

## PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in Subjects introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Cooperation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of a proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in 'invisible teaching'. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that they may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great deal of these efforts is still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

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Vice-Chancellor

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**PAPER - VIII**  
**Module - 1**

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**NETAJI SUBHAS  
OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**Post Graduate  
Course in English  
PG-English—VIII**

## **PAPER VIII**

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## **Unit 1 □ The Aeneid by Vergilius Maro**

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## 1.1 The Poet

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Publius Vergilius Maro (70 BCE – 19 BCE), a native of northern Italy, was the son of a humble rural farmer. He received a stolid yet liberal education and went on to earn the friendship of leading public figures like Maecenas and Augustus. To use Dante's words, this 'Mantuan swain' became a celebrated national poet who created the Roman 'myth' of a culture and civilization that influenced Europe for centuries to come.

Virgil's poetic career commenced with several pastoral poems written between 42 BCE and 37 / 35 BCE modelled on the *Idylls* of the Greek poet Theocritus. His *Eclogues* are mellifluous poems, depicting charming rural scenes with imaginary shepherds and goatherds. There are also many oblique references to contemporary political and literary figures which anchor these poems in the realities of lived human experience.

Between 37 BCE to 30 BCE, Virgil wrote four books of *Georgics* which are exquisite poems on nature and the countryside rather than mere didactic verses addressed to farmers about farming and caring for animals. The poetic techniques and skills evident in this hexameter poetry included the varied use of contrast and symmetry.

The remainder of Virgil's life from about 30 BCE was spent in composing the *Aeneid*, an epic about the legendary hero Aeneas, and more importantly about the founding and destiny of Rome. First and foremost, the *Aeneid* is an engaging narrative that weaves adventure, romance and travel into the historical theme of the rise of Rome and the growing magnificence of its imperial grandeur. The tales featured gods and goddesses, heroes and ghosts, warriors and lovers. The texture of the work is a tapestry of legend and history, myth and realism. Virgil died before completing the work, and though he wanted the draft to be destroyed, Augustus forbade that. It was an absorbing epic poem on which his reputation as the foremost Latin poet was founded.

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## 1.2 Virgil's Times

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Virgil grew up in politically unsettled and therefore critical times. Julius Caesar (100 BCE – 44 BCE) defeated Pompey and became the supreme authority in Rome. The Republicans led by Brutus and Cassius assassinated Caesar in 44 BCE. Marcus Antonius, Caesar's trusted general who opposed the republicans was joined by Octavian, Caesar's nephew and adopted son, the future ruler of Rome. With Lepidus, the triumvirate was formed and Brutus and Cassius were defeated at Phillipi in 42 BCE. The Civil War however continued as Antony and Octavian became contenders for supreme power. In the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra, returned to Rome in 29 BCE and in 27 BCE, assumed the title of Augustus (63 BCE – 14 BCE).

Augustus believed that he was restoring at once the republic as well as older traditions, systems of value and customs. Rome and the Romans flourished and prospered under his tutelage as he had rescued the Empire from disintegration while inaugurating a period of peace and security. Augustus emerged as a patron of the arts and among others, Horace and Virgil wrote under his direct patronage. It is even believed that Augustus urged Virgil to write an epic to celebrate his victories and the Roman way of life.

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## 1.3 The Roman Heritage

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Virgil did not choose to write a simple poem of praise about a contemporary. He planned out a heroic epic set in a distant past that foreshadowed the imperial destiny of Rome and projected the values of the Augustan world. The Romans of Virgil's own day felt privileged to be privy to Jupiter's plans for Aeneas and the birth of a future civilization as revealed in the poem. These prophecies stood vindicated by contemporary history. Augustus, the first emperor of Rome, considered himself a direct descendant of Aeneas, and Virgil's *Aeneid* glorified not just Aeneas but also Augustus by linking the past with the present using allegory, symbolism and allusion.

The *Aeneid* narrates the story of how Aeneas, a warrior of Troy, escaped from the city that the Greeks destroyed during the Trojan War and journeyed to the kingdom of Latium in central Italy, where Rome eventually arose. In a way, the story of Aeneas was much older than Rome as the hero had appeared as a character in the *Iliad*, an epic about the Trojan War by the Greek poet Homer.

Aeneas was projected by later writers as the legendary founder of Rome. He had both divine and royal parents, being the son of Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of love, and Anchises, a member of the Trojan royal family. Aeneas was portrayed in legends as dutiful and pious, brave and honourable, epitomizing the very virtues that characterized Roman culture. By claiming this Trojan as an ancestor, the Romans were endowed with a distinct identity and a proud heritage.

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## 1.4 The Epic Tradition

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For the early Greeks, epic narratives represented drama, philosophy and history even before these categories and disciplines existed. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are primary epic poems that formed part of the early oral traditions of Greek poetry. It is almost impossible to date the poems that could have been composed any time between the 8th century and 6th century BCE. Epic poems have appeared in other places and other times in the ancient world and most written epics have emerged out of an older tradition of oral poetry. What Homer's epics are to Europe and the western world, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are to Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

An epic poem may be described as a long narrative poem, expansive in dimension, yet comprehensive in scope. An epic therefore can be culture-specific—encapsulating the thoughts and ideals, the history and legends, the life and customs of an entire civilization. The 'hero' at the centre of the epic action and narration distinguishes himself in some way in being extraordinary, a favourite of the Gods, Fortune and Fate. The ultimate focus is not on the supernatural forces that guide destiny but on human life and the lessons learnt through lived experiences.



Virgil's *Aeneid* is a secondary epic that responds to the whole of the epic tradition and to its origins in the poems of Homer. Virgil had in some sense decided to outdo Ennius's *Annales*— a historical epic, with a narrative poem written from the perspective of the legendary ancestor of the ruling dynasty who is a significant character in Homer's *Iliad*. Virgil's imitation of Homer creates a rich texture of allusion, comparison and interpretation through which the *Aeneid* made a dramatic and literary impact even as it was being read as a commentary on the Homeric poems.

There is a visible structural downscaling in Virgil's attempt to model his work on that of Homer. Thus unlike the 24 books each of the two Greek epics, the *Aeneid* comprises 12 books that symmetrically fall into two halves. The first half of Virgil's poem traces Aeneas's journey westward in search of Italy and was modelled on the pattern of the wanderings of Odysseus. The second part recreated the battles of the *Iliad* and the wrath of Achilles through Aeneas's conquest of Latium and the defeat of Turnus.

While Virgil is acutely conscious of Homer's epic techniques, conventions and episodes, his intention is to transform, modify and adapt these to suit his Roman subject matter. Virgil reworks the tradition of the Homeric epic to present and examine the Roman way of life. Passionately patriotic on one level, Virgil's *Aeneid* is a national epic that recounts the history of Rome and questions the Greek concept of heroism. Aeneas is portrayed in more human terms and his victorious career is paradoxically enough marked by sacrifices and self-abnegation. The epic does not celebrate conquest and imperialism but integrity and moral strength. The narrative ends with the victory of Aeneas over Turnus that upholds the focal theme of the value of 'pietas' over 'furor.' From being a mere imitation of Homer's Greek epic, Virgil's poem becomes an aesthetically sophisticated and satisfying exploration of the philosophy underlying contemporary Roman life and thought.

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## 1.5 Influence of Virgil's Epic

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Just as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have had an all-pervasive influence

on vernacular or bhasha literatures in India, the *Aeneid* has influenced European literature, thought and writing. Virgil and his work form a historical bridge between the first and second Rome, between classic writers and medieval writers. The epic poet exercised a magical influence on Dante Alighieri (1265-1321 CE) and in his journey through Hell (*Inferno*) and Purgatory, the Italian poet is led by Virgil. Thus much of the Virgilian influence in English literature was filtered through Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

Over the centuries several Latin scholars and academics have translated Virgil's epic, transforming it into English prose or verse of great variety. The story of the translation of the *Aeneid* is exciting and colourful. The history of these English language translations begins with William Caxton's version probably printed in 1490. The other remarkable translations include Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey's version written in a dignified heroic style in 1557, that became a model for the formation of an English poetic style or heroic verse. In the eighteenth century John Dryden used the heroic couplet, a sprightly neo-classical verse form to translate Virgil's epic. Modern verse translations of Virgil include one by Cecil Day Lewis and another by Robert Fitzgerald, that was much acclaimed by the poet Stephen Spender.

In any translation, the verse style has to be adequate so as not to seem archaic, or stilted. The style has to carry passages of action and tenderness or convey the essential dignity and pathos of the mood. Capturing the tone of the Virgilian narrative, the drift of thought and temper is as important as translating details of the story.

The continuing relevance of the *Aeneid* lies in the telling of an exciting story and the communication of an exhilarating poetic experience. The story is one of unrelieved action and adventure that leads to passages of intense emotion and passion often punctuated by trains of reflection and thought. The poem is an image of the times during which it was composed, a social and political document that was simultaneously a repository of traditional wisdom and perennial values. All these facets of the work make it not just a 'classical' i.e. a Latin text but a 'classic' worth reading and re-reading.

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## 1.6 Synopsis of the Epic / Story and Features

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### BOOK 1 :

In the opening scenes the focal themes of battles (*arma*) and individual heroism (*virum*) are indicated. Aeneas and his followers are shipwrecked by a storm sent by Juno, the consort of Jupiter, the king of gods, but escape and reach the shores of Carthage in North Africa. Juno does her best to ruin Aeneas's plans because of her hatred for the Trojans, while Venus, his mother protects him. Jupiter reveals that Aeneas will ultimately reach Italy and that his descendants will found a great empire. This is the first of many prophecies in the *Aeneid*. It is clearly indicated that Rome rules the world because it is fated to do so and has the support of the gods.

Other poetic features of the Book consist of the epic invocation, a convention adopted from Homer, but imitated by Virgil who does not merely ask the Muse to inspire him to narrate events, but to give the poet insight to find the causal connection between events.

The storm that directs events and dominates the Book is an expression of the anger of a goddess but it also symbolizes the blows of ill-fortune that pursue and lay waste many human beings. The descriptions are charged with poetry even while the naturalism intertwines with the supernaturalism. Aeneas, who is first seen during this terrifying storm, appears as an ordinary mortal, weak and vulnerable. The transformation of this human figure into the superhuman epic hero is essential of the dynamic progression of the epic narrative.

The first full-fledged epic simile occurs early in the book. Neptune's calming of the storm is compared to a statesman calming an unruly mob. This is an inverted simile because a natural calamity is compared to a specific human activity. The simile foreshadows the epic theme — the importance of *pietas* in human beings and the danger of furor or irrational passion symbolized by the storm.

Dido, Queen of Carthage who dominates the first third of the poem, welcomes the Trojans and extends her hospitality to them. Jupiter is instrumental in preparing her for receiving them.

## **BOOK 2 :**

In Book 2, Aeneas narrates, at the great feast that Dido sets out for the exiled Trojans, the story of the Greek victory in the Trojan War and how he escaped the city. This entire section, chronologically the earliest, is a flashback, recounting at the request of the Queen, the horrors and sufferings of the Trojans. Though Hector appears to Aeneas in a dream and advises him to abandon Troy, he is anxious to die fighting in the battle and ignores the message. Like any Homeric hero, Aeneas is prepared to confront his enemies and his anger is restrained by Venus who compels him to leave Troy with his family. The enduring visual impact of this exile is the scene showing Aeneas with his father, Anchises on his shoulder, leading his son, Ascanius by his hand, his wife irretrievably lost in the catastrophe, and the common Trojan warriors following him out of a burning and destroyed city.

The predominant mood of the Book is one of empathy, where Virgil draws the battle-scenes as vivid cameos using varied poetic techniques—general description, detailed portrayal, extended similes or reported narrative. The victims of Fate are both prominent heroes as well as unnamed soldiers, innocent women and children who are ruthlessly slaughtered.

One of the most compelling narratives in this Book is about the wooden horse and the trickery that brings the enemies into the city that had held out for ten years. The storming of King Priam's palace, the cruel killing of his sons, the sorrow of Hecuba, his wife and finally the savage end of Priam, are integral to the tragic fall of Troy.

## **BOOK 3 :**

The pathos of Aeneas's flight from Troy shapes the third Book that charts the seven-year voyage from Troy to the Tiber along the Mediterranean, touching towns of southern Italy and ports of Sicily. The Trojans stop at Actium, made famous by Augustus's victory (31 BCE) and the proclamation of the Actian games, thus bringing the epic narrative close to contemporary times. Virgil blends the real with the strange by introducing the Harpies who attack the Trojans on one of the islands. Throughout his wanderings, Aeneas is heartened to hear oracular prophecies of future achievement and greatness that metaphorically transport him forward.

#### **BOOK 4 :**

This Book presents a fascinating story of love, betrayal and treachery that has no precedent in Homer. Dido's love for Aeneas is his chance to snatch moments of personal happiness on the way to accomplishing his mission. Dido too was an exilee after her brother Pygmalion killed her husband Sychaeus. She surmounted her personal sorrows by wandering into Libya and establishing the city of Carthage. Similarly, Aeneas is an exilee and wanderer who has not reached his destination, but lingers in Carthage and Dido's passion leads her to believe that she is married to the valorous hero of Troy.

At this point Jupiter intervenes by sending his messenger Mercury with instructions that Aeneas should resume his mission. Aeneas is now anxious to get away but does not know how to tell Dido that. He instructs his men to prepare for departure. Though Aeneas is deeply unhappy, he is logical and almost heartless when Dido urges him to stay. He is bound by the pledge made to Jupiter to resume the mission. The conflict between human wishes and the divine purpose is emphasized by the use of an epic simile describing an oak tree swayed by winds but firmly rooted to the soil.

Dido behaves like a woman spurned. She initially pleads with Aeneas as she is totally possessed by her love for him. She becomes an archetypal figure of hatred and vengeance as she curses Aeneas. Passion has changed her personality and unlike Aeneas who regains control over himself, she is unable to do so. Even as Aeneas's fleet leaves Carthage at dawn, Dido mounts a pyre and dies — an act of self-violence that is a culmination of the intense hatred and spirit of revenge that underlies her madness.

The story of Aeneas and Dido is an emotionally surcharged human story that invokes pity and awe — the cathartic emotions central to Greek tragedy. In the epic context, Aeneas is subject to external pressures to fulfill his predestined role in the founding of Rome. Thus his emotional sacrifice in abandoning his love in the pursuit of duty is commendable.

#### **BOOK 5 :**

This Book that is flanked by the tragic intensity of Book 4 and the mysterious majesty of Book 6, provides a narrative interlude. Based on *Iliad*

23 and the description of the funeral games for Patroclus, it describes the funeral games on the anniversary of Anchises's death. This foreshadows the keen interest Augustus was taking in Virgil's own time in the revival in Rome of the Greek type of athletic competitions as seen in the Actian Games. Virgil describes four contests — a boat race, a foot race, a boxing match, an archery contest — competitions rounded off by an impressive equestrian show. Remarkably, aetiological links are drawn with contemporary times — a feature that sustains the nationalistic fervour of the poem.

One of the traumatizing events described in the Book is the news that the women had set Aeneas's ships on fire. Aeneas struggles with despair and his resolution to fulfill his destiny is considerably weakened. The intervention of Jupiter and his direct message conveyed through the ghost of Anchises is integral to the narrative strategy of the book. It is clear to Aeneas that he must seek further instructions from his father and therefore, does not hesitate to visit his father in the underworld.

#### **BOOK 6 :**

This Book is an example of the manner in which Virgil transformed what he found in Homer (here the book of ghosts, *Odyssey*11) for entirely different results. The first part of Book 6, prior to the actual entrance into the underworld creates an atmosphere of supernaturalism. Aeneas visits the temple of Apollo and sees the grim pictures of the Minotaur and the labyrinth that is symbolic of his wanderings in the underworld. The Sibyl's prophecies that the events awaiting him are perilous—grim wars and the Tiber flowing with blood — are frightening and ominous. Aeneas requests that he be accompanied into the underworld before which he must complete ritual sacrifices and seek the Golden Bough.

Virgil evokes traditional mythological dimensions of the underworld to instill a sense of awe. On the banks of the Styx and across the river, Aeneas meets with the ghosts of his past — his unburied helmsman Palinurus, the admired Queen and hostess, Dido, his Trojan companions killed in the war. Aeneas moves through moods of sorrow, remorse and guilt, expiating his psychological traumas before he journeys through Hades and confronts his father's ghost in Elysium.

The ghost of Anchises reveals to Aeneas the nature of life after death. This explains the presence of the ghosts of future Roman heroes waiting to be born on the banks of the river of Lethe. Anchises explains to his son the pageant which is a prophecy of the future of Rome traversing history up to Augustus's times. This optimistic narration rekindles faith and strengthens Aeneas's resolution to found the city of Rome. This advice becomes the turning point of Aeneas's life and thematically it reiterates the ideal of *pietas* — devotion to duty, one's father and family and to the country as symbolized in the epic hero's career.

The advice of Anchises to Aeneas, the mysteries of action and inaction, life and death, war and peace, resembles the sermon that Krishna gives to Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*. Confronted by his elders and brothers in the battle of Kurukshetra, Arjuna is distraught and grim. Krishna, his charioteer, inspires him to fight and perform his duties without expectation of reward. This is the section of the great Indian epic called *Bhagavad Gita*.

#### **BOOK 7 :**

The Book begins with the death and burial of Caieta, Aeneas's nurse. The Trojans negotiate Circe's island safely before sailing into the mouth of the Tiber at dawn. The bipartite division of the epic is renewed by Virgil's new invocation to the epic Muse Erato, seeking inspiration to describe ghastly battles and narrate a grander story.

Then follows a description of Laurentum and of King Latinus, who visits the oracle of his father Faunus, and learns about the destiny awaiting his daughter, Lavinia. The Trojans are joyous on their arrival and pray to the land that Fate had reserved for their new home. Some of the Trojans are sent as emissaries to Latinus who welcomes them and sends horses and chariots for Aeneas and his men. This moment of triumph is quickly overshadowed by the angry intervention of Juno who uses the services of Allecto to take revenge on the Trojans.

Turnus, like Dido in the first half of the epic, plays a thematically major role in the last books. He represents the opposition to the Roman mission and deliberately tries to thwart the divine will. According to the decrees of Fate,

he is placed in circumstances beyond his control and cannot escape traits of his personality that doom him. Allecto comes to him in sleep and mocks and ridicules him until he answers with equal recklessness, audacity and violence.

From the first introduction to Turnus, his inflexible determination to display his prowess is set in contrast against the pietas and divine mission of Aeneas. Turnus is brave but impetuous, unthinking and irrational in his anger, totally self-confident of his unassailable excellence in warfare. Very appropriately, Virgil uses the simile of a seething cauldron of water boiling over to express his superabundant energy and fierceness that lacks restraint, a virtue ascribed by the poet to the new Roman hero. Turnus roar for his weapons, passion and madness — furor or anger initiates him into battle. His helmet is decorated with the chimera belching forth fire that becomes hotter as the fight becomes fiercer.

The Book ends with a catalogue of the Italian troops. Interestingly enough, this rally of Italians or the troops that line up against Aeneas come from small towns and rural districts still familiar in Virgil's own day. These people are shown as brave and simple by nature, losers in the battle with the Trojans, worthy ancestors nevertheless of the Romans. The theme of building a nation that lies at the heart of the epic is prominent here.

#### **BOOK 8 :**

While Latinus and Mezentius prepare for war, Aeneas with the help of Tiber travels to the future site of Rome and negotiates an alliance with Evander, an immigrant settled on that site. He finds the Arcadians celebrating a religious festival in honour of Hercules who freed them from the monster Cacus. Evander shows Aeneas round the little city explaining how it was originally the home of hardy but uncivilized people, how Saturn came there, seeking refuge from Jupiter who tried to depose him. The word 'latium' is derived from 'latere', to hide. He brought together the scattered mountain dwellers into a community, then taught them laws, founded the golden age with its universal peace until it eventually declined through war and greed. Anchises had declared to Aeneas in the underworld that Augustus would reclaim the glories of the legendary golden age as presided over by Saturn.



As Evander leads Aeneas to his humble dwelling, he points out the sites that foreshadow the location of buildings that would in Virgil's own day proclaim the greatness and glory of Rome. The past and the present come together and Virgil uses an aetiological method of explaining the origins of Augustus's splendid empire from simple beginnings. Evander sends his son Pallas with Aeneas to participate in his first battle and they set out for Pallentum.

In the meanwhile, Venus has requested Vulcan to forge a shield for Aeneas. In *Iliad* 18, Hephaestus had crafted a new shield for Achilles after it was lost by Patroclus to whom he had lent it. Homer's precedent is an occasion for a long passage of 'ecphrasis' or description where Virgil has a unique opportunity to illustrate prophetic scenes depicting the future destiny of Rome. The full-scale battle begins from Book 9 and Virgil seems to indicate how the future will be shaped by that event.

The shield of Aeneas focuses through three separate pictorial representations on Augustus's victory at Actium, a significant contemporary event that ended the civil war. Round the edge of the shield were engraved six representative scenes from the history and legends of Rome that epitomized ideals and morals that formed part of the Roman national character. Aeneas marvels at the scenes as he accepts this gift from his mother, and ignorant of history, he literally lifts the shield on his shoulder, a symbolic gesture that shows him responsibly carrying the destiny of his future descendants.

## **BOOK 9 :**

At the beginning of the Book, Juno sends Iris to Turnus and advises him that his strategy should be to attack his enemies while Aeneas is away. Turnus and his men raise a horrific battle cry and attack the walls of the Trojan camp. The epic simile used to describe Turnus is that of a wolf hunting for lambs. These are hardened soldiers looking for an advantage and they plan to set fire to the Trojan ships. This is curiously avoided when the ships are transformed into nymphs by some supernatural agency. This episode is somewhat jarring in the context of the realistic battle-scenes depicted, but it reiterates the presence of the supernatural that intervenes from time to time to direct human affairs.

This is followed by the courageous death of Nisus and Euryalus, two Trojan

friends in what may be called the opening action of the battle. This episode recounts how the two inexperienced warriors break out of the besieged camp at night to contact Aeneas who is absent from the camp. Virgil portrays these two figures sympathetically as immature and therefore unable to anticipate the formidable dangers ahead of them. Deeds of blood are followed by the pathos of their deaths, the intensity of which is underlined by Virgil's use of a flower simile to describe the fall of Euryalus. The theme of the epic—the horror and waste associated with empire is emphasized by an invocation to them. The terrible cruelty of the enemies who exhibit severed heads on spears is deepened by the hysterical sorrow of Euryalus's mother. The tone of narration highlights the futility and pathos of human life.

The rest of the Book describes the exploits of Turnus in a more traditional epic manner. Turnus shows his prowess on the battlefield much like the Homeric heroes, Hector and Ajax. The taunts and heated interchanges as warriors confront each other expose the confident boastfulness of Turnus. As Pandarus is challenged and killed, the Trojans flee in all directions, but Turnus does not use this opportunity to open the camp gates for his warriors. Unlike Aeneas, Turnus concentrates on deeds of personal prowess and closely following Homeric models, Virgil lists the way in which he claims several victims in the gruesome war. The Book ends with a robust description of Turnus's retreat as he is overwhelmed by numbers, showered by weapons and battered by stones, and finally leaps, fully armoured into the Tiber and returns to his companions.

The two battle episodes narrated in the Book portray two entirely different narrative modes through which Virgil achieves entirely different effects.

#### **BOOK 10 :**

The council of the Gods, presided over by Jupiter is held in Olympus and the Olympian hierarchy looks down on the whole world, on the Dardan camp and on the people of Latium. Jupiter's plans of calling a truce have been frustrated by Venus and Juno and he leaves the responsibility to Fate. The ambivalence in the power exercised by Jupiter and the role of Fate, remain perplexing problems for Virgil throughout the epic.

Aeneas returns from Pallenteum, a short catalogue of his allies is presented,

followed by the appearance of a nymph who apprises him of the critical situation in his camp. The battle scenes are equally balanced and the fates of the two young warriors, Pallas, son of Evander and Lausus, son of Mezentius are interlinked as they die prematurely at the hands of heroic adversaries – Turnus and Aeneas.

In the encounter of Turnus and Pallas, Turnus is ruthless and arrogant while Pallas, though inexperienced, is fearless. Challenged by his formidable adversary, he is ready for death and glory. The self-sacrifice of the young warrior is pathetic as it is a waste of human potential. This mood seems to be entirely Virgilian and undercuts the ideal of heroism that Homer's epic upholds – the idea that valour, when established by one's deeds on the battlefield, can be transformed into fame. Turnus not only kills Pallas in an unequal fight but also arrogantly prides himself on the spoil – his sword-belt. This is a deed that ironically dooms Turnus in the end of the epic. Moderation in victory is a lesson that Virgil would like to impart as being the essence of the Roman heroic ideal.

Aeneas is inflamed by the death of young Pallas to deeds of cruelty. His encounter with Mezentius is savage and when this ruthless warrior is wounded, Lausus tries to protect his father. Though Aeneas is impressed by the devotion of Lausus to his father, he is warned not to rush to his death. He persists, impervious to this warning, and Aeneas in a burst of anger, is compelled to kill him. Aeneas is filled with remorse for his deed. The Book closes with the death of Mezentius, but pathos is evoked by the self-sacrifice of the two young heroes.

#### **BOOK 11 :**

This Book commences with the elaborate preparations for the funeral of Pallas. Even as Evander laments, Aeneas grieves that he is responsible for the breach of promises made to Evander. Aeneas covers the dead body with a handcrafted cloak gifted to him by Dido. By subtly bringing in a reference to Dido at this juncture, Virgil links up the two tragic episodes that intensely affect Aeneas. The procession of mourners includes Pallas's weeping horse. Aeneas realizes that the continuation of the war to which they are called by Fate would further magnify their sorrows. Yet the horror of war and heroic sacrifice is seen in the context of the magnificence of Rome achieved precisely through military

proWess. This conflict is one of the central themes of the epic.

The Latin envoys ask for a truce to bury their dead and are readily granted this by Aeneas. As Pallas is buried, Evander prays that Aeneas would take revenge on Turnus, thus putting him under an obligation that is fulfilled at the end of the epic. Several funeral ceremonies on the Trojan and Latin sides are described — some bodies are carried back to their families, some are buried, some lay unidentified and are burnt.

Before the hostilities commence again, there is an interlude that debates the possibilities of peace to be made by the Latins with the Trojans. Turnus turns down peace proposals, altercations ensue, heated exchanges and oratorical speeches follow before returning to the battle narrative. The focus of the Book shifts to Camilla, an ally of Turnus, relentless in the pursuit of her foes. She is destined to die, shot by Arunns, but the presentation of her individual prowess is in Homeric style.

#### **BOOK 12 :**

The confrontation of Turnus and Aeneas is the focus of this Book. Even as Turnus claims his new victims, his lust for battle and passion for personal glory is emphasized. Aeneas, wounded by a chance arrow loses control over his own fury and shows an uncharacteristic ruthlessness. Aeneas and Turnus appear alternately in battle scenes filled with action, till they meet in single combat like Achilles meets Hector in *Iliad* 22. Turnus is wounded and pleads for mercy and Aeneas even at the point of conceding, suddenly catches sight of the sword belt that Turnus had snatched from the body of the dead Pallas. He becomes furious, is reminded of his pledge to Evander, and in a moment of anger, plunges his sword into Turnus's breast. The epic ends with this act of revenge that paradoxically enough is the point when Aeneas's divine mission is fulfilled.

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## **1.7 Structure**

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Traditionally an epic poem is built on a large scale spanning legendary

and historical time. The epic poet needs to decide where to start and where to end the narration in order to give at once the effect of the epic sweep and expanse, while maintaining the unity of action. The architectural quality of the work sets out the symmetry and contrasts in terms of subject matter, thematic links and emotional tone. Though the structure is not the main consideration, it variously assists the total poetic intention and helps in creating a sense of aesthetic satisfaction and completion. Though Virgil's epic has an intricate formal patterning, the structure is not just static but an integral part of the narrative dynamics of the text.

The *Aeneid* chooses a segment of a longer story, which could have been either the entire prehistory or history of Rome or the whole story of Aeneas. Virgil concentrates on Aeneas's reluctant departure from Troy to the assertion of his right to settle in Italy. The epic poet thus imposes the effect of a complete action on the vast range of episodes that constitute the individual books. This integrated beginning, middle and end was what Aristotle set down as a primary requirement for good tragedy and also what he recognized in the Homeric epics. The Virgilian epic is dramatic and does not have an entirely linear narrative form because the progression of events is balanced by flashbacks to a past time. In true classical fashion, the opening action is an example of 'in medias res,' where the beginning is not the sack of Troy (later described by Aeneas in Books 2 and 3), but the voyage of Aeneas who encounters the first storm in his search of the promised land.

The vast Homeric canvases are compressed into the clear bipartite division of Virgil's epic — the Odyssean wanderings of the first half and the Illiadic war of the second half. Two separate invocations to a Muse in Book 1 and again in Book 7, mark this division, while Juno's storm in the beginning of the epic is balanced by the fury of Alecto in Book 7 and a clear parallel may be found in the deaths of young heroes, Marcellus and Turnus, that conclude Book 6 and Book 12 respectively.

The *Aeneid* can also be analysed as having a complex tripartite structure consisting of four books each. The highlight of the first four books is the story of Dido and her tragedy just as that of the last four books is the fall of Turnus, the main obstacle to Aeneas's mission which necessitated the wars fought in

Latium. The pathos of the fate of each of these two impressive characters frames the success of the epic hero. The four central books are characterized by inset pageants, spectacles and narratives that look both backwards and forwards in time. Earlier history and events commemorated are the Games in Book 5 on the anniversary of Anchises' death, the first part of Aeneas's journey through the underworld in Book 6, Evander's story of Hercules and Cacus in Book 8. The central theme of Rome's destiny and future history is charted through the speech of Anchises and the pageant of Roman heroes at the end of Book 6, the catalogue of Italian ancestors at the end of Book 7, the pictures of Roman heroes on the shield of Aeneas at the end of Book 8.

Another marked feature of the structure is the alternation of intensity between adjacent books. In the first half of the epic, for example, the intensity of Books 2, 4 and 6 is set off by the calmer and more relaxed mood of Books 3 and 5. There are similar alternations in the second half of the poem. Book 7 sets the horrific scene for violence by the agency of Juno and Allecto, while Book 8 is serene and gentle. Book 9 is a battle interlude leading up to the decisive and tragic events of Book 10, a prelude to the final scenes of Book 12. Relationships have also been traced between corresponding books in the two halves of the poem, either in linear sequence (1 and 7, 2 and 8...) or according to concentric arrangement (2 and 12, 3 and 11...). These relationships throw up interesting insights and connections. For example, according to the first scheme, the book about the destruction of Troy (Book 2) is seen in the context of the foundation and growth of Rome (Book 8). While the piety of Aeneas towards his family and household Gods is symbolized by the burden that he shoulders when he carries his father out of the burning city of Troy (Book 2), the shield on which the fame of his descendants is depicted (Book 8), matches the values that the Roman hero cherishes. The second scheme is equally incisive in pairing the utter defeat of the Trojans (Book 2) with the Achillean feat of Aeneas in vanquishing Turnus (Book 12). The interwoven sets of symmetries and contrasts, the interconnections established through repetitions, both verbal and structural, create a rich texture of patterns and symbols that contribute to the poetic texture of the work.

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## 1.8 The Epic Machinery

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By convention, an epic ranges over human history within the context of a cosmic universe. Thus the power of fate, destiny or providence in directing the course of human affairs is commonly acknowledged. Sometimes these powers manifest themselves as forces of nature – winds, storms etc. or as anthropomorphic forms of Olympian deities like Jupiter, Juno and Venus. The intervention of gods and goddesses in human affairs, the use of prophecies, dreams and other supernatural agencies is commonly referred to as the 'epic machinery' in an epic poem. The use of such machinery elevates the subject of the epic, making human actions conform to some divine plan. It also enlarges the perspective and dimension of events recounted.

### 1.8.1 Religion, Gods, Goddesses

Aeneas in the *Aeneid* is the son of Anchises and a divine mother – Venus. The central theme of the epic narrative is how Aeneas fulfills his divine mission of following the dictates of Fate in order to found Rome. Fate decrees that Aeneas flees Troy with the household Gods, his father, son and a select group of followers – his 'pietas' — obedience and sacred duty to Gods and kin is extolled throughout the epic. Though the idea that life is directed by Providence is strong, Aeneas is allowed to take his own decisions and the poem is not exactly fatalistic. The *Aeneid* is a religious poem that explores the mysteries of human success and failure, life and death, happiness and sorrow.

The poem is not based on any single theological system. Very clearly, it does not subscribe to Epicurean philosophy that denied that gods were involved in mortal affairs. It appears that it has much in common with the Stoic philosophical notion that human beings should live life according to the divine plan that may include misfortune and suffering. Yet Aeneas is not a typical Stoic hero as in the first books he appears frail and uncertain and in the later books, gives vent to anger and resentment. He may have some Stoic traits that enable him to persevere in his mission in spite of obstacles and frustrations.

The epic also meticulously depicts all the ceremonies, rituals and observances that formed part of customary religious practices. There are references to

funerals (Pallas, Misenus), anniversary games (for Anchises), burials of the dead (Palinurus, Caieta), prayers (Aeneas's to Apollo and the Sibyl), worship (Evander's of Hercules) and offerings.

The Olympian deities in anthropomorphic form intervene directly in Homer's epic. The same technique persists in Virgil's epic, but acquires a more complex meaning because religion and religious thought had changed in Virgil's time and the deities are portrayed more symbolically.

Jupiter is portrayed as the arbiter of human destiny, as a God who presides over an ordered universe. Therefore early in the epic, Jupiter reveals to Venus the plans for Aeneas's future after the destruction of Troy. He also intervenes through Mercury to remind Aeneas about his mission when he is in Carthage. He presides over the Olympian council and is enraged by the obstacles in his plans for the Trojans and though he cannot immediately control the disputes, eventually he exercises his divine power.

Juno, like the Homeric deities is portrayed as a mythological figure whose anger and guile can be explained by her support of the Greeks and of Carthage which was destined to be destroyed by the Trojans and the son of Venus. Throughout the narrative, Juno is directly responsible for the sufferings of Aeneas and though she is aware that she cannot change his destiny, she attempts to delay or modify its fulfillment. Thus, she symbolizes the hostile forces and inexplicable disasters that confront mankind.

Venus, who supports her son and therefore the Trojans, is seen as a protective force who guides Aeneas out of Troy, has a shield forged for him by Vulcan and generally appears to him at moments of weakness and frustration to uplift his spirit with a promise of the grand destiny that awaits him.

Apollo was the patron of Augustus and the Roman way of life. Traditionally he presided over journeys and the founding of colonies and therefore during the wanderings of Aeneas in search of the promised land, he plays a crucial role meriting the temple that Aeneas promises to build for him. (Book 6)

### **1.8.2 The Supernatural**

Though the gods and goddesses operate on a level different from mortals and are gifted by prophetic qualities and visionary powers, the supernatural



machinery in Virgil's epic can be seen as natural forces or externalization of internal qualities. Thus the storm raised by Juno to shipwreck Aeneas is both a manifestation of her personal fury and an uncontrollable natural disaster. Again, her instigation of Allecto to infuriate Turnus is only a manifestation of qualities of temperament that characterize the volatile personality of Turnus. When Venus uses Cupid to make Dido fall in love with Aeneas, the Carthaginian queen is already emotionally inclined to have a relationship with the Trojan hero. Again when Jupiter sends Mercury to remind him of his mission, Aeneas is already faced in his own mind by the conflict of interests between his sacred duty and his personal happiness. His determination to abandon Dido is entirely his choice of *pietas* over passion and lust. The relationship between human agency and divine will and between psychological motivation and external forces is explored in various ways in the epic.

### 1.8.3 The Underworld

Virgil was primarily a poet and not a philosopher. Therefore he drew on poets who had described the underworld previously, on ancient lore and on mythology created by poets rather than theologians.

In the Sixth Book, prior to his actual entrance into the underworld, Aeneas performs rituals and sacrifices and despite the discouraging prophecies of the Sibyl, requests her to accompany him into the underworld. The Sibyl guides him in finding the Golden Bough that would grant him a passage into that world. Disease and Age, Sorrow and Fear, War and Discord form part of the literal and metaphorical darkness of these realms. Chimaeras, Scyllas, Gorgons and Centaurs stalk the land of substanceless forms. Virgil generally depicts traditional geography and inhabitants of the underworld.

Charon ferries the dead across the Acheron. The banks of the river are thronged by the dead, described by a picturesque simile of fallen autumn leaves (adapted by John Milton in *Paradise Lost Book I* to describe the fallen angels). The first recognizable figure seen in the dimness is that of Aeneas's unburied steersman Palinurus. Aeneas promises to name a Cape after him to immortalize his memory.

Once the river is crossed, Aeneas passes through five regions of Hades.

He undergoes traumatic experiences as he encounters the shades of the nameless dead as well as the ghosts of Dido and Deiphobus. These ghosts symbolize the deep psychological wounds of the past, Aeneas's guilt, regrets and remorse with which he has to come to terms in order to move forward with his mission.

Finally, Aeneas reaches Elysium, his sense of duty and devotion to the mission has conquered the dangers of a difficult journey. Aeneas tries to embrace his father's ghost and fails. He catches sight of ghosts of those waiting to be born. Anchises attempts to lift his despair by providing an explanation and showing him a pageant of Roman heroes. This is perhaps the turning point in the narrative as Aeneas's insight into his mission gives him confidence and strengthens his passion to succeed in his nationalistic endeavour. Both in life and in death, Anchises plays a stellar role in forwarding the Roman mission. The aspects of *pietas* or devotion upheld are the sacred bonds of family life—both filial obedience to a father and paternal devotion to a son.

Interestingly, the passage in which the ghost of Anchises explains the nature of life after death, serves to justify the presence of the ghosts of future Roman heroes on the banks of Lethe rather than contributing to the plot. This is one of the directly didactic passages, influenced by Stoic ideas, Orphic and Pythagorean thought as modified by later Greek thinkers. The religious message to the Romans of Virgil's own day was clear—life on earth is a preparation for a richer life to follow in Elysium. Virtue and patriotism in earthly life is rewarded in after life and thus some consolation may be found for the suffering and sorrow that Virgil depicts as part of mortal destiny.

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## 1.9 Characters

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The *Aeneid* is the story of Aeneas, who features as the epic hero. The poem is also about other warriors who make cameo-like appearances in the battle scenes. The flamboyant heroism of Turnus is set against the more dutiful patriotism of Aeneas. The tragedies of Turnus and Dido are sympathetically narrated, but thematically they symbolize the 'pietas' / 'furor' binary that is explored throughout the epic. Anchises is another character who makes an impact

on the career of Aeneas and the future of Rome. His role is similar to that of the gods and goddesses, who in anthropomorphic form, control the destinies of mortals. Other figures – historical, legendary and imaginary— move in and out of scenes creating a rich texture of interdependent and interrelated characters who invariably provide a rich panorama of proto-Roman life.

### 1.9.1 Aeneas

The portrayal of the epic hero was difficult for Virgil because even as he drew on a distant past, he was aware that the demands of contemporary history needed to be fulfilled within a viable artistic form. Times had changed and the older Greek brand of heroism was impossible to emulate. Virgil's task was to create a hero for the new age.

Critics have remarked that compared to Achilles, Aeneas is only a shadow (T.E. Page) and that he is not uniformly interesting as a character (Wight Duff). This view stems from the mistaken notion that Virgil had tried to imitate Homer and had failed. Critiques of Aeneas's character find the portrayal unrealistic or his behaviour unforgivable on particular occasions. This opinion may be partly justified, but the unevenness also makes the character portrayal convincing and complex. More interestingly, in the portrayal of Aeneas, we see the making of a hero, a dynamic process of becoming that makes the epic narrative exciting.

Aeneas is a character in the *Iliad* and through the Julii, was an ancestor of Augustus. Romans believed that their city was founded by Romulus in the eighth century BCE. Some legends however traced the origins of some places in Italy back to Troy and the fleeing Trojans who came westward. Non-Greek peoples were keen to attach themselves to the cycles of Greek legend. Since the fall of Troy was placed in the twelfth century BCE, i.e. four hundred years before the founding of Rome, Aeneas could only become the founder of Lavinium from which Rome would be born. In Book 8, when Aeneas meets his ally Evander, he is shown sites, which would in the future become the hub of a great civilization.

In an age that was different from Homer's, Virgil's problem was to define the qualities of Aeneas who steps out of a heroic world to redefine the parameters of heroism. The epic opens with Aeneas sailing westward from Troy, in dire

distress because of the storm raised by Juno. He is depicted, not as a superhuman figure, but as a person with human weaknesses and frailties. His strength and resolution have to be reinforced from time to time by divine prophecies of his mission. There are echoes of Odysseus' voyage but the differences are more marked. The Homeric hero is returning home to resume his life with Penelope and Telemachus and his voyage epitomizes qualities of endurance and resource. Aeneas leaves his home, set on fire by the Greeks, to found a city and a civilization. He has to sacrifice personal pursuits, love and fame, in the interests of community existence.

Though Aeneas is meticulous in the performance of prayers, sacrifices, rituals to the gods and goddesses and a Stoic in the acceptance of his sufferings, he does question the way in which he is used by destiny. He is the chosen one who has to bring determination and perseverance to his mission and has to adapt new ideals of behaviour. For example, when Hector's ghost first appears in a dream to advise Aeneas to flee Troy, like a Homeric warrior, he seeks glory in death. His guilt and remorse about abandoning his Trojan friends persists until he realizes the need to control his impetuous and irrational instincts.

The physical sufferings are as relevant in making a hero of a common Trojan warrior as is the psychological conflict that Aeneas is presented with when he has to make a choice between personal happiness and his mission in Book 4. The dilemmas faced by Aeneas are usually resolved by spiritual help and the mood of despair is lifted miraculously by the explanation Anchises provides for the cycles of birth and death. It is not physical prowess but mental stamina that marks out the new generation epic hero from the old.

In the second half of the poem, Aeneas behaves like a responsible statesman who tries to minimize war by trying to clinch treaties with King Latinus. Aeneas is distressed by the prospect of war and the waste that it entails but continues to lead his people — a destiny that he struggles to fulfill. He wields immense self-control but is ruthless when grief overtakes him at the sight of Pallas's belt worn by Turnus and he vows himself to revenge his death. This gives Aeneas sway over Latium and the hand of the young princess, Lavinia. Disquieting as it seems, and however just the death of Turnus may be, Virgil reflects on

the nature of imperialism, the lonely destiny of the conqueror as he makes his choices and has to be cruel though touched by the deeper pathos of life.

### 1.9.2 Dido :

The story of Dido, Queen of Carthage in *Aeneid* Book 4 becomes Virgil's imaginative reworking of legend and history. The end result is a tragic story of passion, treachery and betrayal. The Greek historian Timaeus (third century BCE) recounts how Dido's brother Pygmalion murdered his sister's husband Sychaeus and fled to Libya and founded Carthage. The Aeneas legend does not mention his visit to Carthage, but Virgil uses this as an opportunity to draw parallels between the destinies of Dido and Aeneas — both are exiles from their respective homelands, set up their own cities and are leaders of their own peoples.

No exact literary sources can be traced for the portrayal of Dido's character. Like the Homeric witches Circe and Calypso who delayed Odysseus's voyage, she entrances Aeneas and detains him by her hospitality and passion. Virgil is however able to infuse more realism and pathos to make her a convincing figure. Parallels have been found with other unhappy heroines in classical literature—Euripides' *Medea* and the *Medea* of Apollonius of Rhodes.

The character is dynamically depicted, first as the inspiring and confident Queen of her people, then as a woman subsumed by passion and by a love rejected, that transforms her into a symbol of vengeance. While the characterization begins with Venus narrating the story of a wronged woman and drawing the sympathies of an audience, she compels admiration by her energy and courage, her beauty, her qualities of leadership and her generosity to those in distress. She is majestic and gracious and the circumstances largely reflect the will of Providence.

Virgil gives Dido a freedom of choice and her desire for Aeneas spells disaster for herself. She is aware that her passion is immoral but she is unable to control herself. Dido seeks religious sanction to yield to love when, on a boar hunt, she is driven by a storm to spend a night in a cave with Aeneas. She sees flashes of lightning and hears the cry of the nymphs and believes that their union has been divinely sanctioned by Juno. Her tragedy lies in her

self-delusion. She evokes pity because other positive aspects of her personality are totally overshadowed by her guilty passion and she is trapped by circumstances of her own making.

Dido's pride gets the better of her and she is unable to reconcile herself to Aeneas' choosing his mission over her. Book 4 is dominated by her fury and bitterness expressed in passionate speeches that plead, reproach, entreat and curse Aeneas. The logical explanations of Aeneas, his devotion to his mission, his effort to control his own emotions are all ineffective in calming the anger of Dido. She is transformed into an archetypal figure of hatred and revenge. Even as Aeneas leaves the shores of Carthage, she mounts a funeral pyre and commits suicide. She is unforgiving even in death as her ghost turns away from Aeneas in the underworld. The tragedy of Dido is the tragedy of uncontrolled passion.

### 1.9.3 Turnus

Turnus, a brave, young Rutulian warrior, is presented in the second half of the epic as a foil to Aeneas who represents the mission and is in the process of being shaped by circumstances and divine will into the new Roman hero. Turnus symbolizes the furor, audacity, hubris — all forms of passion that destroy human beings. Turnus is thus a counterpart of Dido.

The arrogance and pride that mark his first exploits and victories on the battlefield, also ironically doom him in future. The cruel killing of Pallas coupled with the lack of humility in victory, lead to his own death at the end of the epic. Turnus fights for individual glory and honour and reminds one of Hector in Homer's *Iliad*. He is too preoccupied with his own prowess until faced by Aeneas in single combat. His heroic defiance is tragic and one is left with a feeling of uncertainty whether he deserved his final fate.

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## 1.10 Language and Style

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The Roman empire, its magnificence and grandeur, its conquests and imperial sway are legends of the past. Yet the *Aeneid* survives well into the twenty-

first century in locales and climes far removed from Europe. This continuing importance may be traced to the haunting beauty of Virgil's verse and its universal theme that fervently upholds the achievement of the Empire simultaneously with the cost calculated in terms of human waste, economic loss and defilement of nature.

### **1.10.1 The Heroic Idiom**

W.F. Jackson Knight (*Roman Vergil*, p.180) observes about Virgil's epic idiom, "...his language, metre, rhythm, and style of expression are all so fused together that they are not individually obtrusive. His metre, the hexameter, helps to make his language, and is part of the style; and the style, whatever may reasonably be meant by the word, is not really separable from the hexameter."

The heroic hexameter was generally accepted by epic writers because it had been used by Homer. The movement of Virgil's hexameter is slow and sonorous — an attribute of the Latin rather than Greek language. The narrative uses a reflective method of narration that also modulates the pace. Homer's poem was a recited epic that used stock epithets and repetitions to help the listener's concentration in a fast moving narrative. Virgil's 'literary epic' uses a style that "is much denser, much less precisely presented, enriched with images and implications flitting around the penumbra, as opposed to what Auerbach called the 'perpetual foreground' of Homer." (R.D. Williams, *The Aeneid*, p. 13)

### **1.10.2 Epic Simile**

All epic poets, including Virgil borrowed from Homer the use of the extended or 'Homeric simile' which is a comparison that is several lines long, not exactly confined to the actual points of comparison, but expanding into an almost independent verbal picture. Epic poetry generally has many similes, short interludes where a new experience of things is compared to some other known state of things. As Williams notes, such similes in Homer appear at points of narrative excitement and act as "vivid aids to visualizing the narrative." (p. 13) A simile acts as an artistic device that controls listener/reader response by creating effects by reinforcement or contrast, enrichment or relief.

Virgil's similes are not merely ornamental, but often function as symbols

that contain subtle thematic links with the narrative. Even otherwise, these form an intrinsic part of the imagery of the poem. For example, the natural storm that batters the fleet of exiled Trojans at the beginning of the epic is an occasion for the first epic simile. The storm becomes variously, a metaphor for anger, for passion and the battles that ravage the plains of Italy in the second half of the poem. The calming of the storm by Neptune is compared to a statesman controlling an unruly mob. This is an inverted comparison where human activity instead of being likened to the natural, the abating storm is compared to human activity. To use the words of W. F. Jackson Knight, "alternation and reconciliation normally occur together in similes. A new world of comparison alternates with the world of action; and the comparison reconciles the action to perception, by the relief, and also by the picture given of something known." (p. 171)

Virgil's similes, unlike those of Homer, have expressive density where the simile begins with a single point of comparison which continues to expand, so that similarities may be found at several points. Such multiple correspondences often acquire symbolic significance. Aeneas in Book 8 reaches Latium and tries to sleep but is unable to do so. Virgil compares his thoughts, hopes and fears to flickering sunlight reflected from a water-filled cauldron and shining on the ceiling. Aeneas's mind like the cauldron is passive but the divine light/guidance, leads him on. Turnus's thoughts are compared in Book 7 to a cauldron of boiling water when he is infused with hatred by Allecto. His mind boils over with violence, emitting smoke and darkness, a glare that is not like sunlight.

A large part of the characterization of Turnus is through epic similes. His dominant traits are energy and mindless passion, anger and ferocity. He is compared with predatory animals and birds — a lion (Book 9, 10, 12), with a bull (Book 12), with a wolf (Book 9), with an eagle (Book 9), with a tiger (Book 9). He is also compared to natural forces — the north wind (Book 12), fire and torrent (Book 12), a landslide (Book 12). The last simile that describes him after his fall is to the meaninglessness of a dream.

The wantonness of Dido who abandons herself to love and passion, is compared with the madness of Greek figures — Pentheus, King of Thebes and Orestes, son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who were hounded by tragic deaths (Book 4). On the other hand, Aeneas and Turnus are often likened to



epic warriors, Hector or Achilles, wanderers like Odysseus and compared to mythic figures like Hercules or Apollo.

Memories of country life, so richly described in Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, are evoked as sources of several similes. As Aeneas watches Troy burning and falling, he compares the scene to the felling of an ash tree on the mountainside, attacked with steel axes by farmers. As the trunk collapses, the crest shakes and comes down, trailing havoc (Book 2). In stark contrast, Aeneas, entreated by Dido to stay on in Carthage, is compared with an ancient oak tree, swaying in the wind but holding out firmly as the roots enter as deeply into the soil as the crest towers high (Book 4).

Other interesting similes that imaginatively extend the scope of a scene may be recounted. Describing the hectic activity in building the city of Carthage when Aeneas first arrives there, is the simile of bees in early summer, humming at their work and cramming their cells with honey (Book 1). Equally spectacular is the simile comparing the activity of Aeneas's men, preparing to sail away from Carthage with ants moving in disciplined ranks across fields to store food for winter (Book 4). More surprising than either of these similes is the awakening of Vulcan after Venus appeals to him to create a shield for her son. Vulcan is compared with an industrious rustic woman, trying to stoke the fire through the night, weaving and working to sustain the family. (Book 8)

### 1.10.3 Ecphrasis

Ecphrasis is a technical term used for a verbal description of a work of art. In Book 1 the relief describing the events of the Trojan war on the walls of Dido's temple of Juno is an ecphrasis. The role of art in processing experience is explored in this passage, as Aeneas, still part of the action, gazes on the relief that helps him to distance and to come to terms with his past.

The future can also be symbolically foreshadowed through art. The shield of Aeneas, forged by Vulcan, depicts scenes, apparently notional or imaginary, that become prophecies about Roman civilization. The representation on the shield of Rome's martial achievements, culminates in the scene from the Battle of Actium and Augustus's victory. Aeneas marvels at the artistic excellence, though he cannot understand the events depicted as these have not happened yet. Literally and metaphorically, he has to bear the burden of such momentous

events by shouldering the fame and fortune of his race.

Unlike the moving pageant of Roman heroes described by Anchises (Book 6), etched on the shield are a series of static pictures of individual events. On the outer edge of the shield are significant events from early Roman history that are pictorially represented. These scenes symbolically represent ideals and values that form the national character. The she-wolf suckling the twins Romulus and Remus is an emblem of Rome. It symbolizes the tenacity of the Roman race and their power of survival. The depiction of the rape of the Sabine women, followed by war, peace and an alliance, proves the martial valour as well as the peace-loving nature of the Roman people. A third scene depicts a scene of violence where the third king of Rome, Tullus Hostilius punishes an enemy by binding him to two chariots and tearing him apart by driving in two opposite directions. The lesson taught by this horrific scene is the punishment that is due for treachery and betrayal. The next scene portrays the revolt against the newly established republic and the attempt to restore the expelled king Tarquin. Fortitude and freedom are the values to be learnt from such incidents. Occupying a focal position at the top of the shield is a picture of the sacred geese, a picture of the temple and religious ceremonies and processions, the Capitol being defended against the Gauls – all emphasize the importance of pietas. Balancing this scene at the top of the outer edge is a picture at the lower edge, of the underworld. The figure of Catiline, the conspirator among the punished in the underworld is balanced by the portrayal of Cato administering justice, placed among the blessed.

At the centre is the theme of the Battle of Actium. Virgil mentions Augustus by name, depicts pictures of the victorious forces fighting against the Eastern forces of Antony and Cleopatra, which represent an ideological conflict between two ways of life. The unity of Roman life, the link of the present with the past, a strong sense of patriotism and an intense faith in the Roman mission mark the three vignettes of the battle and the triumph of Rome.

Aesthetic and creative poetic devices, rich in symbolism, imagery and imagination are used by Virgil to enhance the epic narrative. In a literary epic these conventions enhance meaning and depth and engender a greater sense of completeness.

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## 1.11 Bibliographical Assistance for Further Reading

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- Putnam, Michael C. J. *The Poetry of the Aeneid : Four Studies in Imaginative Unity and Design*, Cambridge, MA., 1965. Quinn, Kenneth. *Vergil's Aeneid : A Critical Description*, London, 1968.
- Williams, R. D. *The Aeneid*, London, 1972-73.

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## 1.12 Approaches to Study and Preparation — Topics

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- *Aeneid* as a literary epic
- Nationalism and patriotism
- Virgil's themes
- Portrayal of Aeneas — fate, choice and responsibility
- Relation between the divine and human

- Aeneas and Dido—portrayal of Dido as a tragic heroine
- The conflict of Aeneas and Turnus — two kinds of heroism
- Structure and composition in the epic
- Thought and expression : language and style

**Primary Text to be Used :**

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated into English prose with an Introduction by W. D. Jackson Knight, Penguin, 1956, 1958.

Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Translated into English verse by Robert Fitzgerald. Penguin, 1985.

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## **Unit 2 □ Medea : Euripides**

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### **Structure**

- 2.1 The Life and Works of Euripides**
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- 2.3 The Background Myth**
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- 2.8 The Chorus**
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- 2.10 The Aegeus Episode**
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### **2.1 The Life and Works of Euripides**

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Euripides was born about 480 B.C., some forty-five years after Aeschylus, who is considered to be the father of ancient Greek drama. In contrast to Aeschylus, who took part in the public affairs of his native city, Euripides seems to have been a retired man taking no part in government affairs and caring very little for the company of his fellowmen.

His first drama was probably **The Daughters of Pelias**, produced about 455 B.C. In all, Euripides wrote about ninety-two plays and produced about eighty-eight of them. His frequently unorthodox themes did not bring him much

popular enthusiasm for his plays and so he won only five times in the play writing competitions that were very popular in ancient Greece. Only eighteen of his tragedies survive along with a satyr play. The **Medea** came out in 431 B.C. It was the first play of a tetralogy, the others being the **Philoctetes**, the **Dictys** and the satyr play **Theristae**. Among his other major plays are **Alcestis**, **Hippolytus**, **The Trojan Women**, **Helen**, **Orestes**, **Iphigenia at Aulis**, **Hecuba**, **Andromache**, **The Heracleidae**, **The Suppliants**, **Heracles**, **Iphigenia in Tauris**, **Ion** and **The Bacchae**. Euripides spent the last two years of his life at the court of King Archelaus of Macedonia and died in 406 B.C.

Euripides was less concerned with representing man's relationship to the gods than with realistic portraits of human beings in situations of great stress and distress. His ideas of religion and morality were frequently unorthodox which is reflected in his highly independent way of thinking in his extant plays. As a technician, Euripides is inferior to both Aeschylus and Sophocles. His plots are not regularly realistic. There are many highly improbable 'recognition' scenes in his plays and his plots, many critics argue, that got into such tangles that he had to take recourse to the awkward machinery *deus ex machina*. His genius lies in his ability to create psychologically realistic characters, especially women like Medea. He is also a genius in treating human problems at human terms. His plays show little reliance on fate as the overarching cosmic force that rules the lives of men as we see in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Also Euripides is a genius in packing immense dramatic possibilities in individual scenes.

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## 2.2 Sources of the Play

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The story of the **Medea** is an old one and can be traced as far back as the epic poet Eumelus of Corinth (c. 740B.C.). But the killing of the children by Medea is commonly held to be the invention of tragic poets. It is now known that the story material was used by Aeschylus and Sophocles though they used other parts of the story. The myth was very popular with later playwrights whose plays have perished. The most famous of these lost **Medeas** was by a certain Neophon of Sicyon. Many believe that Euripides made this play one of his

major sources for the plot though this point is not above dispute. There have been numerous translations of the **Medea**.

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## **2.3 The Background Myth**

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Jason, the rightful heir to the throne of the Greek city Iolcos had his place usurped by his wicked uncle, Pelias. In order to insure the death of Jason, Pelias sent him to get the magical Golden Fleece, which was in the possession of the barbarian king Aetes, king of Colchis. Medea, the daughter of Aetes, herself a sorceress, fell in love with Jason. She aided her lover in stealing the fleece after deceiving her father and killing her brother. They then come back to Iolcos after a lot of peril. Back in Iolcos, Medea contrives the death of Pelias, but Jason fails to get the throne. Jason and Medea, along with their two young sons, flee to Corinth, where they get the permission to stay from the king of Corinth, Creon. Jason still harbours the desire to become king. He is offered the princess for marriage by Creon provided he abandons his wife, Medea, and their two sons. Jason accepts the proposal. Euripides' play begins at this point.

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## **2.4 The Story of the Play**

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The scene of the play is Corinth. In the background, to one side, is the palace of the king. To the other side there is the house of Medea and Jason. They are outsiders who have settled in Corinth along with their two sons. Medea is the fierce heroine of the play, daughter of the king of Colchis. Jason has been favourably accepted by the king of Corinth, Creon, so much so that he has offered his daughter, Creusa, as bride to Jason if he gives up his foreign wife. Jason is downright selfish and opportunist and he readily accepts this offer. This is the situation in which the play begins.

The play begins with the prologue spoken by the old nurse of Medea. She comes out of the couple's house and speaks. She laments that the Argonautic expedition had at all taken place because it has brought her mistress to Corinth

and her subsequent dishonour and distress. This speech gives the audience all the necessary information it needs at the outset of the action. While the nurse laments, an aged slave, the tutor, comes in with Medea's two boys. A dialogue ensues between the two servants which is interrupted often by cries of Medea from within her house. A group of Corinthian women (the chorus) has heard the cries and has come to ask the meaning of the cries. On their advice the nurse at length enters the house. She soon returns with Medea, whom we see for the first time, who tells of her misfortunes.

Creon, the king, now enters and orders Medea to leave the country at once with her two children. Medea begs for some time for preparations and is granted one day. She is glad that she has got this respite. She scorns the king for his leniency for she decides that on this day she will have her revenge by killing her husband, his new bride and the king. How she will escape after the murders is not clear at this stage, but Medea is sure she will be able to find a way to escape. Jason now enters and rebukes Medea for her anger and tells her that he really has her interests at heart. This is of course, needless to say, false. Medea puts Jason in his right place in a speech in which she is full of indignation and bitterness. She points out his perfidy and his falsity. Jason tries to defend his conduct with several specious arguments which Medea has no difficulty in refuting. She dismisses him with scorn and threats.

This is followed by the song of the chorus after which Aegeus, king of Athens enters. He has been to Delphi to consult the oracle there and is now going back home. He has dropped in on his way to confer with Pittheus, king of Troezen, about the oracle he has received. Medea tells him of her troubles and when he offers her refuge in Athens she persuades him to bind himself by an oath to protect her there. Aegeus departs and Medea has a soliloquy. She exalts in the fact that now that she has a safe place to retreat, she will be able to kill her enemies and escape. She now reveals her plan. Her plan is to pretend she acquiesces in Jason's second marriage. She will beg that her children be allowed to live in Corinth. To obtain this permission she will send her sons to the princess with valuable gifts. But the gifts will be smeared with poison which will destroy her and anybody who touches her. Then she will herself kill her children.



This is followed by the song of the chorus. After this song, she proceeds to execute her plan. Jason is summoned by Medea who delivers a long speech to him. In this speech she pretends that she is convinced that everything he is doing is for the best. Jason is completely deceived by this subterfuge. The children go to the princess with the gifts and return accompanied by the old slave who reports that the princess has received the gifts and the children are permitted to stay in Corinth.

Now comes a long soliloquy by Medea, in which she shows she is swayed by two contradictory passions; she has love for her children and yet the desire for revenge is overwhelming; she wants to punish Jason by killing their sons. In the long run her desire for vengeance gets the upper hand in her. Her desire to cause distress to her husband proves stronger than her motherly love. Thus she determines to kill her children. The children enter the house and the chorus falls to moralizing on the trials of parents who raise a family, and they contrast their lot with that of the childless.

A messenger hastens in with the terrible news of the catastrophe that has occurred inside the palace; the princess has died of the poison Medea had sent her through the gifts her children had handed over. He urges Medea to flee. She rejoices openly and at her request the messenger gives a vivid account of what had happened at the palace. Now Medea knows there is very little time left for her to kill her children. Again she wavers, the instinct of the mother and her love for her children again almost overcome her desire for revenge against Jason. The desire for revenge, of course, conquers her and she enters her house determined to slay her children. But she has grief in her heart. Presently the cries of the children are heard which soon cease and the audience knows that the dreadful deed is done.

Jason now enters hastily with the full knowledge of what has happened at the palace. He is in haste because he wants to save his children from mob fury. But it is a great shock to him when the chorus informs him that they too have been slain by their mother. Medea now appears high above, as she becomes the granddaughter of the Sun, in a chariot drawn by winged servants. This is the famed *deus ex machina* of the play. Medea is carrying with her the bodies of her children. Jason bitterly reproaches her but she hardly cares

for his reproaches. She refuses his plea to be permitted to bury the children's bodies. With taunts about the unhappy life Jason will lead from henceforth, she disappears. Jason is left protesting to heaven against the treatment he has got.

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## 2.5 The Character of Medea

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Bernard Knox tells us that "Medea...is presented to us, from the start, in heroic terms." Her language and actions are all heroic. She is like a Sophoclean tragic hero in her intractable nature and in her firmness of purpose in defiance of threats and advice. This is the only play by Euripides that is tightly knit around a hero, a strong and inflexible central character who is unshaken in her motive and purpose. Like the true Sophoclean hero, she is determined in her resolve expressed in uncompromising terms. She expresses her wish in uncompromising terms; "the deed must be done" ("ergasteon") and "I must dare" ("tolmeteon") as also "I shall kill" ("kteno"). The firmness of her resolve is expressed in Sophoclean terms: "my mind is made up" ("dedoktai" and "dedogmenon"). She is moved by the typical heroic passions like anger ("orge") and wrath ("cholos"). She has the characteristic heroic temper, daring ("tolma") and rashness ("thrasos"). She is fearful, terrible ("deine") and wild like a beast ("Agrios"). Like the heroes she is much concerned with her glory; she will not tolerate injustice or personal insult and is full of passionate intensity ("thumos"). Her greatest torment is that her enemies will laugh at her. Like the Sophoclean hero she curses her enemies as she plans her revenge. She is alone and abandoned and so she suffers and in her suffering, she wishes for death. Like the Sophoclean hero she resists appeals for moderation and reason. She is stubborn like a wild animal.

Medea is of a violent nature. When she falls in love with Jason, she sacrifices her family even to the extent of deceiving her father and killing her own brother. She sacrifices her home and her country for Jason and runs away with him to his country. When Jason decides to abandon her to marry the princess of Corinth, her sense of being wronged overwhelms her as love for Jason had earlier. The feeling of being wronged so takes control of her that

she decides to take revenge on Jason by killing the princess as well as her two sons. This, she believes, will hurt him as he had hurt her. Medea does love her children; she is considerably pained in killing them. But this seems to be the only way left for her (as she sees it) to hit back at their father who had wronged her. It is quite apparent therefore that she is a woman of passion, with no restraints imposed by the intellect.

Tragedies are written on the basis of characters. Even in the plays of Aeschylus, where factors external to character play dominant roles, character is the fulcrum on which the actions move. An Agamemnon, an Orestes or a Polynices is central to the building up of the plays. In the plays of Euripides external factors are relatively less important than characters. Yet the dramatic personae of **Medea** require less discussion than those in other plays. That is not to say that there is no discernible character in **Medea** that is not worth discussing. Medea herself completely dominates the play. The playwright has created in this figure one of the most tragic (and controversial) figures on stage. The figure of Medea stands out as vividly as a Cleopatra or a Lady Macbeth. She is a jealous woman grievously wronged by her husband. She is portrayed as the woman of tremendous power and furious temper. She is the fierce, resentful, indignant, and resourceful daughter of a noble house who feels too deeply the slight cast on her, a slight for which one often falters but as a response to which one feels deep inside one's own self a violent urge to act. That act happens to be an urge for revenge for the slight is felt too deeply and too strongly for her not to react the way she does later.

Medea simply refuses to accept the slight; she is not ready to lay down her weapons of revenge because she is a woman who is defenceless and friendless in a foreign country, or to make a compromise that is insulting to her in the name of feminine gentleness and acceptance. So she is determined her enemies will pay dearly for her humiliation. In the act of revenge Medea not only kills the princess her husband is to marry, but also kills her own children. The killing of her children becomes secondary to her revenge motive. She is semi-savage, as is evident in the scene before the death of her children. Such a powerful character is rarely to be seen on stage. Despite her savagery Euripides is able to garner sympathy for that a playwright does only for tragic protagonists.

Euripides' creation of tragedy was intimately linked with his views on rationality. He has expressed the irrational forces in human life in play after play, particularly the irrationality of women in love. The tragedy in Euripides' plays stems from the break of reason. He has gone against the celebrated Greek notions of moderation and control because he knows moderation and control can break down even in the strongest personalities under duress. The tragedy of **Medea** is built up on this.

Medea is one of the best studies in the history of world literature of the irrational, passionate character who in actuality breaks down under what she perceives as a slight to her character, love and existence, by the very person for whose love she had staked everything in life. Euripides has studied Medea's character from inside out and though she commits horrible acts of murder (even of her own children), the playwright never for once strays into portraying her in a negative light. It is clear from the portrait of Medea's character that Euripides has the fullest possible sympathy for her. She is an excellent study of human nature that can love to the hilt and hate to the point of murder. Her passionate love turns into murderous hate and she is driven by her pride, will-power, ferocity, and demonic energy.

None of the other plays by Euripides has so firmly been centred on one single figure; Medea is the central and paramount figure in the play. She gets a respite of one day from Creon in which she gets the time to prepare to leave Corinth. Instead of doing exactly as she is told and packing to make an exit (as ordinary people would do) she prepares herself for revenge as she tells the chorus:

"A bad predicament all round—yes, true enough;  
But don't imagine things as they are now.  
Trials are yet to come for this new-wedded pair;  
Nor shall those nearest to them get off easily.  
Do you think I would ever have fawned so on this man (meaning  
Creon)  
Except to gain my purpose, carry out my schemes?...  
By banishing me at once he could have thwarted me

Utterly; instead, he allows me to remain one day.  
Today three of my enemies I shall strike dead;  
Father and daughter; and my husband."

This is, for her, a god send opportunity. She is gleeful that Creon has given her that one vital day to her. Though she is semi divine in her birth, and though she is a sorceress, she is very human in her feelings here. But her heart is not just like any ordinary mortal. All her feelings are deep and absorbing. Her love for Jason was all-consuming; now her hatred for him (and the princess she is about to marry) is equally devastating. Her love for her children is absolutely genuine. So her murdering them adds poignancy to the tragedy. Their death will be absolutely painful for her. But for her the fact that Jason has abandoned her has itself made her life irrevocably miserable. As a consequence she is now, in turn, consumed by a powerful motive of revenge.

Medea is a woman, a wife and a mother. She is also a foreigner in unfamiliar territory. Yet she acts as if she were a combination of the terrible and naked violence of Achilles and the cold craft of Odysseus. She says: "Let no one think of me? As humble or weak or passive; let them understand / I am of a different kind: dangerous to my enemies, / Loyal to my friends. To such a life glory belongs." This is the creed of Homeric and Sophoclean heroes.

Her one purpose in life is to punish Jason. She no doubt dithers between her desire for revenge and her love for her children. But revenge gets the better of her in the long run. This is where Euripides' study of irrationality and passion in duress is so very deep and psychologically realistic. In either case it is Medea who will suffer. That is where the crux of the tragedy in the play lies. She reasons that once the second marriage of Jason is consummated, her children will not survive anyway. So they can very well die at the hands of their own mother: "... they must die, / In any case; and since they must, then I who gave / Them birth will kill them." In the process of her choice her soul is thrown into a cavernous feeling of agony which no ordinary mortal can endure: "My misery is my own heart, which will not relent." Medea becomes heroic in going through this agony which tragic heroes usually do in the face of their tragedy, destruction, and annihilation. It should be remembered that either way Medea is the loser. Her glowing spirit rises from this agonizing state towards

revenge. She makes the decision that is terrible for her and yet satisfying in the end.

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## 2.6 The Character of Jason

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Medea's husband Jason at first seems a thoroughly selfish person. He can see nothing except his own interest. He is even ready to abandon his wife who loves him and had saved him because it serves him to marry the princess of the foreign land he now resides in. He is utterly contemptible. His weakness is in stark contrast to the strength of Medea.

Jason cuts a poor figure when compared with Medea. He does not retain in the play any of the grandeur and heroic splendour associated with the leader of the Argonauts. In commenting on Jason a modern reader may find fault with him for deserting his wife and remarrying. It has to be remembered, however, that for the ancient Greeks these were far from being dishonourable. For Jason this is matter of course.

In the first scene with Jason, Medea is revealed as a character who is worthy of respect and admiration. Beside her Jason appears quite contemptible. He tells Medea about the hateful exile they are in and in course of time becomes insultingly abrupt. In the 'debate' that ensues between the two, Jason's speech becomes clever to the level of sophistry. This sophistry characterizes Jason. He is conceited and is in haste to deny the help a woman provided him in his course to success. He is all too glib in his answer to charges against him of broken faith and lack of gratitude. According to Jason, Medea saved his life only to satisfy her own lust. This is rank bad taste. On the contrary he tells Medea that he has brought her out of a brutal and obscure life among savages to the civilized existence and decent life in Hellas. Gilbert Murray at this stage comments, "even a reader can scarcely withhold a bitter laugh when Jason explains the advantage he has conferred on Medea by bringing her to a civilized country." Jason argues that rather than sacrificing Medea for his new love he has used his wit to obtain the power to protect her and her children. He is neither in love of the princess nor is he weary of Medea. He sees this marriage just as a means of self-promotion, in a foreign land, Corinth, a promotion from poverty to opulence.

The sincerity of Jason's reasons for the second marriage may be debated. Dr. Verrall opines that Jason is sincere in his reasoning with Medea, that his second marriage will secure not only himself but also Medea herself and their children. Eilhard Schlesinger also is of the opinion that the marital discord here is much more complicated than its stereotypical portrayal in art. He tells us, "Jason is not the husband who, tired of his wife, has fallen in love with another woman and now loses his head. We may take him at his word when he repeatedly denies his love for Creusa." To understand Euripides' Jason we have to go to the motif of the rootlessness of the exile. He tells Medea.

"As for your scurrilous taunts against my marriage with  
The royal family, I shall show you that my action  
Was wise, not swayed by passion, and directed towards  
Your interests and my children's... When I  
Came here from Iolcos as a stateless exile, dogged  
And thwarted by misfortunes – why, what luckier chance  
Could I have met, than marriage with the king's daughter?  
It was not, as you resentfully assume, that I  
Found your attractions wearisome, and was smitten with  
Desire for a new wife..."

Seen from this angle Jason's decision seems to be prudent. But this is not sufficient reason for a woman where her love is concerned. But this seems merely a veneer. He appears to be wise and modest and a benefactor to his own children and Medea in his second marriage. But underlying all these he appears in the worst of colours (but his true colours nonetheless). Now he reveals his fatal and damning vice: his desire for wealth and power:

"...I wanted to ensure  
First – and the most important that we should live well  
And not be poor; I know how a poor man is shunned  
By all his friends. Next that I could bring up my sons  
In a manner worthy of my descent..."

Jason appears to be ambitious but his ambition includes his family as well.

But he refuses to see Medea's point of view which makes her see herself as the wronged and betrayed wife; she cares little for worldly promotions when her love is at stake. Jason does descend low when in reply he shows little care for his wife's sentiment:

"You know—you'll change your mind and be more sensible.  
You'll soon stop thinking good is bad, and striking these  
Pathetic poses when in fact you are fortunate."

Both fail to understand the point of view of each other. Medea accuses Jason of lust. We know that his is a lust for wealth and power. But worldly desires have made him forget his earlier love for Medea. The fact of the matter is that he is selfish for which he has no qualms to abandon his former beloved and current wife.

It is easy at this stage to condemn Jason. But one has to remember that Jason plays an important role in maintaining the balance in the play, between non-Greek (Asiatic) barbaric and uncontrollable passion and the Greek virtue of balance, control and order. Jason was a man of perfectly respectable ambitions. To these ambitions Medea had presented two fatal obstacles. She had involved him in murder before they came to Corinth. Also, as a non-Greek (Asiatic), she could never be recognized by the Greeks as Jason's wife. Jason had to overcome these obstacles to establish himself once again in the Greek fold. And this means representing the values cherished by the Greeks: civilized life which meant controlled, orderly, proportionate life without any excess. Also, as Jason seems to argue, getting a Greek wife would give him that social status that he could not get being the husband of Medea. Thus the character of Jason can be wonderfully summed up in the words of Philip Vellacott: "In the character of Jason a concern for civilized values is joined with a calculating coldness and an unscrupulous want of feeling."

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## 2.7 The Minor Characters

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The minor characters in **Medea** are excellently drawn. Among the minor characters the nurse and the paidagogos (the tutor) stand out. They are aged



servants devoted to their mistress's interests. They are presented true to life. They are used skillfully by Euripides in the prologue to present the necessary facts of the play the audience needs to know right at the beginning of the play. The monologue of the nurse is the most successful. She presents the minimum of facts. She is a devoted servant completely identifying herself with the cause of her mistress. She intersperses her tale with bits of homely philosophy. She says of herself, "Old friend, tutor of Jason's sons, an honest slave / Suffers in her own heart the blow that strikes her mistress." She helps in garnering sympathy for her mistress from the audience before we even meet Medea. The nurse has an irresistible longing to come forth and cry out to heaven and earth the misfortunes of Medea. The tutor to Medea's sons condemn Jason's conduct in the loudest voice: "Old love is ousted by new love. Jason's no friend / To this house." Further he says: "These boys are nothing to their father: he is in love." Both characters are admirable portraits of the good and faithful slave, a type Euripides could draw so well.

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## 2.8 The Chorus

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The chorus was an integral aspect of Attic tragedy. It played a vital role in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In Euripides the chorus was retained but its importance was diminished. In **Medea** the chorus is made up of Corinthian women. It, like the nurse and the tutor presents the case of Medea and like them approves of her desire and plan for revenge on her husband. It posits the feminine feelings of betrayal that hurt Medea so very deeply. When Medea makes clear that her plan of revenge includes not only her husband but also Creon, the king of Corinth and his daughter, it raises no objection. Like the minor characters, the chorus provides the moral justification for this diabolical plan of revenge. Rather than opposing Medea, it sings exultantly of honour that is to come to the female sex. But when she announces that her plans for revenge include the killing of the princess and Medea's sons, the chorus cannot prevent itself from protesting. But it is actually the plan to murder the sons that it protests thus highlighting the absolute horror associated with this murder. That Euripides is not writing a clear black and white play is clear from this. Euripides

problematizes the issue of right and wrong and good and evil. The chorus knows that the murder of her children will only make Medea suffer. But its protests are dismissed.

In the scene where Medea entraps Jason by feigned humility, the chorus could have intervened, but it remains silent. The role of the chorus thereby gets diminished in Euripides. Conventionally, in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles the chorus is a group of elderly, wise people who have a calming effect upon the tempestuous characters and their actions. They provide the voice of sanity, wisdom, reason and moderation, the celebrated Greek virtues. For Euripides, at least in **Medea** if not in other plays, this is not necessary. In **Medea** Euripides has brought these two forces in headlong collision. The composition of the chorus therefore changes as does its function.

As long as Medea does not include the children in her plan for revenge she gets the full support of the chorus. When she tells the chorus of her plan, after she gets one day's reprieve from Creon, the chorus fully approves of it. It in fact celebrates the new day that is dawning for the female sex. It castigates Jason and then celebrates the emerging emancipation of the female sex:

"The waters of the sacred rivers run upstream;  
The right order of all things is reversed.  
Now it is men who deal in treachery:  
Now covenants sealed in heaven's name are worthless.

Legends now shall change direction,  
Woman's life have glory.  
Honour comes to the female sex.  
Woman shall be a theme for slanderous tales not more.

The songs of poets from bygone times shall cease  
To harp on our faithlessness."

This passage intends to evoke the memory of great sinning women related in songs, stories, and the whole literary and artistic tradition of Greece, women

like Clytemnestra and Helen and the desirable women (from the male point of view) of faithful Penelope and Andromache. The chorus dismisses the construction of the woman because that is all done by men. Medea therefore becomes for the chorus an agent through whom the whole history of the female sex is rewritten, as it is and not mediated through men. That includes Medea and all Greek women. The chorus sings: "Legends now shall change direction; women's life have glory." This includes all women.

After it comes to know of the killing of the king and his daughter the chorus only comments: "Today we see the will of Heaven, blow after blow, / Bring down on Jason justice and calamity." Obviously the chorus is on the side of Medea. It feels Medea's situation might well be its own. It is female camaraderie that it feels and it identifies with Medea, whom it perceives as the hapless and wronged heroine. Medea on her turn speaks like and for them. After the murder of the children the chorus does not vilify Medea for being a barbarian and a witch. Rather it finds a parallel with one such woman in Greek tradition itself. They mention Ino who was driven mad by the gods. The story of Medea is not remote and that of the other. It is Greek in its heroism and intransigent desire and horrible execution of revenge. It also highlights the plight of Greek women. The chorus sets that for us.

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## 2.9 Plot Construction

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As it generally happens in Greek tragedy the plot of **Medea** consists of a change from one state to its opposite (Aristotle called it "metabasis"). The helpless victim in **Medea** emerges victorious in all fronts at the end while the master of the situation, who fancied he could control the fate of Medea and fulfill all his desires, becomes an annihilated man. There is a reversal of fortune (peripety) for both Medea and Jason, but in opposite directions. Jason passes from prosperity to misery and Medea the reverse. It seems the play has two plots. There is even an impression that Jason is the tragic hero while Medea, whose metabasis is a turn for the good, is lacking in true heroic stature. But this is untrue. As the plot unravels Medea does emerge as a tragic hero who narrowly misses the final catastrophe. A study of the respective characters settles the issue.

The plot centres on Medea and it depends on her will. In the prologue and parados we get the condition in which Medea is due to Jason. Material consequences like the exile are mentioned but the emphasis is on her emotional state. This exposes, as the nurse's speech does, Medea's cursing of her past when she had tied herself to Jason. She feels remorse for having completely estranged herself from her family and native land for the crimes she had committed on his behalf. Her frame of mind in the present circumstances is mentioned which prepares us for the Medea we are to see in the course of the play. We also know of her desire for revenge but it does not include her children at this stage though they are mentioned. Her first utterance shows her despair and her wish to die, so desperate she feels about the state she is in due to Jason. At the beginning of the first episode the heroine though appears composed, a state necessary to execute her plan of revenge. Only raving and ranting will not work. From the prologue and parados to Medea's first speech we get the motifs of the homelessness of an exile and the plight of a woman in the existing social order. Only at the end of the speech we come to know of her resolve for revenge but the form of revenge is not yet clear. Only in general terms does she say that she will take revenge on Jason and Creusa. She does not divulge how she is going to take her revenge or the time when it will happen.

The action needs an external impetus and that is provided by Creon's order of banishing Medea and her children from Corinth. The exile is a new development which will whet Medea's appetite for revenge further, which will get her what she has set out to get. Creon is afraid of Medea and therefore, to achieve his and his family's safety, he orders her banishment. The irony is that it leads to the annihilation of his family, the opposite of what he wanted to achieve. The king wanted to create safety measures against her desire for revenge but actually manages to create greater outrage and drive her faster towards swift and decisive implementation of her scheme. The king now becomes the victim of her machination. The king will escort her to the border to oversee her banishment and will not return home until she has safely crossed over to the other side. In such circumstances she has no chance of carrying out her plan. So she pleads for one day's reprieve that will give her the necessary elbow room to carry out her plan. Creon unwittingly tells her how much he loves

his own children and that strikes Medea. She now knows how much their own children mean to a man. She now can formulate her plan in an altered light. Also it is in the name of her children that she asks for the reprieve.

At the end of the first episode, Medea gives free rein to her indignation and her sense of being wronged. The theme of the speech here is almost the same as her earlier speech. She wishes to murder Creon, his daughter, the princess Creusa and her husband Jason. But now she wonders how to go about doing it. Openly killing them would expose her and lead to her own death and make her a laughing stock to her enemies, she reasons. Instead, she decides to use poison. This is a method in which she is well versed. But she is faced with a new difficulty now. She wonders where she will take refuge after the deeds are done; she needs a home or a shelter. Without these she will not be truly victorious, and so she might as well seize a sword and kill and then die herself. The method of revenge is not fully resolved yet. But she has decided it will happen on this very day.

In the second episode Medea and Jason come face to face for the first time. She enumerates to him what she had done for him in the past. Her situation, vis-a-vis Jason, is brought out in clearer light as is her character. Kurt von Fritz remarks that the two characters are contrasted here and the former Greek national hero, Jason, is depreciated to a considerable extent. The studies of both the characters in the dramatic context are not only interesting but also important. The revenge motive is brought to further relief. Medea reminds Jason that she has left her country, her mother and father, murdered her own brother, severed all ties of family and country, and relinquished her entire previous existence to follow her husband. She has descended from the divine and heroic sun god and to sever her ties with such a family is painful. She had done all these merely for Jason. His reasoning that his second marriage will be beneficial to her and her children therefore does not cut any ice with her at all. She is the loving wife, she feels, who has been wronged. Therefore it merits revenge. Jason has the possibility of making his sons by his first marriage made princes, as they will become the stepsons of the princess. It is also possible he may ascend the throne. He fails to understand how that is less important than life in bed ("lechos") that Medea argues for. But it is this "lechos" that is the difference between the two. For Jason marriage and children, in fact all human relationships,

are means to an end. For Medea they are ends in themselves. Jason and Medea clash on the fulcrum of what they respectively (and contrastingly) consider to be the value of life. From hereon Medea cannot but do what she wants to do.

The children of Medea are important in the play. They not only provide the play with an important motif but are also instrumental in Medea's plan. She uses them to get reprieve from Creon. She uses them to carry the poison, laced with the wedding gifts Medea is presenting to Creusa, into the royal palace unsuspected. This is also the wish of Jason and there is no problem at all to carry out this plan. Then she kills these children to give Jason ultimate punishment. She will not make herself a laughing stock to her enemies and infanticide therefore becomes the supreme agony that Medea intends to create for Jason. Everything that happens in the plot therefore is geared towards the will of Medea. It caters to her to the fullest extent and the other characters are merely instrumental in carrying out a plot in which Medea has the supreme importance.

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## 2.10 The Aegeus Episode

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Critics from the time of Neophron and Aristotle have been troubled by the dramatic function of the scene in which Aegeus, the King of Athens arrives in Corinth. The latter has even objected to the entrance of Aegeus. This scene supposedly violates the Aristotelian law of necessary or probable sequence. This is more applicable in Sophoclean tragedy, however, than Euripidean tragedy. In Sophoclean tragedy there is always a significant relation between the character and the circumstances, and the circumstances, though they may be exceptional, develop normally. This is not the case in Euripidean tragedy. Here accidents are allowed. This is because his tragic conception is that the passions and unreason are the greatest scourge of mankind. This implies no tragic interlock between character and situation; the situation is merely a setting for the outburst of unreason. The fortuitousness of the arrival of Aegeus in Corinth becomes the dramatic metaphor of the fortuitous nature of the passions and unreason. This episode becomes the channel to express Medea's violent passions.

The king of Athens happens to pass through Corinth on his journey from Delphi to Troezen. Medea asks and obtains from him the desired asylum. She now has a harbour for her plans. Eilhard Schlesinger says, "The appearance of Aegeus is without a doubt the turning-point of the drama." The Aegeus episode ranges from line 661 to 761. Roughly a 100 line episode, it is a brief interruption in the flow of the main action. Aristotle thinks that the turning-point is poorly constructed because the appearance of Aegeus is "alogon" ("absurd" or "dragged in by the hair").

Aegeus is already married when he meets Medea. He is going to Troezen to consult Pittheus regarding the Delphic oracle. This journey now becomes unnecessary because Medea holds out to him the prospect of being blessed with the offspring he desires. This Medea does out of gratitude. When Aegeus leaves, the chorus utters a conventional blessing in which it speaks of his return home. We can assume therefore that Aegeus has abandoned his journey.

It we look at it strictly from the point of view of the action the arrival of Aegeus in Corinth is definitely forced. There is not the slightest connection between Medea and Aegeus or Athens. But really speaking there is a connection between the Medea plot and the journey of Aegeus, though it lies under the surface and is not perceivable easily. The nature of the connection is purely poetic. This is because what ties the two seemingly disparate actions is the children motif. The childless Aegeus has travelled to Delphi to inquire what he must do to get an offspring. He does not understand the oracle and is travelling to Troezen to get an interpreter who can explain to him the full meaning of the oracle.

The child, however, as we have seen throughout the play, is the central theme of the tragedy. In Aegeus now we have a man who desires progeny similar to the desire of Creon and Jason. For the third time, after Creon and Jason, Medea comes to see the importance of children to men. So, just as she had exploited the knowledge with Creon, she now achieves her goal by promising Aegeus that with her magic arts she will help him get children of his own. The meeting with Aegeus provides the last link in a chain of evidence as to how vulnerable Jason will be, and how triumphant Medea would be, without his children. The children, the shrewd Medea guesses correctly, will be the vital

chink in Jason's armour. Aegeus' arrival therefore serves two functions. First, it marks the "peripety," the reversal of fortune which brings about the beginning of the revenge action. Secondly, it determines, once and for all, the specific form of the revenge – infanticide. The latter raises all the moral problems that the play has been successful to generate.

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## 2.11 Technical Aspects

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In this book **Euripides : A Student of Human Nature**, W.N. Bates has commented that "technically the **Medea** is the most perfect of the tragedies of Euripides." The use of the prologue has been generally objected to. But, it should be noted that the prologue has been artistically introduced and it provides in a natural way the necessary information the audience should have at the beginning of the play. As far as the construction of Euripides' plays is concerned the most obvious characteristic is the use of the prologue. This is quite different from the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles which begin in a different way. For Euripides the prologue serves a purpose. Some character is introduced at the outset, who might or might not take part in the subsequent action, to give some vital information to the audience that it should know to understand the play better. The prologue gives information like the detail of the context in which the action is set, who the chief characters are, what the situation is in which the characters find themselves, where the scene is laid etc. The prologue of **Medea** consists of forty-eight lines spoken by the nurse.

The nurse, importantly tells us about how Jason and Medea came together, the passionate love Medea bore for Jason, their arriving in Corinth, Jason's marriage with Creusa, the daughter of the king of Corinth, Creon, and, most importantly how Medea has responded to this marriage. The nurse prepares us for our response to Medea later. As the nurse puts it Jason's second marriage tantamounts to betrayal, given the fact that Medea had committed crimes for the sake of Jason (she had killed her own brother and Pelias so that Jason could become king of Iolcos). This had led to the banishment of both Medea and Jason. Medea previously had to flee her own native land, along with Jason for she had helped him to get the Golden Fleece. Also, the nurse tells us, that



Medea was a loving and obedient wife but the second marriage of Jason had transformed her personality and now “she raves, invoking every vow and solemn pledge / that Jason made her, and calls the gods as witness / What thanks she has received for fidelity. / She will not eat; lies collapsed in agony, / Dissolving the long hours in tears.” The nurse tells us a little later: “I am afraid / Some dreadful purpose is forming in her mind. She is / A frightening woman; no one who makes an enemy / Of her will carry off an easy victory.” We not only get the character of Medea here but also the justification of what she will become and do later in the play. We are prepared for the gale that is to follow in the action.

As a rule in Euripides’ plays the prologue is immediately followed by a dialogue. The transition is skillfully managed as **Medea** exemplifies. And so the nurse’s speech is immediately followed by the dialogue between the nurse and the tutor. Their conversation gives us a vital information – that Creon is to banish Medea and her sons from Corinth. This is important as far as the action is concerned. It not only enrages Medea further but will provide another justification for Medea to take the kind of revenge against Jason that she really does. Jason is portrayed in a very poor light here. So this conversation prepares us for our reception of Jason. Jason will not stir to prevent this banishment as it will go against his ambition. The nurse says: “Children, do you hear / What sort of father Jason is to you? My curse...” And the nurse stops just short of cursing Jason. Nevertheless she goes on to add: “He is guilty; he has betrayed those near and dear to him.” The tutor clarifies the character of Jason further: “everybody loves himself more than his neighbour. / These boys are nothing to their father: he’s is love.” The blatant selfishness of Jason is quite apparent from these words. Thus we are prepared for our emotional response to the characters and actions of Medea and Jason that is to follow later. Thus such an opening was vital at a time when there was no system of playbills and advertisements. The audience knows where and how it is situated and how the playwright himself views the actions of the characters.

Another important technical aspect of Euripides’ plays is the frequent use of the *deus ex machina*, gods out of the machine, at the end of the play. This device necessitated the introduction of a god, or some other character, on high by means of a mechanical contrivance. It enabled the playwright to represent

a figure in mid-air, or on the roof of a temple, or elsewhere atop. The deus ex machina has also been criticized along with Euripides' use of the prologue. Critics who are adverse to the use of the deus ex machina argue that Euripides used this device to get himself out of difficult situations in the plot. W.N. Bates argues in favour of this use by saying that in only two of his plays this criticism is justifiable, **Hippolytus** and **Orestes**. Not so in **Medea**. Also a careful examination of the plays shows that if Euripides had wanted to avoid this device he could have done so by making minor adjustments to the plot which would not have harmed the plot itself. So there must be some justification for Euripides' use of this device.

The criticism necessitates the defence that Euripides was a practical playwright. As the prologue provides necessary information at the beginning which facilitates better comprehension of the play for the audience, the deus ex machina also serves a practical purpose. It creates a spectacular effect at the end of the play, an effect a playwright seeks to provide for a play fated to be a popular play meant for dramatic competitions. It must be remembered that Euripides wrote his plays not for reading but for performance. He was not a closet playwright but a man of theatre. The appearance of an Athena in shining armour above the roof of her temple as in **Iphigenia in Tauris** would be striking. It was to create such striking effects on stage that Euripides used this device. According to Aristotle, in the **Poetics**, this device is a convenient way of setting forth what has preceded, or what is to follow. For Euripides it was much more than simply that. Dramatically and scenically the deus ex machina fulfills a definite function and the playwright is justified in using it. It was a means of introducing a striking scene. There is no doubt that the audience approved of it. The visuals of the scene are to be imagined in a reading of the play to understand the full dramatic implication of the scene. It also has a profound symbolic meaning.

It must be remembered that Medea sees herself as the instrument and associate of the gods – "The gods and I" she says. The deus ex machina merely confirms the claim in a spectacular fashion. Medea's phrases chastising Jason are like the pronouncements of the gods from the machine. Medea tells Jason, "Why are you battering at these doors, seeking / The dead children and me who killed them? Stop (pausai)!" So also the goddess Athena asks Thous to

“Stop (pausai!)” at the end of **Iphigenia in Tauris**. The god Apollo tells Menelaus in **Orestes** “pausai”. This is not the only command Medea issues from the machine; like the gods she is prone to imperatives. She dismisses Jason: “Go (steicheth) home: your wife waits to be buried.” So also goddess Athena dismisses Ion and Creusa in **Ion**: “Go (steicheth)” and the Dioscuri in **Electra** send Orestes on his way to Athens with the same word: “Go (steicheth)”. Also Medea shows the same vindictiveness towards Jason that Euripidean gods are used to. She tells Jason, “The children are dead. This is what will give you pain”. She uses the word “dextai” here which is also used by goddess Artemis in **Hippolytus** when she rebukes Theseus, “Do my words pain you?” (“daknei”). Like Artemis, Medea holds out the prospect of more suffering for Jason. “Listen to what comes next – you will cry out in even greater agony,” says Artemis. Medea tells Jason similarly: “You are not sorrowing yet. Wait until you are old.” One statement of Artemis matches with the revenge motive and action of Medea: “Those who are evil we destroy, children and home and all.”

The affinities between the gods and Medea are sufficiently clear. The *deus ex machina* is a visual confirmation of precisely that. She reaches high up and out of reach of ordinary mortals. This is the place reserved in Attic tragedy for gods. This is not the place for ordinary mortals. So Medea becomes something more than mortal. Her situation, action and language are like the divine beings who appear at the end of many of Euripides’ plays to wind up the action, give judgement, prophesy the future, and announce the foundation of a religious ritual. Medea at the end definitely does all, except the last mentioned, from high up.

The Sun is the source of all life and warmth, vindicating the cause of passion, disorder and violent cruelty, against the cold, orderly, self-protective processes of civilized man. Throughout the play, appeals have been made to two divine beings, Earth and sun. It is by these divinities that Aegeus is made to swear the oath that he will protect Medea from her enemies once she reaches Athens. Helios, the Sun is clearly in favour of Medea. She and her actions seem to have divine sanction. Jason appeals at the end, “In the gods’ name let me touch the soft skin of my sons.” But his appeals to the gods are of no effect. “Your words are wasted,” Medea tells him, and draws away in her chariot as Jason appeals to Zeus with, what we can easily surmise, with no

effect to come again. The *deus ex machina* becomes a profoundly philosophic utterance. The universe and the cosmic forces are not in favour of civilization. A life combining order with happiness is something men must achieve for themselves in continual struggle with an unsympathetic and an unsavoury environment.

There is no magical background to **Medea** as there is in **Philoctetes**. On the contrary the play itself is painfully prosaic. It is a play on domestic strife, conjugal jealousy and discord. It naturally therefore begs the question why such a prosaic play has such an unnatural means of escape at the end. It must be remembered that Medea is a barbarian princess and a magician. She is descended from Helios, and she is in possession of certain mysterious powers, poison to be more precise, of which ordinary women have no idea. This lessens the surprise that she escapes so miraculously. The end of Medea is not logical, as H.D.F. Kitto tells us; it is contrived by Euripides "as the final revelation of his thought," to put it in the words of Kitto. Medea is not only the betrayed and vindictive wife. She stands for the blind and irrational forces. The contrivance at the end is a catharsis (purgation) at the end which can only come through the contrivance, not through logical progression of the plot.

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## 2.12 Sample Questions

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1. Would you say that as a barbarian, a woman, and a witch, Medea is the alien and the disturbing 'other' of patriarchal Greek society?
2. Has Euripides in **Medea** struck a balance between sympathy for Medea and horror at her deeds?
3. Would you say the actions of Medea are too horrifying to be tragic?
4. Does Medea transcend the moral parameters of good and evil?
5. Analyze the character of Medea.
6. Compare and contrast the characters of Medea and Jason. Who in your opinion is the true tragic hero?

7. Is Medea the tragic hero we are accustomed to see in Greek tragedies? Justify.
8. Is the play **Medea** a conflict between Greek, patriarchal rationality and barbarian, matriarchal irrational frenzy?
9. Is **Medea** more a tragic victim than a tragic agent?
10. Is **Medea** more a modern play and less a Greek play?
11. Does the plot of **Medea** depend upon Medea's will?
12. Analyze the striking technical features of **Medea**.
13. Is the use of the deus ex machina justified in **Medea**?
14. What is the role of the minor characters and the chorus in **Medea**?
15. Is **Medea** a play on the conflict of two wrongs? Discuss.
16. What is the justification of the presence of the Aegeus episode in **Medea**?

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## 2.13 Selected Reading List

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1. Stringfellow Barr, **The Will of Zeus**, Philadelphia and New York, 1961
2. Moses Hadas, **Ancilla to Classical Reading**, Boston, 1940
3. Philip Whaley Harsh, **A Handbook of Classical Drama**, Stanford, 1960
4. H.D.F. Kitto, **Greek Tragedy, A Literary Study**, New York, 1954
5. Gilbert Murray, **The Literature of Ancient Greece**, 3rd ed., Chicago, 1956
6. W.N. Bates, **Euripides: A Student of Human Nature**, Philadelphia, 1930
7. Gilbert Murray, **Euripides and His Age**, New York, 1913.

## NOTES