

The story of Virgil's Aeneid was drawn from many sources, the most influential being the work of the Greek poet Homer. Virgil based the first six books of the Aeneid on the Odessey and the last six books on the Iliad both written by Homer. The Aeneid describes the adventures of Aeneas, the legendary Trojan hero who survived the fall of troy, sailed westward to Italy and founded Rome. During the time that Virgil wrote the Aeneid he incorporated all known Rome history up to his own time.

The book is world renowned and also is said by many to be one of the best works ever. The last chapter of the Aeneid has caused some problems for readers. The first problem that is evident is the manner in which Aeneas deals with Turnus. In book XII Turnus states that the fight should be between the two men as apposed to both armies fighting any further. Turnus had every right to dislike Aeneas who came unannounced, tried to take his fiancé, Aeneas' son killed their sacred deer, and he took his land. They have a great dual and Aeneas disarmed Turnus by striking him in the leg. With his sword to his chest Turnus makes a last request for his body to be returned to his family, as Aeneas is considering the request he notices that Turnus is wearing the sword belt of Pallas and the stoic ways of Aeneas leave him as rage, fury, and anger run through his body. He kills Turnus in anger and dedicates his death to Pallas. This loss of control and act of violence is the opposite of stoicism and the way Aeneas had been portrayed the rest of the epic.

Turnus has to die for the founding of Rome to occur but he should not have been killed in such a way. The killing was payback for the dishonorable way that Pallas was killed. The sword belt had images that reflect Augustinian Rome as did the shield in book eight. The theft of the belt from Pallas can be compared to the stolen helmet and the youth slain when his guard was down and greed had taken over. All if this represents the theme of greed and each incident resulted in death of the thief.

Another problem that the last book of the Aeneid provided for the readers was how the last scene was written in relation to the rest of the epic. At the end of the novel Aeneas kills Turnus for many reasons, most them were dishonorable. Aeneas had gone through many barriers in the epic. At the beginning of the epic Aeneas knew his duty to the people very well, this was shown in many instances such as returning for his wife during his flight from troy. But throughout the epic this theme becomes less and less vivid and the fact that he starts to understands the Gods becomes more and more evident. Due to the fact that Aeneas is half devine shows that he can be in either side of the line that divides the two. Usually a being in this state is either more devine or more human. At the beginning of the epic Aeneas is portrayed as a very human person who understands human needs. As the epic progresses this fades, his divinity states to show. At the end of the novel he is very much the opposite is of when it started and his will to understand human behavior is gone. Due to the fact that the piety that he had throughout the epic was no longer within him. Aeneas has no need for piatos because in a very short time he will become a god and he must prepare for this instead of gaining piety. The last scene changes our view of Aeneas that has been built up throughout the epic. He becomes enraged and clearly not the Aeneas that started out during the fall of Troy. This is not necessary a bad thing because the he has ahead of him needs a strong man and the occurrences throughout the book actually made him the man that the founding of Rome required him to be.

The third problem that appears in the final act of Aeneas is that his actions are really not like him at all and is not consistent with the character which is shown in the rest of the epic. I feel that for the founding of Rome to occur Turnus had to die but Turnus did not have to die the way he did. If Turnus did live he would have been a constant nuisance and a trouble maker. He would have also posed a constant threat to the life of Aeneas. The fact that he stole the sword belt of Pallas and killed him with such dishonor does somewhat justify the act of Aeneas but it goes back to the question of who is the better man out of the

two. Aeneas let his emotions overcome him and this in turn shows weakness. On the other hand Turnus showed strength in accepting his defeat and making a last request.

Aeneas' character throughout the epic was ever learning. He went through much to get to the point where he is at during the battle. He fought the walls that Juno put up throughout his journey and became a stronger man at the end. Aeneas deals with Turnus in a bad way but this should not totally dishonor him. He did make it to his destination and sacrificed much to get there. Although Aeneas did make it to found Rome. Juno also is a victor in the epic. The root of Juno's anger was that the prophecies proclaimed that Aeneas would take over Carthage and he is Trojan. But now that Aeneas is no longer Trojan but Roman and Rome will love Juno more than Carthage ever did.

If Aeneas had stuck to stoicism in the story could he have accomplished his mission without resorting to such violence? Obviously the Stoic way would have been much better and much quicker. If he had not let his emotions get the better of him he would not have spent seven years with Dido and her death would not have happened. Also if he would have gone straight to Italy he would have arrived long before Turnus was engaged to the princess and there would have been no war. Although there is a strong argument that the events throughout the book built the character Aeneas needed to be the founder of Rome and become a God. Another point is that the prophecies stated that Aeneas would have to fight many battles to found Rome the fact remains that if he had gotten there sooner there would still have been some sort of war awaiting his arrival. On the other hand in the last book Jupiter did make a statement that suggested that it was possible for him to interfere with fate if he wished and change the prophecies. There is no telling what he could have done had he made different choices throughout his journey and many people ponder the same questions about life itself and the choices made in their lives. The fact is there is no way of knowing.

In my opinion the last scene insinuates that Rome was founded in violence. This is not necessarily bad, Roman people were very proud of their heritage and the way that the city was founded. The Romans fell in love with Virgil's Aeneid and so did Augustus. The book was praised by Romans as it showed Rome as strong and powerful.

The character of Aeneas was modeled after Augustus and the book agreed that Augustus was a strong leader. The book actually helped his image and the love for him grew through Rome after the publication of the book. For that society in that time the epic was written perfectly to suit the need of the reader.

