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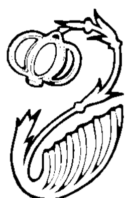

Vergil's Ajax: Allusion, Tragedy, and Heroic Identity in the *Aeneid*

In the long history of Vergilian criticism Greek tragedy has always been considered one of the constitutive forces of the *Aeneid* and scholarly contributions to date have mostly illuminated the tragic aspects of the episode of Dido.[1] Vergil's use of Greek tragedy, however, deserves a reevaluation in light of current approaches which place emphasis on tragedy's civic and ideological function. Toward this end, the methodological insights which recent work on allusion has generated can be put to fruitful use.[2] In the following pages, I offer a reading

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1. In antiquity, Servius (*Aen.* 4.471, 664); Macrobius (*Sat.* 5.18–19) thought that Vergil knew the Greek tragedies and borrowed from them. In more recent times, the rather impressive volume of scholarship constitutes ample proof: Heinze; Conington vol. 2: xxxv-vi; Pease 5–6; Duckworth 1940, 1957; Jackson Knight 133–40; Pöschl 1962 passim, especially 60–138, 1978; Quinn 323–49; von Albrecht (although he reaches a negative conclusion); Wigodsky 91–97; Manuwald; Feeney 129–87, passim. Hardie 1991, 1993, 1994, 1997 has attempted a deeper and more comprehensive probe into the tragic elements in the *Aeneid*. See also the three doctoral dissertations on the subject: Fenik; König; and Panoussi. On the "tragedy" of Dido see Wlosok; Muecke; Clausen 53–60; Jacobson; Moles 1984, 1987; Harrison 1989; Swanepoel; and Spence.

2. Most recently Hinds; Pucci. In the case of Vergil in particular, valuable interpretations of the allusiveness of the *corpus* have been and continue to be proposed: Farrell on the *Georgics*; Conte; Thomas. I did not have the opportunity to include Edmund's book on intertextuality in this discussion, as it was published after the final draft of this essay was written.

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of the multiple and complex allusions to the figure of Ajax as a subtext for the construction of the personae of Dido and Turnus in the *Aeneid*. I argue that the allusive presence of Ajax attests to the existence of a tragic register in the epic, which intersects with and complicates further the multiple allusive registers within the poem. Moreover, I propose that a detailed examination of Vergil's manipulation of the mechanisms through which tragedy articulates socio-political and ideological problems may in turn illuminate the *Aeneid* as a national epic and its much-contested relationship with Augustan ideology.

In order to utilize the interpretative possibilities that the allusive evidence affords, I shall first attempt to locate the tragic material in the Vergilian text and then proceed to restore it to its larger context, both Vergilian and tragic. Such tragic material is readily discernible in the epic's deployment of the issue of heroic identity. Though overemphasized as a feature of Greek tragedy,[3] the concept of the tragic hero may still serve as a good measure of the "tragic," since it may be readily juxtaposed with that of the epic hero. In a highly influential essay, Jean-Pierre Vernant posits that tragedy is a particular stage in the development of the categories of action and agent.[4] In contrast to epic and lyric, tragedy, as *mimesis praxeos*, presents individuals engaged in action.[5] The tragic decision is thus defined by the simultaneous presence of a "self" (*ethos*), and the operation of something greater, that is, divine force (*daimon*), so that the same character appears as both agent, the cause of his actions, and as acted upon, "engulfed in a source that is beyond him and sweeps him away."[6] For Vernant, tragedy dramatizes the tensions arising when human and divine constitute categories distinct enough to be set in opposition while still remaining conceptually inseparable. As a result, the subject is an agent whose autonomy is inconsistent and limited because it is vaguely defined.[7] The collusion of human and divine responsibility and their simultaneous opposition may also be argued for a number of Vergilian heroes, especially Dido and Turnus, who grapple with similar issues and choose to resolve them in what can be called a "tragic" manner.

The French school's emphasis on social context also draws attention to tragedy's civic and ideological function. This crucial aspect of Greek tragedy is rarely taken into account in discussions of tragedy in the *Aeneid*.[8] Moreover, it is important to recognize that Vergil's engagement with tragedy is not solely a result of the universal resonance of its content. Tragedy also reflects the tensions and conflicts that issue from the creation of the democratic *polis*, a time of profound socio-political change in Athens. Vernant describes the social conditions that gave rise to tragedy as follows:

3. On the dangers arising from such an emphasis, see Jones 13.
4. Vernant 1988c: 71.
5. Vernant 1988b: 44.
6. Vernant 1988c: 77.
7. Vernant 1988c: 82.
8. Hardie 1991, 1997 is a notable exception.

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> The tragic turning point . . . occurs when a gap develops at the heart of the social experience. It is wide enough for the oppositions between legal and political thought on the one hand and the mythical and heroic traditions on the other to stand out quite clearly. Yet it is narrow enough for the conflict in values still to be a painful one and for the clash to continue to take place.[9]

I argue that Vergil's appropriation of tragic discourse is in part motivated by what is a shared experience: at the time Vergil was composing his poem, Rome too was undergoing momentous changes in its social and political structure. The *Aeneid* was written at a time when the triumph of Augustan order with its promise of peace and stability for the Roman state was still being measured against the fresh memories of the civil struggle which preceded it and which had depleted the country's resources and decimated its manpower. In the case of fifth-century Athens, the new socio-political reality necessitated the creation of a new civic identity for the individual and of a new ideology for the *polis*. In order to dramatize the conflict between old and new socio-political reality, tragedy brings on stage the larger-than-life hero of the mythic and Homeric past and pits his individualistic self-reliance against the community, which depends on reciprocal relations for its existence.[10] The tragic hero finds himself needing to redefine his Homeric heroic values in order to accommodate the demands of the communal goal. Although the particulars of the Roman socio-political reality are obviously very different, it may be argued that Augustan Rome and its new ideology also necessitated a shift in the ways Romans defined their national and social identities.[11] As Vergil's epic makes plain, Aeneas must shed his Trojan (and Homeric) identity in order to assume that of the Roman citizen and leader. This requirement, however, is not entirely attributable to the mythic tradition prescribing his Trojan origin. One of the major issues explored in the poem is precisely the formation of a Roman identity and more specifically the formation of a new identity for Aeneas himself: the hero only gradually—and at times even reluctantly—becomes aware of his task and is able to assume his new role as a Roman. At the same time, Aeneas' success in adapting his Trojan and Homeric identity to the demands of his Roman mission forms a notable contrast with the failure of Dido and Turnus to redefine their heroic identities in the face of the new order that Aeneas represents.

Issues of self-definition and identity, right action, and moral judgment are crucial in the cases of Dido and Turnus, who find themselves in conflict with and unable to adapt to the new social and political structure of Aeneas' Rome. Vergil

9. Vernant 1988a: 27.

10. Goldhill 186 and passim.

11. On the issue of the changes in Roman socio-political life, see Raaflaub and Samons 447; Wallace-Hadrill. For a discussion on Roman civic identity as constructed in Livy's text see Feldherr 1997; on Roman national identity and the *Aeneid*, see Toll.

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explores these issues of identity by mobilizing a tragic subtext which colludes with and is reinforced by the Homeric allusive register. In particular, the personae of Dido and Turnus are constructed through systematic allusion to the figure of Ajax, preeminent Homeric hero and protagonist in Sophocles' tragedy. This dual literary pedigree of the Greek hero provided Vergil with ample means to activate and sustain a tragic subtext within the epic without compromising—at least explicitly—its generic integrity. I will trace in detail Ajax' allusive presence as well as the Homeric and tragic registers at work in the *Aeneid*. It is necessary first, however, to define more precisely the host of meanings the figure of Ajax encompasses in Homer and in Sophocles that will be central to my discussion of Dido and Turnus.

HOMERIC AND SOPHOCLEAN AJAX

By comparison with the volume of scholarship devoted to other heroes of the Homeric poems, Ajax has received little treatment. This is perhaps due to the fact that Homer himself treats the second best of the Achaeans[12] in a rather peculiar way; although the hero figures prominently in a few important instances of the narrative (especially the embassy to Achilles and the fight over the body of Patroclus), in contrast to other Homeric heroes, he is given no *aristeia*.[13]

Ajax is the protagonist in two famous stories in the post-Iliadic tradition: he defended the corpse of Achilles and he went mad after the loss of the contest for the arms of Achilles to Odysseus. The poet of the *Iliad* relates neither of these; yet scholars have suggested that they provide a framework within which the Homeric Ajax may be viewed: his role in the defense of Patroclus' body in Book 17 may have been adapted from his famous retreat while bearing the dead Achilles,[14] and in Book 23 the wrestling match with Odysseus prefigures the "judgment of the arms."[15]

In the *Iliad*, Ajax has been recognized by scholars as the figure most consistently associated with the idea of *aidos*, that is, responsibility to others and a sense of their importance to oneself. As an ideal prescribing the perfect alignment of personal and communal interests, the concept of *aidos* is crucial for a full appreciation of the problems surrounding the pursuit of personal interest and individual honor in the epic. Ajax' sense of individual honor finds expression in promoting the common enterprise at Troy. Achilles by contrast, consumed by

12. Cf. *Il.* 2.768–69. See also Nagy 27.
13. Whitman 169.
14. See Edwards on 17.720–21.
15. Whitman 169; Richardson on 23.700–39 states that the match between the two is inconclusive because of Achilles' intervention. The episode is referred to by Odysseus in *Od.* 11.543–64. Richardson argues that if it is indeed true that the match is related to the contest of the arms, Achilles' decision maintains a balance between the two opponents broken by the later contest.

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self-interest, negates the common goal and causes death and destruction for his community.[16]

Ajax' extraordinary physical strength and his unfailing commitment to the communal cause are symbolically expressed in the description of his enormous sevenfold shield which receives extensive treatment in *Iliad* 7:

> Αἴας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἠΰτε πύργον,
> χάλκεον ἑπταβόειον, ὅ οἱ Τυχίος κάμε τεύχων,
> σκυτοτόμων ὄχ' ἄριστος, Ὕλῃ ἔνι οἰκία ναίων,
> ὅς οἱ ἐποίησεν σάκος αἰόλον ἑπταβόειον
> ταύρων ζατρεφέων, ἐπὶ δ' ὄγδοον ἤλασε χαλκόν.
> (219–23)[17]

> Now Ajax came near him, carrying like a wall his shield
> Of bronze and sevenfold ox-hide which Tychios wrought him with much toil;
> Tychios, at home in Hyle, far the best of all workers in leather
> Who had made him the great gleaming shield of sevenfold ox-hide
> From strong bulls, and hammered an eighth fold of bronze upon it.[18]

The attributes of the shield are readily transferred to Ajax himself in Odysseus' greeting to him in their encounter in the Underworld (*Od.* 11.556, τοῖος γάρ σφιν πύργος ἀπώλεο).[19] The name of Ajax' son, Eurysaces, offers further evidence for the shield's exceptional qualities and for its particular connection with the hero. In the aristocratic value system of the Homeric epics, where nobility and valor are transmissible by heredity, the naming of Eurysaces after his father's shield renders this piece of defensive weaponry a constitutive force in the construction of Ajax' identity, as well as that of his son.[20]

Scholars have located the central issues of the tragedy in the conflict between Ajax' fixed behavioral code and the ever-fluctuating reality of societal structures.[21] Ajax is a hero of raw physical strength faced with the fragility of his intellectual powers and, though fully cognizant of the demands of the new reality before him, ultimately incapable of embracing the moral relativism it requires. Sophocles manipulates the traditional story of the conflict in terms of the hero's blindness and self-deception, by adding and dramatically intensifying Ajax' return to san-

16. Bradshaw 111–12.
17. *Il.* 7.219 is repeated at *Il.* 11.485 and *Il.* 17.128.
18. I have used the following translations: Lattimore for the *Iliad*, Day Lewis for the *Aeneid*, and Lloyd-Jones for Sophocles' *Ajax*. Occasionally, I have adapted these translations in order to make a specific point.
19. In the *Iliad* Helen refers to him in similar terms at 3.229; cf. also *Il.* 6.5 and 7.211.
20. The importance of hereditary valor is reflected in Sophocles' play both in the scene where Ajax hands over the shield to Eurysaces and in Ajax' words that his son, if he is indeed his, will not be scared by the appearance of blood. See also Goldhill 187.
21. See, for instance, Knox; Sicherl; Bradshaw.

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ity and full consciousness of his choice of suicide.[22] Ajax' plight is cast as an insoluble problem which can be resolved only through his self-removal from a society in which he no longer has a place. His raw, heroic nature is balanced by an intellectual recognition of the forces dictating a readjustment of his behavioral code. He finds suicide the only means by which he can maintain dignity without yielding to these forces.[23]

The tragic essence of Sophocles' Ajax cannot be fully appreciated without constant reference to Homer. The hero's tragedy lies in his violation of *aidos*, the very virtue he champions in the *Iliad*, that is, the strong sense of honor which a deep commitment to the community affords. His slaying of the cattle (which in his madness he mistakes for the Achaean leaders) and his subsequent suicide mark a disgraceful betrayal of the loyalties he so fervently safeguarded in the *Iliad*. Ajax' tragic isolation therefore is rendered more poignant in view of his Homeric portrait as the hero most conscious of the communal goals and of the value of camaraderie. Sophocles expresses Ajax' qualities in Iliadic language, and thus constructs a hero larger than life.[24] The play's emphasis on his self-sufficiency stands in sharp contrast with the Homeric image of the man who was the bulwark of his people, who was defined by and in turn contributed to the protection and preservation of his social milieu. Concurrently, the death of the hero, though resulting from his isolation, has nevertheless a profound effect on his dependents. Since Tecmessa's and the Salaminians' survival wholly rests on his (896–902), Ajax' life ends with a further disregard for the immediate familial and civic ties which have hitherto defined his existence.

Ajax, however, cannot be reduced merely to an embodiment of the old heroic ideal which is to be admired but not emulated.[25] The complexity of his ethical quandary affords no such easy solutions. On the contrary, Ajax' moral superiority despite his extremism is powerfully revealed in the second half of the play, in which the gulf separating the hero from his enemies becomes all too apparent.[26] The play offers no comparable moral force to counterbalance Ajax' loss within the value system of the new reality (which reflects the realities of fifth-century Athens), and the problem of moral and so-

22. Rose 64.

23. Knox 19–20; Sicherl 88–91.

24. See Knox 21, although I do not share his view that the Homeric ideal, at least the one which Ajax represents, is that of the individual hero who is unable to conform to the rules of society (22). On the contrary, Achilles' anger is chastised throughout the poem—and indeed by Ajax himself in his speech in Book 9—as a paradigm of the destructive consequences of such individualistic behavior, and, as we have seen, Ajax' conduct in battle and elsewhere serves as a positive contrast to that of Achilles. Bradshaw 118–19 is more to the point when he argues that in Sophocles' tragedy, Ajax assumes an Achillean temperament.

25. Bradshaw.

26. For a good discussion of Ajax' enemies, see Goldhill 157–59 where he convincingly argues that even Odysseus, who appears as the model statesman in the play, is still far from heroic when compared to Ajax.

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cial evaluation that it poses becomes therefore unsettling because it is ultimately unresolved.[27]

The constant negotiation between Homeric tradition and contemporary reality constitutes therefore the backdrop against which the ethical problems posed in the drama are played out. As Goldhill puts it:

> The problem of the evaluation of humans and humans' conduct in a social setting is developed through the complex network of strands and strains of Homeric and contemporary values, associations, distortions. It is this interpenetration of ideas, this dialectic whereby the values and characterization of the heroic past and contemporary world clash with, undermine, illuminate each other that makes the moral and social evaluations of Sophoclean drama so complex. The concern with right action and moral judgement in Sophocles' drama is developed through the interrelations of the tragic and Homeric texts. The "unsettling, questioning process" of this "intertextuality," then, informs Sophoclean tragedy. Sophocles may be read for and/or against but never without Homer.[28]

This intertextual relationship between the Homeric tradition and Sophocles' drama constitutes in turn the backdrop against which Vergil orchestrates the interpenetration of epic and tragic allusive registers in the construction of the figures of Dido and Turnus and to which I now turn.

DIDO

Readers' fascination with Dido rests to a large degree on Vergil's ingenious manipulation of a variety of allusive models and ability to craft a narrative whose richness and complexity is unparalleled in ancient literature. Of these models, the Homeric epics, Euripides' *Medea*, Apollonius' *Argonautica* Book 3, and Catullus 64 are the most readily discernible.[29] Critics since the time of Servius have also recognized that Dido's meeting with Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6 is patterned after Odysseus' brief meeting with Ajax in *Odyssey* 11.543–67: both Dido and Ajax encounter in the Underworld the men responsible for their demise and both

27. Bradshaw argues a similar point, reading the figure of Ajax as an allegory for the city of Athens and as a paradigm for the values and problems that fifth-century Athens faced with regard to her allies. The question of resolution and restoration in the play is, of course, a whole different matter. Leaving aside the problem of ritual corruption and resolution (on which see Sicherl and more recently Krummen), which is beyond the scope of this paper, I simply refer here to the inadequacy of Odysseus as a heroic model to replace Ajax' loss in the play and by extension serve as a wholly satisfactory model for fifth-century Athenian society.

28. Goldhill 161.

29. In Book 4 in particular, there is also the famous simile likening Dido to Pentheus and Aeschylus' Orestes (for a recent analysis of which see Spence 88–89). Dido's recourse to magic also points to Homer's Circe.

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treat them with the same dignified silence.[30] Critics have also long acknowledged that Dido's suicide shares many affinities with that of Sophocles' Ajax.[31] Yet the allusive presence of the Sophoclean Ajax in this important moment in the epic has been treated as an isolated, local[32] —and therefore limited—occurrence, while for many critics, the allusion to the Homeric Ajax in Book 6 merely constitutes another instance of borrowing in the larger scheme of Homeric imitation in the *Aeneid.* In what follows, I will explore other intertextual debts to the Homeric and the Sophoclean Ajax in the Dido episode, aiming at challenging the view that the allusive presence of the figure of Ajax is an isolated instance and locating it within the larger framework of allusivity in the poem.[33] I argue that Vergil's allusive annotation to Ajax both as a tragic persona and as a Homeric hero has important repercussions for the intertextual program of the poem, since it reveals the presence of a tragic register in the *Aeneid* which operates in dialogue with the Homeric allusive register.

The focus on the figure of Ajax, however, does not imply that the other allusive registers operative in the epic are less important. As Stephen Hinds argues,[34] any reading of allusive incorporation is a tendentious reading: the privileging of one text (in this case the *Aeneid*) over another (the Homeric epics and the *Ajax*) aims at "holding still" the incorporated texts so that they can be contemplated from the point of view of the incorporating text. Similarly, within the multiple allusive registers active in the Vergilian epic, my reading privileges one allusive subtext over others in order to investigate one particular process of intertextual negotiation, the interpenetration of the Homeric and tragic registers. My argument privileges the figure of Ajax over that of Medea, for instance, who likewise is an important allusive model for the construction of Dido's persona and whose dual literary pedigree, tragic and epic, is also put to work within the poem's allusive schema. The figure of Ajax, however, is annotated in most explicit terms in two pivotal moments in the "Dido narrative" (her suicide and the encounter in the Underworld), and thereby invites us to investigate whether we are dealing with a more systematic rather than a purely local allusion. Moreover, as a Homeric hero Ajax is particularly useful for exploring the epic's dynamic appropriation (to use Hinds' term) of the Homeric register, admittedly the most conspicuous allusive register in the *Aeneid.* Allusion to the figure of Ajax persists in the construction of the persona of Turnus, thus

30. Servius on *Aen.* 6.468: *tractum autem est hoc de Homero, qui inducit Aiacis umbram Vlixis conloquia fugientem, quod ei fuerat causa mortis.* Both episodes have the same length (27 lines), a fact attesting to Vergil's careful allusive annotation. See also Norden; Knauer 108–12.

31. Wigodsky 95–97 identifies a number of useful parallels; Lefèvre has the most thorough collection of the evidence.

32. For the term see Hinds 129–35.

33. Some of this has been attempted by Lyne 1987 and Tatum. Feldherr 1999 also explores generic tensions between epic and elegy in the episode of the Underworld.

34. Hinds 100–104.

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lending support to the argument that a larger tragic register is at work in the epic as a whole.

The unmistakable link between Dido and Ajax is their suicides.[35] Both die by the sword, and both attribute their impasse to the person who supplied them with the weapon (4.646–47 and *Aj.* 665).[36] Dido makes sure that her sister will be the first to find her body (634–40), just as Ajax prays to Zeus that his brother Teucer will be the first to find his (826–28). While Ajax traces the beginning of his downfall to the time when enmity first turned to friendship, Dido considers her encounter with Aeneas, a friendship turned into enmity, to be the catalyst which brought about the violation of her behavioral code. Moreover, specific verbal contact allusively links Dido's and Ajax' dying moments:

> dixerat, atque illam media inter talia ferro
> conlapsam aspiciunt comites, ensemque cruore
> spumantem sparsasque manus. it clamor ad alta
> atria: concussam bacchatur Fama per urbem.
>
> (4.663–66)

> She had spoken; and with these words, her attendants saw her falling
> Upon the sword, they could see the blood spouting up over
> The blade, and her hands spattered. Their screams ran to the roofs of
> The palace; then rumor runs mad through the shocked city.

> πέμψον τιν' ἡμῖν ἄγγελον, κακὴν φάτιν
> Τεύκρῳ φέροντα, πρῶτος ὥς με βαστάσῃ
> πεπτῶτα τῷδε περὶ νεορράντῳ ξίφει.
>
> (826–28)

> Send a messenger to bring the evil news to Teucer,
> So that he may be the first to handle me
> When I have fallen upon this sword, then newly bloodstained.

Vergil observes the dramatic convention prohibiting depiction of violence "on-stage," as the narrative in the decisive moment shifts the focus from Dido herself to her attendants, who see her collapse under the mortal blow.[37] Yet the poet's artistry in the description of Dido's suicide powerfully evokes Ajax' death onstage and several propositions have been offered for its significance. Lefèvre argues that the figure of Ajax links Dido with the Greek world and serves to contrast her with Aeneas as a Roman.[38] Tatum draws attention to Dido's adherence to the value

35. König 215–16; Lefèvre 9–10; Tatum 446.
36. See Tatum 446. On Ajax' sword see Kane; on Dido's Basto.
37. Servius on *Aen.* 4.664: *non induxit occidentem se, sed ostendit occisam. et hoc tragico fecit exemplo, apud quos non videtur quemadmodum fit caedes, sed facta narratur.*
38. Lefèvre 23–24.

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of *fama* which he finds to be corresponding to Ajax' strong sense of *time*.[39] It is important to recognize, however, that the link between Dido and Ajax is even more complex than these scholars allow: Ajax commits suicide after violating the value he championed when alive, that of *aidos*; Dido takes her life after having violated a value very similar to Ajax' *aidos*, i.e., *pudor*. Both fall prey to madness, and both experience isolation from their communities. The extremism accompanying the final stages of their lives and the kinship between their personal systems of values are painstakingly portrayed in the Vergilian narrative. Most important, both find themselves unable to negotiate an alternative heroic identity when faced with the demands of a new socio-political reality.

Dido's heroic stature is established as comparable to that of Aeneas early in the poem; this status is closely related to her role as a public and political figure. Critics have noted that the queen serves as Aeneas' double in many respects.[40] Venus' account of Dido's story to her son in Book 1 presents the Carthaginian queen as a woman of virtue, ability, foresight, and courage, and thus claims Aeneas' and the reader's sympathy and admiration. Dido took brave and decisive action when she removed herself and her people from the authority of her ruthless brother and successfully established a new and prospering city.[41] The queen's first appearance in the poem (1.503–508) exhibits her energetic, caring, and just leadership, while the compassion with which she receives the shipwrecked Aeneas attests to her sense of *humanitas*.[42] With her image as a gifted leader thus established, the narrative of Book 4, in true tragic fashion, shifts the focus to the workings of Dido's mind. The opening of the book shows the queen oscillating between her attraction to the newcomer and the importance of *pudor* in her personal system of values (4.24–29). Dido fervently asserts her loyalty to her dead husband Sychaeus, linking the concept of *pudor* with the Roman ideal of *uniuira*, an ideal grounded within the larger value-system of the entire community.[43] Anna, however, by emphasizing the political gains that a union with Aeneas would secure, appeals to the queen's strong commitment to the welfare of her city, and therefore effectively alleviates her sister's concerns. Dido's sense of personal honor arises from a steadfast adherence to communal values.

39. Tatum 446–51.

40. See, for instance, Rudd 160.

41. On the political aspect of the enterprise see Monti 22.

42. Monti 20.

43. Rudd 154–59 and Monti 53–59 propound the view that Dido's failure to uphold the ideal of *uniuira* was not a crime by Roman standards. Monti recognizes, however, that it came close to being a moral obligation. But even if one concedes that Dido did not violate a moral standard which was upheld in real life (as Ariadne, Medea, and Ajax), her perception of her action as wrong suffices to justify her feeling of isolation, which will eventually push her to suicide. I am also in disagreement with Pavlock 78, who comments that the poet implies that Dido's persistence in remaining faithful to Sychaeus is ultimately unnatural. Even if this is true, it does not preclude the possibility that Dido herself did not see it the same way and I believe it is disproved when the queen is shown with Sychaeus in Book 6.

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Since Dido's identity is constructed around the ideal of *pudor*, the question of right action and moral judgment that she faces may not be considered apart from her role as a champion of her city's welfare and prosperity.[44] Scholars in search of Dido's "tragic" flaw or *hamartia* usually place emphasis on the violation of her oath to remain loyal to Sychaeus[45] or present the queen as a woman in conflict over her private love for Aeneas and her duty to Carthage.[46] While to a certain degree Dido's passion necessitates a choice between clashing polarities (husband vs. lover, private vs. public), when she finally succumbs to that passion, she does so in the belief that she puts her personal desire at the service of her city and people. Her "marriage" to Aeneas is not simply a lovers' union; it also guarantees the permanency of Aeneas' political alliance.[47] Dido's actions are determined through constant reference to her community and in this regard she is different from the female heroines to whom she is allusively connected: while for Medea and Ariadne the abdication of familial and communal ties does not significantly affect the survival of their communities, in the case of Dido, it is precisely her inadvertent rupture of the bonds with her people that results in the annihilation of her city. *Pudor* has always been the guiding principle in her actions, public or private: when she later confronts Aeneas about his imminent departure, she refers to *pudor* and *fama* as constitutive elements in Carthage's foreign relations (4.320–23),[48] and in her subsequent monologue (534–52), she displays yet again the high value she places on her reputation as an honorable and devoted leader, who, until Aeneas' arrival, refused to jeopardize her city's independence with a political union that would ensure safety from foreign peril.

Dido's high valuation of *pudor* and extraordinary attachment to her community are qualities she shares with Ajax, the champion of *aidos*. Vergil thus invests Dido with the attributes of a male hero—the male hero par excellence—while he simultaneously casts her as unmistakably female by mobilizing the allusive framework of erotic poetry.[49] The poet's manipulation of these allusive registers brings to the foreground these two facets of Dido's identity in order to intensify the loss she incurs with Aeneas' departure. The queen's "female" side is evident in her first confrontation with Aeneas (4.305–30, 365–87): allusion casts the queen as Ariadne pleading with Theseus (Catullus 64.132–201) and as Medea upbraiding Jason in Euripides (*Med.* 465–519) and Apollonius (*Arg.* 4.355–90). At the same time, Dido's argumentation is steeped in the political vocabulary of reciprocity and exchange, when she in effect charges Aeneas with a breach of

44. Monti has amply demonstrated this much neglected aspect of Dido's identity.

45. Williams 1962: 45, 1968: 384–85; Moles 1984, 1987; Harrison 1989: 11–13.

46. Wiltshire 90–93, 108–109.

47. Dido may indeed neglect the construction of the city (4.86–89) but Aeneas has taken over (4.259–61).

48. Monti 40.

49. On Dido and allusion to love poetry see Tatum 440–44; Griffith; and Feldherr 1999. On Dido's "male" and "female" attributes see West.

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fides.[50] Aeneas abandons Carthage after exacerbating the hostility between Dido and her political adversaries. Dido, like Ajax, perceives her loss as irreparable, as she finds herself in a world where loyalties unexpectedly shift when friends turn to enemies. As a female heroine, she cannot conceive of life without the object of her desire. As a "male" leader, she is surrounded by angry and predatory neighbors. Dido's "female" and "male" identities are further complicated through allusion to Sophocles' *Ajax*. Surprisingly, the verbal contact is not between Dido and Ajax but Dido and Tecmessa:

> si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quicquam
> dulce meum, miserere domus labentis . . .
> (4.317–18)
>
> If I have helped you at all, if anything
> About me pleased you, take pity on the faltering
> household . . .
>
> ἀλλ' ἴσχε κἀμοῦ μνῆστιν· ἀνδρί τοι χρεὼν
> μνήμην προσεῖναι, τερπνὸν εἴ τί που πάθοι.
> (520–21)
>
> Think of me also; a man should remember,
> Should some pleasure come his way.

The similarity of the two women's situations provides a *prima facie* justification for the presence of the allusion. Tecmessa contemplates the dangers awaiting her in the event of Ajax' death. She appeals to her past devotion and loyalty to him as his wife and reminds him of his responsibility toward his *philoi* in an effort to persuade him not to commit suicide.[51] Tecmessa's entreaties (485–524) insist on the marital bond between Ajax and herself and display her entire dependence on him: without Ajax' protection she faces slavery and possibly death. By stressing the reciprocity central to the relations between husband and wife, Tecmessa constructs herself as a legitimate wife, although her actual status as spear-bride is probably less clear than her rhetoric here implies.[52] Dido, too, appeals to a commitment she views as binding.[53] Allusion to this particular segment of the play therefore serves to underscore the ambiguity of Dido's position as Aeneas' wife and illuminates the queen's self-portrayal as a spear-bride facing captivity (325–26 and 330). At the same time, Dido, like Ajax, grapples with a real ethical and political dilemma. She has to learn to live with Aeneas as an enemy and to negotiate the political

50. See Monti 39.

51. The scene in the Greek play is modeled after *Il.* 6.390–502. Kirkwood 56–59 has demonstrated the affinity between the two texts and has drawn attention to their contrasts, which he deems more significant than their similarities for the interpretation of the tragedy.

52. A view proposed by Ormand 110–19.

53. On the "marriage" of Dido and Aeneas see Williams 1968: 378–83; Rudd 153–54.

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and personal significance of the injury to her *pudor*.[54] Aeneas' departure threatens Dido in both her "male" and "female" capacities. Her eventual refusal to entertain any moral relativism in finding a solution to her predicament, however, decidedly aligns her with Ajax.

State of mind is a crucial issue in both Sophocles and Vergil. Dido's and Ajax' infringement upon the moral principles they have always striven to uphold is portrayed as madness caused by divine intervention. Madness alone can account for the disavowal of loyalties: Ajax, the bulwark of the Achaeans, turns against his superiors; Dido forfeits her promise to her dead husband and endangers her city. Divine cruelty is a theme paramount in both texts. Athena's callousness in the Greek play is matched by the business-like cruelty of Venus and Juno in the *Aeneid*.[55] Madness is caused by forces external working side by side with forces residing within. Dido and Ajax, formerly wholly invested in the world outside, are now faced with an inner disturbance. As they turn into creatures of the night, their internal anguish stands in sharp contrast to the world around them: Ajax' *mania* which causes him to slay the cattle occurs at nighttime;[56] similarly, Dido's *furor* intensifies during the night (80–83), especially in the poignant moment when the queen's turmoil is pitted against night's quiet rest (522–32). Dido's and Ajax' suicides are not attributable to a bout of madness, however; on the contrary, their mental agony leads them to a new consciousness and enables them to gain clearer vision. Dido and Ajax gauge their options and decide on a solution with remarkable intellectual clarity.

Madness may be temporary but the isolation it generates is permanent. Dido immediately apprehends her political isolation (320–21, 325–26); loneliness torments her in nightmares (466–68); her nocturnal anxiety revolves around the fear of alienation:

> en, quid ago? rursusne procos inrisa priores
experiar, Nomadumque petam conubia supplex,
quos ego sim totiens iam dedignata maritos?
. . .
quis me autem, fac uelle, sinet ratibusue superbis
inuisam accipiet? . . .
. . .
quid tum? sola fuga nautas comitabor ouantis?

54. The allusion to this passage, however, also points to Ajax' peremptory dismissal of Tecmessa's pleas and invites comparison with Aeneas' behavior toward Dido. To be sure, Aeneas does not display Ajax' self-absorption. But we are dealing with the same conflict between love and duty, where duty must prevail. It is also interesting how the critics writing on the *Ajax* and on the *Aeneid* are at pains to justify the cruelty displayed by the heroes toward the women. See Poe 43–45; Austin 1955 on 4.331–61.

55. *Aen.* 4.90–128. The scene is very different in tone from the humorous divine exchanges in Apollonius 3.1–166, where divine frivolity contrasts with human suffering.

56. Padel 66–70.

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an Tyriis omnique manu stipata meorum
inferar et, quos Sidonia uix urbe reuelli,
rursus agam pelago et uentis dare uela iubebo?
(4.534–46)[57]

What shall I do? Shall I, who have been laughed at, return to my former
Suitors? Go down on my knees for marriage to one of the Nomads
Although, time and again, I have already rejected their offers?
. . . But even if I wished it, who would accept me, welcome me
Aboard those arrogant ships? They hate me . . .
. . . So then? Shall I sail, by myself, with those exulting sailors
Or sail against them with all my Tyrian folk about me—
My people, whom once I could hardly persuade to depart from Sidon—
Bidding them man their ships and driving them out to sea again?

Ajax voices similar concerns as soon as he regains his senses:

κεῖνοι δ' [sc. the Atridae] ἐπεγγελῶσιν ἐκπεφευγότες,
. . .
καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς
ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός,
ἔχθει δὲ Τροία πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε.
πότερα πρὸς οἴκους, ναυλόχους λιπὼν ἕδρας
μόνους τ' Ἀτρείδας, πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον περῶ;
(454–61)

They [sc. The Atridae] are laughing at me;
. . .
And now what must I do, I who obviously am hated
By the gods, and loathed by the army of the Greeks,
And hated, too, by Troy and by these plains?
Shall I cross the Aegean sea, leaving behind the station of the ships
And the sons of Atreus, and go home?

57. The Vergilian passage also alludes to Medea's speech (Euripides *Med.* 502–15). The main difference between Dido and Medea, however, is that in Medea's case her isolation is more the result of both her "difference" from the other Greek women (she is a foreigner and a witch) and of the crimes she committed against her family. Moreover, her wounded pride generates further aggression against her enemies, whereas Ajax' and Dido's reasoning ends in self-destruction which is perceived as adherence to a superior moral code. Of course, the allusive material of this passage (*Aen.* 4.522–52) also points to *Arg.* 3.744–801 and Catullus 64.177–83, on which see Pavlock 81–82.

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In both passages the realization of the state of isolation is paired with a newly-found awareness.[58] Dido ponders a series of different courses of action: to renew relations with her African suitors is unfeasible in view of her former treatment of them and their present hostility; to sail with the Trojans to Italy is dismissed on the basis of their ungratefulness for her generosity and compassion towards them (537–39). Unable to uproot her people a second time, she comes to the conclusion that she has severed ties with both her people and her enemies. Ajax in his self-questioning also weighs possible options, which he similarly dismisses: to return home dishonored (460–65) or to attack the Trojans and die in battle (466–70). In both cases the characters' attempts to formulate the alternatives to heroic suicide convince them of their impossibility:[59]

> ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι
> τὸν εὐγενῆ χρή.
> (479–80)
>
> The noble man must live with honor
> Or die honorably.
>
> quin morere ut merita es, ferroque auerte dolorem.
> (4.547)
>
> Better die—I deserve it—end my pain with the sword.

The problem of Dido's and Ajax' state of mind is closely connected with the planning and execution of their suicide. Scholarship on the *Ajax* has focused on the hero's famous *Trugrede* (646–92) and in particular on the question of whether or not Ajax changes his mind and decides against killing himself.[60] Likewise, critics have debated whether or not Dido had resolved on death at the moment she first voices the possibility (308, 323)[61] and, if indeed she has, why she delays in implementing it. In both instances, Ajax' *Trugrede* and Dido's speeches (416–36, 478–98, 534–52) are filled with ambivalence and double entendres[62] and in both cases the characters reveal an obsession with death.

The Greek hero's words mark a recognition of the ever-fluctuating nature of reality, and the moral relativism this entails, which, of course, cannot be reconciled

58. Tatum 447 comments that both Dido and Ajax now express themselves through monologue.

59. Knox 17, on *Ajax,* but the same can be argued for Dido as well. See also Heinze 136n.1, who points to Sophocles' *Ajax* 460. On the alternative courses of action which Ajax rejects, see Winnington-Ingram 28; Poe 42. On Dido's see Pöschl 1962: 85–87; Monti 56–57; Pavlock 81–82.

60. See Knox; Sicherl; Winnington-Ingram 46–56; Poe 50–71.

61. Austin 1955 on 4.308 argues that Dido decides on suicide only when she has lost all hope. *Contra* Pöschl 1962: 85. That Dido in employing a *Trugrede* clearly intends to deceive Anna (478–98) further confirms the parallel between Dido and the tragic Ajax.

62. See Pöschl 1962: 84–85, who directly links these features to Greek tragedy, but does not identify the kinship with Sophocles' *Ajax*. On the ambiguity in Ajax' *Trugrede* see Knox 11–13; Sicherl; Padel 71.

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with his concept of personal honor.[63] He begins with a general statement on the action of time (646–49), followed by the realization that he himself takes part in this temporal order (650–52). It seems that it is a new Ajax speaking when he reveals that he is softened by Tecmessa's words. But his choice of diction also indicates that there is deep irony behind these statements.[64] Ambiguity is also present when he proceeds to describe how he will perform ritual cleansing, which could either refer to a willingness to return to normalcy or to the ritual washing of his dead body (654–59).[65] The hero then goes on to express in tangible terms what his hard-won knowledge of the law of time and change entails, that is, a reconciliation with the Atridae (666–67): "give in to the gods and show reverence to the sons of Atreus." Again, irony lies behind his word choice: one should show reverence not to humans but to gods.[66] By the time he addresses Tecmessa, therefore, Ajax' decision has been made. His words to her constitute the final arrangements before his death.

Dido declares that she is intent on death at the moment she first confronts Aeneas, but does not actually commit suicide until after Aeneas' departure from Carthage. In the meantime (and here she differs from Ajax) she oscillates between alternatives: love and hate, life and death,[67] social decorum and personal desire. Guilt over the violation of her oath to Sychaeus, disillusionment from a love lost, consciousness of her alienation from her people, the daunting prospect of humiliation and mockery by her enemies are all present in her thoughts. But she too, like Ajax, finally comes to an important recognition: the rift between her past and present state brings into question her ability and willingness to continue her existence. The presence of Aeneas has caused an irrevocable disruption of life as she knew it, and her inability to reclaim a meaningful existence in the new terms that his departure imposes pushes her to opt for death. The sinister omens she receives (453–65) and the magic ritual to which she resorts defy every hope that normal life will be resumed (474–521).[68]

The curses Dido and Ajax cast against their enemies only serve to confirm their failure to come to a reconciliation with their social milieu. When Dido sees Aeneas sneaking off before dawn, her reaction is violent. Oscillating between madness and sanity, she contemplates once again different courses of action (590–629). She ends her monologue by calling upon the Sun, the Furies, and Hecate to avenge her death. Similarly, in Sophocles' play, Ajax ends his life with a terrible curse on

63. Knox 16; Sicherl 81–91; Winnington-Ingram 52.

64. Knox 15.

65. Knox 11, Sicherl 78. Along the same lines one may read that his plan to "hide" his sword can mean either that he will simply get rid of it or that he will bury it in his body (Sicherl 79–80), though I find this reading strained.

66. Noted by the ancient scholiast. See also Knox 34n.85; Winnington-Ingram 49.

67. Pöschl 1962: 86–87. See also Pavlock 82 on the ambivalence that dominates Dido's speeches.

68. Pavlock 83 suggests that Vergil, by connecting Dido with the forces of magic, exposes her ambivalent relation to civilized values.

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the Atridae. Vergil allusively manipulates Dido's curse so that its first part alludes to that uttered by the dying Ajax, while its conclusion is intertextually linked to a curse pronounced by Teucer later on in the play. The allusive kinship among these three passages is remarkable.[69]

Dido's curse:

> Sol, qui terrarum flammis opera omnia lustras,
> tuque harum interpres curarum et conscia Iuno,
> nocturnisque Hecate triuiis ululata per urbes
> et Dirae ultrices et di morientis Elissae,
> accipite haec, meritumque malis aduertite numen
> et nostras audite preces . . .
> . . .
> . . . nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae
> tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
> sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.
> haec precor, hanc uocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.
> tum uos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum
> exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro
> munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunto.
> (4.607–24)

> O Sun, with your beams surveying all that is done on earth,
> Juno, the mediator and witness of my cares,
> Hecate, whose name is howled by night at the city cross-roads,
> Avenging Furies, and you, the patrons of dying Elissa,
> Hear me, with your divine power take notice of this wickedness,
> So worthy of your wrath, and hear my prayer . . .
> . . .
> . . . And when he's accepted the terms of a harsh peace,
> Let him never enjoy his realm or the life he longs for,
> But let him fall before his time and lie on the sands, unburied.
> That is my last prayer. I pour it out, with my lifeblood.
> Let you, my Tyrians, sharpen your hatred upon his children
> And all their seed for ever; send this as an offering
> To my ghost. Between my people and his, no love, no alliance.

Ajax' curse upon the Atridae:

> ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἐρινύες,
> γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ.

69. Heinze 136n.2 identifies the allusion to *Aj.* 835 and Catullus 64.193.

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σὺ δ', ὦ τὸν αἰπὺν οὐρανὸν διφρηλατῶν
Ἥλιε, πατρῴαν τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα
ἴδῃς, ἐπισχὼν χρυσόνωτον ἡνίαν
ἄγγειλον ἄτας τὰς ἐμὰς μόρον τ' ἐμὸν
γέροντι πατρὶ τῇ τε δυστήνῳ τροφῷ.
ἦ που τάλαινα, τήνδ' ὅταν κλύῃ φάτιν,
ἥσει μέγαν κωκυτὸν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει.

(843–51)

Come, Erinyes, swift to punish,
Take your fill, do not spare the host entire!
But do you who drive your chariot through high heaven,
Sun, when you see my native land,
Check your golden rein
And announce my ruin and my death
To my aged father and to the unhappy one who nursed me.
Poor woman, when she hears this news
She will utter loud wailing in all the city.

After Ajax' death, his brother Teucer, embroiled in a quarrel with the Atridae, pronounces a curse against whoever would attempt to remove Ajax' son from his father's dead body:

εἰ δέ τις στρατοῦ
βίᾳ σ' ἀποσπάσειε τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ,
κακὸς κακῶς ἄθαπτος ἐκπέσοι χθονός,
γένους ἅπαντος ῥίζαν ἐξημημένος.

(1175–78)

. . . And if any of the army
Tries to drag you by force away from this corpse,
May that man perish out of the earth without burial, evilly
as befits an evil man,
With the seed of all his house cut off.

Ajax' curse on the Atridae at once constitutes a rejection of the world of change and a reaffirmation of his own ethical code. Ajax refuses to renegotiate his heroic values in the face of the new reality before him, while his extreme individualism seems out of place in a community defined by reciprocity, compromise, and exchange. Ajax' loss, however, is keenly felt in the latter portion of the play in the petty bickering of the Atridae over the hero's dead body. Teucer's curse, a counterpart to the earlier one uttered by Ajax himself and one which reaffirms the old enmities (839–40), underscores this loss.[70] Neither the new ethical code of relativism (which Odysseus recognizes and advocates) nor Teucer's fervent

70. Kamerbeek on *Aj.* 1175–79.

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defense of his brother's cause is a match for the higher moral dignity of Ajax' heroic persona.

Dido, in her curse against Aeneas, turns to her people, confirming once again that the Trojan hero harmed not only her person but also her city. By addressing the Tyrians and proclaiming the future enmity between her people and his, the queen too, like Ajax, by momentarily renewing the ties with her community, reaffirms the values which defined her previous existence. Dido identifies with her city in her call for the perpetuation of an enmity which is closely linked with her inability to renegotiate her ethical code in the face of the new reality that Aeneas' mission presents. At the same time, the intertextual connection with Teucer's curse over Ajax' dead body intensifies the certainty of the queen's death and of a future devoid of Dido's heroic values. Dido's intransigence contrasts sharply with Aeneas' ability to adapt to the demands of his new destiny.

The extremism with which Dido and Ajax view reality, their predicament, and their options forces them to turn the sword inward on themselves, thus completing their severance of the external ties of *pudor* and *aidos*. Dido's isolation as she takes her life is only mitigated by her allusive bond to Ajax, since the reader is informed of the presence of her *comites* after the fact. Similarly, Ajax' last farewell is not directed to his loved ones but to the permanent and immovable landscape of his homeland and of Troy. The play's dramaturgy accentuates the hero's isolation. In an extraordinary gesture which defies dramatic convention, the Chorus is removed from the stage and the mortal blow takes place in full view.

Ajax' solitude is lamented by the Chorus:

> ... οἷος ἄρ' αἱμάχθης,
> ἄφαρκτος φίλων·
> ἐγὼ δ' ὁ πάντα κωφός, ὁ πάντ' ἄϊδρις,
> κατημέλησα.
>
> (909–12)

> ... how you were bathed in blood,
> With no protection from your friends;
> And I all deaf, all ignorant,
> Took no care.

Anna's dirge allusively assumes the role of the Chorus:

> his etiam struxi manibus patriosque uocaui
> uoce deos, sic te ut posita, crudelis, abessem?
> exstinxti te meque, soror, populumque patresque
> Sidonios urbemque tuam.
>
> (4.680–83)

> Did I build this pyre with my own hands, invoking
> our family gods,

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So that you might lie on it, and I, the cause of
your troubles not be there?
You have destroyed more than yourself—me, and
the people
And the noble men of Sidon and your city.

Anna's words confirm that Dido's death is not a matter of solely personal but also political importance; in the same fashion, the Chorus recognize the importance of the leader for the life of the army:

ὤμοι, κατέπεφνες, ἄναξ,
τόνδε συνναύταν, τάλας. . . .
(901–902)

Alas my lord, you have killed me
Your fellow sailor. . . .

When Aeneas meets Dido in the Underworld (6.450–76), the queen's moral restoration (as she treats Aeneas with indifference and takes her place next to her husband) celebrates the heroic ideals she represents and confirms that her death marks an important loss for the epic's hero and his mission. Scholars have long recognized that the encounter of the two lovers, though inspired by Homer, underscores the "tragic" issues delineated in Book 4. This "tragic" quality has been located mainly in the passage's intertextual debt to Book 4.[71] Vergil, however, also manipulates the Homeric text, expanding the allusive space[72] to include Sophocles' *Ajax*, and invites us to tease out the implications of the allusive interplay of all three texts.[73]

More specifically, in Homer Odysseus seeks reconciliation with the slain hero, yet he displays a certain self-absorption in that he neither offers an apology (instead he attributes the unfortunate incident to Zeus' hatred), nor takes the time to persuade Ajax to speak or listen.[74] Aeneas, on the contrary, recognizes his share of responsibility for Dido's plight (458, *funeris heu tibi causa fui?*), is deeply shaken by her death, and follows her in tears.[75] Aeneas' sympathy does not merely constitute a display of *pietas*; it also indicates a sincere hope that a final reconciliation with Dido will take place, a hope eventually frustrated by the queen's cold silence. In this light, Aeneas' attitude owes something to that of Odysseus in Sophocles' *Ajax*, who, out of sympathy for the fragility of the human condition (e.g., 121–26), ensures proper burial for the lost hero and champions

71. Austin 1977 on 6.456–76.
72. For the term see Pucci 43–44.
73. Other allusive registers operative in this passage are discussed by Tatum; Feldherr 1999.
74. Jebb xlii argues that the Homeric Odysseus is similar to that of Sophocles. While it is true that in Homer Odysseus is moved by pity at the sight of Ajax, he seems here more interested in the implications of his loss for the Achaean army than in the hero's untimely death (*Od.* 11.556–60).
75. This contrast is noted by Tatum 445.

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his restoration. By casting Aeneas as a foil to the tragic (and not the Homeric) Odysseus, Vergil sharply contrasts Odysseus' success with Aeneas' failure in this respect.

The inclusion of the Odyssean model thus serves multiple purposes: Dido's heroic persona is completely restored when she assumes a place by her husband, a restoration which affirms the importance of the heroic ideals she embodies and emphasizes that they no longer have a place in Aeneas' new world. Furthermore, the intertextual fusion of the Homeric and tragic Ajax in Dido's persona is paired with a conflation of the Homeric and the Sophoclean Odysseus in the persona of Aeneas. In Homer, Odysseus' unsuccessful attempt at a reconciliation with Ajax parallels Aeneas' failure to achieve reconciliation with Dido. At the same time, Aeneas' pity and *pietas* towards Dido in Book 6 evoke the tragic Odysseus, who displayed a similar attitude toward the plight of his foe, convinced the obstinate Atridae to allow his body to be buried, and almost single-handedly effected the restoration of Ajax' heroic status among the Greek army at the end of the play. The active role that the tragic Odysseus played in the hero's restoration is juxtaposed with Aeneas' absence in the process of Dido's restoration, poignantly underscored by his utter surprise to see her among the shades in the world below. Aeneas is completely severed from the dangers that the queen's attachment poses for his mission, but this also implies that the new state he is about to create will be deprived of the heroic ideals that she champions.

TURNUS

Much like Dido, Turnus' figure also problematizes established notions of heroic identity and proper behavior in the face of ethical dilemmas circumscribed by ineluctable Fate and evolving social structures. In the case of Turnus, Vergil deploys allusive material from the Iliadic and Sophoclean Ajax in order to achieve specific narrative strategies: a series of allusions to a pair of Homeric episodes establishes the hero's prowess as a warrior as well as his extraordinary talent in military defense. Once annotation[76] to Ajax is launched through reference to the epic's code-model (Homer), the tragic *Ajax* enters the intertextual map, creating a new allusive space which necessitates a renegotiation of the hero's identity in view of the new (tragic) allusive material.[77] The reader is now forced to admit another model at work, Sophocles' tragedy. These allusive subtexts operate in conjunction but they also intensify and reinforce one another: the Homeric material invites the reader to revisit and reinterpret it in light of the tragic appropriations, while the tragic is mobilized by and relies on the Homeric in order to fulfill its interpretative

76. On annotation as "footnote," see Hinds 1–5.
77. See Conte 31; Hinds 41–43 on a discussion of "code" model and "exemplary" model.

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potential. More important, the Homeric material is put to work in the service of a broader pattern of narrative allusion which is in effect tragic.[78]

Furthermore, Turnus' intertextual connection with the figure of Ajax permits a reading of his *furor* and *uiolentia* as facets of the poem's articulation of a new definition of heroic (and by extension Roman) identity and the tensions and conflicts that such a redefinition necessarily generates. The linking of Ajax and Turnus therefore establishes for the Vergilian hero a Homeric archetype of military excellence, while his association with the Greek hero most conscious of the communal goal calls into question his image as an egotist who causes death and destruction to his community in order to avenge his own wounded pride. As a result, Turnus' *furor* and *uiolentia* are fueled by a desire to fulfill his responsibility toward his people, a responsibility inextricably linked to his own sense of honor. The tragic Ajax displays a similarly misplaced determination which leads him to madness, disillusionment, and death. Turnus, however, like Sophocles' Ajax and, of course, Dido, engages in action which pits him against the interests of his community and which results in his complete isolation from it. Unable to adjust to the kind of moral relativism which would enable a peaceful coexistence with the Trojans, he also embodies a heroic ideal which, though laudable, can have no rightful place in the Roman future. The tension between the celebration of this ideal and the realization that social change has rendered it obsolete is precisely the point of Sophocles' drama. Just as Ajax' tragedy relies on the audience's knowledge of his Homeric past, so the Homeric qualities of Turnus, painstakingly established earlier in the narrative, underscore Vergil's engagement with similarly tragic issues.

The most impressive set of intertextual associations firmly linking Turnus and Ajax is found as Book 9 draws to a close, the first display of Turnus' warrior talent. In the absence of Aeneas, the Rutulian hero is given a proper *aristeia* when he combats the host of the Trojans alone. This segment of the narrative annotates its allusive debt to two Homeric passages, each attesting to Ajax' talent in the face of overwhelming odds. The first passage is from *Iliad* 11:

Ζεὺς δὲ πατὴρ Αἴανθ' ὑψίζυγος ἐν φόβον ὦρσε·
στῆ δὲ ταφών, ὄπιθεν δὲ σάκος βάλεν ἑπταβόειον,
τρέσσε δὲ παπτήνας ἐφ' ὁμίλου, θηρὶ ἐοικώς,
ἐντροπαλιζόμενος, ὀλίγον γόνυ γουνὸς ἀμείβων.
ὡς δ' αἴθωνα λέοντα βοῶν ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο
ἐσσεύαντο κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἀγροιῶται,
οἵ τέ μιν οὐκ εἰῶσι βοῶν ἐκ πῖαρ ἑλέσθαι
πάννυχοι ἐγρήσσοντες· ὁ δὲ κρειῶν ἐρατίζων
ἰθύει, ἀλλ' οὔ τι πρήσσει· θαμέες γὰρ ἄκοντες
ἀντίον ἀΐσσουσι θρασειάων ἀπὸ χειρῶν,
καιόμεναί τε δεταί, τάς τε τρεῖ ἐσσύμενός περ·

78. A similar case is argued by Hinds 140 for Horatian and Ovidian allusion in Statius' *Achilleid*.

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ἠῶθεν δ' ἀπονόσφιν ἔβη τετιηότι θυμῷ·
ὣς Αἴας τότ' ἀπὸ Τρώων τετιημένος ἦτορ
ἤϊε πόλλ' ἀέκων· περὶ γὰρ δίε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.

(544–57)

But Zeus father who sits on high drove fear upon Ajax.
He stood stunned, and swung the sevenfold ox-hide shield behind him
And drew back, throwing his eyes round the crowd of men, like a wild beast,
Turning on his way, shifting knee past knee only a little;
As when the men who live in the wild and their dogs have driven
A tawny lion away from the mid-fenced ground of their oxen,
And will not let him tear out the fat of the oxen, watching
Nightlong against him, and he in his hunger for meat closes in
But can get nothing of what he wants, for the raining javelins
Thrown from the daring hands of the men beat ever against him,
And the flaming torches, and these he balks at for all of his fury
And with the daylight goes away, disappointed of desire;
So Ajax, disappointed at heart, drew back from the Trojans
Much unwilling, but feared for the ships of the Achaeans.

The alluding text reads as follows:

Turnus paulatim excedere pugna
et fluuium petere ac partem quae cingitur unda.
acrius hoc Teucri clamore incumbere magno
et glomerare manum, ceu saeuum turba leonem
cum telis premit infensis; at territus ille,
asper, acerba tuens, retro redit et neque terga
ira dare aut uirtus patitur, nec tendere contra
ille quidem hoc cupiens potis est per tela uirosque.
haud aliter retro dubius uestigia Turnus
improperata refert et mens exaestuat ira.

(9.789–98)

. . . Little by little Turnus gave back from the onslaught
Towards the river, that part of the wall which Tiber bounded.
Made more aggressive by this, the Trojans pressed in on him shouting
And concentrating their forces; so will a crowd of men harry
A savage lion with spears leveled; he backs away in alarm,
Still dangerous, viciously glaring; his rage
And his courage forbid him to turn tail; but equally, much as
He'd like to, he cannot drive a path through those men with their weapons.
Just so did Turnus give ground. He was in a fix, but his movements
Were quite unflurried; his fighting blood was on the boil still.

Turnus, like Ajax, is compared to a lion cornered and seemingly helpless. The emphasis in both passages is on the hero's extraordinary ability in defensive

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battle. Turnus' representation as a force of *uiolentia* in the poem is sustained and reinforced by the emphasis on the beast's violence and anger, while the Iliadic passage only stresses the feeling of terror inspired by a divine power.[79] Vergil, however, by including a reference to the lion's *uirtus*,[80] further diverges from the Greek text, which only makes mention of the beast's physicality, hunger, and frustration. This addition imparts information on both the high quality of the hero's performance in battle and his moral compass. Moreover, the pairing of *ira* and *uirtus* as subjects of the same verb (*patitur*) suggests a deeper and more important connection between the two words. The lion's anger surfaces as a consequence of *uirtus*, a desire to continue fighting prescribed by the conventions of heroic behavior in a social setting. Vergil thus causes the boundaries between simile and narrative proper to collapse temporarily as he turns the narrative focus away from the lion and back on Turnus. The Rutulian's anger in this instance, aroused by his inability to live up to the heroic code by which he abides, emerges as natural and justified.

The conclusion of Turnus' retreat is drawn from another Homeric passage where Ajax is again the protagonist:[81]

> Αἴας δ' οὐκέτ' ἔμιμνε· βιάζετο γὰρ βελέεσσι·
> δάμνα μιν Ζηνός τε νόος καὶ Τρῶες ἀγαυοὶ
> βάλλοντες· δεινὴν δὲ περὶ κροτάφοισι φαεινὴ
> πήληξ βαλλομένη καναχὴν ἔχε, βάλλετο δ' αἰεὶ
> κὰπ φάλαρ' εὐποίηθ' ὁ δ' ἀριστερὸν ὦμον ἔκαμνεν,
> ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἔχων σάκος αἰόλον· οὐδ' ἐδύναντο
> ἀμφ' αὐτῷ πελεμίξαι ἐρείδοντες βελέεσσιν.
> αἰεὶ δ' ἀργαλέῳ ἔχετ' ἄσθματι, κὰδ δέ οἱ ἱδρὼς
> πάντοθεν ἐκ μελέων πολὺς ἔρρεεν, οὐδέ πῃ εἶχεν
> ἀμπνεῦσαι· πάντῃ δὲ κακὸν κακῷ ἐστήρικτο.
>
> (*Il.* 16.102–11)

> Meanwhile the missiles were too much for Ajax, who could hold no longer
> His place. The will of Zeus beat him back, and the proud Trojans
> With their spears, and around his temples the shining helmet
> Clashed horribly under the shower of strokes; he was hit constantly
> On the strong-wrought cheek-pieces, and his left shoulder was tiring
> From always holding up the big glittering shield; yet they could not
> Beat him out of his place, though they piled their missiles upon him.
> His breath came ever hard and painful, the sweat ran pouring
> Down his body from every limb, he could find no means
> To catch his breath, but evil was piled on evil about him.

79. The words underlined in each passage reflect these respective emphases.
80. Schenk 208.
81. Hardie 1994 on 9.806–14 also notes Ennius' adaptation of the Homeric passage.

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ergo nec clipeo iuuenis subsistere tantum
nec dextra ualet, iniectis sic undique telis
obruitur. strepit adsiduo caua tempora circum
tinnitu galea et saxis solida aera fatiscunt
discussaeque iubae, capiti nec sufficit umbo
ictibus; ingeminant hastis et Troes et ipse
fulmineus Mnestheus. tum toto corpore sudor
liquitur et piceum (nec respirare potestas)
flumen agit, fessos quatit aeger anhelitus artus.
(9.806–14)

And so that warrior found his shield less sure to protect him,
His sword-arm flagging: missiles storming from every angle
Were snowing him under. The helmet upon his temples rang with
Incessant blows, its strong bronze cracked open by stones,
And the plumes torn away from its crest: his shield's boss could not
Stand up to the battering: led by Mnestheus, who fought like a fury,
The Trojans redoubled their fire. Then Turnus was bathed in sweat
Which ran—he had not a moment's breathing space—dirty and sticky
All over him, and he panted heavily, sick with exhaustion.

Vergil's intertextual debt in this instance is to a crucial moment in the *Iliad*, the burning of the ships, where the Greek fleet faces total destruction. The main point of comparison in both passages is Turnus' and Ajax' physical fatigue, the gradual loss of vigor that results in ultimate retreat. Turnus is welcomed by the friendly waters of the Tiber;[82] Ajax' withdrawal is followed by Hector's success in setting the Achaean ships on fire, an event which leads to the subsequent *aristeia* and death of Patroclus. Ajax here stands for the Greek army as a whole, his suffering exemplifying the communal suffering caused by Achilles' individualistic behavior.[83] The two Homeric passages with Ajax as the main figure merge into one in the Latin, a powerful annotation of the allusive connection between Turnus and the Greek hero. As a result, the mobilization of the Homeric register, far from casting Turnus as a man pursuing personal gain, renders him a champion of the safety of the Latin community.[84]

82. To be sure, Turnus' escape evokes the famous leap of the Roman hero Horatius Cocles: the Rutulian takes on the role of one of the most famous saviors of Rome. See Hardie 1994 on 9.815–18.

83. See Janko on 16.101–24.

84. The Homeric passage describing Ajax' retreat is also particularly relevant to the action of the Vergilian narrative both structurally and contextually. In the *Iliad*, Hector's triumph over the worn-out Ajax at 16.113–22, which follows the passage quoted above, is undercut by the reader's knowledge that Patroclus is about to counter-attack (Janko on 15.592–746). Similarly in the *Aeneid*, Turnus' retreat foreshadows his ultimate defeat at the poem's close (see Hardie 1994 on 9.806–14). Moreover, this particular Iliadic incident is part of a series of duels between Hector and Ajax begun in Book 12, in which Ajax is represented as the bastion of the entire Achaean defense (Schadewaldt 69). In addition, the present confrontation between the two Iliadic heroes by Protesilaus' ship is

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This link between the Homeric Ajax and Turnus is anticipated by an allusive gesture framing both the beginning and the ending of the "Turnus narrative" of Book 9 with the figure of the Greek hero. When the reader first encounters Turnus in this book, Vergil footnotes Homer as his source for what follows by appropriating the epic motif of the invocation to the Muses.[85] Turnus, acting here as another Hector, prepares to set fire to the Trojan ships, which are saved from incineration by the aid of Cybele. At this critical moment for the Trojan fleet, Vergil interrupts the flow of the narrative to summon the Muses:

> Quis deus, o Musae, tam saeua incendia Teucris
> auertit? tantos ratibus quis depulit ignis?
> dicite: prisca fides facto, sed fama perennis.
> (9.77–79)
>
> What deity, o Muses, averted such a merciless blaze
> From the Trojans? Who drove away so fierce a fire from
> their ships?
> Tell me! The proofs are deep-buried in the past, but the
> tale is undying.

Vergil's manipulation of a familiar Homeric motif serves as yet another reminder of the epic literary tradition to which his poetry ascribes. Out of the six similar invocations found in the *Iliad*, however, Vergil mobilizes the one most appropriate for the larger allusive scheme of his narrative, the reworking of the Homeric burning of the ships:

> Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι,
> ὅππως δὴ πρῶτον πῦρ ἔμπεσε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
> (*Il.* 16.112–13)
>
> Tell me now, you Muses who have your homes on Olym-
> pos,
> How fire was first thrown upon the ships of the Achaeans.

This allusion not only places emphasis on Turnus' failure to burn the Trojan ships by juxtaposing it to Hector's success in the *Iliad*;[86] it also pauses the narrative to call attention to the fact that the Homeric passage at work in this instance belongs

connected with the fight in Book 11. The affinity between the two Homeric episodes rests not only on the predominance of the figure of Ajax in both instances but also on the utilization of the same narrative technique: the poet of the *Iliad* builds the expectation of a final combat which he consistently suspends for a later moment in the story (Schadewaldt 70), a technique also used by Vergil later in Book 12.

85. Hinds 34–47 offers a very useful discussion on the uses of *topoi* as invoking the tradition as collectivity.

86. For the inversion of the Homeric model see Hardie 1994 on 9.77–79. Vergil also inverts the order of the formula of invocation by posing first the question and then the request: the placement of the imperative *dicite* in the first metrical *sedes* followed by a pause places special emphasis on the request.

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to the same narrative segment on which the final scene of Turnus' jump into the Tiber is modeled. Thus Turnus' first and last action in the book are allusively linked and, more importantly, by the time the narrative of Book 9 has come to a close, Turnus has been transformed from Hector to Ajax, from aggressor to defender.[87]

Aside from the Homeric Hector, Achilles, and Ajax, after whom Turnus' persona has hitherto been crafted, the figure of Sophocles' Ajax is added to the allusive map. In Book 10 Turnus shares the foreground of the action with Aeneas, as this portion of the epic contains the slaying of young Pallas, which provides the impetus for the poem's ending. Concurrently, the reader gains a deeper insight into Turnus' mind, since during the *aristeia* the narrative focus stays on him. This concentration on the inner workings of the hero's mind triggers in turn a shift in the models utilized in order to achieve this goal. The reader is thus invited to renegotiate the Homeric qualities of Turnus in light of the allusive tragic material. Moreover, this mobilization of the tragic register, far from constituting an isolated occurrence, persists until the end of the poem.

Before I discuss the systematic nature of Vergil's manipulation of the Sophoclean tragedy, it is instructive to trace how the shift in the allusive model occurs. Midway through Book 10, Turnus, tricked into following a phantom of Aeneas, is removed from the battlefield. As soon as he realizes what has happened to him, he utters a despondent soliloquy:

> omnipotens genitor, tanton me crimine dignum
> duxisti et talis uoluisti expendere poenas?
> quo feror? unde abii? quae me fuga quemue reducit?
> Laurentisne iterum muros aut castra uidebo?
> quid manus illa uirum, qui me meaque arma secuti?
> quosque (nefas) omnis infanda in morte reliqui
> et nunc palantis uideo, gemitumque cadentum
> accipio? quid ago? aut quae iam satis ima dehiscat
> terra mihi? uos o potius miserescite, uenti;

87. This self-conscious pause is important for the authentication of the poem's place within the epic tradition as well as for securing the status of Homeric warrior for Turnus. Vergil here builds on the self-conscious manipulation of the "Muses" motif in Homer. As de Jong 45–53 has convincingly argued for the *Iliad*, calling upon the divine authority of the Muses does not demote the narrator's poetic activity; on the contrary, it calls attention to the poet's authority precisely because of his alignment with the divine. In the case of Vergil, the use of the "Muses" motif further serves to underscore the particular literary tradition within which the poet's activity takes place. The poet complements his imperative to the Muses with a phrase that confirms the literary aims of his annotation: the reason given for the invocation is continuity between past, present, and future (79, *prisca fides facto, sed fama perennis*), achieved only through the power of poetry, which the narrator owes to his association with the Muses. The emphasis on the epic task therefore reinforces simultaneously Vergil's epic heritage and Turnus' Homeric pedigree. The importance of the allusive play at work here is further emphasized by Vergil's use of the same device in the opening of the book's section dealing with Turnus' *aristeia* proper (see 9.525–28 and *Il.* 11.218–20). On the double reworking of the Homeric model and on the firing of the tower, see Hardie 1994 on 9.525–28.

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in rupes, in saxa (uolens uos Turnus adoro)
ferte ratem saeuisque uadis immittite syrtis,
quo nec me Rutuli nec conscia fama sequatur.
(10.668–79)

Father almighty, do I deserve to incur so grave
A reproach? To be punished so sorely? Was this your will and your judgment?
Where and from what am I being taken? I cannot fathom
This running away, its means or its end. How can I face
Laurentum again, my town and stronghold? What of the men who
Followed my flag, all left to die?—such a death, I can't speak of it,
I'm so ashamed—all scattered now, I can see them and hear
Their groans as they fall. What am I to do? What grave would be deep enough
Now to hide my dishonor? Oh, rather, you winds, take pity
And dash this vessel on rock or reef—from my heart I implore you—
Pile it up on some merciless quicksand, anywhere
Beyond the ken of my people, the reach of my shameful story.

Critics have acknowledged the kinship between Turnus' predicament and that of Sophocles' Ajax, as well as the similarity in the manner they choose to face it.[88] But how is the situation that Turnus faces more tragic than Homeric? And how does one determine that the model at work is no longer Homer's Ajax but that of Sophocles? As we have seen, tragic discourse engages the simultaneous presence of the categories of human agency and divine will and grapples with the tension between active and passive, intention and constraint;[89] Turnus' predicament and behavior in this instance fit neatly this definition of the tragic hero. Manipulated by Juno and Jupiter and deceived into chasing Aeneas' phantom, Turnus soon becomes painfully aware that he is caught between his own personal code of ethics and the divine at work.

There are indeed many points of contact between Turnus and Sophocles' Ajax in this instance. Ajax was also deceived by a deity as to the identity of his enemies. In the passage quoted above, Turnus' address to Jupiter first contains a realization of his *crimen*, that is, his absence from the line of duty; when the hero speaks of punishment, he refers to the dishonor that accompanies such action. Initially fearing that he will be unable to return, his thoughts next turn to his comrades. The hero appears genuinely concerned for their safety which he perceives as his responsibility (672, *quid manus illa uirum, qui me meaque arma secuti?*): this is a fine display of the Homeric quality of *aidos*, which we have seen that Ajax

88. See Pöschl 1962: 107–108; Schenk 114. The latter, however, condemns the hero for exceeding the Homeric norm of "Selbstwertgefühl." Cf. also Harrison 1991 on 10.668–79, who compares Turnus' monologue to those uttered by "disturbed and abandoned heroines such as Medea and Ariadne."

89. Vernant 79 on the tragic hero.

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embodies in Homer, and which Vergil so carefully established for Turnus in Book 9.[90] We witness first-hand his profound desperation and sorrow as he addresses the winds in his desolation, and asks them to aid him in his death. Turnus' dejected monologue ends with a reference to his moral obligation to his people and to *fama*, the values that define his place within his community and which he believes he has forfeited. The same betrayal of the ideals that defined his existence presented Sophocles' Ajax with no alternative other than suicide. Turnus readily attempts the same:

> haec memorans animo nunc huc, nunc fluctuat illuc,
> an sese mucrone ob tantum dedecus amens
> induat et crudum per costas exigat ensem,
> fluctibus an iaciat mediis et litora nando
> curua petat Teucrumque iterum se reddat in arma.
> ter conatus utramque uiam, ter maxima Iuno
> continuit iuuenemque animi miserata repressit.
> (10.680–86)

> So Turnus spoke, and his mind swayed this way and that,
> Whether to fling himself on his sword in desperation
> At such a disgrace, and drive the cruel blade through his ribs,
> Or throw himself into the deep sea and try to swim back to the shore
> Of the bay, so he might once more wade in at the Trojan soldiers.
> Three times he began to attempt either alternative; three times
> Great Juno held him back, and, pitying him, prevented it.

Thus Turnus, like Dido, struggles between his "internal spontaneity ... and the destiny that is fixed for him in advance by the gods."[91] The hero's proposed recourse to action takes two forms, both of which are tantamount to suicide: significantly, the first possibility he entertains is suicide in the manner of the Sophoclean Ajax. Death is finally averted through divine interference, but nevertheless both Turnus' perception of his relationship with his comrades and his resolve to overcome his impasse honorably serve to underscore his full adherence to the heroic code, which in turn counterbalances his cruelty in the slaying of young Pallas. The reader also gains a glimpse into the workings of the hero's mind and the fragility of his intellectual powers when pitted against divine will.

Vergil's reworking of the tragic Ajax in the figure of Turnus continues in Book 12 in full force. Turnus now displays a fierce determination to adhere to a system of values no longer effective against Aeneas and the new order he represents.

90. Pöschl 1962: 108 comments that Turnus here first acknowledges his "guilt," meaning his resistance to Aeneas. But I believe that it is clear that Turnus blames himself for leaving his comrades to their fate, not for causing war against Aeneas.

91. Vernant 79.

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This determination, arising from the hero's deep commitment to the common interests, turns into a violent rage which is usually explained in terms of *furor*, the irrational, dehumanizing, and barbaric force of the epic which Aeneas (and Rome) must strive to vanquish. Book 12 opens with a powerful illustration of Turnus' *uiolentia*: the army's defeat (1, *infractos* ... *Latinos*) is transferred to Turnus himself through a simile in which he is likened to a lion wounded (5, *saucius ille graui uenantum uulnere pectus*) yet angered and dangerous (8, *fremit ore cruento*).[92] The wound represents both the defeat in battle and the blow to Turnus' honor that the delay of the final confrontation with Aeneas causes. Yet the hero's violent rage is also linked to his allegiance to the value of *aidos*: he declares his readiness to shoulder the responsibility for his community and fight Aeneas in a duel that will determine the outcome of the conflict (16, *solus ferro crimen commune refellam*).

Latinus and Amata make an attempt to avert Turnus from fighting what they know is a doomed war. According to the heroic code by which Turnus abides, commitment to the common enterprise goes side by side with commitment to one's family. Latinus, at the close of his appeal, reminds the hero of his responsibility toward his aged father:

> respice res bello uarias, miserere parentis
> longaeui, quem nunc maestum patria Ardea longe
> diuidit.
>
> (12.43–45)

> Consider how war can change men's fortunes. Take pity
> On your old father who grieves for you, cut off as he is in his native
> Ardea.

Commentators point to *Il.* 22.38–76 as the model for this scene, where Priam urges Hector (a hero famous for his familial loyalty)[93] not to fight Achilles, and compare Turnus' refusal to comply with the old man's request to that of Hector.[94] Turnus' alignment with Hector's decision undeniably foreshadows his ultimate death, while at the same time it underscores his valor. Despite these obvious connections, however, the Homeric scene lacks the overwhelming presence of the divine *fata*, the predetermined outcome of the duel, as in the Vergilian narrative. Within this context of divine constraint, Latinus urges Turnus to acknowledge the

92. The best discussions of the simile are still, I think, Putnam 1965: 153–58 and Pöschl 1962: 109–11, who include in detail the links with Dido's wound in Book 4. On *eros* and war, Dido and Turnus, see in addition Putnam 1999. On the scene and its Homeric models, see Schenk 146–50. Also note how the world of the narrative and the world of the simile merge in the identification of Turnus with the lion, just as happened earlier in Book 9.

93. Bradshaw 118.

94. See Schenk 152–56.

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fluctuating nature of fortune in war (43, *respice res bello uarias*) and the necessity to yield.

The conflict between intention and constraint, the individual's personal sense of honor and the shifting demands of the communal goals, mobilizes the emergence of the tragic register in Vergil's epic. Indeed, verbal contact can be found between Latinus' words and Tecmessa's address to Ajax in the Sophoclean play:

> ἀλλ' αἴδεσαι μὲν πατέρα τὸν σὸν ἐν λυγρῷ
> γήρᾳ προλείπων.
>
> (506–507)

> Come, show regard for your father, whom you are deserting
> In grieving old age.

As we have seen, Ajax' inability to adapt to the ever-fluctuating realities of wartime politics is the Sophoclean play's chief problem. In this particular scene, Ajax, his hands still stained with the blood of the slaughtered sheep, has just become aware of his actions. Tecmessa and the Chorus, however, speak of him as suffering from *nosos* (mental derangement) and therefore still presenting a danger to himself and others. Tecmessa attempts to dissuade him from compromising himself and his family any further. Her speech opens with a statement on the mutability of fortune imposed on all humans by the divine, and she offers herself as an example: once a princess, she is now a spear-bride wholly dependent on her captor with whom her loyalties now lie. She then goes on to appeal to Ajax to honor his familial ties to herself, their son, and his father. Tecmessa's words prefigure Ajax' own realization of the mutability of fortune later on in the play.

Turnus and Ajax both display a rage that feeds on their weakened state, an internal madness which intensifies their separation from the external world. Ajax is "sick" while Turnus is a wounded lion. Like Ajax, who refuses to give an answer to Tecmessa's pleas and thus further compromise the heroic code of honor, so Turnus in his reply to Latinus reaffirms his decision to fight to the death in order to preserve his honor:

> quam pro me curam geris, hanc precor, optime, pro me
> deponas letumque sinas pro laude pacisci.
> et nos tela, pater, ferrumque haud debile dextra
> spargimus, et nostro sequitur de uulnere sanguis.
>
> (12.48–51)

> The anxiety you show for me, most gracious king, I implore you
> For my sake to put aside: let me purchase fame with death.
> I am no weakling, father, I too can rain blows and deliver
> Fusillades; men bleed when I wound them—same as Aeneas.

Both in Sophocles' play and Vergil's epic the hero's "sick" rage which breeds a misguided confidence is followed by the realization of his ultimate failure and

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exclusion from his social milieu. As the narrative proceeds, Turnus' confidence is gradually depleted but his loyalties remain unfailing. At the moment he hears the wailing from the besieged city, he comes to the realization that this war has taken a turn that will eventually destroy his community. His words to his sister reflect the sorrow and grief of a leader unable to help his people, recalling thereby the earlier moment of his removal from the battlefield in Book 10 as well as the grim disillusionment of Sophocles' Ajax:

> exscindine domos (id rebus defuit unum)
> perpetiar, dextra nec Drancis dicta refellam?
> terga dabo et Turnum fugientem haec terra uidebit?
> usque adeone mori miserum est? uos o mihi, Manes,
> este boni, quoniam superis auersa uoluntas.
> sancta ad uos anima atque istius inscia culpae
> descendam magnorum haud umquam indignus auorum.
> (12.643–49)

> Am I to let our homes be destroyed (the one disaster
> I have been spared) and not give the lie to Drances' slanders
> By fighting? What? Turn my back? My country to see me a runaway?
> Death is not all that dreadful. You, Shades, be kind to me,
> Since now the gods above have taken their goodwill from me.
> I shall come down to you, a soul unstained, with no cowardice
> Upon my conscience to make me unworthy of my great ancestors.

> ἐγὼ δ' ὁ κείνου παῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐς τόπον
> Τροίας ἐπελθὼν οὐκ ἐλάσσονι σθένει,
> οὐδ' ἔργα μείω χειρὸς ἀρκέσας ἐμῆς . . .
> (437–39)

> καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς
> ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός. . . .
> (457–59)

> But I, his son, having come to the same place, Troy,
> With no less strong a force
> And having performed with my own hand no lesser deeds . . .
> And now what must I do, I who obviously am hated
> By the gods, and loathed by the army of the Greeks. . . .

Turnus, like Ajax, places himself within the family tradition and, like the Greek hero, asserts that he has done his share dutifully; both conclude that divine will is against them and that they have brought harm to their people. This constitutes the acknowledgment of an inner defeat, more profound and disturbing than the defeat in battle; Turnus, like Ajax, and like Dido, experiences the loss of all that has hitherto defined his existence.

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Tangible confirmation of this recognition comes immediately afterwards, when Turnus is informed of Queen Amata's death and sees the tower which he himself had built collapse in smoke and flames:

> Ecce autem flammis inter tabulata uolutus
> ad caelum undabat uertex turrimque tenebat,
> turrim compactis trabibus quam eduxerat ipse
> subdideratque rotas pontisque instrauerat altos.
> "iam iam fata, soror, superant, absiste morari;
> quo deus et quo dura uocat Fortuna sequamur.
> stat conferre manum Aeneae, stat, quidquid acerbi est,
> morte pati, neque me indecorem, germana, uidebis
> amplius. hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem."
> (12.672–80)

> He saw a whirling spire of flame which was leaping upwards,
> Wave after wave, through the floors of the tower, had got a firm grip on it:
> Turnus had built this tower himself, a solid construction
> Of planking, with wheels to move on, and gangways rigged aloft:
> "The fates are too strong for me, sister—I see it now. Don't hold me back;
> Let me go where god and my own unmerciful Fortune call me.
> I am resolved to fight Aeneas, to bear whatever
> Bitterness death holds for me. You shall not see me disgraced
> Any longer. Just let me indulge this madness of mine before I die."

Turnus' words again display his disillusionment but also his strong sense of honor and pride, a pride similar to Dido's, which dictates that the only possible way out of an impossible situation is an honorable and self-inflicted death. Yet there is a further connection that involves the tower itself. Turnus' first exploit in Book 9 (530–37) was to burn the tower of the Trojans. Aeneas' action here corresponds to that of Turnus in 9 and "is part of a larger movement of inversion whereby the beleaguered Trojans end up in the role of Homer's city-sacking Achaeans."[95] Moreover, the tower's collapse serves as a metaphor for Turnus' own death,[96] while at the same time it implies an identification of the hero with the defensive structure. Vergil thus effectively links Turnus with Ajax at this crucial moment of Turnus' disillusionment, by concretizing and then inverting the Homeric metaphor of Ajax as a tower: as already mentioned, Odysseus'

95. Hardie 1994 on 9.538. He also points out the allusions to the incident in 12. See Hardie 1994 on 9.530, 532, and 538.
96. Pöschl 1962: 128.

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address to Ajax in the Underworld appropriates the image of the tower for the hero himself.[97]

Despite his recognition of the fate that awaits him, Turnus appears determined not to yield but to abide by his code of honor until the end. He appears unable to entertain any notion of moral relativism which would permit him to adjust to the demands of the new order that the gods have in store for the Latins and the Trojans. He shares the tragic Ajax' (and Dido's) intransigence and extremism which run contrary to the demands of the individual's submission to the greater enterprise of Rome.[98] The tragedy of Ajax rests on his betrayal of the very values that he championed in the *Iliad*, especially his loyalty to the common cause. Turnus, too, due to his inability to conform to the new role his community is called on to play in Aeneas' Latium, finds himself in complete isolation, grasping at his outdated sense of honor and rushing to certain death as a result. Turnus thus embodies the clash between the necessity to adapt to a new social order and the inability to do so while still abiding by the (Homeric) heroic code. Since the foundation of the new Latium with Trojans and Italians in equal partnership marks both Rome's beginning and the re-birth of the Roman state under the Augustan regime, the Rutulian hero poignantly exemplifies the powerful tensions and conflicts inherent in the social and political changes these processes entail. Concurrently, Turnus' imminent death represents the loss of a vital moral force which necessitates the articulation of a comparable, if not superior, ethical code for Aeneas' Latium. Just as Odysseus in the Sophoclean play emerges as the alternative model to Ajax in the post-Achillean times and in the new socio-political reality of fifth-century Athens, so Aeneas constitutes the alternative to Turnus' outdated heroism in the new Latium and in the new reality of Augustan Rome.

Yet another allusion to the tragic Ajax distorts and confuses Aeneas' emergence as a superior moral force in the poem. Before the final confrontation between Aeneas and Turnus, intertextual evidence forces us to pause and ponder a rather unexpected connection between Ajax and the poem's hero. While Aeneas, his wound healed, prepares to re-enter the fray, he imparts the following advice to his son:

> disce, puer, uirtutem ex me uerumque laborem,
> fortunam ex aliis.
>
> (12.435–36)

> From me, son, you may learn courage and what real toil is;
> From others, the meaning of fortune.

97. See above, n. 19.
98. For the imperial politics of Rome see for instance Lyne 1983; Hardie 1986; Quint 21–96; Gurval.

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Scholars have located the model in Sophocles' *Ajax*:[99]

> ὦ παῖ, γένοιο πατρὸς εὐτυχέστερος,
> τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὁμοῖος· καὶ γένοι' ἂν οὐ κακός.
> (550–51)
>
> Son, may you be more fortunate than your father,
> But in all other ways resemble him. Then you will
> be no coward.

The Vergilian reader may be initially puzzled by this allusion, since, apparently, the connection between a hero bent on suicide and the soon-to-be-victorious Aeneas is far from obvious.[100] Both Vergil and Sophocles in this instance appropriate the Iliadic Hector's farewell to his son. In this segment of the play, the Sophoclean Ajax evinces a stern arrogance, which sharply contrasts with Hector's modesty and fatherly ambition that his son may surpass him in valor.[101] The intersection of the Homeric and tragic in the *Ajax* is also superbly manipulated by Vergil, as Aeneas, too, shares in this contrast with the Iliadic Hector. Furthermore, Sophocles' Ajax, in his preceding monologue, came to the agonizing realization that he had failed to succeed his father, Telamon, in honorable repute through lack of fortune; he now looks upon his son to win heroic accolades in the line of male succession.[102] In this light, Aeneas' advice to Ascanius looks forward to a similar contingency. At the final moment of Turnus' supplication, the Trojan hero in effect will betray his own father's legacy.[103] As a result, he falls prey to anger and *furor*, the uncivilized forces he tried to combat and conquer throughout the epic. The Aeneas of the final scene of the poem, who in his avenging wrath kills Turnus

99. Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.1.58) states that Vergil's source was Accius' *Armorum iudicium*: Ribbeck 156, *uirtuti sis par, dispar fortunis patris*. Jocelyn 128 interprets this as spoken "not by an Ajax bent on suicide, but by an Ajax conscious of his *uirtus*, despite the decision given against him in the matter of Achilles' armour, and wishing to recover his reputation among men by a glorious deed in battle. Virgil's copy of Accius' sentence is more comprehensible on such an interpretation." *Contra* Wigodsky 95–97, who argues that the lines can be said to have been taken from the Greek text. See also Lefèvre 25. Whatever the context in Accius may be, the Vergilian text contains allusions to Sophocles' *Ajax*, which need to be interpreted in their own right. Lyne 1987: 4–12 also argues that the model here for Aeneas is the tragic Ajax. I believe that the evidence presented here adds force to this argument. On Aeneas as *ductor Rhoeteius* and implications of apotheosis, as well as a justification for the killing of Turnus, see Rowland.

100. Fowler 86 well illustrates the reader's puzzlement: "All the commentators, down to Mr. Page, tell us that Virgil is 'copying' the famous lines in Sophocles' *Ajax*. . . . Virgil may have been thinking of them, but he must have seen that the circumstances of Ajax and Aeneas were very different. Ajax had been mad: he is the protagonist of a tragedy; Aeneas had no special cause to lament his misfortunes, nor was it his habit to do so. We need not go to the Greeks for what is a truly Roman sentiment. In the family, the Roman boy learnt to live a manly life, and to face life's painful struggles with a good heart: what *fortuna* might mean for him he might learn from any other teacher, from his experience of the world."

101. Kirkwood 58.

102. Winnington-Ingram 30–31.

103. Putnam 1965: 192–94.

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the suppliant, is as much a deluded hero as the blinded Ajax who brought death to the sheepfolds of the Achaeans. The tragic Ajax as intertextual subtext aligning Aeneas with Dido and Turnus further complicates and problematizes his heroic identity. Aeneas, the model hero of a new social order, may be said to share in this instance Ajax' misplaced adherence to a moral code no longer viable, as well as the fragility of his state of mind.

In the scene of the final duel between the two heroes, the figure of Ajax returns as a foil to Turnus. Aeneas strikes Turnus' breastplate and shield with his spear:

> uolat atri turbinis instar
> exitium dirum hasta ferens orasque recludit
> loricae et clipei extremos septemplicis orbis.
> (12.923–25)

> The spear flew on its sinister
> Mission of death like a black whirlwind, and piercing the edge
> Of the sevenfold shield, laid open the corselet of Turnus.

The word *septemplicis* is a *hapax* in the Vergilian corpus. Similarly, Ajax' shield is the only shield in the *Iliad* that has seven ox-hide layers,[104] and it is the same one that Ajax entrusts to his son in Sophocles' tragedy when he asks to be buried along with his other weapons:

> ἀλλ' αὐτό μοι σύ, παῖ, λαβὼν τοὐπώνυμον,
> Εὐρύσακες, ἴσχε διὰ πολυρράφου στρέφων
> πόρπακος ἑπτάβοιον ἄρρηκτον σάκος.
> (574–76)

> But do you, son, take the thing from which you take your name
> And carry it, wielding it by means of its well-sewn thong,
> My shield unbreakable, made of seven ox-hides.

In the Greek play, the shield serves as a reminder of Ajax' heroic past: his enormous physical power, his talent in military defense, and his role in the Trojan war as a bastion of the entire Achaean army. It is a visible symbol of both his bodily strength and his *aidos*, and hence a constitutive element of his identity as a hero. The allusive appropriation of Ajax' shield in the scene of Turnus' final defeat achieves a similar goal: it is a reminder of the Rutulian's past services and loyalty to his people and of his inadvertent betrayal of his community's enterprise. In this light, Turnus' actions, like Dido's, are not motivated by self-interest as scholars usually argue. To be sure, he has a personal stake in the matter; but, like Dido, he believes that his personal interest coincides with the common goal. As in the case of Sophocles' Ajax, his tragedy lies in his realization that the two cease to be identical and his inability to reconcile his own sense of honor with the demands of this new reality.

104. See above, n. 17.

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All the preceding allusions, Homeric and tragic, intersect in this final scene as Turnus once again takes on Ajax' attributes.[105] The rich allusive texture of the Sophoclean play puts the Homeric material to work as a backdrop against which the tragedy of Ajax is to be measured. Similarly, the Vergilian epic appropriates Homeric material to establish Turnus as a valiant warrior, but utilizes the tragic Ajax in order to reveal his moral agony and the fragility of his state of mind in the face of divine manipulation (Juno) and opposition (Jupiter). The appropriation of the Homeric epics sufficiently enables Vergil to celebrate the ideals of the Homeric (and Roman) behavioral code as well as to endow his poem with the luster and authority which its literary pedigree implies. But in the case of Turnus, as in the case of Dido, the Homeric material serves to deploy a systematic tragic register, without which it would be impossible to appreciate the profound problems, tensions, and conflicts inherent in the socio-political changes that Aeneas' new order and, by extension, Augustus' Rome bring to bear.

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105. As Aeneas hesitates over the suppliant Turnus, he catches sight of the baldric that the Rutulian had taken from the young Pallas (12.940–44). The use of the word *infelix* attributed to the baldric constitutes another tragic gesture: see Conington on 12.941 (quoting Heyne on 12.940): "this passage is quite in accordance with the feeling expressed in Greek tragedies, that what was given by, or taken from, an enemy, brought ill fortune with it. In *Il.* 22.322 a chance is given to Achilles' weapon, because Patroclus' armor does not fit Hector. Hector, according to Sophocles, was dragged around the walls of Troy by the belt which Ajax had given him, while Ajax killed himself with the sword of Hector."

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