Foreshadowing and Dramatic Irony in the Story of Dido

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FORESHADOWING AND DRAMATIC IRONY IN THE STORY OF DIDO*

A casual mention of the story of Dido, or the tragedy of Dido, evokes Book 4 of the *Aeneid.* This paper, however, will be equally concerned with Book 1, in line with a recent tendency of Virgilian scholarship to stress the importance of Book 1 for interpretation of the Dido episode as a tragedy.[1] The paper is offered as a supplement to Antonie Wlosok's analysis of Book 4 in the light of Aristotle's *Poetics,*[2] for dramatic irony, not explicitly recognised by Aristotle, is correspondingly absent from her treatment. Yet for modern critics dramatic irony is a characteristic feature of Greek tragedy,[3] and instances of "tragic irony" are often observed by commentators on Virgil.[4] My aim is to add precision to the identification of this type of Virgilian irony as dramatic irony and, using Aristotle's analysis of the elements of the plot of tragedy, to show that this dramatic irony is basic to the structure of Virgil's "tragedy."

The story of Dido is tragic in two senses of the word, tragic in that her life ends in *pathos,* in untimely self-destruction, and tragic because her story is told as a tragedy. This overlap between "tragic" as a formal generic description and as a term for the proper effect of the genre is

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[1] R. G. Austin, *Aeneid* 1 (Oxford 1971) xviii; E. L. Harrison, "Why did Venus wear boots?—Some reflections on Aeneid 1.314 f.," *PVS* 12 (1972–73) 10 ff., esp. 19.

[2] "Virgils Didotragödie. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Tragischen in der Aeneis" in *Studien zum antiken Epos,* ed. H. Görgemanns and E. A. Schmidt (Meisenheim 1976) 228–50.

[3] It was first defined and illustrated from the tragedies of Sophocles by Bishop Thirlwall (*The Philological Museum* 2 [1833] 483–537). With W. B. Stanford (*Ambiguity in Greek Literature* [Oxford 1939] 66) I prefer the term Dramatic Irony to Tragic or Sophoclean Irony, for dramatic irony is not confined to tragedy. It is not even confined to drama (D. C. Muecke, *Irony,* The Critical Idiom 13 [London 1970] 64–66).

[4] The earliest comment on tragic irony in Virgil I have found is that of Henry Nettleship on *Aen.* 4.57–58 ("Suggestions Introductory to a Study of the Aeneid" [originally published 1875] in *Lectures and Essays* [Oxford 1885] 127). See Austin on *Aen.* 1.35, 299, 597, 732; *Aen.* 4.45 f., 306; Pease on *Aen.* 4.20, 29, 65 (comparing 10.500–2), 308, 384; Gransden on *Aen.* 8.514 ff.

American Journal of Philology 104 (1983) 134–55

already assumed in the *Poetics,* where the analysis of the composition of tragedy is intended to account for its effect—the arousal of pity and fear (esp. 11.1452b). Comparisons with tragedy have long seemed appropriate for this episode of the *Aeneid.*[5] Not only is Dido likened to such Euripidean tragic heroines as Medea or Phaedra, but the preponderance of speech in Book 4 led Heinze, in particular, to regard its composition as analogous to that of a drama.[6] A subtle acknowledgment of the "mixing of genres" was detected by E. L. Harrison in his paper "Why did Venus wear boots?—Some reflections on Aeneid 1.314f." Venus' *cothurnus,* the mention of which is held back to precede immediately her prologue-like account of Dido's life so far (1.337), is to be taken as the tragic buskin, symbolically hinting at the beginning of the drama.[7] The validity of this insight, as well as of the general approach, is supported by the tendency of the scholia to the *Iliad,* in which Homer figures as the "first of the tragedians," to follow Aristotle in interpreting the *Iliad* in terms of drama.[8]

Harrison pointed out that critics often miss the divine prologue in Book 1, and consequently fail to realise that it is here that the tragedy really begins, begins formally with Venus' prologue, and begins in the sense that the elements of the action are laid down. The most recent analysis of the story of Dido as a tragedy, however, concentrates on Book 4. Although Wlosok recognises the introductory nature of the events in Book 1, she does not really take on board their value as dramatic preparation, nor, incidentally, the relation of Books 2 and 3 to Book 4. For her, "Das eigentliche Drama Didos ist auf Buch 4 konzentriert, das eine in sich geschlossene und auffällig stark dramatisierte

[5] For the influence of tragedy on the *Aeneid* as a whole, see Nettleship (note 4 above) 125 and Conington (Introduction to Vol. 2 1865) 5, "The substance of Homeric poetry, the conduct of the action and the conception of the actors, came to Virgil modified by the intermediate agency of Greek drama" (cf. 14–19). On the Dido episode, Nettleship 129–31. For further references, see Pease 8–11 and Wlosok (note 2 above) 228, n. 2, adding (with no attempt to be exhaustive): K. Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid* (London 1968) 323–39, E. Turolla, "Le origine e le caratteristiche del tragico nell' Eneide," *GIF* 6 (1953) 114–33, W. S. Maguiness, "L'inspiration tragique de l'Enéide," *L'antiquité classique* 32 (1963) 477–90, J. Foster, "Some Devices of Drama used in Aeneid 1–4," *PVS* 13 (1973–74) 28–41 (with some original perceptions of dramatic irony).

[6] *Virgils epische Technik*[3] (Berlin 1915) 127–28, 134, 138.

[7] Harrison (note 1 above) 20–21. See also his "Snakes and Buskins," *Eranos* 77 (1979) 51–56.

[8] N. J. Richardson, "Literary Criticism in the Exegetical Scholia to the *Iliad:* A Sketch," *CQ* 30 (1980) 265–87, esp. 270.

Komposition bildet."[9] Nevertheless, hers is the most rigorous attempt so far to interpret the story of Dido as a tragedy in the generic sense. Book 4 is firmly divided into five acts, without a prologue, and Aristotle's analysis of tragedy used to define the tragic nature of the Dido episode.[10] In it, in fact, Aristotle's ideal requirements are shown to be fulfilled remarkably well. For Aristotle, the tragic hero is "one who is pre-eminent in moral virtue, who passes to bad fortune not through vice and wickedness, but because of some piece of ignorance, and who is of high repute and great good fortune, like Oedipus and Thyestes, and the splendid men of such families"[11] (13.1453a7 ff.). The best plot is the complex one "where the change of fortune is accompanied by *peripeteia* or recognition, or both" (10.1452a16 ff.). "For a recognition accompanied by *peripeteia* will involve either pity or fear, and tragedy is by definition a *mimēsis* of actions that rouse these emotions" (11.1452b32 ff.).

Whatever our assessment of Dido's character, I think we must agree that Virgil wanted to give her the status, at least, of a tragic heroine.[12] It will be less controversial to find a reversal of fortune in the plot, and one which is a necessary result of the preceding action, involving a change from ignorance to knowledge, and culminating in *pathos*. As to the complicated question of Dido's ἁμαρτία, the *culpa*, here I would agree with Rudd that the Aristotelian notion of disproportion between fault and fate is maintained.[13]

I have concentrated on Wlosok's analysis partly because I think the use of Aristotle valid and wish to develop it further below, and also because I wanted to point out an omission which surprises me. It may be due to the aim of analysing Book 4 strictly in the terms of ancient criticism of tragedy, or to the failure to include Book 1 in the tragedy

[9] Wlosok (note 2 above) 233.

[10] See also C. Collard, "Medea and Dido," *Prometheus* 1 (1975) 131–51, esp. 141.

[11] All translations of the *Poetics* are quoted from Miss M. E. Hubbard's translation in *Ancient Literary Criticism in Translation*, ed. D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (Oxford 1972) 90–132.

[12] According to N. Horsfall ("Dido in the light of history," *PVS* 13 [1973–74] 1–13) Dido displays "violence, greed, duplicity and hatred" (12). I believe that the character of Dido is to be kept separate from general Punic characteristics, though these are certainly relevant to the episode. Dido has a greatness from which to fall: she is a queen and founder of a city (1.503–8, 4.655), she shows pity and generosity to Aeneas and the Trojans, and feels bound to Sychaeus by love and loyalty (Niall Rudd, *Lines of Enquiry* [Cambridge 1976] 49). See also Heinze (note 6 above) 138 f.; V. Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil*, trans. G. Seligson (Ann Arbor 1962) 67–72, 90–91; Collard (note 10 above) 142, n. 36; Wlosok (note 2 above) 238–39; F. Klingner, *Virgil* (Zürich and Stuttgart 1967) 409.

[13] Rudd (note 12 above) 49.

proper, but, for whatever reason, this "Beitrag zum Problem des Tragischen in der Aeneis" does not mention dramatic or tragic irony at all.

I

We should note, first of all, that the different kinds of irony that are noticed by modern commentators are not clearly distinguished by them, "Tragic Irony" being detected in the words of a speaker who is deliberately using ambiguity to deceive the person addressed (4.478 ff., Dido to Anna),[14] or in the words of a character which unconsciously betray ignorance of his true situation (1.731–35, Dido's prayer at the banquet),[15] or in the words of the author which call attention to a discrepancy between the character's situation and his knowledge of it (1.299, *fati nescia Dido*).[16] It is only the first case, that of Verbal Irony, which was recognised as *ironia* by the ancient commentators.[17] From my description of the last two cases it can be seen that they are very similar in that both depend on a gap in knowledge between the audience and the protagonist as to the meaning of a given situation. It is this kind of irony that I will treat as dramatic irony, taking it primarily as Situational Irony, which arises from the contradictions between two opposing interpretations of a situation.[18]

In epic the technique of foreshadowing is often used to evoke a sense of dramatic irony, most effectively when it hints at a complete reversal of fortune.[19] The foreshadowing of disaster at a moment of

[14] See Pöschl (note 12 above) 83–84 on amphibology as a device of tragedy, Quinn (note 5 above) 333. On this speech see E. Lefèvre, *Dido und Aias: Ein Beitrag zur römischen Tragödie* (Mainz 1978) 16–22, Collard (note 10 above) 149.

[15] This is Quinn's second kind of Tragic Irony (note 5 above) (334) and G. E. Duckworth's first (*Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius and Vergil* [reprinted New York 1966] 75–76).

[16] This is Duckworth's second type (note 15 above) (77–79). Stanford (note 3 above) 66 distinguishes between Sophoclean Irony (intended by the speaker) and Dramatic Ambiguity (where the speaker is unconscious of the double meaning).

[17] E.g., Servius on 4.93, "ironia est cum aliud uerba, aliud continet sensus." Cf. Quint. 8.6.54, Stanford (note 3 above) 61–65. For the history of the concept of irony see Norman D. Knox, "Irony" in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 2, ed. Philip P. Weiner (New York 1973) 626–34.

[18] D. C. Muecke, "Analyses de l'ironie," *Poétique* 36 (1978) 478–94, esp. 481.

[19] Duckworth (note 15 above) 59, 75–79.

success or happiness which recurs so insistently in the story of Dido is Iliadic in origin. In the *Iliad,* however, the context of the foreshadowing does not always give the contrast necessary for irony, whereas Virgil in our episode consistently uses foreshadowing to underline Situational Irony. In the *Odyssey* dramatic irony is conveyed by a different technique, as has been shown in the major study by A. F. Bekker, who concludes: "it is 'shown' and only by exception is it 'told.' "[20] Similarly, while there are ironic situations and potentially ironic reversals in the *Argonautica* (e.g., 3.598 ff., Aietes' misinterpretation of the prophecy of Helios that he would be destroyed by one of his own stock), Apollonius rarely draws the reader's attention to them by explicit intervention or foreshadowing.[21]

This element of "editorial intrusion" was an aspect of the narrative of the Dido story which Brooks Otis discussed in his comparison of Virgil with Apollonius in the chapter in which he formulated his well-known theory of the subjective style. Prominent in his analysis is the motif of treacherous ignorance or unawareness, as it is developed in contrast with the motif of happiness. For him the effect of this contrast is pathos, above all the pathos evoked by the specifically Virgilian use of *infelix,* "a finger-pointing word that foreshadows future tragedy and at the same time expresses sympathy: it is the word for those who oppose fate and whom fate opposes but are yet worthy of true pity."[22] But in all this, even with the perception that the motifs are integrated into the framework of the plot, he finds no place for the concept of dramatic irony.[23] I would argue, however, that the function of "editorial intrusion" is ambivalent. For the very ability of the narrator to intervene implies a distance between him and the characters, because, on the most simple level, he can see ahead and they cannot. Therefore, as well as highlighting the pathos of the moment, such intervention also leads away from emotional involvement in it to a perception of the total pattern of events.

The most explicit of the comments of the epic narrator in the

[20] A. F. Bekker, *Ironie in de Odyssee* (Leiden 1965) 321.

[21] σχετλιή of Medea, underlining Hera's plans for her (*Argo.* 3.1113–14) is an exception. Cf. D. N. Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-examined,* Vol. 1 (Leiden 1971) index s.v. Irony.

[22] *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963) 61–96, esp. 70.

[23] But see his later discussion of "three ironically ambiguous episodes" in Book 1 (234–40).

story of Dido underlines the contradictory nature of the "wedding" in the cave (4.169–70):[24]

> ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
> causa fuit.

Here Virgil is imitating the use of foreshadowing in the *Iliad* through which Homer repeatedly foreshadows the deaths of Patroclus and Hector, intertwining them and showing their inevitable connection. Verbally our passage is closest to *Il.* 11.604b, κακοῦ δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή, words which signal the beginning of the ineluctable train of events which is to lead to the death of Patroclus. The immediate context, however, Achilles' sending of Patroclus to inquire about Machaon, does not encourage us to see irony, though Griffin has noticed pathos in the contrast between the hero's greatness (ἶσος Ἄρηϊ) and his fragility.[25] The death of Patroclus is foreshadowed again at *Il.* 15.65–67 in a speech of Zeus and finally there is *Il.* 16.46–47, the narrator's comment on Patroclus' wish to enter the fight:

> Ὣς φάτο λισσόμενος μέγα νήπιος· ἦ γὰρ ἔμελλεν
> οἱ αὐτῷ θάνατόν τε κακὸν καὶ κῆρα λιτέσθαι.[26]

Here there is a contrast between Patroclus' expectations of an easy victory and the doom that we are told awaits him.

The most striking moments of this kind, which form the sort of progression noticed by Griffin, "an ascending scale of pathos," are those which relate to Hector. The first is *Il.* 15.613 ff., where the narrator forecasts Hector's death in his great moment of victory near the ships.[27]

[24] Cf. I. M. Le M. Du Quesnay, "Virgil's Fourth Eclogue," *ARCA* 2, Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar 1976, ed. F. Cairns (Liverpool 1977) 25–99, "Deaths and funerals are the very antithesis of weddings and birth, and ancient authors never seem to tire of playing on this fact" (73).

[25] J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 85. G. Nagy (*The Best of the Achaeans* [Baltimore 1979] 33, 294) links ἶσος Ἄρηϊ (*Il.* 11.604) with θεῷ ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηϊ (*Il.* 16.784) and takes the first use of the comparison as foreshadowing its second appearance at Patroclus' death, since it is not used of him elsewhere in the poem.

[26] Schol. B here comments on the heightening of anticipation by the repetition of the foreshadowing. See G. E. Duckworth, "Προαναφώνησις in the Scholia to Homer," *AJP* 52 (1931) 320–38 and Richardson (note 8 above) 269, n. 2.

[27] It does not affect the argument that most of these passages are "late." See Leaf on *Il.* 2.692, "the epic poet foreshadows [future events] in his own words only in suspicious passages." Indications of lateness are also detected in most of them by G. P. Shipp (*Studies in the Language of Homer*[2] [Cambridge 1972]).

The next passage is more powerful, since it links the fate of Hector with his victory over Patroclus (*Il.* 16.793–800), symbolised by the passing of the helmet to Hector.[28] This motif is repeated in a more elaborate passage where Zeus comments on Hector's arming himself with the spoils of Patroclus, Achilles' armour (*Il.* 17.200–9):[29]

> κινήσας ῥα κάρη προτὶ ὃν μυθήσατο θυμόν·
> "ἆ δείλ', οὐδέ τί τοι θάνατος καταθύμιός ἐστιν,
> ὃς δή τοι σχεδὸν εἶσι· σὺ δ' ἄμβροτα τεύχεα δύνεις
> ἀνδρὸς ἀριστῆος, τόν τε τρομέουσι καὶ ἄλλοι·
> τοῦ δὴ ἑταῖρον ἔπεφνες ἐνηέα τε κρατερόν τε,
> τεύχεα δ' οὐ κατὰ κόσμον ἀπὸ κρατός τε καὶ ὤμων
> εἵλευ· ἀτάρ τοι νῦν γε μέγα κράτος ἐγγυαλίξω,
> τῶν ποινὴν ὅ τοι οὔ τι μάχης ἓκ νοστήσαντι
> δέξεται Ἀνδρομάχη κλυτὰ τεύχεα Πηλεΐωνος."
> Ἦ, καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων.

The ancient scholia recognise the contrast between the victory and the doom to which it will inevitably lead (T *Il.* 17.209 = B *Il.* 17.208):

> τραγῳδίαν ἔχει τὸ ἐπὶ κυρώσει μεγάλων παθῶν νεῦμα. ἔνευσε νικῆσαι· τὸ γὰρ ἀποθανεῖν ἐπέπρωτο.

There is not just contrast here, but all the ingredients of dramatic irony.[30] Homer has used the figure of the all-seeing and all-powerful god to draw the listener's attention to the implications of the action at this crucial moment. The hero's ignorance of his fate is explicitly commented upon. But the ironic effect lies not so much in the fact that his death is foretold in a moment of triumph, as in that it is shown to be the necessary result of the way he has reacted to his victory. The description of Hector's arming himself in the spoils is unique in the *Iliad,* and this is highlighted by the phrase οὐ κατὰ κόσμον. When Virgil adapted this passage for Turnus' killing of Pallas, he too made the epic narrator underline what is there seen as Turnus' ignorance of the fatal folly of his actions (10.500–5).[31]

[28] Cf. Griffin (note 25 above) 136–37.

[29] Cf. Griffin (note 25 above) 129.

[30] Duckworth (note 26 above) 336 goes further and claims that the scholiast recognised the tragic irony.

[31] While acknowledging the taking of the baldric as "the fatal slip of tragedy" (326), Quinn (note 5 above) dismisses the authorial comment as "a trick of plot construction" (341). It is interesting that Virgil does not actually tell us that Turnus put on the *balteus.* Are we to supply this detail from the Homeric allusion?

An examination of the Scholia to the *Iliad* shows that the ancient commentators recognised the contrast basic to dramatic irony and its effect of pathos. Very similar are a group of comments on some ironic moments in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus,* collected by Stanford.[32] These refer to a series of passages in the *O.T.* where Oedipus makes in ignorance an assertion about the future which is to be reversed to his own disaster. For example, at line 141 he says that in helping Laius he will aid himself, whereas what will really happen is that in helping Laius he will destroy himself. The comment in the scholia is καὶ τοῦτο κινητικὸν τοῦ θεάτρου. τὰ γὰρ ἐναντία ἀποβήσεται. Similarly, comments on lines 236, 249, and 264 combine the elements of ignorance of the protagonist, pathos, and moving of the audience, but do not explicitly mention foreshadowing. We might also notice a comment on Soph. *Electra* 1137 which compares the pathos arising from Electra's mourning of her brother just before the recognition scene, not knowing that he is present, to a scene of dramatic irony in the *Odyssey*—Penelope lamenting for Odysseus when he is present in disguise (19.106–385). From these comments I think we can safely assume that ancient audiences were aware of the effects of dramatic irony, even though they did not have a term with which to label it.

II

Though Virgil's technique of explicit foreshadowing derives from Homer, we would not be mistaken, I think, in attributing its predominantly ironic use in the Dido episode to the influence of Attic tragedy. This is because in Virgil, as in Sophocles, the dramatic irony is linked to the climactic moment of the plot, the reversal of fortune. The structural role of ambiguity in Sophocles is stressed by Stanford: "Sophocles' double meanings play a vital part in the development of the plot, foreshadowing the *dénouement* and reminding the spectators of what has gone before."[33] Similarly Vellacott's definition of dramatic irony is useful for the emphasis placed on its importance in the plot. "This contrast [between expectation and fulfillment] exercises its power upon the audience because at critical points in the unfolding of a plot the

[32] Stanford (note 3 above) 167–68.

[33] Stanford (note 3 above) 173. Cf. "With Sophocles suggestive ambiguity becomes a major element in the σύστασις τῶν πραγμάτων" (165).

audience can see the imminent outcome and can see that the hero cannot or will not see it."[34]

For dramatic irony the "discrepant awareness"[35] of the audience and protagonist is *par excellence* of the outcome and involves directly opposed expectations of what is in store. The sort of plot that encourages disclosure of the outcome at critical points in its unfolding, and which therefore seems to us most productive of dramatic irony, is Aristotle's "complex" plot, "where the change of fortune is accompanied by *peripeteia* or recognition or both" (10.1452a16 ff.). I incline to John Jones' interpretation of these crucial concepts,[36] though acceptance of his views is not necessary to my argument. For him the "change of fortune" is not "the change in the hero's fortunes" but a reversed state of affairs, and the recognition is therefore "recognition of, a discovering of the truth about, a state of affairs which was unknown before, or misapprehended." When we add his definition of *peripeteia* as "Reversal—'the shift of the action towards the opposite pole,'" we can see why many modern critics tend to assimilate the change of fortune to the *peripeteia* and to refer to both simply as the *peripeteia*.[37]

Though Aristotle did not discuss dramatic irony as such, it is now generally agreed that "Irony is implicit in the principle of Reversal of Fortune which Aristotle notes as the basis of tragedy; its general and specific forms are both implicit in his doctrine of Recognition or Discovery."[38] We can also say that irony is implicit in Aristotle's basic requirement that the plot display probability or necessity in the succession of the episodes (7.1450b21–9.1451b39).[39] This does not mean that what happens may not be unexpected, and indeed, having explained

[34] P. Vellacott, *Ironic Drama* (Cambridge 1975) 23.

[35] B. Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford 1960) vii–xi.

[36] John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London 1967) 13, 16, and 48 (where he quotes Else's definition of *peripeteia*).

[37] Cf. the prominence given to the concept of *peripeteia* in Bert O. States, *Irony and Drama: A Poetics* (Ithaca and London 1971).

[38] G. G. Sedgewick, *Of Irony: Especially in Drama*[2] (Toronto 1948) 59. For him general dramatic irony is the irony of the theatre, potential in the spectator's attitude which is a mixture of superior knowledge and detached sympathy (32–33), while specific dramatic irony occurs when this potential is actualized and made manifest (33).

[39] Cf. G. Brereton, *Principles of Tragedy* (London 1968) 14, "Irony is often held to be an essential concept of the tragic . . . it is bound up with the concept of probability and also with the concept of destiny." The example that Aristotle adduces to illustrate events happening "unexpectedly but because of each other," "the statue of Mitys in Argos killing Mitys' murderer by falling on him as he looked at it" (*Poet.* 9, 1452a 7–9) is striking precisely because, as an accident drawn from real life, it shows how we interpret

that traditional stories allow room for manoeuvre and that, in any case, only a few people know them well (9.1451b26), Aristotle states his preference for plots where "things happen unexpectedly because of each other" (9.1452a3). The emphasis on the unexpected is in the interests of Aristotle's explanation of the effect of tragedy, for he connects the arousal of pity and fear with surprise (9.1452a; 18.1456a). Given our view of the ironic nature of Greek tragedy, Aristotle's emphasis on surprise is puzzling, since it is not just, or mainly, the surprise of the protagonists; but it does cohere with the ancient view that the response demanded by tragedy was emotional involvement in the action.[40] Nevertheless none of this excludes dramatic irony, for, as John Moles has argued, irony can work retrospectively. Foreknowledge is not necessary to ironic effects whose true meaning is only made clear by the Recognition itself. "Thus Aristotle's emphasis on the techniques of suspense is in theory by no means incompatible with an awareness of the significance of ironic effects."[41] For, as Moles points out, if the true meaning of the previous ironic effects is only made clear by the Recognition itself, this will enhance the ἔκπληξις of the audience. For later readers of the plays, less concerned with the impact of the original performance, it is only natural that knowledge of the outcome should lead to perception of the ironic effects as foreshadowing.

An essential component of the irony that is potential in the complex plot of tragedy is the ignorance or quasi-ignorance, the blindness or self-delusion of the protagonist. Just as in the *O.T.* the ironic effect is heightened by the paradoxical extent of Oedipus' knowledge—he is in possession of the oracle yet unwilling or unable to believe that it has been fulfilled—so Dido's ignorance develops from innocence to willful imprudence. In contrast to Dido's ignorance, the knowledge of the reader is not constrained by human limitations of time and space. Expectations can be formed not only by what we are explicitly told in the poem, but also by our recognition, through allusion, of typical story-patterns, as well as by our knowledge of history.

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things in terms of aesthetic pattern, finding the coincidence impressive, as Aristotle himself comments, because it looks designed (Muecke [note 18 above] 481–82, 494). To see the same motif incorporated into a plot, and used ironically, we need think no further than the statue of the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni.*

[40] For dramatic irony and surprise, see D. W. Lucas, *Aristotle Poetics* (Oxford 1968) 135, 292; "Pity, Terror and *Peripeteia*," *CQ* 12 (1962) 52–60.

[41] "Notes on Aristotle, *Poetics* 13 and 14," *CQ* 29 (1979) 90, n. 2.

In Virgil's Dido episode the operation of foreknowledge and expectation is complex. Beside the, so to speak, hard knowledge of the future history of Rome, which casts a dark shadow over any association between Trojans and Carthaginians, there is also the vaguer sense of the way the epic narrative must go—this last contributed to by the historical dimension just mentioned, the authorial foreshadowing, the divine interventions, imagery,[42] and mythical or literary analogues (Dido is Helen,[43] Calypso, Circe,[44] Penelope,[45] Hypsipyle,[46] Medea,[47] Ariadne[48] and all, not to mention Ajax[49] and Hector[50]). The ironic effects depend at different moments on all these different strands of the audience's knowledge, weaving them together and linking them to the inevitable reversal of fortune. But in what sense is Dido's catastrophe "inevitable"? It has been argued that, in itself, the story of Dido is not tragic in the Sophoclean sense, since the reversal is not a logically necessary result of previous events, "car sa 'reconnaissance' de l'erreur commise et de la trahison d'Enée reste essentiellement liée au processus d'une aventure romanesque qui exclut l'idée d'un destin malheureux au départ."[51] While there may be some truth in this point of view, in that Dido's fate, considered in isolation, lacks a degree of ironic necessity, it seems to me that we are not meant to realise this. On the contrary, Virgil has used

[42] E.g., B. Fenik, "Parallelism of Theme and Imagery in *Aeneid* II and IV," *AJP* 80 (1959) 1–24.

[43] See Servius on *Aen.* 1.650; Pöschl (note 12 above) 149; G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer*[2] (Göttingen 1979) 155, n. 3.

[44] Conington (note 5 above) 12.

[45] C. Kopff, "Dido and Penelope," *Philologus* 121 (1977) 244–48.

[46] Conington (note 5 above) 19; G. Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton 1972) 186, 219, 223.

[47] Collard (note 10 above); G. Zanker, "The Love Theme in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica," *WS* 13 (1979) 52–75, esp. 67 n. 44, "Medea's tragic fate is arrestingly foreshadowed by Apollonius' use of the Ariadne myth, which is mentioned at two crucial points (3.997–1007, 4.423–34)."

[48] P. Oksala, "Das Aufblühen des römischen Epos: Berührungen zwischen der Ariadne-Episode Catulls und der Dido-Geschichte Vergils," *Arctos* 3 (1962) 167–97.

[49] Most recently Lefèvre (note 14 above).

[50] If the tragedies of Troy and Dido parallel one another, there are at least as many points of contact between the fates of Hector and Dido as between those of Priam and Dido (Fenik [note 42 above] 19 ff.): both Dido and Hector supplicate; both are defenders of the city; Hector's end leads to the sack of Troy, while Dido's end is like a sacked city (see below); both in a way destroy their people (*Aen.* 4.682–83, *Il.* 22.104). I owe these points to Mr. C. W. Macleod.

[51] R. Lesueur, *L'Enéide de Virgile* (Toulouse 1975) 252–55 on Dido and *peripeteia*.

every means possible to make the plot *seem* to be a tragic plot, and treating Dido's ignorance of the future as an ironic ignorance is one of those means.[52]

There are two stages in Dido's ignorance. In the first she is serenely unaware that things are not what she supposes them to be, unaware that, in welcoming and aiding Aeneas as a guest worthy of sympathy she is setting in train her own destruction. In Book 1 there is constant emphasis on Dido's ignorance, but nothing is said to disabuse her. When Ilioneus speaks to Dido on behalf of the Trojan survivors (1.522 ff.), he explains that the Trojans were driven onto the shores of Libya by a storm and stresses that their destination was Italy. If Aeneas proves to be safe they will proceed there with him, but if not they will return to Acestes in Sicily. Dido's reply acknowledges these possible destinations (569–70) but it also contains the at first tentative, but then solemnly expressed suggestion that the leaderless Trojans should settle in Carthage on equal terms (572–74).[53] It is Aeneas himself, suddenly revealed by the parting of the mist, who replies to Dido (595 ff.). His highly emotional speech is distinctly ambiguous. He acknowledges Dido's offer to share her city (600), saying that only the gods could repay such kindness, but her name will always be honoured wherever he may be. In his desire to express his gratitude adequately, Aeneas suppresses the refusal he ought to have made and it appears only as a vague afterthought (610, *quae me cumque uocant terrae*), something that Dido could interpret as a piece of rhetoric.[54] She replies sympathetically and invites the Trojans to enter her palace.

At the beginning of Book 4, however, Dido can no longer be said to be ignorant of Aeneas' destiny, but she acts nevertheless as if the will of the gods need not apply in her case. We should not interpret the change as a simple contrast between knowledge and ignorance, but see the possibility that ignorance may be dispelled by different degrees of knowledge. At the beginning of Book 4 Dido is no longer *nescia* but

[52] Klingner (note 12 above) 438 handily summarises the focus of Heinze's discussion as "die Verwandlung des erotischen Epos in Tragische mit Hilfe der Tragödie." See also Foster (note 5 above) 29 on Virgil's treatment of the family of Belus as a tragic house.

[53] On the elevation of the expression E. Fraenkel, "VRBEM QVAM STATVO VESTRA EST," *Glotta* 33 (1954) 157–59, who points to the echo of the phrase at 4.655 f.

[54] 1.607–10 is echoed by 4.333–36. Cf. G. Highet (note 46 above) 115, who interprets Aeneas' words as an implicit rejection of the offer. Likewise for Henry (Conington, note 5 above) *uocant* implies that Aeneas will have to leave Dido. Cf. H. W. Prescott, *The Development of Virgil's Art* (New York 1927) 269, "Only the Roman reader appreciated the unconscious irony of the hero's final words."

she is not yet *conscia fati.* Her knowledge is not accompanied by an assent of the will.[55] Books 2 and 3 are all about knowledge, Aeneas' growing knowledge of and understanding of his destiny and what it involves.[56] We have to take this information into account when we consider the position of Dido in Book 4, even though she herself does not seem to have grasped the meaning of what she has heard. The narrative of Aeneas' experiences (especially the prophecy of Helenus, 3.374 ff.) should have made clear to her the impossibility of a permanent association with Aeneas, the marriage she is later to think she has obtained,[57] but the nature of her passion is such that she is unable to heed this warning. Indeed, the narrative itself inspires love (4.1-5, 77-79). What worries her at the beginning of Book 4 is not whether Aeneas is free, but whether she herself is. The *peripeteia* caused by Mercury's intervention finally brings the realisation that Aeneas must leave her, and it is this realisation which leads inevitably to her decision to die (4.450). It is because Dido is no longer *fati nescia* in the wider sense that in Book 4 Virgil shifts the emphasis in his use of foreshadowing to focus exclusively on her death.

III

Since we have said that dramatic irony is potentially present in the reversal of fortune in the tragic plot, we need to look more closely at the *peripeteia* in Book 4. But a *peripeteia* in itself is not sufficient to create a tragic effect, nor is it through dramatic irony alone that a *peripeteia* becomes tragic. We can see this if we compare the analogous legends concerning heroines who, out of love, help foreigners or enemies: betraying their friends or country, they are in turn betrayed. But while the punishments of Scylla and Tarpeia and the abandoning of Ariadne could be classed as peripeties, and dramatic or narrative treatment could highlight the ironies potentially present in these unlooked for reversals of fortune, this alone does not give the serious conflict—"those struggles of inward free will with outward necessity"—which we expect of great tragedy.[58]

[55] I owe this point to Miss M. E. Hubbard.

[56] E.g., M. C. Putnam, "The Third Book of the Aeneid: From Homer to Rome," *Ramus* 9 (1980) 1-21.

[57] G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality* (Oxford 1968) 374-87.

[58] S. T. Coleridge, "Greek Drama" in *Lectures and Essays* (Everyman's Library, London 1926) 16. See Austin (note 1 above) on *Aen.* 4.305-30, "When Ariadne upbraids

In the story of Dido this seriousness derives partly from the far-reaching importance of the dramatic conflict and partly from the moral character of the heroine. Both these elements are displayed through the *peripeteia,* which is the dramatic centre of Book 4. While many critics have mentioned this *peripeteia,*[59] it is Wlosok who has provided the most helpful analysis of it. For her the *peripeteia* is divided into two stages, covering two "acts": the third act (296–449), which results in the separation and parting of the lovers, contains what she calls the external *peripeteia,* while the fourth act (450–583) contains the internal *peripeteia,* with Dido making her decision to die.[60] In the first stage, the aftermath of Mercury's first intervention, Aeneas' decision to leave is contested, and the remote but fated necessity of founding Rome pitted against the living claims of Dido's love (though Jupiter and Mercury have made it harder for Aeneas by stressing the involvement of Ascanius, who is all Aeneas has to love, as well as the bearer of the future of the family). It is at this point that there is a fusion of the historical/divine dimension of the poem and the narrative of events on the human plane. We can no longer keep separate the pairs Rome and Carthage and Aeneas and Dido, for the full force of the *peripeteia* depends on our acceptance of the inevitability, and indeed the rightness, of Aeneas' departure, and this in turn is the result of the embedding of the tragedy in the epic.

When the tragedy of Dido is extracted from its epic context it becomes a very different thing, as a comparison with the Renaissance Dido tragedies (all very much dependent on Virgil) makes clear. In all the plays that I have been able to read,[61] except Marlowe's *Tragedy of Dido,* the centre of interest is the sufferings of Dido. The plays open

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Theseus for his desertion . . . she seems ineffectual and tiresome, a silly little thing for all her betrayal."

[59] Pease (note 4 above) 10 n. 69; Heinze (note 6 above) 119, 132, 323 f.; K. Büchner, *P.Vergilius Maro: Der Dichter der Römer* (Stuttgart 1955 = RE VIIIA 1021–1486) 351. Further on *peripeteia* and irony, V. R. Rossman, *Perspectives of Irony in Medieval French Literature* (The Hague/Paris 1975) 26–28, esp. 26, n. 31; G. Brereton (note 39 above) 47, "Our 'ironical change of fortune' is Aristotle's *peripeteia,* on which he insists, considering it as basic and linking it with the notion of probability." Cf. 14–17, 26–27, 34–37.

[60] Wlosok (note 2 above) 237–38.

[61] Alessandro Pazzi de' Medici, *Dido in Cartagine* (1524); Lodovico Dolce, *Didone* (1547); Etienne Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant* (1560); Alexandre Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant* (1624). I have not seen Giovan Battista Giraldi Cinthio, *Didone Tragedia* (1541) or Georges de Scudéry, *Didon* (1637). For further information and bibliography see E. Leube, *Fortuna in Karthago* (Heidelberg 1969).

just before or simultaneously with Mercury's intervention, and therefore the main focus of attention becomes Dido's decision to die (indeed the tragedies of Jodelle and Hardy are entitled *Didon se sacrifiant*). With such a view of events, the role of Aeneas becomes problematic in spite of attempts to portray his internal struggles. If the divine sanction is undermined by the disappearance of the historical reinforcement[62] Aeneas' reasons for leaving are neither compelling nor believable, and therefore these plays are primarily dramas of Dido's tragic discovery, as well as explorations of the fury of a woman scorned. In these treatments the *peripeteia* and discovery lose their potential for dramatic irony for the simple reason that Dido is not shown happy, confident, or under any illusion, or is shown thus so briefly, as in Lodovico Dolce's play, that no sense of foreboding of disaster can be created in the audience. The final misfortune is not enhanced by a reversal of hope and expectation.

Marlowe's play is an exception to this pattern. In his tragedy Book 1 of the *Aeneid* is given its full importance. In Act I we have the storm, the prophecy of Jupiter, and Venus' encounter with Aeneas, and in Act II the meeting of Dido and Aeneas and the banquet. At the banquet Aeneas tells Dido of the fall of Troy. In spite of the omission of the account of his wanderings (Book 3), it is quite clear that Dido is aware that Aeneas' destination and destiny is Italy, though she is not convinced of its inevitability. As a result Marlowe can exploit dramatic irony and he does this, interestingly, through references to Sychaeus. Though his Dido is not stayed from marriage to Iarbas and her gallery of other suitors by thoughts of Sychaeus, nor does remorse for her fidelity to him torment her after Aeneas has left her, yet references to Sychaeus are used ironically to foreshadow what Marlowe clearly sees as her betrayal by Aeneas. These references come at two crucial moments, the first meeting of the pair and the scene in the cave. Firstly, Act II Sc. I 74–80:

Dido. What stranger art thou that does eye me thus?
Aen. Sometime I was a Trojan, mighty Queen;
But Troy is not; what shall I say I am?
Ilio. Renowned Dido, 'tis our general,
Warlike Aeneas.

[62] Cf. V. Pöschl, "Dido und Aeneas" in *Festschrift Karl Vretska*, ed. D. Ableitinger and H. Gugel (Heidelberg 1970) 148 ff., esp. 169, "Vor allem ist es die politische Dimension, die Zeitproblematik und die Geschichtsdeutung, die Vergil vor dem französischen und dem deutscher Dichter [Goethe] voraus hat."

Dido. Warlike Aeneas, and in these base robes?
Go fetch the garment which Sichaeus wore.[63]

A variation on this theme of identity recurs in the second passage (Act III Sc. IV 40–63):

Aen. If that Your Majesty can look so low
As my despised worths, that shun all praise,
With this my hand I give to you my heart,
And vow, by all the Gods of hospitality,
By heaven and earth, and my fair brother's bow,
By Paphos, Capys, and the purple sea
From whence my radiant mother did descend,
And by this sword that sav'd me from the Greeks,
Never to leave these new-upreared walls
Whiles Dido lives and rules in Juno's town—
Never to like or love any but her!

Dido. What more than Delian music do I hear,
That calls my soul from forth his living seat
To move unto the measures of delight?
Kind clouds that sent forth such a courteous storm
As made disdain to fly to fancy's lap!
Stout love, in mine arms make thy Italy,
Whose crown and kingdom rests at thy command;
Sichaeus, not Aeneas, be thou call'd;
The King of Carthage, not Anchises' son.
Hold, take these jewels at thy lover's hand,
These golden bracelets, and this wedding-ring,
Wherewith my husband woo'd me yet a maid,
And be thou King of Libya, by my gift.

In Dido's speech Marlowe admirably recreates the Virgilian irony that results from the fusion of the historical and personal dimensions—in the invitation to exchange Rome for Carthage, to give up his personal and historic identity, and the ominous obligation to fill the place of the dead husband in some kind of marriage. In contrast to the French and Italian playwrights, Marlowe finds more interest in the external than the inner peripety. But even the dramatic conflict of the external peripety is somewhat dissipated by his Dido's original resourcefulness. To foil Aeneas' first attempt to leave, she has the oars and sails removed from his ships and Cupid/Ascanius abducted to a country house as a hostage.

[63] All quotations of Marlowe are from *Dido Queen of Carthage*, ed. H. J. Oliver (London 1968).

When Hermes has brought back the real Ascanius, and when Iarbas has given back the tackle to get his rival in love out of the way, then we do get the passionate confrontation between love and duty. Yet the decision to die is passed over rapidly (Act V Sc. I 269–71):

> What shall I do,
> But die in fury of this oversight?
> I, I must be the murderer of my self;
> No, but I am not; yet I will be, straight.

It is the betrayal that prompts her decision to die, and she dies uttering the curse prophetic of future enmity between the two races (306 ff.):

> And from mine ashes let a conqueror rise
> That may revenge this treason to a queen
> By ploughing up his countries with the sword!
> Betwixt this land and that be never league.

Returning to Virgil we see that it is in the inner peripety, the moment of realisation, in her awakening to the reality of the situation, that the story of Dido achieves its truly tragic depth.[64] The moment of transition comes at 4.450–51:

> tum uero infelix fatis exterrita Dido
> mortem orat; taedet caeli conuexa tueri.

What does *fatis exterrita* mean? Are we to take the phrase as summing up the preceding scenes or as looking forward to the paragraph which follows? Interpretations are various, from Thornton "for now through Aeneas' refusal she realizes the finality of fate's decree concerning Aeneas, and in her terror she prays for death,"[65] following Pease (who is in turn following a hint in Servius) "she begins to recognise that what is ordained for him conflicts with her own desires" to Austin "she sees her doom clearly." A specialised study of the use of *fatum* in the *Aeneid* concludes that *fatis* here designates "Götterspruche,"[66] messages of the

[64] Cf. Rudd (note 12 above) 49.

[65] A. Thornton, *The Living Universe* (Dunedin 1976) 99 and n. 66, "*fatis* must primarily be the destiny which directs Aeneas to Italy, because Dido herself does not die 'by the decree of fate,' as Virgil says explicitly (696)."

[66] W. Pötscher, *Vergil und die göttlichen Mächte* (Hildesheim 1977) 69. For an opposing opinion see Wlosok (note 2 above) 247, "Ihre Schuld sieht sie ganz aus ihrer fatumsfernen Perspektive als Verletzung der Sittlichkeit und der Treue gegenüber ihrem Gemahl Sychaeus. Der Gedanke an eine Kollision mit den *fata* als Ausdruck göttlichen Willens stellt sich in diesem Zusammenhang nicht ein."

gods which justify or account for everything that has happened. In that case we could conclude that Aeneas' appeals to the will of the gods in the preceding scene are now confirmed in the omens Dido herself receives. The phrase therefore looks both backwards and forwards and links the recognition with the decision to die.

It is Dido's decision to die that redeems her from the status of simply a victim of "an act of divine malice interpreted by an 'ironic' poet."[67] Just as the story of Oedipus becomes tragic through the hero's assumption of responsibility for his actions, even though they were commited in ignorance, so Dido's acceptance of fate, her repossession of her own life even in order to end it, allow her to regain her autonomy in the face of her suffering. At the same time this moment is tragically ambiguous. For when she becomes mistress of herself and conscious of her ruin she also becomes baneful, bringing ruin on her city and initiating the curse on Rome and Carthage.[68]

It would please Aristotle that Heinze regarded the *peripeteia* in Book 4 as a surprise.[69] In his view it looks as if Aeneas is going to stay and the sudden intervention of Mercury causes an unexpected change of direction. But this is only half the picture. As a result of the focus on Dido from the last part of Book 1, with the narration consistently from her point of view to the exclusion of that of Aeneas, the reader is led to sympathise with her desires. Yet the predominance given to Dido's view of the situation does not outweigh the foreknowledge of the reader, reinforced by the foreshadowing of the future, both in the narrator's voice and conveyed through the scenes with the gods, so that there is a continuous tension between the audience's expectations of disaster and the restricted awareness of her situation that Dido is shown to have.

In many ways, in Virgil, ignorance of fate amounts to an ignorance of history, since what has happened is what must happen;[70] historical knowledge thus plays a unique role in the understanding of the *Aeneid*. Right from the beginning Carthage is associated with the anger of Juno, the Roman threat to its future greatness being the latest in the series of defeats and humiliations which she has suffered (1.12–33).[71]

[67] The phrase is borrowed from States (note 37 above) 53.

[68] I owe this point to Mr. C. W. Macleod.

[69] Heinze (note 6 above) 317.

[70] Büchner (note 59 above) 321–22; C. H. Wilson, "Jupiter and the Fates in the *Aeneid*," *CQ* 29 (1979) 361–71, esp. 367; G. Williams, Ninth Todd Memorial Lecture 1976 (University of Sydney 1982) 3–7.

[71] Horsfall (note 12 above) 1–6.

Henceforward, in this episode at least, information about the historical future given explicitly in the poem is to be located on the level of the gods. As in Homer the vital questions about the future are linked to their less than heroic machinations. So in the passage explaining the motives for Juno's anger the reader is reminded not only that Aeneas will arrive in Italy to found Rome, but also that it is fated that the Romans will one day destroy Carthage in war (1.12–22). A pendant to the great prophecy of Jupiter to Venus in Book 1 is the first despatch of Mercury to Carthage (297–304):

> Haec ait et Maia genitum demittit ab alto,
> ut terrae utque nouae pateant Karthaginis arces
> hospitio Teucris, ne fati nescia Dido
> finibus arceret. uolat ille per aera magnum
> remigio alarum ac Libyae citus astitit oris.
> et iam iussa facit, ponuntque ferocia Poeni
> corda uolente deo; in primis regina quietum
> accipit in Teucros animum mentemque benignam.[72]

Here the poet contrasts divine omniscience, of which Jupiter has just given an example, with human ignorance of the future—measures have to be taken precisely because Dido is *fati nescia.* (Appropriately, Jupiter ensures the disposition to *hospitium* which Dido displays so innocently in the scene in the temple.) At the same time the equally omniscient epic narrator takes the opportunity of reminding us of the warlike nature of the Carthaginians and alerting us to the possibility that their *ferocia corda* will prove relevant. In fact, the future hostility of the two states is prefigured in the original encounter of the Trojans and the Carthaginians. Despite Mercury's mission, Ilioneus complains to Dido of having been treated as an enemy (1.522 ff., esp. 530–41). This future hostility is not referred to again on the human level in Book 1, but given that our historical knowledge is relevant, we can see irony in several important episodes in Book 1: Aeneas in the temple of Juno,[73] Dido's speech of welcome to the Trojans and Aeneas' reply, and Dido's prayer at the banquet (to *Iuppiter hospitalis!*). But in none of these cases is the irony thrust upon us, or even overtly signalled. It is for us to

[72] On the problems of this scene, see A. Wlosok, *Die Göttin Venus in Vergils Aeneis* (Heidelberg 1967) 26, n. 2; W. Kühn, *Götterszenen bei Vergil* (Heidelberg 1971) 28, n. 2, 31, n. 9; Büchner (note 59 above) 320.

[73] Cf. Horsfall (note 12 above) 7 f.; W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1976) 99–105.

supplement the immediate context with what we know to be the contradictory factors.

On the divine level, however, the historic significance of the encounter is kept alive, in Venus' fears of *Iunonia hospitia,* in the dialogue between the two goddesses in Book 4 (Juno with her gibe that Venus fears the city of Carthage, Venus with her rejoinder that Jupiter may not allow the Tyrians and Trojans to unite in one city), and in the instructions of Jupiter to Mercury (particularly 4.235, "inimica in gente"). Dido and Aeneas, on the other hand, remain equal in their ignorance of the historical consequences, for all that they are the bearers of the fates of their cities (the intertwining of the historical and personal destinies is made clear in the dialogue of the two goddesses in Book 4). No less than Dido, Aeneas is left in ignorance of the Punic Wars; it has often been pointed out that Mercury does not repeat to him Jupiter's "aut qua spe inimica in gente moratur" (4.235).[74] So the confident assertions of future friendship and gratitude in Book 1 are ironical not only in the light of the break in Book 4, but even more because of the wars which this break prefigures.

This is, it need not be said, because Dido and her growing city represent a threat to the foundation of Rome, a threat which foreshadows the danger Carthage will later pose to the very existence of Rome, and to underline this the death of Dido, like that of Hector, is linked by imagery to the final destruction of her city (4.669–71, cf. *Il.* 22.410 ff.):

> non aliter quam si immissis ruat hostibus omnis
> Karthago aut antiqua Tyros, flammaeque furentes
> culmina perque hominum uoluantur perque deorum.

In Virgil this simile looks back to the image of the capture of a city used for Venus' initial attack (1.673–74) and is given added point and poignancy by the allusive reference to the fall of Troy.[75] To sum up, Dido and Aeneas are doubly ignorant in this episode, both of their immediate future and of what it prefigures. This ignorance is thrown into relief by the presence in the poem of the gods with their superior knowledge. While the chief human characters are portrayed in their struggle to reconcile personal desires with the fulfillment of their wider responsibilities (and it adds to Dido's pathos that she thinks she has

[74] Rudd (note 12 above) 37, n. 9.

[75] Cf. 4.330, *capta ac deserta* "as if at the sack of a city" (Austin, note 1 above). V. A. Estevez ("Queen and City: Three similes in *Aeneid* IV," *Vergilius* 20 [1974] 25–28) does not mention the parallel with Troy.

found a way to do this),[76] the gods look after the future. In Virgil we may have even more problems than with Homer about the way they do it, but nevertheless one of their functions in the economy of the poem is to mediate between the facts of history and the epic narrative.

Given the increased importance of the historical future for the poem (relative to Homer), the role of the gods in the narrative becomes more complex. To allow the historical outcome (or fate) to control the narrative directly would not work. Therefore the poet frees himself and his human characters from the compulsion of fate by attributing the manipulation of events to the interventions of the gods. But this does not amount to a simple dramatising of the workings of fate with the gods always knowing better. In our episode Venus and Juno do not seem to be able to see any further ahead than the next move.[77] The conflict between order and chaos, pattern and the randomness of events, or as Cartault puts it,[78] necessity and free will, is spread over both dimensions of the poem. Hence, I think, we do not always have to believe the god's eye view of events if it is in opposition to what we know of the human characters. Venus' fears of Tyrian perfidy and *Iunonia hospitia* (1.661 f. and 671 f.), while to be proved justified in the long run, are not applicable to the Dido we have so far been shown.

In this episode the intervention of the gods is very marked, since they bring about the three crucial events in the actual working out of the story: Dido's falling in love, the "wedding" in the cave, and Aeneas' departure. The portrayal of the gods as manipulators of the action opens up possibilities for anticipation, which, according to Sedgewick is "one of the invariable accompaniments of dramatic irony in its tragic form," since "the ironic sense drives the mind forward from the episode which is engaging its immediate attention."[79] As we have seen, the presence of the gods as actors with power over events provides a locus in the poem for information about the immediate and more remote future. At the same time, by freeing the narrator of responsibility for what happens in the poem it allows him to use foreshadowing for

[76] Foster (note 5 above) 35, "There is great irony in the reversal, if one may use that word, whereby Dido changes her life-style completely from chaste widowhood to infatuated 'marriage' with Aeneas, in that, had other things been equal, this marriage was the right solution for her."

[77] On the role of the goddesses, see G. H. Gellie, "Juno and Aeneas in Aeneid IV" in *Cicero and Virgil*, ed. J. R. C. Martyn (Amsterdam 1972) 138–48.

[78] A. Cartault, *L'art de Virgile dans l'Enéide* (Paris 1926) 84–85.

[79] Sedgewick (note 38 above) 50.

pathetic effect, underlining the ignorance of the human characters. The result in both cases is the preparation of the reader for the tragic reversal—the generation of expectation, which to Coleridge was a more powerful emotion than surprise.[80]

In my discussion I have tried to show that Virgil uses foreshadowing to make us aware of the irony in the story of Dido at crucial moments in it: the first mention of her name, the first exchange of words between Dido and Aeneas, Dido's falling in love, and the "wedding" in the cave. The foreshadowing is implicit and explicit, of either the historical outcome of the meeting or of what it has in store for Dido herself. The function of the foreshadowing is partly one of emphasis, but chiefly it is used to create the sense of dramatic irony—"it points the significance of the situation, it brings the conflict of dramatic forces into clearer view, it heightens the sense of pity and terror."[81] The early ironic moments are ironic in the light of the tragic outcome of the story, but they also contribute to the sense of inevitability inherent in the situation in progress; the dramatic irony, once brought into play, underlines the fundamental role of the *peripeteia* in the plot and encourages us to read the episode as a "tragedy."

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[80] "Characteristics of Shakespeare's Dramas," (note 58 above) 53.

[81] Sedgewick (note 38 above) 63.