

# Commentary

Aeneid 1.1 – 1.123

## *Introductory Note*

The first book of the Aeneid begins the epic with a tone of frustration and sorrow. After a brief introductory section and the invocation of the muse, Virgil immediately goes on to tell his readers about the wrath of Juno and her hate for Troy, which is then substantiated by the deathly storm she conjures up with Aeolus's help. Thus we are forced to look at Aeneas's story first as one of tribulation. We are forced to come to grips with the fact that, although Rome grew to be a majestic entity, it was born from sorrow; it has its origins in suffering.

This theme, of course, has ramifications in terms of comparison between Roman culture and African-American culture, as this is a common thread of each. As one reads of the ordeals Aeneas had to undergo at sea, and how he was forced into Carthage, trapped in a foreign land, one could easily be reminded of the African slave trade of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Aeneas's story, marked by human suffering on his own part and that of his men, differs somewhat from the stories of past epic heroes in its denial of perfection. Aeneas is characterized from the very beginning by his imperfections, by his inability to counteract his fate and his obligation to accept the sorrow all around him. Taking Aeneas to be Virgil's conception of the epitomized Roman, this says something about Roman culture itself. In Rome, it seems, the most extolled was not he who won every battle and excelled in every field, but rather he who deals with pain and survives in the face of it. Thus, the key value was not perfection but the ability to deal with imperfection.

African-American culture, too, puts much emphasis on surviving sorrow as a cultural value. In this passage I reference two major concepts that demonstrate this value, that of *payin' dues* and that of *soul*, and those will be explicated when they are brought up in the passage.

**1f.** Again, the epic begins with a brief outline of the pains Aeneas had to go through to found Rome successfully. Virgil begins the poem with the word "arma", to emphasize this theme from the start, so I too decided to begin my poem with a word concerning war, "burners", an alternate word for weaponry. In addition, Virgil refers to Aeneas as "iactatus" and "passus", or "tossed 'round" (4) and "crapped out" (7), two words that inspire sympathy and a certain degree of pathos.

Yet, Virgil does add that Aeneas is "fato profugus" or driven by "God's will" (3) to his fate, and thus we are forced to see the suffering of Aeneas, about to be told, as a work of the gods, and thus for a greater purpose. To emphasize this greater purpose the paragraph is ended with the image of "altae moenia Romae", a transferred epithet translated as "Rome high walls". Thus, even though the beginning passage is that of sorrow, we are reminded of what the sorrow is for and why it came about: all for the founding of a great culture.

**1. singin’:** In this passage I have used apostrophes liberally to denote the omission of letters we would normally find in Standard English (SE), although, as a friend astutely observes, if African American English (AAE) is indeed its own language, then these should be unnecessary, the main problem in this case being that, since AAE is a mainly spoken language, there has yet to be a standardized written system.

**2. been’:** Also written as “ben”, “been”, or “*BIN*” in other sources, this aspectual marker denotes that an action has taken place in the remote past, or that a regular action or state began a long time ago and begins today. It is characterized usually by emphatic speech, hence the apostrophe immediately succeeding.

**6. hatin’ on:** I thought the epithet *hatin’* to describe Juno was particularly appropriate, although the text uses *saevae*, often translated into SE as *savage*. To *hate on* somebody, as my dictionary defines it, is “to display, usually through words, envy, resentment, or opposition to someone else’s success in any area or endeavor.” Indeed, it can be argued that Virgil used Juno as a character for this very purpose, to act as a barrier to Aeneas’s success and to ensure conflict and a source of trial.

**8. dun:** Another one of the aspectual markers, which were of particular interest to me, as they seemed the most clear syntactical difference between AAE and SE, *dun*, which is written as “done” or “d\_n” in other sources, indicates that an action occurred recently, or, in this case, the completion of an action. I used “dun” here as a way of emphasizing how difficult “found[ing] his city and [taking] his gods to Latium” was for Aeneas.

**11f.** The invocation of the muse, along with the use of first person in the first line (“I’m singin’” (1)) brings to mind a story told orally. Thus, Virgil seems to be emulating something of a read aloud, a convention more prevalent in earlier times. This oral tradition is also found in African-American culture, as evidenced by the lack of a standardized written system for AAE, cf. 1.

**13. playa hata:** Again Juno’s fury is emphasized. Like *hatin’ on*, *playa hata* is defined as one who resents another’s success.

**14. soul:** This is an important word choice in my translation. The text has “*insignem pietate*”, or “distinguished by his hard work and dedication to the gods”. *Pietas* is a major theme for Virgil: it is Aeneas’s chief characteristic (Indeed, placed on the tenth line, it is one of the first traits of his we learn of) and he used it as the pinnacle of pride within the Roman community. Thus, *pietas* was the ultimate Roman quality, and the best of Romans would possess it. Thus, my job was to find an analogical trait for the African-American community. I chose *soul*, which my dictionary defines as “the essence of life; feeling, passion, emotional depth – all of which are believed to be derived from struggle, suffering, and having participated in the Black Experience. Having risen above suffering, a person gains *soul*”. Obviously, this is an important term, for this translation, for the study of AAE, and for African-American culture itself. One source cites such suffering as the reason for the advent of AAE, which it in fact calls “Spoken Soul”. It quotes author Claude Brown as calling AAE “that ceaselessly and relentlessly driving rhythm

that flows from poignantly spent lives”. Toni Morrison seconds this notion, saying “the range of emotions and perceptions I have had access to as a black person... are greater than those of people who are [not]”. It seems, rather tragically, that suffering is a very part of African American culture, that the quintessential African-American experience is one of trials, somewhat analogous to those of Aeneas. Yet, the flipside is the triumph and richness that is considered to come from these trials. This is *soul*: it is a way for Black Americans to own their American experience, and to retain cultural uniqueness in the fact of oppression.

*Pietas* and *soul* both, then, share a common relationship with suffering. *Pietas* is what drives Virgil’s Aeneas to undergo sorrow. It is the trait that gets Aeneas through the day. Similarly, *soul* for many African-Americans seems to be the driving force, the aspect that makes being African-American something to celebrate, despite the oppression and prejudice that come as part of the package. Thus, considering the fact that the most revered trait of each culture deals with suffering, it is interesting to note that both cultures indeed seem to have been born from suffering. One could hypothesize, in this case, that the way in which a culture was founded affects what that culture becomes. In this case, because both cultures had to endure suffering to be founded, both cultures ended up extolling those who dealt with sorrow above all others.

**pay... dues:** Another key cultural point. The text reads “adire labores”, or “to undertake labors”, here translated as “to pay so many dues” because of the cultural significance of the phrase. It is defined as “to pay the cost of living one’s own life; from a belief that life exacts a price – in the form of emotional and/or physical hardships – that is, dues. Everybody has to pay this cost; nobody gets life for free. Paying dues is an inevitable obligation of the human condition”. Again resurfaces the cultural ideal of surviving troubles, as described in the preceding note.

**20f.** Thus begins the antagonization of Carthage, which is developed later in the epic. They are a powerful enemy, “rich in money and tough in war” (20), two characteristics Romans would have respected, and yet they are portrayed in the negative, as it is noted that “Juno loved that city more than any other” (21 and 22). The text reads that Carthage is “Italiam contra”, which can be translated both as “across from Italy” and “against Italy”, creating something of a pun. I attempted to keep this pun by adding “corner to corner” (19), a slight reference to boxing matches. This is a foreshadowing of troubles between Romans and Carthaginians, which indeed had been substantiated in the Punic Wars. I emphasize this enmity to highlight a possible connection that can be made, when taking the Romans to represent Africans or African Americans.

**20. be:** The last aspectual marker, *be* is used to indicate that the following verb happens habitually or periodically, but not necessarily at the moment of utterance.

**27 race:** The text reads *progeniem* in this case, which is often translated into SE as *race*, although it often does not mean race by modern standards (i.e. a group of all the people in the world that share a common skin color), though the word does conjure interesting parallels in this case.

**29 gangsta:** The dictionary says this term is “used to refer to any event, activity, behavior, person, or object that represents rejection of mainstream society’s standards”. The term highlights the oppositional quality of African-American culture, further discussed in Spoken Soul, whereby Black culture is defined in part by the rejection of White culture, an ideal that stems from years of oppression and hence the reluctance of Blacks to “act White”.

**30 dead it:** The term might sound odd to ears accustomed to SE, but it is defined as to “kill it”

**41 steady:** Another interesting syntactical construction. *Steady* implies the continuousness or intensity of an action, in this case both, since *hatin’* is something Juno does quite often and with great intensity throughout the poem.

**47 Such... be:** This line sums up what has been said so far, and what has yet to come. Written in the text as “*tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem*”, or “so great an effort it was to found the Roman lineage”, this line’s only alteration was the switching of “*erat*”, “it was”, to “had to be”. I did this to emphasize the necessity of human suffering in order to found a culture as enriched and “soulful” as that of African America.

**49f.** After a description of hardships to come, the beginning of the next section seems lighthearted and playful. The chosen diction is meant to instill this sense, to provide a brief glimmer of the contentment felt by Aeneas and his men, which is then made tragic when it is stripped away and replaced by desperation.

**54 What I doin’:** In many cases in AAE, the auxiliary verb is dropped for questions.

**56 cock sucka:** Though the epithet sounds harsh to SE ears, it is a bona fide term in AAE, with its own entry in the dictionary, which defines it non-literally as an “emasculated male”. The preponderance of such insulting epithets aimed to assign feminine qualities to males indicates a greater cultural value for men retaining their virility. This value is shown to be a part of Roman culture as well in separate passages of the Aeneid, such as 12.97 and 4.215 (both not translated).

**57 Ain’t... me:** The text reads quite differently as “*quippe vetor fatis*”, or “I am of course forbidden by the fates”. I chose this different translation to further characterize Juno as acting out of her place in heaven, assuming she is more powerful than she is, another quality scorned within Black Talk, often because of their association with Whites, as seen by words such as *saditty*, *mannish*, *H.N.I.C.*, and *Ms. Ann*, and the expression “*That’s mighty White of you!*”.

**59 everything:** In the translation I often write “thing” as “thang”, because the dictionary seems to do the same, as in defining “*It ain’t a thang*”.

**62 she:** refers to Pallas, another name for Athena. Though it is unclear in the text, Roman readers would have gotten the meaning.

**63 flames:** The flames of Jove, or Juppiter, refer to his thunderbolts, another cultural reference that would have been clear to those reading at the time. It is worth noting here that for the most part I tried to retain the integrity of the text in situations like these, although it was suggested to me that I transfer all terms to their modern or AAE counterparts, such as treating *ensis*, literally sword, as a gun, or *navis*, literally ship, as a car.

**68f.** AAE rules go by “negative agreement”, in contrast to SE where one negative serves the entire clause. I found this useful here because it provides more emphasis, and is most likely a component of AAE that adds to its *soul*.

**71 muthafuckas:** As with *cock sucka*, this term contains less crassness in AAE.

**74 marinatin’:** Means “to ponder over or meditate on”. I had fun attaching culinary epithets to Juno, cf. 40 and 75.

**77 buck wild:** *Buck wild* implies crazy, as one would become at a party. I liked the imagery the word created, along with the usage of *amp up*, likening the winds to members of a party, as opposed to angry creatures, as Virgil does with words like *furētibus*, or “raging”. Thus, I substituted Roman culture, which is often grim, with African-American culture, which is more often joyful in an unrestrained way.

**80 pen:** refers to a jail, a shortening of penitentiary, as opposed to a fenced off area for animals, although perhaps the two forms are related.

**80f.** In here I used the second person to reinforce the idea originally from the very beginning, of this being a story told by a narrator, not simply some omniscient, incorporeal voice. I do this throughout the translation

**84 coolin’:** Both Latin and AAE, oddly enough, relate temperature with emotional level. In AAE, terms like *cool* or *chill* refer to a low emotional state, a state of calm, whereas Latin words like *ardens*, or *exurere*, “burning” or “to kindle”, respectively, denote heightened emotional states.

**87 be dun:** The combination of these two aspectual markers can mean different things, but in this case it is used for the result in a conditional statement.

**98 rageddy-ass:** This construction is actually a combination of two lexical structures in AAE, *rageddy* and *-ass*, the former referring to anything that is perceived as inadequate or illegitimate, and the latter being a suffix added on to adjectives for emphasis.

**100 wack:** Like *rageddy*, *wack* refers to things that are sub par or not deserving of respect. In the text, Juno never actually denigrates the gods of Troy in this particular instance, though she does apply the term “victos” or “defeated”, which can be taken to be an insult or a simple statement of fact. I thought that such an addition would add to the

monologue, first of all by making Juno sound more belligerent, and secondly by demonstrating that Juno hates not only the Trojans themselves, but their very culture, that her grudges transcend a simple vengeance to full-fledged racism.

**115 drop:** Now that *drop* has been used several times, I thought it might be helpful give the exact definition, which is “to enlighten, inform, explain”.

**116 down for you:** The original text says, more elaborately, that “mihi iussa capessere fas est”, “for me it is divine law to obey your commands”, but I simplified the concept, substituting the idiom “down for” someone which denotes loyalty.

**127 Eurus and Notus:** Both of these names refer to winds, as does Africanus (129)

**134f.** In the place of *heavens*, the text uses “caelumque diemque”, literally meaning “both the sky and the day”, although *caelum* can refer to heaven as well. I dropped *diemque* for counts of irrelevance and chose to interpret *caelum* as heaven, accentuating the concept that Juno is attempting to undermine heaven’s power in this instance. Since the fates were all Aeneas had to his advantage in the situation, such an image might have more effect.

**140 Trojan... comin’:** Virgil, too, gives this message a line to itself. There are, in fact, many cases where the self-containedness of a line is use to give the line more power. When Virgil uses such a device, I normally do as well.

**143f.** This is Aeneas’s first comment within the epic, and it casts him in what might be construed as an unflattering light. He is seen essentially in supplication, yearning to be somewhere else. This contributes to Aeneas’s unheroicism. Whereas a hero in a different epic, instead of begging for mercy, might use supernatural power to turn the situation to his advantage, Aeneas is more human. He is a great human, but a human nonetheless. Thus, he will undergo desperation and suffering, but he will do grow stronger from the occasion and will not give up.

Another quality Aeneas demonstrates here is his cultural pride. He wishes to have died fighting for his country, thus he shows that he is not afraid of death itself, but of death without utility. He yearns to die back at home, in the *hood*, where he feels his spirit is, and he reveres past Trojans.

**145 hood:** Though most speakers of SE would define *the hood* as any inner-city ghetto, Black Talk defines it as any “neighborhood, especially where you live or have grown up; your roots and a place where you feel welcome and at home”. Thus, the term is appropriate in regards to Troy.

**145f.** The text does not include Latin counterparts of terms like *you know what uhm sayin’*, *brotha*, and *dawg*, because they are terms that foster unity amongst the speaker and the addressees, adding to the idea of cultural solidarity.

**154 dome piece:** A *dome* is a word for a head, and thus a *dome piece* refers to a hat, or in this case a helmet.

**155f.** The last image of Aeneas's speech is alarmingly analogous to his current situation.

**158 shit:** I found this word particularly useful because, as the dictionary states, it "can refer to almost anything", but I used it for the most part in reference to Latin *res*, which has similar properties.

**157f.** These are the *dues* that the Romans had to pay in order to found Roman culture.

**168 all in the shores face:** This is an AAE term essentially meaning "to accost someone", a type of personification to increase intensity. Virgil too does this with the word *furit*, to rage.

**174 Lord... sight:** The Latin, "miserabile visu", includes no entreaty to a god, but I found the rhythm worked better with it in AAE, and also sounded more authentic.

**175 It was all:** This construction is a combination of an existential *it*, not unlike a dummy subject "there" in SE, with the word *all*, together meaning that the following happenings were quite common in the current situation.

**187 bad:** The dictionary simply defines *bad* as "good".

**179f.** As Syed points out, since each Roman was supposed to identify with Aeneas, putting the whole scene through Aeneas's eyes would heighten the pathos.

**189 dividends:** The Latin word used is *gaza*, meaning "treasure". I used in this instance the AAE *bread*, meaning specifically money, and *shit*, which denotes all other possessions regularly associated with treasure. I used both to help bring about the imagery that Troy's past is being lost in the storm, foreshadowing that the new Troy (i.e. Rome) will not simply be a carbon copy of the old one; instead it will be something new. This relates nicely with the rise of African-American culture.

**195 souls:** By using the term *soul* in this line, I hoped to remind readers what all the suffering that just occurred will contribute to. While it was painful to the Trojan settlers, it was essential in the molding of Roman culture, and likewise for African-American culture.

#### Aeneid 1.148 – 1.156

##### *Introductory Note*

This is a small passage, and in a way it was included in this translation by mistake. However, it does show an important common trait between African-American

culture and that of Rome. One major difference I encountered over the course of this project is that, whereas Rome was known for its stoicism, and in a way the suppression of extreme emotion, African-American culture seems to let its emotion show, as evidenced by such cultural phenomena as *shoutin'* and *testifyin'*. However, these refer mostly to the expression of positive emotion, like joy or rapture, as opposed to negative emotion, like sadness or anger. It would seem that to a certain extent, the acquisition of *soul* and the concept of *payin' dues* would imply the suppression of negative emotion, an ideal that the following passage supports. In it, Neptune calms the storm that Aeolus brought forth in the first passage. It describes Neptune doing so with an analogy, comparing him to someone I thought both Roman culture and African-American culture would value.

**200 caps:** The dictionary defines *bus' a cap* as “to shoot a gun”. I thus inferred that a *cap* referred to a bullet. While of course when Virgil first wrote the story *caps* were not yet existent, I thought that this would be an appropriate transgression from my attempts to retain the chronological integrity, so as to sound more colloquial. Since the narrator is not describing the actions of Neptune, but rather comparing him to someone else, I thought the term would be innocuous, since in theory the narrator is narrating in real time.

**204 heavy:** Black Talk defines this term as referring to someone with “good leadership skills”, which I thought appropriate here.

**nigga:** I thought for a long time about whether or not I would allow myself to use this word. After all, regardless of the race of the narrator I have constructed, I as a person am in no place to use such a word. However, I have allowed myself to do so, on the grounds outlined by my dictionary, which differentiates between the word *nigga* and a similar word ending instead in *-er*. While this *-er* word can be used by Whites as an insult or by Blacks as a positive epithet, *nigga* exclusively denotes the latter.

**207 on it:** Whereas the text simply says “ille regit dictis animos et pectora mulcet”, “that man rules the souls with his words and strokes the chests”, I prefaced the statement by saying the person is *on it*, or “on top of the situation”, to reinforce this theoretical persons leadership qualities.

**211f.** At last, the sky is open again and the gods above can see what havoc Juno has caused while their vision was blocked.

#### Aeneid 1.157 – 1.209

##### *Introductory Note*

The following passage emphasizes an idea brought forth in the last one, concerning the concept of *paying dues* in stride and not giving up at the face of adversity. Aeneas's men, here, having lost most of their mates, and having been forced to land on foreign shores, do not sit idly and morn their tribulations. Instead, they get to work and

do what they can to survive. They accept their *dues* and work to right them. Thus, again, the Trojans are seen as fallible human beings with the capacity to suffer, but with the wherewithal to deal with the suffering and make the best of a given situation. The passage reaches its climax with Aeneas's motivational speech, which not only charges his men, but also gives reference to trials they have already endured, and then concludes on a sorrowful and very revealing note.

**217 homeboys:** The dictionary defines *homeboy* as either “a fellow gang member”, or “a Black person”. Perhaps, in this case, I will leave it ambiguous as to which definition is used. The Latin has *Aeneadae*, or simply “Aeneas's men”.

**219 turns:** One phenomenon in AAE is to use what's called the syntactical *-s* when one is telling a story. Since Virgil uses the present tense in this case as well, (*vertuntur*, or “they are turned”), I thought the use of the syntactical *-s* might work.

**220f.** This ephrastic description of a harbor has seen many languages. First in Greek by Homer, to describe a port in Ithaca (*Od.* 13.96f), then to Latin by Virgil, and now to AAE.

**228 dark and rich:** The text has the word *atrum*, meaning dark, with connotations of gloominess or death. I attempted to avert this connotation by adding the *rich* and turning *dark* into a positive word.

**231 Quiet as it's kept:** A common idiom in AAE that expresses validity and privihood.

**238f.** Note that, while there is a tinge of dejection amongst the Trojans, they are still completing the work they need for survival.

**245 had soaked up:** In AAE, it is common enough to exclude the relative pronoun when its antecedent is in an objective position, as *food* is in this case.

**247f.** Again, the final line is indicative of the situation at large, and sums up the point of the preceding section.

**250 for to:** This is a construction I picked up from reading the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar, who wrote mostly in AAE. However, in my ignorance, I am not sure that it is still used today, as his poetry is from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The construction is also present in the famous song “Swing Home, Sweet Chariot”

**251 could he find:** It is common practice in AAE to retain the original word order when transplanting a question into a declarative sentence, hence “see / could he find...”, as opposed to SE “see / if he could find...”; cf. 254.

**268 struttin':** The term is related to *soul*, as it is defined as “soulful, rhythmic walking”. It does not necessarily carry the same connotations of egotism present in SE.

**270 crazy:** This term, of course, is an idiom. The word *crazy* implies something done in great numbers.

**272 calmin'... inside:** This is a reference to the analogy used to describe Neptune in the preceding passage. Virgil uses the same words to describe each occasions: “pectora mulcet”, or “he strokes the chests”

**274f.** In this monologue Aeneas reveals what a hard journey it has been for the Trojans, and for himself. What is masked as motivational descriptions of all the Trojans have been through already has the opposite affect on the readers, who realize that suffering is not just a series of random occurrences for the Romans, but has almost become a part of their lives. Thus, I hope to deepen the parallel between Romans and African-Americans. To truly have *soul*, one must have lived a life of oppression. Up until now, the reader has no knowledge of events past besides the storm. In this speech, Aeneas sheds some light on the hard past, which becomes even more developed in the second book. Thus, I put forth the argument that the Trojan settlers, with the struggles they faced, might have amassed something close to *soul* by the time the journey was over.

**274 b's:** A term that might stir up camaraderie amongst Aeneas and his men. A unifying moniker.

**275 ya'll... shit:** This was the point I wanted to drive home most in this monologue.

**288 our right:** The Latin term used, *fas*, demanded great reverence from Romans. I'm not sure whether *our right* does the term justice, but it is the best I could come up with.

**291f.** A tragic end to the passage, but it provides deep insight into Aeneas's persona, and thus that of all Rome. Aeneas, who is in the midst of *payin' dues*, must keep a strong façade, and resist the temptation to break down within all the pressure. Perhaps, although the dictionary does not make this explicit, such toughness was a product of having *soul*. The dictionary does provide an epithet for Aeneas right now, though, which is *hard*, a term assigning toughness from hardship that will be explored later.

#### Aeneid 1.223 – 1.296

##### *Introductory Note*

This is the triumphant passage of the first book, in which glimmers of hope are allowed to arise and the reader is reminded of all the glory that will be born from the sorrow described thus far. For the first time, we learn of the power Rome will have, how Juppiter “dun gave power and beauty wit out no ends” (386) to the Roman cause. The mission's heroicness and grandeur is restored.

And yet, with joy tempered by Venus's plea that comes before Juppiter's prophecy, the reader must remember that which has already been told and that which has yet to come, a series of tragic events. But now, as Williams notes, these tribulations have

purpose, they are no longer random bouts of hardship that one must live with, but rather the *dues* one must *pay* to discover glory. Thus, we are brought back to the ideal of hardship being a prerequisite for majesty, a theory certainly present in the African-American concept of *soul*. With his prophecy, Juppiter suggests that the suffering of Aeneas and his men is necessary to found a culture as great as Rome's will be, just as the suffering of the earliest African-Americans, and indeed those alive today, contributes to the richness of African-American culture.

**303 ghettos:** Another instance of a word having different connotations in AAE and SE. Whereas the word "ghetto" of SE will imply grunginess or poverty, the AAE term *ghetto* is defined as "the site and origin of soul", meaning that it is seen somewhat as "the symbolic site of African American cultural authenticity and 'real' Blackness". Thus, *ghetto* can be added along with *payin' dues* and *soul* to the group of terms that highlight hardship as a key component of African-American culture.

**304 ovah:** My dictionary spells SE "over" as *ovah*, as in *git ovah*. I decided to let the dictionary rule in this case.

**307 Jove... eternal:** The text has somewhat more complicated language: "o qui res hominumque deumque / aeternis regis imperiis", "O you, who rules over the affairs of men and gods with eternal power". Instead of making a relative clause within an address, which I thought might be over-complicated and clumsy sounding in AAE, I chose to have Venus simply state that she knows these facts, that she "recognize[s]".

**310 honey:** Throughout Venus's monologue, I try to characterize her as saucy or flirtatious, somewhat of a *hoochie momma*, per the normal Roman characterization of her, which was devious and sexual.

**318 hard:** As described before (see note on 291), *hard* is another word that clearly defines surviving lifelong hardships as a cultural value, along with *ghetto*, *payin' dues* and *soul*. It is defined as describing "a person who is tough, hardened by life experiences", again demonstrating a cultural respect for those who have undergone suffering in their lives, and the belief that from hardship comes strength. The Latin has more specific verbiage: "qui mare, qui terras omnis ditione tenerent", "who will hold both the sea and the lands with authority". In my translation I substituted the trumpeting of physical power on an empire for that of the emotional power of the individual, perhaps a key difference between Roman culture and African-American culture. Later in the poem we will see another instance in which what happens literally to the Romans happens figuratively for the African-Americans (see Aen. 12.791 – 12.842)

**321 lie dead:** Not to be confused with *layin' dead*; cf. 343.

**327f. cf. 58.** It is common for the gods to use past precedents to their rhetorical advantage. Unfortunately, this leaves gaps in the text within which most modern readers don't know what is being referred to. In this case, Antenor founded a place he called

Troia in what is now Venice. Venus is comparing the comparatively easy time he had founding his Troia, with the difficult time Aeneas is having founding Rome.

**342 soul:** Again in this line, *soul*, or Latin *pietas*, is extolled as the epitome of each respective culture. The Latin gives “*hic pietatis honos?*”, or “is this the glory of *pietas?*”, a rhetorical question suggesting that Aeneas should be better rewarded for his dedication. The question is, while *pietas* is obviously supposed to get Aeneas through his journey, could *soul* do the same? This brings into light a new parallel between Roman and African-American culture, the common paradigm of culture saving one from hardship. For notes on this, cf. 906.

**343 layin’ dead:** The term has nothing to do with actual death. It is defined as “to wait; to keep a low profile.” I thought it brought a nice emphasis to the frustration Venus feels while she entreats Juppiter.

**346 daddy:** A kind of pun. The text has *sator*, defined as “sower”, “planter”, or “father”. *Daddy*, while to an extent it retains its SE meaning, also carries the meaning of someone who cares for any child’s “physical and emotional needs” regardless of whether the person has biological children. Is it defined in opposition to the term *baby daddy*; cf. 557.

**349 Cytherea:** An alternate name for Venus.

**chill:** Could be classified as zeugma. The term *chill* has two definitions as a verb, the first of which is to “hang out” at someone’s home, and the second of which is to “calm down from a high emotional state”. In this case, Juppiter is inviting Venus to do both. He wants her to stay for a while and listen to his prophecy, but also to calm down from all her frustration.

**355 ain’t... yet:** The text simply reads “*neque me sententia vertit*”, “and no feeling turn me”. I added *yet* to give Juppiter a sense of lightheartedness, to show he is still confident in Aeneas’s future.

**360 dey... hardships:** The text contains no relating sentence, but I added it to drive home this particular parallel between the two cultures.

**362 battles:** When Virgil wrote *bella*, or “wars”, in his text, he certainly meant them literally. In this translation, *battles* is meant more emotionally or figuratively.

**363 it’s... survive:** The text says merely “*moresque viris et moenia ponet*”, that “he will instate customs and walls for men”, walls being the traditional Roman symbol for civilization (see note on 381). However, Juppiter’s juxtaposition of this statement immediately after telling of wars and ferocious peoples I thought emphasized the difficulty of setting up a culture, *mores*, that Aeneas would experience.

**365 outta... strength:** This add-on was entirely my doing. There is no correlative clause in the text, though one might argue that it is implied throughout the monologue at large. I added it to highlight the concept presented in (14), that the way a culture is set up will influence what it ultimately becomes.

**376 beauty and joy:** Whereas once could argue that the Romans most strived for power and wealth, I think these traits are more representative of African-American culture. Wiley comments that what he loves most about the African-American community is that nothing has made them “less determined, or less artistic, or less inventive, or less adaptable, or less productive, or less wise, or less creative, or less quite stupendously gorgeous.” Note that he mentions qualities of the individual, creativity, artistry, determination, but not qualities of the whole society, like economic strength or militaristic power, qualities that Romans would have extolled.

**377 sista:** The Latin has *sacerdos*, in this case “priestess”. I played a little with the meaning of SE “sister”, the proper address for a nun, and AAE *sista*, or “any African-American woman”

**379f.** Perhaps another sign of toughness, or another hardship to contribute to the *soul* of a population.

**380 he... bloodline:** It’s interesting to note that both culture, to an extent, view their members as all blood related. Here, the Latin has “Romulus excipiet gentem”, or “Romulus will bring out the lineage”, suggesting that all future Romans will be descended from him, making them essentially one large family. Similarly, it is common practice in AAE to refer to males as *brotha* and females as *sista*.

**382 front porches:** Latin has in its place *moenia*, “walls”, a constructional embodiment of Roman culture, perhaps. Walls are hard and unforgiving, and represent power and protection, qualities of Roman culture I didn’t think crossed over to African-American culture. I substituted houses with *front porches* because of the prominence of such a setting in African-American literature, as in the books of Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston. They seem more often to represent community and openness.

**384f.** This is the most patriotic section of the passage, in which Juppiter exclaims that the power of the Romans will have no limits. The certainty with which he says this, and the glory he prophesizes together had a profound impact on Roman readers.

**389 is:** Usually, in AAE the copula is dropped. SE “she is tall” becomes AAE “she tall”. “You are walking” becomes “you walkin’”. However, in cases of emphasis, the copula is brought back. Thus, this sentence “she is gonna change” might translate into SE as “she *is* going to change”.

**391 soul:** Again the substitution of power for beauty. *Soul* here goes in place of *rerum*, simply “all things”, suggesting that the Romans had power over everything. I thought *soul* more appropriate for my purposes.

**392 ghetto fabulous:** Things that are *ghetto fabulous* in a way exemplify Black culture. The dictionary says the term “describes a person or thing that is fantastic... according to the authentic, natural, ‘keepin-it-real’ standards of Blackness”. Of course, Virgil did not use the term *ghetto fabulous*. Instead he wrote *togatam*, or “clothed in togas”.

**393 tha’s joy:** Virgil’s correlating sentence “sic placitum” (“such is happiness”) is also short, to make the sentence stand out more. I used the same device here.

**395f.** Juppiter now talks about the future military conquests of Rome. This might be hard to relate, since, of course, African-American culture itself has no military strength or conquest. However, again taking the Roman’s literal to be the African-American’s figurative, in an American where White suburban boys emulate hip-hop artists, and where WASPS “today show little imprint of what their heritage once was” and are becoming “more blandly American” (Hacker, et al.), while African-American culture is attributed “spirit, creativity, resilience, and soul” (Rickford, p. 226), it can be said that African-American culture has eclipsed that of Whites in terms of uniqueness and presence.

**402f.** The African Diaspora.

**406 call him up:** I common term meaning to pray to, or to ask favors from a god, as seen in the gospel song “Call Him Up”.

**414f:** Furor, here, of course represents rage and harshness. Again, we see the paradigm of bottling up hatred and not showing negative emotion.

## Aeneid 2.1 – 2.13

### *Introductory Note:*

During the end of Book I, Dido, queen of Carthage, finds Aeneas and invites him to stay as a guest. She sets up a celebratory banquet, during which she asks Aeneas about Troy and how he came to Carthage. Book II consists almost entirely of his response, the harrowing downfall of the Trojan empire, and all the hardship Aeneas had to go through. Like Book I, Book II is focused on suffering, and Aeneas makes this quite clear at the beginning of the Book, in the following passage, in which he voices reluctance to recall all the horrible events that transpired. The passages of Book II are meant to continue the concept presented in Book I, that Aeneas and his men have survived struggles and become tougher as a result, that they had to *pay dues* to found the glory of Troy and acquire a *hard* disposition.

**422f.** I think it's very telling that Aeneas, though he is on "the high couch", is still able to recall all the events without shame. He has not let them rip apart his spirit, but rather has risen above them. He looks back on them as sorrowful, and it pains him to do so, but the fact that he is able to suggest that he has come to grips with pain and has grown tougher from it.

**424 freeze up:** The text reads "infandum" here, or "unspeakable" with connotations of shock and turmoil. I chose the opposite route, and instead of saying that the memories made him shake, I said they made him freeze. I did this because in my research I found that wild movements are often associated with extreme joy, as opposed to sorrow, as seen by the phenomenon of *shoutin'* (see Lanehart).

**425 no count:** Similar in meaning to *wack*. This term refers to anything as inadequate.

**429f.** And yet Aeneas does anyways, even though he states that some of the toughest figures of the time (Myrmidons and Dolomites were known for toughness) could not.

**435 burners:** A somewhat recognizable word, I hoped this term would echo the beginning and in a way mimic the way the narrator began his story.

#### Aeneid 2.506 – 2.559

##### *Introductory Note:*

The first translated passage of direct substance in Book II, I hoped this section would highlight a few points. So far throughout the story, we have related Trojans (and thus Romans) to African-Americans, with Rome being the New World. Thus, now that Aeneas in telling the story of Troy as it fell, we encounter the Old World. The suffering we witness in Troy is easily comparable with the damage African cultures suffered with the advent of European slave trade.

The first element at play here is the loss of power. In this passage we see Priam, the king of Troy and much respected among Trojans, die a gruesome and humiliating death, without any regard to his power and respect in his native country. Virgil goes out of his way to make sure the reader knows the futility of Priam's efforts on the battlefield by using words like *nequiquam* ("in vain") and *inutile* ("useless"), to create a feeling of loss and desperation, which I hoped to translate into this document (cf. 447 – 451). Thus, the reader, who is familiar with Priam's majesty, is forced to look at him in a new light, one in which his majesty doesn't matter, and commensurately Troy doesn't matter. Its people and culture become meaningless, as it is stripped from glory by the Greek troops.

This sense of disregard on the part of invaders was also present when European first arrived in Africa for slave trade. Painter laments that "most seventeenth century Africans and their descendents lived and died anonymously" (p. 27), because their "names, origins, dates of arrival, and ethnicity were not noted" (p. 26). This is because Europeans did not care what kind of people their imported Africans were. Rather, to Europeans they were just bodies to use, and were characterized only by their Africanness.

Similarly, Pyrrhus has no concern as to what kind of person Priam is, although he probably knew. Instead, the only aspect of Priam that mattered was that he was Trojan; the rest was superfluous.

Taking Troy as a symbol for Africa, we see further parallels in the formation of these two cultures, which again make sense of the similarities that exist between them. These two peoples were uprooted from their homes and stripped of their native cultures, forced into new surroundings, and forced to develop a new community from scratch. Ultimately, both cultures grew to value toughness, and respect those that overcame life problems.

**445 his own:** Virgil chose not to do this, but I decided to emphasize Priam's ownership of the city by adding the term *his own*. I hoped this would make more obvious the desperation of Priam's situation.

**447f.** The pitifulness of Priam is so obvious in this description. The words *rageddy*, *molded*, *sorry*, *all fo' no end*, and the fact that his hands are *a' tremblin'* all build up a sense of sorrow and desperation that is practically put over the top when Virgil adds, *moriturus*, or *gon' die*. Yet, to an extent the reader must admire Priam for his *pietas*, his commitment to his country and his willingness to fight even when his destiny is already clear. The tragedy is that Priam is such a brave man in such a pitiful situation.

**447 rageddy:** cf. 98. This is certainly a word of pity.

**448 molded:** The dictionary defines this term simply as "old".

**451 static:** This word is defined as "anything you don't want to hear". I chose it in this case because it accentuates the business of the battlefield, and how easily Priam could get lost in it.

**455f.** The Penates are also known as the "household gods". Here we see a family using their culture for protection, a concept that will be teased out further in the notes on Book XII.

**460 uselessly:** Pity is ascribed to Priam's family as well.

**458 Folk... groun':** Though the text gives the same message somewhat differently, I thought phrasing the message this way would be interesting, since it presents a two-pronged meaning, the possibility of which is unique to AAE. *Was* here is ambiguous – it can be the auxiliary verb of the past progressive tense, or it can be the past tense of the aspectual marker *be*, and each form comes with it a different meaning. Taking *was* as the past tense of *be* would mean that people would often throw themselves to the ground, suggesting that people would often pray at that altar. Taking *was* as auxiliary with past progressive, though, means that people at that specific time were throwing themselves down, creating the somewhat gruesome image of bodies flying to the ground in battle.

**462 from boyhood:** Another epithet to make Priam look pitiful, for me this wording conjures up the image of a man wearing a suit from adolescence that is the wrong size and worn down. The text has *iuvenalibus*, a word of essentially the same meaning.

**466f.** We are confronted with a battle of pragmatism versus principle. Hecuba is correct that Priam will be of *no count* in the battle and will only hurt himself, but Priam feels the compulsion to defend his country. Perhaps in this short tragedy, Priam's tragic flaw is his *pietas*.

**475 look ya'll:** The Latin *ecce*, written here, is usually defined as "look" or "behold", as an exclamation, and it usually difficult to translate into SE naturally. Part of its purpose, though, is to simulate one person talking to another. I used the second person address *ya'll* unto this purpose.

**482 poison:** It's interesting that in both languages the word for "drug" and the word for "poison" are one in the same. Here, *poison* refers to an exclusively AAE usage, meaning "drugs". In Latin word *venenum*, although it is not used here, can mean either "drug" or "poison. The Latin used is "ardens infesto vulnere", "burning with a weapon poisoned to kill"

**Now... now:** The narrator gives what amounts to the play-by-play of Polites's death. Putting the events in real time accomplishes two things: they make the event more vivid for the reader, and they also demonstrate how vividly Aeneas has the haunting memory in his mind. It almost appears as if he is experiencing it all again.

**484 dun:** I used this marker here to convey the depressing finality of Pyrrhus's action. The deed is done, and Polites cannot be brought back to life.

**487 soul:** The Latin reads here *vitam*, which could be translated literally as "soul" in SE, although in this case I think the AAE version of *soul* works well too.

**491 hate sprung:** The text does not add this extra epithet to Priam before he speaks. I added it to give the sense that Priam has lost control of his mind, and he is acting completely on emotion. *Sprung* is defined as meaning "out of emotional control", usually in reference to love. I added *hate* to make it perfectly clear that Priam is not in love with Pyrrhus, but rather he has essentially gone rabid.

**492f.** I tried to make the language in Priam's speech somewhat scrambled, to emphasize how *sprung* he is.'

**496 be:** It is my understanding that in jussive clause such as this, the aspectual maker *be* is added.

**501 come:** This syntactical construction was also of particular interest to me, because it has no parallel in SE. Though of course AAE also makes use of the SE word *come*, this separate device works almost as an auxiliary verb, but instead of expressing time or

possibility, it expresses indignation. In a way it expresses a type of disbelief that the subject is carrying out such an action, because it is so reprehensible.

**504f.** For an interesting parallel, cf. 1016.

**512f.** To add to the pity developed earlier, Pyrrhus's reply is one of sarcasm and childish disrespect. He does not acknowledge Priam's high emotional state, nor does he acknowledge Priam's respect among Trojan's. Instead, he treats the old man like he were infinitely inferior, for to an extent he is in this situation, having made only the feeblest of attempts to avenge his son's death.

**514 pop:** I chose this word because it seemed to reinforce Pyrrhus's sense of flippancy, because it is such a colloquial term, even though the text reads *genitori*, a fairly generic word for father or ancestor.

**518 now... sucka:** The dictionary defines *sucka* as "a weak person, a pushover, a chump", an exceedingly appropriate term in this case I think, since it essentially sums up Pyrrhus's attitudes towards Priam, and Priam's power in this situation. Thus, I included it even though the Latin has only "nunc morere", "now die". In either case, the final phrase shows Pyrrhus's self-confidence in the battle and his assurance that Priam will be defeated.

**524 an'... wrote:** The text contains no such expression, but I thought it would work well. It is defined as "an expression used to refer to the end of something; can be something that leaves either good or bad memories", and of course in this case the latter is meant.

**527f.** Virgil ends the story of Priam by reemphasizing what a respected figure he is. He ascribes words such as *superbum*, "proud", and *regnatorem*, "supreme ruler", which terms I respectively translated as "proud" and "high up king", so as to retain the sense of reverence attributed. Yet, after this miniature fanfare, Virgil focuses again on reality, reminding the reader that Priam has now lost his identity and with it his glory and respect.

#### Aeneid 2.567 – 2.623

##### *Introductory Note:*

I chose to translate this passage because it proffers a pertinent message regarding the modern African-American experience. Here Aeneas encounters Helen of Troy, and is reminded of Greece and all the injustices it has produced for his country. He becomes enraged and wishes to take out his anger on Helen, by killing her, yet, as he is about to do so, Venus stops him and commands him to drop his rage and instead exercise forgiveness, and more importantly to look towards the future instead of the past. The

idea proposed, then, is that good sense and humanity should replace blind rage and vengefulness.

As I reread the passage I was reminded of the philosophy of Martin Luther King, who too demanded that his supporters practice forgiveness and fought against violent protest. Thus, we see here another paradigm. As two essentially oppressed peoples, the Trojans and African-Americans had the burden of figuring out how to fight back against their respective enemies, and as evidenced here, in both cases had to suppress their fury in the name of common good. Perhaps such a need helped reinforce the emotional strength discussed before (See note on 14).

**535 daughter a' Tyndaridus:** This refers to Helen of Troy. The text reads *Tyndarida*, a feminine version of the name Tyndaridus in the Greek accusative.

**534 layin' dead:** See note on 343.

**573 hid:** It is common in AAE to use the past tense for of a verb in cases that would call for the participial form in SE.

**540 miss Ann:** An interesting term, indicative of what Rickford calls the “oppositional culture” of African-Americans. The dictionary defines it thus: “A derisive term for a white woman. By extension, used to refer to any uppity-acting Black woman, especially one who ‘acts white.’”. Since Helen, essentially a defected Trojan, was scorned by her native people for having gone to the Greek side, I thought the second definition of this term to be applicable, even though the texts has no direct insult in this case. I know of no comparable term in Latin, one that would chide a Roman for acting too Greek or Carthaginian, but many Romans certainly had negative sentiments towards these cultures.

**547 jive-ass:** This term has connotations of dishonesty or trickery. *Jive* is defined as “deceptive, putting somebody on”. Again, *-ass* is an emphatic suffix, which I used in this case as an attributive ending. Cf. 540, the text has no direct insult here, but I added one so as to make my text more belligerent.

**549 flames... heart:** See note on 84.

**556 H.N.I.C. queen:** The text reads here “partoque ibit regina triumpho”, “and the queen will leave with triumph having been gained”. I gleaned from this sentence a sense that Aeneas fears Helen thinking herself better off with Greece and happier without Troy, thus I used the term H.N.I.C., defined as “Head Nigga In Charge, a pejorative term that references a historical tradition dating back to enslavement, whereby white selected Black leaders and authority figures and put them in charge of other Blacks to keep them in lie... suggesting that the ‘head nigga’ is not really in charge of anything meaningful, or that he/she lacks power to do anything.” Cf. 540 and 57.

**557 baby daddy:** Defined as “baby’s daddy, that is, a child’s father...the linguistic counterpart, *baby momma*, emerged as a label for irresponsible mothers”. I thought that

in this case the fact that Helen had not a “husband” but a *baby daddy*, could also work as an insult against her, referencing her promiscuity.

**562f.** Here, we could easily see Aeneas’s thoughts as justified. He has obviously taken proper course in thought and has arrived at a well thought out conclusion – he is not simply acting on instinctive rage. Pragmatically, he has good reason to go after Helen, yet he must not, because he has higher duties. This relates to Martin Luther King’s activism methods of the Civil Rights era.

**579 dark mouth:** The text reads *rosea ore*, or “from her red lips”. However, since my conception of Venus for this project is African-American, I changed the epithet from *red* to *dark*.

**580 out of order:** Defined as “Inappropriate or inadequate way of talking (or acting) in a situation, out of step with the requirements of a situation.” The Latin reads, more elaborately, “*quis indomitas tantus dolor excitat iras?*”. “What such distress has aroused untamable rages?”, a rhetorical question implying that Aeneas should be keeping better control of himself.

**582f.** It becomes evident that, even though Aeneas’s thinking was pragmatically sound, he has greater goals to accomplish. He must suppress his rage for more worthy duties. Similarly, Martin Luther King argued that, when fighting for the civil rights, one must not protest blindly and violently, but rather must appeal to the individual’s sense of compassion. Thus, again, angry emotions are ignored to benefit the greater good.

**593 It’s... gods:** Similarly, the Latin has “*divum inclementia, divum*”. “The mercilessness of the gods, the gods”. Again, Venus reiterates the power of the fates to decide his future.

**597 bad nigga:** This term means “an African-American, generally a male, who is rebellious”, appropriate for this case, in which the described individual is insubordinating his mother.

**610 She... ships:** The Latin has a defective line here, a product of Virgil’s premature death, causing his inability to finish the piece.

#### Aeneid 2.701 – 2.804

##### *Introductory Note:*

In the narrative of Olaudah Equiano (Painter, p. 29), he tells his story of how he was kidnapped and sold to European traders, eventually becoming “separated from his sister” and the rest of his family, an experience that was “tragically typical” for kidnapped Africans of the time. Aeneas, here, undergoes his analogous experience: he loses his wife Creusa and is forced to leave Troy by the gods.

I chose to translate this passage because of its obvious similarities with the historical African experience. It is the culmination of Book II, the climax of all the suffering and hardship that has transpired, and the result of it as well. I wanted to emphasize Aeneas's past suffering with this passage, so as to contribute to the building of Aeneas's *soul* throughout the story.

**632 hood:** cf. 145

**641 go down:** Interestingly enough, both Latin and AAE have words that mean both to drop and to occur. In AAE, *go down* is defined as “to happen, to occur, take place”, cf. 444. Here the Latin has the verb *cado*, “to fall, sink, drop... happen, occur”.

**643f.** cf. 470

**659 lion skin:** The Latin has the same phrasing: “*veste leonis*”, “with the clothing of a lion”. It is interesting to note that this was common practice among cultures in South Africa, many of whom were taken as slaves, especially by the Dutch.

**678 boy:** The text reads *nate* here, or “son”. I had trouble finding a natural sounding counterpart in AAE, but settled on *boy*, said to be used as an address for younger males.

**687 shucks:** I had much trouble finding a good translation of the Latin word used here, *ehue*, or “alas”. Personal consultations about the word revealed that the word *shucks* can be used to connote desperation and helplessness, in which capacity I now use it.

**709 again:** Here Virgil uses a type of anaphora with the prefix *re-*, as shown in the words *repeto*, *recondo*, *reverti*, *rursus*, and *retro*. To simulate this repetition, so to speak, I used the word *again*.

**720f.** I hoped to give this idea more emphasis by giving it its own line. This statement is not only indicative of Aeneas's property, but of Troy as a whole. Thus, Aeneas's home is representative of the greater home of the Trojans, making Aeneas representative of Troy.

**730f.** cf. 189. Note that the Greeks lay waste not only to the Trojan people, but their possessions and representations of their native culture. Europeans can be said to have caused something similar. Painter laments a similar phenomenon among African-Americans, whereby they have lost touch with their true ancestry and instead become bonded only to the idea of Africa (Painter, p. 4).

**742f.** Creusa's words are vaguely reminiscent of those of Venus, cf. 580. They both speak to Aeneas's duty to *step up* and *pay his dues*. He must control his negative emotion so as to overcome his greater goals, escaping from Troy and fulfilling his destiny.

**750 baby:** Finding an AAE word to go here was of similar difficulty to that of finding a word for *nate*. The Latin in this case reads *dulce coniunx*, or “sweet husband”. *Baby* is “a form of address for a male or female”, which to me seemed a term of endearment for obvious reasons.

**751f.** Here the reader is reminded of Juppiter’s great destiny for the Trojans. It provides some solace amongst all the sorrow that has taken place. Cf. 349.

**762 flow:** A pun. Flow can mean, of course, the SE term flow, when referring to rivers, as it does here. *Flow*, in AAE, also means to do something “very well” or “gracefully”. In this sense, *wit flow* can refer to *come* three lines earlier.

**770 do a ghost:** Defined as “to leave”. Ironic, since Creusa is a ghost.

**785f.** These lines show that Aeneas’s troubles were not unique to him: All the surviving Trojans had undergone hardship to survive, and it was on its way to becoming part of the culture.

**789 stepped up:** The Latin has *surgebat*, or “he was rising”, which also could be translated as *stepped up*. In this case, though, it was a double meaning, for to *step up* is also defined in the dictionary as “to face a challenge, to rise to the occasion and take responsibility for getting the job done”. At this turning point in the story, Aeneas has witnessed the fall of Troy and the tragedy of the Trojan people, and now his job is presented to him: he must found for them a new home. Thus, now Aeneas is *stepping up* to face a new challenge.

**793 got ovah it:** Another term that signifies the African-American cultural value of overcoming hardship. The phrase means “forget about it, dismiss it from your mind; the state of affairs you are concerned about is not going to change, so accept reality”.

#### Aeneid 4.296 – 4.361, and 4.939 – 4.396

##### *Introductory Note:*

This passage is instrumental in highlighting the similarities between the founding of Roman culture and that of African-American culture because it emphasizes the extent to which Aeneas has not chosen his journey, but rather it was forced upon him.

In the pretext to this story, Dido, having heard the tales of Aeneas’s journey, falls madly in love with him, and Aeneas reciprocates the feeling. They plan to live together happily in Carthage, until Juppiter gets word of the happenings. Juppiter sends a messenger to tell Aeneas that he must depart and resume his expedition, because to simply settle in Carthage would not fulfill his fate: he must found Rome in full. Thus, Aeneas is presented with a conflict. He decides to prepare for departure, and while he is doing so, Dido catches word of what’s going on.

The way Aeneas reacts to Dido's entreaty reveals that he does not in fact wish to be doing what he is doing. The last words of his monologue (902) make this all too clear, but the same can be said of the tone in which Aeneas replies. It is serious, unsympathetic, reserved, even cold. It is the physical demonstration of his reluctance to let out his true emotions, cf. 274. The manner in which Aeneas speaks emphasizes his inability to let his true feelings show. Thus we can infer that, while he states his reasons for leaving stoically, his *soul* does not feel so stoic. He is torn apart inside

And thus, the parallel to the formation of African-American culture is obvious. This passage shows that these cultures were founded not simply because of geography, like many ancient cultures, or on purpose, like colonial Puritan culture for instance, but rather as a side effect of what amounts to persecution and hardship.

Another aspect of Aeneas that becomes evident in this passage is the depth of his *pietas*. This dedication becomes especially obvious in the appended passage, in which the narrator tells his readers that Aeneas longed to help, but suppressed all his emotion for the good of his greater goal. See note on 14.

**798 burnin'**: Although up to this point, words like *burnin'* might be used to denote anger or rage, in this case it is used as the AAE verb *to burn*, meaning "to deceive or manipulate someone..."

**804 Drama**: Here the Latin reads *Fama*. This is a personification of gossip and rumor that tells third parties the inner workings of foreign relationships. The Latin *fama* translates literally as "fame". It is sometimes translated into English as "Rumor". Here I chose the word *drama*, which is defined in AAE as "a situation of emotional stress turmoil, or conflict... may be perceived as affected, overindulgent, and exaggerated for effect." (cf. 320). I chose this term because, of course, *Fama* in stories is known to cause *Drama*.

**807 buck wild**: An intriguingly appropriate term for the situation. The Latin reads *bacchatur*, literally translated as an odd mix of "to revel", "to rage", or "to run wildly about". The word references the followers of Bacchus, Roman god of wine and its associates, whose followers would ritually go into the woods and take part in drunken orgies. The verb *bacchor* makes reference to the crazed manner in which these festivals were carried out, giving it both a sense of joy but also a sense of insanity, the sense which is used in this case to describe Dido. The term *buck wild* also carries both these senses, though, being defined as "describe[ing] a person or persons acting very wild, crazy, out of control, usually at a party or social event". Thus, I thought the word useful in this context.

**817f.** Dido's monologue is somewhat tragic and wholly crazed. Virgil made use of Latin's versatility to emphasize Dido's insanity by mixing word order. I attempted to simulate this to the greatest extent possible.

**819 skunk**: The text has *perfide*, or "treacherous one". Skunk, commensurately, is defined "a low-down, no-good person; someone who is treacherous". This word shows

that Dido is not only angry for Aeneas's departure, but also at the fact that Aeneas would have the wherewithal to lie to her, as he had not told her he was preparing to leave.

**823f.** A representation of the mental disconnect between the two, Dido's misunderstanding regarding whether or not the two had been married is brought up here. The quandary originated at one point when the two were in a cave, and Juno set up a marriage featuring parts of nature as the components usually expected at a Roman wedding. Dido perceived these entities as the makings of a wedding, and assumed Aeneas perceived them as well, though he never did. (cf. 872)

**825 sorry:** cf. 447. The reader is made to pity Dido here. Truly, her situation is a tragic one. Having to uproot a shared love, all for the fate of her lover.

**826 come:** cf. 501

**shuckin' an' jivin':** cf. 547.

**831 you... negro:** I have kept Dido, like many characters, racially ambiguous. However, it could be argued here that Dido is indeed white, a race opposed to that of African-Americans (or perhaps more the other way around, cf. 29), just as Carthage was a civilization opposed to Rome (cf. 20). Mannish, used here, is a term "used to reprimand a young male who is acting too grown-up and too much like an adult". Cf. 57.

**834 is... me?:** cf. 825. Dido's paranoia and self-doubt crop up here. The Latin is emphatically undersized: "mene fugis?", "is it me you are fleeing?"

**840 brick house:** A double meaning. The Latin has *domus*, or "home", here referencing the family Aeneas's departure would destroy. Yet, in AAE *brick house* can refer to women, suggesting that it is Dido who is "crumblin'".

**842f.** This is in reference to the fact that, after Aeneas's arrival, she put aside her leadership duties, distracted by her love for him. After she fell in love with Aeneas, Dido's competence as a ruler of Carthage dwindled.

**846 props:** A word that means respect from another individual. The Latin has *fama*, "fame" or "repute".

**853f.** This section is truly pitiful. Dido is so *sprung* with love for Aeneas that she is willing to beg for a child from him, as a substitute for him after he leaves.

**860f.** Aeneas's response is famously cold and repressed. The fates have given their decree, saying he must leave, so he is forced to bottle all emotion, anything that could waver his dedication. Thus, Aeneas replies in a fashion reminiscent of a lawyer, seemingly unsympathetic, though in reality he is simply unable to express his sympathy. In fact, to the reader, then, the tone of Aeneas's reply can be used to evidence his unwillingness to leave her. Cf. 862 and appended passage.

**871f.** That Aeneas would chastise Dido in this situation seems reprehensible, but again, this is a product of Aeneas's need to suppress his emotion, lest his true feelings come out.

**882f.** The Latin has "hic amor, haec patria est", "this is love, and this is country". Another important line, showing the separation Aeneas makes between his personal wishes and those of his people. This is a key difference between Roman culture, which values the strength of society over that of the individual, and African-American culture, which puts more emphasis on the strength of the individual, cf. 376. In the Aeneid, Roman culture is forced into existence by gods, and brought about by Aeneas's dedication, whereas African-American culture is forced into existence physically by others, and gave its constituents no choice as to whether or not to accept the challenge.

**884f.** Another series of poor word choices on Aeneas's part.

**894f.** Another key difference in the formations of Roman and African-American culture. For Romans, as shown here and elsewhere, the glory was known to come, whereas for African-Americans, no hope was given, especially in the beginnings.

**900 ma'am:** Of course, a very cold term to address a loved one with. The Latin has no such address here, but I thought it appropriate.

**902f.** The most important line in the monologue, which sums up Aeneas's overarching point into one cogent concept. The Latin contains here a truncated line "Italiam non sponte sequor", "I do not pursue Italy of my own accord". The line is a brash transgression of normal metric laws, and is probably as such simply because Virgil did not finish the line, but as is it gives powerful emphasis.

**906f.** Two key concepts, *soul* and *hardness*, are addressed here and attributed as the cause for Aeneas's refusal to comfort Dido in her sorrow. Together, these qualities have formed a sense of dedication within Aeneas that drives him towards his goal even when confronted with Dido's pain.

**907f.** cf. 274 and Introductory note on 1.148 – 1.156.

#### Aeneid 12.791 – 12.842

##### *Introductory Note:*

This passage is a far jump ahead in the story. Having finally left Carthage, Aeneas finds Italy and attempts to begin to set up Rome. He becomes embroiled in a war against the native Rutulians. Juno, of course, takes the side of the Rutulians here, and continues to plague the Romans on their quest. In this passage, Jupiter confronts Juno about her *hatin'* and requests that she desist. Having mostly completed their mission, the

Romans are finally freed from Juno's wrath. This presents an interesting paradigm to connect the Romans with African-Americans: the formation of culture as a means of savior. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is continually afflicted by Juno and in such a way forced to undergo trials and sorrow, cf. 14. Yet, once he reaches Italy and Rome begins to form, Juno submits. Roman culture has freed Aeneas and his men from Juno and the suffering she begot.

Similarly, African-American culture has acted as a savior for oppressed African-Americans, a way for them to take pride in themselves when it was not easy to do so. Certainly this is not the sole purpose of culture, but it has served this end. Black culture has given African-Americans "something to shout about" (Lanehart, p. 179).

Another remarkable connection made here is the fact that the passage dictates a certain amount of integration between Trojan culture and the native culture, so as to form the new Roman culture. This is, in fact, Juno's one condition. She cannot allow Trojan culture per se survive, so she asks that Trojans be mixed with native Italians. This parallels the formation of African-American culture nicely, for it too has been influenced by native (European American) traditions. Of course, given different surroundings, it was the African-Americans that changed their ways of dress, ways of living, and language, but all in a distinctive manner, all by force instead of choice. Thus, both cultures, having landed in their new home, were forced to alter their traditions in lieu of ones more befitting their new location.

**917 heavy:** cf. 204

**928f.** This refers to a past crime of Juno, in which she helped Turnus, a leading Rutulian, in a fight against Aeneas by sending his sister, Juturna, for aid.

**935f.** Another recount of the *dues* Aeneas had to *pay*.

**958 truth be told:** The dictionary denotes this as "an expression of validity; usually occurs at the beginning of a statement, emphasizing the truth of the statement".

**967f.** Given the nature of this project, it was the change in language I was most interested in. This passage highlighted to me the extent to which language can be said to embody a culture, how a people's way of speaking is a microcosm of its culture. That Juno wanted to make sure Trojan language was lost forever shows how much she associated the language with the culture herself. Having only the language around would be too much: it could keep the culture alive, even when everything else had changed. This shows an intimate connection between language and culture. AAE as well can be said to exemplify African-American culture in many ways. Rickford notes that one main reason parents teach their children AAE is "its role in the preservation of their distinctive history, worldview, and culture – their soul." Thus, AAE is an embodiment of *soul*. It was heavily influenced by African language (most linguists even classify it not as a language relative to SE, but as a relative of West African languages, mainly due to its methods of pronunciation). Yet, it of course bears a strong resemblance to SE. It is in a way oppositional, often used so as to avoid sounding "white", which can sound more affected and less genuine (Rickford, p. 226). Thus, AAE embodies, and is a product of, AAE

culture, which too was influenced by America and made in opposition to white America, cf. 29.

**970f.** Cultural adaptation as a source of cultural strength. Juno here seems to think that making the Romans integrate into the local culture a little will cause them to “grow some strength”. The same could be said for African-Americans, the source of whose oppression, and thus *soul*, is the culture they were forced into.

**973 is:** cf. 389

**979 mix... little:** In this sentence I took the term *mixtum*, “mixed” to mean genetically so, meaning that Trojans would co-reproduce with Italians to form Romans. This is true for African-Americans as well, many of whom can trace their heritage to White slave owners.

**981 somethin’... it:** The text does not include this part, instead only saying “una ore”, “one tongue”. I couldn’t resist adding this, though, given its applicability to AAE in relation to SE.

**982 race:** cf. 27

#### Aeneid 12.930 – 12.952

##### *Introductory Note:*

This passage contains the last 23 lines of the Aeneid, and it presents an interesting contradiction to past passages translated, and to the Aeneid as a whole. As discussed prior, one major theme of the Aeneid is the repression of emotion, especially negative ones, such as anger. Yet, as the end of the poem, Aeneas lets this tenet go and unleashes vengeful rage. As Aeneas as *paid dues* throughout the story, building up *soul* and *pietas*, we have seen his character change, from a man who needed instruction from his mother as to what path to take (cf. 580) to a man *heavy, hard*, and able to lead Rome, even giving up true love so as to do so. And yet, in the final passage of the text, why does he undergo an apparent regress? Not only that, but why does Virgil choose to focus on the downfall of Turnus, when the uprising of Rome seems imminently more important to the text?

One possible answer is that Virgil wanted to reemphasize that suffering must come before success. As laid out in Jupiter’s glorious prophecy for Rome, and mirrored in AAE terms like *hard, pay dues*, and *soul*, this tenet suggests that sorrow must precede success, or perhaps even that success is the ultimate cause of suffering. Virgil demonstrates this by showing that, at Rome’s major turning point to arrival, sorrow has come to foreign entities. Rome’s success needed Rutulian failure, as well as Trojan hardship.

This can be said for African-American success as well. Since the Civil Rights era, Blacks and Whites have been tirelessly compared statistic by statistic, to see whether naturally disadvantaged Blacks are catching up with Whites. The statistics seem to show

improvement in African-American median income, employment rates, etc. alone, but stagnation or even regression in comparison with Whites. People have suggested using systems like affirmative action to help Blacks catch up, yet there is significant White backlash to such a proposal, since it disadvantages Whites. People fail to see that Black success, in this case, is dependent on Whites falling behind. True equality requires the rise of one group, but also the fall of another. Thus, success in one category is marred but failure in another.

Another reason to have Aeneas kill Turnus is to demonstrate the solidarity Aeneas feels with his comrades, in this case Pallas, a Latin that helped Aeneas in battle. Aeneas kills Turnus as revenge for Pallas, demonstrating a dedication to Pallas's wellbeing. Such solidarity is a major characteristic of African-American culture as well, as evidences by such terms as *brotha* and *sista*, and conversely *H.N.I.C.* and *Ms. Ann.*

**995 knock:** "To criticize something or someone". The text reads *deprecor*, or "to pray against"

**1000 like dat:** Defined as "possessing whatever quality is suggested by a preceding statement". I usually used this term in place of *ita*, or "thus", "in this way".

**1005 you... Lavinia:** Part of their feud had been who would marry Lavinia, who had been prophesied to marry Aeneas.

**1009 rollin'... forth:** An echo from 860. Yet, what follows is markedly different.

**1023f.** It is important to note that Aeneas killed not for himself, perhaps more reprehensible by Roman standards, but for another.

**1029 poor:** The text reads *ingidnata*, or "undeserving". It is perplexing, at least to modern readers, why Virgil would sympathize with Turnus here.

**soul:** Here ambiguous as to which "soul" is meant, Turnus's senses, or his *soul*, but I would guess both.