

Essay 1

Literature



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Aeneas: Character Analysis Aeneas is the main character in Vergil's Aeneid. He is depicted as a hero and founder of the Roman Empire. Aeneas was a courageous man who was committed to fulfilling the wills of the gods by triumphing over the challenges that were presented to him. He represented the moral values of the Romans. Similarly, in Homer's epic, Odysseus was a Greek hero, also depicted as being strong and unwavering in his mission to overcome the difficulties he encounters on his way back home to Greece. Odysseus is a crafty man whose exploits involved careful planning and plotting. He is depicted as being susceptible to temptations. He relies on his own sharp wits rather than relying on divine intervention. In contrast, Aeneas, son of a mortal Anchises and the goddess Venus enjoys the protection of divinity as we see him surviving the seizure of Troy. He is chosen to found the great Roman Empire. This was his fate, which drives and motivates his actions. He believed in divine intervention and fate and as such, he made sacrifices that denied him the chance at love and happiness for the sake of the future that was Rome.

The form of the Aeneid is similar to that of Odysseus in that both are tales of heroes who set out searching for glory according to the will of the gods. Both Aeneas and Odysseus travel long distances one to fulfill his destiny and the other to rejoin his family after many years of wandering. Both Aeneas' and Odysseus' journeys are greatly influenced by the gods and goddesses in conflict. Aeneas is fated to have founded Rome and nothing, not even the goddess Juno who is on a vengeful mission against him can prevent him from achieving what is destined for him. Fate is what guides Aeneas and not even his love for and "marriage" to the Dido the Queen of Carthage can prevent him from achieving this. Both the Aeneid and Odysseus strongly view the

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actions of individuals in their societies in terms of good and evil.

Aeneas faces many challenges that are both inherent and those that he encounters many of which are beyond his control. His is a story of piety, sacrifice and divinity. He triumphs against the most difficult temptation, that of the love of the Dido. Barely had he begun to enjoy the love between Dido and himself when the gods again removed him from Carthage so that he may fulfill his predetermined destiny. Regardless of this, he manages to separate himself from his love and sail towards Italy, believing that this was his fate and that nothing would stand in the way.

The Greek outlook on personal conduct and morality differs from that of the Romans in some ways. The Greek heroes were required to be witty, intelligent and with mortal qualities. They were depicted as common people who do great things despite the daily struggles, temptations and disappointments. Odysseus uses wit and crafty deception to survive the 20 years he is wandering. On the other hand, Roman society valued courage in war as well as strength. The Romans did not value aesthetics like art or science, but they believed that they were destined to rule the world through their established Empire. Their outlook was that of grandeur enabling them to establish the greatest Empire in history at the time when the Aeneid was written. Aeneas sacrifices love to take up duty and destiny and in doing so; he becomes a hero in the Roman mythologies.

Aeneas was a virtuous man able to accept his destiny despite his unhappiness in doing so. This earned him the place of greatest hero, having honored the will of the gods. In contrast, Odysseus is shown as not being so pious. He is unfaithful to his wife when he lives in luxury with Circe; indulging in alcohol and feasts while his wife is still in mourning for his apparent death.

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Aeneas' compassion for others and their suffering coupled by his devotion to duty also makes him a hero. He is shown to be a leader who is sympathetic to the struggles of others when during the journey he is said to have encouraged his men through speech. After the death of his father, Aeneas organizes funeral games to honor the dead. He offers rewards to both the winner and loser preventing strife and in doing so displays leadership qualities. His visit to the underworld where he meets his father shows his growth in terms of leadership. His father spells out his future for him; that of greatness where he is to found the Roman Empire and in doing so ensure the prosperity of future generations. There are instances where he almost loses track of his destiny and in particular when in Carthage where he had found love but this is quickly rectified when the gods call upon him to continue on his way to his great future.

Family values are of great importance to Aeneas. This is shown when he carries his father on his back as they flee from Troy while holding his son's hand. In contrast, Odysseus seems not to uphold family values. This is shown when he forgets about his wife and son back home and lives with Circe indulging in all manner of excesses. During the encounter with the sirens, he is shown to be curious and eager to fulfill his not so honorable pleasures. Aeneas is depicted as goal oriented and selfless individual. He is honorable in more ways than one. During his visit to the underworld, he also encounters a dead friend called Palinurus who has not been properly buried and promises to honor him even in death. Similarly Odysseus encounters a deceased friend who he vows to properly bury. All through the Aeneid, we see Aeneas as an honorable and patriotic man. He was devoted to his people and his mission as destined representing the ideal Roman. Ultimately, the <https://assignbuster.com/essay-1-essay-samples/>

future generations that were Romans were the greatest beneficiaries of Aeneas' life, triumphs and struggles.