is still very much a Trojan warrior with a code and heritage like that of Hector and Turnus. But when compelled to abandon a home which is in a ruinous state of horror and confusion, against a passionate desire to remain, fight and die if necessary in a glorious, if futile last effort to protect his homeland, Aeneas undergoes a change of character which begins to distinguish him from the likes of Hector and Turnus. Fittingly, it is Hector himself, spokesman of a dying code, who, recognizing its limitations, appears before Aeneas and warns him that he must flee:

> Our home, our Priam-these have had their due,
> Could Pergamus be saved by any prowess,
> Then my hand would have served. (1. 398-400)[6]

The message is clear: prowess in battle will no longer sustain the fate of Troy. Aeneas must learn another kind of strength, a strength of patience and restraint. That the message is delivered by a mutilated Hector gives Aeneas a first-hand glimpse at the bloody end of a once proud man, a glimpse not without effect:

> Oh this
> Was Hector, and how different he was
> from Hector back from battle putting on
> Achilles spoils or Hector when he flung
> his Phrygian firebrands at Darden prows! (1. 371-76).

This irony is hard to accept, that a man once so glorious is now hideous, as he stands "in tears and sorrow," "dismembered...black with bloodied dust... His beard unkempt his hair...thick with blood" (1. 377-81). The scene is especially important because it signals a recurring theme of violence breeding violence, blood begetting blood. This is, then, the cycle that Aeneas must not perpetuate no matter the strain on his pride. He must transcend the cycle of blood vengeance. This is the message of Hector, the fading shadow of a dying age.

Virgil goes to great lengths to dramatize this cycle of blood-letting in Book II, and Aeneas is forced to stand and witness it while restrained on all sides from his immediate impulse for vengeance. The episodes that follow are some of the finest in the Aeneid. They provide a panorama of scenes which offer a picture of merciless slaughter, brutal destruction and defilement, in toll the general waste of life, and property caused by useless war waged by the proud. The scenes are particularly important because of the profound suffering they cause in Aeneas, which later gives him credibility as an heroic figure. Certainly in the fires of Troy are the beginnings of Roman piety painfully forged in his heart.

After Hector vanishes, the "howls of war" fill Aeneas' hearing, and he starts from bed. Climbing to the roof of his house, he sees the

elements of war, which are by and large indiscriminate forces such as fire that destroy whole wheat fields or:

> a torrent
> that hurtles from a mountain stream lay[ing] low
> the meadows, low the happy crops and low
> the labor of the oxen, dragging forests
> headlong (1. 414-19).

The image of pastoral devastation is used again and again to describe the random cruelties of war. These particular images call to mind the innocent casualties that have little to do with one man's injured pride or anothers' heroic quest for glory, or other such typical initiators of destruction. They are images of wheat fields, meadows, happy crops, oxen and forests all being razed by the insensitive hand of war.

The scene overwhelms Aeneas, and his first impulse is to perpetuate the destruction:

> Insane, I seize my weapons. There's no sense
> in weapons, yet my spirit burns to gather
> a band for battle...
> Rage and anger drive my mind. My only thought
> how fine a thing it is to die in arms (1. 728-33).

The telling words in this passage are insane, burns, rage and anger. His actions are irrational, passionate, even savage, as he and his men are compared to hungry "wolves in a black fog/ driven blindly by their belly's endless/ frenzy" (1. 481-84). Their hunger is, of course, for battle and satisfied vengeance. These images both of pastoral devastation and frenzied savagery are repeated in the later books of the Aeneid with reference to Turnus and the war in Latium. The images at that time recall the setting of Troy and invite a comparison between the

Aeneas of Book II and of Books VII - XII as well as between Aeneas and Turnus.

In the ensuing scenes Aeneas makes his way to Priam's palace. Along his path there has been everywhere "fear, harsh grief and many shapes of slaughter" (1. 498). Virgil reminds the reader of the mass hysteria and loss of life, never allowing them to slip too far into the background. At Priam's palace:

> the fight is deadly, just as if
> There were no battles elsewhere, just as if
> No one were dying now throughout the city (1. 589-91).

The words "just as if" by contrast conjure up the countless bloody scenes of battles and death occurring throughout the city. Virgil never allows this reality to be eclipsed by a few sporadic moments of individual endeavor. The technique is used by Virgil to move the emphasis away from the particular and into the general, or sometimes to emphasize the general significance of the particular act. At the palace of Priam Aeneas experiences perhaps his most difficult and painful test. Entering a realm of deep confusion "anguish and sad commotion" (1. 650), he finds himself inside the palace where "the vaulted walls echo with the wail and woe of women" (1. 650-51). Pyrrhus is this time the warrior of the moment. His savagery is unrestrained as he and his band storm the gate. Here again Virgil introduces a simile which depicts random destruction of innocents. They storm the palace like:

> The foaming river
> when it has burst across resisting banks
> and boundaries and overflows its angry
> flood piling in a moss along the plains
> as it drags flocks and folds across the fields (1. 664-68).

Again the pastoral is disrupted. Victimized flocks and folds represent the daughters of Hecuba, as well as Hecuba and the defenseless, aging King Priam himself. In this passage Hecuba and her daughters also are compared to doves, an image of innocence, driven by a dark storm, a random destroyer. Polites is slaughtered by Pyrrhus before his parent's eyes with cold brutality and arrogance. The arrogance of this act will be recalled in Book X, when Turnus slaughters Pallus, callously lamenting the fact that Evander was not present to watch. Virgil underscores the callous act:

> Polites falls before his parent's eyes
> within their presence he pours out his life
> in streams of blood (1. 700-02).

Pyrrhus then slaughters Priam, who slips in "the blood that streamed from his own son" (1. 739-40). It is important to distinguish these early scenes of violence from the running catalogues of conquests and slayings which make up much of the later books of the Aeneid. The blood-letting of Book II is not merely one of many conventional epic war sequences or a rehashing of old myths (in this case the sack of Troy). Virgil is directly concerned with the effect of this type of destruction on the peaceful sanctity of man, on the continuity of a civilization. At the heart of Book II is a lesson of control and restraint which Aeneas must learn for the sake of Troy, Rome, and from Virgil's point of view the survival of a peaceful co-existence of man. For Virgil, the passionate violence of someone like Pyrrhus, or later Nizus, Errylus, Menzentius and Turnus, as well as Dido's own form of passion, breeds a chaos that,

usually self-destructive, is always universally disrupting to the nature of things. It is the passion-bred chaos that continually disrupts the peace that Aeneas must learn to avoid. This message runs through the Aeneid and must be realized by Aeneas on his path toward a full understanding of Roman piety.

At the sight of once noble Priam's dismembered body, a sight reminiscent of Hector's bloodied appearance, Aeneas is nearly overcome:

> This was the first time savage horror took me
> I was astounded (1. 151-52).

In this maddened fram of mind Aeneas experiences a major reversal. Left alone in the chamber of Priam, surrounded by the sights and sounds of death, he becomes concerned for his own family. But before leaving sees Helen "crouching silently/within a secret corner of the shrine" (1. 764-65). His immediate impulse is for venegeance:

> In my mind a fire
> is burning; anger spurs me to avenge
> my falling land, to exact the debt of my crime
> (1. 774-76).

> For though there is no memorable name
> in punishing a woman and no gain
> of honor in such victory... it will be
> a joy to fill my soul with vengeful fire, to satisfy
> the aches of my people (1. 785-92).

But before he is able to accomplish this deed his passion is stayed by the goddess Venus. From Venus Aeneas learns that though his family is protected by the gods, his homeland is not, that Helen is not to blame but that Jupiter's will would have Troy leveled. For the first time

Aeneas is being asked to abandon his own perspective for one that is transcendent. The wider perspective shows his fighting to be futile and his thirst for vengeance misdirected. For the moment he is calmed and Helen is spared.

Nevertheless Aeneas returns home only to be incensed again by his father's refusal to leave Troy:

> Again I take
> arms and, miserable long for death (l. 884-85).
>
> Let be; and let me at the Greeks again
> to make my way back to new battles. Never
> shall we all die this day without revenge (l. 905-07).

But Aeneas is given another sign:

> Over Iulus' head
> There leaps a lithe flametip that seems to shed
> a radiance; the tongue of fire flickers
> harmless, and plays about his soft hair, grazes
> his temples (l. 924-28).

The omen works a dramatic reversal in Aeneas' father Anchises. He is at once understanding and accepting, convinced that the sign is from Jupiter: "Now my delay is done; I follow; where/you lead, I am... Yours, this omen;/and Troy is in your keeping. Yes I yield" (l. 949-52). The omen comes as a flash of insight to Anchises as a kind of religious awakening, and fills him with a spiritual strength with which he will inspire Aeneas time and again on their journey. While Aeneas maintains a certain amount of courage and strength, Anchises is able to provide the spiritual energies hs son lacks in the early going.

At the end of Book II Aeneas loses his wife Cruesa. Panicked he returns to the city in search of her. The scene both gives Virgil a chance

to put a prophecy into the mouth of Cruesa's spirit, and affords him one final look at the devastation of war. Troy "high as the highest rooftop" is in flames, "The boiling tide/is raging to the heavens."

> And here, from every quarter, heaped together
> are Trojan treasures torn, from burning altars--
> the tables of the gods, and plundered garments,
> and bowls of solid gold, and Trojan boys
> and trembling women stand in a long line (l. 1031-35).

Aeneas' suffering has been poignant. His task was no light one, his loss almost unbearable. But that Aeneas does endure the loss must be remembered, for Turnus will experience the same flames when in the last moments of his life, he looks upon the burning Latium. His reactions are contrasted constantly with earlier reactions of Aeneas.

In Book III there are two themes which contribute to Aeneas' development as a hero. The first is the relationship between Aeneas and his father, Anchises. The second develops Aeneas' relationship to the gods. These relationships work a long way toward defining Roman piety and consequently Virgilian heroism. Basic to both is a solemn spiritual interchange that is meant to give the poem a religious (and not merely political) seriousness. To begin with, every stage of travel in Book III is for the most part initiated and directed by Anchises, who is by this time a spokesman of divine purpose, teacher of Aeneas in the ways of Roman piety. Though Aeneas' very departure from the shores of Troy signifies a crucial symbolic victory over those aspects of himself which he will meet again in Turnus, and is thus a major stop toward Roman piety, he remains unsure of his destiny, and is in need of the

guidance his father and the gods can provide. The opening of Book III demonstrates this need:

> No sooner
> was summer come upon us than my father
> Anchises bid us spread our sails to fate.
> Weeping, I must give up the shores, the harbors
> that were my home, the plain that once was Troy
> (1. 11-15).

Clearly, Aeneas' weeping shows that his heart is not in this journey. Anchises is, on the other hand, of one mind, the only one inspired by the cosmic significance of Troy's fall and the impending outcome of their travels.

It is Anchises who finally unravels the omens of Apollo after an initial misunderstanding:

> Who then could heed Cassandra's prophecy?
> But let us trust in Phoebus; warned by him,
> let us pursue a better destiny (1. 247-49).

And again it is Anchises who is anxious to leave Trojan Chaon, the home of Andromache:

> Meanwhile Anchises has our sails made ready
> That no delay rob us of driving winds (1. 616-17).

Throughout Book III Anchises is a symbol of perseverence, careful judgment, sympathy, reverence and wisdom. Keen to observe the significance of the horses of the plains of Minerva's Height, he notices the harnesses of war, which have "yielded to the chariot beneath/ the yoke and reins of peace" (1. 705-06), and recognizes in this a sign of peace to come: "Then there is also/ some hope for peace" (1. 706-07). The hardest lesson Aeneas had to learn in Troy was restraint. Here the

image of the yoke and reins, the symbol of restraint, recalls that lesson. The voyage continues as Anchises spurs them past Charybis and, "They do as they are told" (1. 731). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, when the Greek warrior, Achaemenides pleads for protection against the great Cyclops of Etna, Anchises is quick to offer a compassionate hand:

> Father Anchises
> does not wait long to offer him his hand
> and steadies the young man with the strong pledge
> (1. 790-92).

Anchises demonstrates a novel ability to befriend a former enemy with a simple gesture of kindness. This is another lesson directed at Aeneas, for eventually he must confront the Latins with the same gesture. All these deeds have been in part for the benefit of Aeneas' education.

The second theme is Aeneas' relationship to his gods. Several times in Book III both Aeneas and Anchises are shown in the midst of prayer and ritual. The continual reference to these ceremonial times gives this book, as well as the entire poem, a highly religious atmosphere. And again, as with the violence in Book II, much of the ceremony in the poem is more than epic convention or mythic trapping.

There are, of course, several examples of ceremony and special rites, examples that seem to increase and intensify as the epic progresses.[7] But what finally is important about all of them is exactly what they tell of Aeneas and Virgilian heroism. Each time Aeneas prays or performs a rite, he demonstrates a religious awareness of and adherence to the spiritual nature and divine influence within himself and

the things and events around him. By praying at almost every turning point in the poem, he repeatedly renews his bond with the intrinsic spirituality of life. Anchises begins this pattern of communion which Aeneas learns and continues after his father's death. It is Anchises the teacher who reappears in Book VI when Aeneas is having serious doubts about his future. Anchises, as the original convert to the Roman cause and teacher in the ways of piety, strengthens Aeneas by revealing the order of things and the way he fits into them.

Virgilian heroism has been defined and exemplified by self-restraint and acknowledgment of the importance and preservation of the pastoral way of life. This restraint and appreciation of the pastoral arise from a spiritual vision as opposed to the limited vision of the self-seeking individual. To Virgil, who is primarily a religious poet, in the spiritual significance of the hero lies his greatest distinction.

Cyril Bailey goes to great lengths to analyze Virgil's religious intent, and a very brief summary of a few of his major conclusions, would be useful.[8] The religious tone of the Aeneid fluctuates necessarily because of the vast variety of religious cults and traditions, which find their way in one form or another into the poem. The type of religious emphasis placed on each source varies depending upon Virgil's handling of it. Much of the religion in the Aeneid is based either on the old Italian traditions, which are bred of a simple pastoral existence, as they pertain to the spirits of the countryside, divinities of the household and deities of the seasons, along with the protectors of the vine and the

olive, or on the state-cults which stress a cosmic machinery manipulating history as Virgil uses them?[9] Now insofar as Aeneas demonstrates an awareness of both the spiritual value of particular events and everyday experiences, and the general or cosmic destiny of man as it is to be fulfilled by the founding and flourishing of the Roman state, he comes very close to what Virgil terms piety, the outstanding attribute of Roman heroism. Furthermore, Aeneas reaches an ultimate in heroism only when he is able to reconcile the spiritual value of everyday life with an overall divine plan. There is an example in Book III of religious ceremony where this reconciliation seems to occur.

The example is again the passing of Minerva's Height where the white horses of the plain are recognized for their real significance as both symbols of war and peace. But it is the potential for peace that impresses Anchises most. Immediately Aeneas and his warriors respond to this omen by praying to Pallas, while covering their heads with "Trojan veils," a custom common in Virgil's Rome.[10] The solemnity of this event cannot be over-emphasized on the cosmic level. Aeneas is associated, as the founder of Rome, with the attainment and preservation of peace, a peace which with his compliance will be accomplished eventually by a working out of a divine will. The peace gained by the cosmic machinery will put an end to the random destruction of the pastoral world, which thrives on old traditions of daily ceremonies that recognize the spiritual value of everyday things. Though the horses as symbols of war are associated with harnesses, the horses as symbols

of peace are associated with the yoke and rein, tools of a pastoral existence. Aeneas, as the ideal Virgilian hero, must recognize the spiritual value of everyday life, indeed the godliness of a pastoral existence, and therefore, must understand that his cosmic role is as the instrument of divine will, whose intent it is to establish a nation founded on the principles of peace and preservation of a peace which will protect the pastoral way of life and the religious solemnity that Virgil attaches to it.

Clearly the finest examples of Virgil's use of the pastoral to convey this process of heroic recognition are in Books VI and VIII of the Aeneid. In Book VI the pastoral is used to express metaphorically the paradise of the righteous. They are described as the "lands of gladness," "glades of gentleness" and the "Groves of Blessedness." While in Book VIII the pastoral kingdom of Evander, Pallanteum, as the organic reflection or earthly complement to the Elysian fields of Book VI, represents the immediate and working relationship between the ideal and the everyday life of pious ritual and thanksgiving. Both scenes are given a like mood of solemn dignity and gentle nobility, created with a same reverence for the pastoral that is unmistakable throughout the poem. And in both instances the pastoral landscape is shown to hold within it a spiritual bond with the wisdom and workings of the divine, and therefore, gives the special sense of religion instrinsic to Virgil's conception of Aeneas', and ultimately Rome's, place in history. Each time Aeneas comes away from these settings of peaceful communion

with a renewed insight and understanding pertaining to his own destiny, the nature of man and divine Providence.

Aeneas is told by Musaeus in Book VI that those who reach the "fields of gladness":

> live in shady groves
> and settle on soft riverbanks and meadows
> where fresh streams flow (l. 891-93).

And here in the midst of the locus amoenus, he discovers his father "in the deep of a green valley...lost in thought...studying the souls of all his sons to come" (l. 898-900). The depth and intensity of Anchises' contemplation is expressed very nearly allegorically by the "deep of a green valley" surrounding him. This association with the meditative spirit gives the pastoral a specifically profound and reverent significance. Indeed, from the same deep green valley of contemplation will spring the great heroes of Rome.

In Book VIII Aeneas returns to the pastoral. By first sailing through a "shade of varied trees and cleave green woods reflected in calm water" (l. 124), Aeneas reaches Evander, who is found "within a grove/ before the city" (l. 134-35), celebrating the anniversary of his people's liberation. On this journey to the sacred regions of Pallanteum, Aeneas moves symbolically toward the sacred regions of his own consciousness. When the two regions meet, he is ready to receive the wisdom this land and its people have to offer.

The people of Pallanteum are in the midst of celebrating the anniversary of the heroic deeds of Hercules, who freed the land of the

monster Cacus. There are some parallels between the story Evander relates of the hero of action, Hercules, who frees the victimized innocents or pastoral Arcadians of the brutal ravager of the land, and the present circumstance of Aeneas. The story is meant as a lesson in heroism for Aeneas, as he, too, is to be a great liberator and protector of the pastoral ideal, a hero of action who rids a brutalized humanity of the proud, vicious warriors of vengeance and vain-glory. Evander says to Aeneas "try/ as he did to deserve divinity" (1. 478-79). This notion of hero-liberator slaying the savage beast who threatens the existence of the pastoral, and therefore the spiritual founts of life, is a theme central to Virgil's Aeneid.

After the celebration, Aeneas is shown the great shrines, remnants of a golden age, now the grassy foundations of forthcoming Rome. The scene recalls Elysium where Anchises reveals to Aeneas the soon to be heroes of Rome. As the heroes were born of the spiritual pastoral "Fields of Gladness" and "Groves of Blessedness," so the seat of Rome will spring from the golden age of rustic and solemn shrines. The best example of a Roman shrine born of rustic ancestry is the capital where the "Arcadians believe/ that often they have seen Jupiter himself," which Virgil says was once "rough with thick underbrush," and that "even then/ its holiness had filled the fearful farmers/ with dread, and even then they shuddered at/ the woods and rock" (1. 455-59). Evander points out that "this grove, this hill, tree-topped/ are some god's home" (1. 459-60). Here again the grove is given a

mystical significance that, of course, the tillers of the lands, the simple farmers recognize immediately by virtue of their humility. This grove, someday the Roman Capital, begins as a wooded temple of natural holiness, where the earth and the heavens mingle to form the hilly shrine of Jupiter, a shrine symbolic of the divine sanctity and authority given to Rome as the righteous warriors of peace and forbearance. The message that Aeneas receives while in Pallenteum is then a reiteration of the words of Anchises, who said:

> remember Roman, these will be your arts:
> to teach the ways of peace to those you conquer,
> to spare defeated peoples, tame the proud
> (Bk VI l. 1135-37).

The process of internalization seems to culminate in one final scene where Aeneas receives spiritual as well as practical aid, while in the midst of the idyllic pastoral. This time the aid comes from Venus in the form of a gift of armor. On his journey back to Latium, Aeneas rests his men in a symbolic landscape:

> Close by the cooling stream of Caere stands
> a spacious grove, held sacred far and wide
> in ancient reverence; and on all sides
> the hills hem in the forest of dark firs (Bk VIII l., 755-58).

The sacred grove, again used to underscore the religious importance of the event, has been consecrated to Silvanus, god of "fields and flocks" (l. 782). Here as always Virgil is careful to assure that the pastoral is linked to a scene in which Aeneas receives divine sustenance. Venus finds her son "in a secluded valley/ withdrawn beside a cooling stream" (l. 790-91), presumably meditating on the things he has learned and the

things he must do. His contemplative mood is reflected in the holy grounds around him. The entire effect of the scene recalls the meditative spirit of Anchises, and the implication is that Aeneas has gained the wisdom of his father; he has internalized the pastoral ideal of humility and sacrifice. In this setting he gains the armor, which has been elaborately designed to depict the long history of Rome. And for the third time the knowledge offered by his father and then by Evander is repeated, as he is again reminded of the meaning of his life in relationship to the ultimate passage of humanity. He must remember that he is a Roman hero whose greatest gift is the ability to place others before him, and that with this ability "upon his shoulder he/ lifts up the fame and fate of his sons" (1. 954-55).

When Aeneas finally reaches Latium, he is a man transformed, indeed reborn. No longer a Trojan warrior, but the prototype of a new hero, he has learned restraint and sacrifice, endured great suffering, and gained the wisdom and knowledge of men and gods. His highest ideals are those of peace which will be attained only by the laying aside of selfish pursuits, vainglorious delusions and ignoble pride. This, then, is the Aeneas that arrives in Latium to establish Rome and a world of peaceful co-existence.

For the remainder of the poem, an irony, to this point in the narrative only slightly felt, becomes very important to the thematic direction and ultimate resolution of the poem. All through the Aeneid the image of the pastoral has been used to contrast as well as dramatize

the wasted brutality of war. Always it has been the innocents who are victimized by the few whose motives usually are selfish. Virgil's disdain for this senseless slaughter is obvious enough, but beyond this, the poet of the Aeneid fears for a less explicit, more devastating loss. He fears the final and fundamental deprivation of all that this subtly profound way of life represents, be it simple human values, a closeness to the land, an awareness of origins, or perhaps most importantly, a respect and awe for the spiritual presence in all forms and aspects of existence. Essentially, Latium, like Pallanteum, is a civilization in which these values are found. The Latins are a race of Saturn, a people of self-rule or natural-law. In King Latinus' initial speech to the Teucrians the Latin values are emphasized:

> Do not forget
> the Latins are a race of Saturn needing
> no laws and no restraint for righteousness;
> they hold themselves in check by their own will
> and by the customs of their ancient god (Bk VII 66, 860-71).

Though Latinus speeks of the pastoral ideal, there is an irony implicit in the situation that spoils this ideal. The same natural philosophy espoused by Latinus, while creating an environment of individual liberty and pastoral tranquility, also sustains the liberty of a few extraordinary men who comprehend life only insofar as it pertains exclusively to the bounds of their own personal drama. These men wage indiscriminate battle in the pursuit of fame, inadvertently violating the very ideal that nourishes their valued freedom. Menzentius and Turnus are examples of this kind of man. Still another perplexing irony arises when having

arrived in Latium with the visage of savior, Aeneas offers as an alternative to natural law, positive or civil law as a possible solution for controlling these violent outbreaks, and finds his own philosophy also in violation of the pastoral ideal because it threatens the very natural communion and individual liberty it seeks to protect. These ironies are given dramatic light when Aeneas, the hero of action, is forced to violate Pallanteum by taking Evander's son Pallas out of Arcadia and into the corrupt world, where he is the first to be slaughtered in battle. The incident is very much a sacrificial rite suggesting that the pastoral must lose some of its innocence and freedom to the state in order to protect and preserve at least a remnant of its philosophy.

But Virgil does not surrender easily to this paradox as he attempts to overcome it by seeing a divine, benevolent state wed to a philosophy which gives sanctity to individual life. In this union one does for the other what each is unable to do for itself. Aeneas and Rome will rid the world of men and women like Mezentias, Amata and Turnus, while the philosophy and way of life of the race of Saturn will insure the benevolence and longevity of a state which is founded on the respect and reverence Aeneas has gained, and his decendants will inherit, for this ideal. Through these events is born a golden age of political and natural rule working in union for the benefit of each. This marriage is the central ideal of the Aeneid. And it is up to Aeneas as a Roman hero to bring it about. But there are some contradictions in this ideal that Virgil, who very much aware of them, never completely resolves,

contradictions which in fact go far to explain the existing tension between the implied note of celebration and the actual strain of resigned melancholy both heard at the end of the poem. The melancholy, again parodoxically born of the celebrated peace, stems from an uneasiness felt for what seems an inevitable loss (if only in part) of the pastoral ideal, when a long-sought peace is established through violence and maintained by authority of a state, whether or not this state is divinely sanctioned. The last and most crucial trial of the Roman hero, then occurs in Latium, which is Troy revisited. Aeneas, a new conqueror much changed, now the hero of Providence, carrying the message of peace and positive law, finally must confront and overcome his former self, Turnus, the symbolic remnant of a dying age. This trial is waged amidst such conflicting themes as birth and death, gain and loss, celebration and melancholy, which oppose each other with great complexity and meaning as they reflect both Aeneas' success and failure as an heroic figure.

The obvious success of Aeneas is explicit enough. Turnus is defeated, allowing the race of Saturn to pass into Rome, while the champion of obedience, restraint, and peace prevails. The Aeneid, was specifically written to convey this theme that justifies the ways of Rome to men, that credits Augustus' claim to divine authority. But other realities work implicitly against this pronounced glorification of Augustus and Rome. Contradictory to this theme is Aeneas' final inability to overcome his passion and spare Turnus. For with this failure

is implied the inherent limitation of political solutions: simply that they are made by men, and that men are made of passions. Aeneas, one who will rule many, slays Turnus in a moment of lost control, passionate rage, in the very spirit of vengeance he has fought to overcome. At that instant Aeneas falls short of the ideal of merciful rule and takes on, if only partially, the blood-lust of Turnus. Ironically, Virgil's ideal peacemaker enters the Arcadian pastoral stained with the blood of the defeated. The implication clearly suggests that not only will the pastoral not be preserved by the state, but that conversely, the blood-letting code of vengeance is perpetual. A closer reading of certain passages in the final scenes in Latium tells much of this ambiguous relationship between Aeneas and Turnus, which culminates in death.

Turnus is on one hand the epitome of all that is inherently dangerous about a way of life unprotected by the authority of civil law. He is arrogant, brutal, merciless, and blind to the destruction his futile struggle lays on the innocents about him. On the other hand, he is also an extraordinary man with exceptional prowess in battle, love and loyalty for family and home, and self-assertive pride which yields an undaunted courage. Together these two natures make up his tragedy. Essentially, the final books of the Aeneid are dominated by Turnus' tragic quest for fame. And in an important way his tragedy, which is painfully ironic, guides and influences the final tone of the poem, which ends hopelessly unresolved.

His circumstances initially are not unlike the ones Aeneas

experiences in Troy. He, too, is asked to lay down his arms and surrender his city to a conqueror. His response to this indignation is predictable:

> Insane, he raves
> for arms, he searches bed and halls for weapons.
> Lust for the sword and wars damnable madness
> are raging in him and—above all—anger (Bk VII, l. 607-10).

Here again is the same passionate, irrational response that has become by now so familiar. Aeneas, also, at one time is obsessed with feelings of self-righteousness and indignation. However, unlike Turnus, he is able to overcome them for the time and leave Troy without perpetuating the cycle of vengeance. But in Turnus the passion burns even until it swallows him with its flames. The fury Allecto is this blaze personified, and Juno invokes her to ignite the flame in Turnus that he may spread it in his arrogance to all parts of Latium:

> For you can arm for battle brothers, though
> they feel at one, and ruin homes with hatred;
> and you can carry fire brands and lashes
> beneath their roofs; you have a thousand names,
> a thousand ways of injuring; awake your fertile
> breast and break this settled peace;
> sow war and crime; let sudden quarrel spur
> young men to want, demand, and seize the sword
> (Bk VII, l. 443-50).

This passage gives an exceptionally important account of the particular dangers of unleashed frenzy. Virgil expresses his greatest fears and warnings regarding civil strife, domestic ruin and wasted youth. But once Allecto begins, she is not easy to stop:

> I shall
> compel the neighboring towns to war by rumor,
> inflame their minds with love of insane Mars
> (Bk VII, l. 722-24).

And from this point on Turnus is her slave.

Many are the examples both in actions and in simile which describe Turnus' lust for blood, examples which at times seem direct allusions to Aeneas' own experience in Troy. Aeneas had been compared to a wolf thirsty for blood, frenzied by hunger for flesh. Turnus in Book IX is described with the same simile:

> fierce and desperate
> with rage, the wolf is wild against his absent
> prey, after such long famine now the frenzy
> for food, his dry and bloodless jaws
> torment him (l. 78-81).

Turnus is outraged by the sheltered Trojans much as a wolf is by the bleating of the penned lambs. The point of the simile is that Turnus, as the predator wolf, seeks the slaughter of innocents to nurture his hunger for revenge, his passion for glory. Aeneas would have done the same thing to Helen had Venus not stayed his anger. And when Turnus finally does enter the encampment, he is again compared to the predator among the defenseless:

> he
> had locked him in the city like some monstrous
> tiger among the helpless flocks (l. 974-76).

The references to sheep and flocks bring to mind the pastoral and exactly what is at stake, what is lost in this senseless conflict. Turnus is oblivious to this loss, for in the midst of death he can think of only one thing, glory.

In this scene he likens himself to Achilles:

> you shall say to Priam that here, too, an Achilles
> can be found (l. 989-90).

This association is important because it places Turnus (even if only in his own mind) in the tradition of the old hero, now the enemy of Aeneas. And coming from the mouth of Turnus, it reveals his strongest motivation for battle as personal fame or glory. His comparison to Achilles exemplifies his hammartia. To be like Achilles is worth all the blood in Latium, even his own, perhaps especially his own.

Later in Book X the driving force of this flaw is most visible when Turnus, in what must be his least sympathetic moment, slaughters Pallas in a very Pyrrhus-like fashion, going so far as to call for the presence of Evander so that he may suffer his son's brutal death just as Priam suffered the death of his son Polites. This is, of course, the arrogant Turnus who brings about his own death. And Virgil, wishing to underscore the blind, passionate, self-destructive nature of the act, intrudes with a lament that sound much like the chorus of tragedy:

> O mind of man that does not know the end
> or future fates, nor how to keep the measure
> when we are fat with pride at things that prosper
> A time will come to Turnus when he will long
> to purchase at great price an untouched Pallas,
> when he will hate this trophy and this day
> (1. 690-95).

The phrase "to keep the measure" emphasizes again the value Virgil places on the ability to restrain the emotions, to overcome pride and vainglory. Turnus mocks this ideal as he gloats in the blood of his triumph. Furthermore, the belt that he rips from Pallas' body carries a highly significant scene which intensifies the drama and brutal irony

of the act. It shows "a band of fifty bridegrooms, foully slaughtered/ one wedding night, and bloodied marriage chambers" (1. 685-86). When Pallas is slain, the symbolic marriage, or sacred trust, between the philosophies of the race of Saturn and the race of Jupiter is violated. As Pallas' belt would indicate, it has been horribly bloodied. And although Turnus committed the deed, it is after all Aeneas who brought Pallas out of Arcadia and into battle with the Latins. This belt with its imagery of nuptial defilement is a prime example of the implicit mood of melancholy which opposes or doubts the plausibility of political solutions, that fears positive law can never enter Arcadia without compromising innocence.

Turnus, then, is his most audacious when he takes the life of Pallas. But Virgil is careful not to leave this portrait of Turnus as it is, so obviously unsympathetic. Consequently, from this point most of his poetic skills seem guided by a desire to see Turnus as sympathetic, though for the most part ironically so. His death, certainly necessary to the good of humanity, does not signify, however, an unqualified celebration, for where there is gain there is loss, and with the death of Turnus is lost a mode of hero that carries with it a dignity and personal pride that for all its limitations cannot help but be in some ways profound.

Beginning with the council of Latin leaders in Book XI, Virgil casts Turnus in a favorable, if ironic, light when in opposition to Drances, who is "just as spiteful as before/ spurred by the strings of his insidious

envy/ of Turnus' glory" (1. 444-445). The characterization of Drances adds significantly to the ambivalent feelings Virgil holds for Turnus. Certainly it would seem that Drances' argument is the correct one, for he calls for peace: "let us beseech/ Turnus, and beg his favor, that he may/ give way, forego his own right for the sake/ of king and homeland" (1. 472-75). He calls Turnus and justly so, the "source and cause of all/ these trials of Latium" (1. 477-478). And his words appear tempered by reason:

> There is no safety in war. What all of us are asking you,
> Turnus, is peace...pity us,
> your fellow citizens; put off your pride
> and, beaten, leave the field. We have seen enough
> of death in our defeat, enough broad lands
> stripped of their husband men (1. 478-488).

Yet every aspect of this speech is shadowed by the fact that Drances is a bitter, resentful man, "lavish/ with wealth and even more with words" and of course, "low-born" on his father's side. His words are described as "taunting" and he "heaps resentment high" (1. 451). The speech which comes so near Virgil's, or at least Aeneas', sentiments is little more than political rhetoric, shallow words from a shallow man. Conversely, Turnus' answer is laced with the emotions of an irrational man repulsed by the thought of defeat and subjugation:

> But if something still remains
> of our old courage, then I should consider
> him happy in his trials and best of souls
> who—to avoid the sight of such a peace—
> would fall in death and gnaw the dust once and for all
> (1. 550-555).

His words ring a familiar note: if there can be no peace with honor, then

there must be no peace at all, rather death with honor should be preferred, death in the name of "king and homeland." This exchange is rich with perplexing irony because the right words come from the wrong mouth, and although the wrong words come from Turnus, he nevertheless appears victor by default. The scene, then unfolds with an irony that justifies Turnus, who deceives himself, and dismisses Drances, who speaks the truth.

This ironic sympathy follows Turnus to the battlefield. Book XII depicts the noble death he has so long sought. In this book he is everything that Aeneas might have been in Book II. The reader, therefore, is provided with the other side of the coin. This is perhaps why Turnus is elevated to such importance in the final books. Both sides of the story must be told in order that they be weighed evenly. And in that Turnus' responses are invariably the opposite of Aeneas' in every case in which a similar situation occurs, Virgil provides a framework for comparison.

In Book XII Turnus is the unquestionable underdog, and as such he becomes sympathetic, but this sympathy is partially ironic because, of course, Turnus' suffering is self-initiated. That Virgil goes to great lengths to make Turnus' suffering real, to give him a personal dimension which cannot be dismissed easily after his death, heightens the sympathy, but also intensifies the irony. One feels sympathy for his situation, understands his resentment, enters into his pain as he watches his world slip away, yet at the same time one feels all this could have been avoided

if not for his blind fury and arrogant pride. Both sympathy and a pervading irony accompany Turnus in practically every scene in which he appears in Book XII.

Before leaving to meet Aeneas, Turnus gazes upon Lavinia, and for the first time there is a hint of genuine love, which makes his suffering that much more poignant, and his character that much more sympathetic. Lavinia is pained by the spite of her mother, as well as by the general sorrow of things:

> Lavinia's hot cheeks were bathed in tears; she heard
> her mother's
> words; and her blush, a kindled fire crossed
> her burning face. And just as when a craftsman
> stains Indian ivory with blood-red purple,
> or when white lilies, mixed with many roses
> blush, even such, the colors of the virgin (1. 88-94).

She is at once as a work of art and nature, both ivory and lily, beautiful and delicate, innocent, a virgin stained with remorseful tears. This is the beauty that incenses Turnus, ironically the face that fires his wrath, ironic simply because his wrath prolongs and deepens her pain:

> His love drives Turnus wild; he stares at his
> Lavinia; even keener now for battle (1. 95-96).

When faced with a similar circumstance Aeneas overcame his passion and left his Cruesa in Troy and Dido in Carthage.

When Turnus' sister tries to protect him from his impending death, he delivers a speech that is reminiscent of many given by Aeneas in Book II:

> And shall I let the Latins' homes be leveled
> The only shame my fate has yet to face
> not let my sword refute the words of Drances'
> Shall I retreat? Shall this land see me fleeing?
> And after all is death so sad a thing? (1. 854-58).

At first Aeneas would not suffer unavenged death. He would have had Helen's life and many others had he not overcome his bitterness:

> Again I take
> to arms and, miserable, long for death (Bk II, 1. 884-85).
>
> Never
> shall we all die this day without revenge (Bk II, 1. 906-07).

And Turnus, like Aeneas in Book II, is out of his mind with despair. One overcomes his despair while the other does not:

> Confused by these shifting images
> of ruin, Turnus stood astounded, staring
> and silent. In his deepest heart there surge
> tremendous shame and madness mixed with sorrow
> and love whipped on by frenzy and a courage
> aware of its own worth (1. 886-91).

This passage recalls Aeneas' own panoramic view of destruction in Troy. Another passage shows Turnus looking back from the battlefield to his city much as Aeneas looked on Troy. The same implicit pathetic irony can be seen working:

> he turned his blurring eyes
> upon the walls and from his chariot looked
> back to that splended city. There a whirlwind
> of flames was rolling on, storey by storey,
> skyward, and gripping fast a tower one
> that he himself had built (1. 893-898).

Again, one senses his remorse, while also realizing his responsibility.

The pathetic irony in all these scenes separates Aeneas from Turnus. Turnus in his blindness is unaware that he himself is leveling

all this destruction, which in turn is causing him so much grief. This is the tragedy behind all passionate, impetuous action, for it inevitably turns back on itself. Each time Turnus chooses rage and violence, as he does when speaking to Drances, or when he sees Lavinia slipping away, or when he experiences his city doing the same, he insures more death, more burning cities. Aeneas, on the other hand, attempts to break this cycle of vengeance. His methods are non-violent, peaceful:

> You seek peace for the dead
> and those cut down beneath the chance of battle?
> But I would give that to the living too. I should not be
> here if the fates had not made this my home
> and place. I do not war
> against your nation. But your King abandoned
> our friendship; he preferred to trust himself
> to Turnus' sword (Bk XI, 142-149).

He will not plunder the city, which was the Greeks' greatest offense. He will not defile native gods, as did the Greeks in Troy; he will not demand more than is prophecied:

> I shall not subject Italians
> to Teucrians, ask Kingdoms for myself:
> both nations, undefeated, shall accept the equal laws
> of an eternal compact:
> their sacred rites, their gods shall be intact
> (Bk XII, 255-59).

This last speech, delivered in the form of a prayer, "may the sun be witness to my prayer," gives divine credence to his method of conquest, which is in fact no conquest, but a union or marriage.

The personal tragedy of Turnus is waged amidst or against the powers of Providence. This power Aeneas understands, and humbled, no longer is concerned with personal glory or vengeance. Blind to the powers of Providence, Turnus still believes the ultimate

glory is to be won in the moment, the chance encounter which guarantees equal fame in victory or defeat. In the final lines of the poem these two great heroes of different codes meet.

The struggle is multi-leveled. Aeneas fights Turnus while at the same time battling himself, who at one time looked very much like Turnus. Turnus struggles with Aeneas as well as his own "tremendous shame and madness mixed with sorrow/ and love." Aeneas seeks to overcome his passion, Turnus only to satisfy it: "I beg you, let/ me rage this madness out before I die" (1. 905-6). Aeneas fights for all men, Turnus for himself. A familiar simile is used to dramatize Turnus' selfish struggle. He is compared to a loosed boulder causing indiscriminate destruction, which "with a mighty thrust/ drives down the slope and sounding upon the earth/ rolls woods and herds and men along its course" (915-17). Again woods, herds, and men signify the disrupted pastoral. The conflict, at its most profound, pits Turnus' vain attempt for glory against all the cosmos. The full impact of this vain attempt is demonstrated in yet another simile, which describes the frightening futility of Turnus' position:

> Just as in dreams of night when languid rest
> has closed our eyes, we seem in vain to wish
> to press on down a path, but as we strain
> we falter weak; our tongues can say nothing,
> the body loses its familiar force, no voice, no
> word, can follow (1. 1209-1214).

All of fate is closing in, "so whatever/ courage he calls upon to find a way/ the cursed goddess keeps success from Turnus" (1. 1214-16). The path of escape eludes Turnus, though he frantically seeks it. As the

cosmos descends one envisions Turnus' movements to be in slow motion becoming slower until he is frozen, restricted by his own limited consciousness, which has refused to acknowledge the realities around him. At this point he is a pathetic, remorseful figure, humbled by his own fears:

> Then shifting feelings overtake his heart,
> he looks in longing at the Latin ranks
> and at the city, and he hesitates
> afraid (1. 217-20).

He is beaten by fate, and recognizing this, his tragedy is complete but for his death. And though it is ultimately fate or the cosmos that defeats Turnus, it is finally, and with the deepest irony, Aeneas, who, not as the instrument of fate, nor as the new hero of Roman humility, compassion and restraint, but as one man acting and sounding very much like his former self, slays Turnus. The tension at the end of the poem is not resolved, but intensified, for if Aeneas cannot overcome his passion, the question arises as to the plausibility of anyone ever reaching this ideal, anyone ever being able finally to "keep the measure." It appears that Virgil understands the difficulty of his ideal as well as the limitations of men. There is a provocative line spoken by the Trojan warrior, Nisus, that perhaps by nature of its directness reaches out and encompasses the final tone of a poem that must remain ambiguous:

> is it
> the gods who put this fire in our minds
> or is it that each man's relentless longing,
> becomes a god to him? (Bk X, 1. 243-46).

Perhaps it is Virgil's own relentless longing for a golden age of peace that drives him to believe in Aeneas, but perhaps it is his own more profound, if more melancholy, understanding that this golden age is at last a fading ideal, another relentless longing of men, which finally does not allow him to create a totally new hero, one who is clearly possessed of an unqualified right to re-encounter, rediscover, indeed recreate Arcadia.

II

In relation to the overall development of the heroic tradition, the success or failure of Aeneas to fulfill the lofty idealism of Virgil's vision of heroism is not as important as the nature of the vision itself. Certainly humility and sacrifice, the fundamental elements of the Virgilian vision of heroism, have a substantial effect on succeeding heroic poetry. Virgil demonstrated in the Aeneid that, at least ideally, humility and sacrifice as well as a social and spiritual awareness can be integrated in one man to form a unique picture of heroism to which Renaissance England would respond actively, primarily for its ready adaptibility to Christian thought.

The political, cosmic and religious realities of Renaissance England, much like those in Virgil's Rome, go a long way toward determining the essential nature of Spenserian heroism. The hero of the first book of the Faerie Queene is the champion of Christ and the protector of the Crown; the greater good is now Christianity and the English monarchy. Like Aeneas, Red Cross Knight is the humble instrument of a divine purpose when he slays the dragon. This symbolic confrontation with the satanic elements of the world is meant to free the spiritually infected Eden, which all men internally possess. Red Cross Knight's quest is a model for what must be experienced by all men. He is the hero in each man that must understand his own significance and responsibility, that must free himself so as to bring

spiritual strength to others. Red Cross Knight is also St. George the dragon-slayer, patron saint of England, and so gains national or political significance. And as the liberator of Eden he is Christ, the Saviour of man. Spenser's epic is a tribute to the glory of Christ and the sanctity of England, much as Virgil's epic is a tribute to the splendid simplicity of the pastoral ideal and sanctity of Rome to protect and perpetuate it. And just as Aeneas undergoes a process of education, so Red Cross Knight experiences a like process, whereby he learns to subordinate individual goals, desires and fantasies to the larger purpose, which is accomplished by obedience and loyalty to both God and Queene.

At the beginning of Book I Red Cross Knight, brimming with anticipation, is riding across an open plain. Young and fresh from the plow and field, his life has known little excitement, and it is with zealous and well-meaning intent that he sets out upon a "great adventure." But at this time, though the Knight be well-intentioned, Spenser carefully points out early signs of an ill-fated and misguided pride, which seeks out the challenge of encounter for its own sake. His battles with Sansfoy and Sansjoy are instances of this type of encounter. The Knight's innocence is shown in obvious contrast to the armor on his back:

> Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine
> The cruell markes of many a bloudy fielde
> Yet armes till that time did he never wield
> (Bk I, i, 1).[11]

Though the armor, which bears the red cross, symbolic of Christ's death on the cross and the struggle of good against evil, has borne the

battles of many heroes and will bear more beyond the death of George, the Knight himself is new to the struggle. He is now merely George the plowman, a man of misinformed innocence and vulnerable naivete. The agitated state of the horse "which did chide his foaming bitt/ As much disdayning to the curbe to yield" (Bk I, i, l) also reflects the dangerous state of overly excited energy the Knight experiences as he places a personal quest to prove himself a brave knight before the greater quest to slay the dragon and free Una's parents, Adam and Eve, from enthrallment.

Red Cross Knight, like Aeneas, progresses toward the realization of his significance to the workings of history. This progression begins when in his young rashness, he immediately leads Una off the path of righteousness into an ominous forest "whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride/ Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide/ Not perceable with power of any starre" (Bk I, i, 7). In this darkness separate from heavenly light, they come to the cave of Errour. In the region of Errour the wiser Una warns Red Cross Knight against too impetuous action. She is well aware of the Knight's over-zealous desire to wage battle, as well as his inexperience to do so successfully:

> Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
> Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
> The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
> Breedes dreadfull doubts: Oft fire is without smoke
> And perill without show: therefore your stroke
> Sir knight with-hold, till further triall made.
> Ah Ladie (said he) shame were to revoke
> The forward footing for an hidden shade:
> Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.
> (Bk I, i, 12).

His rather naive answer, implies that virtue will take care of itself. His well-intentioned, but misinformed innocence that does not allow for, or underestimates, the destructive, beguiling powers of evil. In any event despite warnings from Una and their companion, the dwarf, Red Cross Knight rushes into the cave "full of fire and greedy hardiment" (Bk I, i, 14). This particular description emphasizes the passions of the Knight out of control. Hot tempered and greedy, the young Knight is like the passionate Aeneas who craved the blood of the Greeks. Though the circumstances are quite different, the actions of both warriors are not in the best interests of those who must be protected. Both potential heroes act prematurely, Aeneas to avenge the loss of his city and the defeat of his people, Red Cross Knight to prove his worthiness in battle. The feelings of Virgil and Spenser toward this type of behavior are the same, though Spenser's are much less clouded by political scepticism and philosophical melancholy. There is no doubt that as long as Red Cross Knight's actions are "full of fire and greedy hardiment," he moves from his purpose and acts not for the benefit of humanity as the agent of Christ, but as the agent of his own pride and purpose. When Red Cross Knight enters the cave of Errour, he commits intellectual error, which is implied by the books and pamphlets in the vomit of Errour, and separates himself from the wisdom of Una for a time and is nothing more than brute force. Immediately, he is caught within the grasp of Errour, striving to regain his lost freedom. And only after Una cries out to him, reminding him of his purpose, is he able to free himself and slay Errour:

> His lady sad to see his sore constraint,
> cride out, Now now Sir Knight, shew what ye bee,
> Add faith unto your force and be not faint:
> Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee
> (Bk I, i, 19).

The relationship between Red Cross and Una is established. Without her he is separated from God's truth and remains only blinded force. Of course, Red Cross must realize the full implications of this bond before he can successfully battle the dragon. This relationship is not unlike certain aspects of Aeneas' relationship to his father, who supplies the wisdom and guidance to an Aeneas who is physically, though not yet spiritually, strong enough to sustain the trials that must be endured on his way to Latium. Due to the rigid allegory of Book I of the Faerie Queene, the relationship between Red Cross and Una is much more clearly defined than the relationship between Aeneas and Anchises, though some similarities are apparent; in both cases it is the one who encourages the other in moments of waning strength, courage and confidence.

Red Cross is successful in his battle against Errour, and Una praises his valor:

> His Ladie seeing all, that chaunst, from fare
> Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
> And said, Faire knight, borne under happy starre,
> Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye;
> Well worthy be you of that Armorie,
> Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
> And proou'd your strength on a strong enimie,
> Your first adventure: many such I pray,
> And henceforth ever wish, that like succeed it may
> (Bk I, i, 27).

But his first adventure is not quite worthy of the "great glory" bestowed upon him. During the struggle Spenser describes the Knight's fighting form and attitude in unflattering terms. He is said to attack the offspring of Errour with "clownish hands," and though his life, and therefore Una's, are in serious peril, he is "fearefull more of shame/ Then of the certaine perill he stood in" (Bk I, i, 24). His pride is more important than his life, again like Aeneas, who sought revenge in order to save face in defeat, rather than take the rational course and save the lives of his family and people. Thus, though the words of Una seem at first to give a dimension of true heroism to the young Knight's actions, in light of the actual events her words seem somewhat premature, if not unintentionally ironic. Perhaps both Red Cross and Una have yet to understand the deeper dimensions of heroism. Primarily, this first encounter has been a test of physical strength and courage. The next tests will be of a different nature. Now the enemy becomes more deceptive, less visible. Una has said that fire is not always preceded by smoke, and in the case of Archimago and Duessa, she is more precise than she herself realizes. Both Una and Red Cross follow Archimago to his hermitage. Here they are divided, faith from strength, separation being the most dramatic way for Spenser to convey the essential need one has for the other. But before this happens the Knight experiences a series of mental states he is shown ill-equipped to handle. Disturbed by the erotic dream Archimago plants in his mind, Red Cross wakes to discover a weeping figure who appears to be Una conjured up by the magic of Archimago. She is anxious for the

demonstrated love of the Knight, to which he responds by nearly slaying her in her disgrace. Aside from the obvious disappointment he feels for protecting what appears a less than worthy charge, he responds partially from guilt and astonishment over his own lustful dreams. Rather than question the possible deception, the Knight is more concerned that his fight earlier that day was, and future fights will be, waged in vain:

> Long after he lay musing at her mood,
> Much grieved to think that gentle Dame so light,
> For whose defense he was to shed his blood
> (Bk I, i, 55).

Though the encounter with Errour may have been successful, these later tests of mental and emotional strength the Knight fails. He is impetuous, unable to recognize deceit and too ready to judge Una given his own sexual weakness vanity and pride. These faults are compounded the next morning when Red Cross discovers what appears to be a faithless Una in the embrace of a young squire:

> All in amaze he suddenly up start
> With sword in hand, and with the old man went;
> Who soone him brought into a secret part,
> Where that false couple were full closely ment
> In wanton lust and lewd embracement:
> Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,
> The eye of reason was with rage yblent,
> And would have slaine them in his furious ire,
> But hardly was restreined of that aged sire
> (Bk I, ii, 5).

His immediate response is violence. His passions released, a jealous rage overpowers reason. He wishes to strike out, and would have ruthlessly, had not Archimago stayed him. Nevertheless, Red Cross must vent his anger, so he flees, "flying from his thoughts and

gealous fear" (Bk I, ii, 12). Within this metaphor the actual enemies of the Knight emerge: ignorance and pride. The Knight has moved from intellectual to spiritual error, and from this point on the growing desolation and bleakness of a life separate from the truth of God is time and again dramatized. As the Knight falls further and further from Una, he falls deeper and deeper into the isolation of his own ignorant pride, unable to rid himself of the "gealous fear" and wild thoughts that began his flight.

Separated from Una, Red Cross is vulnerable to the temptations and failings of a man without faith. He becomes little more than warrior without purpose or higher intent. It is not surprising, then, that his first encounter is with the knight, Sansfoy, who rides with Duessa, Una's antithesis. The deceitful Duessa is the ironic reward of a victory of the faithless over the faithless. Red Cross rushes into this fight with the same naive impetuousness he exhibited against Errour. This time, however, his rash action stems from something other than youthful pride. Now the deep psychological wounds, and the resultant displaced anger he holds for Una drives him into foolish battle, "Spurring so hate with rage dispiteous" (Bk I, ii, 15). He fights as a ram "with ambitious pride" (Bk I, ii, 16), with animal force for the right to possess falsehood. The Knight wins, and yet by doing so, further solidifies the irony of his position. Throughout his spiritual development, he is able to defeat the Sarazin Knights, but each time he moves away victorious, it is as though he takes on the traits of the conquered. In defeating Sansfoy his position of

faithlessness becomes more pronounced and his descent to despair hastened.

The Knight's actions convey a sense of confused and finally negative or sinful purpose. His responses continually are the result of a weakness in himself, be it ignorance, passion, or pride. He fights Errour to prove his untested strength and courage despite the fact that it places Una in unnecessary danger. Certainly from jealousy he flees from what he assumes to be an unfaithful Una, but perhaps more subtly, he flees from his own sense of aroused passion, passions admittedly stirred by Archimago, but nonetheless, felt by the Knight, who is forced to deal with them. So in part he flees from his own fantasies, which he sees materialized in the "lewd embrace" of the false Una and the squire. And finally, in hope of redeeming the failure of having lost his charge, maddened by jealousy and perplexed and frightened by lust, he enters an ironic fruitless battle with Sansfoy. It is intellectual error that the Knight carries from the cave of Errour, jealousy and distrust, other kinds of error, that carry him from a feigned cheating Una, and faithlessness that carries him to Sansfoy. His motives range from naive but well-intentioned innocence to jealous and infuriated spite.

The passions of Red Cross aroused, he proves an easy prey for Duessa:

> He in great passion all this while did dwell,
> More busying his quicke eyes, her face to view,
> Then his dull eares, to heare what she did tell
> (Bk I, ii, 26).

Duessa appeals to all that Red Cross thinks he needs to recover from

his past failings. He wins her with his strength, is taken by her beauty and is flattered by her compliments:

> Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes,
> With goodly purposes there as they sit:
> And in his fancy he her takes
> To be the fairest wight, that lived yit
> (Bk I, ii, 30).

She soothes his vanity, bolsters his pride and awakens his lust. The Knight, immersed now in self-indulgence, perhaps feeling justified or having been betrayed by Una, is led to the city of Pride. But prior to entering this city, he meets Fradubio, and Spenser uses one more exchange to delineate the degree to which the Knight is blinded without the resources of Una. Red Cross hears his own story repeated on the lips of Fradubio, and yet is unable to comprehend, made stupid by "sad fear and ghastly dreriment" (Bk I, ii, 44). His only response is to get away from this "living tree" as quickly as possible, "That from the bloud he might be innocent" (Bk I, ii, 44). The dramatic irony is clear; the Knight, already stained by guilt, returns to Duessa.

Canto IV begins with a narrator's heed to other knights to be forewarned of the failings of Red Cross lest they stumble into the same pitfalls. Red Cross is at this point every man representing all vulnerable men in the midst of a corrupt world, striving for redemption. Unlike Christ, he is capable of failure, sin and finally damnation. His path to salvation is not unconditional, but as he overcomes weakness, vulnerability and sin, he draws nearer the ideal of heroism. His degeneration and ultimate regeneration constitute an education for all men.

Becoming a model for heroism in an infected world, he resembles regenerate man in Paradise Lost.

Duessa leads Red Cross through a corrupt world that has beaten its path to the house of Pride:

> Great troupes of people traveild thitherward
> Both day and night, of each degree and place,
> But few returned, having scaped hard,
> With balefull beggerie, or foule disgrace,
> Which ever after in most wretched case,
> Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay
> (Bk I, iiii, 2).

Again the ignorant pride of the Knight clouds his vision as he moves toward the city, oblivious to these warnings of indiscriminate ruination. The house itself "without morter laid/ Whose wals were high, but nothing strong, nor thick" (Bk I, iiii, 4), is without substance of foundation. The irony of this house is directed to the young Knight's own condition. Of the house Spenser laments:

> It was a goodly heape for to behould,
> And spake the praises of the workmans wit,
> But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
> Did on so weake foundation ever sit
> (Bk I, iiii, 5).

Red Cross Knight, himself, full of pride and the blinding passions of jealousy, spite and lust is "a goodly heape for to behould," but rests on a weak foundation of force separate from faith, temperance and moderation. Without Una, Red Cross is without substance, purposeful intent. He is a wasted creation of the divine "workmans wit." Within this house the Knight prepares to fight Sansjoy. The description of his preparation is an ironic foreshadowing of what he will be:

> The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
> And is with child of glorious great intent,
> Can never rest, until it forth have brought
> The eternall brood of glorie excellent
> (Bk I, v, 1).

This passage gives an account of the noble heart the Knight will possess by Canto X. At this point, however, he has far from a "noble hart, that harbours vertuous intent." The reference is mostly ironic, for it contrasts the less-than-noble intent of Red Cross, who remains concerned with how he might gain as much personal honor as possible in what seems little more than a grudge match with Duessa as the spoils. Red Cross' "noble hart" is now the source of "restlesse passion" which "did all night torment. / The flaming corage of that Faery Knight, Devizing, how that doughtie turnament/ with greatest honour he atchieven might" (Bk I, v, 1). The Knight still seeks glory for its own sake, and therefore his presence in the house of Pride.

Time and again the setting, in this case the house of Pride, reflects allegorically the mental make-up of the Knight. A like allegorical setting is used when the Knight is caught unaware by Orgoglio and later when tempted to suicide by Despaire. The Knight's fight with Sansjoy is shaded by the walls that surround it. Again the Knight can only lose in victory. Ironically, Duessa urges Red Cross on, her call clarifies his purpose, which is to protect, as she says, "Thine the shield, and I, and all" (Bk I, v, 11). These words revive him from his swoon:

> Soone as the Faerie heard his Ladie speake,
> out of his swowning dreame he gan awake,
> And quickning faith, that earst was woxen weake,
> The creeping deadly cold away did shake
> (Bk I, v, 12).

The sequence is an ironic reminder of the first canto, when Una's words saved the Knight from defeat. The incident parodies the first canto, and in doing so reveals the depth of spiritual ignorance to which the Knight has fallen. And when Sansjoy disappears, Red Cross shows an almost uncontrollable lust for blood, reminiscent of Aeneas in Book II and Turnus in the latter books of the Aeneid:

> Not all so satisfide, with greedie eye
> He sought all round about, his thirstie blade
> To bath in bloud of faithlesse enemy
> (Bk I, v, 15).

After the dubious victory, dramatic irony is again employed as the Knight falls before this questionable Queen on "lowly knee" thinking to greatly advance "his gay chevalree" (Bk I, v, 16). Of course his chivalry has not been advanced, and the Knight, in proving his strength and skill in battle, has exposed ignorant pride. At this point he understands only that Una has mocked him, his pride insulted, his Queen failed. In light of all of this he fights meaningless battles if only to prove his ability. The passionate need to slay Sansfoy and gain Duessa, to slay Sansjoy and protect her shows an attempt to re-establish his integrity. Each man fails to or refuses to realize the original fault lies within himself; that by striking out rather than more courageously looking within, he jeopardizes not only his own life but the lives of many others as well. Each acts out of unenlightened passion, falling deeper into an abyss of faithlessness and self-deception. Though the Knight finally recognizes the danger he faced prior to his escape from the house

of Pride, this understanding hardly enlightens him, for all he can do in his freedom is lament the loss of Duessa and the unfaithful Una:

> Yet sad he was that his too hastie speed
> The faire Duess' had forst him leave behind;
> And yet more sad, that Una his deare dreed
> Her truth had staind with treason so unkind
> (Bk I, vi, 2).

Still unable to see through the disguise of Duessa or the truth about Una, his experiences seem to have taught him little.

The Knight's degeneration morally and now physically continues in Canto VII. Duessa finds him worn, resting and unarmed. And here the Knight, like the Nymph of the fountain who "sat downe to rest in middest of the race" (Bk I, vii, 5), sits, quest abandoned, careless and inattentive, vulnerable to the attack of Orgoglio. Allegorically his present state summons the giant, who merely reflects the Knight's carnal pride:

> Poured out in loosnesse on the grassy ground,
> Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:
> Till at the last he heard a dreadful sound
> (Bk I, vii, 7).

Spenser is careful to show the cause and effect relationship between the carnal pride of the Knight and the appearance of Orgoglio. The Knight is enthralled by his own pride. Caught terribly off guard, with "unready weapons," he is little match in a fight:

> But ere he could his armour on him dight,
> Or get his shield, his monstrous enimy
> With sturdie steps came stalking in his sight
> (Bk I, vii, 8).

This time physical strength fails, as his mind, infected by deceit and

ignorance can no longer guide an unprotected and weakened body. Red Cross takes both a physical and emotional beating:

> Disarmed, disgrast, and inwardly dismayde
> And eke so faint in every joynt and vaine,
> Through that fraile fountaine, which him feeble made,
> That scarsely could he weeld his bootlesse single blade
> (Bk I, vii, 12).

Thus, he lands in the dungeon of his own sickened soul, a prisoner to the very pride and passion he was unable to recognize and arrest in himself. The Knight is of course saved by heavenly grace. By allowing this to occur, Spenser brings the principle of grace into the hero and heroic quest that is not altogether present in the Aeneid. Grace is that principle or gift of God that comes in the form of divine aid for the faltering or weak in heart who are for the most part well-intentioned in spirit. Grace is perhaps the Christian poet's answer to the pre-Christian epic poet's use of divine intervention. But more specifically, it is something much more religious and occurs much less frequently. It is grace that leads a man to humility, makes him aware of his own limitations and the unlimited powers of compassion and forgiveness held by God. This power saves the Adam in Red Cross. Spenser begins Canto VII by saying as much:

> Ay me, how many perils doe enfold
> The righteous man, to make him daily fall?
> Were not, that heavenly grace doth him uphold,
> And stedfast truth acquite him out of all,
> (Bk I, viii, 1).

Una or "steadfast truth" has pursued the Knight throughout the poem: 'Her love is firme, her care continuall" (Bk I, viii, 1). She is the Truth

that through heavenly grace has been restored to a spiritually deteriorating Red Cross Knight. But presently he can think of nothing but a quick death that must relieve him of this living death into which he has fallen, a plaint which foreshadows his colloquy with Despaire. The relationship between pride and despair is fundamental to the spiritual decay of the hero. A pride which denies the grace of God must necessarily result in the desolation of despair.

Reunited with Truth and aided by grace the Knight begins his regeneration, but not before "his pined corse... A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly drere" first encounters the final obstacle before completely climbing out of that dungeon of living death. Although heavenly grace saves the hero from total oblivion, Red Cross must take alone the final steps toward God. These final steps are ones of psychological introspection, recognition of guilt and genuine remorse which lead directly to humility, consequent spiritual regeneration and final heroic contemplation of universal truth and man's relation to it.

Red Cross confronts the figure Despaire, "A man of hell," whose dwelling is "low in an hollow cave/Farre underneath a croggie clift ypight/ Dark, dolefull, drearie, like a greedie grave/That still for carrion carrcases doth crave" (Bk I, ix, 33). The imagery of desolation and death recalls the cave of Errour and the dungeon of Orgoglio, and each scene with escalating intensity suggests the bleak cavernous regions to which man may descend in a state of self-loathing and overwhelming shame. Again the presence of human misery and death make

up the allegorical landscape which reflects the mental condition of the Knight. His first response to Despaire is consistent with past action, as he flares up in anger and desire for revenge at the sight of the bleeding corpse of Sir Terwin:

> With fine zeale he burnt in courage bold
> Him to avenge, before his blood were cold
> (Bk I, ix, 37).

Despaire for the moment avoids the blow by turning this wrath back upon the Knight. He does this using rhetoric in a Satanic way, which persuasively argues that death by suicide is a necessary, if not desirable, end to a life which offers little more than an inevitable cycle of transgression and remorse:

> Is not short panic well borne that brings long ease
> And layes the soule to sleep in quiet grave?
> Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas
> Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please
> (Bk I, ix, 40).

In light of the Knight's history the proposition of repose is inviting, especially given Despaire's next argument:

> The longer life, I wote the greater sin,
> The greater sin, the greater punishment...
> For he, that once hath missed the right way
> The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray
> (Bk I, ix, 43).

First, there is the implicit irony that Despaire could not purposely misinterpret the Christian doctrine without first understanding it. Despaire relies primarily on these two arguments: first that "Death is the end of woes" or that there will be no atonement; second, that there is no hope of forgiveness or mercy, for once one sins, the process of

degeneration is irreversable, "the further he doth goe the further he doth stray." The implicit contradiction is of course that one cannot hope for escape in death if a life of sin is to be punished. And, on the other hand, if one need only die to escape punishment, then there is no cause to lament or fear a sinful life, indeed, no cause to cut it short. Despaire makes no mention of the soul of man in his first argument and no mention of grace or mercy in the second. The Knight, failing to realize Despaire's deliberate omission, is overcome by regret, guilt, shame, fear, and chooses suicide as the only end to his pain. And although Una prevents the suicide, her presence does not prevent Red Cross initially from entering the cave of Despaire. She remains united with Red Cross primarily due to the aid of heavenly grace and not the Knight's own awakened spirit. This union he has yet to understand and internalize. He is still a victim of poor judgment, and it is up to Una to point out the flaws in Despaire's arguments:

> Come, come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight,
> Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,
> Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
> In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?
> Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?
> Where justice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
>
> The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
> And that accurst hand-writing doth deface.
> Arise, Sir knight arise, and leave this cursed place.
> (Bk I, ix, 53).

The Knight has forgotten the justice and grace of God that can purge a truly repentant man. Only the last remnant of faith saves him from that final, irreversible sin. The episode with Despaire marks the

lowest depth spiritually to which Red Cross Knight will fall. It is the last in a series of confrontations that have been designed to depict his disintegration. From this low point the pattern reverses, and a feeling of ascension begins to dominate the course of the remaining narrative as the strength of Una leads Red Cross to the house of Holinesse.

Spenser opens Canto X by again emphasizing the meaning of grace and its place in every man's life. If Virgil begins the transformation of the hero from inflated individualism in the void of unknowable fortune, to the humble, predominantly obedient hero of Providence and society, Spenser directs that transformation to the point where the individual is nothing, or at best, sinful, if not the grateful recipient of God's grace:

> Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill
> That thorough grace hath gained victory.
> If any strength we have it is to ill,
> But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will
> (Bk I, x, 1).

Man is incapable of anything but sin without the grace of God. There is no Virgilian ambivalence of feeling concerning what is truly heroic, nor is there doubt as to the divine nature and purpose of God. Those who do not have faith in this divine nature are either ignorant or of the devil's part. Distinctions of clarity, constant purpose and unqualified faith are the most important ones between Virgilian and Spenserian heroism. Virgil moves toward defining the hero as the servant of a cause greater than himself, but remains never wholly convinced of the realistic application of his ideal. One reason for his doubt is perhaps the less-than-clear focus his greater cause takes unless it be the Roman state,

which is perhaps a cause not always worthy of its servant. Spenser, on the other hand, has no misgivings concerning his greater cause and as a result his hero crystalizes, giving his poetry a clear picture of the true Christian hero.

Beginning with submission and new found humility the Knight gains access to the house of Pride's antithesis, the house of Holinesse. Here the way is "streight and narrow" as he passes into a "Spacious court... Both plaine, and pleasant to be walked in" (Bk I, x, 6). Keeper of the house is Caelia "as thought/ from heaven to come, or thither to arise" (Bk I, x, 4). She , like Arthur, represents a form of heavenly grace, without which the Knight is beyond supplication. Caelia teaches the Knight "celestiall discipline/ And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine." (Bk I, x, 18). In this canto the exchange is essentially spiritual, one in which the Knight receives the divine knowledge necessary to clarify his purpose and justify his existence. Caelia, and later the figure of Contemplation, resemble Anchises and Michael, each a spokesmen of revealed truth, a symbolic fountainhead of spiritual guidance. Caelia, like Anchises and Michael, offers sustenance, regeneration:

> And that her sacred Booke, with bloud ywrit,
> That noen could read, except she did them teach,
> She unto him disclosed every whit,
> And heavenly documdnts thereout did preach,
> That weaker wit of man could never reach
> Of God, of grace, of justice, of free will,
> That wonder was to heare her goodly speach:
> For she was able, with her words to kill,
> And raise againe to life the hart, that she did thrill.
> (Bk I, x, 19).

Through Caelia, Red Cross is led to a vision, a pure state of contemplation, of recognition. On this highest mount of contemplation Red Cross envisions the city of God, the new Jerusalem "that God has built/ For those to dwell in, that are chosen his/ His chosen people purg'd from sinfull guilt" (Bk I, x, 57). From these heights Contemplation is able to give Red Cross Knight his last and most important role-defining gift: a sense of vocation and identity. Realizing that by necessity of this vocation, which involves a responsibility to Una and the faithful, waiting for redemption, Red Cross descends from the contemplative heights and now sustained on the strength of heavenly grace and divine purpose, returns to Una.

In the final two cantos of Book I the allegory expands to a level of apocalyptic prophecy. Allusions to the Book of Revelations underscore the apocalyptic importance of the events. As the allegory moves beyond the quest of one knight, the spiritual growth of one man, the universal implications of Christian heroism are enacted. Graham Hough gives an account of the allegory in the last two cantos:

> Una's parents are only comprehensible as our common parents, Adam and Eve, the types of human kind; their land is Eden ravaged by the Fall. And Una as their daughter cannot now be understood as Truth or Faith, but only as the Church, the whole body of the faithful, waiting to be redeemed; and the Red Cross Knight as a type of Redeemer.[12]

On one level of allegory, Red Cross Knight is a vulnerable man of a corruptible nature. Like Adam, he is prone to sin, fallible, like Aeneas, to mistake, unrestraint. On another level, Red Cross Knight comes to

represent Christ and the apocalyptic second coming. Leaving out the obvious political significance of this struggle, Red Cross is also Saint George, England's patron Saint, there remain, then, two levels of meaning which complement each other in a way that say much about the Christian hero and his relationship to Christ. As St. George fights the dragon, he becomes less the man of corruptibility and more the man of Christ, indeed, for the moment Christ himself, the Redeemer. The more submissive and humble, the more ready to receive the grace of God, the nearer Red Cross comes to the heroic ideal, which is Christ, the final Redeemer of men.

With the culmination of the three-day battle, Spenser immediately moves out of the prophetic mode. Red Cross Knight again becomes one knight of many in a continuing struggle against Satanic elements in a corrupt world. Also, the kingdom of Una's parents no longer represents all of humanity waiting for redemption, but rather one corner of the world, a world to which the Knight must return as is his obligation to the Queen. Spenser, writing much of the first book of the Faerie Queene in an heroic mode, quickly modulates to a prophetic or apocalyptic mode in the final cantos, only to complete the book by returning to the heroic mode. He does this in order to bind the Christian notion of heroism in a fallen world to the ideal Christian hero, Christ.

If one phrase could be used to describe the heroism of Aeneas, it would be pious resignation. In the Faerie Queene this pious resignation gains an intensified religious fervor. The almost fatalistic

resignation of Aeneas becomes in Red Cross Knight a spiritual submission. And the submission of the Christian hero to the will of God is of such an extreme sort, that he not only performs in the name of Christ, but is able to do so only with the benefit of grace. Evil is accomplished by man, good, by God through man. Only when a man is humble and truly submissive is the strength of God able to flow through the veins, cleansing the mind, purging the spirit. The unheroic stands as an obstacle before the grace of God; the Christian hero, ego dissolved, receiver of grace, stands as the purified will of God made manifest in a corrupt world.

III

In many ways Book I of the Faerie Queene presents an almost formulaic equation for Christian heroism. At times this makes it impossible to think of Red Cross in psychological terms the way one thinks of Satan or Adam in Paradise Lost. Indeed Spenser does not intend that it should be any other way. He is working in the strict manner of allegory toward a workable definition of the Christian hero-redeemer. This definition created by Spenser is in many ways similar to the concept of heroism in Paradise Lost. Milton begins the composition of Paradise Lost with the declared intention of transcending his predecessors philosophically, or theologically, and artistically:

> I thence
> Invoke thy aid to my adventrous son,
> That with no middle flight intends to soar
> Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
> Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rime
> (Bk I, l. 12-16).[13]

Soaring above the Aonian Mount, or more specifically beyond the poetry of Homer and Virgil, Milton creates an heroic vision of his own which centers in the regenerated spirit of Adam. In some ways a general description of Paradise Lost would resemble a Medieval morality play with Satan acting as the agent of Hell, Christ the agent of Heaven, and Adam the corruptible man capable of moving or being drawn in either direction. Satan is the model of classical heroism perverted within the Christian framework, and Christ is the ideal hero, a divine model for man. Adam, as he matures, comes to recognize both standards for

what they represent, and chooses accordingly. The steps leading up that choice, a progression not unlike the path Red Cross Knight follows toward Christian heroism, lead Adam to a psychological crisis where he, too, like Red Cross Knight, contemplates death, before submitting to Divine mercy and justice. With Satan representing the old and Christ the ideal new, a polarity is established from which Adam the Christian man evolves as a realistic model for heroism. He becomes as Frye writes, "What leaders of men were intended to be, peaceful patriarchs."[14]

However, not before Milton goes to great lengths to develop, highlight, and finally undermine a standard of heroism previously elevated in the epic of Homer, and not wholly rejected in the epic of Virgil, does he allow Adam to emerge as the Christian heroic prototype; that is, the human sum "Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom" (Bk IX, l. 32). John Steadman points out in his book Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol that Milton's intent in Paradise Lost is "to define clearly the essence of true heroism by contrasting it with spurious norms" thus, delineating "genuine and counterfeit virtue, true and false standards of praise."[15] Steadman says that Milton to this end continually refers to heroic prototypes in Homer, Hesiod, Statius and Virgil when speaking of Satan and his compatriots. Satan is like Odysseus in guile, disguises and rhetoric, and like Achilles and Turnus in wrath and thirst for vengeance.[16] One conclusion Steadman draws is that Milton "by casting his devils in the mold of classical heroes...achieves poetic imitation of the ancients, yet simultaneously emphasizes the gulf between Christian and pagan

conceptions of heroic virtue. If Hell is classical, it is also heathen."[17] Although these points are helpful, they do not answer all the questions that arise surrounding Milton's repeated allusions to antiquity. But for the moment Steadman's argument will be pursued.

Certainly, Satan's character is in part based on the characters of Odysseus, Achilles and Turnus. Chronologically, Milton's narrative begins almost literally where Virgil's culminates. Satan, as a representative of Homeric heroism as it is portrayed by Virgil in the body of Turnus, has been told he must bow before the new King. The brightest, most glorious angel in heaven is insulted by this request and organizes a rebellion. Like Turnus, by refusing to submit to the greater will of Providence, Satan sets the stage for war and the ideal opportunity to exhibit his prowess, and if this prowess fails, then at the last there is glory to be gained. The following speech of Satan resembles the speech of Turnus to Drances. Satan has been told to give up, that his struggle is useless and blasphemous. He replies:

> Hast thou turnd the least of these
> To flight, or if to fall, but that they rise
> Unvanquisht, easier to t ransact with mee
> That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats.
> To chase me hense? err not that so shall end
> The strife which thou call'st evil, but wee style
> The strife of Glorie: which we mean to win,
> or turn this Heav'n it self into the Hell
> Thou fablest (Bk VI, l. 284-292).

Both Satan and Turnus are indignant as they feel slandered and cheated of natural rights.

The substance of Satan's speech rings a familiar note. He speaks of the tribute of glory for its own sake, and fame, the reward for great

prowess and courage. His words express a lust for fame born of glorious deeds, whether they be waged in victory or defeat. As this type of fame is Homeric, so the speech professes the Homeric code of elevated individualism whereby the man is the only constant when faced with an unjust or indifferent divinity. The poet's primary purpose of this battle in Heaven is to present this Homeric code in contrast to Christian spirituality. The war in Heaven is perfect for this purpose because of the explicit absurdity of the battle which underscores the absurdity of all like battles.

The battle is shown as little more than an opportunity for Satan to indulge in ludicrous fantasy. And the entire code, which calls for war so that one man can realize and exhibit greatness, is subjected to satire and irony. Such a code is revealed for its shallow and wasteful nature. Milton points out the implicit faults of this code of heroism in a passage which echoes similar misgivings held by both Virgil and Spenser:

> For strength from Truth divided and from Just,
> Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
> And ignomine, yet to glorie aspires
> Vainglorious, and through infamie seeks fame:
> Therefore Eternal silence be thir doom
> (Bk VI, l. 381-85).

Not only can these words be applied to the actions of Satan, but they stand as the total condemnation of classical heroic virtues, which grow in part from this very aspiration to self-glory. The words "strength from Truth divided" call to mind the central themes of both the Aeneid and the first book of the Faerie Queene. Turnus is prowess

divided from the Providential fate of Aeneas; Red Cross is strength divided from God's Truth. Turnus, Red Cross, and now Satan all seek glory in what are vain pursuits.

For the remainder of Book VI Satan follows a course similar to that of Turnus. Milton is careful to link Satan and the scenes around him with similar scenes in Virgil's Aeneid. On the battle lines Satan taunts his enemy with accusations of laziness and frivolity:

> I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
> Ministring spirits, trained up in feast and song;
> Such hast thou arm'd, the Minstrelsie of Heav'n
> (Bk VI, l. 166-68).

These taunts correspond to those leveled against the Trojans:

> But you wear robes of saffron, ornamented
> and gleaming purple; you like laziness,
> and you delight in dances; and your tunics
> have sleeves, your bonnets, ribbons. You indeed
> are Phrygian women-hardly Phrygian men:
> now go, prance through high Dindyma, there where
> the twin-mouthed pipes delight familiar ears!
> (Bk IX, l. 820-26).

Neither Satan nor the Latins understand the ceremonial implications of song and feast. Their values lie in war, destruction and pain. The accusations they make capture only the surface reality and not the spiritual significance of celebration and ritual. Satan's inability to understand, or at least to admit to, anything beyond the surface reality leads him from one stage of disintegration to the next. His belief that physical force can overcome God causes his downfall. This reliance on physical force marks his as well as Turnus' great failings as heroes. Milton does much to associate Satan with Turnus. The early signs of the war in Heaven are described:

> Clouds began
> To darken all the Hill, and smoak to rowl
> In duskie wreaths, reluctant flames, the signe
> Of wrauth awak't (Bk VI, l. 56-59).

Virgil uses like imagery:

> And here the Teucrians can see a sudden
> Cloudbank that gathers with black dust and darkness
> that rises from the plains (Bk IX, l. 41-43).

And in the midst of this tumult Satan stands "before the cloudie Van/ On the rough edge of battel ere it joyn'd" (Bk VI, l. 107-08). Turnus, "at the center of the line," projects his personage in what is described as a "rolling mass...of gloom and darkness" (Bk IX, l. 45-46). The scenes are nearly identical with like moods of awesome foreboding. When the two sides meet, Milton's angels are said to have "no thought of flight/ None of retreat" (Bk VI, l. 236-37), and of his warriors Virgil states "neither side/ knew what was flight" (Bk X, l. 1041-42). As Milton's one battle scene continues to unfold, it looks more and more like a Virgilian landscape. However, at the same time the atmosphere is quite different, as it approaches the mock-epic, becoming more and more absurd as angels, spiritual beings who cannot actually harm one another, become very physical, throwing mountains and devising ridiculous weaponry. Through the entire battle, Milton underscores the absurdity of waging physical war on a spiritual plane. Aware of the limitations of Homeric battle prowess as a viable trait of heroism because of its stress of the physical, he presents it for its true value in the battle of Heaven. When Satan is thrown to Hell, so is the Homeric code of heroic prowess. At one point in the struggle Satan is wounded;

the scene is in many ways like the death of Turnus at the end of the Aeneid:

> ten paces huge
> He back recoild; the tenth on bended knee
> His massie spear upstaid; as if on Earth
> Winds under ground or waters forcing way
> Sidelong, had push't a Mountain f rom his seat
> Half sunk with all his Pines. Amazement seis'd
> The Rebel Thrones, but greater rage to see
> Thus foil'd thir mightiest (Bk VI, l. 194-201).

Virgil writes:

> The giant Turnus,
> struck, falls to earth; his knees bend under him.
> All the Rutulians leap up with a groan,
> and all the mountain slopes around reecho;
> tall forests, far and near, return that voice
> (Bk XII, l. 1235-39).

Milton reconstructs this scene to give Book VI the atmosphere of classical heroism, while at the same time undermining all claims to heroism Satan might gain through the association by employing the mock-epic which shows physical prowess to be truly unheroic, even ridiculous, as it is used to confront God. What Milton seems to be doing in Book VI is recreating the circumstances of the Aeneid, placing Satan in the role of Turnus, God in the role of Providence and Messiah in the role of Aeneas. He does this to finally complete what Virgil could not seem to; that is, by recreating the circumstances in such a way that Satan can appear nothing if not unheroic and dangerous to all concerned, Milton sweeps away the unresolved ambiguities surrounding the character of Turnus. Here, then, is an example of what Steadman sees as Milton's imitation of the ancients so as simultaneously to remind one of the vast difference between Christian and pagan heroism.

Milton continues his story beyond the banishment of Satan, leaving the scenes of war, but not before God has summed up with stark realism the futility of war:

> Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
> Endless, and no solution will be found:
> Warr wearied hath perform'd what Warr can do,
> And to disorder'd rage let loose the reins
> (Bk VI, l. 693-96).

The content of his speech seems to indicate the necessity of war so as to reveal its products, waste and desolation. The degeneration of Satan is perhaps the greatest waste suffered as the result of his defiant act in Heaven. The initial pathos and eventual inantiy of this degeneration dominates much of the thematic content of the poem. It is a fall that brings down with it Classical norms of heroism while allowing the spiritual awakening of Adam, the new Christian hero.

C. S. Lewis traces Satan's decline succinctly:

> From hero to general, from general to politician
> to secret service agent, and thence to a thing that
> peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows,
> and thence to a toad, and finally to a snake--
> such is the progress of Satan.[18]

If Satan begins as a hero, it is a hero of the stature of Hector or Turnus that he most resembles. The likes of Hector and Turnus are of course the "spurious norms" Steadman refers to as having the most in common with the Satan that first appears in Hell. Satan, like the others, allows his excessive pride to guide his steady decline. To save himself would be to submit to God's will, and this submission would be defeat. Satan must fall because he defies God, the true, just God of Christianity.

Turnus, like Satan, falls but not wholly for the same reasons. He does not fall because he is necessarily a sinner or even in the wrong, but rather because he is over-powered by the mightier forces of unknowable Providence. The controlling powers of Virgil's universe are unlike the Christian deity in Paradise Lost. As it was with Spenser, Milton introduces an element of religious conviction not always present in the Aeneid. This conviction is what makes it possible for Steadman to say flatly that Milton fuses the Biblical notion of Satan with the classical picture of heroic virtue. Where one is found wanting, so then must be the other.[19] Though the directness of this statement seems an over-simplification, it remains that, for Milton there can be no varying degree of faith or conviction. One believes in the Saviour or one does not, and though artistically Milton respects the classics, philosophically and theologically he must disagree devoutly:

> Since first this subject for Heroic Song
> Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late;
> Not sedulous by Nature to indite
> Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument
> Heroic deem'd, chief maistrie to dissect
> With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights
> In Battels feign'd...
> or to describe Races and Games,
> Or tilting Furniture, emblazon'd Shields,
> Impreses quaint, Caparisons and Steeds;
> Bases and tinsel Trappings, gorgious Knights
> At Joust and Torneament; then marshal'd Feast
> Serv'd up in Hall with Sewers, and Seneshals;
> The skill of Artifice of Office mean
> Not that which justly gives Heroic name
> To Person or to Poem (Bk IX, 1. 25-41).

In this lengthy passage Milton sweeps away with one motion the "spurious norms" against which he contrasts and elevates the Christian ideal of

heroism. He does not tolerate the violence waged in the "name" of heroic virtue. He undermines some of the finest epic poetry to his day, all with the intention of offering a "higher Argument," which lifts Adam as the mutable complement of Christ, the realistic model for all men to emulate in its stead. His battles, no longer leveled with sword and shield, will be fought with the intellect, the spirit in a continual struggle against the beguiling powers of Satan.

But before Milton dismisses all the various forms of heroism, he constructs a drama in which this is done for him. All these forms of heroism he integrates within Satan's psychology, allowing Satan with his own words and actions to disintegrate them for him. By the time Milton delivers the invocation of Book IX, Satan has already cleared the way, prepared the reader for the profound rejection Milton makes. Milton's invocation is merely a commentary on what Satan has already dramatized.

Satan initially appears to possess all the essential traits of the classical hero: great pride, physical strength and stature, leadership, courage and self-reliance. Milton explicitly associates Satan and his followers with the heroic legions of antiquity. He invites, indeed demands, that the two are thought of as one. The rebel warriors of Hell are described:

> Anon they move
> In perfect Phalanx to the Dorian mood
> Of Flutes and soft Recorders; such as rais'd
> To highth of noblest temper Heros old
> Arming to Battel, and in stead of rage
> Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd
> With dread of death to flight or foul retreat (Bk I, l. 549-55).

Satan stands before this a wesome troop which moves "in guise/ Of Warriors old." (Bk, 1.564-65), nearly overwhelmed by the spectacle:

> And now his heart
> Distends with pride, and hardning in his strength
> Glories
>
> (Bk I, 1.571-73).

One more time in this passage Milton underscores the similarities between Satan and Turnus forcing them to a prominence that cannot be ignored. The conspirators are compared to the "Heroic Race...That faught at Thebes and Ilium, on each side/ Mixt with auxiliar Gods" (Bk I, 1.577-79). Initially, Milton intends Satan to be thought of as heroic by classical standards. In this way early in Paradise Lost Milton consciously gives the character of Satan a dimension of classical heroism. This is done so that as Satan steadily declines from his original grandeur and begins to represent the unambivalent threat which his conventional type of heroism poses to the Christian universe, he collectively brings down all the kinds of heroism on which he is modeled. When Satan moves out of classical Hell and into the Christian realities of God's dominion, his as well as all classical heroism, is diminished or eclipsed by the brilliance of God and His creation.

Satan's greatest flaw lies in his continual inability to submit to what he himself recognizes as genuine truth until a point is reached when this truth is no longer recoverable. In Book I his words contain contradiction and contrivance. Aware of the futility of his struggle, he incites his followers to continue the fight. He delivers eloquent speeches which profess individual freedom and liberty, "The mind is its own place, and

and in it self/ can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n " (Bk I, l. 254-55), while knowing full well, as demonstrated by his soliloquy in Book IV, the faulty nature of his argument: "Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell" (Bk IV, l. 75). His appearance in Book I also relects this intellectual and emotional contradiction:

> Dark'n'd so, yet shon
> Above them all th' Arch Angel: but his face
> Deep scars of Thunder had intrenct, and care
> Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows
> Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride
> Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
> Signs of remorse and passion to behold
> The fellows of his crime
> (Bk I, l. 599-606).

He reflects both the light of Heaven and the darkness of Hell, feels both pain and compassion, both the lust for vengeance and the pangs of remorse. It should be noted that although in this passage Satan is made to appear sympathetic, even here, at this early stage, Milton is careful to align Satan's apparent attributes with classical heroic virtues: "Dauntless courage," "considerate pride" and the incessant longing for vengeance, traits which later Milton will undermine as he shows the effect pride and vengeance have on the psychology of Satan.

In Book IV Satan delivers a soliloquy which reveals a great deal of his character. His words show an arrogant, self-destructive acceptance of the situation, which it seems Satan has the power to reverse. Satan addresses the sun, the ironic reminder of the darkness to which he has allowed himself to descend:

> O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
> That bring to my remembrance from what state
> I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphear;
> Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down
> Warring in Heav'n against Heav'ns matchless King
> (Bk IV, l. 37-41).

He admits his sin and beyond this admits to a recognition of the fact that all he need do is submit to God's mercy in order to regain lost glory:

> O then at last relent: is there no place
> Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left?
> None left but by submission, and that word
> Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
> Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd
> With other promises and other vaunts
> Then to submit, boasting I could subdue
> Th' omnipotent
> (Bk IV, l. 79-86).

This passage has a parallel passage in the soliloquy of Adam. In these passages Satan and Adam must decide either to repent or not; and depending upon that choice, they return to God or are damned forever. In possession of a precise comprehension of his own situation, Satan seems in complete control of his intellect, aware of his choices and of the consequences. His deliverate choice to reject the living God that he recognizes as the just, merciful, omnipotent creator of life, indeed the source of his very existence, stands as an ignorant, arrogant act of a self-willed perpetrator of sin and spiritual devastation.

Satan follows a psychological pattern described by Milton in Book VI whereby one seeks fame in any way available, "yet to glorie aspires/ Vain glorious, and through infamie seeks fame" (Bk VI, l. 383-384).

The need to justify past failings in light of current victories becomes in Satan, (as it did in both Turnus and Red Cross Knight), a blinding passionate addiction which afflicts the spirit, severing all links to God. This need to justify can be seen at work in another passage where Satan momentarily weakens and yearns again for the comfort of God's forgiveness, and the right to participate in his creation. Approaching Eve with the intention of seducing her, Satan is overcome by her beauty:

> her every Air
> Of gesture or lest action overawd
> His Malice, and with repine sweet bereav'd
> His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
> That space the Evil one abstracted stood
> From his own evil, and for the time remained
> Stupidly good, of enmite disarm'd
> Of guild, of hate, of envie, of revenge
> (Bk IX, 1.459-466).

Satan is for the moment capable of gaining joy from one of God's creations. The feeling of joy is a positive influence, as it sways him from his destructive purpose. But the experience also causes him to resent his present spiritual decay, thus intensifying his spite, "Soon/ Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts/ Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites" (Bk IX, 1.470-72). Satan perpetuates his own pain by repeating his sin of arrogant defiance again and again. To submit is to admit he was originally in the wrong, compromising his position as "great potentate" of Hell. Rather than endure this compromise, Satan chooses to pursue

fame by ignominy and glory by vain strife with the righteous. Consequently, he finally falls beyond repentance. Satan epitomizes the downward movement of the unheroic, finding himself in Hell as far removed from the new spirit of heroism as possible. By linking Satan to the conventional view of classical heroism as it is found in both Homer and Virgil, Milton theologically refuses the viability of the heroism of the old standards in light of new Christian ones. However, Milton's refutation of Homeric and Virgilian heroism is not complete. Either consciously or not (though it is hard to believe this would have slipped Milton's mind) Milton neglects to address himself to another kind of classical heroism found in the verse of Virgil. What Virgil sets out to accomplish in the Aeneid, is something very much like what Milton intends. Virgil's intent is to replace one code of heroism with another; Milton's intent is the same. And although Milton successfully undermines the heroic code represented by Turnus in the Aeneid, he never confronts its replacement. There are various passages in Paradise Lost where Milton describes his new ideal using phrases not unlike those Virgil applies to Aeneas. Milton's hero possesses "the better fortitude/ Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom/ Unsung" (Bk IX, 1. 31-33). These words could be used to describe Aeneas, or if not Aeneas, then certainly Virgil's vision of heroism. What Michael conveys to Adam in Book XI concerning the classical view of heroism is said in as many words to Aeneas by his father:

> For in those dayes Might onely shall be admir'd,
> And Valour and Heroic Vertu call'd;
> To overcome in Battel, and subdue
> Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
> Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
> Of human Glorie, and for Glorie done
> Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerours,
> Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,
> Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men.
> Thus Fame shall be atchiev'd, renown on Earch,
> And what most merits fame in silence hid
> (Bk XI, 1. 689-699);

Father Anchises says to Aeneas:

> My sons do not
> let such great wars be native to your minds,
> or turn your force against your homeland's vitals;
> and Caesan, be the first to show forbearance;
> may you, who come from heaven's seed, born of
> my blood, cast down the weapon from your hand!
> (Bk VI, 1. 1105-09).

There are other examples in the Aeneid where Aeneas receives a similar message, again in his father's words:

> Roman, these will be your arts:
> to teach the ways of peace to those you conquer
> to spare defeated peoples, tame the proud
> (Bk VI, 1. 1135-37);

or in Evander's words:

> dare to despise riches, and try--
> as he did - to deserve divinity
> (Bk Viii, 1. 478-79).

From these passages it becomes clear that Virgil and Milton seek nearly the same thing. Both fear the destructive powers of the pride-consumed.

Both Aneas and Adam are instructed in humility, forbearance, patience and sacrifice, all the Christian virtues with which Milton hopes to create his vision of heroism. Frye says that "Adam is what leaders of men were intended to be, peaceful patriarchs." Surely the same words can be applied to Aeneas.

Though Milton does not explicitly address the heroism of Aeneas, and therefore does not explicitly undermine it, Virgilian heroism is nevertheless implicitly refuted and transcended in Paradise Lost, not by the demise of Satan, but rather by the ascension of Christ. Milton could hardly describe Aeanes' kind of heroism as vain, ignoble and destructive. He could, however, describe it as un-Christian, and therefore an imperfect prefiguration of heroism. This view is intrinsic to Christian theology. It is given that those without benefit of Christ's salvation are outside the truth. But there is another distinction between Virgil's type of heroism and Milton's. Once again one need only look at the degree of conviction Virgil feels for his own kind of heroism and the degree Milton feels for his. In Milton there is an increased religious fervor, dedicated acceptance of the ways of God. In Virgil this conviction is lacking. Indeed Virgil is at times sceptical of the attainability of his own concept of heroism. The implicit message throughout Paradise Lost is that without the spiritual understanding that accompanies a recognition of God's ways, there can be no heroic dimension to human nature.

In some ways this kind of answer remains an unsatisfactory explanation of Milton's failure to mention Aeneas in his various statements concerning classical heroism. It seems a case could be made supporting the fact that Milton and Virgil's concepts of heroism are quite similar. In this light the argument which says Milton's vision is more heroic, simply because it is built on a christian world-view and Virgil's is not, does not stand up. Suffice it to say that Milton as a devout Christian poet could not bring himself to acknowledge that Virgil set an artistic and philosophical prec edent for Milton's vision of heroism in Paradise Lost. Nevertheless, although theologically inspired by his puritan background and perhaps artistically inspired by Virgil's Aeneid, Milton does synthesize a new hero in Adam. For the first time the hero is not a warrior; he is not distinguished by battle prowess, great strength and undaunted courage; he is simply a man, prone to error and sin as well as to humility, patience and self-sacrifice.

Like Aeneas and Red Cross Knight, Adam undergoes a process of education, whereby he is brought to a new understanding of his role as a man and father. The education in part takes the form of instruction in which Adam is exposed to a hierarchy of heroic types beginning with Satan and moving up to Christ. Satan, as a study of frailty in the context of human psychology, instructs by negative example as Christ instructs by positive example. The final insight Adam is to gain from this instruction is that as Paradise may be regained or internalized through the presence

of Christ, so Hell may be gained or internalized through the presence of Satan. Adam must realize that Christ represents heroic virtue, and that Satan is the psychological and spiritual threat to this virtue which manifests itself in the forms of false-pride, self-worship and idolatry. As Adam moves in either direction, toward heroism or its antithesis he is not defined so much by what he does, as by what he thinks, feels, understands. Heroism is, then, a state of mind, the fulfillment of spiritual revelation.

In Paradise Lost the theme of heroism as a state of self-knowledge is bound intrinsically to the theme of the garden of paradise within, for in the ability to grasp the spiritual reality of an internalized Eden lies the essential heroism of man. The external image of this paradise within is the prototypical garden of Eden, which is internalized in Adam and Eve as they grow from an appreciation of the sensuous beauty of the physical garden to a recognition of their own spiritual nature and the reflection of that nature in the creation around them. Unfallen Adam views this garden from an ill-conceived perspective. He does not understand his spiritual bond to God's creation. He, like Aeneas and Red Cross, must learn of his part in the destiny of man. Raphael, at the request of God, goes to Eden with the intent of revealing to Adam his spiritual bond to God and the universe. But Adam fails to grasp Raphael's meaning and seeks instead answers to questions of a speculative nature having little to do with his own circumstances. Adam has been forewarned of the dangers of Satan and his response reveals his inattentiveness:

> Whence Adam soon repeal'd
> The doubts that in his heart arose: and now
> Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
> What neerer might concern him, how this World
> Of Heav'n and Earth conspicuous first began,
> When, and where of created, for what cause,
> What within Eden or without was done
> Before his memorie, as one whose drouth
> Yet scarce allay'd still eyes the current stream,
> Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites
> (Bk VII, l. 59-68).

His need for more knowledge points to a serious lack of understanding. Adam is unable at this point to appreciate the impending threat to his innocence. Instead he seeks to possess answers to questions that one day will seem superfluous. Now he asks for information; the knowledge of his spiritual gift from God will provide him with all the wisdom he will need. In the passage cited above Milton is careful to mention that Adam is still without sin, implying that his curiosity stems principally from an ignorance and not from a sinful nature. Like the young Red Cross Knight, who enters the cave of Errour, careless of his charge, Adam exhibits an early vulnerability to sin that develops into an outright defiance of God.

At the outset of Book VIII, after Adam has been told of the rebellion in Heaven, the rebel angel's banishment to Hell, and has had the splendor of creation described, he persists in matters of irrelevant speculation.

> Something yet of doubt remains,
> Which onely thy solution can resolve.
> When I behold this goodly Frame, this World
> Of Heav'n and Earth consisting, and compute,
> Thir magnitudes, this Earth a spot, a grain,
> An Atom, with the Firmament compar'd
> And all her numbered Starrs, that seem to rowl
> Spaces incomprehensible (for such

> Thir distance argues and thir swift return
> Diurnal) meerly to officiate light
> Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
> One day and night; in all thir vast survey
> Useless besides, reasoning I oft admire
> How Nature wise and frugal could commit
> Such disproportions
>
> (Bk VIII, 1.13-27).

Adam is arrogant in his blasphemy which questions the wisdom of God. But the most incriminating thing about this passage is not so much the degree of arrogance but rather Adam's lack of comprehension which it reveals. This lack exemplifies Adam's spiritual immaturity, and goes far to explain his ready susceptibility to Eve's plea to forsake the creation he obviously does not understand.

Although Adam delivers a lengthy speech in Book VIII which implies great insight and self-knowledge, which says that the "prime wisdom" is "to know/ That which before us lies in daily life" (Bk VIII, 1.192-93), his insight is superficial. He has not yet internalized concepts untested by experience, untested by pain and suffering. When Adam chooses to "freely taste/ And fear of Death deliver to the Winds" (Bk IX, 1.988-89), he calls to himself the pain and suffering necessary to bring him to a full appreciation of his intellectual arrogance and spiritual neglect. This suffering forces him to acknowledge his own spirituality. From the moment of Adam's fall, he begins a process of regeneration that follows a pattern nearly identical to that of Red Cross Knight. Red Cross Knight draws near Despaire, and at the moment of suicide is rescued by Una, who leads him to Humilitas, which in turn enables him to meet with Contemplation, from whom is gained knowledge of God and purpose. This progression,

enriched by the complex psychology and emotion of human drama, is repeated in the final books of Paradise Lost. In this way the themes of heavenly grace and heroic humility and sacrifice in Book I of the Faerie Queene are recreated in Paradise Lost.

When Adam realizes the gravity of his sin, with great shame and humiliation he attempts to isolate himself from man and God. In this isolated state, he is severed momentarily from the grace and mercy of God and the compassionate understanding of Eve. Adam's soliloquy has a parallel passage in Satan's own soliloquy in Book IV. In these moments of introspection each reaches a potential turning point. Adam can follow the descending path of all that is unheroic or he can submit with heroic humility to God. Adam's soliloquy is also paralleled in Red Cross Knight's own confrontation with Despaire. Isolated from God, both long for death as a solution for insuring that isolation. The rationale is that in death lies respose in an escape from retribution. Adam contemplates this escape:

> how gladly would I meet
> Mortalitie my sentence, and be Earth
> Insensible, how glad would lay me down
> As in my Mothers lap? There I should rest
> And sleep secure
>
> (Bk X, 1.775-79).

Of course Adam's reasoning, which resembles the first argument of Despaire, is as faulty as Adam is remorseful. And Adam is not long convinced of its viability:

> Yet one doubt
> Pursues me still, least all I cannot die
> Least my pure breath of Life, the Spirit of Man
> Which God inspir'd, cannot together perish
> With this corporeal Clod
>
> (Bk X, 1.782-86).

Already Adam draws conclusions which will eventually lead him back to God. He is growing conscious of his spirit, a life beyond the physical garden. Yet the recognition of immortality only causes more pain as he contemplates the notion of eternal retribution. This fear of unending punishment is an idea which forms the second argument of Despaire. Adam reasons that "For though the Lord of all be infinite/ Is his wrauth also? be it, man is not so/ But mortal doom'd" (Bk X, 1.794-796). He, like Despaire, does not allow for divine mercy which will forgive his transgression and absolve him from pain. Adam ends his soliloquy with an entreaty to "conscience" which is at this time a profound admission of self-awareness, which moves him toward ultimate self-knowledge:

> O Conscience, into what Abyss of fears
> And horrors hast thou driv'n me; out of which
> I find no way, from deep to deeper plung'd!
> (Bk X, 1.842-44).

Although he has made important discoveries about himself and the consequence of his sin, he has yet to understand the forgiving, compassionate nature of God. Finally, he discovers this compassion in Eve, the "human face divine." She approaches him where "On the ground/ Outstretcht he lay, on the cold ground, and oft/ Curs'd his Creation, Death as oft accus'd/ Of tardid execution, Since denounc't/ The day of his offence" (Bk X, 1.850-54). Eve, acting very much like Una, soothes his mind, reminds him of the power of love and forgiveness and most importantly shows him humility:

> And tresses all disordered, at his feet
> Fell humble, and imbracing them, besaught
> His peace
> (Bk X, 1.911-13).

Her words and manner bring him back from his desolate alienation. Adam and Eve revive their relationship:

> But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
> Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere, but strive
> In offices of Love, how we may light'n
> Each others burden in our share of woe
> (Bk X, 1.958-61).

Eve's submission to Adam results in Adam's submission to God. She leads Adam to the door of humility. He says to her:

> What better can we do, then to the place
> Repairing where he judg'd us prostrate fall
> Before him reverent, and there confess
> Humbly our faults, and pardon beg with tears
> . . . sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeign'd and humiliation meek
> (Bk X, 1.1086-92).

Book XI begins with Adam and Eve "in lowlies plight repentant," now the recipients of Heavenly grace:

> for from the Mercie-set above
> Prevenient Grace descending had removed
> The stone from thir hearts, and made new flesh
> Regenerat grow instead, that sighs now breath'd
> Unutterable, which the spirit of prayer
> Inspir'd
> (Bk XI, 1.2-7).

There is a similarity to the Faerie Queene as Red Cross and Una are met at the door of Humilitas by Caelia, the figure of Heavenly Grace. And just as Caelia leads Red Cross to the contemplative heights, so the grace of heaven allows Adam to climb to similar heights: "so both ascend/ In the visions of God" (Bk XI, 1.376-377). Supplicant, humble and cleansed by heavenly grace Adam ascends, just as did Red Cross, to the heights of contemplation:

> It was a Hill
> or Paradise the highest, from whose top
> The Hemisphere of Earth in cleerest ken
> Stretcht out to amplest reach of prospect lay
> (Bk XI, 1.377-80).

Yet the specific nature of what Adam and Red Cross contemplate is quite different. Red Cross Knight's is a mystical vision, while Adam's is a prophecy of human history. What Adam contemplates is consistent with his kind of heroism, a heroism of patient endurance in a corrupt world of men. At this peak Adam receives "the sum/ Of wisdom" and is told to:

> add Faith,
> Add Vertue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
> By name to come call'd Charitie, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee, happier farr
> (Bk XII, 1.582-87).

He is to move from the knowledge of the transcient realities around him to an awareness of his internal strength, which can make a spiritual paradise of any place by the grace of God.

Adam descends the mountain of heavenly contemplation a regenerate man:

> Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
> Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
> Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain
> (Bk XII, 1.557-59).

With these new insights, like Aeneas and Red Cross Knight, he enters the passage of history. And like Aeneas and Red Cross Knight, he brings with him a re-awakened spirituality, which is the "Paradise within." Unlike Aeneas and Red Cross Knight, however, Adam does not return to do immediate battle with the "proud ones" or the "dragon," but his role on earth is

not yet played out, for he must return to Eve and beget a race of men, so that "one greater man" will be born to liberate man from his sin. Christ is, then, the ultimate Christian hero-liberator, but only through a regenerate Adam is the passage of Christ possible. Thus, Adam's regeneration is itself an heroic action, which indirectly is responsible for the salvation of man.

The concepts of heroism in Virgil, Spenser and Milton are born of a commonly sensitive, conscientious concern for the political and psychological and spiritual well-being of humanity. Each shares a desire to redefine a basic premise of heroism established by Homer in a time when the political and cosmological realities were radically different from his own. For Virgil the founding of Rome signified a new far-reaching social and historical responsibility. No longer was the man free to pursue the whims of his own desire at the fatal expense of the weak and unprotected. The political force of Rome, as sanctioned by divine will, represented ideally a new hope for the integration, interaction and final unity of men. If this hope was to be realized, then civil as well as international strife had to end. The values deemed heroic, values such as the battle prowess, great courage, strength and the passionate need to seek out, even create a bloody conflict in which this prowess, courage and strength can be used in an attempt to win glory and fame; these values had to be re-assessed in light of a new social and cosmic perspective. In the Aeneid Virgil attempts to present this new perspective and the heroic virtues that are born of it. Aeneas is Virgil's hero, a man of patient forbearance, humility and sacrifice, possessed of an implicit understanding of the spiritual value of daily life. His ideals are unpretentious, his goal an enduring peace where men are free to worship their own gods, continue their own customs, in short, to live out their lives without the intrusion

of unnecessary and sometimes devastating war. This is the new heroic vision of Virgil. Yet ironically, though Virgil realizes the necessity of this redefinition of heroic values, he is not always satisfied with all the implications of such a change. Virgil recognizes the effect of a political solution on the natural condition of men. He understands the loss of innocence when natural law is replaced by positive law. When Aeneas slays Turnus, Virgil reveals a disconcerting ambivalence concerning the loss of all that his type of hero represents. There is also an implicit distrust of the utility of political solutions which is built into the brutal manner in which Aeneas sends Turnus to the underworld. Aeneas destroys Turnus in the spirit of bloody vengeance, a spirit which he was ordained to purge. If Aeneas, the hero of patient forbearance, the founder and ruler of Rome, remains subject to moments of uncontrolled passion, then what had been a solution for ending these passionate outbursts, instead legitimizes them behind the guise of political authority. What Virgil offers in the Aeneid, then, is an ideal foiled by realistic concerns which call to question that ideal without undermining it. Aeneas is understandably the new and preferable hero, but he, too is human and prone to the failings of men.

The concept of heroism in Book I of Spenser's Faerie Queene is based on a similar premise of forbearance, humility and sacrifice. Yet it is enhanced by a Christian religious fervor that resolves all sense

of ambivalence Virgil might have conveyed in the Aeneid. Spenser's more vividly realized concept of deity, with Christ as the source of heavenly grace cleansing and uplifting the souls of the spiritually depressed, brings into clear focus the nature of heroism as it crystalizes in the light of the Chrisitan faith. Red Cross Knight, the hero-redeemer, follows a path on which all Christian men may return to God. Spenser pursues all facets of this path in a methodical fashion that depicts the Knight's psychological and spiritual fall into error, lust, distrust, ignorant pride, slothful neglect and finally despair. These successive states of spiritual degeneration shown to be the certain results of separation from Gods Truth, are the initial and perhaps necessary steps toward the regeneration of the spirit. This regeneration is begun with a recognition of guilt, contrite humility and resurgence of moral strength, all brought about by the grace of divine justice and mercy. Through this process, the hero is brought back to an understanding of his own spirituality. To recognize the truth for its divine source and meaning to individual life, to protect it and to confront its antithesis, is to achieve what Spenser envisions as the ideal virtues of Christian heroism.

Milton follows closely the themes of both Virgil and Spenser, integrating what Virgil saw as pious resignation in the character of Aeneas and what Spenser developed as the allegorical decline and rise of Red Cross Knight on the path of righteousness, to form a hero of

humility and mild nobility. He is not a warrior, nor the founder of a race; neither is he meant to encounter Satan with the explicit end of liberating men. Rather he is the father of men, a model of peaceful submission to God's ways and internal strength. Adam is everyman, leader of a family, and with self-knowledge the liberator of his own soul. This is what Milton sees as the Christian hero. When a man knows Christ to be his Saviour, the heroic ideal of supreme sacrifice and divine humility, and Satan, his antithesis in every way, he nears the heroic dimensions attainable in a corrupt world.

Notes

[1]C. S. Lewis, Preface to Paradise Lost. (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 28.

[2]Brooks Otis, "The Originality of the Aeneid," Virgil, ed. D. R. Dudley (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1969) p. 56.

[3]H. D. F. Kitto, The Greeks (Baltimore Penguin Books, 1951), p. 58.

[4]Otis, p. 56.

[5]Otis, p. 65.

[6]All the quoted material from Virgil's Aeneid is taken from Allen Mandelbaum, trans., The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation (New York: A Bantam Book, 1971).

[7]Cyril Bailey, Religion in Virgil (1935; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1969).

[8]Bailey, p. 302.

[9]Bailey, p. 302.

[10]Bailey, p. 46.

[11]All quoted material from Spenser's Faerie Queene is taken from J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt, eds., The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser (London: Oxford University Press, 1912).

[12]Graham Hough, A Preface To The Faerie Queene (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1962) p. 148.

[13]All quoted material from Milton's Paradise Lost is taken from John T. Shawcross, ed., rev. ed. with introduction, notes and variants, The Complete Poetry of John Milton (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books Doubleday and Company, 1971).

[14]Northrup Frye, The Return of Eden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 113.

[15]John Steadman, Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959) p. 24.

[16]Steadman, pp. 177-78.

[17]Steadman, p. 210.

[18]Lewis, p. 99

[19]Steadman, p. 178.

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