

### 3 The Fragility of Reconciliation: Ritual Restoration and the Divine

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS WE HAVE EXAMINED THE WAYS IN which the narrative plot of the *Aeneid* mobilizes a ritual intertext consisting of representations of rituals and the use of ritual vocabulary and metaphors. This ritual intertext is inspired by and is akin to Greek tragedy's manipulation of ritual to exhibit the conflict and crisis of the tragic plot. The correct execution of rituals on the part of humans guarantees smooth relations with the gods. In this chapter, I turn to the divine figures of the epic and suggest that they too play an integral part within the epic's ritual intertext. As we have already seen, the poem's narrative opens with Juno's grievances against the Trojans, grievances linked with the ritual practice of sacrifice. In her anger, Juno envisions a future where humans disregard her divinity by forgoing the practice of rituals in her honor. The poem ends with Jupiter's promise of new rituals honoring Juno and his assurance of the people's unequalled piety. The representation of the divine in the *Aeneid*, therefore, goes side by side with the deployment of the poem's ritual intertext.

Since the *Aeneid* is, among other things, a poem about civil war, the ability of the warring parties to come to reconciliation is a central concern. This theme of reconciliation dominates the depiction of the relationships among gods, from the collusion of archenemies Venus and Juno to the final compromise between Jupiter and Juno that ushers in the end of the poem and lends legitimacy to the killing of Turnus. By placing reconciliation on the divine level, the poem proclaims it as lasting and permanent. Nevertheless, divine reconciliation is implicated in the intertext of ritual corruption at work in the poem, thus exposing its inherent fragility.

More specifically, I argue that divine action in the *Aeneid* mirrors the tragic ritual pattern of corruption and thwarted restoration found in the context of other rituals in the poem. Both Juno and her minions instigate ritual corruption or even delight in their participation within the framework of ritual perversion operative in the poem. We witness, as it were, a replication of the pattern of repetition (for the term, see Chapter 1, pp. 14–16) in the depiction of the divine, as different versions of Juno oppose afresh Aeneas and his mission throughout the epic narrative. By the poem's end, however, Juno and these other supernatural forces (whether they are openly in the service of Juno or simply appear to share an opposition to Aeneas) all undergo a transformation that allows them not only to accept but also to support Aeneas' mission and the future of Rome. This divine transformation is analogous to the process of ritual restoration that is expected to occur on the human plane. Nevertheless, just as the poem's ritual intertext is devoid of any ritual restoration, so is the divine sphere: Juno and her entourage resist transformation and retain their original attributes.

Juno, however, is not the only deity who manipulates and perverts the religious order to serve her own agenda. Jupiter and Venus have no qualms about using religious perversion to achieve their own goals, even though they appear to proclaim a new and superior idea of justice on which Aeneas' new state will be founded. The gods' disregard of the religious order is manifested either through their active involvement in ritual perversion (as is the case with Venus' collusion with Juno) or through their marked passivity while Juno's agents run rampant at Aeneas' expense. By the poem's end, after the reconciliation of the opposing deities, Jupiter may be said to have been assimilated to the realm of Juno. As a result, the ideological polarities the deities represent are eventually confused, and the pattern of ritual corruption-restoration is thwarted on the divine level as well, calling into question the effectiveness of the process of reconciliation.

The representation of the divine in the *Aeneid* thus mirrors the ideological (op)positions that the poem explores on the human plane. Gods are as much a part of the epic fiction as the humans, as Lyne and Feeney have shown; they are epic characters, whose depiction is consistent with some of their fundamental divine attributes but also contingent upon narrative demands (Lyne 1987: 61–99; Feeney 1991: 129–87). As both deities and epic characters, it is not surprising that they too are embedded

within the pattern of ritual repetition operative in the poem. As a result, an analysis of the gods' actions needs to be included in our examination of the epic's ritual intertext.

Since a great variety of forms of divine representation from state cult and literary practices was available to Vergil for manipulation (Feeney 1998: 92–104), his divinities exhibit traits traditionally associated with their deity. But the poet also appropriates the rich tradition of the divine representations in epic and tragedy. While Vergil's gods display many attributes of their Homeric counterparts, they are unlike the Homeric gods in that they are entrenched in the poem's teleology vis-à-vis the foundation of the Roman state and its future domination and supremacy over others. On both these counts the gods in the *Aeneid* resemble those of Greek tragedy.<sup>1</sup> An analysis of the defining characteristics of divine figures suggests that the overall deployment of the action of the gods in the epic shares important similarities with the representation of the gods in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. The *Aeneid*, however, has an ending much different from the conclusion of the trilogy: in Aeschylus, the Erinyes, formerly persecuting Orestes, become the protectors of Athens, the city that offered him asylum. By contrast, in the *Aeneid* their transformation is not as complete as it may initially appear, and the triumph of Jupiter's justice remains open to question.

In what follows, I will first examine the deployment of the motif of ritual pollution on the divine level, with Juno and the Furies as its primary agents. I will then show that the supernatural forces of ritual corruption are intimately bound up with the theme of civil war; that the process of *concordia* is jeopardized by divine manipulation of proper rituals; and that the final reconciliation between Jupiter and Juno appropriates and transforms the solutions to the problem of violence propounded in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.

## I. VERSIONS OF JUNO: FURIES AND RITUAL POLLUTION

Epic tradition prescribes that the hero face and overcome perils of various kinds. As dictated by the epic's literary models (in this case, the *Odyssey*

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Harrison 1972–73 and Feeney 1991: 132, 143, 153.

and the *Argonautica*), various supernatural creatures hinder Aeneas' journey to Latium as well as facilitate the outbreak of war between Trojans and Latins. To be sure, the repeated intrusion of these creatures is necessary for the creation of the plot. In the *Aeneid*, however, they are more than obstacles that the hero must successfully surmount. They constitute versions of Aeneas' archenemy, the goddess Juno, actual (creatures working on her behalf) or symbolic (creatures that display her characteristics and/or employ her methods). Moreover, their appearance is accompanied by a distortion of the proper performance of rituals and thus belongs to the larger context of the repetition of ritual distortion in the poem.

In the following, I argue that the link between the Furies of the *Aeneid* and ritual distortion is achieved through the appropriation of a host of elements characterizing the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*: the confusion between the Olympic and the chthonic realm; the clash between supernatural creatures associated with the female and the divine order associated with the male; and a proliferation of violence against attempts to restore peace. As a result, we may speak of a continuous replication of certain oppositions, which can be outlined as follows:

Jupiter	Juno
Olympian (Venus, Mercury, Apollo, Neptune, Pallas Minerva)	Chthonic (Dirae, Harpies, Allecto)
Male	Female
Concordia/peace	Discordia/(civil) war
Empire without end	Endless (repetition of civil) war

Since the importance of the Furies in the epic is paramount, it is necessary to discuss briefly their precise identity. Thought to be a collective deity in the *Iliad* and in the *Oresteia*, they are given the individual names Tisiphone, Allecto, and Megaera by subsequent authors. All three names also appear in the *Aeneid*. Throughout the poem, the Furies are named with the Greek terms *Erinyes* and *Eumenides*; the Latin terms *Furiae* and *Dirae* also appear to apply to them interchangeably. Servius remarks that the Furies live on Earth, the Dirae in Heaven, and the Eumenides in the Underworld and goes on to note that poets confuse the three names.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Servius on *Aen.* 4.609. On the terms *Erinyes* and *Eumenides*, see Brown 1984: 267. Brown argues that the equation of the Eumenides with the Erinyes occurs

Aeneas' encounter with the Harpies in Book 3 is a fine example of the rich array of connections among supernatural creatures, the Furies, and ritual pollution. Hungry after long wanderings in the ocean, the Trojans land on the shores of the Strophades and slaughter some of the cattle roaming freely. As they prepare to feast, the Harpies attack them and defile their food. The link between the Harpies and the Furies/Dirae is meticulously detailed throughout the episode<sup>3</sup> and reaches its impressive climax with the Harpy Celaeno describing herself as *Furiarum maxima* (352) before she utters her horrifying prophecy.<sup>4</sup> This correlation between the Harpies and the Furies is well based on conceptions of the Harpies in Greek thought, where they are associated with the Erinyes as early as Homer.<sup>5</sup> It is also present in the other important text for this episode, Apollonius' *Argonautica*: Phineus calls one of the Harpies attacking his food *Erinyes* (2.220).<sup>6</sup>

The theme of ritual distortion and pollution is also central to this episode, as the Harpies attack the Trojans while they prepare a ritual meal.

first in Euripides' *Orestes*. He also notes that in using the term *Eumenides* to refer to the Furies (*Aen.* 4.469, 6.250, 280, 375), Vergil perhaps follows Ennius' *Eumenides* (though direct evidence is lacking) and Varro's satire *Eumenides*. Hübner (1970) argues for a distinction between Jupiter's Dirae and the Furies of the Underworld. Edgeworth (1986) believes that the Dirae are different from the Erinyes, yet he recognizes that all the creatures are infernal. Mackie (1992), after examining pictorial evidence from South Italy and Etruria, argues that the Dirae of *Aeneid* 12 are the Furies (Allecto, Tisiphone, and Megaera). Dyson (2001: 128 n.12) believes that Vergil's views on this identification are ambiguous.

<sup>3</sup> See Hübner 1970: 64–70. Note that the word *dira* is used five times in a span of fifty-seven lines, consistently associated with the Harpies: *uox...dira* (228); *dira...gente* (235); *dira...fames* (256); *dirae...uolucres* (262). See also Williams 1962: 106–107.

<sup>4</sup> The same phrase is used at 6.605 of Tisiphone, "one of the Furies who is engaged in the harpy-like activity of preventing Tantalus from touching the food" (Williams 1962: 106).

<sup>5</sup> See *Odyssey* 20.78, where they hand the daughters of Pandareus over to the Erinyes.

<sup>6</sup> Both Homer's episode of the slaughtering of the cattle of Helios and *Argon.* 2.178–310 (especially 262–97) are important for Vergil's rendition of the myth here. Similar links between the Furies and the Harpies are found in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* 50–51, where the Pythia, in her effort to describe the sleeping Erinyes, first likens them to Gorgons, then to Harpies.

In his narrative, Aeneas emphasizes that he and his comrades made sure that Jupiter and the other gods took part in the meal by offering the due portion of the sacrifice to them (*diuos ipsumque uocamus / in partem praedamque Iouem* [we call the gods and Jupiter himself to share the spoil], 222–23). But the vocabulary describing the slaughter (*inruimus ferro*, 222; *praeda*, 223) belongs to the realm of battle and hunting rather than to that of sacrifice (Vance: 1981: 131). What is more, by killing animals that roam freely (*nullo custode*, 221), they further transgress ritual norms, which prescribe that only a domestic animal may be sacrificed.<sup>7</sup> The Harpies react to the Trojans' transgression by defiling their food. Instead of enjoying the nourishment of the sacrificial meal,<sup>8</sup> the Harpies embody the pollution incurred after its corruption.<sup>9</sup>

Ritual vocabulary describing pollution abounds in the episode, evident in the extensive use of the verb *foedare* to describe the actions of both the Harpies and the Trojans and of the adjective *foedus* (*foedissima uentris / proluuiis* [most foul their droppings], 216–17; *contactuque omnia foedant* [they defile everything with their touch], 227; *ferro foedare uolucris* [to wound the birds with their sword], 241; *uestigia foeda relinquunt* [they leave foul traces], 244).<sup>10</sup> One could certainly translate *foedare* here as simply “to soil, stain” (*OLD* s.v. *foedo* 1). In a sacrificial context, however, the word may very well retain its religious connotations. The problem of pollution is compounded by the Trojans' effort to solve the problem of ritual perversion by repeating the ritual, whereupon they provoke yet another onslaught by the Harpies:

instruimus mensas arisque reponimus ignem;  
 rursum ex diuerso caeli caecisque latebris  
 turba sonans praedam pedibus circumuolat uncis,  
 polluit ore dapes.

(231–34)

we set up the tables and light again a fire on the altars;  
 again from various parts of the sky and dark hiding places

<sup>7</sup> Vance 1981: 131; see also Vernant 1989: 166–67 on the slaying of Helios' cattle in *Od.* 12.

<sup>8</sup> Vance (1981: 131) notes that the episode contrasts proper sacrificial food that is life-giving to that which is improper and corrupting.

<sup>9</sup> On the Harpies and pollution, see also Hübner 1970: 71.

<sup>10</sup> See also *polluit ore dapes*, 234.

the noisy crowd flies about their prey with its hooked talons,  
and pollutes our meal with its mouth.

The repetition of ritual thus results in further pollution, to which the Trojans react with violence, a violence that brings about the horrifying prophecy of the Harpy Celaeno, that the Trojans will eat their own tables upon their arrival in Italy (256–57).<sup>11</sup> Their violent attack on the Harpies is described in terms that connote that the Trojans' act is equally polluting: *ferro foedare uolucris* (241). Although the verb in this instance is usually taken as a very strong word meaning "to wound" (*OLD s.v. foedo* 3: "to wound savagely, mangle, hack, mutilate"),<sup>12</sup> it constitutes a verbal repetition of the words hitherto employed to describe the Harpies. Thus the Trojans' improper ritual has caused the attack of the Harpies, which embody the idea of ritual pollution. At the same time, the Trojans' efforts toward ritual restoration result in a proliferation of this pollution.<sup>13</sup>

Repetition is prominent in this episode with the Trojan's twofold attempt at a sacrificial meal and the Harpies' repeated attacks. This repetition, so necessary for the advancement of the episode's action, is also related to the larger theme of ritual distortion at work in the poem. It looks back to the episode of Polydorus, where the hero, in preparation for the performance of a sacrifice, attempts to uproot bleeding branches three times, thus provoking the apparition of the dead Polydorus, who warns of the pollution Aeneas is about to incur. Aeneas has committed an improper act, and ritual perversion is averted as he and his men execute burial rites for their dead compatriot.<sup>14</sup> But repetition is also at

<sup>11</sup> On the sacrilegious nature of this action, see Horsfall 2000: 111.

<sup>12</sup> See Williams 1962: 104.

<sup>13</sup> Despite the hideousness of their physical appearance and their violent behavior, the Harpies in the *Aeneid* act defensively rather than aggressively (Putnam 1995: 64). The Trojans attempt to drive the Harpies away from what they consider their territory (*patrio . . . regno*, 249). Vergil reverses the effect of Apollonius' narrative: the focus in the *Argonautica* is on Phineus' torture. Yet when Phineus asks the Argonauts to help him, Zetes extracts a promise from him that in doing so they would not offend the gods (*Argon.* 2.251–53). No such caution exists in Vergil's narrative when the heroes, themselves subjected to Phineus' notorious torture, engage in a fight with the Harpies.

<sup>14</sup> On the episode of Polydorus and Aeneas' execution of ritual ceremonies, see Dyson 2001: 35–39.

work in the casting of the Harpies as Furies, who thus implicitly constitute agents of Juno. As versions of the goddess, they belong to the larger framework of repetition of ritual distortion through which the goddess operates in the epic.

Since the Harpies are cast as Furies, they share their chthonic nature. It is no surprise, therefore, to find them dwelling in Hades later in the poem (6.289).<sup>15</sup> In opposing Aeneas and his Trojans, they also oppose the Olympian order of Jupiter that protects and favors the foundation of the new city and the creation of the Roman empire. Celaeno, however, confuses this carefully outlined distinction between Olympian and chthonic, when she proclaims that her prophecy comes straight from the mouth of Jupiter with Apollo as the go-between:

accipite ergo animis atque haec mea figite dicta,  
 quae Phoebus pater omnipotens, mihi Phoebus Apollo  
 praedixit, uobis Furiarum ego maxima pando. (3.250–52)

take then these words of mine and fix them to your hearts;  
 what the almighty father foretold Phoebus, and Phoebus Apollo  
 to me, I, the greatest of the Furies, disclose to you.

The Furies then, if we believe Celaeno, are privy to Olympian knowledge.<sup>16</sup> By the end of the epic, we have been told to expect a triumph of the Olympian forces over those of Furor. But for the moment, at least,

<sup>15</sup> Lines 6.285–89 recall Aeneas' journey: the hero now reacts to the Harpies in the same way he did in Book 3: once again he grabs his sword and threatens them. The reference in the same passage in Book 6 to Scylla, a creature not normally associated with Hades (Austin 1977: 122), also points to the connection between this passage and Aeneas' voyage.

<sup>16</sup> Celaeno's prophecy is unique to Vergil. See Williams 1962: 107. When the prophecy is fulfilled at *Aen.* 7.109–29, Aeneas (erroneously) recalls that it was given by Anchises. On Apollonius' influence on this episode, see Nelis 2001: 32–38. Nelis observes that Apollonius' description of the Harpies differs from Vergil's in that it supports an interpretation of the Harpies as winds (33). He also notes that Celaeno's prophecy is an inversion of the helpful prophecy of Phineus after the Harpies have been chased away by the Argonauts (35). In Apollonius it is Iris, Celaeno's sister (Hesiod, *Tb.* 266–67), who speaks as the Harpies are driven away. Nelis (36) rightly suggests that Celaeno's curse is a counterpart to Helios' anger at the slaughter of his cattle (*Od.* 12.377–83).



Jupiter appears to be implicated in Juno's plan to persecute the Trojans, as the Harpies emerge to be as much his minions as hers.

The paradox of the close relationship between Celaeno and Apollo is further complicated through an intertextual connection between the Harpy's words and Aeschylus' *Eumenides*: Διὸς προφήτης δ'ἔστι Λοξίας πατρός [Loxias is the prophet of his father Zeus] (19).<sup>17</sup> The plot of that play is structured around a similar opposition between Zeus and Apollo on the one hand and the Erinyes on the other, between forces that are explicitly Olympian and chthonic, respectively. The Pythia's description of the Erinyes (ἐπεὶ κακόν / σκότον νέμονται Τάρταρόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονός, / μισήματ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ θεῶν Ὀλυμπίων [since they live in evil darkness and in Tartarus beneath the earth, hateful to men and to the Olympian gods], 71–74) also shares intertextual contact with the description of the Harpies: *nec saevior ulla / pestis et ira deum Stygiis sese extulit undis* [no plague more savage or wrath of the gods ever rose from the waves of Styx] (3.214–15).<sup>18</sup> We see therefore that the episode of the Harpies has bearing on the larger tragic pattern at work in the epic, which results from the intersection of the ritual and allusive intertexts.

Pollution is also a theme central both to this episode of the *Aeneid* and to Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. In the play, Orestes claims that he has been ritually purified (*Eum.* 280–83); but the Pythia describes his hands as dripping with blood (*Eum.* 42–43). Apollo's purification is thus negated by the bloodthirsty Erinyes and will be effective only after the Erinyes are transformed to Eumenides. In the *Aeneid*, the pollution incurred from the Harpies is recognized by Aeneas' companions after Celaeno's prophecy. They ask for a reconciliation with offerings and prayers. The ritual import of the request is indicated by the use of a religious formula (*sed uotis precibusque iubent exposcere pacem* [but they bid to ask for peace with offerings and prayers], 261)<sup>19</sup> and confirmed by Anchises himself, the religious authority of the Trojans, who proclaims that sacrifices are due (*meritosque indicit honores*,

<sup>17</sup> The connection is found in Macrobius, *Sat.* 5.22.13, who also cites Aeschylus' *Hieriae* (86 *TrGF Radi*) as Vergil's source: στέλλειν ὅπως τάχιστα· ταῦτα γὰρ πατὴρ / Ζεὺς ἐγκαθίει Λοξίαι θεσπίσματα, [send as quickly as possible; for these oracles father Zeus entrusts to Loxias].

<sup>18</sup> The words in bold are common to the two texts, while the words underlined with a dotted line are not exact translations but express similar ideas.

<sup>19</sup> Williams 1962: 109, 131.

264). Ritual vocabulary emerges next when the Trojans reach Actium and perform purification in honor of Jupiter (*lustramurque Ioui uotisque incendimus aras* [we perform rites of cleansing to Jupiter and we light the altars with offerings], 279) followed by the celebration of games.<sup>20</sup>

Aeneas' stop at the site of the future single most significant Augustan victory provides a very desirable continuity between past and present, which the games can only intensify. Games were celebrated both in Rome and at Nicopolis, a city founded by Augustus after his victory and located opposite the site of the battle (Lloyd 1954: 296). If the narrative replicates Augustus' games, then the ceremony of purification preceding them requires an explanation. In 28 BCE, the same year that the Actian games were celebrated in Rome, a censorial lustration had also taken place as a symbol of the ending of civil war (Lloyd 1954: 298). Aeneas' purification from the ritual pollution effected by the Harpies is thus linked with the pollution Rome incurred because of the civil strife. Yet it is important to note that Aeneas' purification here is rather unsuccessful as Furies continue to persecute him in Italy and violence is not yet brought to an end. It is time to consider next in what ways civil war determines the depiction of Furies in the epic.

## II. FURIES AS AGENTS OF DISCORDIA

The active role of the Furies in the war narrative of the *Aeneid* is well established. Furies are responsible for or participate in almost every battle scene in the poem. For instance, the Fury Allecto is the sole instigator of the collision between Trojans and Latins that dominates the second half of the epic,<sup>21</sup> while in Aeneas' narrative of Book 2 a Fury is used as a metonymy for the destruction of Troy (*in flammis et in arma feror, quo tristis Erinys, / quo fremitus uocat et sublatus ad aethera clamor* [I am driven between flames and weapons, where grim Erinys, where the roar and the cries rising to the sky call], 337–38).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the Furies

<sup>20</sup> On the games as part of the purification, see Hübner 1970: 71. See also Lloyd 1954: 296.

<sup>21</sup> On Allecto's relationship with ritual perversion, see Chapter 4, pp. 128–129.

<sup>22</sup> This is the first appearance of the word *Erinys* in the poem. Later on in the same book, Aeneas calls Helen *Troiae et patriae communis Erinys* [Erinys of her fatherland and Troy alike] (573). Commentators have pointed to Aeschylus'

are identified with Discordia, as two important passages in the poem make clear. This identification is linked to their portrayal as chthonic forces that cause ritual distortion. Such forces are typically at work during times of civil unrest. The end of the poem holds the promise of their transformation followed by ritual restoration.

Both Furies and War share infernal attributes: in the description of Hades in Book 6 the Furies' dwelling is located between Bellum and Discordia:

... mortiferumque aduerso in limine Bellum,  
ferreique Eumenidum thalami et Discordia demens  
uipereum crinem uitiss innexa cruentis. (6.279–81)

... on the threshold opposite [are] death-dealing War  
and the iron chambers of the Eumenides and raving Discord,  
her snaky hair bound with bloody ribbons.

The topographical placement of these three entities denotes their deep connection, also indicated by the use of the adjective *ferreus* to describe the home of the Furies. Discordia's snaky hair further casts her as a Fury.<sup>23</sup>

The connection between Furies and Discordia is both confirmed and complicated in the *ekphrasis* of Aeneas' shield, which depicts the battle of Actium:

omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis  
contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Mineruam  
tela tenent. saeuit medio in certamine Mauors  
caelatus ferro, tristesque *ex aethere* Dirae,  
et scissa gaudens uadit Discordia palla,  
quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello. (8.698–703)

monstrous gods of every shape and barking Anubis  
wield weapons against Neptune and Venus

*Agamemnon*: τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφινεικῆ θ' / Ἑλέναν [the bride of the spear who caused death on both sides, Helen] (687–88); also compare νυμφόκλαυτος Ἐρινύς also of Helen [a Fury who brought tears to brides] (749). There is a similar phrase in Euripides' *Orestes* (1387–88), a passage intertextually linked to that of Aeschylus. See Willink 1986: 310.

<sup>23</sup> It is important to note that this description of Discordia will be recalled in other appearances of Furies: e.g., Tisiphone later in this book (555), Allecto in Book 7 (cf., for instance, 351), and the Dirae at the battle of Actium (8.702).

and against Minerva. In the middle of the battle Mars rages  
 embossed in steel and the grim Dirae *from the upper air*;  
 Discordia marches rejoicing in her torn mantle,  
 and Bellona follows her with bloody scourge.

The passage at first creates a neat juxtaposition between gods Egyptian (monstrous gods and Anubis) and Roman (Neptune, Venus, and Minerva). By contrast, Mars (notably a Roman god), the Dirae, Discordia, and Bellona all operate on both sides. Once again, we find the Dirae as agents of civil war, located between War and Discordia. Despite their function as destructive forces, however, they seem to have abandoned their infernal abode. They no longer occupy the lower end of the divine pole, but have moved upward and have access to Olympus (*tristesque ex aethere Dirae*).<sup>24</sup> The realm of *aether* is associated in the epic with Jupiter, as the god's first appearance attests (I.223; see Feeney 1991: 150). As a result, it is deeply disturbing to see these creatures aligned with the supreme deity at the most critical moment of the civil conflict, urging the combatants on to more violence. The location of the Dirae thus suggests a blurring of the boundaries between Hades and Olympus, order and disorder, friend and foe.

Such confusion is typical of narratives of civil war and is frequently followed by instances of ritual pollution. The reader awaits a restoration of these distinctions at the end of the poem, where the reconciliation between Jupiter and Juno takes place. Having examined the identity of the Dirae as agents of pollution and Discordia, we may now turn to the process of *concordia* and how it is achieved between opposing deities in the course of the poem.

### III. VENUS, JUNO, AND THE FRAGILITY OF *CONCORDIA*

Venus' intervention in the action of the poem parallels that of Juno. As the goddess who protects Aeneas and champions his interests to Jupiter, she forms a natural polar opposite to the goddess who does everything in her power to destroy him. Although the two deities have conflicting

<sup>24</sup> This representation goes against the traditional belief that the Erinyes are hated by the gods: for instance, see Aesch. *Eum.* 73, 644.

agendas, their *modus operandi* is very similar. Much like Juno, Venus often treats ritual acts as opportunities for furthering her goals. Accordingly, she distorts rites in a manner that recalls Juno's manipulation of bacchic ritual (in Book 7) or the rites of a treaty (Book 12). As a locus where the human and the divine meet, ritual acts constitute the means by which deities may communicate their will to humans. Yet Venus, like Juno, is not satisfied simply to convey her will through these appropriate channels but actively interferes in human affairs, often in the context of ritual. An examination of the moments of Venus' active participation in the plot of the poem reveals an utter disregard for correct ritual procedure. By negating ritual correctness, she is complicit in the instigation or perpetuation of ritual disruption and crisis and may thus be read as a version of Juno: she constitutes yet another divine figure who promotes repetition of ritual corruption in the epic. At the same time, since she is aligned with the Olympic realm of Jupiter, she foreshadows the eventual assimilation of the Olympic order into that of Juno.

The kinship between Venus and Juno becomes most salient in *Aeneid* 4, where the two deities collude with an aim of establishing a union between Dido and Aeneas. This is a rare and important moment of *concordia* in the poem, albeit one that is as artificial as it is temporary: both Venus and Juno place emphasis upon the kinship of their divine spheres – namely, *amor* and *conubium*, respectively – in order to reach their common goal. Their *concordia*, however, is predicated upon a distortion of rituals, and specifically those of *hospitium* (by Venus) and marriage (by Juno). The goddesses' utter disrespect for ritual correctness prefigures not only the tragic outcome of the affair between Aeneas and Dido but also the fragility of the process of achieving *concordia*. Furthermore, their pact illuminates the *concordia* achieved in the reconciliation scene between Jupiter and Juno in Book 12.

Juno outlines the terms of this alliance as preserving equality between the two goddesses, whose competition (*certamine*, 98) is at the center of their relationship. She carefully delineates the contours of this equality, aiming at appeasing her rival's pride, and assures her that their interests are best served by their alliance. She proposes lasting peace (*pacem aeternam*, 99) both between themselves and between the two peoples they protect, a peace based upon community (*communem . . . populum*, 102) and equality (*paribusque regamus / auspiciis* [let us rule with equal authority],

102–103). Juno suggests that this peace should be sealed with a marriage (*pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos* [lasting peace and an arranged marriage], 99), a tactical ploy on her part, designed to undermine the equality she proposes in two ways. First, the institution she supports as goddess of marriage will now preside over and protect the love that Venus has instigated. At the same time, although marriage ideally celebrates the complementary nature of the roles of husband and wife, in reality it reflects and replicates a patriarchal social structure that prescribes the submission of wife to husband, as Juno's vocabulary makes plain (*liceat Phrygio servire marito* [let her serve a Phrygian husband], 103). According to Juno, Dido and Carthage will be under Aeneas' sway. By casting this specific marriage as an expansion of Venus' domain (*dotalisque tuae Tyrios permittere dextrae* [yield her Tyrians to your power as dowry], 104), Juno attempts to convince her rival that she is getting the better end of the deal; in actuality, however, not only does Dido's and Aeneas' marriage fall neatly within Juno's sphere of influence (and therefore Venus' place in this equation is undermined), but also Aeneas' role as leader of Carthage ensures that Rome will never be founded. Juno argues that marital *concordia* will generate *concordia* in gods and humans alike, a desirable goal for both divinities. Nevertheless, she is fully aware, as is Venus, of the implications of her proposal.

Juno's choice of vocabulary as she presents her arguments to Venus further highlights the fragility of the reconciliation she proposes. Her repeated use of the term *pax* and its derivatives (*pactos*, 99) is not lost on Venus, who responds by using the same type of vocabulary (*foedera iungi*, 112). Their agreement is thus contractual and legalistic, more appropriate for two warring parties entering a temporary moment of mutually advantageous ceasefire than a sincere reconciliation. True peace would have been denoted by the term *concordia*, which, though implied by Juno's and Venus' rhetoric, is wholly absent in the scene. The two divinities thus echo Roman writers such as Cicero, who describes *concordia* as an affective state, a genuine sympathy between opponents, and a marker of true and lasting peace, as opposed to the term *pax*, which appears to be no longer enough to denote all the attributes of peace that the Romans thought indispensable (Jal 1961: 212–21).<sup>25</sup> Juno and Venus

<sup>25</sup> I owe this point to Neil Coffee.

fully understand and readily exploit the fine nuances of the ideological vocabulary they employ, thus reinforcing the notion that they are not so different from one another.

The two goddesses emerge as equals only in their manipulation and distortion of ritual institutions and in their exploitation of the very ideal of *concordia* they profess to support. Juno, by holding Dido's and Aeneas' wedding ceremony in supernatural terms, renders it ambiguous and destabilizes its meaning. She ensures that all the elements of wedding ritual are present,<sup>26</sup> and she has a role in it herself (*pronuba*, 166); yet this ceremony defies the fundamental nature of ritual, which is to provide a space controlled by humans so that communication with the divine can be achieved. Viewed in this light, the differing interpretations that Dido and Aeneas draw from the events in the cave may be explained as a consequence of the distorted ritual in which they participate.

Venus replicates Juno's pattern of action earlier in Book 1, where she orders Amor to infect Dido with love for Aeneas. Though markedly different from the way in which Juno stirs up chthonic forces in the service of war and destruction, Venus' act, nevertheless, will also result in the death of Dido and will set in motion the course of events that will bring about the Carthaginian wars and the destruction of the city of Carthage. But Venus acts like Juno on another deeper, and in many ways more disturbing, level in that she operates by distorting and manipulating the ritual elements of *hospitium*. The goddess claims that Dido's hospitality may be treacherous (*Iunonia hospitia*, 672) and thus justifies her interference; without hesitation, she uses the context of the banquet, an integral part of the ritual of *hospitium*, to put her plan into effect.

Before I go on to illustrate how Venus manipulates ritual procedure, a few words on the ritualized nature of *hospitium* are in order. Though primarily a social institution, *hospitium* contains ritualized elements, most conspicuously a ceremony of initiation. Greek and Roman epic narratives represent this ceremony as consisting of a series of symbolic gestures enacted in sequence, elaborately described also in *Aeneid* 1: a sacrifice (632-36), gift exchange (647-55), feasting (637-42; 697-722), and a libation to Jupiter *hospitalis* (728-40). As a result, these rites invest

<sup>26</sup> On the wedding ceremony in Book 4, see also Chapter 2, pp. 48-49.

the bond of *hospitium* with religious importance and sacrosanctity (*OCD* 612), broken only by means of a formal ceremony. Ritualized friendship thus guaranteed mutual support between parties, which included the exchange of valuable resources (money, troops, etc.), usually designated as gifts, and the performance of important services, such as saving the life of one of the two parties (*OCD* 612). In *Aeneid* 1, while Dido and Aeneas' guest-friendship fulfills all the requirements of an epic topos, it is simultaneously represented in specifically Roman terms: Dido and Aeneas are cast as foreign leaders entering into the bond of *amicitia* that ensures continuing *fides* between them and their communities (Monti 1981: 9–10, 24–25). The presence of the Roman vocabulary of political alliance with a foreign people is not out of place here, since Dido's Carthage is painstakingly cast as a surrogate Rome. It is also regularly employed in other instances of *hospitium* in the *Aeneid* (Monti 1981: 27–28).

Since Romans used the vocabulary of interpersonal relations to describe political relationships, guest-friendship is the alternative to marriage in furthering political interests and forging alliances with foreigners.<sup>27</sup> Intertextual contact between the description of Dido's banquet in the *Aeneid* (1.637–42) and Peleus' and Thetis' wedding feast in Catullus 64 (42–52) mobilizes the ritual context of the wedding and foreshadows the subsequent "wedding" between Aeneas and Dido:

at domus interior regali splendida luxu  
instruitur, mediisque parant conuiuia tectis:  
arte laboratae uestes ostroque superbo,  
ingens argentum mensis, caelataque in auro  
fortia facta patrum, series longissima rerum  
per tot ducta uiros antiqua ab origine gentis. (*Aen.* 1.637–42)

But the glittering house inside is laid out with royal finery,  
and in the midst of the palace they prepare a banquet:  
coverlets adorned with art and majestic purple,  
massive silver on the tables, and the courageous deeds  
of the ancestors wrought in gold, the longest series of feats  
traced through so many men from the ancient beginnings of the race.

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, Finley 1977: 99 on the same concept of marriage and friendship in Homeric epic.



Precious objects, richly embroidered garments, and the commemoration of ancestral feats all constitute the core of the description of Peleus' house as the preparations for the wedding take place:

ipsius at sedes, quacumque opulenta recessit  
 regia, fulgenti splendent auro atque argento.  
 candet ebur soliis, collucent pocula mensae,  
 tota domus gaudet regali splendida gaza.  
 puluinar vero diuae geniale locatur  
 sedibus in mediis, Indo quod dente politum  
 tincta tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco.  
 haec uestis priscis hominum uariata figuris  
 heroum mira uirtutes indicat arte. (Catullus 64.42–52)

But his house [sc. Peleus'], as far as the wealthy palace reaches, glows with glittering gold and silver. Ivory sparkles on the seats, the cups on the table shine bright, the whole house rejoices splendid with regal treasure. And the royal marriage bed for the goddess is placed in the middle of the palace, polished with Indian tusk and covered with purple tinged with the rosy stain of the shell. This coverlet adorned with the shapes of men of old displays the feats of heroes with wondrous art.

The wedding of Peleus and Thetis is far from a purely joyous occasion. The couple will produce Achilles, who is described as causing war and bloodshed and as taking a wife in death with the sacrifice of the virgin Polyxena at his tomb (338–70). Moreover, the coverlet depicts the story of Theseus and Ariadne, a tale of a breach of *fides* and *pietas*, all of which foreshadows the future of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido. Thus the description of Dido's banquet may also be read as a wedding feast.

In this light, other elements in the narrative acquire new significance. For instance, the scene in which Dido leads Aeneas into her palace where the feast is about to take place may also be compared to the bride's entrance into the groom's house after the wedding ceremony and before the wedding feast can begin (Treggiari 1991: 167–68). Contrary to custom, however, according to which the groom leads the bride into the

house, Dido is the one who leads Aeneas into the palace (*Aeneas in regia ducit / tecta*, 631–32). Aeneas thus assumes the role of the bride (*ducta*) who enters her new marital abode. This reversal of roles is consistent with the previous representation of the union of Aeneas and Dido as one that ensures continuity and growth for Carthage at the expense of the foundation of Rome.

The sacrifices that Dido performs before the banquet, of which one is in honor of Bacchus (632–36), a god associated with marriage, is yet another instance of the possibility of multiple readings of the episode. Although it is uncertain to which gods sacrifice was made at a wedding,<sup>28</sup> the act itself was never omitted, and if it was, bad luck was expected to follow (Treggiari 1991: 164).<sup>29</sup> Similarly, wedding narratives regularly emphasize the feelings of joy the occasion generates among participants and guests,<sup>30</sup> a theme also repeatedly mentioned during the description of Dido's banquet (*limina laeta*, 707; *laetum . . . diem*, 732; *laetitiae*, 734). Finally, when Venus causes Ascanius to fall asleep so that Cupid may impersonate him, she wraps him in flowers of marjoram (*amaracus*, 693), a plant first mentioned in Catullus' marriage hymn (61.6–7), specifically in the description of the god of marriage, Hymen (*cinge tempora floribus / suave olentis amaraci* [crown your head with the flowers of fragrant marjoram]; see Fedeli 1983: 24). Ascanius' intertextual connection with Hymen thus intensifies the context of wedding ritual operative in the description of Dido's banquet.

This overlap between wedding and *hospitium* in the ritual elements opens up the episode for new interpretative possibilities and creates fruitful ground for Venus to achieve her goals. The goddess, however, displays her indifference to ritual correctness. Cupid's impersonation of Ascanius as he brings Dido the gifts distorts the process of ritualized gift exchange: far from constituting the expression of trusted friendship, gifts now serve to ensure Dido's falling in love (*iamque ibat dicto parens et dona Cupido / regia portabat Tyriis* [now Cupid went on, obeying her word

<sup>28</sup> Tellus and Ceres are often mentioned. See Treggiari 1991: 164.

<sup>29</sup> Dido makes further sacrifices, which are more directly associated with wedding ritual, at the beginning of Book 4. See Treggiari 1991: 164 and Monti 1981: 31–32.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Catullus 64.46, 284.

and carrying royal gifts to the Tyrians], 695–96). This link between the gifts and Dido's love is also asserted later on, where Dido is described as moved equally by the boy and the gifts (*pariter puero donisque mouetur*, 714). As a result, Venus actively compromises the bond of guest-friendship between Dido and Aeneas.

The theme of drinking within the context of the feast also serves to show the greater distortion Venus causes to the ritual of the banquet. Wine libations constitute part of the process of initiation into *hospitium* as symbolic of the new bond between guest and host. Accordingly, Dido as host makes a wine offering. As Roman custom prescribes, a woman may take only a sip of the wine consecrated to the god.<sup>31</sup> The creation of this new bond symbolized by drinking is exploited later in this episode to display Dido's growing love for Aeneas as the result of intoxication (*longumque bibebat amorem* [she drank long draughts of love], 749). Thus drinking is here used as a metaphor for forging Dido's relationship with Aeneas as that of both guest and host and "husband and wife." Venus distorts and confuses the ritual of *hospitium* with that of the wedding, a distortion that prefigures the ultimate failure of both. The casting of Dido's passion for Aeneas as intoxication is further recalled in Book 4, when Dido, angry at the news of Aeneas' intention to leave her, is described as a bacchant (300–303). Similarly, the fusion of the institutions of *hospitium* and marriage in this instance is confirmed when Dido calls Aeneas *hospes* and adds that this alone is left from the name of husband (4.323–24). Thus Venus' interference at this juncture causes a confusion of the two rituals and prefigures their ultimate failure.

In her proposal of a *concordia* Juno manipulates the language of marriage to describe an alliance between herself and Venus, Dido and Aeneas. In doing so, she sets the terms of this alliance in a way that purports to maintain equality and equilibrium between the goddesses but in reality serves Juno's plans. Venus' manipulation of the rituals of *hospitium* and

<sup>31</sup> See Servius on *Aen.* 1.737: *et verecundiam reginae ostendit, et morem Romanum. nam apud maiores nostros feminae non utebantur vino, nisi sacrorum causa certis diebus* [shows the reverence of the queen and a Roman custom; for at the time of our ancestors women did not use wine, unless for sacred rites on certain days]. Roman women were forbidden from drinking wine as it was considered synonymous with adultery.

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*conubium* in Book 1 recalls Juno's actions throughout the poem, thus signaling a pattern of repeated ritual distortion on the part of the divinities. Juno's and Venus' disingenuous *concordia* also illuminates the reconciliation between Jupiter and Juno in Book 12, to which my discussion will now turn.

#### IV. TRANSFORMING JUNO: RITUAL RESTORATION IN *AENEID* 12

Ritual plays a prominent role in the scene of the final divine reconciliation, since Jupiter's persuasion of Juno is cast as an *evocatio*.<sup>32</sup> *Evocatio* is the Roman ritual whereby a deity of an enemy city is persuaded to transfer his or her favor to Rome in exchange for a temple and cult worship. Sources attest to the success of the ritual, the first known example being the transfer of Juno's cult from Veii to Rome in 396 BCE and the building of the temple of Juno Regina on the Aventine.<sup>33</sup> Yet Romans continued to feel anxiety over Juno's loyalty to their city, an anxiety that became most pronounced during the Punic Wars: at the time of the Hannibalic crisis, the Romans paid special attention to the worship of Juno, culminating in a ritual procession to her temple on the Aventine in 207 BCE, while in the course of the third Punic war, an *evocatio* of the Juno of Carthage took place.<sup>34</sup> The ritual of *evocatio* thus appears to be successful but does not eliminate the danger that the deity, especially if that deity is Juno, may not always be on the side of Rome.<sup>35</sup>

In his *evocatio*, Jupiter employs a rather heavy-handed rhetorical strategy: his opening words to Juno assert a divine hierarchy in which his authority reigns supreme, his will identical to the all-powerful *fatum*.

<sup>32</sup> Johnson 1976: 123–24. Servius on *Aen.* 12.841 implies that an *evocatio* is operative in this episode. See also note 34 to this chapter.

<sup>33</sup> Livy 5.21.1–7; see also Beard 1998, 1: 1, 35.

<sup>34</sup> See Servius on *Aen.* 12.841: *sed constat bello Punico secundo exoratam Iunonem, tertio vero bello a Scipione sacris quibusdam etiam Romam esse translata[m]* [but it is agreed that Juno was placated during the second Punic war, but in the third war [waged] by Scipio she was even transferred by means of certain rites to Rome]; see also Palmer 1974: 49 and Beard 1998, 1: 82, III.

<sup>35</sup> See also Servius on *Aen.* 12.830.

This is not exactly persuasion, but it has the effect of making an important point: Juno has no choice but to comply and indeed will be rewarded for doing so. This *evocatio* is thus immediately signaled as quite different from the entreaties of a Roman general to the tutelary deity of the enemy city, where the power lies entirely with the divinity. Jupiter seeks both to compel and appease Juno when he describes his command as an entreaty (*precibusque inflectere nostris* [yield to my prayers], 800), acknowledging his consort's enormous powers (803–805) while also explicitly ordering her to stop (*ulterius temptare veto* [I forbid you to try any further], 806).<sup>36</sup>

This initial imbalance of power between the two divinities is at once asserted and dismantled in what follows. Juno assures Jupiter that she is in full compliance with his will (even if her arguments are rather weak in the face of the amount of havoc she has caused) and that their interests coincide (*pro Latio obtestor, pro maiestate tuorum* [I beg for the sake of Latium, for the greatness of your kin], 820). Juno's show of respect for Jupiter's authority causes him in turn to acknowledge her as his equal and kin (*es germana Iovis, Saturnique altera proles* [you are Jupiter's sister, the other child of Saturn], 830) and to grant her request that the Trojans be renamed Latins as *victus* and *volens* (833). In other words, Juno yields to Jupiter in order to succeed in eliminating the name of Troy, while Jupiter grants Juno her request believing that his will has prevailed. In this instance too, then, as in the case of the reconciliation between Juno and Venus in Book 4, *concordia* is predicated upon an assumed equality of the two parties, while in reality both of them believe that they have gained the upper hand.<sup>37</sup> Significantly, here too, the word *concordia*, which would denote true kinship of spirit between the two divinities, is absent from their negotiations.

The fragility of such a reconciliation becomes even more poignant if we consider the role that ritual, and wedding in particular, is called to play in this process. Jupiter's gesture of acknowledgment of Juno's divinity is to enumerate her accomplishments in this war:

uentum ad supremum est. terris agitare uel undis  
Troianos potuisti, infandum accendere bellum,  
deformare domum et luctu miscere hymenaeos: (12.803–805)

<sup>36</sup> See also Lyne 1987: 96.

<sup>37</sup> On the problems of the reconciliation of Juno, see Johnson 1976: 123–27 and Feeney 1984: 179–94 (= Harrison 1990: 339–62).

It has come to an end. You were powerful to chase the Trojans  
 over land and sea, to kindle an unspeakable war,  
 to ruin a home and to merge weddings and mourning:

For Jupiter, Juno's extraordinary powers find expression in the destruction of the home and the perversion of marriage. Jupiter's use of the ritual term for marriage, *hymenaeos*, shows that ritual is key in his (and the reader's) understanding of the concept of marriage. Juno also articulates reconciliation and peace in terms of the restoration of marriage (*cum iam conubiis pacem felicibus (esto) / component, cum iam leges et foedera iungent* [when they now make peace with happy marriage (so be it) / when they now join in laws and treaties], 821–22), while Jupiter seals the pact with the promise of rituals to honor Juno, as in the case of an *evocatio* proper (*morem ritusque sacrorum / adiciam* [I will give them sacred law and rites], 836–37; *nec gens ulla tuos aequè celebrabit honores* [nor will any other people celebrate your sacrifices equally], 840).<sup>38</sup> Both deities are claiming to oversee and protect the proper execution of rituals.

Nevertheless, Juno, despite her (reluctant) assurances to the contrary, continues to display her disregard for the realm of the sacred: in that same speech, in an effort to show her compliance with Jupiter's will, Juno swears the oath of Styx that she never instructed Juturna to take up weapons:

Iuturnam misero (fateor) succurrere fratri  
 suasi et pro uita maiora audere probauì,  
 non ut tela tamen, non ut contenderet arcum;  
 adiuro Stygii caput implacabile fontis,  
 una superstìtio superis quae reddita diuis. (813–17)

As for Juturna, I persuaded her (I confess) to help her unfortunate brother  
 and for his life's sake approved of still greater deeds;  
 but not that she should use the arrow, not that she should shoot the bow;  
 I swear by the inexorable fountainhead of Styx,  
 the only dreadful oath ordained for the gods above.

<sup>38</sup> On *honores* as sacrifices, see Hardie 1993: 19, and on this particular passage, Dyson 2001: 129. Scholars have posited that perhaps Jupiter's words constitute a reference to Augustus' building a temple to Juno, on which see Conington 1884, 3: 476.



Earlier in the book, however, she had baldly authorized Juturna to use force (*aut tu bella cie conceptumque execute foedus. / auctor ego audendi* [or rouse battle and destroy the treaty that has begun. / It is I who bid you dare], 158–59. Commentators point out the clever rhetoric in Juno's use of the words *fratri* and *pro uita*, as they suggest that Juturna should act to protect only her brother's life (Conington 1884, 3: 474). Juno puts her rhetorical skills to work so as to absolve herself of responsibility for the violation of the treaty. The goddess' manipulation of words is consistent with the practice of oath taking in ancient Rome, which dictated the interpretation of the phrasing of the oath in its most technical and literal sense. Juno may be thus manipulating the language of the oath in order to distance herself from Juturna's actions.

Juno may be said to distort the process of oath taking in other ways as well: Roman oaths were usually followed by the addition of a curse in case of perjury (*OCD* 1056). The goddess, however, does not invoke one in this instance and therefore does not complete the process properly. At the same time, her use of the word *superstitio* to describe the oath may also be seen as problematic: the term usually refers to extreme piety or excessive devotion to ritual and the gods and was viewed as a powerful and dangerous practice that might threaten the stability of *religio* and the state (Beard 1998, 1: 217). Juno's characterization of the oath as *superstitio* may evoke all that is negative vis-à-vis the oath. Once again, the goddess can be shown to manipulate an oath of supreme sacrosanctity, such as that of Styx, to achieve her goals. As a result, her promise of ritual restoration is not entirely credible.

If Juno's practices indeed remain unchanged, then the ramifications for the stability of the reconciliation we have just witnessed are devastating on a number of levels. Jupiter and Juno agree to end a war between Trojans and Latins, out of which a new nation with a prosperous and glorious future will emerge. At the same time, their pact constitutes a promise of a new cosmic order, one that reconciles forces Olympian and chthonic, male and female. Yet Jupiter puts a stop to the war by sending a Dira to instruct Juturna to withdraw from the battle. Throughout the poem, the Dirae have served as Juno's minions. Seeing a Dira execute the will of Jupiter raises questions regarding the nature of this divine reconciliation. In order to appreciate more fully the significance of the Dirae's role in the divine *concordia*, we need to turn briefly to Greek tragedy, and in particular to Aeschylus' conclusion of the *Oresteia*, the *Eumenides*.

## V. CHANGE OF VENUE: THE DIRAE AND THE *ORESTEIA*

The resolution of the *Oresteia* is almost as controversial a topic of debate as the end of the *Aeneid*. Orestes' acquittal for his mother's murder by the court of Areopagus and the eventual transformation of the Erinyes, his persecutors, to Eumenides mark a transition from the old justice system of kin killing to the new institution of the court, where justice is now dispensed by nonkin members. The opposing nature of these two systems of justice is articulated throughout the trilogy by linking each of them to opposites: old/new, female/male, chthonic/Olympian. As a result, the old justice system is associated in the plays with the female and the powers of the Underworld, whereas the Areopagus is linked with the male and the Olympian authority of Zeus. The foundation and continuing success of this new system of justice is predicated upon the reconciliation of the deities involved in the conflict, that is, Apollo, Athena, and the Erinyes. Their reconciliation is made possible through the use of Persuasion (Peitho),<sup>39</sup> which allows the deities to reach and accept the court's authority as the earthly representative of Zeus' new concept of Justice (Dike). The Erinyes play a key role in this reconciliation as they are transformed from bloodthirsty creatures to safeguards of the new justice system and guarantors of prosperity for the city of Athens.<sup>40</sup>

More specifically, in the last choral ode of the play (916–1020), the Erinyes deliver blessings upon Athens, namely, prosperity and fertility for the earth, longevity and health for humans, and civic concord. The play ends with a ritual procession, in which Athena and the people of Athens

<sup>39</sup> Persuasion itself sustains a transformation at the end of the play: she is no longer a curse but a blessing. See Sommerstein 1989: 255.

<sup>40</sup> At the heart of every reconciliation always lies the risk of an outbreak of violent conflict, and the *Oresteia* is no exception. A case in point is the prologue of the *Eumenides*, which foreshadows the resolution of the end of the play: the Pythia relates the peaceful transition of mantic power at Delphi from the chthonic gods to Apollo's Olympian rule (Conacher 1987: 139; Lebeck 1971: 142). Yet the audience would have been greatly surprised to hear this account, as it explicitly rejects the dominant version of the story, according to which Apollo became the reigning deity of the oracle by force (Sommerstein 1989: 80–81). As a result, not only the outcome of the play but also the problems inherent in this outcome are foreshadowed for the audience early on.

will escort the Erinyes, now transformed to Semnai (the Venerable Ones), to their new home in Athens.<sup>41</sup> Athena stresses that these blessings are conditional only, and that the Erinyes are equally capable of good and ill (see Sommerstein 1989: 260–62, 275–78). I argue that the Erinyes and the Dirae share characteristics that warrant a comparison of the two. Their juxtaposition will help answer questions regarding the quality of divine reconciliation in the *Aeneid*.

Though the Dirae are hardly unknown entities in the poem, their habitat and role are redefined at the moment of Jupiter's decision to employ them:

dicuntur geminae pestes cognomine Dirae,  
 quas et Tartaream Nox intempesta Megaeram  
 uno eodem tulit partu, paribusque reuinxit  
 serpentum spiris uentosasque addidit alas.  
 hae Iouis ad solium *saevique* in limine regis  
 apparent *acuuntque metum mortalibus* aegris,  
 si quando *letum horrificum morbosque* deum rex  
 molitur, *meritas* aut *bello* territat urbes. (12.845–52)

men tell of twin pestilences, named the Furies,  
 whom untimely Night bore in one and the same birth  
 with hellish Megaera, wreathing them alike  
 with snaky coils and giving them wings of wind.  
 These attend on the throne of Jupiter and on the threshold  
 of the savage ruler, and *rouse the fears of ailing mortals*,  
 whenever the king of gods is wreaking *bideous death*  
 and *diseases*, or *terrifies guilty cities with war*.

The Dirae's lineage is associated with the chthonic powers of the Underworld: their mother is Night and their sister "infernal Megaera." Earlier in the poem, their abode is the *limen* of Hades (6.279). Here, however, we are reminded that, as we have seen, they actually dwell in the *limen* of Jupiter. Olympus thus appears to have permanently appropriated the topography of Hades.

<sup>41</sup> On the particular ritual that the procession is meant to evoke, see Bowie 1993: 27–29.

Fear constitutes a fundamental aspect of the Furies in the *Oresteia* as well. For instance, one of the trilogy's most poignant and memorable moments is Orestes' terror at the sight of the blood-dripping Erinyes persecuting him at the end of *Choephoroi* (1048–50; 1057–58). The opening of *Eumenides* shows that this theme will continue to be important: when the Pythia catches sight of the Furies, she exclaims in terror: ἦ δεινὰ λέξαι, δεινὰ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖς δρακεῖν [indeed terrible things to tell, terrible things for my eyes to see], 34). Fear has a chief role in the play's articulation of the new system of justice and is progressively viewed, like the Furies themselves, as a necessary bulwark of justice (517–25; 698–702) and a guarantee of prosperity (990–91; Sommerstein 1989: 87). In the *Aeneid*, by contrast, we see none of these positive attributes of fear, only Jupiter's use of it as a means to punish humanity for unspecified crimes.

Fear, however, is not the only characteristic shared by the Dirae of the *Aeneid* and the Erinyes of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. Both oversee death, disease, and warfare.<sup>42</sup> And in both cases they lend their services to Jupiter and Zeus, respectively.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the two works present these deities in markedly different ways. As we have seen, in the final choral ode of the Greek play, the Furies deliver blessings upon Athens. These take the specific form of protection of the crops from disease (μηδ' ἄκαρπος αἰανῆς ἐφερπέτω νόσος [may no deadly disease draw near to kill the fruit], 942), untimely death (ἀνδροκμητῆτας δ' ἄωρους ἀπεννέπω τύχας [I ban deadly and untimely death for men], 956), and civil strife (976–83).<sup>44</sup>

In the epic, however, there is no guarantee of protection from these evils; the Dirae appear to exist not in order to ensure that justice prevails (as in *Eum.* 690–92) but rather as minions of Jupiter when he chooses to inflict harm upon mortals and cities. The positive affirmation of fertility, longevity, and peace, which cements the reconciliation of opposing

<sup>42</sup> To be sure, the Dirae themselves bring pestilence to humans, as is the case in Verg. *G.* (3.551–53). The motif of disease is familiar to the reader from earlier parts of Book 12. On the "illness" of Turnus, see Putnam 1965: 194–95.

<sup>43</sup> See Sommerstein 1989: 267, where he notes that in *Eum.* (976–87) the Erinyes appropriate blessings that are usually associated with Athena and Zeus.

<sup>44</sup> This passage bears close affinities to the blessings that the Danaids bestow upon Argos in Aesch. *Supp.* (625–709). On the importance of the myth of the Danaids in the *Aeneid*, see Putnam 1994: 171–89.

divine forces in the Greek play, is remarkably absent in the description of the Vergilian Dirae. Yet it is precisely this benevolence toward humans that is essential to the new system of justice propounded in the play, and that unites all under the aegis of Zeus. In the *Aeneid*, by contrast, it seems that Jupiter, instead of converting the Dirae, is himself transformed into a version of Juno.<sup>45</sup>

Thus the Dirae remain embodiments of violent internal conflict. As we have seen, throughout the epic, their chthonic, warlike nature is expressed through their affinity with snakes. This Dira is no exception. As Jupiter dispatches her to terrify Turnus and remove Juturna from the action, the Fury is likened to a poisonous arrow in a description that also evokes her serpentine nature:

non secus ac neruo per nubem impulsa sagitta,  
armatam saeui Parthus quam felle ueneni,  
Parthus siue Cydon, telum immedicabile, torsit,  
stridens et celeris incognita transilit umbras: . . . (12.856–59)

Like an arrow, shot from the bow-string through a cloud,  
armed with the gall of fell poison which a Parthian,  
a Parthian or a Cydonian has launched, a shaft beyond all cure;  
hissing, it leaps unseen through the swift shadows: . . .

The arrow/Dira is deadly (*immedicabile*); its poison is *saeuum*, the same adjective used of Jupiter a few lines earlier (849) and of Juno and the Furies in many instances throughout the poem (Knox 1997: 227–28); the verb used to describe the shooting of the arrow is the same as the one usually depicting the winding of a snake (*torsit*); and lastly, the arrow/Dira attacks unseen by its victim, just as snakes often catch their victim unaware. The passage has much in common with the following lines from *Eumenides*, where Apollo's arrow is likened to a snake:

μη̄ καῑ λαβοῡσᾱ πτηνὸν ἀργηστὴν ὄφιν  
χρυσηλάτου θάμιγρος̄ ἐξορμώμενον

<sup>45</sup> See Servius on *Aen.* 12.845 on the Dira's habitat: *et dictae 'dirae', quod non nisi ante iratum Iovem videntur, ut <849> saevique in limine regis apparent* [and they are called 'dirae,' because they do not appear unless Jupiter is angry, as they stand as attendants on the threshold of the savage king].

ἀνῆις ὑπ' ἄλγους μέλανα πλευμόνων ἀφρόν,  
ἐμοῦσα θρόμβους οὖς ἀφείλικυσας φόνου.

(*Eum.* 181–84)

lest you might be even smitten by a winged glistening snake  
shot forth from a bow-string wrought of gold  
and disgorge in pain black foam from your lungs,  
vomiting the clotted blood you have drained.

These lines come from the first encounter between Apollo and the Erinyes. The likening of Apollo's arrow to a winged glistening snake recalls the image of the snake in the *Choephoroi*: Orestes was turned into a snake (ἐκδρακοντωθείς, *Cho.* 549) in order to be able to murder his mother, and now the god's snake-weapon protects him against the dreaded dragonness (δεινῆς δρακαίνης, *Eum.* 128), whose ghost pursues him (Goldhill 1984: 218). At this early stage in the play, both sides, Apollo and Orestes on the one hand, and Clytemnestra and the Erinyes on the other, while in conflict, share similar snakelike attributes. That Jupiter's ultimate intervention in the poem looks back to the beginning of *Eumenides*, where the new system of justice has not yet been established, is of great significance. Much like Juno throughout the epic, Jupiter utilizes the serpentine, chthonic, warmongering qualities of the Dira in order to implement his divine plan. Viewed in this light, his repeated promises of prosperity, justice, and a new order demand an explanation.

In the following scene, that of the duel between Aeneas and Turnus, the reader witnesses the outcome of the divine settlement. When Aeneas chooses to disregard the supplication of Turnus and proceeds to kill him, he may be said to act within the framework of a system of justice in which the shedding of blood is the only way to achieve retribution. No higher authority settles the dispute, however; no ritual ceremony ends the epic. The contrast with the ending of the *Oresteia* is stark and poignant.

Supplication and justice are also key problems in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*. The integrity of the act of supplication is particularly at stake: the Erinyes twice try to prevent the suppliant Orestes from getting asylum (Sommerstein 1989: 11 n.39); what is more, supplication proves insufficient to save him. At the end of the play, however, it is the court that decides the fate of Orestes, while the functions assigned to the reformed Erinyes include those of the Semnai Theai in Athenian cult, who are protectors of suppliants (Brown 1984: 262). As a result, the suppliant drama

ends successfully for the suppliant, even though, contrary to customary practice, he must leave Athens, whereas his prosecutors remain. The Erinyes lose some of their traditional prerogatives but retain their importance for society, transformed to benevolent forces guaranteeing prosperity and justice. The Vergilian Dira's jurisdiction, however, remains akin to that of the Erinyes *before* their transformation to Eumenides. She does not offer any protection to the suppliant Turnus; on the contrary, she serves as a guarantor of his demise. In the *Aeneid*, the suppliant is killed and the Dirae, instead of departing for Hades, keep their place on the threshold of Olympus.

The role of the Dira in this instance in the *Aeneid* and its close relationship with Aeschylus' *Oresteia* may be further illuminated through a brief consideration of the presence of another female deity, Pallas Athena.

## VI. THE MEDIATION OF PALLAS

In an insightful article, Sarah Spence notes that the Dira of *Aeneid* 12 is portrayed as an owl-like bird, the signature bird of Pallas Minerva (*quae quondam in bustis aut culminibus desertis / nocte sedens serum canit importuna per umbras* [which sits sometimes on tombs or deserted rooftops and sings ill-omened things late at night in the shadows], 863–64). Spence suggests that this implicit reference to the goddess casts the Dira as a representative of the feminine aspect of Jupiter and points to the similar role of Athena in the *Oresteia*. For Spence, the connection between the *Aeneid* and the trilogy renders Pallas a figure of peace and inclusion that ensures that violence will come to an end (Spence 1999: 157–58).<sup>46</sup> In the following, I argue that Pallas in the *Aeneid* is yet another Olympian deity whose powers are appropriated by the realm of Juno.

A closer look into the different roles Pallas is called on to play in the poem will bring into sharper focus the themes at work at this particular juncture. Critics of the *Aeneid* have long noted Minerva's association with the demands of fate and the will of Jupiter (Wilhelm 1992: 75). She is a

<sup>46</sup> Spence's larger argument is that the variety of roles that Pallas is called on to play throughout the *Aeneid* emphasizes the liminality of the poem's ending (159).

warrior goddess, initially on the side of the Greeks in the conflict with Troy but eventually a protector of Rome (8.699). In Roman religious life, the goddess occupied a prominent place: she was part of the Capitoline triad, worshipped on the Capitoline hill along with Jupiter and Juno. Compared to her Capitoline counterparts, however, Minerva's appearance in the *Aeneid* is brief. Nevertheless, the moments in which she appears are highly memorable: she is shown as terrible in exacting vengeance from those who wrong her (1.39–45) and as rejecting the women's pleas for help both at Troy (1.479–82) and in Latium (11.477–85).

Although a goddess of great intellectual power, Pallas also displays chthonic attributes (Henry 1989: 91–92). Prominent among these is her kinship with serpents. In one of the most frightening scenes of Book 2, she sends twin snakes to devour Laocoon and his sons (225–27), while snakes also resurface at the scene of Troy's pillaging, which Minerva oversees along with Juno:

... hic Iuno Scaeas saeuissima portas  
 prima tenet sociumque furens a nauibus agmen  
 ferro accincta uocat.  
 iam summas arces Tritonia, respice, Pallas  
 insedit nimbo effulgens et Gorgone saeua. (2.612–16)

here most savage Juno first holds the Scaean gates  
 and girded with steel furiously calls from the ships  
 her allied army.

Now look, Tritonia Pallas occupies the top of the citadel  
 shining with her cloud and the savage Gorgon.

The collusion of Juno and Pallas is marked by their resemblance,<sup>47</sup> with both goddesses cast as Fury-like creatures: Juno's attire links her with Tisiphone, who later in the poem is depicted as leaping upon her victims girded with a whip (*accincta flagello*, 6.570). Pallas' shield, on the other hand, depicts the Gorgon Medusa, a creature famous for its serpentine hair.<sup>48</sup> The similarity of the two goddesses is further reinforced through

<sup>47</sup> On other important connections between Pallas and Juno in the poem, see Spence 1999: 152. The image of Pallas rejecting the Trojan women's prayers is in one of the paintings in Juno's temple in Carthage (1.479–82).

<sup>48</sup> Note that Discordia is also presented as having serpentine hair (6.280–81).



the use of *saeva* to describe each of them, an adjective often employed, as we have seen, to emphasize forces hostile to Aeneas and Rome.<sup>49</sup>

Yet snakes are inseparable from Pallas even as she operates on the Roman side. The Pallas/Gorgon motif recurs in Book 8, where the Cyclopes carve the image of the Gorgon on the goddess's shield:<sup>50</sup>

aeqidaque horrifera, turbatae Palladis arma,  
certatim squamis serpentum auroque polibant  
conexosque anguis ipsamque in pectore diuae  
Gorgona desecto uertentem lumina collo. (8.435–38)

they were polishing eagerly the fearsome shield,  
the weapons of angry Pallas, with the scales of serpents and gold,  
and the entwined snakes, and on the goddess' breast  
the Gorgon herself, rolling her eyes in her severed head.

Pallas is here presented in all her frightening destructive power (see also Henry 1989: 99–100). Anger (*turbata*) is her main characteristic, reflected in the image of the Gorgon decorating her shield. This shield, able to turn into stone the goddess' enemies, is a reminder of the intensity of her wrath, the same wrath that had sent the twin snakes to devour Laocoon and his sons at Troy.

The images of Pallas as a deity of war associated with the powers of Hades form a sharp contrast to her role in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* as a rational, calm divinity who supports the justice of Zeus that puts an end to the cycle of violence. In the *Aeneid*, Pallas' linkage with the Dira emphasizes the notion that the divinities of Olympus are being taken over by the forces of anger and irrationality that dominate Hades. Pallas does not

<sup>49</sup> The adjective is widely used of the Furies: of the Harpy Celaeno (3.214–15), of Tisiphone's sisters (6.572), and of Allecto (7.329 and 511). On the use of *saevus* in the *Aeneid*, see Knox 1997.

<sup>50</sup> Furies and Gorgons had been perceived as kindred entities since the time of Aeschylus. In the prologue of *Eumenides*, the Pythia mistakes the Furies for Gorgons (48–52). At the end of *Choephoroi* (1048–50), Orestes makes the same comparison. Sommerstein (1989: 90) proposes that the impetus for the analogy comes from the fact that the Erinyes too, much like the Gorgons, were believed to have hideous faces and snakes for hair. In the *Aeneid*, Allecto is described as *Gorgoneis ... infecta uenenis* (7.341).

help to put an end to violence through the creation of a new institution, as she does in the *Oresteia*. The Dira embodies the angry, violent, and vengeful aspects of the goddess, which cause her to adopt and employ the tactics of Juno. We may thus say that the mobilization of a host of associations with Pallas at this moment both confirms that the *Oresteia* is an important backdrop against which we may read this episode and suggests that Jupiter himself is being transformed into a version of Juno.

## VII. RITUAL AND EMPIRE

Pallas' role in the Capitoline triad and Palladium is one of the many connections operative here between the endlessness of civil war and the endlessness of the Roman Empire promised by Jupiter in Book 1. The plotment of the divine within the context of ritual pollution and the ultimate appropriation of Jupiter's realm by that of Juno suggest that ritual pollution persists and that restoration is denied. Ritual restoration, however, is synonymous with peace and empire, while ritual pollution is a direct result of (civil) war. As the divinities of Olympus fall prey to the agents of Discordia, the endlessness of the Roman Empire is seriously undermined by the endlessness of violence, the repetition of civil war.

The association of the divine forces with ritual distortion is of tremendous importance in view of Augustus' religious reform and his zealous promotion and establishment of cults (Feeney 1991: 179). The realm of religious worship provided confirmation and support for Augustus' ideological claims. At the same time, however, it affords a space within which the articulation of dissent is possible (see Goff 2004: 10–11; Bell 1992: 197–223). The representation of the divine in the *Aeneid* explores precisely this space and thus plays out the polarities that make up the ideological fabric of the poem.

# GREEK TRAGEDY IN VERGIL'S "AENEID"

*Ritual, Empire, and Intertext*

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**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PA  
6825  
-P27  
2008

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press  
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521895224

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First published 2009

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Panoussi, Vassiliki, 1967-

Greek tragedy in Vergil's Aeneid: ritual, empire, and intertext / Vassiliki Panoussi.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-89522-4

1. Virgil. Aeneis. 2. Epic poetry, Latin - Greek influences. 3. Epic poetry, Latin -

History and criticism. I. Title.

PA6825.P27 2008

873'.01-dc22

2008030568

ISBN 978-0-521-89522-4 hardback

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