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The World of the Dead in Book 6 of the
Aeneid

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When Eduard Norden's famous commentary on the Sixth Book of the *Aeneid* was published in 1903,¹ it was customary to posit two main sources for Virgil's 'Underworld' and, in correspondence with the postulated sources, to divide the description itself into two main parts. The first half of the account was called 'popular' or 'mythological'; the second, 'philosophical'. Disagreement was confined to the question whether the sinners in Tartarus and the pious in Elysium (548-665) should be included in the former or in the latter part. Norden himself, after some wavering, sided with Albrecht Dieterich and decided in favour of the philosophical (or 'theological') source as Virgil's authority for the categories of the sinners and the blessed, mentioning the eschatological myths of Plato and Plutarch as the kind of source he had in mind.²

More recently, a different view has gained ground. Instead of dividing Virgil's account into two main parts, the new theory distinguishes three phases: a mythological or Homeric, a moral, and a philosophical Underworld. The idea of these three distinct 'Underworlds' may be traced to A. Cartault's book on the *Aeneid*.³ Lately it has found its most strenuous champions in Frances Norwood and Brooks Otis.⁴ Unlike

¹ P. Vergilius Maro, *Aeneis Buch VI*³ (Leipzig and Berlin, 1926).

² Ibid. 10 ff. (see also p. 10 for references to earlier studies); A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (Leipzig, 1893), pp. 150 ff. H. E. Butler in the Intro. (pp. 19-36) to his *Sixth Book of the Aeneid* (London, 1920) seems today closer to Norden than he himself thought at the time of publication. He is equally generous in tracing much of Virgil's material to 'Orphic' sources although more restrained on the question of Posidonius' influence (p. 33 and n. 3).

³ *L'Art de Virgile dans l'Énéide* (Paris, 1926), pp. 461 and n. 1, 474 f., 490 f. C. Bailey, *Religion in Virgil* (Oxford, 1935), approximates the scheme in his analysis, see esp. pp. 270 ff., 273 ff.

⁴ F. Norwood, 'The Tripartite Eschatology of *Aeneid VI*', *CP* 49 (1954), 15 ff.; B. Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 289 ff. P. Boyancé, *La Religion de Virgile* (Paris, 1963), p. 156, distinguishes 'trois grandes parties' without identifying them clearly.

earlier scholars, the proponents of this theory do not worry about inconsistencies among the different phases; still less do they censure Virgil for his failure to remove them. To Mrs Norwood, the discrepancies are evidence that it is a mistake to 'integrate' the phases; Virgil's intention was not to present an extrinsically unified picture but rather three pictures, each somehow complete in itself and existing in its own right. The three phases correspond to the distinction made by the pontifex Scaevola between the religion of the citizen, the poet, and the philosopher; they satisfy in turn the primitive, the moral, and the rational or philosophical facet of man's nature.⁵ For Otis, what matters most is the significance of the three divisions in Virgil's overall artistic and philosophic scheme. He regards the mythological Hades as oriented toward Aeneas' past; the philosophical, in which he, unlike Mrs Norwood, includes the great vision of Rome's history, toward the future. Tartarus and Elysium, though for him too the second main division, are 'summarily treated and constitute an obviously secondary part of the narrative'; still, they illustrate the rule of Justice, an idea by which Virgil must have set great store.⁶

Undeniably, this tripartite division has its attractions. Some impressions and observations advanced in its support are not open to dispute. It may seem obvious, for example, that in 540 ff., before the description of Tartarus, something new is announced, and that the meeting with Anchises leads up to revelations of great significance. In fact, the tripartite structure may acquire additional support from the historical development of Greek conceptions regarding man's fate after death that underlie this scheme.

Mrs Norwood labels the first division (295?-547) as 'Homeric', and it doubtless corresponds to the Underworld of the Homeric *nekyia* in *Odyssey* 11. For—if we except *Od.* 11. 568-600 (on which presently)—there is no mention in it of punishment or reward; the characters are *ἀμενηνὰ πάθηνα*, neither acting nor suffering; in the absence of new experiences, they dwell on what happened to them while they were alive. All this is in accord with the 'Homeric' section of *Aeneid* 6. For us, Book 11 of the *Odyssey* is the only literary document to embody

⁵ Norwood, op. cit., 18. *Religio civilis* (as defined after Varro in Aug. *Civ. Dei* 6. 5, 254. 14 Dombart-Kalb) cannot be equated with Tartarus and Elysium, nor should I consider the Homeric section 'a world which a savage could understand perfectly'. These, however, are minor infelicities. On the inconsistencies and contradictions in the Virgilian Underworld, I find myself in complete agreement with Mrs Norwood's approach.

⁶ See esp. pp. 297 ff.

this stage of Greek beliefs regarding the hereafter. We need not here discuss the probability that there were other *katabaseis* of the same type.

Odyssey 11. 568–600, however, which includes the ordeals of Tityus, Tantalus, and Sisyphus, is conceived in a different spirit;⁷ and even though the motif of punishment is here confined to a few mythical figures of exceptional hubris, we have a right to look upon it as heralding a new outlook, the second of the three stages that we distinguish. The idea of punishment and reward after death used to be associated in particular with the Orphic movement.⁸ In the present stage of research, it is difficult—and perhaps unnecessary—to trace it to a specific group, although mysteries and itinerant prophets doubtless played a role in propagating these beliefs. Everybody is familiar with the reflections of this view in Pindar, in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and in Platonic myths.⁹ Conceivably, the bliss in Elysium or the Islands of the Blessed was originally promised only to those who had earned it by participating in certain strictly defined rituals; the extension to the *εσθλοί* (good) or the *εὐσεβείς* (pious) may be a secondary development.¹⁰ We do not know at what time groups or categories began to be set up both for those who merited Elysium and for the wicked whose conduct consisted them to Tartarus. The poetic *katabasis* recently discovered on a papyrus,¹¹ which includes an extensive listing of categories on both sides, seems to have originated in the Hellenistic centuries; yet, while the categories are likely to have fluctuated from one account to the next, the idea of classifying the sinners and the elect must go back to an earlier period, at least to the fifth century. The newly found poem has one category in common with Virgil (besides others that are close to his); for, as Max Treu has pointed out, the words αἶ (sc. ψυχᾶι) δὲ βίον σοφίησιν

⁷ The section has in ancient as well as modern times been considered foreign to the original conception of the *nekyia*; see the excellent discussion in D. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 25 ff. and 50; see also G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 236 f.

⁸ Wilamowitz at one time went so far as to declare the sufferers in *Od.* 11 an 'Orphic interpolation' (*Homerische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1884), pp. 149 ff., 199 ff.).

⁹ Passages of importance are *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 480 ff.; Aesch. *Suppl.* 230 ff.; Pind. *O.* 2. 61 ff.; Aristoph. *Ran.* 145 ff., 355 ff.; Plato *Phaed.* 69 C, *Rep.* 363 C f., 364 E; and the 'reflections' in Plato's own myths at the end of *Gorg.*, *Phaed.*, and *Rep.*

¹⁰ Compare from this point of view *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 480–2 with Pind. *O.* 2. 61 ff. and Frag. 129 Snell as introduced by Plut. *De lat. viv.* 1130 C. On *O.* 2. 61 ff., see my note in *Hermes* 96 (1968), 503 ff.

¹¹ For all purposes the *editio princeps* of the poem is R. Merkelbach's in *Mus. Helv.* 8 (1951), 2 ff.; see esp. cols. II^r, III^r. Cf. also the illuminating discussion of M. Treu in *Hermes* 82 (1954), 24 ff.

ἐκόσμεον ('[the souls] who enhanced life with skills') parallel Virgil's 'inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes' (663).¹²

Finally, what we may call the third historical stage is characterized by its focusing on the soul as the surviving and eternal part of man, by its concomitant insistence on a fundamental difference between the soul and the body, and—in its early phases at least—by its belief in reincarnations. There are good reasons for agreeing with the current opinion which considers Pythagoras as the thinker who established these beliefs.¹³ It is unnecessary to discuss the influence of this outlook on Plato's thought, or the appeal which the doctrine of the soul as a separate entity and its immortality exerted in later centuries; still less need we rehearse the varying definitions and conceptions of the soul in the philosophical schools. Whether or not they accepted the idea of successive incorporations, it was the fate of the soul that was of primary concern for the intellectuals and perhaps even for wider circles.¹⁴

No effort is required to correlate these three stages in the development of Greek thought with the tripartite division of Greek thought with the tripartite division of Virgil's account. Each of the three historical stages is somehow more 'mature' than the preceding one, offering a fuller and more meaningful answer to the question of man's destiny. By embodying the answers in a sequence which corresponds to their successive emergence in the course of Greek speculation, Virgil seems to lead us to ever higher degrees of clarity and understanding; Aeneas and the reader are given a progressive initiation (the *τέλεια* and *ἐποπτικά*, 'the final and full mysteries', materializing in Anchises' revelation). This impression cannot be entirely wrong;¹⁵ yet the support

¹² Treu, op. cit., 25, equates col. III^r. 7 with *Aen.* 6. 663; for other similarities see Merkelbach's annotations on I^r, II^r, and III^r. I should take the view that Virgil knew specimens of this literature but not necessarily this particular poem. See, however, Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 158 f., 163 f.

¹³ Cf. esp. W. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft: Studien zu Pythagoras* (Nuremberg, 1962), pp. 98 ff.; K. von Fritz, s.v. *Pythagoras*, *RE* 47 (1963), 187 ff.; J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and early Pythagoreanism* (Toronto, 1966), pp. 153 ff.; H. S. Long, *A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece* (Princeton, 1948), pp. 13 ff.

¹⁴ The developments as such are familiar, and we cannot here attempt a listing of the countless studies dealing with the conception of the soul in Plato, Stoicism (Posidonius?), later Platonism, etc. There seems to be no synoptic treatment comparable to the final chapter in E. Rohde's *Psyche* (Freiburg, 1897), pp. 263 ff.

¹⁵ Cf. my study, 'Greek Ideas of the Hereafter in Virgil's Roman Epic', *PAPhS* 112 (1968), 8 ff. P. Boyancé, in a fine paper (*REL* 32 (1954), 248) takes a somewhat different line, speaking of 'corrections' which the speech of Anchises makes to the earlier Homeric picture of the Underworld. I am sceptical regarding Treu's attempt (op. cit., 37 ff.) to find in the newly discovered poem a section (III^r) comparable to Anchises' revelation. Even if souls arrive without the 'garment of the body' (III^r. 8; cf. Emped. B 126), it remains

which the three stages of Greek thought lend to the tripartite scheme is deceptive. The three stages have a bearing on the question of Virgil's sources rather than on his own organization of what these sources presented. To be sure, both Mrs Norwood and Otis deprecate an excessive interest in Virgil's sources and try to keep their path clear of its disturbing interference.¹⁶ Should they nevertheless have done more for the reconstruction of Virgil's sources than for the understanding of his own work? Or does the condition of the sources, and thereby the stages of Greek thought which these sources represent, shine through his own design? Should one structural scheme be superimposed upon another? Attractive and fashionable as this hypothesis may be, if put to the test, it does for some hundreds of lines neither harm nor good and in the end breaks down at the same point where the tripartite scheme itself comes to grief. When at 540 ff., the Sybil speaks of the places 'partis ubi se via findit in ambas', one road leading to Tartarus, the other to Elysium, the reader may think of these two regions as complementary. So they ought to be, with or without tripartite scheme. Still, the fact remains that at 637-8 ('his demum exactis ... devenere locos laetos') we pass abruptly from the world of sadness and horror into a totally different one of bliss and joy.

The situation is deceptive also in the case of a specific motif which appears on all three levels and is invoked by Mrs Norwood to strengthen her thesis.¹⁷ Each of the three divisions includes a judgment or something akin to a judgment. Using some of her observations, we may put the matter briefly as follows: in the mythological or Homeric Hades, Minos acts as judge. He does so also in the *Odyssey*, yet in Virgil his functions are somewhat different: he assigns to the shades their 'places'.¹⁸ For there is somewhat better and clearer order than in Homer; each of the groups that Aeneas meets has its *loca*. In the 'second phase', Rhadamanthys has his *durissima regna*, administering justice in Tartarus; he forces the sinners to confess and hands them over to their

doubtful whether rain and hail (III. 9-11) have a purifying function, and there is nothing of a broader cosmological vision (see Treu himself, p. 39).

¹⁶ Norwood, *op. cit.*, 16; Otis, *op. cit.*, 290 n. 1. Otis's critique of Norden (*ibid.*) strikes me as rather 'anachronistic'. A book of 1903 cannot be expected to apply critical methods in vogue sixty years later. Moreover, Norden's very sensitive stylistic observations do much to enhance our perception of the poetic qualities.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, 17. The pertinent passages are 431-5, 566-9, and 739-51.

¹⁸ I infer this from 431, 'nec vero hae ... datae sine iudice sedes', although I understand Bailey's doubts (*op. cit.*, 254 f.); for *crimina discit* (433) suggests a different function. Probably Virgil was familiar with divergent traditions, which he did not reconcile; yet the explanations offered by Butler, *op. cit.*, *ad v.* 431, seem extravagant.

torturers. Finally, in the 'philosophical Hades', there seems to be no individual or personal judge (except for the *deus* of 749 who calls souls to the river Lethe). It is made abundantly clear, however, that each soul expiates its *mala* and is after death treated in accordance with its record: everybody has his individual *manes* (this much we understand from 743). Again, however, what looks like an argument in support of the tripartite division is delusive and will on closer examination reveal the fatal flaw of this theory.

The crucial question may be whether we are entitled to place a major break at (or near) 679, where Aeneas finds his father somewhat apart from the other inhabitants of Elysium. But before we come to this point, it will be well to consider briefly the preceding sections, going some of the way with the sponsors of the tripartite scheme. On the first of the three divisions, they offer somewhat divergent opinions. Otis speaks of the 'Mythological Hades'; Mrs Norwood, of the 'Homeric Underworld'. Otis places the beginning of this section at 264; Cartault, at 426, after the crossing of the Styx; Mrs Norwood appears to waver. The divergences are not fatal to their theory; still, no matter which version we favour, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the population of the regions traversed by Aeneas is far from homogeneous. The Palinurus episode (337-83) has so much in common with the Elpenor episode of the *Odyssey* (11. 51-80) that we can hardly exclude it from the 'Homeric Hades'. Yet Charon and Cerberus,¹⁹ who do not appear in the *nekyia*, introduce something new and strange into the Homeric atmosphere. Moreover, Aeneas, before finding himself securely on Homeric ground, meets some other most unattractive denizens of the Underworld. At the very entrance (*vestibulum ante ipsum*), there are *Luctus, Curae, Morbi, Senectus, Metus, Fames, Discordia*, and other utterly un-Homeric entities (273-84). We can understand how they came to be here. For ghosts, the Underworld is the natural habitat. Even in the *nekyia*, Odysseus fears that he might encounter the *Γοργεῖν κεφαλὴ*, 'Gordon's head' (634); in the *Frogs* (285 ff.), Dionysus does meet the Empusa. Moreover, the Hesiodic *Theogony* places Night and two of her children, Sleep and Death, in the Underworld. With this precedent it would be natural for the poets of *katabaseis* to transfer more of Night's unpleasant offspring, as listed in the *Theogony*, to these dark abodes.²⁰ To sum up, Aeneas has

¹⁹ Charon, 385 ff. (298 ff.); Cerberus, 417 ff. Charon is attested for the *Minyas* (Frag. 1 Kinkel), a somewhat mysterious epic; hence, according to Pausanias (10. 28. 7), his presence on the famous picture of Polygnotus.

²⁰ Cf. Norden, *op. cit.*, 213; Butler, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.* See Hes. *Theog.* 746-66, and for the catalogue of Night's children, which has many items in common with Virgil, *Theog.* 211-

to face an assortment of frightening, ghost-like sights before he enters the Homeric Hades with its human population.

As for this Hades, it is well known that just as the Palinurus episode is inspired by the Elpenor episode of the *nekyia*, so the Dido episode is modelled on Odysseus' meeting with Ajax and the horrifying tale of Deiphobus on Agamemnon's similar report about the treachery of his wife.²¹ What differs in these scenes is the result partly of intervening developments in Greek poetry, partly of Virgil's own creativity. Thus, while in the meeting with Dido attitudes and gestures parallel those of the *nekyia*, the feelings are far more delicate and the effect is far more disturbing. This is Virgil's own poetic achievement; yet that Dido and other heroines known for unhappy love find themselves in a myrtle grove is probably a motif of Hellenistic poetry, which, being deeply interested in erotic subjects, would have treated the sorrow (*curae*) of these heroines with more sympathy than did the author of the *nekyia*.²² There is one notable departure from the Homeric paradigm: unlike Odysseus, who converses at length with Achilles, Ajax, and Agamemnon, Aeneas does not meet any of the outstanding Trojan warriors. There is no Hector, no Polydamas, not even a Paris or a Sarpedon. The *multum fleti* (481) Trojans to whom Aeneas gives much time (yet Virgil remarkably little, 481–8) are rather undistinguished individuals. However, instead of speculating about Virgil's motives for this innovation, let us rather note with Mrs Norwood²³ that all characters in this part of the Underworld are preoccupied with the experiences in their life on Earth; recollection of these determines their mood and actions. (This is true even of 489–93, where the Greek warriors, instinctively obeying the impulse of fear, take to flight, an episode which the ancient reader need not have considered an interlude of comic relief.)

What matters next, in Tartarus and Elysium, is not life as lived and experienced by the individuals but as judged by a higher power. Crime is punished and merit rewarded. But is there in this respect no difference

32. *deiquara*, 'objects of fear?' (whatever this word may mean) in Hades are attested for the *Nostoi* and the *Minyas* (Paus. 10. 28. 7).

²¹ Cf., after many other scholars, Otis, op. cit., 292. Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 4), p. 151, who deals interestingly with philosophical interpretations of the Homeric Hades, considers Virgil as influenced by these interpretations and feels entitled to speak of an 'accord' between the mythical and the philosophical life after death.

²² Cf. Otis's perceptive observations, op. cit., 292, on differences between Virgil's treatment and his models; for the myrtle grove, see Norden, op. cit., 250, and Butler, op. cit., ad vv. 440–76.

²³ Op. cit., 18 (see also p. 19 on the different conception of Tartarus).

between Tartarus and Elysium? We should, at this point, be in the second division of the tripartite scheme. Like Pindar, like the Greek *katabaseis*, including the newly found poem, and like Plato in his myths, Virgil too brings out the contrast between the population of these two regions, chiefly by means of the classes or categories of which we have spoken. On the one side are '... quibus inuisi fratres dum vita manebat ... aut qui divitiis soli incubuere repertis ... quique ob adulterium caesi', *et al.*; on the other, 'quique sacerdotes casti dum vita manebat, / quique pii vates et Phoebos digna locuti, ... quique sui memores alios fecere merendo'.²⁴ Since the discovery of the papyrus, we know even more definitely that this technique is a traditional form. The contrast is bound to be felt by the reader, but what is its function in Virgil's own design? Does it serve to pull Tartarus and Elysium together or to set them far apart?

Before we reach the five lines (660–4) which enumerate the classes of the elect, we have been transported into surroundings far more beautiful than anything on Earth—and the complete opposite of all that we have seen or heard before. Surely at 637 f., 'his demum exactis ... devenere locos laetos et amoena virecta', we are passing from one world and one atmosphere into another, diametrically different one. We leave behind the realm of sadness and horror and enter the realm of bliss; from 'loca lenta situ, nox profunda, tristes sine sole domus, loca turbida',²⁵ and the even more appalling places of punishment and torture, we move on to *loci laeti* resplendent with the light of sun and stars. There is a definite break at 637; a sharp dividing line cuts across the section 548–678, which the current theory happily treats as a unit, making it the second main division in its tripartite scheme.

We must beware of putting one hard and fast scheme in the place of another. Yet Elysium is, after all, the goal of Aeneas' wanderings through Hades. It is here that he was bidden to find his father (5. 734 ff.). The verses 'largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit / purpureo; solemque suum, sua sidera norunt' (640–1), give our emotions and our imagination a radically new orientation. The *strepitus Acherontis avari* is *sub pedibus*; we are no longer in the Underworld. The opposition of past and future, on which Otis lays much stress, is less conspicuous than the opposition of darkness and light.²⁶

²⁴ 608–14, 621–4, 660–4.

²⁵ 462, 534; cf. 268 ff.

²⁶ Otis, op. cit., 293 ff., 296, and 297. The importance of the opposition between darkness and light is recognized by Mrs Norwood, op. cit., 20. Cf. also K. Büchner, s.v.

The horrors of Tartarus are in no way lessened—in fact they become more concentrated and intense—by being reported in the speech of the Sibyl. (If Aeneas had gone from one sufferer to the next, learning about the crime and fate of each, the effect would not be the same.)²⁷ The gruesome story of Deiphobus' maltreatment may have been deliberately placed last in the Homeric Hades, to form a kind of prelude to greater terrors. But now at 637, a happy and relaxed atmosphere envelops us. The style is sublime, conveying the assurance of undisturbed enjoyment. All that is pleasant in life is here preserved; all imperfections are absent.

After once entering Elysium we never in Book 6 leave it. The revelation about the fate of the souls as well as the vision of Rome's greatness are presented in Elysium. It is true that Anchises has his place somewhat apart from the other heroes and groups whom Aeneas sees on arriving in this region. Still, the Sibyl has every right to expect Anchises in the *amoena piorum concilia*.²⁸ With the exception of Orpheus and Musaeus—figures most appropriate to Elysium—the only individuals mentioned as present (650) are 'Ilusque Assaracusque et Troiae Dardanus auctor', Trojans of earlier generations and by this token the obvious company in which to look for Anchises. In fact, since Anchises calls the heroes of Roman history to whom he introduces his son 'Dardania proles' and 'animae nostrum(que) in nomen iturae' (756, 758),²⁹ continuity extending from *Ilus(que) Assaracusque* ... to Anchises and beyond him to the future leaders of Rome would seem to be more important than the opposition between past and future.

For the separate place in Elysium which Virgil has assigned to Anchises various reasons may be suggested, but it suffices that we have not passed outside the confines of Elysium. As Musaeus helping Aeneas and the Sibyl to find Anchises says (673), there is in Elysium *nulli certa domus* (whereas in the 'Homeric' Hades specific *sedes* were assigned,

Vergilius, RE, ser. 2, 16 (1958), 1388; and J. Peirret, *Virgile* (Paris, 1965), pp. 114 f., who combines the two oppositions and seems to recognize the change of atmosphere after Tartarus.

²⁷ I am unable to agree with Otis's judgement (see above, p. 209) regarding the 'secondary importance' or 'summary' treatment of Tartarus and Elysium. The unparalleled *ὑψος* attained in 577 ff., 585–94, 617–20, and 625–7 makes it impossible to take this view. See also Boyancé, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 158 f. Cf. A. Ruegg, *Die Jenseitsvorstellungen vor Dante* (Einsiedeln, 1945), i. 149.

²⁸ See again 5. 734 ff. Not only the appearance of Anchises at 5. 721 ff., but the whole of Book 5, has, if possible, heightened even more the authority which he possesses throughout the first half of the *Aeneid*.

²⁹ Cf. also 681 ff., 716 ff.

431 ff.). For the rest, we gladly recognize that the 'animae superum(que) ad lumen iturae', which Anchises is found contemplating at 680, introduce a new topic and that their mention here is intended to lead up to another and final revelation about man's life and death. We shall presently study the devices by which we gradually reach this final knowledge. First, however, we may note that Anchises' revelation about the fate of the souls includes the sojourn in Elysium³⁰ but knows nothing of Tartarus. For if the souls too receive 'punishments' (*exercentur poenis*, 739), they are utterly different from those in Tartarus. As described in 739–42, they are actually purifications, and they are temporary, not—like those in Tartarus—eternal. Conversely, as Mrs Norwood has quite correctly observed, 'The judgment of Rhadamanthys (566–7) is confined to the guilty who are destined for Tartarus';³¹ it does not at all extend to Elysium. Unlike the judges in the myth of Plato's *Gorgias* (523 B, 523 E f.),³² Rhadamanthys does not send some souls to the one, others to the other place. If the tripartite scheme has so many holes, it cannot be the last word on Virgil's own composition. He knows the three conceptions of the hereafter but he uses, modifies, and interconnects them for his own purposes. What is preserved of the contrast between Tartarus and Elysium conveys a more fundamental dualism; and, where this contrast is not preserved, we may find our clues for Virgil's own design and original creativity.

In the revelation itself, Platonic and Stoic motifs are combined with others of a different, less philosophical cast, e.g. that souls 'panduntur inanes (!) suspensae ad ventos'.³³ Still, the substance is definitely Platonic; the idea that *noxia corpora tardant* (sc. the souls) and the lines in which Anchises, speaking of the temporary association of souls with bodies, explains 'hinc metuunt cupiuntque dolent gaudentque' (733 ff.), inevitably remind us of the *Phaedo*.³⁴ However, in this instance, it does

³⁰ See below, p. 218.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, 20. Cf. also Bailey, *op. cit.*, 272, 274; Boyancé, *op. cit.* (n. 4), pp. 165 f.; see above, pp. 212–13.

³² Cf. also *Rep.* 614 C, *Phaed.* 113 D ff. (although this passage provides for additional differentiations).

³³ 740–1; the closest parallel I know is Plut. *De gen.* 590 B, where the soul is 'spread out' (*ἐκπεταρυμένη*) like a sail.

³⁴ *Phaed.* 65 B ff.; cf. also 81 A, 82 B, 82 C, 83 B ff. Cf. Servius *ad v.* 703; Butler, *op. cit.*, *ad v.* 733 (see also P. Boyancé, *Études sur le songe de Scipion* (Paris, 1936), pp. 126 ff.). Otis, *op. cit.*, 300, says correctly that Virgil could find most of the thoughts in Plato's own myths or in others written in imitation of them. However, the idea of the *spiritus* (725 ff.), the *igneus vigor* in the *σπέρματα*, 'seeds' (730 f.), and the words used in 747 suggest a concept of *ψυχή*, 'soul', quite different from Plato's immaterial soul. For a Stoic component, cf. Bailey, *op. cit.*, 265, 275 ff., who rightly refers to *Geo.* 4. 219 ff.; and

not suffice to name Virgil's (proximate or ultimate) source. For such thoughts are bound to acquire a new meaning when from a philosophical work written to deprecate man's emotional nature they are transferred to an epic in which almost every episode shows human beings in the grip of desire or hope, fear or grief. Here for once we rise above this view of life, so natural for a poem in the Homeric tradition and so deepened by Virgil's *συμπάσχειν* (sympathy) with his characters, and are taught to regard all experiences of the kind as part of man's mortal nature, not of his true being.

After expounding how the souls are in water, air, and fire cleansed of the evils contracted in the body—the stage which corresponds to the Christian purgatory³⁵—Anchises continues, 'exinde per amplum / mit-timur Elysium et pauci laeta arva tenemus' (743–4; only here, where he mentions Elysium, does Anchises speak in the first person).³⁶ However, the sojourn in Elysium is not the final condition of the souls. As becomes clear in the next lines ('donec longa dies perfecto temporis orbe / concretam exemit labem purumque relinquit / aetherium sensum atque aurai simplicis ignem', 745 ff.), for the *pauci* the purification continues in Elysium until their souls have regained their pristine nature and are again identical with the aether spirit, i.e. the (Stoic) *pneuma* which, as we have learned, keeps the world and all its parts in being.³⁷ All other souls

Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 167 f., who reckons with Antiochus of Ascalon and Varro (cf. Servius *ad v.* 703) as intermediaries.

³⁵ See St Augustine's comments (*Civ. Dei* 21. 13, in a discussion of this Virgilian passage) on the difference between the *purgatoriae poenae* of the Platonists and of the Christians. The most illuminating study of Platonic influences in the formation of the Christian purgatory seems still to be G. Anrich's in *Theologische Abhandlungen: Festgabe für H. J. Holtzmann* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1902), pp. 97 ff. F. Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*⁴ (Paris, 1929), p. 202, explains a picture as showing 'purification by air, water, and fire'. Boyancé's view of Virgil's purgatory (see n. 37) is problematic.

³⁶ We hardly need this additional piece of evidence for Anchises' finding himself in Elysium. The difficulties which Mrs Norwood detects in Anchises' role (op. cit., 21) are of her own making. She decides that Anchises must be in the 'Moral Underworld' and that the 'philosophic introduction to the (historical) review is spoken by him but does not apply to him'. This is at variance with Virgil's own words (743 ff.).

³⁷ Cf. Norden's discussion and his translation of the doctrine into Greek terms, op. cit., 16 f. The different designations of this divine element—*spiritus*, *aura*, *aether*, *ignis*—were clearly a matter of indifference to Virgil. They need not disturb us either; for the Stoic background of all of them, cf. G. Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma* (Paris and Louvain, 1945), as well as M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* (Göttingen, 1948), i. 73 f., 83, and *passim*. Curiously, even the first passage which introduces the (originally medical) *πνεῦμα* (breath) concept into philosophical psychology (Arist. *Gen. an.* 2. 3, 736^b 30–737^a) also refers to the *θερμόν* (warm element) and treats 'the element of the stars' (= *αἰθήρ*, 'heaven') as part of the *σπέρμα* (seed); cf. my paper in *JHS* 77 (1957), 119 ff. For some other observations, cf.

must, after a period of a thousand years, drink of the river of Forgetting and enter new bodies. Virgil does not tell us by what criterion the *pauci* are separated out from 'all' others (*has omnis*, 748), but there can be no doubt that in the doctrine which he adapts the souls that need not re-enter bodies are the best which are thus rewarded for a blameless record.³⁸ Aeneas himself, after all, expresses astonishment (719–21) that any souls should 'desire' a return to *tarda corpora* (he is soon disabused of the idea that it is a matter of their own choice). However, Virgil has the best of reasons for being discreet about qualitative differences between souls. Since those about to begin a new life on Earth are to be the noble figures of Rome's history, any intimation that they are second-class souls would have been the height of tactlessness.

As we have seen, while Elysium has its place in the soul's itinerary, and therefore also in Anchises' initiation of his son into the cosmic secrets, Tartarus does not figure in it at all. Tartarus is a place of no return; 'sedet aeternumque sedebit / infelix Theseus' (617 f.) completely disregards the story which told of his liberation by Heracles. The moral motifs, such as the message, 'discite iustitiam moniti et non temnere divos' (620), the judgment of Rhadamanthys, the punishment inflicted by Zeus for provocation or hubris (582 ff., 592 ff.) have no analogues in the description of Elysium. Although we are free to imagine that some groups, e.g. the *pii vates* (622) or *qui(que) sui memores alios fecere merendo* (664), are in Elysium as reward for their life on Earth, the moral point of view does not at all predominate, and it is only by stretching the concept of morality that we could include *genus antiquum Teucris* or the *magnanimi heroes*, who, to be sure, are *nati melioribus annis* (648 f.),³⁹ in the conception of a just world order. If Orpheus and Musaeus (as is likely enough) originally acquired their place in these Fields of Bliss because they had shown mankind the way to a better life

Boyancé in *Hommages à Georges Dumézil* (= *Collection Latomus* 55 (1960)), pp. 60 ff., esp. 62 ff., 70 f.

³⁸ See, e.g., Plato *Phaed.* 114 B (οἱ ἂν δόξωσι διαφερόντως πρὸς τὸ ὁσιον βίωσαι). See also 114 C, *Rep.* 619 D–E, *Phaedr.* 248 E ff., *Laws* 10; Plut. *De def. or.* 415 B f., *De fac.* 943 A f., 945 A.

³⁹ In Greek literature, the first group of whose translation to the *μακάρων νῆσοι* (Islands of the Blest) we read is, after all, the generation of heroes (Hes. *Op.* 167 ff.). Treu (op. cit., 28 f.) distinguishes, perhaps somewhat too rigidly, both in the newly found poem and in *Aen.* 6, between moral and cultural merits. Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 163 f., distinguishes the warrior heroes from the other *élus*. Unlike Virgil, the papyrus introduces no individual (mythical) figures in Tartarus or Elysium. Does Virgil reflect an earlier scheme? See my comments, op. cit. (n. 15).

and to salvation,⁴⁰ Virgil completely ignores this aspect, using Orpheus instead to create with his lyre and music the atmosphere of happiness and enjoyment (645 ff.). In short, while the report about Tartarus combines description and explanation, ordeals and the meaning of these ordeals in a divine scheme, the account of Elysium is by comparison one dimensional; in 637–65, we only learn what sights present themselves. This time the reason and rationale—the *λόγον διδόναι*—are reserved for later, and it becomes once more clear that it is not possible to sever the links between Elysium and the revelation which defines its place in a comprehensive cosmological or theological order.

The language used to describe Elysium has created an aura of festive solemnity, which, even if an episode of more personal character intervenes (679–702), is the appropriate atmosphere for the sublime revelation of Anchises. V. Pöschl and others⁴¹ have compared this revelation with the initiation into the secrets of the cosmos which Scipio Aemilianus receives in Cicero's *Somnium*. The setting of that initiation is an *illustris et clarus locus* (*Somn.* 11). These words would be equally applicable to the environment in which Aeneas is introduced to the divine power operative in the world and the divine quality of the souls. What is essential for both conceptions is that the recipient of the initiation and, with him, the reader have been transported into a realm far superior in beauty and dignity to ordinary life, into a world from which everything *mortale et caducum* is absent (*Somn.* 17). Whether we consider the environment, the political-historical motif, the philosophy of soul, or finally the poetic atmosphere, the continuity remains unbroken from the arrival in the *loci laeti* (638).

It may be a slight exaggeration if we describe all encounters with old friends in the 'Homeric Underworld' as distressing, for Aeneas and his Trojan fellow warriors enjoy (*iuvat*, 487) their meeting. Still, sadness certainly is the mood which predominates in these encounters, whereas the reunion in Elysium with Anchises is a joyful experience for both. If the Dido episode reminds us of Ajax' reactions in the *nekyia*, and if there are meaningful parallels between the fate of Palinurus and Elpenor (as well as between that of Agamemnon and Deiphobus), the meeting of

⁴⁰ Cf. Bailey, op. cit., 272. It is impossible to be sure, for Orpheus with his lyre appears on vase pictures of the Underworld; see J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*³ (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 600 ff. Still, in the *Aeneid* he is associated not with Eurydice (as in the *Georgics*) but with Musaeus, and the latter too is prominent (645 ff., 667 ff.); cf. Plato *Rep.* 363 C, 364 E f.

⁴¹ Norden, op. cit., 47 f.; Butler, op. cit., 35 and *passim*; V. Pöschl, *Die Dichtkunst Virgils* (Innsbruck and Vienna, 1960), p. 45; Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 34), pp. 38 ff.

Aeneas with his father is comparable both to Odysseus' reunion with his mother (152–224) and to his consultation of Teiresias (90–150).⁴² With the former it shares the intimate, personal quality; with the latter, the imparting of authoritative knowledge. Moreover, it was for the purpose of seeing his father and learning about the future that Aeneas had ventured into Hades. It is the only meeting for which we are prepared, all others being unexpected. In this respect, as well as in the joy and satisfaction experienced by father and son, it forms a contrast to the meetings in the former half, and it is certainly significant enough to balance them. Once more, the tripartite scheme proves irrelevant or inadequate. Weighty elements of Virgil's own composition suggest the overriding importance of a dichotomous pattern.

On finally meeting his father, Aeneas finds him engaged in contemplating 'animas superum(que) ad lumen ituras' and learning in the same act about the future of his progeny and of Rome ('omnemque suorum/forte recensebat numerum carosque nepotes', etc., 679 ff.). Thus Virgil at once combines with the personal motif of the reunion between father and son indications pointing ahead to the philosophical and to the historical subjects soon to be treated. Very naturally, Anchises and Aeneas first surrender themselves to the full enjoyment of the desired reunion; yet intense as the feelings of joy on both sides are, Virgil has concentrated their expression into relatively few lines. After twenty lines (at 703), we are called back to the souls ready for a new life on Earth. Aeneas, astonished at the gathering he sees in the valley of Lethe, asks for an explanation (710–12). Anchises' answer once more combines the religious and the historical aspects of the reincorporation (713–15, 716–18). Since it was Virgil's plan to conclude Book 6 with the panorama of Rome's future, the religious (or philosophical) topic must be taken up first, and we understand why Aeneas' next question, indifferent to the progeny motif and to the happy prospects of his landing in Italy, focuses on the return into bodies, thereby leading up to the philosophical revelation. Still 'quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?' (721) is not only from the compositional point of view the right question for him to ask. The astonishment is amply justified as long as we still consider ourselves in the beautiful surroundings of Elysium (this point need probably no longer be laboured). Yet the question also expresses the ethos of the

⁴² Cf. (also for what follows) Norden's 'Schlussbetrachtung', op. cit., 357 ff., 360; and the very detailed investigation of G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 107 ff., although not all of Knauer's observations are equally to the point. Whether *Od.* 24. 320–55 (Odysseus and Laertes) also served as a model for the reunion of father and son in *Aen.* 6 remains uncertain; like Knauer, p. 127 n. 1, I fail to find close similarities.

man for whom life and the task which destiny has imposed upon him are a burden rather than a joy.⁴³ The motif of the *proles meorum* (717), in abeyance while Anchises speaks as hierophant of the cosmic laws, becomes dominant at 752 or 756 (*Dardaniam prolem*) and remains so for the rest of the Book.

Anchises' first answer (713-18) has reaffirmed the identity, known to us ever since 679 ff., of the souls to be reincarnated with the great figures of Rome's history. There was no need for Virgil in the metaphysical section or in the subsequent display of Rome's glory to emphasize this identity. He may well have considered it an advantage to treat each of these subjects without reference to the other. How little he has done to integrate them⁴⁴ and how such integration might have been achieved becomes clear if we once more turn to the *Somnium Scipionis*, which in the midst of the cosmic vision (*Somn.* 13) provides the assurance: 'nihil est enim illi principi deo, qui omnem mundum regit, quod quidem in terris fiat, acceptius quam concilia coetusque hominum iure sociati, quae civitates appellantur; harum rectores et conservatores hinc profecti huc revertuntur.' ('Nothing that happens on earth is more acceptable to that chief of gods who rules the whole universe than the councils and gatherings of men associated by law, which are called states; their directors and preservers come from this place and return here.') It is probably characteristic of Virgil that he kept the world of politics apart from the religious and philosophical.

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil is the poet of Rome's greatness—Book 6 includes the message, 'tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento', etc. (851 ff.)—but he is more than this. He also is the poet whose feelings respond with a warmth unknown before his days to the sorrows and struggles of individuals, who would wonder whether such trials were all that the divine world order had allotted to man, and who would be receptive to the Platonic and Stoic teachings about release from the world and the return of soul to its sublime origin. Even in his national epic, his sympathy with the individual in his physical or emotional sufferings manifests itself everywhere. In Book 6 it demands a separate place. Only after we have learned the truth about the meaning of life in a divine world scheme may the galaxy of Roman warriors and statesmen display itself before our eyes.

⁴³ Cf. Otis, op. cit., 300.

⁴⁴ Pace Otis, op. cit., 301. See also R. Lamacchia, *RhM* 107 (1964), 268 ff., for an excellent statement and a not-so-convincing solution of the problem. Pöschl, op. cit., 39 f., is important.

In the presentation of Rome's glorious future the perspective from beyond is maintained; yet the merits and virtues of this life come more and more to predominate. When, in the passage which concludes the historical vision, the premature death of Marcellus is lamented in moving verses of superlative beauty, the emphasis is on what his life would have meant for Rome. No thought is given to the greater bliss which awaits noble minds of such distinction in the hereafter.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ See 860-86.