Sideshadowing in Virgil's *Aeneid*

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Abstract – Unlike the Homeric epos, which is enclosed in an absolute past, the *Aeneid* forges a continuity between myth and the historical present and its plot is the fulfillment of a future which is preordained by Fate. As a result, Virgil's epic has often been regarded as the expression of the immobilization of history rather than its open-endedness. Contrary to the idea of the *Aeneid* as a mere narrative teleology, the numerous untimely deaths of young heroes and their un-enacted futures bring about elements of temporal condensation that not only add uncertainty to the narrative, but undermine the idea of the present as the only inevitable realization of the past. The *sideshadowing* created by *mors immatura* opens loopholes in the poem and stands as a counterpoint to epic as the genre of absolute truths and historical determinism.

Keywords – Bakhtin, death, epic, history, *mors immatura*, novel, sideshadowing, time, Virgil. Bachtin, epica, *mors immatura*, morte, romanzo, sideshadowing, storia, tempo.

Bakhtin's *Epic and Novel* [1] is one of the most influential and radical writings on temporality in epic poetry. As is well known, Bakhtin defines the two narrative genres (epic and novel) in dichotomic terms, that is, through their opposing «temporal horizons» [2]. Whereas one of the novel's distinctive characteristics is «contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness», the world of the heroes is confined to a «monochromic and valorized (hierarchical)» [3] past. According to Bakhtin, the two different temporal models have not only literary but also epistemological [4] and ethical implications in that the «absolute epic distance» is «in the epic material»

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[1] Presented under the title *The Novel as a Literary Genre* at the Gorky Institute, in Moscow, the essay was published in 1970 (with some omissions) and reprinted in 1975. It was translated into English in 1981.

[2] Dunn 2002, 189. Of course, Bakhtin's theory of metalanguage and his emphasis on utterance must also be kept in mind to understand the distinction between novel and epic. See Michael Holquist's introduction to Bakhtin 1981, XV-XXXIV.

[3] Bakhtin 1981, 11, 15.

[4] The novelistic image of time implies a «new critical scientific perception» (Bakhtin 1981, 39).

and «in the point of view and evaluation one assumes toward them»[5]. The difference between epic and novel is thus ultimately a discussion about human freedom and responsibility: «When the present becomes the center of human orientation in time and in the world, time and world lose their completedness as a whole as well as in each of their parts. The temporal model of the world changes radically: it becomes a world where there is no first word (no ideal word), and the final word has not yet been spoken»[6].

Classicists have thoroughly shown the advantages and limits of Bakhtin's schematic opposition[7]. Certainly, one of the most problematic aspects of Bakhtin's model is that in his attempt to redefine traditional genres, he seems to confine epic to the Homeric texts[8]. In fact, Bakhtin argues that by the Hellenistic age, epic poetry was «already being transformed into novel»[9]. Yet, the concept of the «absolute past» has become central to the discussion of temporal structures in epic, even in cases such as the *Aeneid*, whose relation to time is characterized by an open-endedness to history and the present[10]. Virgil sets the poem's action in a temporal limbo, that is, «in a penumbra of transition» between myth and history[11]. The poet's age is not directly narrated but is embedded in the myth through prophetic visions. In this regard, Bakhtin's remarks about the representation of the future in the epos pinpoint a well-known difference between the Homeric and the Virgilian narratives: «[…] prophecy is characteristic for the epic, prediction for the novel. Epic prophecy is realized wholly within the limits of the absolute past (if not in a given epic, then within the limits of the tradition it encompasses); it does not touch the reader and his real time»[12].

Of course, throughout the Homeric poems there are anticipations of events that fall outside the time frame of the narrative, such as Poseidon's prophecy regarding Aeneas' lineage (*Il.* XX 307-308), or Tiresias' prediction of Odysseus' death (*Od.* XI 34-37)[13]. However, these external pro-

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[5] Bakhtin 1981, 17.

[6] Bakhtin 1981, 30.

[7] On this topic, see Peradotto 1990; Bakker 1997; Nagy 2002; Dunn 2002; Kahane 2005.

[8] See, *e.g.*, Nagy 2002, 80: «There are other kinds of epic wherein references to the agenda of the present are clearly in evidence».

[9] Bakhtin 1981, 15. In another essay (*From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse*), Bakhtin defines Rome as «the concluding phase of Hellenism» and attributes to all Latin literature the polyglossia typical of the novel (Bakhtin 1981, 63).

[10] Hardie 1993, 2-3.

[11] Feeney 1991, 131.

[12] Bakhtin 1981, 31.

[13] See de Jong 2007, 24-37. See also de Jong 1987, 81-90, and Richardson 1990, 132-139.

lepses do not extend to the narrator's time. Even the passages of the *Iliad* that clearly refer to the readers' present in the form of «such as men are now» (e.g., *Il.* V 302-304), simply inform us that the narration belongs to a later period than do the characters [14] and set the latter in «a different and inaccessible time-and-value plane» [15] that has no other continuity with the present than a mere chronological succession [16]. In the *Aeneid*, conversely, prophecies (along with the Parade of Heroes and *ekphraseis*) are rather the entryway into epic for a historically defined present [17]. In other words, Virgil turns to a technique that Bakhtin recognizes as typically epic in order to give voice to history.

But beyond the prophetic moments, Virgil opens his epic to the present in a more structural manner, *i.e.*, in Tarrant's words, through the «viewpoint of the present» [18], which underlies the entire representation of the past. In fact, in the *Aeneid*, the heroic past creates meaning through its connection to the present. The poem is an «aetiological epic» that places Roman history in a legendary past [19] along a «plot of predestination» whereby – according to a Stoic vision of history revived by the new Augustan teleology [20] – events move toward the inevitable realization of the ecumenical Roman Empire. The historical inevitability the reader knows from hindsight is projected by the poet into Fate, which seems to anticipate and impose the future upon both characters and events [21]. Against such teleology, characters and events in the poem are often judged, for the outcome of their deeds follows either the epic path of success or the wandering form of historical failure. In this dichotomy, readers have long searched for Virgil's political message, whether hidden in the poet's empathy [22] for the inconclusive stories of the defeated, or represented by the triumphantly linear trajectory that ultimately leads to the justification of Augustus' Principate [23].

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[14] See de Jong 2004, 13.

[15] Bakhtin 1981, 14.

[16] We find similar expressions in the *Aeneid* (*e.g.*, XII 899-900).

[17] See O'Hara 1990, 128.

[18] Tarrant 1997, 177.

[19] Hardie 1998, 63.

[20] See Hardie 1986.

[21] For time and narrative in the *Aeneid*, see also Mack 1978, 33-88; Williams 1983, 4-5; Quint 1993, 3-96; Kennedy 1997; Fowler 1977; Hardie 1998, 53-101; Raaflaub 2005, 65-70.

[22] See Heinze 1993, 207, and Otis 1964, 41-96.

[23] With regard to the ideological value of the opposition, Fowler writes: «The question of the tendency of the plot of the *Aeneid*, whether it progresses linearly or goes round in circles, thus turns out to be another version of the debate over the ideological tendency of the poem» (Fowler 1997, 262).

However, this dichotomy is rarely regarded as a real dialectic. The «dead ends»[24] described by the stories of the vanquished are rarely considered actual alternatives to the teleology of history realized by the plot of the Virgilian epic and their role is still interpreted «under the shadow of the end»[25].

Yet, if the *Aeneid* were merely the emplotment of a history that is pre-ordained and destined according to eternally valid laws, the poem would still be an expression of the conclusiveness and closeness of the Bakhtinian epic as opposed to the incompleteness and open-endedness of the novel. A present that is already contained in the past lacks presentness, precludes changes, and is closed to an actual (unpredictable) future. Kennedy writes: «Jupiter's role as surrogate narrator of a history of predetermined things-going-to-happen further implies that not only the *Aeneid* but 'history' too, rather than being a contingent series of things-that-happened, has a *plot*, a shape and structure, with a beginning and an end […]»[26].

But of course, the *Aeneid* is *not* simply the realization of a national plan. The journey of Aeneas is but a simple progress toward the fulfillment of Fate[27] and Virgil's representation of history is not limited to mere teleological determinism[28]. Aside from the foreshadowing of the present contained in the most evident prolepses, moments of temporal conflation occur, which bring forward contingency and unpredictability and question the scope of Fate and the epic form itself. In this paper, I will discuss a specific case of temporal condensation, such as the one Virgil realized through the characterization of the young and, in particular, through the representation of their deaths. I argue that Virgil inserted the traditional images and motifs of youth he found within the Homeric poems into a new historical context, thus bringing together *present* and *absolute past*.

It has been noted that most of the Virgilian heroes are youths who perish prematurely[29]. Euryalus, Nisus, Pandarus, Bitias, Pallas, Lausus, Camilla, and Marcellus are among the most memorable symbols of *mors immatura* in the *Aeneid*. However, most of the protagonists of those brief miniature stories that constitute Virgil's *plurima mortis imago* are also youthful and are structural to the representation of war in the poem. Fowler

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[24] Quint 1993, 34.
[25] Kermode 1967, 5.
[26] Kennedy 1997, 150.
[27] For more on Aeneas' longer and «multifaceted journey», see Gioseffi 2014, 67.
[28] Horsfall 1976, 77.
[29] For more on mors immatura in the *Aeneid*, see Lee 1979; Hardie 1994, 14-18; Petrini 1997; Traina 1999; La Penna 2005, 304; Rossi 2004, 73-75; Reed 2007; Gioseffi 2008.

writes: «Battle narratives […] are typically constructed around death-vignettes in which description and analepsis of the victim's past life tends to predominate over narration of the actual killing, and at the moment of death the focus may be on a bizarre detail rather than the expected narration of the killing»[30].

Once again, the same technique can be observed in the *Iliad*[31]. Further, Virgil reuses many of the themes scholars have found in the Homeric battle-obituaries, such as the «loneliness of death in a strange land» (e.g., *Il.* XVII 300-301; XXI 122 ff.; *Aen.* X 557 ff.; X 705-706), the «pastoral mood of creativity in nature» (e.g., *Il.* IV 473-476; *Aen.* IX 581-585; XII 517-520), «the widowed wife» (e.g., *Il.* XI 221 ff.; *Aen.* IX 590 ff.), and «the bereaved parents» (e.g., *Il.* XIV 501-502; *Aen.* IX 545-548)[32]. For Homer as well as for Virgil, anecdotes and images of peace constitute a counterpoint to war as they describe the hero's pre-war life. The warrior's expected future, in this sense, appears no different from his past. In these characters, therefore, a sort of predetermination is found as their lives draw a circularity that excludes them from a real «existence» in time. The victims of warfare are portrayed for what they *were*, which is not different from what they *could* or *would* have become. This is confirmed by another motif common to both poems, *i.e.*, «the sad inevitability of fate»[33]. Death falls upon the hero with inexorable predestination. At X 417-420, for instance, we read that Halaesus, who is about to fall victim to Pallas' *aristeia*, had been protected by his father, in vain, from his destiny:

> Fata canens silvis genitor celarat Halaesum:
> ut senior leto canentia lumina solvit,
> iniecere manum Parcae telisque sacrarunt
> Evandri.

The Homeric model is *Il.* II 831-834 (repeated at *Il.* XI 329-332)[34]:

> υἷε δύω Μέροπος Περκωσίου, ὃς περὶ πάντων
> ᾔδεε μαντοσύνας, οὐδὲ οὓς παῖδας ἔασκε

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[30] Fowler 1997, 263.

[31] Beye 1966, 93-96. For more regarding Homer's miniature stories in battle scenes, see also Beye 1964; Fenik 1968; Griffin 1980, 103-143; de Jong 2007, 21. For more on similar scenes in the *Aeneid*, see Willcock 1983; Harrison 1991, XXI-XXIII; Esposito 2000; Mazzocchini 2000; Rossi 2004. The motifs I discuss below are from Beye 1966 and Griffin 1980.

[32] The pathetic effect of some of these themes has been recognized by future rhetoricians, such as Menander the Rhetor, who takes from Homer his starting point for a discussion on the form of the monody (Men. Rhet. 434, 10 Russell-Wilson).

[33] Beye 1966, 96.

[34] Harrison 1991, 179.

στείχειν ἐς πόλεμον φθισήνορα. τὼ δέ οἱ οὔ τι
πειθέσθην· κῆρες γὰρ ἄγον μέλανος θανάτοιο.

In other passages, Virgil focuses even more on the sinister patterns of death, which follow the hero from his infancy and even from his birth. At X 315-317, a pun on the two occurrences of the word *ferrum* conveys a new «pathetic irony» [35] to Lichas' death; the term refers to both the scalpel the doctor uses to perform a Caesarean section and the sword Aeneas uses to kill Lichas [36]:

> *Inde Lichan ferit, exsectum iam matre perempta*
> *et tibi, Phoebe, sacrum, casus evadere*
> *ferri quod licuit parvo.*

Hence, in both the Homeric and the Virgilian epics, many of the victims of warfare lack a real presence in time as well as a sense of development, for their expected future is described as a return of their past and the completion of a destiny that is predetermined.

To be sure, the death of the young in the *Aeneid* is not only defined by a return of their past but is also sometimes projected into the future, although this future is ultimately denied. At X 545-549, the death of Anxur assumes a new pathos which is not given in the past of the warrior but instead in his future, *i.e.*, in the old age the character envisaged for himself:

> *Dardanides contra furit: Anxuris ense sinistram*
> *et totum clipei terrae deiecerat orbem*
> *(dixerat ille aliquid magnum vimque adfore verbo*
> *crediderat, caeloque animum fortasse ferebat*
> *canitiemque sibi et longos promiserat annos).*

While this is technically an analepsis (marked by the pluperfect *crediderat*), the image is an anticipation of an (unrealized) future. This obituary does not have a Homeric model [37]. And yet, we have several cases in the *Iliad* where the death of the hero is read against an unactualized future. In *Il.* IX 410-416, Achilles himself refers to the two possible destinies he was offered: die gloriously in Troy, or age anonymously at home:

> μήτηρ γάρ τέ μέ φησι θεὰ Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα
> διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τέλος δέ.
> εἰ μέν κ’ αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι,

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[35] Harrison 1991, 156.

[36] The fulfillment of destiny is also evident in those *androktasiai* wherein the death of some Trojan warriors is described as the fulfillment of a destiny not realized by the Achaeans. See Mazzocchini 2000, 374.

[37] Esposito 2000, 81.

ὤλετο μέν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται·
εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ᾽ ἵκωμι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν
ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ᾽ ὦκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη.

However, as in Anxur's case, Achilles' unrealized future has an utterly private dimension. The projection of the character in the future adds something to his characterization (by confirming Achilles' quest for glory and Anxur's «hubristic attitude» [38]), but the future and the present are ultimately indistinguishable for the heroes and their deeds float in an ahistorical indeterminacy. This ahistoricity is shared by all of the characters in the *Iliad*, whether protagonists or minor figures, and extends beyond the boundaries of the poem. Prophecies and analepses are mostly narrative devices, and there seems to be no real difference between the death that occurs in the poem and one that is foreshadowed in an extra-diegetic future. Conversely, the boundaries of the *Aeneid* set a meaningful distinction among Virgilian heroes, for only the characters who outlive the poem have access to a post-narrative future and establish a continuity with the reader's present [39]. The privileged protagonists of the prophecies, Iulus and Aeneas, are also the only survivors (among the main characters) of the poem [40], whereas the victims are – as we have seen – mostly defined by analepses and expressions of the contingency of Fortune. In the *Aeneid*, death appears to entail exclusion from *Historia*. The defeated seem doomed to be trapped in a mythical and individual past, and their deaths are always – and sometimes quite surprisingly – omitted from prophecies [41]. The lack of a role in the realization of the national and collective goals seems to coincide with the lack of a post-narrative continuum.

But things look much more complex when we turn to some of the main young figures of the *Aeneid* and notice that they can sometimes constitute a connection between the mythical past and the historical future, even beyond their deaths. Aeneas's eulogy for Pallas (XI 42-58) develops along traditional motifs [42], such as his (i) «young age» (*miserande puer*, XI 42), (ii) «death far away» (*neque ad sedes … paternas*, XI 44), and (iii) «bereaved parent» (*infelix, nati funus crudele videbis*, XI 53), as Servius noted (on XI 42):

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[38] Harrison 1991, 211.

[39] For more on the difference between the ends of the Homeric poems and the *Aeneid*, see Hardie 1993, 11-14.

[40] Rossi 2004, 73-74.

[41] See O'Hara 1990.

[42] See Gransden 1984, 154-173, and Delvigo 1999.

TENE INQUIT *iteration est … nam locis omnibus commovet miserationem, ab aetate, a tempore, a vulnere, a spe parentis.*

However, Pallas' death, unlike those seen hitherto, is not a mere consummation of destiny or a repetition of the past but is projected in a hypothetical future (XI 42-44):

> *«Tene», inquit, «miserande puer, cum laeta veniret,*
> *invidit Fortuna mihi, ne regna videres*
> *nostra neque ad sedes victor veherere paternas?»*

To be sure, this future is once again a rhetorical move. Menander Rhetor suggests stressing the future of a man who died young and lacked glorious deeds by envisaging «how he would have shown himself as a benefactor» (Men. Rhet. 436, 5-10). We have a similar example of counterfactual conditional sentences in the epitaph of Africanus' son[43], Publius Scipio (*ILLRP* 311), wherein untimely death prevents the young deceased man from overcoming his ancestors' *gloria* (*sei / in longa licuiset tibe utier vita, / facile facteis superases gloriam / maiorum*). Similarly, in the *Consolatio ad Liviam*, Drusus is «seen» by his mother for what he could become (*Nunc primum aspiceris consul victorque parenti?*). Hence, Aeneas' speech follows a common theme in the genre of the *consolatio*. However, the τόπος acquires quite a different value in the *Aeneid*, as Gransden claims: «the rhetoric of *consolatio* becomes in terms of the narrative a means by which the reader may construct a meaning for the entire poem which depends on negation, not affirmation»[44].

For a moment, the poem «enacts the things which were not enacted»[45]. In fact, Virgil places this un-enacted alternative future in a historical context. The world that the young Arcadian will not witness is not a mere repetition of the world he left; it is a new and unprecedented one (*regna nostra*). What the hero *could have* become is something different from what he *was*. This is confirmed a few lines later, when Aeneas mourns Pallas for not being able to contribute further to the Trojan cause (XI 57-58):

> *Ei mihi, quantum*
> *praesidium Ausonia et quantum tu perdis, Iule.*

Aeneas can «foresee» and thus mourn the young hero as a real and actual loss. The unrealized future of Pallas not only has a private dimension, but it also acquires a collective and historical importance. Death, in his case, does not entail exclusion from history.

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[43] For a discussion about the identification of the youngster, see Moir 1986.
[44] Gransden 1984, 161.
[45] Gransden 1984, 161.

A similar technique can be observed in Book VI, when Anchises praises Marcellus not for what he has achieved but for what he could *not* achieve (VI 878-883):

> *Heu pietas, heu prisca fides, invictaque bello*
> *dextera! Non illi se quisquam impune tulisset*
> *obvius armato, seu cum pedes iret in hostem,*
> *seu spumantis equi foderet calcaribus armos.*
> *Heu, miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas,*
> *tu Marcellus eris!*

Scholars have widely disputed this passage. *Tu Marcellus eris* has been read either as the apodosis of the protasis *si qua … rumpas* or as an independent clause [46]. What is certain, however, is that Anchises' words envisage a contra-factual condition. This motif is not merely a Virgilian one; it is largely used by Homer [47], particularly in the form of «something would have happened, had not someone acted to prevent it», which is quite common in the *Iliad* [48], and, to a lesser extent, in the *Odyssey* [49]. Virgil adopts this technique in some of his battle scenes, such as in X 324-328, when he contemplates the death of Cydon at the hand of Aeneas, a death prevented by the timely intervention of Cydon's brothers:

> *Tu quoque, flaventem prima lanugine malas*
> *dum sequeris Clytium infelix, nova gaudia, Cydon,*
> *Dardania stratus dextra, securus amorum,*
> *qui iuvenum tibi sempre erant, miserande iaceres,*
> *ni fratrum stipata cohors foret obvia …*

Likewise, when Turnus, carried away by his *furor*, indulges in the massacre of the enemies instead of opening the doors of the Trojan camp and letting his allies in, Virgil introduces a hypothetical outcome to the war (IX 756-759) [50]:

> *Diffugiunt versi trepida formidine Troes,*
> *et si continuo victorem ea cura subisset,*
> *rumpere claustra manu sociosque immittere portis,*
> *ultimus ille dies bello gentique fuisset.*

It has been noted in regard to the Homeric poems that some types of unreal conditions «increase the hearers' feeling of potentiality and even

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[46] Shackleton Bailey 1986.
[47] E.g. *Il.* II 155-156 and *Od.* IV 363-366. See de Jong 1987, 68-81; Lang 1989; Nesselrath 1992. De Jong 1987, 68, defines the «*if not*-situations» as «a special type of *couterfactuals*».
[48] Fenik 1968, 154, 175-177 and 221; Lang 1989, 9-10; Nesselrath 1992, 38.
[49] Lang 1989, 23; Nesselrath 1992, 28-29.
[50] See Hardie 1994, 234.

uncertainty»[51]. Indeed, Virgil appears to take a further step and Marcellus' unrealized future displays an even higher degree of «actuality» in the text than the examples hitherto considered[52]. The youngster's unaccomplished deeds are necessary within the economy of the narrative, for Marcellus' unrealized future – and not his past – makes him deserving of a place in the review of Roman heroes. Anchises' words may well be rhetorical[53], as Servius explained in his comment to the *Aeneid*, VI 875 (*rhetorice spem laudat in puero, quia facta non invenit*), but Marcellus' glorious feats are presented as «factual». We expect that Aeneas takes them literally and never doubts that *that* would be Marcellus' future had he not prematurely died. Here, Anchises is not only the *vates* of what *will* happen (the *fata aspera*) but also of what *could have happened*.

Marcellus' death, just like Pallas', allows the poet to create a «middle realm» made of what would have been the future had things in the past gone differently, which complicates the teleology of the poem[54]. Narratologists have long individuated a similar pattern in some modern novels, which they named *sideshadowing*[55] as opposed to the more common ideas of *foreshadowing* and *backshadowing*. While *foreshadowing* and *backshadowing* (the latter meant as foreshadowing after the fact) convey an image of closed time whereby the future is already contained in the past, *sideshadowing* conveys a contingency of events through hypothetical histories. Sideshadowing is not only a device (or «a set of devices»[56]) but is also an attitude toward history based on a conception of open time that teaches us to distrust our ability to predict the future. What is interesting for our discussion is that within an apparently teleological conception of history, such as that of the *Aeneid*, sideshadowing «suggests that even unactualized possibilities may somehow leave their mark on history»[57]. Morson writes:

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[51] Lang 1989, 7.

[52] Nesselrath suggests that this might be the boldest case of «Beinahe-Episoden» (Nesselrath 1992, 84).

[53] For a discussion of the Virgilian's *Epicedion Marcelli* and the rhetoricians, particularly Menander Rhetor, see Horsfall 2013, 587-589.

[54] This «middle realm» in the *Aeneid* is only hypothetical and is only possible in words (in the speeches between Anchises and Aeneas and between the latter and his troops). However, it is not less actual than other facts and events in the poem. In fact, Pallas' death – as we have seen – is mourned as a missed *praesidium* for Iulus and for *Ausonia* and Marcellus as a loss to Rome (*nimium vobis Romana propago / visa potens, superi*, VI 870-871).

[55] The term was developed by Michael André Bernstein and Gary Saul Morson. See Morson 1994, 6, n. 4, for the history of the term and concept. For a discussion of the device, see Morson 1994, 117-172.

[56] Morson 1994, 6.

[57] Morson 1991, 120.

«A present somehow grows partly out of an unactualized as well as an actualized past. Time exists not just 'phenotypically' but also 'genotypically'. However and whatever applied, sideshadowing multiplies stories»[58].

Sideshadowing, in other words, undermines the very idea of the present as the result of a merely linear and uncomplicated plot of predetermination; the past is not simply recounted but is questioned and opened to the reader. In fact, the reader is fully involved in these scenes. Aeneas articulates his eulogy for Pallas (XI 57-58, reported above) along a triple focalization (*mihi*, *Ausonia*, *Iule*) that follows a chronological order (from Aeneas' present to his successful unification of the Trojans and the Italians and then to Iulus' succession) and conveys an «openendedness» to the passage. The reader, who is called to participate in the event through Aeneas' emphatic *ei mihi* (XI 57), finds an even closer reference to the present in the final vocative *Iule* insofar as Ascanius is the symbol of Rome's hope throughout the poem and is the most evident linguistic link with the *gens Iulia* of Caesar and Augustus (*Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo*, I 288).

Similarly, Marcellus' future links, through an ancipital focalization, with the reader's time (VI 875-877):

> *Nec puer Iliaca quisquam de gente Latinos*
> *in tantum spe tollet avos, nec Romula quondam*
> *ullo se tantum tellus iactabit alumno.*

The greatness of the youngster is seen from the perspective of *Latini avi* but is defined in terms of *spes*, a word that more adequately describes the expectations of Virgil's contemporaries prior to Marcellus' death. Through the use of the threefold reference to *Iliaci*, *Latini,* and Romuleans, Virgil seems to concentrate on what Horsfall defines as «the *Aen.*'s basic genealogical equation, Trojans + Latins = Romans»[59]; the three stages of Roman history find in Marcellus' unrealized future a point of convergence. Moreover, Anchises' final outcry opens on the reader's future (VI 882-883):

> *Heu! miserande puer, si qua fata aspera rumpas,*
> *tu Marcellus eris!*

There is a fusion of two temporal horizons, *i.e.*, that of the characters and that of Virgil's contemporaries[60]. The future tense (*eris*) is consistent with the point of view of Aeneas, for whom Marcellus belongs to a prophetic time that is yet to come, likewise all the previous heroes of the Parade, from

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[58] Morson 1991, 120.
[59] Horsfall 2013, 601. For Horsfall, the equation «probably deserves more attention that it has received».
[60] Bettini 1991, 142-150. Maclennan, quoted by Horsfall 2013, 605.

Silvius (*Lavinia coniunx / educet …*, VI 764-765) to the elder Marcellus (*sistet eques, sternet Poenos …*, VI 858). But for the contemporary reader, who experiences the procession as a climactic movement toward his present, this future is his own future, and Anchises' words must have sounded like a funeral invocation, «as though – Horsfall notes – to those present at the actual funeral in the Camp. Mart.» [61] (VI 883-886):

> *Manibus date lilia plenis,*
> *purpureus spargam flores animamque nepotis*
> *hic saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani*
> *munere.*

For Anchises, Marcellus is a *nepos* (884), and *nepotes* are all the heroes of the review (682, 757, 786, 864), but his attitude is rather that of one who mourns an antecedent, as though Anchises was not also dead. Anchises, in other words, also speaks from the temporal level of Virgil himself and «his listeners are his descendants» [62].

Hence, Marcellus and Pallas are Janus-faced figures. Their lives are buried in the absolute past of the heroic predecessors, but their unrealized futures are projected into the historical future. Through his young heroes, Virgil connects the reader to the mythical events. This conflation of times and perspectives eventually contributes to the polyphony that Virgil realizes through his characters' points of view and their subjectivities and that «creates a sense of the multiple realities of the world» [63]. Through the evocation of unactualized possibilities, Virgil opens «loopholes» [64] in the absolute past and in the present derived from that past. These loopholes are made even more evident in the case of Nisus and Euryalus, the two Virgilian youngsters *par excellence*; at IX 446-449, their deaths are lamented by calling on the future's reader:

> *Fortunati ambo! Si quid mea carmina possunt,*
> *nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,*
> *dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum*
> *accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.*

Here Virgil matches the characters' aspiration to *kleos*, a typically Homeric motif [65], with his own pretension to *fama* [66], an Ennian theme also found

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[61] Horsfall 2013, 605.
[62] Horsfall 1976, 84.
[63] Conte 1986, 157.
[64] Bakhtin 1981, 16.
[65] De Jong 2006, 188.
[66] De Jong finds a similar authorial self-consciousness in Homer (de Jong 2006). For more on *Fama* in the *Aeneid*, see Hardie 2012, 48-149.

in Horace (*Exegi monumentum aere perennis*, *Carm.* III 30) [67]. However, while Homer foreshadows fame in an impersonal and ahistorical future, Virgil projects the future of his heroes and his *carmina* against a horizon that is connoted historically. Moreover, the fortunes of Nisus and Euryalus, who are Virgilian creations and do not exist outside the poem [68], are not only conditional on the power of Virgil's poetry (*si quid mea carmina possunt*) and on the existence of Rome (*dum … imperium pater Romanus habebit*), but also on the centrality of Aeneas (*dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum accolet*) [69]. The identification of the future *pater Romanus* with the *domus Aeneae*, an identification that started during Caesar's time [70], is fundamental to the survival of the poem and its meanings [71]. What appeared to be a *makarismos* [72] for the dead heroes and a confident claim regarding the power of poetry to preserve the memory of the past [73] turns out to be a painful remark on the precariousness of literature and its contents vis-à-vis ideology and its «mystification of history» [74]. We are not too far from Moeris' «statement of poetry's impotency» [75] in *Ecl.* IX 11-13:

> *Sed carmina tantum*
> *nostra valent, Lycida, tela inter Martia, quantum*
> *Chaonias dicunt aquila veniente columbas.*

In the *Aeneid* this consideration moderates the teleological vision of history proposed by the plot, by showing that the real *fatum* of the heroes and their events lies in an extra-textual future. It is then not surprising that Bakhtin regarded authorial interventions as «one of the most important results of surmounting epic (hierarchical) distance» [76].

Similarly, Virgil intervenes *in propria persona* at the death of Lausus, who is another *iuvenis memorandus* (X 791-793) [77]:

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[67] Hardie 1994, 154.
[68] Gransden 1984, 110.
[69] Seider 2013, 143. For more on this passage, see Casali 2004.
[70] La Penna 2005, 134 ff.
[71] Such as, for example, Anchises' «genealogical protreptic», as it was defined by Horsfall 1976.
[72] Hardie 1994, 153.
[73] Gransden 1984, 112.
[74] Casali 2004, 354.
[75] Boyle 1986, 15.
[76] Bakhtin 1981, 28.
[77] This passage, as we know, presents not a few hermeneutical problems, not least the identification of the young with the father, Mezentius. See Barchiesi 1984, 66-68, and Conte 1986, 165-166.

> *Hic mortis durae casum tuaque optima facta,*
> *si qua fidem tanto est operi latura vetustas,*
> *non equidem nec te, iuvenis memorande, silebo.*

Once more, the reflection on the youngster's death brings about a temporal conflation that makes the passage hard to interpret univocally[78]. *Vetustas* can refer to the antiquity of the events (the myth) as much as it can refer to posterity. The poet's appeal to the faithfulness of ancient times to confer credence on extraordinary events is an old τόπος[79], but what is interesting for our discussion is that Virgil's use of the τόπος stresses the dependence of Lausus' *fortuna* on the faith that future generations will grant the entire poem. Likewise, when Aeneas addresses the dead body of the youngster a few lines down during a brief funeral eulogy, he once again appeals to the future that awaits Lausus even beyond his death (X 825-830):

> *Quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, pro laudibus istis,*
> *quid pius Aeneas tanta dabit indole dignum?*
> *Arma, quibus laetatus, habe tua, teque parentum*
> *manibus et cineri, si qua est ea cura, remitto.*
> *Hoc tamen infelix miseram solabere mortem:*
> *Aeneae magni dextra cadis.*

Here, Aeneas is more than a character; he embraces an external perspective (confirmed by the use of the third person for himself) and an «authorial function»[80]. Hence, Aeneas addresses Lausus not only as a real person but as a literary character as well[81]. The *consolatio* to the youngster's death is also given beyond the fiction, in the fortune of the poem itself, where the destiny of the youngster is indissolubly linked to the *fortuna* of his slayer.

The episodes of fictional Virgilian characters such as Lausus, Pallas, Nisus, and Euryalus project a degree of uncertainty in the narrative: they are not mythic characters, and their stories are unknown to the reader, who follows their evolution unaware of their outcome. In this sense, they can be seen as novelistic creations within the poem[82]. However, the main hero, the narrator, and ultimately Virgil, envisage for the young victims a future outside the fiction. As in Marcellus' case, the poem seems to compensate for the inauspicious destiny of the valorous and promising young soldiers and

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[78] Harrison 1991, 261-262.
[79] Harrison 1991, 261.
[80] Conte 1986, 177-178.
[81] Although it has been noted that epitaphs in literary texts tend to «compete with the narrative voice of the author» (Erasmo 2008, 181).
[82] For more on the difference between a historic type and mythical character, see also Eco 1972, 15.

promotes them, by eliciting the viewpoint of posterity, to mythic heroes. Far from being a mere celebration of bravery, however, *sideshadowing* has a more structural consequence; it proves that *Historia* in the *Aeneid* is not crystallized and made of hard facts but is instead «malleable» [83], *i.e.*, it undermines the idea of the present as the only inevitable realization of the past. *Mors immatura* thus becomes a sort of counterpoint to epic as the source of an ideological discourse [84] meant as a discourse that epic itself even formally represents, as David Quint argues: «epic draws an equation between power and narrative. It tells of a power able to end the indeterminacy of war and to emerge victorious, showing that the struggle had all along been leading up to its victory and thus imposing upon it a narrative teleology – the teleology that epic identifies with the very idea of narrative» [85].

The *Aeneid* is certainly an epic poem but one that problematizes «epicness» [86]. Virgil does not connect myth and present to close the interpretation of the past or announce the end of time; rather, he reminds us of the vulnerability of the word and its subjection to an unfathomable future.

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[83] Horsfall 2000, 144. See also Horsfall 1991, 84-90.

[84] For Gioseffi (Gioseffi - Zanetto 2011), an image of the history that ends with the death of Marcellus may be a sign that Virgil questions the entire value-system of the poem.

[85] Quint 1993, 45.

[86] For Conte (Conte 1986, 182), Virgil «wished to display the ideological bias of the epic norm by showing that the truth, which it claimed entire for itself, was relative».

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