



April 2016

Apud Genus Omne Futurum: Virgil's Aenid in Contemporary English Translation

Sophia Ly

University of British Columbia, sophia.ly03@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://trace.tennessee.edu/pursuit>

Recommended Citation

Ly, Sophia (2016) "Apud Genus Omne Futurum: Virgil's Aenid in Contemporary English Translation," *Pursuit - The Journal of Undergraduate Research at the University of Tennessee*: Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 16.

Available at: <http://trace.tennessee.edu/pursuit/vol7/iss1/16>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pursuit - The Journal of Undergraduate Research at the University of Tennessee by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

Apud Genus Omne Futurum: Virgil's Aeneid in Contemporary English Translation

SOPHIA LY

Advisor: Dr. Hector Williams

The archetype of classical Roman epic, Virgil's Aeneid has enjoyed incredible literary attention since its appearance in the first century of the Common Era. More than eighty English translations of the Aeneid have been published since the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the task of the present article is to understand the place of modern-day translations within the context of such a tradition. By juxtaposing the work of contemporary translators Cecil Day Lewis, Allen Mandelbaum, Robert Fitzgerald, Robert Fagles, and Sarah Ruden, it examines the ways in which a translator's milieu can manifest itself in subtle artefacts that converge to produce a novel reading of the text. What emerges through the course of the analysis is a plurality of interpretations that exposes the dynamic nature of the the Aeneid and accounts in no small part for its continued ability to find new meaning among audiences today.

The author can be reached at sophia.ly03@gmail.com.



1. Introduction

A tale of statehood and imperial legacy, Virgil's *Aeneid* is the quintessential Latin epic. Its first appearance was met with immediate success among Roman audiences, and over the centuries that followed, the *Aeneid* has continued to fascinate readers, scholars, and artists, establishing a creative tradition that reaches from Milton and Shakespeare to Keats and T.S. Elliot. Since the sixteenth century, the *Aeneid* has seen no fewer than eighty-three English translations, of which twenty-eight date from the beginning of the twentieth century. Each edition brings forth a novel perspective on the source text, informed by the memories, experiences, and socialized preferences of the translator – in Bourdieusian terms, the translator's *habitus*. Even as the tendency for modern translators is to forgo the liberal stylings of John Dryden and his contemporaries in favour of a more literal and superficially objective product, they continue to betray their underlying voice as they wrestle with matters of vocabulary, grammar, and metre.

This article examines how different translators have approached the *Aeneid* since the mid-twentieth century, with attention, at times, to how their own experiences and attitudes, both towards the text and to the process of translation, have figured into a reformulation of Virgil's epic. The translations of Cecil Day Lewis (1952), Allen Mandelbaum (1961), Robert Fitzgerald (1981), Robert Fagles (2006), and Sarah Ruden (2008) are appraised in turn through a comparison of each translator's approach to lines 615–629 of Book IV. This excerpt follows fast upon Aeneas' departure from Carthage: he has just forsaken Dido, his lover and the Carthaginian queen, to found the Italian kingdom that will give rise to the Roman Empire. In a gesture that recalls the Punic Wars of the third and second centuries BCE, Dido calls for unending strife between their peoples, a curse born of mindless anguish:

at bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,	615
finibus extorris, complexu avulsus luli	
auxilium imploret videatque indigna suorum	
funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae	
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,	
sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.	620
haec precor, hanc vocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.	
tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum	
exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro	
munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunt.	
exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor	625
qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos,	
nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.	
litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas	
imprecor, arma armis: pugnent ipsique nepotesque.	

2.1 Day Lewis (1952)

May he be harried in war by adventurous tribes, and exiled
 From his own land; may Ascanius be torn from his arms; may he have to
 Sue for aid, and see his own friends squalidly dying.
 Yes, and when he's accepted the terms of a harsh peace,
 Let him never enjoy his realm or the allotted span,
 But fall before his time and lie on the sands, unburied.
 That is my last prayer. I pour it out, with my lifeblood.
 Let you, my Tyrians, sharpen your hatred upon his children
 And all their seed for ever: send this as a present to

My ghost. Between my people and his, no love, no alliance!
 Rise up my dead bones, avenger! Rise up, one to hound the
 Trojan settlers with fire and steel remorselessly,
 Now, some day, whenever the strength for it shall be granted!
 Shore to shore, sea to sea, weapon to weapon opposed –
 I call down a feud between them and us to the last generation! (Day Lewis 90)

Commissioned to adapt the Aeneid for a BBC radio broadcast, Day Lewis produced a line-by-line translation of the text that was later published in 1952. In his foreword, he acknowledges the guiding principle of his translation, borrowed, as he confesses, from John Dryden: "How would Virgil have told the story, if he had been born in England, and in this present age? A good translation must be a satisfactory answer to that question" (viii). In this way, Day Lewis' translation is defined by a simultaneous commitment to Virgil's tone and impression, as well as to the language and sensibilities of his day.

Written in blank verse, Day Lewis' translation makes use of modern English while clinging to a sense of romantic intensity and vitality. Scattered throughout his text are dramatic, spirited gestures, invoking the kind of sublime, high-flown passion customarily attributed to classical literature, and particularly the Aeneid – the "exuberance and vivacity," (686) "generous elevation of feeling," (687) and "over-mastering emotion" (687) of which W.Y. Sellar speaks. Exclamation marks punctuate lines 624, 625, 627, and 629; "Yes" is added as an interjection at the start of line 619; Virgil's "exoriare," (IV.625) a jussive subjunctive, is exaggerated into an imperative command. Day Lewis similarly renders "nullus amor populis nec foedera" (IV.624) as "no love, no alliance!" a translation that exploits the force of both asyndeton and anaphora. To close the excerpt, Dido's last words are rearranged to increase the proximity of parallel terms, producing the most intense juxtaposition to be found in these five translations: "Shore to shore, sea to sea, weapon to weapon opposed."

It is necessary, however, to recognize that Day Lewis' translation was written in the shadow of the Second World War. While he never served as a soldier, the war had touched the entire British citizenry with its proximity, economic impact, and human toll. Thus traces of post-war England find themselves in Day Lewis' text, although they figure with less force than his poem's more conventional trappings.

The modernity of his translation first establishes itself in the features that mark it as a radio broadcast. Potential ambiguities in the text are simplified, making it easier to follow: as Day Lewis writes in the foreword, "I wanted it to be explicit; that is, where there are several possible interpretations of a phrase, to plump for one of them and not prevaricate" (viii). Hence the cryptic "optata luce" (IV.619) becomes the more definite "allotted span." The character of Iulus is likewise identified by his other name, Ascanius, in line 616. A quick glimpse at lines IV.140 (76) and IV.274 (80) of Day Lewis' translation – in which he again uses the name Ascanius in place of Iulus – would suggest that he consistently refers to Aeneas' son in this way, avoiding the confusion of calling one character by two names.

Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to note that Day Lewis' translation also incorporates more subtle features that only a reader who moves measuredly through the text could appreciate. As Dido yearns for Aeneas to be "exiled / From his own land", so the enjambment of the line emphasizes this separation. As she pleads, "Between my people and his, no love, no alliance!", so these wishes are heeded literally by the physical placement of her words on the page.

Day Lewis' zeitgeist makes a return through the vocabulary employed in his translation. The use of "steel" for "ferro" (IV.626) lends an industrial edge to his writing. Similarly, his choice of "sue for aid" in place of "auxilium impleret" (IV.617) provides a contemporary flair taken from the language of modern diplomacy.

More interesting, perhaps, is the gentle language that Day Lewis exercises in his description of war and colonial contact. In this translation, "se sub leges...tradiderit" (IV.618-619) becomes

“accepted the terms” and “*pacis iniquae*” (IV.618) is muted into a “harsh peace”. In a similar way, Day Lewis weakens “*audacis*” (IV.615) through the use of “adventurous”, an awkwardly tender way of describing the warlike peoples that Virgil regarded with “turbulent barbarism” and destined for subjugation (Sellar 515). Day Lewis fails to communicate the contempt and shamelessness of *audax*. It was a word of particular bite for the Roman community, who considered shame a condition for social order and the principle that confined each member of a civil community to their proper place (Kaster 27). Indeed, “adventurous” bears nothing of the colonial irreverence that the Romans held for the Gauls, the Parthians, and all the other *audaces populi* of their time. Day Lewis partially redeems his choice of words by characterizing “*populi*” (IV.615) as “tribes”, a term that may invoke similar colonial attitudes within a contemporary readership. Yet “adventurous” remains unsatisfying. Its lasting impression is playful, even humorous and infantile, and it goes so far as to reflect another indigenous stereotype – that of Shaftesbury’s noble savage, a sure nod to Day Lewis’ voice as translator.

Day Lewis’ delicate approach to conflict has been previously noted in his translation of Virgil’s *Georgics* (Ziolkowski 115). Theodore Ziolkowski, in his study of mid-century classical reception, attributes this to the English idealization of Virgil between World Wars, and the treatment of his writings as a nostalgic refuge for hope and humanity (119). The same mechanisms may be in effect here: while Dido’s speech retains a spirit of violence, her milder characterization of war helps to reconcile the *Aeneid* with the dream of a simpler, more benevolent past. The confrontation that exists in Day Lewis’ translation between the narrative of an ancient writer and the perspective of his modern translator will become more pronounced in the translations to follow.

2.2 Mandelbaum (1961)

Yet let
 him suffer war and struggles with audacious
 nations, and then – when banished from his borders
 and torn from the embrace of Iulus – let him
 beg aid and watch his people’s shameful slaughter.
 Not even when he has bent low before
 an unjust peace may he enjoy his kingdom,
 the light that he has wished for. Let him fall
 before his time, unburied in the sand.
 These things I plead; these final words I pour
 out of my blood. Then, Tyrians, hunt down
 with hatred all his sons and race to come;
 send this as offering unto my ashes.
 Do not let love or treaty tie our peoples.
 May an avenger rise up from my bones,
 one who will track with firebrand and sword
 the Dardan settlers, now and in the future,
 at any time that ways present themselves.
 I call your shores to war against their shores,
 your waves against their waves, arms with their arms.
 Let them and their sons’ sons learn what is war. (Mandelbaum 104)

As Day Lewis’ lived civilian experience during the Second World War may have tempered his approach to the *Aeneid*, so Mandelbaum’s translation is shaped by his response to a contemporary conflict. In the introduction, he explains, “The years of my work on this translation have widened that personal discontent; this state (no longer, with the Vietnam War, that innocuous word “society”) has wrought the unthinkable, the abominable” (xv). Rather than a celebration of

patriotic love, Mandelbaum saw in the Aeneid “the underground denial – by consciousness and longing – of the total claims of the state and history” (xi). His subversive, anti-Augustan reading – shared by American classicists Adam Parry and Michael Putnam, also writing in the Vietnam War – reveals itself in the austerity of Mandelbaum’s text.

His translation is written in iambic pentameter, and compared to Day Lewis’ rendition, more solemn and subdued. Gone are the exclamation marks, the exaggerated language, the poetic pomp. Day Lewis’ “Between my people and his, no love, no alliance!” becomes Mandelbaum’s sterner “Do not let love or treaty tie our peoples”. Likewise, Day Lewis’ imperative translation of “exoriare” (IV.625) is replaced by Mandelbaum with the words, “May an avenger rise up,” a quieter optative subjunctive, less ardent and less sure. Notably, Virgil’s “precor” (IV.621) and “imprecor” (IV.629) – whose sense of religious invocation is preserved in Day Lewis’ “my prayer” and “I call down” – are muted in this translation as “I plead” and “I call.” Mandelbaum’s Dido has abandoned the hope of gaining sympathy from the divine forces that have engineered her destruction, and she asks now only for what her fellow Tyrians can deliver. This translation hearkens back to an earlier comment, made sarcastically by Dido of the gods’ indifference to human suffering: “scilicet is superis labor est, ea cura quietos / sollicitat” (IV.379-380).

While his manner of diction is restrained, the language that Mandelbaum employs to communicate themes of war and statehood are heavy and aggressive – a reversal of Day Lewis’ approach to this passage. Mandelbaum takes Virgil’s “indigna...funera” (IV.617-618) as “shameful slaughter,” a translation both harsher and more faithful than Day Lewis’ “squalidly dying.” The Latin “se...tradiderit” (IV.618-619) is also taken as “he has bent low,” rather than Day Lewis’ gentle phrase, “he’s accepted.” In this translation, Aeneas’ terms of peace will not only be unfair, but even humiliating. Mandelbaum’s Dido understands at what cost the Roman state will be won, built, as it is, on the forfeit of Aeneas’ honour and self-respect.

She, too, understands the ties that bind military conflict to trauma and despair. Mandelbaum translates “vexatus” (IV.615) twice, and as “suffer” and “struggle,” each more forceful than Day Lewis’ “harry.” Abandoning the original Latin, he takes “pugnent ipsique nepotesque” (IV.629) as “Let their sons’ sons learn what is war.” Even as she rages at the foot of her funeral pyre, Mandelbaum’s Dido recognizes that war is no simple affair – there are lessons to be learned by those who take up arms, truths unfathomable to those who live in comfort and security.

Compared to Day Lewis’ translation, Mandelbaum’s text offers a more bitter reading of the Aeneid. His phrasing is unornamented. His words are simple and direct. Set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War – and indeed, the general anti-establishment feeling of the time – these fifteen lines alone are sufficient to detect a sombre criticism of state and military violence, and a deeper sense of life’s indignity and despair.

2.3 Fitzgerald (1981)

Yet all the same
 When hard beset in war by a brave people,
 Forced to go outside his boundaries
 And torn from lulus, let him beg assistance,
 Let him see the unmerited deaths of those
 Around and with him, and accepting peace
 On unjust terms, let him not, even so,
 Enjoy his kingdom or the life he longs for,
 But fall in battle before his time and lie
 Unburied on the sand! This I implore,
 This is my last cry, as my last blood flows.
 Then, O my Tyrians, besiege with hate
 His progeny and all his race to come:

Make this your offering to my dust. No love,
 No pact must be between our peoples; No,
 But rise up from my bones, avenging spirit!
 Harry with fire and sword the Dardan countrymen
 Now, or hereafter, at whatever time
 The strength will be afforded. Coast with coast
 In conflict, I implore, and sea with sea,
 And arms with arms: may they contend in war,
 Themselves and all the children of their children! (Fitzgerald 118)

When he first read the Aeneid, Fitzgerald was an American soldier stationed in Guam. It was the final year of the Second World War, and the steady tedium of non-combatant service gradually gave way to an understanding of the undeniable violence further west. As he recounts in his postscript: "More than literary interest, I think, kept me reading Virgil's descriptions of desperate battle, funeral pyres, failed hopes of truce or peace" (414).

While Fitzgerald's translation follows that of Day Lewis and Mandelbaum, it provides a compromise between their readings of the Aeneid. Written in blank verse, it emulates Day Lewis' text in its poetic ornamentation and passionate, elevated tone. Fitzgerald revives his use of exclamation marks and his translation of "exoriare" (IV.625) as an imperative. Fitzgerald's "no love, no pact" glances at Day Lewis' "no love, no alliance," while his added interjection of "No" in IV.624 resembles his predecessor's interposed "Yes" in IV.619. Fitzgerald even exceeds Day Lewis in his treatment of IV.629, a testament to the poetic merit of his translation. The perpetuity of Dido's curse, which Virgil impresses through the use of a hypermetric line, Fitzgerald reproduces in full through its extension into two lines of English verse and the translation of "nepotesque" (IV.629) as the "children of their children." This repetition emphasizes the on-going nature of the Tyrians' enmity towards the descendants of Aeneas. It recalls Mandelbaum's solemn "sons' sons," yet Fitzgerald's lengthier phrase allows his act of repetition to better engender a sense of continuity.

Although Fitzgerald, like Day Lewis, softens "se sub leges...tradiderit" (IV.618-619) as "accepting peace," a closer reading of his translation reveals a more complicated approach to the question of war, and a more critical representation that, in some ways, begins to align with Mandelbaum's text. Two conflicting themes emerge in his translation. On the one hand, warriors are noble and full of honour: "brave" are the warlike people entreated to attack Aeneas and his fellow Trojans. Yet war is also the source of suffering and chaos: similar to Mandelbaum, Fitzgerald takes both "precor" (IV.621) and "imprecor" (IV.629) as "implore," a word lacking the religious implications of the Latin. Dido's pleas for violence and strife are reduced to earthly commands: war is a godless affair, unchecked by any prevailing sense of order or sacred principles.

It is to the same effect that Fitzgerald translates Virgil's simple "cadat" (IV.620) as "fall in battle." In a desperate, tortured frenzy, Fitzgerald's Dido condemns Aeneas, the man who has betrayed her, to a death in arms. As she understands it, death on the battlefield is the ultimate retribution, full of sorrow and pain, bereft of glory and dignity. This comes as a stark rejection of the self-sacrificing fervour that Aeneas expresses in Book II, as Troy falls around him: "pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis" (II.317).

It may be helpful now to return to Fitzgerald's postscript. Reflecting on the conflict in the Pacific, he writes:

Offshore of the big Japanese island to the north, picket ships were having their prows or upperworks and the men who manned them smashed into flaming junk by Japanese fighters aflame; ashore, men with flamethrowers were doing what I had heard a briefing officer in San Francisco, with an insane giggle, refer to as "popping Japs"; and a good many young and brave of both sides were tasting the agony and abomination that the whole show came down to, in fact existed for. (414)

Japs"; and a good many young and brave of both sides were tasting the agony and abomination that the whole show came down to, in fact existed for. (414)

His remarks convey a sense of revulsion at the realities of war, and they mark a discrepancy between the soldiers that are – or present as – honourable men and the abhorrent deeds they commit and to which they are subject. The same incongruity exists in his translation of the Aeneid.

2.4 Fagles (2006)

Still, let him be plagued in war by a nation proud in arms,
 torn from his borders, wrenched from Iulus' embrace,
 let him grovel for help and watch his people die a
 shameful death! And then, once he has bowed down
 to an unjust peace, may he never enjoy his realm
 and the light he yearns for, never, let him die
 before his day, unburied on some desolate beach!
 That is my prayer, my final cry – I pour it out
 with my own lifeblood. And you, my Tyrians,
 harry with hatred all his line, his race to come: make that
 offering to my ashes, send it down below.
 No love between our peoples, ever, no pacts of peace!
 Come rising up from my bones, you avenger still unknown,
 to stalk those Trojan settlers, hunt with fire and iron,
 now or in time to come, whenever the power is yours.
 Shore clash with shore, sea against sea and sword
 against sword – this is my curse – war between all
 our peoples, all their children, endless war! (Fagles 149)

Fagles' Aeneid – his third major work of translation, following the Iliad and the Odyssey – comes more than twenty years after the original publication of Fitzgerald's text. His spirited rendition is written in blank verse with five to seven stresses per line. Using vivid language and a wide range of poetic constructions, Fagles produces a translation of passage IV.615-629 that comes closest, of the five examined here, to the original Latin and the one that rings most pleasantly upon the ear.

In the postscript, Fagles emphasizes his commitment to retaining the immediacy and dramatic vigour of Virgil's Latin (391). It follows that his translation returns very much to the dynamic style of Day Lewis and Fitzgerald, adopting the same catalogue of bold, sweeping gestures to match Dido's frenzied madness. Like both translators, Fagles introduces exclamation marks to generate a sense of excitement and he intensifies the subjunctive "exoriare" (IV.625) as an imperative verb. He translates "mittite" (IV.623) and "sequare" (IV.626) twice each for emphasis, and his added interjection of "never" in IV.619 and "ever" in IV.624 is even stronger in force than Day Lewis' "Yes" or Fitzgerald's "No," which figure in the same lines.

The vibrancy of Fagles' translation also owes to his extensive use of poetic devices, more prominent in this translation than in that of Day Lewis, Mandelbaum, or Fitzgerald. Alliteration lends a natural melody to Fagles' text, while complementing the tenor of Dido's cry. In "Shore clash with shore, sea against sea and sword / against sword", it accentuates Virgil's act of juxtaposition with the sound of sinister hissing. In "pacts of peace," it furnishes Dido's interdiction with a feel of percussive violence. The latter phrase is also noteworthy for its separation from the word "love," both of which serve as the subject of "sunto" (IV.624) in the original Latin. Each of the previous translations place them side by side, as an English reader might expect them to find them. By drawing "pacts of peace" to the end of the line, Fagles' introduces an element of hyperbaton that

betrays Dido's disordered mind.

More striking is Fagles' treatment of line IV.629. The sense of continuity that Virgil conveys with a hypermetric line and that Fitzgerald and Mandelbaum imitate with repetition, Fagles captures with a more declamatory chiasmus. It is a grand call-to-arms: "war between all / our peoples, all their children, endless war!" Yet every gesture in this translation is grand. While his vocabulary and manner of diction are well-suited to a twenty-first century audience, these techniques add such decoration and musicality to his rendition as to recapture the passionate grandeur that might be expected of an earlier translation.

The text diverges, however, from the translations of Day Lewis and Fitzgerald in the forceful and aggressive vocabulary with which Fagles discusses matters of warfare and diplomacy. Like Mandelbaum, Fagles does not shirk from strong, direct language. He takes "auxilium imploret" (IV.617) as "grovel for help" and "se...tradiderit" (IV.619) as "bowed down", an echo of Mandelbaum's "bent low". Similarly, his translation of Virgil's "vexatus" (IV.615) condemns the Trojans not only to a future "hard beset" by war, to use Fitzgerald's phrase, but even "plagued" by it. Yet unlike Mandelbaum's text, Fagles' translation does not read as a condemnation of military conflict. Indeed, it idealizes it. Whereas Fitzgerald's Dido calls for Aeneas to die in battle, Fagles' character wishes him death on "some desolate beach". The word "beach" takes from Virgil's "harena" (IV.620); the rest is Fagles' own invention. As his translation reads, the greatest punishment that Aeneas can sustain for his unfaithfulness is not a death in arms, safeguarding the Roman legacy – that would be too noble – but an anonymous end, uncelebrated, unrecognized and alone.

It may be strange that Fagles' text breaks from the translations of Day Lewis, Mandelbaum, and Fitzgerald to espouse a more dated notion of war as a thing of dignity and splendour. Yet in an interview with *The Paris Review*, he acknowledges that as a child during the Second World War, he adopted a glorified view of martial combat that would remain with him into adulthood:

This may sound a little far-fetched, but it's something that's been on my mind for many years. Ever since my parents read the papers to me and I could follow the European and Pacific theaters of World War II, I've hankered to be a soldier—if only in that war, a war worth fighting, and winning too.

The attitude that Fagles articulates here provides some perspective on the quiet reverence for military glory that marks this excerpt of his translation. Whether he personally read the *Aeneid* as a celebration of patriotic self-sacrifice or believed it to be what Virgil intended, it contributes to the entire atmosphere of romantic dramatization that touches his translation, from its poetic flourishes to its impassioned exclamations.

2.5 Ruden (2008)

Then let a bold and warlike people drive him
Out of his realm and tear his lulus from him.
Make him a suppliant, let him see the death
Of blameless friends. Humiliating peace terms
Will bring no happy old age in his kingdom.
He'll fall and lie unburied in the sand.
And now my last plea, gushing with my blood:
Tyrians, hound with hatred for all time
The race he founds. My ashes call from you
This service. Let there be no pacts of friendship.
Out of my grave let an avenger rise,
With fire and iron for Dardanian settlers—
Now— someday— when the power is there to strike.

Our shores will clash, weapons and seas collide.
My curse is war for Trojans and their children. (Ruden 88)

Despite the release of Virgil's epic almost two thousand years ago, Ruden has been the first woman to publish a translation of the Aeneid. Nevertheless, in her preface, Ruden says nothing of providing a new perspective on an ancient poem. Rather, she comments at length on the responsibility of translators to remain faithful to their source texts, mentioning that "In writing fiction you should work to get into your characters' minds; in translating you should work to get into your author's" (xi). It is particularly curious, then, that compared to the renditions of Day Lewis, Mandelbaum, Fitzgerald, and Fagles, it is Ruden's line-by-line text that reads least like a conventional epic.

The most pronounced feature of Ruden's translation is its pithiness. While the previous translators have been fairly literal in their work, Ruden takes extensive liberties in paraphrasing the original text: she omits some words entirely – like "stirpem" (IV.622) and "ante diem" (IV.620) – and frequently fuses multiple ideas together. In this way, "haec precor, hanc vocem extremam" (IV.621) is condensed into the succinct "And now my last plea". Ruden's contracted style is a response, in part, to the challenges of translating Latin dactylic hexameter into English iambic pentameter on a line-by-line basis. As an uninflected language, English is a wordier medium for a poet. Ruden's metre of choice also gives her fewer syllables to work with.

Although some of Virgil's finer, more complex constructions are abandoned by necessity, Ruden is quite successful in maintaining the general sense of the text. Even as "Nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae / tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur" (IV.619) becomes the simple "Humiliating peace terms / Will bring no happy old age in this kingdom," each of Virgil's key points is retained: first, Aeneas shall have to accept a peace that is shameful and unfair, and second, this peace will not allow him to enjoy the kingdom and happiness for which he has laboured. In some respects, the actual matter of Ruden's translation is more faithful to the original than that of Day Lewis. Her "bold and warlike" is a more fitting translation of "audaci populi" (IV.615) than Day Lewis' euphemistic "adventurous", while the "death of blameless friends" is almost a direct translation of "indigna suorum funera" (IV.617) that contrasts with Day Lewis' inaccurate "friends squalidly dying."

Ruden's translation also retains something of the poetic finesse to be found in the original Latin and each of the translations previously examined. Her alliterative "hounds with hatred" glances at both Mandelbaum's "hunt down with hatred" and Fagles' "harry with hatred." The dashes that enfold "someday," like those that surround Fagles' "this is my curse", create a visual distance that mimics Dido's faltering speech. Similarly, she collapses "amor...nec foedera" into "pacts of friendship" (IV.624), a reversed act of hendiadys that subtly conveys the extent to which Dido's feelings for Aeneas are intertwined with the diplomatic relationship between their peoples. These gestures, however, are unobtrusive. They do not break from the overall terseness and simplicity of Ruden translation.

Ruden's tone is more reserved than Mandelbaum's, and a considerable departure from the energy and exaggerated passion found in the translations of Day Lewis, Fitzgerald, and Fagles. Yet it is critical to note that her brevity does not detract from the emotional force of Dido's character. Instead, it offers the reader a different Dido – one who is still bitter, still passionate, but less raging and more withdrawn, whose struggles are fought within rather than performed without. The self-restraint – and indeed, modernity – of Ruden's Dido is emphasized by the dissonance between her oppressive circumstances and her manner of diction. There are no exclamation marks, and save "hound" for "exercete" (IV.623), no imperative verbs. The juxtaposition that Virgil exercises in IV.628-629 – the strongest, most glaring literary device in the excerpt – is reduced to a solemn parallelism: "Our shores will clash, weapons and seas collide." Moreover, her sentences are short, the longest barely spanning more than two and a half lines of verse. By contrast, Fitzgerald opens his passage with a ten-line sentence, while Fagles' sentences comprise an average of three to four

lines. Ruden's Dido is desperate and broken, but she does not suffer from the same fictional and exaggerated frenzy to which her sister renderings succumb. The effect for a contemporary reader is a character that is immediately more lifelike, more relatable, and more amenable to empathy.

Summarizing an unpublished interview with Ruden, Fiona Cox and Elena Theodorakopoulos express some surprise that "the first female translator of the Aeneid should reject the idea of appropriating Virgil for women, or indeed to recognize any need to do so" (232). Whether unwittingly or by design, it would appear from this passage that a reappropriation of the Aeneid is precisely what her text accomplishes. She redeems Dido from the foreign, raving, and untamed woman that previous translators have characterized at the end of Book IV. Like Margaret Atwood in *The Penelopiad* or Ursula K. Le Guin in *Lavinia*, Ruden's translation provides a new perspective on a woman of classical epic, furnishing her with a newfound realism and complexity.

3. Conclusion

What has become increasingly clear over the course of this investigation is that the common attempt to produce a so-called faithful translation of the Aeneid has culminated in a tremendously diverse body of work. Each of the twentieth and twenty-first century translators examined here finds their own voice in Virgil, and each produces a text marked subtly by their own values, encounters, and experiences. Equipped with lines IV.615-629, Day Lewis crafts an idyllic past, full of feeling and humanity; Mandelbaum, a criticism of war and government, won through wages of desperation and shame; Fitzgerald, a sorrowful and conflicted account of military combat; Fagles, a decorated song of glory and high emotion; and Ruden, a modern and measured recasting of Dido. While these characterizations certainly run the risk of oversimplifying their work, they nonetheless provide a solid foundation for exploring how translations of the Aeneid are informed by the times and voices of their translators. As William R. Nethercut remarks, "Virgil holds up a mirror to us, from which, as we move from decade to decade, a changing image shines" (303).

The range of translations to emerge over the past century pays tribute to the fact that the Aeneid can welcome a myriad of different readings. After two thousand years of study, the epic of Virgil continues to resist any straightforward conclusions. The polysemous nature of its themes has led even recent generations – disillusioned by conflict and wary of nationalistic ideologies – to find meaning in its sibylline treatment of war, humanity, conquest, and fate. Indeed, it is precisely the Aeneid's capacity to be reread and re-invented that has safeguarded its legacy to this day, and certifies its relevance and readership in the years to come.

Works Cited

- Cox, Fiona, and Elena Theodorakopoulos. "Fidelity in an arranged marriage: Sarah Ruden and the Aeneid." *Classical Receptions Journal* 4.2 (2012): 224-234. JSTOR. Web. 2 Mar. 2015.
- Fagles, Robert. Interview. Ed. Patricia Storage. *The Paris Review* 151 (1991): n. pag. Web. 8 Mar. 2015.
- Kaster, Robert A. *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Rome*. London: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Nethercut, William R. "American Scholarship on Vergil in the Twentieth Century." *Vergil at 2000: Commemorative Essays on the Poet and his Influence*. Ed. John D. Bernard. New York: AMS, 1986. 303-330. Print.
- Sellar, W.Y. *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil*. 3rd ed. London: Oxford UP, 1897. EPUB file.
- Virgil. *Aeneid*. Trans. C. Day Lewis. London: Hogarth, 1952. Print.
- . *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fagles. New York: Penguin, 2006. Print.
- . *The Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Knopf, 1981. Print.
- . *The Aeneid*. Trans. Sarah Ruden. New Haven: Yale UP, 2008. Print.
- . *The Aeneid of Virgil*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. Berkeley: UC Press, 1961. Print.
- . *Vergil's Aeneid: Books I-VI*. Ed. Clyde Pharr. Mundelein: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1998. Print.
- Ziolkowski, Theodore. *Virgil and the Moderns*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993. Print.

