Re-reading Marlowe’s *Dido* and Its Influence

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For Christopher Marlowe: *quod me nutrit, id me esurientem relinquit.*
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Introduction

p. 1: beginning para 1 'The main aim of this thesis' to same para ending 'genre of Elizabethan tragedy'.
p. 2: beginning second para 'First, the performance' to same para ending 'as it is expressed in dramatic practice'.
p. 3: beginning para 1 'Critics differ, however' to p. 4 para 1 ending 'propels some Renaissance literary theory'.
p. 5: beginning top of page 'I argue that catharsis has' to end of same para ending 'or reversal of fortune'.
p. 5: beginning start para 2 'I re-read Dido as a serious academic exercise' to same para sentence ending 'kind of emotions tragedy is meant to move'.
p. 5: beginning bottom of page 'I discuss the effect of Dido's enactments' to p. 6 end of para 1 ending 'currency for Marlowe that has not yet been studied'.
p. 7: beginning para 3 'H. J. Oliver notes in his introduction' to p. 3 top of page para ending 'Dido was a 'box-office flop' (2004, 209)'.
p. 8: beginning para 2 after endnote 6 'I argue that Dido, Marlowe's box-office flop, prompted him' to p. 9 para 1 'from the theory that underpins Dido'.

Endnotes to be removed from Introduction: 1, 4, 7, 8

Chapter 1

p. 18: beginning para 3 'Early modern plays that mix comedy and tragedy' to p. 19 para 1 'outcomes of both texts are the same—Aeneas leaves and Dido dies'.
p. 22: beginning para 2 'According to Cheney, Dido is' to p. 23 end para 1 'from amatory love poetry to tragedy'.
p. 23: beginning para 2 'One concern is that Cheney's argument' to p. 24 end of para 1 'new sites of inquiry, not only for criticism of Dido'.
Delete all of section 1.2 (Catharsis Criticism) beginning p. 26 and ending p. 33

Endnotes to be deleted from Chapter 1: 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 23, 24,

Chapter 2

p. 43: section 2.1 beginning 'Dido's opening scene' to p. 49 para 1 ending 'remains true to Virgil's epic is the final analysis'.
p. 45: section 2.2 beginning 'When Marlowe's Aeneas leaves Dido, he explains' to p. 54 para 1 top of page ending 'a difference that is suitably Virgilian'.
p. 56: beginning para 2 'The kind of catharsis that Aeneas experiences' to p. 63 para 1 ending 'when the Outlet interpretation of catharsis begins to drive the Structural one'.
p. 64: beginning para 2 'While the Outlet interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas performs' to p. 65 final para ending 'to pursue the course mapped out for him by Virgil's epic'.
p. 73: beginning last para 'Dido, like Aeneas, responds emotionally' to p. 79 end of section 2.3 ending 'rather than Virgilian furore kills the Carthaginian queen'.
p. 91: beginning para 3 'We come now to the art of orchestration in Aeneas' narrative' to p. 96 end of chapter ending 'at least one of the emotions: 'proper to tragedy's specific pleasure'
Chapter 3
p. 117: beginning para 2 ‘Critics agree that *Aeneid* 1, 2, and 4 are the principle’ to p. 118 middle para 1 ending ‘about *Dido*, which opens up new sites of inquiry’
p. 121: all of para 1, beginning ‘This is not to say that *Dido’s* deployment’ to ‘than we have hitherto given them’
p. 122: beginning para 3 ‘*Aeneas*’ struggle with *pietas* is the backbone’ to p. 123 para 1 ending ‘the very point of the epic’s second half’

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p. 166: beginning para 1 ‘I suggest that *Dido’s* failure prompted Marlowe to re-consider’ to almost end of same para ending ‘in other literary theoretical texts of the period that defend tragedy’
p. 167: beginning section 4.2 ‘*Damascus* is the hometown of *Tamburlaine*’s’ to p. 169 end para 1 ending ‘antececedent text to show a theoretical difference from it’
p. 171: beginning para 2 ‘In *Tamburlaine’s* revision of *Dido*, *Zenocrate*’ to p. 177 para 1 ending ‘rather than restrict them, as does *Aeneas*’ performance of *catarurus*’
p. 178: beginning para 1 ‘*Zenocrate*’s lament fails to persuade even her maid’ to end of para 1 ‘the status of a rhetorical figure that does not work’
p. 179: beginning para 3 ‘*Tamburlaine* claims that the *Damascus* episode’ to p. 180 end of para 2 ending ‘Marlowe achieved a comic conclusion in *Tamburlaine*’
p. 188: beginning para 3 ‘*Tamburlaine’s* desire to *glat* himself’ to p. 189 end of para 1 ending ‘do the bloody spectacles’ of tragedy end’

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Conclusion
p. 214: beginning para 2 ‘George Hunter has traced the widening gap’ to same para ending ‘does not seem to exist in *Dido* but does in the *Tamburlaine* plays’
p. 219: beginning para 1 ‘In *Hamlet’s* opinion, the play was too intellectually’ to p. 221 para 1 ending ‘liberated aesthetic that the revision of *Dido’s* aesthetic enabled’

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Abstract

Over the last 30 years, a number of critics have sought to rescue Christopher Marlowe’s *Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage* from its status as an apprentice work. These attempts have produced two, equally dominant strands of criticism: the first attributes importance to the play’s comic elements; the second attributes importance to the influence of non-Virgilian traditions of the Dido and Aeneas story. Both critical strands find *Dido*’s treatment of the *Aeneid* largely incompatible with the idea that the play is a tragedy.

This thesis suggests an alternative, new approach to *Dido*, one that is based on re-reading the play in the light of the currency of Aristotle’s *Poetics* in the period. My main aim is to demonstrate that *Dido* is a serious exercise in generic transformation. I argue that the play enacts two interpretations of Aristotle’s theory of catharsis, the therapeutic and the structural, to “translate” the entire *Aeneid* as a tragedy and promote the authority of Virgil’s epic in the emerging genre of Elizabethan tragedy. The mobilization of these interpretations of catharsis works to construct an ideal audience for tragedy. Marlowe’s authorial aspiration, I suggest, is to overtake Virgil by attempting to end the *Aeneid*, which, in the period, was sometimes considered narratively incomplete. In the process of generic translation, *Dido* becomes a “modernized” *Poetics*, an English Renaissance tragedy that defends tragedy.

*Dido* appears to have been a box-office flop. How did Marlowe respond to the failure of his first play? The thesis examines Marlowe’s next plays, *Tamburlaine the Great 1 & 2*, in the light of *Dido*’s lack of success. I suggest that the failure of his first play prompted Marlowe to reconsider his aesthetic practice in the *Tamburlaine* plays, in particular the role that catharsis plays in *Dido*. The *Tamburlaine* plays revise the sense of
the tragic that *Dido* enacts, liberating Marlowe’s aesthetic from the theory that underpins his first play. In the conclusion, I track the influence of this liberated aesthetic in other Marlowe plays, and in *Hamlet*.

Critics agree that the *Tamburlaine* plays exemplify and enabled a new kind of tragedy in the period. I argue that the plays’ revision of *Dido* was crucial to the aesthetic that liberated the drama and audiences of early modern England from the restrictions that theories of tragedy’s function placed upon them both.

Re-reading *Dido* invites us to reconsider the place of Marlowe’s first play in early modern literary theorizing, and indeed, in the critical history of catharsis. Re-reading *Dido*’s influence invites us to reconsider the ways in which the play contributed to the Marlovian dramatic canon, and the nature and development of English Renaissance tragedy.
Statement

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Lucy Potter

November 2007
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Notes on the Text

1. Editions
   a. References from Christopher Marlowe’s plays are from editions for the Revels Plays.


      References are from act, scene, and line numbers, and are given parenthetically in the text: e.g. (2.1.35-40).

   b. References from the *Aeneid* are from G. P. Goold’s edition for the Loeb Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. References are from book and lines numbers, and are given parenthetically in the text: e.g. (2.89-95).

   c. References from Aristotle’s *Poetics* are from Ingram Bywater’s translation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909). References are cited by the page numbers in Bywater’s translation and given parenthetically in the text: e.g. (*Poetics* 29).

   d. References from Shakespeare’s plays are from the second edition of the *Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), and are given as for Marlowe’s plays in (a), above.

2. Spelling
   a. I use “Virgil” rather than “Vergil”.
   b. I use the anglicised spelling “catharsis” rather than “katharsis” to signify the modernization of the *Poetics* underway in *Dido*.
   c. I preserve original spelling in quotations.

3. Possessive Apostrophes
   a. *Classical names ending in –s*. Add the apostrophe after the –s: e.g. “the quest of Aeneas” = “Aeneas’ quest”.
   b. *Modern names of one syllable ending in –s*. Add the apostrophe after the –s and an additional “s”: e.g. “the argument by Deats” = “Deats’s argument”.
   c. *Modern names of two syllables ending in –s*. Add the apostrophe after the –s: e.g. “the claim by Bowers” = “Bowers’ claim”.
   d. I preserve original use of possessive apostrophes in quotations.
Christopher Marlowe’s *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage* is a crucial witness to the development of Renaissance literary theory. The main aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that *Dido* enacts certain possibilities in Aristotle’s *Poetics* in order to revise Virgil’s *Aeneid* as a tragedy. Chief among the possibilities that the *Poetics* offers is the idea of catharsis. I argue that *Dido* stages catharsis, thereby revealing Marlowe’s knowledge of the *Poetics* and exposing *Dido* as a text engaged in the literary theorizing of the period. *Dido* is a tragedy about making tragedy, one that stages dramatic theory as dramatic practice for the purpose of promoting the authority of Virgil’s epic in the emerging genre of Elizabethan tragedy. In some Renaissance arguments, Virgil left the *Aeneid* narratively incomplete. In revising the *Aeneid* as *Dido*, Marlowe endeavours to overtake Virgil by achieving the closure the classical poet did not; *Dido* deploys tragedy in an attempt to “end” the epic. The revising process is a dynamic one that gives a contemporary currency to both the *Poetics* and the *Aeneid*. In particular, *Dido* “modernizes” the Aristotelian treatise in which catharsis first appeared as a literary critical term.¹ I suggest *Dido* is an English Renaissance tragedy that enacts catharsis to defend tragedy. Marlowe preserves the message of the *Aeneid* in *Dido*, and uses the *Poetics* to surpass Virgil and his epic through an engagement with Aristotle’s idea of the “better poet” (*Poetics* 39). In the course of generically revising Virgil’s epic, *Dido* engages with more of
the *Aeneid* than is currently thought to be the case. The aesthetic that underpins *Dido*

influences other Marlowe plays and other plays of the period, as we shall see.

The Marlovian project of using the *Poetics* to revise the *Aeneid* as *The Tragedy of* 

*Dido, Queen of Carthage* has not been adequately recognised, and it is important for a 

number of reasons. First, the performance of catharsis in *Dido* identifies the play as a text 

engaged in the debate about what catharsis means, adding more weight to the role of the 

drama and the dramatist in our discussions of the literary theory of the period, and of the 

critical history of catharsis. Second, Marlowe’s use of catharsis to promote the authority of 

Virgil’s epic offers a new perspective on where *Dido* stands in the contest of opposing 

traditions of the Dido and Aeneas story available to Marlowe. It also offers new arguments 

about the thematic, generic, and artistic possibilities that Virgil’s entire epic affords 

Marlowe. Third, the staging of catharsis affects our conception of tragedy as a “masculine” 

genre, asking us to re-examine the position of the category of woman in the dramatic 

theory of the period as it is expressed as dramatic practice. Fourth, *Dido*’s influence over 

other plays of the period, by Marlowe and others, calls for a re-evaluation of its importance 

to the Marlovian dramatic canon, the development of English Renaissance tragedy, and the 

literary theorizing of the period.

Our basic information about the play comes from the first edition of *Dido*, which 
gives a printing date (1594), the auspices of its performance (by the Children of Her 

Majesty’s Chapel), two authors (Marlowe with the help of Nashe), and a genre (tragedy). 

Of these, the auspices of the play’s performance are rarely questioned, although Norman 

Rabkin has suggested a first performance at Norwich or Ipswich (xx), and Donald Stump 

an original audience of Marlowe’s student peers at Cambridge (87-88). These arguments 

have not affected the general view that *Dido* was first performed for a “private,” educated 

audience, “either at Blackfriars or at court” (Oliver xxx), by a company of boy players.
Nashe’s part in the production of *Dido*, according to Thomas Merrian (425-28), is in the play’s second half, but his view is not the common one. Most critics find Nashe’s role to be the ancillary one that Philip Henderson takes it to have been: there are “few discernible traces of [Nashe’s] handiwork, which may have been confined to preparing the play for the press” (82).² As far as the play’s date is concerned, T. M. Pearce has argued for a date of 1591 based on Marlowe’s “knowledge of stagecraft” and similarities between *Dido* and Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (1959, 233, 239-47). Henderson has suggested an early date of original composition and a later revision. In his argument, *Dido* was written between 1586-87 and revised between 1592-93 (80). Despite these challenges, modern editors and most critics agree that *Dido* is Marlowe’s first play, written while he was at Cambridge sometime between 1584 and 1587.³ Critics differ, however, in their opinions about what kind of play *Dido* is. For example, Jackson I. Cope has labelled *Dido* a “fine farce” (316), Patrick Cheney has analysed it as an “Ovidian tragedy” (1997, 26, 99-114), Rick Bowers has called it an “impious classical drama” (95), and Troni Grande has defined it as a tragedy of “dilation” (73-109). Disagreements about whether *Dido* is a comedy, a tragedy, or something else are most often based on what Marlowe does, or does not do, with the *Aeneid*. My analysis will show that *Dido*’s genre depends on catharsis and other theories in the *Poetics*, which Marlowe uses to revise the *Aeneid* as a tragedy.

According to most critics, *Aeneid* 1, 2, and 4 are the primary source of *Dido*’s narrative. Marlowe’s play also embellishes Virgil’s text, sometimes in ways that appear to flout the high seriousness of the *Aeneid*. Examples include the play’s opening and closing scenes, and the Nurse scene in 4.5. Marlowe’s handling of the *Aeneid* in *Dido* has led on the one hand to a strong critical tradition that promotes the play’s comic and satiric elements, and on the other, to an alternative but equally strong strand of criticism that mobilizes the so-called rival tradition, which challenges Virgil’s representation of the Dido
and Aeneas story to account for Marlowe’s departures from the *Aeneid*. Critics find the origin of the rival tradition in Ovid’s *Heroides* 7, and its development in the medieval period in texts such as Lydgate’s *Troy Book* and *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*. Texts in this rival tradition paint a far less flattering portrait of Aeneas than Virgil does, putting the Trojan on trial “for his tricherie” (*Sir Gawain* 4), that is, for his betrayal of Troy and, particularly in Ovid, of Dido. These texts stand against others that advance the authority of Virgil’s epic in the period. Some examples are the four translations of the *Aeneid* in the 1550s—by Gavin Douglas (1553), Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey (1557), Thomas Phaer (1558) and Richard Stanyhurst (1558)—and the “Virgil worship” (Atkins 32) that propels some Renaissance literary theory.4

Chapter 1 establishes the critical contexts for my analysis of *Dido*. In the first section of this chapter, I trace the two strands of *Dido* criticism, position my own arguments in relation to them, and justify my approach to *Dido* as a tragedy in light of the humour that the play produces. The two strands of criticism have done much to “rescue” *Dido* from what Sara Deats calls its “status of Marlowe’s juvenilia” (1997, 89-90). The practice of rescuing *Dido* has assigned importance to the play’s comic elements, and the influence of non-Virgilian traditions of the Dido and Aeneas story. Putting it another way, the two strands of criticism foreground what appears un-Virgilian about *Dido*. Yet the dramatic embellishments of the *Aeneid* do not change the final shape of Virgil’s epic: Aeneas leaves Dido and *Dido* to “find out Italy” (4.3.56), and the Carthaginian queen dies. I intend to further the rescue of *Dido* in a new way—by foregrounding the play’s fidelity to its epic source text, and by demonstrating that catharsis is at the heart of the play’s revisionist project.

The second section of Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical context in which to consider the interpretations of catharsis that inform *Dido*, and evaluate the play’s
contributions to sixteenth-century debates about tragedy. I argue that catharsis has two meanings in *Dido* that engage with many of the questions about the function of tragedy being discussed at the time, predominantly in Italy, but which are nevertheless unique in the period. Indeed, the kinds of catharsis that *Dido* stages seem anachronistically modern in many ways. *Dido* performs catharsis first as a therapeutic response to tragedy but without the ethical dimension that normally attends it in the theory of the period, and second, as a structural device that is closely linked to *peripeteia*, or reversal of fortune.

In Chapter 2, I re-read *Dido* as a serious academic exercise that deploys the *Poetics* to revise the *Aeneid* as a tragedy. The two interpretations of catharsis that *Dido* enacts are the focus of the discussion. In his long narrative about the fall of Troy and its effects, Aeneas performs the therapeutic interpretation of catharsis for aesthetic rather than ethical reasons. I discuss the ways in which the therapeutic interpretation of catharsis drives the play’s enactment of the structural interpretation, aligning *Dido* with the *Aeneid*. We shall see that Aeneas’ catharsis affects more than his fortunes; it affects Dido’s as well. Most important, the play’s enactments of catharsis embody tragedy in the Carthaginian queen, constructing a tragic Dido in contrast to an epic Aeneas. I also track the play’s engagement with possibilities in the *Poetics* other than catharsis, and with questions about the function of tragedy being discussed in the Italian literary theory of the period, such as the kinds of emotions tragedy is meant to move. To evidence my argument that the play is a faithful revision of Virgil’s epic, I match *Dido* with elements of *Aeneid* 1-4, including Virgil’s ecphrasis of the mural in the temple of Juno in Book 1 (446-93). *Dido* is a witness to the development of Renaissance ideas about ecphrasis as well as catharsis. Many of *Dido*’s similarities to *Aeneid* 1-4 are yet to be noted. In the last section of Chapter 2, I discuss the effect of *Dido*’s enactments of catharsis on the play’s audience. *Dido* positions its audience as an “ideal” audience for tragedy by drawing upon aspects of the ancient debate between
Plato and Aristotle about the genre. In this way, *Dido* comes into view as a modernized *Poetics*, a tragedy that defends tragedy. The play’s enactments of catharsis suggest that Aristotle’s treatise, and its recovery and exegesis by Italian critics and poets, had a currency for Marlowe that has not yet been studied.

Chapter 3 reveals *Dido’s* engagement with the entire *Aeneid*, and at deeper levels of composition than I propose in Chapter 2. I make apparent the many opportunities that Virgil’s epic offered Marlowe, structurally, rhetorically, artistically, and professionally. I propose that *Dido* is a hybrid genre—a “tragic epic”—that has its practical origins in the *Aeneid* and its theoretical origins in the *Poetics*. The focus is some of the more problematic elements in Virgil’s epic, such as Aeneas’ wrath and his effeminization. These are examples of what we might call the un-Virgilian moments in the *Aeneid*. Existing criticism of *Dido* has not taken the problematic elements of the *Aeneid* into account. My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate that there is room for Virgil in our discussions about what seems un-Virgilian about *Dido*, opening up new sites of inquiry. I argue that *Dido* is a “translation” of the *Aeneid* in which Books 1-4 work as a synecdoche for the entire epic. Then I discuss Dido’s haunting presence throughout the *Aeneid*—literally, thematically, and substitutionally in the character of Turnus—and the argument, common in the period, that Virgil left the *Aeneid* narratively incomplete. I explore the possibility that Virgil’s representation of Turnus-as-Dido provided Marlowe with the opportunity to deploy catharsis as a means of ending the *Aeneid*. By deploying catharsis to end Virgil’s epic, Marlowe follows the logic implied in Aristotle’s description of what the “better poet” would do. This logical outworking of Aristotle’s poetic prejudices is made possible by the genre Marlowe is working with—tragedy.

The uses to which *Dido* puts the *Aeneid* negotiate Elizabeth I’s manipulation of Virgil’s text to support and promote her authority. I do consider these transactions, in *Dido*
and other plays by Marlowe, but they are always a subsidiary focus in my aim of revealing the contributions that *Dido* in particular makes, in practice, to the period’s theoretical debates about tragedy.

In chapters 2 and 3, I attribute a great deal of scholarly energy to Marlowe. In doing so, my arguments agree with the critical orthodoxy that ascribes to Marlowe a very high order of intellectual “over-reaching.” I use this vehicle to demonstrate that *Dido* approaches the *Poetics* and the entire *Aeneid* for the opportunities that both classical texts offer. *Dido*’s engagements with Aristotle’s and Virgil’s texts draw attention to the capaciousness of Renaissance drama—its ability to accommodate multiple genres—and to the *Poetics* and the *Aeneid* as enabling texts in the creation of new genres. It will become clear that the Renaissance practice of *translatio*, or adaptation, and the *Aeneid’s* intertextuality endorse the scholarly energy that Marlowe exercises in *Dido*, and his authorial aspiration to overtake Virgil.

This is not to suggest that *Dido* achieved the goals I have proposed. It is more likely, as Roma Gill has argued, that Marlowe “takes up the challenge” of accommodating *Dido* to the *Aeneid* but “aims too high” and is “not wholly successful” (1977, 145). Indeed, *Dido* appears to have been poorly received by its original, educated audience. H. J. Oliver notes in his introduction to the Revels edition that there are “no surviving records of any one performance of *Dido* by the Children of the Royal Chapel” (xxxii). Moreover, if *Dido* is the play to which Henslowe refers in two entries in his *Diary* for 1598, then the performances he is referring to “would have been revivals, and revivals by an adult company of a play not originally written for them” (Oliver xxxi-xxxii). Hardly glowing reviews. Anecdotal evidence in *Hamlet*, in an “almost certain allusion” to *Dido* (Oliver xxxii), also suggests that it was poorly received by its audience. In Hamlet’s opinion, *Dido* “pleas’d not the million” because “’twas caviary to the general,” that is, too choice for the
multitude (2.2.436-37). As Richard Wilson puts it, *Dido* was a “box-office flop” (2004, 209).

Marlowe’s reputation as an emerging playwright was obviously at stake with *Dido*. How did he respond to the failure of his first play? In Chapter 4, I consider the *Tamburlaine* plays in the light of *Dido*’s lack of success. Authorial intention is worth attending to in the *Tamburlaine* plays, despite its disrepute in some critical circles, because of the Prologues to both parts. In Part 1’s Prologue, Marlowe tells us he has written a play like nothing that has gone before, and in Part 2’s Prologue, he informs us that the success of Part 1 led him to write a sequel. Indeed, there is a consensus among critics that the *Tamburlaine* plays self-consciously reveal authorial intention. I argue that *Dido*, Marlowe’s box-office flop, prompted him to re-consider his aesthetic practice. We shall see that the *Tamburlaine* plays revise *Dido*, including some of its action, the Aristotelian theory that informs it, and its promotion of the *Aeneid*. Most important, the *Tamburlaine* plays revise the role that catharsis plays in *Dido*. The focus of my analysis of Part 1 is the Damascus episode in Act 5, in particular Zenocrate’s lament for the tableau of slaughtered bodies. Analysis of the lament, and of rival interpretations of the scene from Anippe and then Tamburlaine, reveals that the Damascus episode questions the efficacy of catharsis. The kind of catharsis Part 1 questions is not the same as the interpretations that *Dido* enacts. It is the didactic kind theorized in the period by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry*, the kind that features in the “high and excellent Tragedy” which “teacheth the uncertainty of this world” (117, 34; 118, 2). Zenocrate’s lament in the Damascus episode gives voice to Sidney’s didactic catharsis and yet implicitly challenges it. This paves the way for Anippe’s and Tamburlaine’s interpretations, which undermine the Sidneian theory that Zenocrate expresses in her lament. Tamburlaine’s interpretation in particular has ramifications for the genre of Part 1.
Marlowe takes up the issue of catharsis again in *2 Tamburlaine*, and puts it to work in ways that challenge the function it has in *Dido* and in Sidney’s defence of tragedy. Zenocrate’s death and Tamburlaine’s treatment of her body are the focus of my analysis of Part 2. I argue that the dead Zenocrate becomes the catalyst to the tragic violence that her lament attempts to manage as tragedy in Part 1. In addition, Tamburlaine metaphorically consumes catharsis, in the form of Zenocrate’s dead body, before he dies. This act decisively liberates Marlowe’s aesthetic from the theory that underpins *Dido*. In the analysis of Part 2, I argue that the play also challenges *Dido*’s promotion of the *Aeneid*. Tamburlaine’s murder of his eldest son, Calyphas (4.1.120), is the most important evidence of the anti-epic narrative that *2 Tamburlaine* builds. The chapter concludes with a consideration of Part 2 as a metatheatrical text that opposes *Dido*’s achievement as both a modernized *Poetics* and a faithful translation of the entire *Aeneid*.

*1 Tamburlaine* was an “immediate theatrical success” according to Cunningham, the editor of the Revels edition (1). *2 Tamburlaine*, according to Thomas Cartelli, seems to have been even more successful than Part 1 (69). This means that an aesthetic liberated from the theory that underpins *Dido* proved a winning formula for commercially successful plays. In the conclusion to the thesis, I touch upon some of Marlowe’s play in which the impact of this aesthetic can be felt—*Edward the Second*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *The Massacre at Paris*—and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Marlovian plays bear witness to a growing gap between theories of tragedy’s function and the practice of tragedy, while *Hamlet* reflects upon *Dido* and its lack of success.

There are also areas of investigation apart from early modern English drama to which the discoveries I make in this thesis contribute. The place of *Dido* in the critical history of catharsis is, to my mind, high on the list of these areas. The thesis concludes with a discussion that locates the two interpretations of catharsis that *Dido* enacts in the
critical history of the term. In addition, I raise the possibility that *Dido* offers another, uniquely sixteenth-century kind of catharsis, what we might call “ecphrastic catharsis.” This possibility invites us to re-consider *Dido* and its influence in the Aristotelian and Virgilian contexts in which the play evolved.
The idea of “modernizing” the Poetics is borrowed from Daniel Javitch’s work on sixteenth-century editions and commentaries of Aristotle’s treatise by Italian literary theorists (1998, 139).

Laurie Maguire cites Merrian to promote her argument that all of Marlowe’s plays involve collaborators (44). H. J. Oliver, in his edition of Dido for the Revels plays, weighs up evidence for and against Nashe’s hand, eventually finding that Marlowe is responsible for a larger share of the writing, adding the qualification that when he uses the name “Marlowe,” he is referring to “the author or authors of the play, whoever he or they may have been at this point” (xx-xxv).

For a review of arguments about the play’s date, see Oliver’s introduction xxv-xxx.

The list of English translations of the Aeneid is from an Appendix to Mary Elizabeth Smith’s “Love Kindling Fire” (175). The same Appendix gives a useful history of the Dido and Aeneas story, in England and elsewhere (174-75). While Marlowe most likely knew these translations, there is no indication that they exerted any significant influence on Dido. See Oliver xxxiv-xxxcv, Thomas and Tydeman 18-19, and Gill (1977) 141.

The foundation of this critical orthodoxy is Harry Levin’s influential 1953 study, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (reprint 1961). The “unifying key” to Levin’s arguments is the Marlovian hyperbole. In his view, the “very element of exaggeration that characterizes Marlowe’s technique and outlook lends his writing its exemplary quality” (15). The classical figure of Icarus is, for Levin, a kind of simile for Marlowe.
Richard Levin nurtured this critical consensus with the publication of “The Contemporary Perception of Marlowe’s Tamburlaine” in 1984. Levin’s aim was that of determining “the attitude which Marlowe intended to evoke toward [Tamburlaine] in the play itself” (51; emphasis in original). To accomplish his aim, Levin examines a number of contemporary responses to 1 Tamburlaine in particular that were collected some sixty years earlier by C. F. Tucker Brooke in his essay “The Reputation of Christopher Marlowe.” More recent examples of work on authorial intention in the Tamburlaine plays include Marjorie Garber’s and Richard Schoch’s analyses of the contest between the playwright and his protagonist for mastery of the stage (respectively, “‘Here’s Nothing Writ’” and “Tamburlaine and the Control of Performative Playing”). Garber and Schoch agree that Marlowe wins the contest in both parts of the play (Garber 302-03, 308; Schoch 6, 8-10).


Cartelli’s assertion is based on the following evidence: “The recorded receipts for performances of 2 Tamburlaine are greater than those for performances of 1 Tamburlaine in four of five instances when the plays were performed consecutively” (212n).
Chapter 1

_Dido_ and Catharsis: Critical Contexts

1.1: _Dido_ Criticism

_Dido_ is “perhaps Marlowe’s best piece of total theater,” and yet we have relegated it to the “status of apprentice work” (316). So argued Jackson I. Cope in “Marlowe’s _Dido_ and the Titillating Children,” which was published in 1974. _Dido_ is worthy of serious consideration, and in this thesis, I attempt to raise the play’s status from that of apprentice work. It is not the first such attempt; as we shall see in this section, a number of critics have attempted to bring _Dido_ out of its “quiet corner” in criticism since the publication of Cope’s essay (Martin 1980, 45). The practice of giving _Dido_ some time in the spotlight has gathered momentum in the last 10 years, and two dominant strands of criticism have formed. The first strand concentrates on the play’s comic and satiric elements, and the second on the Ovidian influence on _Dido_. These critical strands share a common goal, which is to raise our appreciation of Marlowe’s achievement in _Dido_ by accounting for the play’s embellishments of the _Aeneid_. The aim of this thesis is to raise appreciation of _Dido_ by taking a different path. I attribute importance to _Dido_ as a theoretical text that deals faithfully with the _Aeneid_ as the play goes about its serious business of generically revising epic as tragedy. The following survey of criticism is crucial to an appreciation of why my reading of _Dido_ is new. I will examine the work of six critics in particular, three each from the two strands of criticism. The work of Cope, Donald Stump, and Rick Bowers is representative of the tradition of examining the play’s comic and satiric elements, and that
of Troni Grande, Patrick Cheney, and Sara Deats, of the tradition of focusing on the Ovidian influence.

Cope’s analysis of *Dido* as production rather than poem leads him to argue that the play’s performance by boy players makes it a “reflexive satire . . . upon the children’s theater itself” (318). Combined with Marlowe’s “several additions to the Vergilian narrative,” the play’s particular dramaturgy turns it from the tragedy announced in its title into “fine farce” (317, 316). Cope notes and then adds to the work of Harry Levin, Clifford Leech, and Don Cameron Allen on the humour *Dido* produces (316).

The comic elements Cope discovers in *Dido* do not fight against Marlowe’s “serious adaptation (in many long passages a close translation) of Vergil” (317). Rather, their coexistence is the very point of the play because it allows Marlowe to “mirror” in it “the psyche’s pleasure in hosting conflicting systems, mutually irreverent senses of the nature of things” (316). The educated audience of the private theatre for which *Dido* was designed is important, for without it, Marlowe could not “exploit the self-conscious theatrical situation vectored by sexually romantic love matter, a literate adult audience, and the little boy players” (317). While Cope’s analysis accommodates *Dido* to the *Aeneid* via the dramaturgy the play’s title page announces, it does not do the same for the tragedy likewise announced. To view *Dido* as tragedy “would be to deny the theatrical game [Marlowe] has been playing with the children” according to Cope (324). Thus, although the Carthaginian queen is awarded a Virgilian dignity by mouthing the original Latin before she dies, saving the denouement from being a travesty of the *Aeneid*, the suicides of Iarbus and Anna conclude what Marlowe “had teasingly promised all along: a silly story hastily superimposed upon the realities of passionate love and death” (324-25).

Cope’s essay is a landmark in the critical literature about *Dido*. His reading of the play stands in stark contrast to much of the previous work on this play, which usually
dismisses it as a minor work or considers it a kind of training ground, “a preliminary to Marlowe’s real work” (Ellis-Fermor 22). Cope’s essay is among the first to argue that Dido has been critically neglected and does something about it by focusing on the play’s dramatic transformation of its epic source text, and by approaching Dido independently of other plays in the Marlovian canon. Nevertheless, although Cope allows Dido to stand on its own terms, those terms do not include tragedy. His essay thereby becomes a landmark in criticism of Dido for another reason because it suggests that approaching Dido as a tragedy is incompatible with the ways in which the play embellishes the Aeneid. As I will demonstrate, however, Dido is in fact a close revision of Virgil’s epic as a tragedy.

Many critics have followed Cope’s lead in examining the comic elements in Dido but not all of them have found the play’s “additions” to the Aeneid as amusing as Cope does. Mary Smith, for example, thinks that Dido is the kind of “savage comedy” that T. S. Eliot thought The Jew of Malta to be (Smith 1977a, 190; Eliot 64). Nor do the critics who pay homage to Cope’s promotion of the comic and satiric elements in Dido necessarily heed his call to raise the critical status of this play because of them. Donald Stump’s essay, “Marlowe’s Travesty of Virgil: Dido and Elizabethan Dreams of Empire,” is a case in point.

Stump’s reading of Dido is everywhere informed by the play as not-the-Aeneid. His analysis of the play is both an extension of Cope’s arguments and a refutation of them. For Stump, Dido is exactly the “travesty” that it is not for Cope; the play is a “sustained deflation” of Virgil’s epic that fulfils Marlowe’s “overriding aim . . . to make a laughing stock of the Aeneid” (82-83). The evidence Stump finds to support his assertion “extends to virtually every scene of the play” (83). He gives readers a comprehensive list of Marlowe’s “most ridiculous or grotesque departures from the Aeneid” (83), and discusses some of the “sly parodies” of Virgil that Cope misses (84-87). The extent of Stump’s
evidence leads him to agree with Patrick Cheney that by embellishing the *Aeneid*, Marlowe “was consciously setting himself up as a skeptical critic of, and rival to, the greatest of the Elizabethan poets of empire, Edmund Spenser” (87). From the premise that *Dido* is not the *Aeneid*, Stump makes the following arguments about the play’s date and performance history: Marlowe produced a draft of *Dido* as early as 1581 and later revised it for the performance by the company of boys that modern editors have used to date the play between 1584 and 1587; *Dido* was first staged for an audience of Marlowe’s student peers in an “unsanctioned performance” at Cambridge (87-88). Stump admits these arguments are based on “circumstantial evidence” (89). All the same, they are the foundation for his major argument that *Dido* is a political satire on Elizabeth’s “fruitless [marriage] negotiations with foreign princes like Anjou,” and on “her endless dalliances with favorites like Leicester” (91). In the expanded role that Marlowe gives Iarbus, Stump infers the Earl of Leicester’s behaviour in a “double game” with the Elizabeth-Anjou courtship and, in the Marlovian Aeneas’ narrative about the fall of Troy, Stump finds an allusion to Anjou’s spectator role in the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre (89-90). According to Stump, Marlowe’s Aeneas is based on Anjou because both are duplicitous, treacherous and incompetent (90). Further, both Marlowe’s Aeneas and the less fictional Anjou “suffer through a storm” that delays their arrival and both are “hardly recognizable” before their various queens (90). In Stump’s analysis, all elements of *Dido* are “departures” from Virgil’s epic rather than the “additions” to it that Cope finds. There is no “superimposing” for Stump as there is for Cope. Only the “silly story” noted by Cope remains for Stump, punctuated by scenes of a “lurid and boyishly sadistic sort” (88). In Stump’s argument, if *Dido* is not the *Aeneid* then it cannot be tragedy.

To my mind, Stump’s reading of *Dido* amounts to little more than an attack on the play’s treatment of the *Aeneid* from a “lover of Virgil” (85). As such, it might tell us
something about Stump’s passion for the epic but it brings us no closer to answering why Marlowe chose to embellish the Dido and Aeneas story as Virgil tells it. Stump’s essay simply rejects what Marlowe does in comparison to the *Aeneid*. I will argue that *Dido* departs from the *Aeneid* only to return to it and promote its authority. We shall see that the play revises more of Virgil’s epic than is currently thought to be the case, and that the revising, and the invention, is endorsed by the *Aeneid* and the Renaissance practice of translation.

Not all critics who advance *Dido* as a purposeful spoof on a famous classical story are as dogmatic as Stump. Rick Bowers’ highly entertaining essay, “Hysterics, High Camp, and *Dido, Queen of Carthage,*” purports to minimize the Virgilian context that drives many readings of *Dido*, instead analysing the play as “play” (95). According to Bowers, *Dido* is Marlowe’s “satirical reaction” to the circulation of classical texts about the Troy legend—and not just Virgil’s—in the university curriculum (96). Hence, *Dido* stages an “already translated, recycled, and over-rehearsed classical story” that “desublimates the classical tale as moral truth and effectively assassinates it through a camp theatrical style” (97). Bowers reads Dido’s conclusion of Aeneas’ narrative about the fall of Troy through Slavoj Žižek’s and Elaine Showalter’s work, identifying a “split between demand and desire” that defines both dramatic characters as hysterical subjects (99-100). *Dido* enacts their story through a theatrical style that is “camp” according to Susan Sontag’s definition of the term as “a variant of sophistication linked to artifice and exaggeration,” one that “communicates its very being in terms of role-play” (96). According to Bowers, the play’s camp theatrical style climaxes in Marlowe’s reiteration of Virgil’s Latin in Act 5, scene 1 (136-40):

> the Latin words of Dido and Aeneas rocket them into a theatrical higher key. Their words are literally italicized as Latin and figuratively italicized as camp—in their passion the lovers hit the high operatic notes of hysteria. (103)
As one of the “declassifying strategies that empties the play of its classical stature,” Marlowe’s repetition of Virgil replaces the *Aeneid* and other classical texts about the Troy legend with an “academic lampoon” (103, 104). Part of Bowers’ strategy is to let the play’s excessiveness—everything ranging from the characters’ behaviour to Marlowe’s use of hyperbole (101)—remain at “play.” Bowers appropriately includes some comments about a 1998 student performance of *Dido* at Cambridge, in the quadrangle overlooked by Marlowe’s room at Corpus Christi College. In Bowers’ view, the production “combined absurdity, camp, and under-rehearsed glee to perform a flouncingly successful *Dido* that milked every line for laughs” (104).

I was in the audience of this production and, with others, found some scenes, notably the triple suicide, strangely serious in comparison to other aspects of the performance that certainly produced some very funny moments. Not every line in *Dido* lends itself to being milked for laughs. What the production brought home for me was *Dido*’s capacity to engage multiple genres. Bowers’ essay is an eloquent and entertaining tribute to the play as one that produces a good deal of humour. Yet *Dido* can also create moments of palpable pathos.

Early modern plays that mix comedy and tragedy are not unusual or necessarily problematic because of it. Indeed, Sir Philip Sidney could complain about “mongrel tragi-comedy” as an issue of decorum only because it must have been practiced (135, 36). In the early modern period, comedy is that which ends well, or happily, rather than necessarily producing laughter. Deploying the term brings into the discussion what is sometimes our commitment to generic purity. Catherine Belsey noted the pitfalls of “our commitment to our classifications” some time ago (1981, 168), and Stephen Orgel has argued that unmixed genres are neither a theoretical imperative nor a dramatic practice in the plays of
the period. He has claimed that “comedy had its place as an adjunct to tragedy, necessary but nevertheless dependent”:

There is a generic truth in this: the tragic purgation of the state and the spirit and the reassertion of norms that is the end of tragedy leave us in the world of comedy. Tragedy is what makes comedy possible—or, putting it another way, comedy is the end of tragedy—and the Renaissance liked to emphasize this aspect of tragedy by concluding its tragedies with jigs. (2002, 156)

_Dido_ may well create comedy in the sense Orgel defines here, as well as produce humour, but this does not mean it is not a tragedy. Neither do Marlowe’s embellishments of the _Aeneid_ provide enough evidence to argue that _Dido_ subverts the authority of Virgil, especially since the outcomes of both texts are the same—Aeneas leaves and Dido dies. I have already stated my intention to demonstrate that _Dido_ faithfully revises the _Aeneid_ as a tragedy. I will also argue that _1 Tamburlaine_, by revising _Dido_’s aesthetic framework, reveals the kind of necessary relationship between tragedy and comedy that Orgel has found.

We turn now to the second strand of criticism of _Dido_, which seeks to account for the play’s treatment of the _Aeneid_ by mobilizing the so-called rival tradition. The rival tradition challenges Virgil’s representation of the Dido and Aeneas story. This tradition has its origins in Ovid, especially _Heroides 7_. Douglas Cole has noted the Ovidian influence. In his view, “_Dido_, then, treats both the tragedy and the comedy of love, in which the ironic sense plays an essential and central role; though the matter is Virgilian, the spirit is Ovid’s” (85). A number of critics have followed Cole’s lead, such as Richard Martin, who uses the Ovidian influence to preface his arguments about Marlowe’s “shaping” of “conflicting epic and lyric modes … into a dialectic that was incompatible with the tragic dramaturgy of [Marlowe’s] time and that demanded a broader understanding of tragic guilt” (1980, 46). In addition, W. Craig Turner uses the Ovidian influence in his arguments about “perverse” and “destructive” passions in the play (3, 5), and Matthew Proser
mentions it to begin his examination of Dido’s structural sophistication (85, 88). Mary Smith also discusses the Ovidian influence (1977b, 103, 145); it has informed the work of Sara Deats for more than ten years, finding its fullest treatment in her chapter on Dido in Sex, Gender, and Desire; and it has led Patrick Cheney to argue that Dido is an example of a lost genre, “Ovidian tragedy” (1997, 26, 99-114). The influence of Ovid alongside, or in spite of Virgil routinely qualifies criticism of Dido’s serious elements.

In Troni Grande’s examination of Dido as a “play of dilation,” she argues that the Ovidian influence is a factor insofar as Marlowe “skews Virgil’s Latin epic in the direction of vernacular drama” but “tragedy finally dictates the triumph of the original text” (73). Her interpretation of the presence of Virgil’s Latin in the play therefore produces a significantly different reading from that of Bowers. Grande argues that “The conclusive use of Latin in Dido signals the victory of epic forces of (public) history over the dilatory impulse of (private) romance” (75). The dramatic Aeneas’ reiteration of Virgil shows that he finally “learns (as an epic hero must) to speak the authoritative language of the father” (77). The dramatic Dido also speaks Virgil’s Latin, “lend[ing] a dignity and solemnity to [her] suicide” that complements Virgil’s portrait (94). While the “‘sweet delite’ of Ovid” haunts Dido, it is part of the playwright’s strategy to “evolve the readers’ expectations of the tragic end only to defer them, dilating the moment of pleasure so the protagonists can dally before the ‘law’ of tragedy” that will eventually “cut [them] down and mete out an orthodox retribution” (20, 13, 16). For Grande, Marlovian tragedy postpones “the already known, always expected end,” producing a “double-edged pleasure” for the audience as the tragic protagonists act in “a space of dalliance, wantonness, or release” before they die, as they must and as the audience expects them to (21, 16). The Ovidian behaviour of Marlowe’s Jupiter exists in this dilatory space, as a prefiguration of the dalliance and delay that characterizes Dido and Aeneas’ relationship before the Virgilian text exerts its
authority through Latin, Aeneas’ departure, and Dido’s death (87-91). Grande evokes the Ovidian influence to help explain the relevance of the play’s opening scene but not the suicides of Anna and Iarbus. These deaths are Marlowe’s invention, his final word in the battle that Dido has staged all along between strict translation and imitation of the classics, and the rewriting of classical stories in the vernacular (79-80). Hence, according to Grande, the triple suicide denotes “a final one-upmanship of Virgil not only by extending and exaggerating the narrative, but also by doing so in the vernacular” (94).

Grande’s work contextualizes Dido in terms of Renaissance attitudes to the translation of classical texts, reminding us of the difference between transcriptio—“strict word-for-word translation”—and translatio—“adaptation” (100). Grande reads Dido against the backdrop of “writerly invention . . . understood in its rhetorical sense as a new arrangement of what has been previously known, rather than . . . as an original discovery of the yet unknown” (80). Because “all forms of writing to a Renaissance mind appear in the light of ‘translation,’ since even ‘original’ compositions in the vernacular invariably refer back to a prior narrative source,” the “anxiety of influence” so thoroughly discussed by Harold Bloom is irrelevant to Dido because “Marlowe acknowledges and accepts his close relationship with his sources” (80-81). Grande gathers support from Brian Duffy for the argument that the “ambivalence towards these sources” which Marlowe displays is “inherent in the very exercise of Renaissance translation” (81):

Translation, the method by which the vernaculars are most often tested against the expressive power of the classical languages, is at once a recognition of the superior position of the antecedent literary culture and a refusal to capitulate to it. (qtd. in Grande 81).

In the final analysis, Grande proposes that Dido is a tragedy because, eventually, the protagonist dies. This promotes an argument about Dido as a de casibus tragedy, a specific kind of tragedy in which, as Madeleine Doran has noted, “death is a sufficiently tragic fact” (119).
My work on Dido’s revision of the Aeneid is indebted to the points Grande makes about the Renaissance practice of translation, as will become clear in Chapter 3. However, my arguments about Dido in Chapter 2 are informed by another concept of tragedy, for it is not death alone that makes Dido a tragedy. Rather, I propose that the theoretical origins for Marlowe’s sense of the tragic in Dido are in the Poetics. According to Aristotle, the best poets are those who tell rather than show the tragic pathos, and the best plots are those that avert the pathos altogether (Poetics 39-41). We shall see that Dido stages Aristotle’s preference for recited tragedy, and that it is catharsis that “makes” Dido both a tragedy and a theoretical defence of that genre.

Patrick Cheney’s analysis of the Ovidian influence on Dido is more specific than Grande’s use of it to account in general for what appears to be un-Virgilian about the play. His chapter on Dido in Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession (1997) proceeds from the critical agreement that “Marlowe relies on Ovid as his most recurrent strategy for rewriting Virgil” (105). According to Cheney, Dido is “a first draft of a larger project” that includes the Tamburlaine plays, a project that encodes Marlowe’s “multigenre idea of a literary career, in direct professional rivalry with England’s greatest national poet [Spenser]” (102, 4). This happens because Marlowe “was in the process of constructing a career model distinctly counter-Virgilian in its forms and goals”; he follows Ovid’s career model, which moves from amatory poetry to tragedy to epic (9-10). This career model “contests Spenser’s, and in doing so offers a (secret) critique of what Spenser’s literary career serves: the literary, political, religious, and sexual ideals of Queen Elizabeth’s nascent Empire” (15). The focus of Cheney’s arguments is on Marlowe’s career battle with Spenser as it is figured forth in the plays. In Cheney’s argument, Marlowe writes “himself, his queen, and her principal poet” into Dido to critique Elizabeth’s “misguided relation with her suitors” and what Spenser had to say about it, thereby “deauthoriz[ing] Spenser’s
providential poetics” (99, 104, 110). Cheney claims that *Dido* is an example of “Ovidian tragedy” for the following reasons: Marlowe “transacts an Ovidian career change, from love elegy to tragedy” in *Dido* (101); the play encodes Ovid’s objection to Virgil’s treatment of Dido (105); in comparison to Aeneas’ Virgilian movement towards epic, the play and its heroine turn “tragically down the Ovidian path from amatory love poetry to tragedy” (109).

*Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession* is the pinnacle of the Ovid/Virgil binary, which has driven criticism of *Dido* for a number of years. Cheney puts the binary to work in the larger context of Marlowe’s other plays, making *Dido* important in the development of the Marlovian dramatic canon. I also attribute importance to *Dido’s* influence on other plays by Marlowe, although the impact I discover is a revisionist one. I suggest that in the plays that follow *Dido*, Marlowe revises his aesthetic and progressively distances himself from the theoretical framework that underpins his first play. While I agree with the idea of influence that Cheney argues, there are some potential problems with Cheney’s deployment of the Ovidian tradition. One concern is that Cheney’s argument borders on a totalising claim about the Marlovian corpus. Some critics of the *Aeneid* would argue that Virgil’s and Ovid’s career models are not as different as Cheney asserts they are. For example, in her study of Virgil’s tripartite career, Elena Theodorakopoulos argues that “Ovid appears to imitate the Virgilian career by placing the didactic *Ars amatoria* between the small-scale love-poems of the *Amores* and *Heroides*, and the epic *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*” (159). Another concern is that the focus on Ovid encourages us to look away from the *Aeneid* for an explanation of what appears un-Virgilian about *Dido*. The *Aeneid* has its dark side, and critics of the so-called Harvard school have drawn attention to the epic’s more pessimistic elements, such as the tension between the celebration of Augustus’ *pax Romana* and the human cost of that peace. In applying the Ovidian tradition too
exclusively, we risk not seeing the ways in which Marlowe’s work may engage the dark side of the *Aeneid*. We also risk loosing sight of the ways in which texts in the rival tradition may pick up on and use the tensions in Virgil’s epic. One of my aims, particularly in Chapter 3, is to demonstrate that *Dido* is sensitive to the dark side of the *Aeneid*. Giving more room to Virgil opens up a number of new sites of inquiry, not only for criticism of *Dido*.

Sara Deats’s work on *Dido* demonstrates the ways in which the Ovidian influence can also be used for a similar purpose. In her chapter on *Dido* in *Sex, Gender, and Desire*, Deats weighs Ovid against Virgil, giving the Ovidian influence a contemporary currency by noting the development of the rival tradition in medieval texts such as Lydgate’s *Troy Book*. Deats uses the model of interrogative or “explorative” drama established by Joel Altman in *The Tudor Play of Mind*, which facilitates her expansive and inclusive reading of *Dido* as an “oxymoronic drama” that allows multiple, contradictory perspectives to exist without synthesis (89). Ovid (and the medieval manifestations of the Ovidian tradition) and Virgil make up the contradictory perspectives—the *in utramque partem* or “both sides of the question” that *Dido* argues (Altman 3). The phrase “oxymoronic drama” suggests generic excessiveness and neutrality, and it allows Deats to contribute to arguments about the play’s genre(s) and not be restricted by them. For Deats, *Dido* “constitutes a dramatic perspective puzzle” (105); what it is depends on how you look at it. From one perspective, *Dido* follows Ovid, as it “disrupt[s] sexual difference and challeng[es] societal categories of sex, gender, and sexuality” (91). Yet *Dido* “ultimately celebrates the masculine ethics of honor over the feminine values of love” (90). This marks a return to the *Aeneid* that is complemented in Ovid for in both texts, Aeneas leaves “compelled not only by duty and the gods but by the legend out of which he is created” (90, 110). That is, *Dido* registers the tension between the rival traditions, and “constitutes a palimpsest upon which the classical
and medieval lineaments of Dido and Aeneas merge into a single complex picture of each
fabled figure” (106). Depending on “the vantage point from which the action is viewed,”
_Dido_ either “valorizes [or] deflates romantic passion, . . . [and either] affirms [or]
interrogates heroic duty” (106).11 This is because _Dido_, in Deats’s view, is an example in
the drama of “the period’s fascination with paintings and drawings presenting dual images”
(104). Deats’s argument is reminiscent of Cope’s that _Dido_ works as a mirror, reflecting
“the psyche’s pleasure in hosting conflicting systems, mutually irreverent senses of the
nature of things” (Cope 316). The fact remains that neither critic seriously considers
tragedy as one of the many perspectives from which _Dido_ can be viewed, although Deats
concedes that the Carthaginian queen is “the character most closely resembling a tragic
protagonist” (123).

Deats’s work has done much to “rescue” _Dido_ from the “status of Marlowe’s
juvenilia” (1997, 89-90).12 She and other critics have liberated _Dido_, promoting the play as
worthy of serious examination. This thesis continues the practice of rescuing _Dido_ by
giving it some time in the spotlight as a tragedy, and fills a number of gaps in criticism of
Marlowe’s first play. There is work on _Dido_ as Marlowe’s version of Books 1, 2, and 4 of
the _Aeneid_ but none on _Dido_ as a sustained engagement with Virgil’s entire epic via the
haunting presence of the Carthaginian queen in the _Aeneid_. There is work on _Dido_ and
English Renaissance approaches to translating classical authors but none on _Dido_ as a
possible adaptation of the _Poetics_ as well as the _Aeneid_. Relying too heavily on the
Ovidian tradition, which centres upon Dido at the expense of Aeneas, would gloss over the
fact that the play’s first two acts are entirely about Aeneas. Indeed, when Dido does finally
appear in the play that bears her name in Act 2, scene 1, she speaks a mere 35 lines to
Aeneas’ 174. Throughout this thesis, I argue that _Dido_ is the tragedy of its eponymous
heroine only by comparison to the play’s other purpose, which is to promote Virgil’s
Aeneas/Aeneid. As we shall see, Dido deploys catharsis to revise the Aeneid as a tragedy.

1.2: Catharsis Criticism

When Marlowe deploys catharsis, he participates in the early modern debates about
what Aristotle meant by the term, debates that for the most part took place in Italy. But as I
aim to demonstrate, the kinds of catharsis that Dido stages are unique in the period,
certainly in England; indeed, they are not fully articulated in theory until the nineteenth
and twentieth centuries. In this section, I prepare for Chapter 2 by outlining the critical
history of catharsis, the crucial role that catharsis played in sixteenth-century Italian
literary theory, and the dominant meanings that the term had at the time. I then turn to a
summary of the more modern interpretations of catharsis, which will help explain what it
means in Dido.

Critics agree that the Poetics in general and the idea of catharsis in particular were
formulated as a defence against Plato’s attack on the mimetic arts, especially tragedy,
largely in Book 10 of the Republic. The ancient quarrel between Plato and Aristotle will be
a feature of Chapter 2’s argument that Dido is a modernized Poetics. The issue currently at
hand is what Aristotle meant when he used the term “catharsis,” and what sixteenth-
century theorists thought Aristotle meant. A consideration of these questions will allow us
to appreciate the theoretical tradition in which Marlowe is working.

The first use of the term in the Poetics is in the definition of tragedy in Chapter 6,
which Ingram Bywater translates as follows:

A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as
having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable
accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a
dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear,
wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions. (Poetics 17)
Aristotle does not mention catharsis before the definition of tragedy, despite his claim that the definition “result[s] from what has been said,” and he offers no explanation of what the term means (*Poetics* 17). In antiquity, as Amélie Oksenberg Rorty explains, there were three main forms of catharsis:

- it is a medical term, referring to a therapeutic cleansing or purgation; it is a religious term, referring to the purification achieved by the formal and the ritualised, bounded expression of powerful and often dangerous emotions; it is a cognitive term, referring to an intellectual resolution that involves directing emotions at their appropriate intentional objects. All three forms of catharsis are meant, at their best, to conduce to the proper functioning of a well-balanced soul. (14)

Whether Aristotle’s use of the term in relation to tragedy carries any of these meanings or a combination of them, or whether he means something else, is a much-disputed point. To complicate matters, as Adnan Abdulla notes, “each age understands it [catharsis] differently” and “Aristotle’s use of catharsis has [since] become encrusted” with many layers of meaning” (2, 12). In 1986, Stephen Halliwell listed six interpretations of catharsis in an appendix to his *Aristotle’s Poetics* in order to identify the main modern schools of thought, some of which contain traces of the classical forms (350-56). They are listed below, with Barbara Koziak’s short explanations (275-76). The list will prove a useful reference point throughout the thesis for explaining the kinds of catharsis that *Dido* enacts, and for identifying the ways in which these interpretations differ from other sixteenth-century meanings of the term:

1. **Moralistic/Didactic**, emphasizing self-regarding fear over pity;
2. **Emotional fortitude**, a “loosely stoical” view in which the agent is inured to misfortune, and experiences a reduction in emotional susceptibility;
3. **Moderation**, in which the experiences and actions one sees in tragedy help to shape future capacities for the same experiences and actions, related to the doctrine of the mean and of habituation;
4. **Outlet**, consisting in a pleasurable expending of pent-up emotions;
5. **Intellectual**, a clarification, for example a removal of false opinion and so of pity and fear for the tragic agent;
6. **Dramatic/Structural**, as an internal feature of the work itself.
The range of meanings that catharsis has accrued is partly due to the lack of explanation that Aristotle gives in the *Poetics*, and partly due to the many ambiguities and inconsistencies in the *Poetics* as a whole. Together, these make Aristotle’s text in general and his idea of catharsis in particular, perhaps more than any other literary critical term, “capable of endless reinterpretation” (Hunter 253).16

In Marlowe’s time, the debate about what Aristotle meant by catharsis was propelled by the recovery and exegesis of the *Poetics* by Italian literary theorists and poets. They awarded Aristotle’s text an authority and influence it did not enjoy in antiquity. The impact of the *Poetics* on Italian literary criticism, claims Nicholas Cronk, “was enormous and unprecedented” (201).17 Although Aristotle’s text was available in the translation of Georgio Valla (1498) from the beginning of the sixteenth century, real interest in the *Poetics* did not appear until the middle of the century, through Segni’s Italian translation (1549) and a series of Latin commentaries beginning with those of Robertelli (1548) and Maggi (1550) (Javitch 1999a, 55).18 Many more were to follow. An appendix to J. E. Spingarn’s *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* lists a further four editions of the *Poetics* and some thirteen theoretical treatises on poetry, all of which engaged with the *Poetics* in some way, from 1550-1600 (332-33).19 Most important, catharsis took centre stage in the literary debates generated by exegeses of the *Poetics*. Baxter Hathaway chooses a deliberately extravagant figure of speech to indicate the impact that catharsis had on the literary theorizing of the period:

more than any other single critical idea, [the adoption of catharsis] was responsible in the Renaissance for the breakthrough of the stout defensive line of rhetorical theory that had enveloped the theory of poetry and literature in general from the days of Horace, Cicero, and Quintilian, allowing the panzer divisions of the earnest Aristotelians to prowl at will through the rich hinterlands of literary speculation. (1962, 205)

Marlowe’s *Dido* testifies to the crucial status of catharsis that Hathaway finds in the *cinquecento* critics. In Chapter 2, it will become clear that *Dido* not only absorbs elements
of some of the meanings that catharsis had for the Italians but also comments on other questions related to what catharsis means. Ultimately, though, Dido offers interpretations of catharsis that have no precedent in the period.

The interpretations of catharsis that Dido partly absorbs but differs from are the Moralistic/Didactic, Emotional fortitude, and Moderation interpretations. These have their origins in the theoretical tendency of the time to interpret catharsis within an “existing moralistic framework of literary-critical thought deriving from Horace,” especially the “description of the poet’s aims as being to instruct and delight” (Cronk 201, 199). In this framework, catharsis comes to serve what Daniel Javitch calls the “ethico-rhetorical” function of poetry—the idea that the experience of tragedy is in some way conducive to virtue. As Javitch explains, catharsis “corroborate[d] that, for Aristotle, as for many of his sixteenth-century readers, the end of poetry was to persuade its readers to behave, or avoid behaving, in certain ways” (1999a, 54, 58). In most cases, the Italian theorists connected the ethico-rhetorical argument to a homeopathic interpretation of catharsis. In this common interpretation, catharsis “purged” the audience’s emotions, generally, although not always, those of pity and fear.20 Minturno offered a passionate account of the argument in 1559 (De Poeta):

What is there indeed which to the same extent as pity and fear breaks the violence of anger, extinguishes the thirst for money, diminishes the desire for honors, represses the eagerness to dominate, restrains the desire for harmful pleasures, holds in check any indomitable fury of the mind? For who is there so possessed by an unbridled desire to avenge, or rule, or own, who, if he is aroused to pity and terror by the calamities of others, does not have his soul purged and purified of the disorder which brought him that unhappiness? Indeed, when we remember the grave misfortunes of others, we are made not only more ready to bear our own with equanimity, but more prudent in the avoidance of that kind of troubles. (qtd. in Weinberg 739)

Hathaway goes so far as to argue that for “the usual critic, the term ‘purgation’ was merely another vague name for moral didacticism, specialized from even vaguer ‘improvements’
because it pertained to the passions” (1968, 52). Denores provides an example in his *Apologia* (1590) when he stretches the function of catharsis to all poetry, and rewrites Aristotle’s definition of tragedy in the process. Poetry, Denores says,

> is an art imitative of some human action, marvelous, complete, and of proper size; either in narration or dramatic representation; through language in verse; in order to purge some passion by means of pleasure, or to introduce virtue into the souls of the auditors and of the spectators, for the general benefit of some well-ordered republic; and a poem, child and labor of the poetic art, is the imitation of such an action. (qtd. in Weinberg 675)

The either/or in Denores’ argument makes moral utility an alternative to pleasure, but either way, poetry is politically expedient.

In the following chapter, I argue that Marlowe’s *Dido* stages a homeopathic interpretation of catharsis without the ethico-rhetorical function that Minturno’s and Denores’ arguments give it. That is, *Dido* stages a catharsis that does not have the end of moral or political utility that characterises most sixteenth-century Italian interpretations of the term. Halliwell’s list helps us here: *Dido* stages the Outlet interpretation of catharsis, sometimes called the therapeutic interpretation. In the critical history of catharsis, the “patron-saint” of this interpretation is Jacob Bernays, who proposed it in 1857 (Halliwell 1986, 353). Bernays translates the catharsis clause in Aristotle’s *Poetics* as follows: “By (arousing) pity and fear tragedy achieves an alleviating relief of such (pitiful and fearful) mental affections” (162).21 Gerald Else offers the following explanation of Bernays’ translation and argument: “‘catharsis’ is a purgation, accompanied by a pleasurable sense of relief, from accumulating emotional tendencies, especially tendencies to pity and fear, which would otherwise poison our mental health” (225n). Bernays’ therapeutic interpretation contains the familiar medical metaphor of purgation that sixteenth-century Italian theorists ascribed to catharsis. The crucial element that distinguishes Bernays’ interpretation, as Halliwell explains, is that the purging is now independent of any of the “various types of moral reading of the doctrine” (1986, 353). Thus, Bernays’ interpretation
overcomes Renaissance accounts that asserted “some sort of real social utility for the
drama” (Orgel 2002, 135). It is a decisive moment in the critical history of catharsis. *Dido*,
I suggest, enacts a sixteenth-century version of Bernays’ theory in Aeneas’ narrative about
the fall of Troy and his emotional reaction to it. An important qualification is required in
light of the fact that Bernays’ interpretation of catharsis is thought to have influenced
Freud and Breuer’s practice of cathartic hypnosis. I am not claiming that Marlowe is
engaged in the discourse of psychoanalysis, only that Bernays’ interpretation comes closest
to explaining one of the interpretations of catharsis that *Dido* performs. We shall see that
catharsis functions in *Dido* for aesthetic rather than psychoanalytic purposes.\(^\text{22}\)

*Dido* enacts more than just the therapeutic interpretation of catharsis, for after
Aeneas tells his tale and responds emotionally to it, catharsis becomes a discernible feature
in the play’s plot and characterization. This interpretation of catharsis is a version of the
*Structural* one in Halliwell’s list. He offers the following explanation of what it means:
catharsis is “an internal and objective feature of the poetic work itself” (1986, 356).
According to the critical literature, neither the *Structural* interpretation nor the *Outlet* one
were available in the literary theory of Marlowe’s time. Halliwell, for example, notes the
possible existence of the structural interpretation in the eighteenth century but not before
(1986, 356). Gerald Else is the “main modern exponent” of *Structural* catharsis, a theory of
which he proposed in 1957 (Halliwell 1986, 356). Else glosses the catharsis clause in his
translation of Aristotle’s definition of tragedy as follows: “carrying to completion, through
a course of events involving pity and fear, the purification of those painful or fatal acts
which have that quality” (221). The role of catharsis that Else identifies involves a tight
network of inter-dependent relationships between *hamartia* (error), *pathos* (suffering),
*peripeteia* (reversal), and *anagnoresis* (recognition).\(^\text{23}\) In Else’s argument, catharsis is “the
purification of the tragic act by the demonstration that its motive was not *mairon* [morally
Therefore, according to Else, catharsis is “not a change or end-product in the spectator’s soul, or in the fear and pity (i.e. the dispositions to them) in his soul, but a process carried forward in the emotional material of the play by its structural elements, above all by the recognition” (439). Dido, I argue, enacts a version of the interpretation of catharsis that Else proposes. The play’s performance of the therapeutic interpretation of catharsis becomes an operational factor in the action that follows, carried forward mainly by the structural element *peripeteia*, to align Dido with the *Aeneid*. Bernays’ and Else’s interpretations help us to hear Dido’s unique voice in sixteenth-century debates about the function of tragedy.

Stephen Orgel has argued that an interpretation of catharsis by Giacomini in 1586 is a “proto-psychoanalytic argument” which anticipates Bernays’ 1857 interpretation (2002, 135). In addition, Orgel proposes that in 1558, Cintio pre-empted Else’s *Structural* catharsis insofar as Cintio suggests that catharsis takes place in the characters, not in the audience (2002, 135). In its effects on plot, the *Structural* catharsis at work in Dido is closer to Else’s interpretation than to Cintio’s. As I aim to demonstrate in the fourth section of Chapter 2, which discusses catharsis and Dido’s audience, Aeneas’ enactment of the *Outlet* interpretation has an aesthetic function that distinguishes it from Giacomini’s interpretation. Orgel argues that “Aristotle does not figure especially significantly in English discussions of tragedy” (2002, 137). In Chapter 2, it will become clear that the interpretations of catharsis Dido stages are indeed indebted to the *Poetics*, which, I suggest, Marlowe modernizes.

The argument that Dido modernizes Aristotle’s treatise draws on the work of Daniel Javitch. He proposes that it is the genres that were emerging in the vernacular at the time that gave rise to the Italian Renaissance theorizing more so than the recovery and exegesis of the *Poetics*. In Javitch’s argument, artistic practice is the source, rather than the
object, of theory. The *Poetics* was appropriated and, according to Javitch, “modernized” by Italian Renaissance theorists to “enable and justify modern versions of the ancient genres when models for them were lacking” (1998, 139). Many of the Italian theorists were practicing poets, and they theorized about Aristotelian principles, including catharsis, in ways that defended their own practice. Cintio is an example: his argument about the validity of tragedies that end happily has support in the *Poetics*—in Aristotle’s argument that the best plots avoid the pathos altogether—and it justified Cintio’s practice, which includes six out of nine tragedies that end happily (Javitch 1999a, 63). I understand Marlowe’s practice in *Dido* in the context that Javitch’s work establishes. Marlowe gives catharsis a contemporary currency in the emerging tragedy of the period, a currency that defends his sense of the tragic in *Dido*.

Not all Italian theorists promoted catharsis as the cornerstone of their arguments about poetry. Neither did they all claim that the function of tragedy is essentially one of moral utility. Nor did they agree on what catharsis means. Scaliger, for example, maintains that “the term catharsis does not at all describe the effect of every plot” (qtd. in Orgel 2002, 149); Castelvetro posits that the pleasure of the “crude multitude and of the common people” is the only function of tragedy (qtd. in Gilbert 307); and Beni, according to Nicholas Cronk, claimed to know of at least a dozen interpretations of catharsis at the beginning of the seventeenth century (201). Nonetheless, as Baxter Hathaway argues, it was the Italian theorists who “brought the principle [of catharsis] back into play and worked out most of the interpretations that have been used since their time” (1962, 300). As I intend to demonstrate, *Dido* brings the principle of catharsis back into the play to revise the *Aeneid* as a tragedy that defends that genre. In the process, *Dido* challenges the authority of theory alone to determine what catharsis means.
Cope’s aim of establishing *Dido* as something more than an “apprentice work” has become a common aim. In 1977, Roma Gill echoed Cope in her defence of *Dido* as more than Marlowe’s “mere juvenilia” (142), and in 2002, Robert Logan commented that the essay by Rick Bowers in the collection *Marlowe’s Empery* does “much to redeem *Dido* from its apprentice status” (18).

Harry Levin 16-17, Clifford Leech (1962) 70-75, Don Cameron Allen 68.

Heather James offers an insightful commentary on the spelling of Vergil/Virgil in “Dido’s Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response” (364n). She argues that the modern preference for “Virgil” encodes and perpetuates the authoritative status of the classical author via the Latin noun for man—*vir*—and its variants.

For example, John Bakeless has argued that in *Dido*, Marlowe was “groping his way through his immaturity toward the greater work that he was eventually to do” (256). In addition, Matthew Proser has distinguished *Dido* from the “major productions” for which Marlowe “justly won his fame” (84). The persistence of arguments about *Dido’s* insignificant status led Sara Deats to propose, in 2004, that the play suffers from “traditional scholarly neglect” (193). The fact that *Dido* has not been published as a stand-alone text seems to confirm the critical neglect: H. J. Oliver’s edition of *Dido* includes Marlowe’s other troublesome play, *The Massacre at Paris*; C. F. Tucker Brooke’s edition includes a life of Marlowe; and the edition of Marlowe’s complete works begun by Roma Gill places *Dido* with Marlowe’s translations of Ovid and Lucan.

Tim Carroll’s production of *Dido* at the Globe in 2003, like the performance by the Fletcher Players at Cambridge in 1998, staged a number of scenes for laughs. The Globe production used stage props to advance an interpretation of *Dido* as a play that deflates the
high seriousness of the *Aeneid*. The stage was set as a contemporary children’s playground, a doll “played” Ascanius, and toy yachts signified Aeneas’ fleet. Benedict Nightingale, in his review for the London *Times* (23 June 2003), was not very complimentary of Carroll’s production, awarding it three stars out of five.

6 Orgel’s arguments invite a reading of the Nurse scene in *Dido* (4.5.1-37) as an example of the *intermezzi* that makes the “interrelationships” between comedy and tragedy “real and fruitful” in his analysis (2002, 154). I quote from Orgel’s essay “Shakespeare and the Kinds of Drama” in his book *The Authentic Shakespeare* (143-158). The essay was first published in *Critical Inquiry* 6.1 (Autumn 1979): 107-123. All references are from *The Authentic Shakespeare*.

7 In 1984, Barbara Bono published an extensive study of what she calls “literary transvaluation,” which bears some similarities to Grande’s arguments about *translatio*:

> literary imitation is neither uncritical copying nor wilfull misprecision, but rather what [Bono] call[s] transvaluation, an artistic act of historical self-consciousness that at once acknowledges the perceived values of the antecedent text and transforms them to serve the uses of the present. (2)

Bono’s study charts the ways in which the *Aeneid*, particularly the Dido and Aeneas story, was transvalued numerous times, for example by Saint Augustine, Dante, and Spenser, and then by the Renaissance dramatists, including Marlowe. Most important for Bono’s purposes is Shakespeare’s transvaluation of the *Aeneid* in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Mary Smith also discusses the question of translation in “‘Love Kindling Fire’” (101-122).

8 Clare Harraway follows a similar path in her analysis of *Dido* as a text engaged in the “artistic debate about imitation and originality,” and reaches a conclusion similar to Grande’s. Harraway argues that “Marlowe’s rewriting of part of the *Aeneid* as *Dido, Queene of Carthage* can be read as a direct challenge to Virgil’s originality” (111).
W. R. Johnson’s *Darkness Visible* is a seminal work on the pessimistic elements in the *Aeneid*.

Craig Kallendorf articulates the point I am making with reference to the dependence of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* on the text it purports to challenge, the *Aeneid*. He comments that “the *Pharsalia* never fully separates itself from the *Aeneid*: Lucan’s own model was Virgil, and Quint argues that Lucan in fact accepted Virgil’s imperialist bias at the same time as he lamented the loss of republican government within Rome” (412n, see Quint 156-57). Georgia Brown’s work on Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander* is a notable example of bringing the Ovidian influence to bear on studies of the poems. See in particular Chapter 3 of *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (102-77). She finds the invocation of Ovid especially fruitful as an “alternative to the authoritative Virgilian cultural archetype” in the poems she examines, by Marlowe and others (36).

Deats suggests other possible meanings that *Dido* might have: to “discredit Mary Stuart as the lustful ruler in opposition to the chaste Elizabeth”; to critique “the marriage and disastrous co-reign of Mary Tudor and Philip of Spain”; to discuss early modern discourses of the maternal (116-17; 118-23).

See also two earlier essays by Deats: “Ovid, Virgil, and Christopher Marlowe’s *Dido, Queene of Carthage*” (1990-91); and “The Subversion of Gender Hierarchies in *Dido, Queene of Carthage*” (1998).

Aristotle uses “catharsis” again in Chapter 17 of the *Poetics*, in reference to the “purifying” that brings about Orestes’ salvation through Iphigenia’s recognition of him in Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Tauris* (*Poetics* 51). Most critics simply ignore the use of catharsis in *Poetics* 17 in their explanations of what the term means in *Poetics* 6 because Aristotle
does not use the term catharsis in relation to dramatic theory in the later chapter. Bywater, for example, barely pauses over the term in his commentary on Poetics 17, instead referring readers to the relevant passage in Euripides’s play (246).

14 Leon Golden makes a singular attempt to bring catharsis “organically into connection with the argument of the Poetics that leads up to the use of the term in chapter 6” in his essay “Catharsis” (52).

15 Catharsis has become “one of the biggest of the ‘big’ aesthetic questions, the “Kilimanjaro that looms on all literary horizons” according to Gerald Else’s own mountainous work on the Poetics (443). In their search for what Aristotle means, scholars of catharsis do not restrict themselves to the Poetics. They often refer to Aristotle’s Rhetoric (e.g. the discussion of the emotions of pity and fear in Chapter 2), Nichomachean Ethics (e.g. the idea of virtue and the mean theorized in Chapter 2), and in particular Politics 8.7, where Aristotle discusses catharsis in the role of music in education. The crucial passage in the Politics is as follows:

\[
\text{it is clear that we should employ all the harmonies, yet not employ them all in the same way, but use the most ethical ones for education, and the active and passionate kinds for listening to when others are performing (for any experience that occurs violently in some souls is found in all, though with different degrees of intensity—for example pity and fear, and also religious excitement; for some people are very liable to this form of emotion, and under the influence of sacred music we see these people, when they use tunes that violently arouse the soul, being thrown into a state as if they had received medicinal treatment and taken a purge; the same experience then must come also to the compassionate and the timid and the other emotional people generally and in such degree as befalls each individual of these classes, and all must undergo a purgation and a pleasant feeling of relief; and similarly also the purgative melodies afford harmless delight to people). (parentheses in Jonathan Barnes’s translation, 669-71)}
\]

As Halliwell notes, there is also a “likelihood that he [Aristotle] posited forms of katharsis related to epic and comic poetry” (1986, 20). Richard Janko has attempted a hypothetical
reconstruction of comic catharsis, using the common translation of the word as “purgation”: “through pleasure and laughter achieving the purgation of the like emotions. It has laughter, so to speak, for its mother. I explained the meanings of the terms here when tragedy was defined” (1984, 93).

16 Stephen Booth gives some idea of the multiplicity of meanings that catharsis has in his comment that the “search for a definition of tragedy has been the most persistent and widespread of all nonreligious quests for definition” (81). The variety of meanings that catharsis and the catharsis word group had in antiquity is another possible reason for the many interpretations of the term. The adjectival form of catharsis, according to Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*, has seven main meanings. The term can apply to people and things, and in other grammatical forms was used in domestic, agricultural, medical, and religious contexts. Martha Nussbaum offers an interpretation of what catharsis means based on the etymology of the term in *The Fragility of Goodness* (389-91). Stephen Halliwell does the same in his *Aristotle’s Poetics* (185-88) but reverses the procedures that Nussbaum uses and the hierarchy of meanings she constructs.

17 Daniel Javitch argues that the *Poetics* was not an authoritative text in antiquity: “Aristotle’s view of poems in terms of the inherent or internal requirements of their forms was a minority view in the ancient world” (1999a, 53). As Javitch explains, the text “exerted surprisingly little influence” in antiquity because of the then dominant focus of literary theorists, Horace among them, on “conditions imposed by the audience and not, as was Aristotle, with the composition of coherent structures which produced certain emotions because of inherent and objective properties” (1999a, 53).

18 Interest in the *Poetics* before the sixteenth century comes not from Aristotle’s text itself but from Averröes *Middle Commentary on the Poetics*, translated by Hermann the German
in 1256. Averröes understands Aristotle’s “tragedy” as “eulogy” (and comedy as satire).

According to Averröes, a eulogy

is a comparison and representation of a complete, virtuous voluntary deed—one that with respect to virtuous matters is universal in compass, not one that is particular in compass, and pertains only to one or another virtuous matter. It is a representation that affects souls moderately by engendering compassion and fear in them. It does this by imitating the purity and immaculateness of the virtuous. (4.20, p. 73; reference is from the chapter and paragraph in Averröes Commentary, and the page number of Charles E. Butterworth’s English translation)

Stephen Orgel notes that Averröes’ interpretation carried over into Renaissance literary theory: “Averröes in many respects continued to be the basis of Renaissance views of the essay, enabling it from the outset to be easily harmonized with Horace’s Art of Poetry.


Bernard Weinberg analyses these and other sixteenth-century materials such as letters and lectures in his seminal study, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance.

Orgel makes the following comments about the medical metaphor on which the homeopathic interpretation of catharsis is based, how Renaissance theorists understood it, and what modern critics think about it:

Moreover, most critics have been at least uncomfortable with the medical metaphor itself, observing that its operation is at best obscure. How does the evocation of pity and fear purge these emotions? Students of classical science point out that this is not even an accurate version of Greek medicine, which worked on the whole allopathically, by opposites, not
homeopathically, by similarities—that is, to purge melancholy, you make people happy not sad. Therefore, if Aristotelian catharsis is really a medical metaphor, drama would purge pity and fear by evoking their opposites, whatever these might be. This has been more of a problem for modern commentators than it was for Renaissance exegetes, since much Renaissance medicine did work homeopathically, and therefore Aristotle, however ahistorically, seemed to be saying something true; but it was a truth that did little to clarify the ambiguities of the passage. (2002, 131)

Bernays draws support for his therapeutic interpretation of catharsis from Aristotle’s use of the term in Politics 8.7 (Bernays 156 and passim). While the passage in the Politics is often used as a resource for understanding what catharsis means in the Poetics, the strategy is not without its critics. Richard McKeon, for example, argues that “To cite what is said concerning art in the Politics in refutation or expansion of what is said on the same subject in the Poetics, without recognizing that one is a political utterance, the other an aesthetic utterance, would be an error” (166). H. D. F. Kitto, Leon Golden, and Gerald Else agreed in their contributions to catharsis criticism in the 1950s and ’60s. See Kitto, “Catharsis” (133-47); Golden, “Catharsis” (51-60, particularly 52); Else, Aristotle’s Poetics (228, 441).

Neither Orgel nor other critics are persuaded by Else’s argument that “the passage from the Politics is not relevant at all, that it is something Aristotle believed when he wrote it but changed his mind about when he came to write the Poetics (2002, 263n; Else 442-43).

O. B. Hardison calls Bernays’ interpretation a “revival” of the homeopathic idea of catharsis and offers the following account of its influence over Freud’s practice:

The homeopathic theory of catharsis, although it never disappeared, lost ground in the eighteenth century, only to be revived by Jacob Bernays in 1857. Needless to say, it gained immeasurably in popularity with the advent of Freud. Freud and Breuer discovered that by helping patients to recall painful childhood experiences under hypnosis, they could alleviate the neurotic symptoms. They originally called their treatment ‘the cathartic method.’ Freud later abandoned hypnotism, but his mature method of psychoanalysis still involves the reconstruction and ‘purgation’ of painful childhood experiences. . . . Freud, then, seems to confirm the notion that catharsis is a purgation, providing a scientific substitute for the inadequate homeopathic explanation . . . (Golden and Hardison 134-35).
On a personal level, there is also a connection because Freud married Bernays’ niece.

23 For Else’s full treatment of the nexus, see his Aristotle’s *Poetics* 436-50. Unlike Leon Golden, Else justifies his argument with reference to chapters after *Poetics* 6. Chapter 14 is particularly important for Else’s interpretation of catharsis, which stems largely from Aristotle’s arguments in *Poetics* 14 about tragedies that avoid the pathos altogether.

24 For an analysis and justification of Else’s argument, see Lois Welch’s essay “Catharsis, Structural Purification, and Else’s Aristotle.” Welch praises Else’s interpretation of catharsis as one that works because Else “makes catharsis a term which makes sense within the *Poetics* and which applies specifically to plays, not to hypothetical audiences” (32, 34). This kind of support for Else’s interpretation is rare among critics of catharsis, and Halliwell lists four objections to it (1986, 356). Orgel is a notable defender of Else from the field of literary criticism. In “The Play of Conscience,” he argues that Else’s interpretation of catharsis has largely been ignored because, “for all its clarity and elegant simplicity, Else’s Aristotle doesn’t say what we want Aristotle to say” (2002, 131). Alice Birney, in advancing her idea of “satiric catharsis” in Shakespeare, finds some support for her argument in Else’s interpretation but is unwilling to fully embrace his theory, calling it “still controversial” (8). H. D. F. Kitto offers an extension of Else’s interpretation in his essay “Catharsis,” and Leon Golden a revision of it in his essay of the same title. Kitto argues that there is a close relationship between catharsis and mimesis. In his reading, catharsis is a clarification of events because “mimesis, the purifying effect of the tragic art, removes the conditions that would cause bewilderment and pain, and leaves something that is orderly and significant, and therefore a source of pleasure” (147). In Golden’s argument, catharsis is “the act of ‘making clear’ or the process of ‘clarification’ by means of which
something that is intellectually obscure is made clear to the observer” (57). In other words, Golden ascribes to the *Intellectual* interpretation of catharsis.

25 See also the following essays by Daniel Javitch, in which he continues his argument about the sixteenth-century “modernization” of the *Poetics*: “The Assimilation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* in Sixteenth-Century Italy”; “Self-Justifying Norms in the Genre Theories of Italian Renaissance Poets”; and “Italian Epic Theory.” In “Assimilation,” Javitch finds that Spingarn’s and Weinberg’s studies have “mislead their readers when they maintain that the Italian theorizing about poetic genres that emerges in the middle decades of the sixteenth century stemmed directly from the recovery and exegesis of Aristotle’s *Poetics*” (58-59). Javitch is currently working on a book that will incorporate the arguments he makes in “The Emergence of Poetic Genre Theory.”
Chapter 2

*Dido* and the Staging of Catharsis

2.1: Introduction

*Dido’s* opening scene, which represents the gods behaving with less than Virgilian decorum, seems to contest my assertion that the play is a serious revision of the *Aeneid* as a tragedy. Yet the play appears more Virgilian when Aeneas, preparing to leave both Dido and *Dido*, reiterates what is perhaps the most famous half-line in the *Aeneid*: “*Italiam non sponte sequor*” (“I do not follow Italy of my accord.” 5.1.140; 4.361). Marlowe’s use of Virgil’s original Latin seems to me to signify, in the most obvious way possible, the play’s fidelity to the *Aeneid*. I will argue that *Dido* is indeed a faithful revision of the *Aeneid*, and will preface the main discussion with an analysis of the play’s opening scene as a template for the ways in which Marlowe treats Virgil’s epic. We shall see that *Dido* departs from the *Aeneid* only to return to it and promote its authority. The analysis of the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange establishes a Virgilian context in which to consider the overarching argument in this chapter—*Dido* stages two interpretations of catharsis to revise Virgil’s *Dido* and Aeneas story as a tragedy. Aeneas’ long narrative to Dido about the fall of Troy in Act 2, scene 1 is the foundation for the revising process. As he tells his tale, Aeneas performs the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis, a performance that activates the *Structural* interpretation of the term and brings about his *peripeteia*. This reversal of fortune realigns Aeneas with the hero of Virgil’s text, and *Dido* with the *Aeneid*. Aeneas’ performance of the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis also brings about Dido’s *peripeteia*, turning her from powerful
queen into doomed lover. I suggest that the play stages the two interpretations of catharsis to direct the response of its audience to the spectacle of Dido’s death. In this scenario, Aeneas’ performance of the Outlet interpretation works as a model for the audience’s response. As I intend to demonstrate, the play’s enactment of the two interpretations, together with other self-reflexive strategies, coaches its audience to experience the Outlet interpretation of catharsis as their response to the play proper. In this way, Dido turns Virgil’s epic into a tragedy.

The two interpretations of catharsis that Dido stages have no theoretical precedent in the period, as noted in Chapter 1. Yet like all interpretations of catharsis, their origins are in the Poetics. I suggest that Marlowe approached the Poetics as an enabling rather than a prescriptive text, allowing him to assign meanings to catharsis that justify his practice in Dido. Analysing Dido in the light of the Poetics has not been attempted before. It constitutes a re-reading of the play that is responsive, above all, to what Clare Harraway has called Dido’s “intractable categorization with a genre” (112)—the tragedy announced on the play’s title page. Re-reading Dido in the light of the Poetics offers new insights into the play’s deployment of the Aeneid, and Marlowe’s sense of the tragic.

There are three main sections in this chapter. The focus in the first section, “Aeneas and Catharsis,” is the Trojan’s narrative about the fall of Troy and the effect that telling it has on him. It will become clear that Dido is not about the Carthaginian queen; it is about making a tragedy that promotes the hero and ideology of the Aeneid.1 The Outlet interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas’ narrative enacts, and the Structural one the tale activates are vital to this process of generic revising. In the course of analysing the narrative and its effects, I draw attention to aspects of the Poetics other than catharsis that Dido deploys, and to some of the features of sixteenth-century Italian debates about the
function of tragedy that the play negotiates. In this context, the unique contributions that
_Dido_ makes to sixteenth-century literary theorizing come into view.

We shall also see that what happens to Dido happens only in contrast to Aeneas’ fortunes. For this reason, the examination of Aeneas in the first section is longer than that of the Carthaginian queen in the second section, “Dido and Catharsis.” Here the focus is the effect that Aeneas’ narrative has on Dido’s characterization and fortunes. I argue that _Dido_ stages the two interpretations of catharsis to embody tragedy in the Carthaginian queen. In both of the first two sections, I emphasize _Dido’s_ fidelity to the _Aeneid_ by matching it with Virgilian narrative elements up to and including Book 4. _Dido_ engages with more of the _Aeneid_ than simply elements of plot and character. In particular, Aeneas’ catharsis raises the possibility that _Dido_ dramatizes one of Virgil’s famous ecphrases in the _Aeneid_, the mural in the temple to Juno at Carthage (1.446-93).

In the third section, “The Audience and Catharsis,” the focus is the ways in which _Dido_ coaches its audience to experience the _Outlet_ interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas models. There are a number of strategies that _Dido_ mobilizes in order to encourage its audience to imaginatively identify with Aeneas. The reversals of fortune that both major characters experience is the main one, but there are others. All these strategies work to position _Dido’s_ audience as the homogeneous one that the _Poetics_ assumes. The educated, private audience for whom _Dido_ was performed is important to the arguments in this section. Of particular significance is the audience’s implied kinship, brought about by the Elizabethan _translatio imperii studiique_, with the hero of Virgil’s epic. The audience’s imaginative identification with Trojan Aeneas, I suggest, is the means Marlowe uses to construct an “ideal” audience for his play, one whose response to the spectacle of Dido’s death has the potential to turn the _Aeneid_ into a tragedy. In the course of constructing its “ideal” audience, _Dido_ activates and glosses the ancient debate about tragedy between
Plato and Aristotle. It is in the construction of an “ideal” audience, we shall see, that *Dido* positions itself as a modernized *Poetics*, a sixteenth-century tragedy that defends tragedy.

We begin with *Dido’s* opening scene, and its function as a kind of prologue that introduces the ways in which Marlowe intends to treat the *Aeneid*. Critics often argue that Marlowe’s plays set up audience expectations only to frustrate them. The Jupiter-Ganymede scene that opens *Dido* warrants examination in these terms, for its fidelity to the epic despite its obvious embellishments.

The curtains open to reveal Ganymede on Jupiter’s knee. A dialogue follows in which Jupiter speaks of his love for the “sweet wag” Ganymede, promises to punish Juno if she strikes Ganymede again, and offers to provide any “content” that Ganymede would “call for” (1.1.23, 12-15, 28). Infatuated, Jupiter promises Ganymede power over fate, time, and the other gods, lets him hold the jewels that “Juno ware upon her marriage-day,” and offers them to him if Ganymede “wilt be [his] love” (1.1.29-30, 42-43, 49). It is, as Rick Bowers comments, a “spectacular opening” (2002, 97), one that probably made *Dido’s* original, literate audience sit up and take notice, and lead them to expect what Bowers calls a “transgressive reinscription” of the *Aeneid* to follow (2002, 97). Venus’ entrance works to heighten the expectation. She disrupts the intimate scene with her complaint about Jupiter’s tardiness in respect to the trials of Aeneas, chastising the father of the gods in disrespectful terms:

> False Jupiter, reward’st thou virtue so?
> What, is not piety exempt from woe?
> Then die, Aeneas, in thine innocence,
> Since that religion hath no recompense. (1.1.78-81)

Sara Deats argues it is paradoxical that Venus, goddess of love and beauty, should “exhort Jupiter to fulfill his masculine duty” (1997, 91) and inconceivable, in terms of the *Aeneid*, that she should speak to her father thus. However, if the audience expect such non-
Virgilian representations to continue, they are frustrated by what follows, while a closer examination of the action to date reveals a more epic agenda.

The Jupiter-Ganymede scene can be read as a dramatic paraphrase of elements in the *Aeneid*. In the first instance, it offers an explanation of the hatred that Juno bears the Trojans and for which, as Deats notes, Trojan Ganymede “traditionally receives blame” (1997, 92). Deats suggests a number of possible sources, including the *Aeneid* (1.6, 5.121-122; Deats 1997, 92). She agrees in part with Roma Gill’s assertion that Marlowe draws together the clues that Virgil gives in the first book of the *Aeneid*, about “how and why Juno hates Aeneas” (Deats 1997, 92; Gill 1977, 143). While there is much that is original in the way Marlowe handles the scene for the stage, according to Gill, there is nothing too surprising about it, let alone transgressive (1977, 143-44). In the second instance, the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange dramatizes, or rather, over-dramatizes, Virgil’s scepticism of heterosexual relationships in the *Aeneid*. In this light, *Dido’s* opening scene appears to depart from the *Aeneid* yet in effect foregrounds the play’s fidelity to its epic source text. It is a pattern that becomes more obvious in Jupiter’s response to Venus’ complaints.

Jupiter counters his daughter’s charges of neglect with a truncated version of his epic counterpart’s narrative in the *Aeneid* (1.257-96 1.1.82-108). The most important information is all there: the promise that “Aeneas’ wand’ring fate is firm” and the famous prophecy of a Roman “empire without end” that will spring from Aeneas’ son, Ascanius/Iulus (1.257-58, 267-279; 1.1.83, 100). To show himself true to his words, Jupiter wakes the sleeping Hermes, sending him to Neptune with a command to quell the storm that threatens Aeneas, and reassuring Venus that her “son shall be our care” (1.1.114-120). Thirteen lines later, Aeneas lands safely on Libyan shores, for which Venus “honours” Jupiter (1.1.137). Jupiter’s immediate response to Venus’ complaints contains the subversive potential of his earlier promises to Ganymede as quickly as he calms the
storm that tosses Aeneas’ ships. Ganymede does not control fate, time, and the gods; Jupiter does, and *Dido* here is no more neglectful of the *Aeneid* than Jupiter is of what happens to Aeneas. The audience’s expectations of a “transgressive reinscription” of Virgil’s epic are frustrated by the time Aeneas appears on stage.

The Jupiter-Ganymede exchange certainly embellishes the *Aeneid* but this does not necessarily mean that it transgresses or subverts Virgil’s text. Rather, I suggest that this embellishment, and others throughout *Dido*, function in two important ways. First, the embellishments of the *Aeneid* generate dramatic tension and thereby stimulate the audience’s interest; the Jupiter-Ganymede scene creates an audience expectation of a parody of epic, and probably of other genres as well, to frustrate it. Second, the embellishments announce Marlowe’s invention as well as his imitation, informing the audience that *Dido* is no slavish revision of the *Aeneid*.

Approaching the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange as a faithful yet original revision of the *Aeneid* opens up a new site of inquiry that I intend to pursue in this chapter: *Dido’s* engagement with some of the problems and tensions in Virgil’s text, elements that make up the *Aeneid’s* darker side. The behaviour of the gods, notably Juno’s wrath, is one of these elements. Juno’s wrath drives Virgil’s epic from the beginning until Book 12, when she assents to Jupiter’s plan for the Roman race (841-42). The Jupiter-Ganymede exchange, as a dramatic explanation of Juno’s hatred of the Trojans throughout the *Aeneid*, raises the possibility that *Dido* revises more of the epic than books 1, 2, and 4, including the epic’s more pessimistic elements. I explore these possibilities further in Chapter 3. There is a tendency in some criticism of *Dido* to view Virgil’s Aeneas as an exemplary hero, and hence, to deploy the Ovidian/rival tradition’s influence to explain what seems un-Virgilian about Marlowe’s Aeneas. In Chapter 3, I demonstrate that Virgil’s Aeneas struggles throughout the epic to maintain his *pius* status. We shall see that Virgil’s Aeneas is at times
rather un-Virgilian, or perhaps not quite the hero we might want him to be. This does not change Aeneas’ transcendental, mythic standing as Rome’s “father” because *pater Aeneas* is always *pater Aeneas* in Virgil’s epic (e.g. 1.580, 5.358). Rather, it is to draw early attention to the fact that Virgil’s Aeneas sometimes acts in ways that contradict the ethical values that are articulated in the *Aeneid*. There is evidence in *Dido* that Marlowe was aware of this problematic Virgilian hero, some of which I bring to light in this chapter. The dramatic Aeneas, like *Dido’s* departures from the *Aeneid*, remains true to Virgil’s epic in the final analysis.

*Dido’s* engagement with the darker side of the *Aeneid* has implications for two arguments that are connected, which I shall attend to briefly before turning to the “Aeneas and Catharsis” section. The first is the audience’s imaginative identification with Marlowe’s Aeneas as Virgil’s hero, and the second is *Dido’s* position in relation to Elizabeth I and her claims to Trojan ancestry. While I maintain that *Dido* celebrates Elizabeth’s mythic origins—*pater Aeneas* is after all the father of the Roman Empire, and thus of London, the “new Troy” in the Elizabethan *translatio imperii studiiique*—the play is still a cryptic and precariously balanced celebration. Recently, Deanne Williams has argued that *Dido* is a “sophisticated theatrical compliment to the queen” (32). I agree, but prefer to use an expression borrowed from *Hamlet* to explain the way *Dido* interacts with Elizabeth: Marlowe’s play negotiates the Virgin queen “with as much modesty as cunning” (2.2.440).

### 2.2: Aeneas and Catharsis

When Marlowe’s Aeneas leaves Dido, he explains that her words cannot move him: “In vain, my love, thy spend’st thy fainting breath: / If words might move me, I were overcome” (5.1.153-54). Dido calls him “perjur’d” for his trouble (5.1.156), and she seems justified in doing so because earlier in the play she witnessed an Aeneas moved by words.
Then the words were his and they told the terrible story of the fall of Troy. Here is part of Aeneas’ tale:

Frighted with this confused noise, I rose,
And looking from a turret might behold
Young infants swimming in their parents’ blood,
Headless carcases piled up in heaps,
Virgins half-dead draggéd by their golden hair
And with main force flung on a ring of pikes,
Old men with swords thrust through their aged sides,
Kneeling for mercy to a Greekish lad,
Who with steel pole-axes dashéd out their brains. (2.1.191-99)

Roma Gill calls Aeneas’ narrative in Dido “at once an expansion and a compression of Virgil’s second book” (1977, 154). Rick Bowers calls it a story of “total violence” with episodes that “demand [an] emotional response” (2002, 99-100). The response it demands, and gets, is a cathartic reaction from Aeneas that has far-reaching implications for the play’s plot, characterization, and genre.

Although Aristotle might not explain what catharsis means, he does nominate pity and fear as the emotions “proper” to the tragic pleasure (Poetics 39). These two emotions inform Aeneas’ tale, mainly in his description of Pyrrhus, Troy’s destroyer. Pyrrhus lacks the Aristotelian tragic emotions, as his treatment of Priam demonstrates. Defeated in battle, Priam holds up his hands to beg for mercy. The pitiless Pyrrhus cuts them off: “Not movéd at all, but smiling at his tears, / This butcher, whilst [Priam’s] hands were yet held up, / Treading upon his breast, struck off his hands” (2.1.240-42). Pyrrhus’ next action is so terrible that it moves a statue of Jove to express disapproval:

Then from the navel to the throat at once
He rippéd old Priam; at whose latter gasp
Jove’s marble statue gan to bend the brow,
As loathing Pyrrhus for this wicked act. (2.1.255-58)

But Pyrrhus is as fearless as he is pitiless, and “undaunted” by the sign of divine censure, he celebrates Priam’s slaughter, fires Troy, and surveys the carnage standing “stone still” (2.1.259-64). The image of an unmoved Pyrrhus in contrast to Jove’s moving statue
suggests that the events Aeneas describes should excite the pity and fear that Pyrrhus never shows. While the events do not excite the tragic emotions in Pyrrhus, they do in Aeneas.

Aeneas is able to express the emotions that Pyrrhus lacks. The Aeneid demands a pitiful and fearful Aeneas because the role of pater Aeneas is that of midwife to the birth of an “infant Troy” (10.27). This newborn Troy—Rome—supersedes the old Troy that Pyrrhus destroys. Dido promotes this “father Aeneas,” the lost character of the Aeneid’s first half who finds his epic way in the second, not the traitorous Aeneas of the Ovidian/rival tradition.

Sometimes, evidence of Dido’s fidelity to the Aeneid is revealed paradoxically in the play’s embellishments of the epic. Such is the case with Aeneas’ narrative, in particular his attempts to avoid telling the story and also in the narrative’s status as more Aeneas’ lament than eyewitness report for Dido. Marlowe’s Aeneas fears recalling the events his narrative describes. In the epic, Aeneas tells the tale because Dido has requested it, even though his “mind trembles to remember” (2.10-12). It “trembles” too in Marlowe’s play, making Aeneas “sink at Dido’s feet” (2.1.117). And yet, in contrast to Virgil’s Aeneas, Marlowe’s character does not want to tell the story at all, at least not to Dido, and it takes a request and then an order from the queen to make him speak (2.1.106-07, 118-20). In the tale, Aeneas’ description of the “undaunted Pyrrhus” implies the Trojan’s fear, suggesting his fearful reaction to the sign of divine disapproval that Pyrrhus ignores. Aeneas expresses his pity as grief. He recalls weeping at the appearance of Hector’s ghost, especially at the sight of the injuries caused by Pyrrhus’ father, Achilles:

And thinking to go down, came Hector’s ghost,
With ashy visage, blueish sulphur eyes,
His arms torn from his shoulders, and his breast
Furrow’d with wounds, and—that which made me weep—
Thongs at his heels, by which Achilles’ horse
Drew him in triumph through the Greekish camp—
Burst from the earth, crying ‘Aeneas, fly!
Troy is a-fire, the Grecians have the town!’ (2.1.201-08)
Virgil calls Achilles “pitiless” (“immitis”) early in his epic (1.30). Like the father in the *Aeneid*, so is the son in *Dido*. Putting it another way, the dramatic Aeneas expresses the emotions that these characters lack in the *Aeneid*. After telling of Hector’s fate, the “woeful tale” becomes Aeneas’ lament. It is a moment that is vital to *Dido’s* modernization of the *Poetics* because, as a lament rather than an eyewitness report, the narrative is the basis for the play’s enactment of both the *Outlet* and *Structural* interpretations of catharsis.

As the narrative progresses, Aeneas becomes hysterical, leading one critic to argue that the narrative “overstate[s] culturally permissible expressions of grief and distress” (Bowers 2002, 99). Aeneas grieves for the Trojan citizens whom the Greeks did not pity—the virgins, the old men—and he laments Priam, Hecuba and, briefly, the loss of his wife, Creusa. Marlowe makes his Aeneas so full of grief that he cannot stop the expression of it, despite Dido’s impassioned plea for him to “end” in the middle of describing Priam’s death (2.1.243). To drive the point home, Aeneas speaks of his abortive attempt to rescue the ravished Cassandra and of the death of Polyxena (2.1.274-9, 286-88). Cassandra and Polyxena are significant for two, connected reasons. The first concerns Dido’s fidelity to the *Aeneid*, and the second concerns the function of Aeneas’ narrative as the emotional experience that re-unifies the Trojan’s epic identity. There has been some debate among critics about the inclusion of Cassandra and especially of Polyxena in Aeneas’ narrative. At stake is whether *Dido* is influenced by the *Aeneid* or the Ovidian/rival tradition.

Virgil’s Aeneas does mention the attempted rescue of Cassandra (2.402-30). Ovid does as well, but like Marlowe, he changes some of the Virgilian details, as H. J. Oliver notes in his edition of *Dido* (33n). I shall return to the Cassandra episode when I come to examine Aeneas’ action during the battle for Troy. Polyxena is the current focus. In their study of the sources for Marlowe’s plays, Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman assert that Polyxena “does not appear at all in the *Aeneid*,” from which they deduce that her
appearance in *Dido* is another of the play’s links with Ovid (24). Oliver agrees, noting that the Myrmidon’s capture of Polyxena is Marlowe’s invention and “Ovid, not Virgil, told how Polyxena . . . was slain by Pyrrhus in revenge for the death of Achilles” (33-34n). Some *Dido* critics deploy Marlowe’s Cassandra and Polyxena as evidence of the influence of the Ovidian/rival tradition.\(^{11}\) A closer look at the *Aeneid* reveals that Virgil does mention the death of Polyxena, but not in Aeneas’ narrative. The reference is in Andromache’s meeting with Aeneas in Book 3. The meeting is a highly charged emotional affair in which Andromache confesses she would rather have died as Polyxena did than suffer as she has at the hands of the Greeks after Troy’s fall (321-24).\(^{12}\) The dramatic Aeneas’ pity for Polyxena is appropriately Virgilian, and gives us reason to suspect that *Dido* is faithfully revising elements of Book 3 as well as books 1, 2, and 4.\(^{13}\) I suggest that Marlowe includes Cassandra and transfers Polyxena’s fate from Book 3 to the narrative so that Aeneas can pity these characters along with all the others. This leaves the narrative’s audiences—both the interior audience of characters listening to the tale and the play’s exterior audience—in no doubt about Aeneas’ grief. The dramatic Aeneas is emotionally “full” in contrast to the unmoved Pyrrhus.

In the *Aeneid*, Pyrrhus’ lack of pity and fear cause the death of Priam and the city for which he stands, leaving a “nameless corpse” on “the shore,” a ruined “trunk” of a city without its head, King Priam (2.557-58). In *Dido*’s revision, Aeneas defines his Virgilian difference from Pyrrhus in the terms “proper” to the tragic pleasure; he is full of the pity and fear that Pyrrhus lacks. *Dido* thereby explores a relationship between Aristotelian tragic emotions and dramatic characterization as a basis for generic revision. In the process, the play embodies pity and fear in the dramatic version of Virgil’s *pater Aeneas*. Marlowe’s Aeneas has what I call a “cathartic prerogative”: the ability to respond
emotionally to tragedy. In *Dido*, this prerogative reveals Aeneas’ difference from Pyrrhus, a difference that is suitably Virgilian.

We can already see *Dido* engaging with both the *Poetics* and some of the questions about catharsis that the Italian theorists of the period were debating. Marlowe’s answers to these questions reveal the modernization of the *Poetics* that occurs in *Dido*. The first question concerns the emotions tragedy is meant to move. The debate, as Bernard Weinberg explains, is about “whether tragedy, through purgation, actually removes pity and fear from men’s souls or whether it removes, through their intermediation, other less desirable passions” (408). For example, Maggi argued that tragedy “frees the mind of perturbations *like* pity and fear (Hathaway 1962, 221-22; my emphasis). According to Maggi, Aristotle used the purgation of pity and fear “for the removal of other disorders from the soul, through which removal the soul comes to be adorned with the virtues. For once wrath is driven out, for example, kindness takes its place” (qtd. in Weinberg 408). Castelvetro added “pusillanimity” to pity and fear, arguing that exposure to these emotions in tragedy will fortify the audience “against these weaknesses and thus make the pusillanimous magnanimous, the timorous brave, and the compassionate severe” (qtd. in Gilbert 55). Minturno, in the extract given in Chapter 1, above, argues that tragedy purges only pity and fear. Stephen Orgel offers the following summary of the debate:

most commentators offered some version of one of three standard views: that tragedy is only concerned with the two passions of pity and fear, and it is therefore only these that were purged (and the argument then centered on trying to explain why this was beneficial); or that, on the contrary, pity and fear are good things and it is the other, antisocial passions that tragedy purges, e.g., envy, anger, hatred, etc.; or, . . . that tragedy purges us in a much more general way, by tempering all our passions through its vision of the pity and fear inherent in the uncertainties of great men’s lives, thereby making our own unhappiness easier to endure. (2002, 134-35)

The question about which emotions tragedy purges, as Orgel notes, involves another: are the tragic emotions controlled or driven out? To put the question another way, does the
theorist ascribe to the *Moderation*, or *Emotional fortitude*, or *Moralistic/Didactic*
interpretation of catharsis? As will become clear shortly, Marlowe has another
interpretation in mind that has no theoretical precedent in the period. The current point is
that according to *Dido*, tragedy moves pity and fear rather than emotions like them.

Aeneas’ expression of pity and fear supplements the argument that *Dido* re-presents
the hero of the *Aeneid*, for the narrative in *Dido* compresses the references to pity and fear
that are scattered throughout Book 2. Aeneas’ pity frames this book: his distress at
recalling the “most piteous [sights]” begins it; his description of the “piteous multitude”
that leaves Troy with him ends it (2.5, 798). Virgil’s hero also experiences fear, often as a
reaction to supernatural sights that he interprets portentously. In Book 2, Aeneas expresses
that fear in a form Virgil uses throughout the *Aeneid*—“my hair stood up and my voice
stuck in my throat” (2.774).15 *Dido*’s educated audience is important here, as is Jove’s
moving statue. It is feasible that an audience familiar with Virgil’s epic imagined the
dramatic Aeneas reacting to the moving statue with this standard Virgilian expression of
fear. By compressing the *Aeneid*, *Dido* embodies in Aeneas the pity and fear that his epic
counterpart feels in Books 1-4.16

Can characters in the tragedy, as well as the exterior audience, experience
catharsis? This is the second question current in the debates of the period that *Dido*
negotiates. *Dido* answers this question via Aeneas’ position as audience to his own
narrative, since he both tells the tale and expresses the emotions “proper” to the tragic
pleasure. The origin of the question is in the *Poetics*, in what Sheila Murnaghan calls
“Aristotle’s tendency to assimilate the experience of dramatic characters and those of
spectators” (772n).17 The sixteenth-century Italian theorists are familiar with this tendency.
Cintio, for example, argues that “the personages introduced in the tragedy are purged of
those passions of which they were the victims” (qtd. in Orgel 2002, 135), and Piccolomini
asserts that the spectators rather than the characters should experience the tragic emotions (Weinberg 546). Dido demonstrates, via Aeneas’ expression of pity and fear, that characters can indeed experience catharsis.

The kind of catharsis that Aeneas experiences is not clear at this stage of the text. It is clear, however, that Dido enacts Aeneas’ catharsis to promote Virgil’s epic and its hero by seeming at first to depart from the Aeneid. Initially, Aeneas’ role in Dido as audience to the events his narrative describes appears to run counter to the narrative of the Aeneid, where Aeneas “rushes into the flames and weapons” (2.337). Many critics react unfavourably to the dramatic Aeneas’ passivity in comparison to the actions of Virgil’s hero. If we read both texts a little more closely, though, we see that the passive Aeneas in Dido has his origins in the Aeneid. What the dramatic Aeneas enacts in his position as audience to his own narrative is the epic hero’s growing awareness in Aeneid 2 that fighting is useless in the battle for Troy (2.314). The Virgilian insistence that battle is futile is captured in the synecdoche of Priam’s “useless sword” (2.510). Dido casts this futility as Aeneas’ confession that “had not we / Fought manfully, I had not told this tale. / Yet manhood would not serve; of force we fled” (2.1.270-72). It is also important to remember that Hector’s ghost appears to Aeneas, in both texts, urging him to flee the falling city (2.1.207-08; 2.289-95). In Dido, Hector’s ghost does duty for two other characters who also urge Aeneas to flee in the epic—Aeneas’ parents, Venus and Anchises (2.619, 640). In the Aeneid, the fact that Aeneas stays is problematic, not the fact that he goes.

We come now to the epic Aeneas’ actions in the battle for Troy, and Dido’s faithful revision of the problematic features of the Aeneid’s hero. In the epic, while Aeneas stays, he engages in action that is extremely questionable in terms of his pius status. A vivid example is that Aeneas helps cause the “piteous slaughter” of Trojans, which comes about when he and others follow Corobeus’ decision to disguise themselves as Greeks (2.411).
The inclusion of Cassandra in Aeneas’ narrative in Dido is significant here, for it is she whom the disguised Trojans aim to rescue in the Aeneid. Roger Hornsby argues that the Greek attack is the “lowest point in Aeneas’ moral history” in Virgil’s epic (64). I am suggesting that the description, in Dido, of Aeneas’ abortive attempt to rescue Cassandra is a faithful revision of the Aeneid’s problematic hero. Roma Gill is right when she calls Aeneas’ narrative in Dido a “compression” of Aeneid 2. The narrative squeezes Virgil’s account of the futility of battle into the dramatic Aeneas’ position as audience to the action it describes. The narrative also draws attention, via Cassandra, to the hero of Virgil’s epic who sometimes acts with intentions that undermine his status as a pius hero.

We can never know whether Dido’s original audience recognised the play’s re-presentation of Virgil’s problematic hero. It is a fleeting reference after all. This does not affect the argument that Dido demonstrates its fidelity to the Aeneid by re-presenting elements of the epic’s darker side. Rather, Dido’s fidelity to the darker elements of its source text encourages us to take Aeneas’ narrative seriously because it is true to Virgil’s epic.

Yet some of Dido’s departures from the Aeneid—especially Aeneas’ emotional “fullness” in contrast to the brutal Pyrrhus—have led a number of critics to argue that Marlowe parodies Virgil’s hero by representing an Aeneas who is emotionally excessive.22 This argument foregrounds the difficulties inherent in the artistic representation of extreme emotion, in this case, Aeneas’ pathos. The main problem is that Aeneas’ tragic agony is so emotionally intense that it lends itself to being parodied, or becoming a parody of tragic suffering that turns tragedy into melodrama. But there are signs within the tale itself that it is an attempt to represent an authentic tragic experience, such as when Aeneas interrupts the tale and fails to finish it. These signs reveal that Aeneas’ narrative is genuinely constitutive of a cathartic moment.
Neither the interruptions nor Aeneas’ failure to finish the story are in the *Aeneid*. These departures tell *Dido’s* audience about the power the tale has to emotionally move Aeneas. I suggest that these differences from the *Aeneid* are crucial evidence that Aeneas experiences a sixteenth-century version of Jacob Bernays’ *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis. In this therapeutic interpretation of catharsis, pity and fear are driven out to alleviate the emotional burden of the person experiencing these emotions. Aeneas’ interruptions and his failure to finish the tale effect the purgation of the pity and fear his narrative excites. We shall see that Aeneas’ experience of the *Outlet* interpretation drives the *Structural* one, reversing the hero’s fortunes and aligning *Dido* with the *Aeneid*.

Marlowe’s Aeneas is in fact “mov’d too much” by his own story, not once but twice (2.1.125). He is so moved by his memory of Sinon’s performance of the “action so pitiful” that “overcame” Priam and let in the Trojan horse that he stops speaking: “And then—O Dido, pardon me!” (2.1.155-59). The Aeneas who is overcome in the first half of the narrative prefigures the Aeneas who is overwhelmed when the narrative ends, so much so that Marlowe’s Dido rather than Virgil’s Aeneas ends the narrative. She cuts the story short after hearing of the death of Polyxena: “I die with melting ruth; Aeneas, leave!” (2.1.289). The use of “leave” could mean stop telling the story, as every edition of the play glosses the term, or “depart Aeneas,” as Rick Bowers suggests (2002, 100).23 Aeneas stops telling the story but he doesn’t go away. The tale has had such an emotional impact on him that he cannot answer the few remaining questions asked of him: “sorrow hath tir’d [Aeneas] quite,” and Achates answers the questions in Aeneas’ stead (2.1.293-99). Aeneas’ inability to finish the story seems to me indicative of the struggle to adequately represent tragedy through language, that is, of the silence that tragedy tends towards. The tale has aroused Aeneas’ pity and fear, he has expressed these emotions in telling it, and now he is
emotionally exhausted. Aeneas’ pity and fear define his narrative as a tragedy, and the Trojan has responded with the emotions “proper” to that genre.

Aeneas’ narrative goes for over one hundred and fifty lines. Clearly, the story is important to Aeneas, and Aeneas wants to tell it, despite his protests to Dido; he just doesn’t want to tell it to her. Before he meets Dido, Aeneas tries twice to “tell [his] griefs” (1.1.246). He is frustrated on both occasions: first, by “too cruel” Venus, who does not stay to listen, and second, by a plea from Ascanius that Aeneas “leave to weep” (1.1.243; 2.1.35). Ascanius’ plea is echoed almost immediately by Achates, who cautions Aeneas to “Leave to lament” lest his expression of “fears” is “laughed at” by an approaching band of men (2.1.38). Aeneas’ attempt to tell the tale to Venus is reasonably Virgilian (1.405-09) but the attempt to tell it to his men and Ascanius is not. Commenting on Aeneas’ second attempt, Donald Stump argues that “The exemplary leader of the Aeneid . . . has been transformed into a deluded exile who distresses children and embarrasses his fellow soldiers” (84). Perhaps, but why? The answer, I think, is not to “make a laughing stock of the Aeneid,” as Stump claims (82). Rather, it is to give a reason for the “unknown” Aeneas in Dido (1.1.227). Rick Bowers notes that Marlowe’s Aeneas “has neither a fixed address nor a fixed identity” when he arrives in Carthage (2002, 99). Virgil’s Aeneas is also “[him]self unknown” before he reaches Carthage (1.384; “ipse ignotus”). I suggest that Dido puts Virgil’s “unknown” Aeneas on the stage to perform the unification of his fragmented epic identity. This unification is brought about by Aeneas’ cathartic response to his narrative.

The difference in Aeneas before and after his narrative—that is, the pre-narrative Aeneas’ difference from the post-narrative Aeneas—demonstrates that he experiences the Outlet interpretation of catharsis. The pre-narrative Aeneas reacts, as Richard Martin notes, “with uncharacteristic sensitivity to his ownimaginative recreation of the horrors of war”
(1980, 59). In Martin’s analysis, “uncharacteristic” means un-Virgilian. On closer inspection, this departure from the *Aeneid* serves, as other departures do in *Dido*, to paradoxically promote the hero of Virgil’s epic because it is after Aeneas’ performance of the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis that the epic business he embodies is remobilised. The change in Aeneas’ fortunes illustrates that the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis in *Dido* drives the play’s enactment of the *Structural* interpretation.

Having Aeneas tell the tragic narrative and express the emotions “proper” to it are vital to the play’s promotion of Virgil’s Aeneas. Aeneas not only wants to tell the narrative, he needs to tell it, but not for the reasons put forth in the *Aeneid* or to satisfy the queen’s request for news in *Dido*. Aeneas needs to tell the story because it “purges” him of the emotions of pity and fear that have been intensifying since his arrival in Libya, and more significantly, have stalled the epic project he embodies. Margot Hendricks notes that the pre-narrative Aeneas is “a man so consumed by personal grief that he is virtually immobilized” (169). The epic that Aeneas embodies has also come to a grinding halt. Both are immobilized because Aeneas’ identity was wiped out along with Troy. As Aeneas puts it to Dido: “Sometime I was a Trojan, mighty Queen; / But Troy is not; what shall I say I am?” (2.1.75-76). Although Aeneas is without Troy when he arrives in Libya, he is burdened with the memory of the city’s destruction, in the *Aeneid* as well as *Dido*. The dramatic Aeneas defines what he remembers as “passions in [his] head” that are worse than any felt by “Theban Niobe” at her sons’ deaths (2.1.3-6). These extreme “passions” worry Achates because they destabilize Aeneas, producing the fantasy that Priam still lives and Troy still stands:

Achates, though mine eyes say this is stone,
Yet thinks my mind that this is Priamus;
And when my grieved heart sighs and says no,
Then would it leap out to give Priam life.
O, were I not at all, so thou mightst be!
Achates, see, King Priam wags his hand;
He is alive; Troy is not overcome! (2.1.24-30)

Aeneas craves no identity at all without the signifiers of Troy and Priam: “Methinks that town there should be Troy, yon Ida’s hill, / There Xanthus stream, because here’s Priamus— / And when I know it is not, then I die” (2.1.7-9).

A paraphrase of some of Catherine Belsey’s work on subjectivity is useful for an insight into the problems the pre-narrative Aeneas experiences. He is an example of Belsey’s “fragmented” subject, and he is psychotic in the sense that Belsey clarifies: the meanings available in the specific discourse that held Aeneas in place crumbled when Troy fell; lost in Libya, Aeneas is “outside the range of meanings in [Trojan] society” and his resulting psychosis manifests as hallucinatory utterance (1985, 5, 15). Aeneas has no idea who he is when he meets Dido—to quote Virgil again, he is “himself unknown”—but things improve after he expresses his griefs in the narrative. They improve because Aeneas has experienced the Outlet interpretation of catharsis.

Jacob Bernays’ interpretation of catharsis as that which achieves an alleviating relief of pitiful and fearful mental affections helps us here (162). So, too, does Sheila Murnaghan’s explanation of the homeopathic interpretation on which Bernays’ theory is based:

*Catharsis* is like a medical intervention in the course of a disease, or like the removal of a weight from someone who is burdened; it alters the course of an emotional response so that it is no longer continuous with what produced it. . . . *catharsis* produces a *tour de force*, removing emotion by evoking it. (761)

*Dido* has staged a mentally unstable and emotionally burdened Aeneas. In addition, Aeneas has told a narrative that evokes the emotions of pity and fear, and he has expressed those emotions as he tells the tale. The cathartic relief proposed by Bernays and the removal of emotions noted by Murnaghan are carefully staged after the narrative, in Act 3, when Aeneas goes to hunt with Dido. Significantly, the hunt is a recapitulation of “labours” that were “irksome” to Aeneas before his narrative (3.3.56). The action also returns to the same
stage space where, before the narrative, Venus would not stay to hear her son’s “woeful
tale” (2.1.114). Then, Aeneas was left to “dull the air” with a “discoursive moan”
(1.1.248). Now, he is overcome with joy: “O, how these irksome labours now delight / And
overjoy my thoughts with their escape! / Who would not undergo all kind of toil / To be
well stor’d with such a winter’s tale?” (3.3.56-59). The action and the performance space
are the same, but Aeneas is entirely different. He is no longer burdened with the weight of
an untold tragedy and relieved to be rid of it. Aeneas’ narrative is, then, a tragedy-within-a-
tragedy where the Outlet interpretation of catharsis is played out before the play proper has
ended. As I aim to demonstrate shortly, this internal tragedy raises the possibility that
Dido engages the concept of ecphrasis.

Because Aeneas expresses his post-narrative joy before he meets Dido in the cave,
its source cannot be his relationship with the Carthaginian queen. Nor can Aeneas’ joy be
confused with his pre-narrative fantasies about Troy and Priam because it is the by-product
of telling the narrative. It is the untold tragedy that causes Aeneas’ hallucinations. Sara
Deats comments that the cave scene is the play’s turning point, the “drama’s second
movement” where action speeds “centrifugally away from love’s fulfillment” and towards
the Virgilian exaltation of “masculine honor over feminine passion” (1997, 103). Taking
Deats’s comments into account, I suggest that Aeneas’ joy is a condition formed
independently of his subsequent relationship with Dido, and a condition of the play’s
promotion of Virgil’s Aeneas.

Through the difference between the pre-narrative and post-narrative Aeneas, Dido
demonstrates that Aeneas’ catharsis brings about the mobilization of the Virgilian
Aeneas/epic in the play. If Aeneas had not been purged of the tragic emotions his tale
excites, he would remain the “immobilized” figure Hendricks notes and the “fragmented”
subject described by Belsey. In one pre-narrative passage alone, the hero is “Of Troy,”
named Aeneas, predestined, of “divine descent from sceptred Jove,” “poor and unknown,” “despis’d,” homeless and “Exil’d forth Europe and wide Asia both” (1.1.216-230). After the narrative, Aeneas’ identity is unified. To paraphrase Belsey again, as the enunciator of the narrative, Aeneas is “the ‘I’ who speaks” and, because he is also ‘the [cathartic] ‘I’ of [the] utterance,” he has “access to the signifying practice” of the narrative (1985, 5-6). As we shall see, the reversal of Aeneas’ emotions prefigures the reversal of his fortunes, marking the emergence of a joyful Aeneas as the moment when the Outlet interpretation of catharsis begins to drive the Structural one. First I shall conclude the discussion of the Outlet interpretation that Aeneas performs.

Aeneas’ catharsis has therapeutic benefits for the hero. There are no ethical-rhetorical benefits here of the kind normally attributed to catharsis by the sixteenth-century theorists. These kinds of benefits may be discerned, however, in the Structural interpretation insofar as the alignment of the dramatic Aeneas with his epic counterpart is an ideological exercise in which the hero is unproblematically pious. I argue in Chapter 3 that such is not entirely the case. The present point is that revising Virgil’s Dido and Aeneas story as a tragedy is primarily an artistic exercise that offers an original interpretation of catharsis to the theoretical debates of the period. Somewhat ironically, objections to the Outlet interpretation are evidence that it comes closest to describing Aeneas’ emotional experience. Gerald Else, for example, argues that the therapeutic interpretation is not what catharsis means in the Poetics because “It presupposes that we come to the tragic drama (unconsciously, if you will) as patients to be cured, relieved, restored to psychic health” (440). 28 It seems to me that Else’s comments aptly describe the pre-narrative Aeneas in Dido, the character in need of the alleviating effects of a Bernaysian catharsis. Aeneas’ performance of the Outlet interpretation of catharsis serves an appropriately Virgilian purpose that relates to the “parade of replica Troys” in Book 3
David Quint points out that the “fiction of Book 3 insists that [the future of Rome] can only be reached if the Trojans relinquish their past and its memories, if they can escape from a pattern of traumatic repetition” (1993, 61). *Dido* does not need to include the main action in Book 3 because Aeneas’ performance of the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis does duty for the fiction that *Aeneid* 3 insists upon.

While the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas performs may seem anachronistically familiar to us, the *Poetics* is nevertheless the source, as is borne out in the play’s performance of one of Aristotle’s substitutional practices—his preference for a tragic plot that does not need to be performed to evoke the emotions of pity and fear. At the beginning of Chapter 14, Aristotle has the following comments to make about recited and performed tragedy:

> The tragic fear and pity may be aroused by the Spectacle; but they may also be aroused by the very structure and incidents of the play—which is the better way and shows the better poet. The Plot in fact should be so framed that, even without seeing the things take place, he who simply hears the account of them shall be filled with horror and pity at the incidents; which is just the effect that the *mere recital* of the story of *Oedipus* would have on one. (*Poetics* 39; my emphasis).

Or, one might add, the effect that Aeneas’ recital of the fall of Troy has on one. Aeneas’ narrative stages, then, Aristotle’s preference for recited rather than performed tragedy. In the process, Marlowe lays claim to the title of “better poet.” Following the logic implied in Aristotle’s description of what the “better poet” would do, Marlowe, I suggest, announces his authorial aspiration to overtake Virgil.

We come now to a consideration of the *Structural* interpretation of catharsis in *Dido*. Gerald Else is the main modern exponent of this interpretation, which was not available to Marlowe in sixteenth-century literary theorizing. In Else’s definition, catharsis is a discernible feature of the play’s plot, “not a change or end-product in the spectator’s soul . . . but a process carried forward in the emotional material of the play by its structural
elements, above all by the recognition” (439). Dido enacts a version of the Structural interpretation in which *peripeteia* rather than *anagnoresis* drives the process. This is evident in the effect that telling the tale has on Aeneas’ destiny rather than on his state of mind. After the purgation of Aeneas’ pity and fear, catharsis becomes an operational factor in Dido’s plot that aligns Aeneas with the epic imperatives of the *Aeneid*.

After the narrative, the “passions” in Aeneas’ head disappear from the play, never to be mentioned again. The change in Aeneas’ emotions from overwhelming grief to elation prefigures the change in his fortunes. Soon, Hermes will appear in a dream to show Aeneas the path to Italy, and a future in “fame’s immortal house” (4.3.1-12). The play’s second half again embellishes Virgil’s story. For example, Marlowe reverses the order of Hermes’ appearances, and Aeneas recognises some of Cupid’s machinations (4.3.1-14; 5.1.27-41; 5.1.42-45).33 Clare Kinney is particularly critical of the latter addition:

the plotting of Aeneas’s anagnorisis is rather telling—it is only after he identifies Cupid as the first cause of Dido’s desire that his resolve to depart from Carthage hardens. It is as if he is ultimately freed from his non-Virgilian promises to Dido, not because of a renewed awareness of his duty to his progeny, but rather as a result of his dismantling of Dido’s agency. (267)

And yet, freed from his non-Virgilian promises to Dido, Marlowe’s Aeneas is also free to resume his epic role. *Dido* ultimately confirms Aeneas’ commitment to epic business with Virgil’s original Latin, and with more of it that just the famous half line: “*Desine meque tuis incendere teque querelis; / Italiam non sponte sequor*” (“Cease to inflame both you and me with your laments. I do not seek Italy of my own free will.” 5.1.139-40; 4.360-61). Aeneas speaks only once more to say that Dido’s words cannot move him. His “deafness” is appropriately Virgilian, for in the *Aeneid*, “heaven seals” Aeneas’ ears to the pleas of Anna, in Dido’s stead (4.437-40). Aeneas leaves Dido/Dido to pursue the course mapped out for him by Virgil’s epic.
The Virgilian “deafness” of Marlowe’s Aeneas furthers my argument that *Dido* enacts the *Structural* interpretation of catharsis, and that *peripeteia* rather than *anagnoresis* drives the process. The *Structural* catharsis in *Dido* owes a debt to the *Emotional fortitude* interpretation of the term, which, unlike Else’s interpretation, was available in the theory of the period. In the *Emotional fortitude* interpretation, as Baxter Hathaway explains, tragedy functions “as protective insulation against evil”; in other words, tragedy provides “fortification by inurement,” increasing emotions in the theatre and purging them so that they may be avoided in real life (1962, 216). Robertelli is one of the Italian Renaissance theorists who proposed the *Emotional fortitude* interpretation:

When men are present at tragedies and hear and perceive characters saying and doing those things that happen to themselves in reality, they become accustomed to grieving, fearing, and pitying; for which reason it happens that when something befalls them as a result of their human condition, they grieve and fear less. Furthermore, it is obvious that whoever has never felt grief for some calamity grieves more violently is some misfortune later occurs contrary to his hopes. (qtd. in Hathaway 1962, 215)

Aeneas’ lack of emotional response to Dido’s pleas suggests that the *Outlet* interpretation he experienced earlier has fortified him against his susceptibility to excessive levels of pity and fear. The *Emotional fortitude* interpretation of catharsis helps Marlowe’s Aeneas act the part of Virgil’s hero, who is twice unmoved by Dido’s pleas (4.438-39, 449).

We have seen throughout this section that *Dido* is a faithful yet original revision of the *Aeneid* as a tragedy. The play’s embellishments of and departures from the *Aeneid* are signs of invention that generate dramatic tension but ultimately do not change the story as Virgil tells it. The discussion in the next two sections furthers this argument. I wish to take a side step before these sections, and explore the possibility that Aeneas’ narrative is about ecphrasis as well as catharsis. This is a site of inquiry that has not been investigated before. The exploration of it has something to tell us about *Dido’s* relationship to the *Aeneid*, and about catharsis in Marlowe’s modernized *Poetics*. 
In his seminal work, Murray Krieger says that ecphrasis as the name of a literary genre, or at least a topos, . . . attempts to imitate in words an object of the plastic arts. . . . Ekphrasis, under this definition, clearly presupposes that one art, poetry, is defining its mission through its dependence on the mission of another art—painting, sculpture, or others. (6)

Critics agree that Virgil is a master practitioner of ecphrasis, and an enduring debate about his use of this device is whether or not the ecphrases in the Aeneid fulfil their task of restraining violence. The most famous ecphrases in Virgil’s epic are Deadalus’ relief, Aeneas’ shield, Pallas’ belt, and the one that most interests me because it interests Marlowe, the mural that depicts the Trojan War in the temple of Juno at Carthage (1.446-93). When Aeneas sees the mural, he experiences an intense emotional reaction which culminates in what one critic calls “the most famous of all Virgilian phrases”—“lacrimae rerum”—or “tears for the events [depicted]” (Lee 33; 1.462). Virgil refers to Aeneas’ tears three times in this section of Book 1 (459, 462, 470). Aeneas’ emotional outburst is a positive experience with implications for the reversal of his fortunes to date. Seeing the mural is the first time in the epic that Aeneas “dare[s] to hope for safety, and put better trust in his crushed [i.e. hitherto adverse] fortunes” (1.451-52). The pictures Aeneas sees show him that “virtue has its due rewards,” and they lead him to encourage Achates to “dismiss [his] fears” because the “fame [of Troy]” the mural represents “will bring [him] salvation” (1. 461, 463).

I suggest that Marlowe found the key to both the Outlet and Structural kinds of catharsis that Dido enacts in this Virgilian ecphrasis. It is also possible that Aeneas’ narrative is a dramatization of the ecphrasis. When read in conjunction with my discussion of the hysterical Aeneas, Krieger’s work brings this possibility to light. In tracing the history of ecphrasis, Krieger comments:

the ekphrasis, as an extended description, was called upon to intrude upon the flow of discourse and, for its duration, to suspend the argument of the
rhetor or the action of the poet; to rivet our attention upon a visual object to be described, which it was to elaborate in rich and vivid detail. It was, then, a device intended to interrupt the temporality of discourse, to freeze it during its indulgence in spatial exploration. (7)

It seems to me that Aeneas’ narrative accomplishes precisely the kind of interruption that ecphrasis intends, even though Aeneas would rather tell it to someone other than Dido. It is an interruption he seeks elsewhere in order to rid himself of his memories. Denied that relief, the repressed “passions in [his] head” break out as fantasies about Troy and Priam. We have already read one of Aeneas’ fantasies. There are others. Early in Act 2, Aeneas confesses to thinking Carthage is Troy (1.7-8). A few lines later, Aeneas again thinks Priam lives:

O, yet this stone doth make Aeneas weep,
And would my prayers, as Pygmalion’s did,
Could give it life, that under his conduct
We might sail back to Troy, and be reveng’d
On those hard-hearted Grecians which rejoice
That nothing now is left of Priamus!
O, Priamus is left, and this is he!
Come, come aboard, pursue the hateful Greeks! (2.1.15-22)

The earlier discussion of Aeneas’ fantasies revealed that they immobilize both Aeneas and the epic agenda he embodies, an immobility that is both a personal and an artistic stasis. Aeneas’ catharsis jolts him and Virgil’s epic, and thereby Dido, into action. The experience frees Aeneas from his emotional burden, allowing him, to cite Virgil, to put better trust in fortunes hitherto adverse, as indeed Aeneas does when Mercury comes to visit. The similarities between what Virgil’s ecphrasis and Marlowe’s catharsis accomplish are remarkable, as is the overwhelming emotional experience they both involve.39 These similarities lead me to argue that Aeneas’ catharsis is further proof that Dido deals faithfully with the Aeneid as it revises the epic as tragedy.

Dido does not, however, include Aeneas’ visit to the temple as part of its action. This appears to be a significant omission given the importance I have attributed to the visit.
Yet I suggest Marlowe did not need to include the visit because Aeneas’ cathartic narrative provides the audience with details of the mural’s pictures and the hero’s emotional response to them. As I have argued, the purpose of Aeneas’ catharsis in *Dido* is the same as it is in the temple of Juno ecphrasis because both assist Aeneas in becoming the epic hero he must be via a vivid, dramatic description that momentarily arrests action. Krieger draws attention to the “paradoxical immediacy of ekphrasis, whether as a verbal replacement for a visual image or as its own verbal emblem that plays the role of a visual image while playing its own role” (11). We can read Aeneas’ cathartic narrative in these terms, as the “verbal emblem” playing the roles Krieger notes, a dramatized ecphrasis of an ecphrasis that has its precedent in the actual Virgilian passage the narrative revises as a cathartic experience (Thomas 181). The tale is a word-painting, or “speaking picture”—*ut pictura poesis* (“as painting so poetry”)—that creates *enargeia*, a rhetorical figure which, to quote Krieger, “is to use words to yield so vivid a description that they—dare we say literally?—place the represented object before the reader’s (hearer’s) inner eye” (14). The cathartic narrative is a dramatized ecphrasis that places the details of the mural before the eyes of the audience, and in addition, performs the emotional effect that the mural has on Virgil’s Aeneas. The narrative draws our attention to Marlowe’s ecphrastic ambition, which, as Krieger notes, “gives to the language art the extraordinary assignment of seeking to represent the literally unrepresentable” (9).

Three points remain to be noted before I turn to the discussion of Dido and catharsis in Marlowe’s play. The first is that the mural ecphrasis in the *Aeneid* depicts a war that Aeneas will fight again in the second half of the epic, this time as victor—the battle for Latinum. When read in conjunction with my argument that the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange explains Juno’s hatred of the Trojans, the dramatized ecphrasis in
Dido gives us another reason to suspect that the play revises more than Virgil’s Dido and Aeneas story.  

The second point is that ecphrasis is part of Plato’s objections to the mimetic arts, tragedy in particular. To mobilize the well-known “bedness” analogy, an ecphrasis of a bed is another art form removed from the one that precedes it, the picture of the bed. Ecphrasis is therefore at a fourth remove from the “ideal form” of bedness that the objective bed itself represents. Putting it another way, ecphrasis is more guilty of mimetic “sins” than is the painting to which tragedy is connected in Plato’s objections. What is more, Aeneas’ narrative, as an ecphrasis of an ecphrasis, is not four but five times removed from the real object. I return to this point in the third section of this chapter, where I suggest that Aeneas’ ecphrastic/cathartic narrative is central to Marlowe’s ambition to overtake Virgil by turning epic into tragedy, and to Dido’s achievement as a modernized Poetics.

The third point involves the pleasure that the dramatic Aeneas experiences after his tale, his “overjoyed thoughts” in Act 3. This joy dramatically realizes the hope expressed by Virgil’s Aeneas in Book 1, when he encourages his men to think that “perhaps, one day, it will be pleasing to remember these things [i.e. the distressing events of the past]” (203). Also in Book 1, when Aeneas first arrives in Carthage, he is excited to see a theatre in the process of construction: “Here others place the deep foundations of the theatre, and they cut huge columns out of cliffs, lofty embellishments of the stage to be!” (1.427-29). With remarkable skill and economy, Dido puts Virgil’s Aeneas—not the traitorous Aeneas of the alternative tradition—on that stage.

2.3: Dido and Catharsis

The cathartic narrative effects the reversal of Dido’s fortunes as well as those of Aeneas, transforming her from powerful queen into doomed lover. Her peripeteia further enacts the Structural interpretation of catharsis. We shall see that Dido comes to embody
tragedy as the play progresses, and that she plays a vital role in coaching the play’s audience to experience the Outlet interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas models.

Dido enters in the second act, some 200 lines after Aeneas. It is a late entrance yet one that is reasonably consistent with the timing of Dido’s entrance in the Aeneid and suggestive, then, of the play’s faithful revision of Virgil’s epic. The greeting scene that follows is more problematic in terms of the play’s relationship to the Aeneid, as I shall demonstrate shortly. In my judgement, it follows the now familiar pattern in which Marlowe departs from and embellishes Virgil’s Aeneid only to return to it and promote its hero. I will consider the greeting scene at some length as evidence for my argument and also to note the ways in which Dido directs the stage action. It will become clear that she sets the scene for the play’s promotion of Virgil’s Aeneas, at her own expense. Her direction of the action also prefigures the ways in which Aeneas’ performance of the Outlet interpretation activates the Structural one, effecting her peripeteia in the play’s second half.

Dido does not recognise Aeneas at first, clad as he is in “base robes” (2.1.74, 79). But when she learns that it is “Warlike Aeneas,” Dido is quick to order her dead husband’s garment for the Trojan to wear, and invites Aeneas to “Sit in this chair, and banquet with a queen” (2.1.78, 80, 83). When Aeneas refuses, Dido berates him for his humility, ordering him to remember who he is and speak like himself (2.1.100-01). She first requests and then orders Aeneas to fulfil the function he performs more willingly in the Aeneid—to tell her the story of the fall of Troy (2.1.106-13, 120). In Dido’s initial request for news, as Mary Smith notes (1997b, 18-19), the queen encodes a suspicion that it is the traitorous Aeneas who stands before her, the one who betrayed Troy with Antenor:

May I entreat thee to discourse at large,
And truly too, how Troy was overcome?
For many tales go of that city’s fall
And scarcely do agree upon one point.
Some say Antenor did betray the town,
Others report ‘twas Sinon’s perjury;
But all in this, that Troy is overcome,
And Priam dead; yet how, we hear no news. (2.1.106-13)

The greeting scene has divided critical opinion. At stake is *Dido’s* fidelity to the *Aeneid*, either literally or as English imperialist discourse. Mary Smith thinks that the whole scene is part of a non-Virgilian project, and that *Dido’s* dressing of Aeneas has thematic significance within it: “Aeneas abandons his heroic pilgrimage almost as soon as he puts on Sichaeus’ cloak; soon he will assume Sichaeus’ position as husband and become what the garment already ironically shows him to be” (1977a, 185). Margot Hendricks, on the other hand, argues that “As a member of a royal (and divine) family, Aeneas has the right to occupy the chair offered by Dido” (170). In her revisionist reading, Emily Bartels maintains that “Aeneas’s self-estranging claims as a way of inscribing himself, blamelessly, as a needy guest and of securing necessary aid, using an overwhelming dependence to mask a motivating independence that has a colony as and at its end” (40). The greeting scene, I suggest, encodes stage directions which centre Aeneas and marginalize the Carthaginian queen, furthering my argument that *Dido* revises Virgil’s version of the story. Mary Smith has attempted to “recreate” *Dido* “as for the Elizabethan stage” (1977a, 177-78). Her attempt provides a visual backdrop for my discussion of the encoded stage directions and their import.

Smith draws on the seminal work of E. K. Chambers, and of T. W. Craik and others, to “suppose the acting area to be divided by a wall, probably built of painted laths, and identified by Aeneas and Ilioneus as ‘Carthage walles’ (2.1.1, 62),” adding that “on one side of the wall is a country setting; on the other is Carthage” (1977a, 178-79). Smith proposes a short wall, “coming forward from the back of the stage towards the front for a distance, perhaps even as much as half” because of “the freedom of movement it allows from one side to the other” (1977a, 178-79). Taking Smith’s proposal as my stage setting,
the action before Aeneas meets Dido takes place on the country setting side of the wall. When Ilioneus asks Aeneas to “view” Dido’s entrance on the Carthage side of the wall, Aeneas replies: “Well may I view her, but she sees not me” (2.1.72-73). We can imagine at this point that Aeneas is on the margins of the Carthage side of the wall, close enough for Dido to see a “stranger” who “eye[s]” her off but not close enough for her to make out who the stranger is (2.1.74). That changes when Ilioneus tells Dido “’tis our general, / Warlike Aeneas,” and she orders Sichaeus’ garment and commands Aeneas to sit first with her and then, what is more striking, “in Dido’s place” (2.1.77-78, 80, 83, 91). In the imagined stage setting, Dido’s orders centre Aeneas on the Carthage side of the wall, drawing the visual attention of the play’s interior and exterior audiences to Aeneas. He occupies centre stage, and Dido has put him there, marginalizing herself. The encoded stage directions perform the significance of Virgil’s hero, who, in the Aeneid, tells his story from a “high couch” (2.2). The greeting scene is in line with Virgil’s text, testifying to the importance and power of Aeneas, not Dido.

Dido has Aeneas dressed and sitting where she normally does within twenty lines of making her entrance. While this suggests her considerable power as a queen, she abdicates this role in the course of performing it. I suggest, then, that Dido is a faithful dramatization, in powerfully visual terms, of the ways in which Aeneid 4 “essentially transforms the Dido figure from a heroic exile into an abandoned woman undone by desire” (Desmond 27). The effect that Aeneas’ narrative has on Dido continues the process of transforming the Carthaginian queen but in Dido, catharsis rather than amor is the cause of her undoing.

Dido, like Aeneas, responds emotionally to the narrative. In fact, she is so moved by it that Marlowe moves her out of her role in the Aeneid as the “queen of the sympathetic ears.” (James 2001, 365). While Virgil’s Dido “hangs” on Aeneas’ tale and wants to hear
it again, Marlowe’s Dido tries to stop it twice: in the middle of the description of Priam’s
death and after Polyxena’s sacrifice (4.77-79; 2.1.243, 289). In her role as queen, Dido’s
passionate interjection that Aeneas “end” in the middle of Pyrrhus’ horrendous treatment
of Priam evokes the Poetics—“pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by
that of one like ourselves” (Poetics 35). In addition, her interruption after the description of
Polyxena’s sacrifice suggests that she is able to feel, as both a political and a private
character, the emotions “proper” to the tragic pleasure. Yet unlike Aeneas, Dido does not
have a “cathartic prerogative,” as we shall see.

Given an Aeneas “in all humility” before Dido (2.1.99), one would think he would
obey her passionate commands and stop. He does not. Aeneas is as “deaf” to Dido when he
first meets her as he is when he leaves her. Dido’s non-Virgilian interruptions thereby
enable a Virgilian portrait of a hero “moved” by his own words but not by Dido’s, while
Aeneas’ total disregard of Dido’s orders signifies his growing ascendency over the
Carthaginian queen. The audience now hear the power of Aeneas that they see in his
position on stage.

Dido also appears similar to Aeneas after she stops the narrative. She admits to
“melancholy thoughts” caused by a “ruthful tale [that] hath made [her] sad” and “think[es]
upon some pleasing sport, / To rid [her] from” them (2.1.301-33). Dido’s responses seem
to signify her similarity to Aeneas because they complement his interruption of the
narrative, and his emotional exhaustion towards the end of it. Yet Dido is not the same as
Aeneas. The pleasing sport upon which Dido thinks is the hunt in Act 3 that the
emotionally purged Aeneas enjoys. There are no such benefits for Dido. Rather, her
experience as audience to Aeneas’ narrative produces fantasies like those that tormented
the fragmented, pre-narrative Aeneas. Anna will call them “idle” and ask her, as Dido
once asked the pre-narrative Aeneas, to remember who she is (5.1.262-63). They include
the fantasy that Aeneas sails back into her arms:

    Now is he come on shore safe, without hurt;
    But see, Achates wills him put to sea,
    And all the sailors merry make for joy;
    But he, rememb’ring me, shrinks back again;
    See where he comes; welcome, welcome, my love! (5.1.257-61)

Dido’s fantasy recalls the mental confusion she experiences after she is struck with
Cupid’s dart, to which she is susceptible only after Aeneas has told his tale: “Because it
may be thou shalt be my love. / Yet boast not of it, for I love thee not— / And yet I hate
thee not” (3.1.169-71). The cave scene offers further evidence that Dido’s identity starts to
fragment after she hears the tale, in contrast to Aeneas. In this scene, she describes her
confusion as a torment that she cannot reveal to Aeneas:

    Not sick, my love, but sick I must conceal
    The torment that it boots me not reveal;
    And yet I’ll speak, and yet I’ll hold my peace;
    Do shame her worst, I will disclose my grief.
    Aeneas, thou art he—what did I say?
    Something it was that now I have forgot. (3.4.24-29)

Unlike Aeneas, Dido cannot linguistically purge herself of the emotions that she feels.
Putting it another way, she is unable to experience the Outlet or therapeutic interpretation
of catharsis. Dido also worries about her fantasies in much the same way that Achates
worries about the fantasies that Aeneas experiences before the narrative: “Love, love, give
Dido leave / To be more modest than her thoughts admit, / Lest I be made a wonder to the
world” (3.1.93-95). A reversal of roles is underway, in which Dido, in the play’s second
half, suffers the torment that Aeneas experiences before he tells his narrative; that is, the
enactment of the Outlet interpretation of catharsis activates the Structural interpretation of
the term in what happens to Dido as well as Aeneas.

It is appropriately Virgilian that the reversal of roles takes place in the cave scene,
for as Marilynn Desmond explains, the scene in the Aeneid is the “turning point for Dido,
and the crux of the narrative for the Aeneas-Dido story” (28). Desmond goes on to argue that “the scene is highly indeterminate” in the Aeneid, and that “Dido and Aeneas each offer different interpretations of the events in the cave” (29). According to Desmond, the Aeneid “largely exploit[s] and never resolve[s]” the indeterminacy (29). In contrast, Dido leaves its audience in no doubt. There is no doubt about what happens in the cave, as there is no indeterminacy in Aeneas’ promises never to leave Carthage and “Never to like or love any but her [Dido]” (3.4.48-50). There is also no doubt about what will happen in light of the reversal of roles that is already in progress. Indeed, given Dido’s bizarre talk, an audience might be forgiven for putting Aeneas’ un-Virgilian promises down to pressure to at least humour the queen because the hero’s successful departure depends upon her generosity. This argument is later borne out when Dido abducts Ascanius and confiscates the Trojan fleet’s tackling, suspicious that Aeneas pretends love only to fulfil his epic quest (4.4.104-165).

Sara Deats argues that the play’s second half is “antithetical” to the first half (1997, 102). Perhaps it is more a mirror of it. Since Dido has been struck by Cupid’s dart, it is unlikely that the “torment” she feels in the cave scene is continuous with the emotions aroused by Aeneas’ narrative. Nevertheless, her fantasies and her unwillingness to say what it is that distresses her are all post-narrative events that invite a comparison with the pre-narrative Aeneas. Dido’s misery, like Aeneas’ joy, is the by-product of Aeneas’ narrative, reflecting and reversing what happens to Aeneas. The agency of the non-Virgilian Cupid is restricted in this scenario to that of a dramatic device which kick-starts Dido’s peripeteia.

The play’s second half fully reflects and reverses the first half when Dido’s fantasies immobilize her as queen. Now she would rather be “a second Helena” and “live a private life with [Aeneas]” (5.1.148, 198). Then Dido becomes a second Eve when she
casts Aeneas as the serpent in the Garden of Eden: “O serpent that came creeping from the shore / And I for pity harbour’d in my bosom, / Wilt thou now slay me with thy venomed sting, / And hiss at Dido for preserving thee?” (5.1.165-68). These lines fulfil, in Christian terms, Virgil’s insistence that Dido’s union with Aeneas was “the first day of death and the first cause of evils” (4.169-70). Dido’s pity is a mark of transgression that stands in stark contrast to Aeneas’ pity as a signifier of his epic transcendent. What is more, when Dido mistakes Aeneas for a serpent, she mistakes Aeneas for Virgil’s Pyrrhus, who in a well-known passage in the *Aeneid* sheds his skin to reveal himself as the new Achilles (2.469-75). I suggest this means that Dido has failed to understand the import of Aeneas’ narrative as proof of the Trojan’s difference from Pyrrhus. There is biting irony in the knowledge that it is she who requests proof of Aeneas’ identity in his report of Troy’s overthrow, yet she cannot decode its significance or respond emotionally to its genre.

As a “second Helena”—the cause of the tragedy that Aeneas’ narrative describes—and a second Eve to boot, Dido embodies tragedy. In the play’s second half, she is the tragedy that tormented Aeneas in the first half. Having expelled tragedy once through his cathartic experience, Aeneas must do so again. Indeed, as Achates understands, Aeneas must now expel Dido-as-tragedy to enable epic continuity: “Banish that ticing dame from forth your mouth, / And follow your foreseeing stars in all” (4.3.31-32). The *Aeneid*, embodied in the dramatic Aeneas, works to expel Dido from *Dido*. In the epic, Dido dies “fired by a sudden madness” rather than through “fate” or a “death deserved” (4. 696-97). In *Dido*, she dies by Virgil’s textual imperative—she is and is not murderer of herself: “I, I must be the murderer of myself; / No, but I am not; yet I will be, straight” (5.1.270-71). *Dido* experiments with catharsis as a structural device that effects Dido’s *peripeteia* to bring the tragedy of the Carthaginian queen thematically in line with the *Aeneid*. 
The embodiment of tragedy in the Carthaginian queen affects our conception of tragedy as a “masculine” genre. The category of woman plays a central role in the practices Marlowe uses to make tragedy in *Dido*. In *Dido*, it is a role that takes power away from the living woman in accordance with the requirements of epic. In *Dido*, tragedy is feminised in contrast to always already masculine epic.

Dido’s death does not end Marlowe’s play; the suicides of Iarbus and Anna do. Clare Kinney argues that their deaths are an “almost farcical piling up of extra casualties” that robs Dido of tragic stature (269), and a number of critics have had similar reactions. Yet I suggest that *Dido* departs from the *Aeneid* here only to return to it and promote its hero, as the play does so often. To my mind, Iarbus’ and Anna’s suicides are repeat performances of Dido’s death, macabre encores that further demonstrate the play’s fidelity to the *Aeneid*. For example, when Iarbus wishes to become “some poisonous beast” with an “edged sting,” he becomes a second Dido, reconfiguring her claim that Aeneas is a serpent (4.1.21-22). The Christian iconography implicates Iarbus, with Dido, in the Virgilian “first day of death” (4.169-70). Clearly, Iarbus has to die.

Anna’s death is more important to *Dido* as a faithful revision of the *Aeneid* because it eradicates all possibility that matrilineal rule will survive Dido’s death. For when Anna dies, the play participates in the systematic removal of (human) matrilineal and maternal power in the *Aeneid*—the deaths of Creusa, Dido and Amata, the nursing of Romulus and Remus by a she-wolf and, finally, the fact that Lavinia, although future wife to Aeneas, is not mother of Ascanius. *Dido* thereby anticipates, as the *Aeneid* does, an elsewhere empire founded by motherless men. This empire adds force to Virgil’s sceptical view of heterosexual relationships, a view that informs *Dido* opening scene—the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange. In *Dido*, the future of Virgil’s endless, motherless empire begins in Aeneas’ narrative, in the swift removal of Creusa, mother of Ascanius, in half a line.
Dido threatens that future in her (Virgilian) wish to have a son with Aeneas to assuage her grief at the epic hero’s departure (5.1.149-50; 4.328-30). *Dido* ensures that future with the death of Anna, and of Iarbus, the man Anna loves in *Dido*, a love that is Marlowe’s invention. When Iarbus and Anna die, Marlowe kills off his own artistic invention, one of his most striking embellishments of Virgil’s epic. *Dido* concludes in the same way it began, with a scene that appears to depart from the *Aeneid* only to return to it.

The *Outlet* and *Structural* interpretations of catharsis do not benefit Dido in *Dido*. The two kinds of catharsis the play enacts benefit Aeneas because the fragmented subject who arrives in Carthage must be mobilized to depart for Italy. On this level, *Dido* is not about Dido; it is about Aeneas. The play deploys the two interpretations of catharsis to revise the *Aeneid*, but in the dramatic version, the tragedy Dido embodies rather than Virgilian *furor* kills the Carthaginian queen.

### 2.4: The Audience and Catharsis

Dido’s death conclusively aligns Marlowe’s play with the *Aeneid* at the level of plot. In the process, *Dido* stages two tragedies: one to hear—Aeneas’ narrative—and one to see—the spectacle of Dido’s death—which Iarbus’ and Anna’s suicides replay. I have suggested that staging Aeneas’ catharsis as a recited tragedy rather than a performed one announces Marlowe’s authorial aspiration to overtake Virgil and his epic. The logical working out of what is implied in Aristotelian poetic prejudices is made possible by the genre of tragedy in which Marlowe is working. Yet if Dido’s death makes *Dido* a tragedy, then the performance of the preferred option in the *Poetics* leads to a spectacle, a tragedy performed, which Aristotle denigrates throughout his treatise. Does Marlowe thwart, then, his own aspiration, first in *Dido*’s fidelity to the plot of the *Aeneid*, and second, in the spectacle of Dido’s death? And does Marlowe undercut his own aim by flouting the very text, the *Poetics*, from which he derives authority for the artistic challenge in the first
place? In this section, I argue that Marlowe, having announced his claim to the title of “better poet,” gives the play’s audience the responsibility of conferring it on him by leading them to “make” Dido a tragedy. I propose that the play coaches its audience to experience catharsis at the spectacle of Dido’s death. Here I refer to the Outlet interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas models for the audience, not the Structural interpretation. It is the audience, I suggest, who close Dido and determine its genre. The practice of tragic closure is the basis for Marlowe’s aspiration to overtake Virgil by offering a way of ending the Aeneid, as I shall argue more fully in Chapter 3. My present concern is to track the ways in which Dido deploys self-reflexive strategies in order to defend tragedy. These strategies include but are not limited to the interpretations of catharsis Dido enacts.

The context for the discussion is the play’s special status within the Marlovian dramatic canon as the only play performed for a private audience by a boy company. Andrew Gurr has noted the “sophisticated artifice of the boy companies,” pointing out that such artifice made “the audience self-conscious, flaunting the artificiality of stage pretence or ‘metatheatre’, and insisting that audiences became not spell-bound believers but sceptical judges” (1996, 158-59). The question that this section addresses is how Dido convinces such an audience to experience the Outlet interpretation of catharsis. While Aeneas models this interpretation, there is evidence in Dido that this performance, on its own, is not enough to convince a sceptical audience. Hence, Dido deploys other strategies to elicit from the audience the response that Aeneas models. We have already seen some of these at work: the encoded stage directions in the greeting scene that centre Aeneas and marginalize Dido; Aeneas’ expression of post-narrative joy in the same place on the stage where, before his narrative, he “dull[ed] the air with a discoursive moan.” These are examples of what we might call Marlowe’s “arts of orchestration”—the ways in which
Dido orientates the audience’s perspective. In this section, I identify other examples, and discuss the ways in which they coach the audience to experience the Outlet interpretation of catharsis. My aim is to demonstrate that together these strategies position Dido as a modernized Poetics, a sixteenth-century tragedy that defends tragedy.

Leading the audience towards an answer or solution is a characteristic of a certain type of play in the period, the play of inquiry, also known as the explorative or interrogative play. In The Tudor Play of Mind, Joel Altman examines the explorative play, its origins in the rhetorical tradition, and the rhetorically skilled, educated audience for whom such plays were designed. He also discusses “demonstrative” texts, the opposite, in Altman’s view, of the texts of inquiry. A qualification needs to be made, which I will come to shortly. First I shall introduce the way in which I intend to deploy Altman’s terms, and summarise the aspects of his study that are important to it.

A number of critics interested in Dido have found Altman’s terms useful, with most arguing that the play is an explorative one. Altman’s models are the scaffold for the analysis in this section. I argue that Dido alternates between explorative and demonstrative strategies to coach its audience to experience the Outlet interpretation of catharsis.

According to Altman, the explorative play debates “an abstract quaestio or thesis” in utramque partem—that is, it argues both sides of a question (3). Such plays functioned as media of intellectual and emotional exploration of minds that were accustomed to examine the many sides of a given theme, to entertain opposing ideals, and by so exercising the understanding, to move toward some fuller apprehension of truth that could be discerned only through the total action of the drama. Thus the experience of the play was the thing. (6; emphasis in original)

The audience of the explorative play were intellectually active, and together with the playwright, they were engaged in a search for the reason why something happened rather than what happened. The function of the explorative play, according to Altman’s analysis of Medwall’s Fulgens and Lucrece, is to “lead the audience to envision, and ultimately to
achieve, the ideal solution itself” (23). The staging of Aeneas’ catharsis and its structural effects evoke Altman’s model of the explorative play in the form of a number of questions about the function of tragedy, such as: What does catharsis mean? What are the cathartic emotions? Can catharsis be staged? Can a dramatic character experience catharsis? If so, is the cathartic experience an issue of gender? If catharsis can be staged, what influence on the construction of characterization and plot does the meaning/meanings of catharsis have? Then Dido debates these questions in utramque partem, first by juxtaposing the pitiless and fearless Pyrrhus and the emotionally “full” Aeneas, and second, by Dido’s difference from Aeneas, as we have seen in the previous sections.

As Dido evokes these questions, it attempts to answer them by calling upon the audience to consider the result of its in utramque partem debates—the cathartic Aeneas whose survival of two tragedies, first Troy, then Dido-as-tragedy, returns him to Virgil’s epic and aligns Dido with the Aeneid. This return makes Dido more a demonstrative text, the function of which, according to Altman, is to show the received wisdom or truth of what is already known (28). Altman’s examples of demonstrative texts include sermon exempla,lectiones, cautionary tales and so on. In his argument, these texts attempt to deductively “prove” the conclusions to questions that other texts have already answered, thereby promoting the authority of the antecedent texts (Altman 28).59

Altman’s model of the demonstrative text implies a static discourse. In Narrative, Authority, and Power, Larry Scanlon makes a case for reading the exemplum as “active and dynamic,” as a narrative that “did not merely ‘confirm’ moral authority, but reproduced it” (5). Scanlon’s main point is that the exemplum enabled the transmission of “previous forms of authority to [a] new vernacular tradition,” a transmission that “must be viewed as a process of empowerment and appropriation” (5). There is nothing either static or passive about the exemplum according to Scanlon, for its function is to persuade rather
than demonstrate (31, 33). The active, productive capacity of the exemplum leads Scanlon to redefine it: “The exemplum illustrates a moral because what it recounts is the enactment of that moral. . . . It establishes a form of authority, enjoining its audience to heed its lesson, and to govern its actions accordingly” (33). I mean my use of Altman’s demonstrative model to carry the active, productive, persuasive capacity that Scanlon’s redefinition gives to the exemplum. The explorative play elements that *Dido* stages as questions about the function of tragedy push the play into the terrain of an active, persuasive, “demonstrative” text that coaches its audience to experience the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis when they view the spectacle of Dido’s (and Iarbus’ and Anna’s) death. Indeed, *Dido* becomes more demonstrative as it moves towards closure, “proving” that Virgil’s Aeneas acts on this stage, and pressuring the audience to identify with him. There are implications here for the play’s engagement with Elizabeth’s claims to Trojan origins.

There are a number of “arts of orchestration” in *Dido* that guide the audience’s perspective. One of these is comprised of the moments when *Dido* is more a *transcriptio* of the *Aeneid* than it is a *translatio*—that is, more strict word-for-word translation than adaptation. I mean here close re-presentations of the epic other than the direct quotation of Virgil’s Latin. We begin with one such example. Another “art of orchestration” is made up of the ways in which Marlowe deliberately departs from the *Aeneid*, foregrounding the originality of *Dido* and his own strategies of invention in order to eventually align the two texts. This alignment endorses Aeneas’ catharsis, persuading the audience to experience a similar reaction to the play proper. Then there are the strategies that make the audience want to hear a story they already know, in particular the story that Aeneas tells in his narrative. These strategies create suspense, and entice the audience to side with Aeneas, his version of the fall of Troy, and his emotional reaction to it. All of these “arts of
orchestration” work to position Dido’s original audience as the “ideal” audience for tragedy. As the play constructs an ideal audience, Dido as a Renaissance defence of tragedy comes into view.

The discussion of Dido’s “arts of orchestration” begins, then, with one of the moments when Dido indulges in transcriptio rather than translatio of the Aeneid. As I pointed out earlier, it is the Carthaginian queen who raises the question of which Aeneas stands before her, the Virgilian version or the Aeneas of the rival tradition. Virgil’s Dido asks a similar question, raising the spectre of an Aeneas who does not always act in ways that befit a pious hero. In Virgil’s text, Aeneas and Dido meet after the Trojan bursts from a cloud Venus has conjured so that he and his companions might move through Carthage unseen, untouched, and without delay (1.411-414). Dido’s amazement takes the form of a number of questions, the last of which asks whether the Trojan general is “that Aeneas, whom generous Venus bore to Dardanian Anchises by the wave of the Phrygian Simois?” (1.617-18; my emphasis). The question may be rhetorical, but when Aeneas threatens to leave, Dido complicates this reading when she twice calls Aeneas “perfidus” (“false” or “treacherous”), adding that “no goddess was [his] mother, nor Dardanus the father of [his] stock, but rough Caucasus begat [him] on harsh rocks, and Hyrcanian tigers suckled [him]” (4.305, 365-67). The dramatic version of Dido’s outburst is the play’s best example of transcriptio:

Thy mother was no Goddess, perjur’d man,
Nor Dardanus the author of thy stock;
But thou art sprung from Scythian Caucasus,
And tigers of Hyrcania gave thee suck (5.1.156-59)

Marlowe’s Dido, like her epic counterpart, will label Aeneas perfidus again, when she vows that her death will “make Aeneas famous through the world / For perjury and slaughter of a queen” (5.1.293-94). Dido’s accusation begins her final speech, in which, as in the Aeneid, she calls for a conqueror to rise from her ashes and avenge her death,
prays—in Virgil’s Latin—for discord among Aeneas’ descendents, and resolves, also in Virgil’s Latin, to go gladly under the shades (5.1.306-313; 4.625-29, 660). Dido’s reliance on the Aeneid in this scene is remarkable. Marlowe seems to acknowledge that he can only tell the story of Dido’s death, like the story of Aeneas’ departure for Italy, in words lifted from the play’s epic source text. Marlowe raises the perfidus possibility in Dido’s last words to align her with Virgil’s representation of the Carthaginian queen, Dido with the Aeneid.

When Dido dies, the play shows the received wisdom or truth of what is already known from the Aeneid, in this instance, that the Carthaginian queen is an obstacle to epic fulfilment. Is this enough to persuade a sceptical audience to identify with Aeneas? Not really, for there is nothing new here in terms of what the audience already know and expect, nothing that in itself would necessarily elicit Aeneas’ catharsis as the audience’s response to Dido’s death. Convincing the audience that this is Virgil’s plot is not the issue here. What is at stake is whether Dido’s death constitutes a tragic spectacle.

Tragedy, as Aeneas’ reaction to his narrative argues, is defined by a cathartic response to it. If the audience are to accept the argument, they must first be persuaded that the interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas models is the appropriate response. And to do that, they must accept the dramatic Aeneas as a faithful version of Virgil’s hero not only at the end of the play but also when he tells his story. Although Dido conclusively aligns its main characters with those in the Aeneid, the play accomplishes this task in a non-Virgilian way—the epic Aeneas does not experience a cathartic reaction to his narrative. Putting it another way, Aeneas’ catharsis aligns Dido with the Aeneid and yet signifies an important difference between the two texts at the same time. We can reasonably assume that Dido’s educated audience recognised this major disparity between play and epic, or that Marlowe
thought they would. Here is the crux of persuading the audience to adopt Aeneas’ cathartic experience as their response to Dido’s death.

What are the strategies *Dido* deploys to make Aeneas’ catharsis carry the authority of the *Aeneid*? How does *Dido* convince its audience that Virgil’s Aeneas acts in the play, and in this way persuade them to side with him and experience his catharsis?

Paradoxically, Marlowe’s embellishments of Virgil’s epic before Aeneas’ narrative and during it have their part to play in the exercise. These embellishments coerce the audience to imaginatively identify with Aeneas, inviting them to see themselves as an “ideal” audience.

The first of such embellishments is Aeneas’ appearance before the Carthaginian queen, in which he looks and behaves in non-Virgilian ways that all the same invite the audience to imaginatively identify with him as a re-presentation of the hero of the *Aeneid*. In *Dido*, Aeneas does not burst from a cloud as he does in the *Aeneid*. Nor is he “godlike” in looks, healthy, beautiful. Indeed, Dido barely sees the stranger Aeneas, clad “In weeds as bad as ever Irus ware,” who views her from the margins of the stage (1.586-95; 2.1.85). Nor does Aeneas have the wealthy gifts to give the Carthaginian queen that he has in Virgil’s text, no “presents snatched from the ruined Ilium,” no veil once worn by Helen (1.647-50). Instead, Dido has to dress Aeneas. As T. M. Pearce notes, there are “elements of true disaster” in Aeneas’ appearance before the Carthaginian queen in *Dido* (1930, 57). Virgil’s *pater* Aeneas is wretched at this stage in *Dido*, an embellishment of the *Aeneid* that draws the audience’s attention away from the Carthaginian queen to a barely recognisable Aeneas. This is to say that the audience have their eyes on Aeneas even before Dido’s encoded stage directions centre him on stage. As important, the wretched Aeneas whets the audience’s appetite for information about why “Warlike Aeneas” looks
like the beggar Irus. One of the functions of the greeting scene, then, is to make the audience want to hear Aeneas’ story.

To heighten the audience’s desire to hear what Aeneas has to say, *Dido* again embellishes the *Aeneid*, this time to keep the audience in suspense. Aeneas refuses the seat Dido offers him, not once but twice, acting with humility before finally accepting “Dido’s place.” Then, once he is the central character on the stage, Aeneas refuses to speak. The significance of these embellishments is in the familiarity of the Troy narrative, a tale that like the *Aeneid* itself was “already translated, recycled, and over-rehearsed” in the period (Bowers 2002, 97). *Dido* tries to make them want to hear it again. The queen’s desire for the story, staged as an order that Aeneas “Look up, and speak,” increases the audience’s desire to hear what he has to say as well. Similarly, Dido’s non-Virgilian interruptions, to continue and then to stop the narrative, intensify the audience’s desire to know what happened (2.1.120, 243, 289). The audience are engaged with Aeneas before he tells his tragic tale.

*Dido* nurtures their engagement with another display of Aeneas’ humility when he stops telling the story and asks Dido’s pardon (2.1.159). The pause in Aeneas’ narrative signifies his respect for Dido; anticipating her distress at hearing of the pitiless Pyrrhus’ slaughter of Priam, Aeneas stops speaking. His humility is an example of the rhetorical trope *libera vox*, sometimes referred to as *parresia/parrhesia*. Henry Peacham gives a definition in *The Garden of Eloquence*:

> The orator speaking before those whom he feareth, or ought to reverence, and having somewhat to say that may either touch themselves, or those they favour, preventeth the displeasure and offence that might be taken, as by craving pardon afore hand, and by showing the necessity of free speech in that behalf. (qtd. in Sonnino, 128)

Today, we might say “don’t shoot the messenger,” which has some bearing on the use of *libera vox* in *Dido* because a messenger is precisely what the Carthaginian queen asks
Aeneas to be. Indeed, she wants a special kind of messenger, one who was at the fall of Troy and saw for himself what happened. There is a truth effect in all of this that helps invest Aeneas’ narrative with the authority of the *Aeneid*. Aeneas’ *libera vox* encourages the audience to believe his version of the events. Our modern equivalent also has relevance for the status of Aeneas’ narrative as a performance of Aristotle’s preference for recited tragedy because it was a convention in much Greek tragedy that the most violent deeds were not performed onstage. Such violence was reported, either by the stock character of the Messenger or by the Chorus, rather than represented. The deployment of *libera vox* is further evidence of the applicability of Aristotelian categories in *Dido*, and yet unlike so many of the play’s self-reflexive practices, it does not eventually lead to a Virgilian representation.

Sara Deats argues that Aeneas’ humility is neither Virgilian nor Ovidian (1997, 93), suggesting a function outside the range of meanings circulating in either text. This is one of Marlowe’s *coup[s] of invention*. The emphasis on Aeneas’ humility both before and during the narrative, an emphasis not in Virgil, wins the favour of the audience, both of Dido as an interior audience, and more important, of the play’s exterior audience. Aeneas’ humility woos them into indulging the Trojan hero, and listening to a story that they already know and might not want to hear again, despite the suspense built into the greeting scene.

The greeting scene shows the audience what the fall of Troy has cost Aeneas: no clothes for “Warlike Aeneas,” no remnants of Troy to give Dido. Knowing the end result, the audience are prepared to hear both what happened and why it happened, that is, to hear both the demonstrative and explorative disclosures of Aeneas’ narrative. The play makes its exterior audience aware of their role in the scene before Aeneas meets the Carthaginian queen, when he is reunited with some of the men he thought lost in the storm. The reunion
scene is noteworthy because of the number of references to audience practices of seeing and hearing. In twenty-eight lines, there are some eleven references to verbs of seeing, and five to verbs of hearing and/or requests to speak so that one might hear (2.1.45-73). *Dido* is thoroughly aware of what audiences do, and reflects on that awareness before Aeneas’ narrative. Together with Aeneas’ own position as another audience to his narrative, *Dido* makes its audience self-conscious of their role. The play is again involved in its own production but this time it is directing its audience rather than its actors.\(^64\)

The next step in coaching the audience to experience the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas models is to further invest the narrative with the truth element that it has in the *Aeneid*, making it tantamount to the story told by Virgil’s *ille Aeneas*. The deployment of *libera vox* assists this process, yet it seems more was required. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil stresses the truth of Aeneas’ tale by using the demonstrative pronoun *ipse*, for Aeneas speaks only of the “sights he himself saw and was a great part of” (2.5-6: *ipse vidi, ipse fui*). Given that Virgil’s Dido does not seek true report, the emphasis is worthy of attention. Aeneas’ narrative is always true in the *Aeneid*, and telling it despite the emotional pain it causes Aeneas is a signifier of his dedication to duty. This dedication is an important aspect of the *pius* Aeneas. Marlowe’s Dido seeks the eyewitness account that her epic counterpart does not need, thus transferring the narrative’s truth element from Virgil’s text to her tragedy. The dramatic Aeneas’ non-Virgilian reticence to tell the story and then his stoic resolution to obey Dido suggest that he has the *pius* qualities of Virgil’s hero.

*Dido* then compounds the truthfulness of the narrative by including in it a truncated version of Sinon’s false narrative to Priam, a story that brings the wooden horse inside Troy’s walls and brings the city down. Sinon’s tale is as well known as Aeneas’ narrative, but for a different reason. Sinon’s narrative is the lie in Virgil’s text that signifies the
treachery of all Greeks (2.65-66). In the Aeneid, Sinon’s false tale reinforces the truth of the larger tale in which it appears because the teller, pius Aeneas, is Sinon’s opposite. A close enough version of Sinon’s lie in Aeneas’ narrative is really all that is needed to convince the audience that the dramatic Aeneas is telling the truth. The strategies Marlowe deploys before Sinon’s story suggest that he is keen to put the issue beyond doubt. That done, the dramatic Aeneas picks out the pieces of Sinon’s story that will help persuade Dido’s audience to experience the Outlet interpretation of catharsis when the Carthaginian queen dies. This response expels Dido, as the Aeneid does, from the epic story in which Aeneas is engaged, and makes Dido a tragedy.

In Dido and the Aeneid, Sinon’s actions as well as his speech are false. The truncated version in Dido starts with Sinon’s “perjury” and “ticing tongue,” then telescopes to the “action so pitiful” and “Looks so remorseful” that Sinon uses to “overcome” Priam (2.1.143-157). Priam then kisses Sinon, embraces Sinon, and frees Sinon’s hands from the bands that hold them (2.1.158). At this point in his tale, Aeneas is telling the audience(s) about the effects of what amounts to a cathartic lie, casting Priam as yet another audience overwhelmed by the emotional experience of Sinon’s story. The result of Sinon’s cathartic lie is the tragedy of Troy that Aeneas’ narrative describes. It is when the focus is on Sinon’s free hands that Aeneas stops speaking and begs Dido’s pardon. And there is good reason for him to practice his libera vox at this point because he knows that Sinon’s free hands will enable Pyrrhus to cut off Priam’s when he begs for mercy, and to kill the Trojan king without either pity or fear. Priam’s death, I argued earlier, is the action that most distresses Dido in terms of the emotions “proper” to tragedy. Sinon’s free hands will also lead to the panorama of the dead children, virgins, and old men that excites in Aeneas the emotions “proper” to the tragic pleasure. Dido is at pains to establish Aeneas’ difference from Sinon. The difference encourages the audience to think of Aeneas’ response to his
narrative as the appropriate response to tragedy, opposed, as it is, to Sinon’s cathartic lie and its tragic effects. Aeneas’ subsequent difference from the pitiless and fearless Pyrrhus ratifies that thinking. Sinon’s cathartic lie is, then, a persuasive “demonstrative” tactic that *Dido* deploys to entice the audience to imaginatively identify with Aeneas and adopt his catharsis as the suitable response to tragedy.

Aeneas’ difference from Sinon and Pyrrhus moves *Dido* back into explorative territory, asking the audience to consider Aeneas’ answer to why the tragedy of Troy happened. According to Aeneas, Sinon’s abuse of a cathartic story and non-cathartic characters beget tragedy. Yet there is also a demonstrative element here, one that proves more than it persuades, because Aeneas’ difference from Sinon and Pyrrhus verifies that he is Virgil’s *ille Aeneas*. The audience does not need to wait for Virgil’s Latin or Dido’s death to be convinced that Aeneas is a faithful version of the epic’s hero. Indeed, as Dido says herself before Aeneas tells his tale, “Aeneas is Aeneas, were he clad / In weeds as bad as ever Irus ware,” that is, no matter how much he might appear to be otherwise (2.1.84-85).

We come now to the art of orchestration in Aeneas’ narrative that mobilizes the debate between Plato and Aristotle about tragedy. This strategy positions the play’s original audience as tragedy’s “ideal” audience, and the play itself as a modernized *Poetics*. The basis of Plato’s objections to the mimetic arts, as Stephen Halliwell explains, is that “works of art do not themselves constitute the reality which they betoken or show” (1988, 7). The development of this argument leads Plato to “the conclusion that the process of art—mimesis—is intrinsically superficial, and of no direct value for the living of our lives” (Halliwell 1988, 7). Plato makes other related charges against poetry, most notably in connection to the emotional power of the dramatic form and its ability to override reason. As Sheila Murnaghan points out, Plato’s greatest quarrel is with tragedy because of
its “power to recreate in its audience the undesirable experiences it imitates” (759). For instance, Plato argues:

> It is likewise true in the case of erotic desire, and anger, and all the cravings, pains and pleasures in the soul which we agree attach themselves to every action of ours, that such is the effect which poetic representation works on us. For it waters and nourishes these feelings, when they ought to be dried up, and it puts them in control of us, when they are the things that ought to be controlled if we are to become better and happier people, not worse and more miserable. (Halliwell 1988, 69).

*Dido* engages Plato’s objections in Aeneas’ stoic resolution to tell the narrative to Dido, even though it causes him intense emotional pain. Like “pale death’s stony mace,” the tragedy of Troy “beats forth [Aeneas’] senses” and makes him “sink at Dido’s feet” (2.1.115-17). Still, Aeneas tells it, but only after a prefatory warning to an onstage audience, Dido and other Carthaginians, a warning that the offstage audience hears as well:

> Then speak, Aeneas, with Achilles tongue,  
> And, Dido, and you Carthaginian peers,  
> Hear me, but yet with Myrmidons’ harsh ears,  
> Daily inur’d to broils and massacres,  
> Lest you be mov’d too much with my sad tale. (2.1.121-25)

In these lines, Aeneas seems to agree with Plato that tragedy represents material capable of “nourishing” emotions to an uncontrollable level. Yet Aeneas is himself “mov’d too much” by the tragedy his tale recounts. If he were not, Aeneas would not be capable of the cathartic experience that returns him to his epic quest. If he were not, Aeneas would be cast as another “false Sinon,” full of “craft and perjury,” and as a Myrmidon, subject and bodyguard of the pitiless and fearless Achilles.68 *Dido* works hard to differentiate Aeneas from these characters.

> When we take the benefits of Aeneas’ catharsis into account—the removal of overwhelming, crippling passions, and the remobilization of epic business—we become aware that *Dido* glosses Plato’s argument because, while tragedy “nourishes” emotions to an uncontrollable level, it does so only in certain audiences, not in Aeneas. To put it
another way, tragedy is inherently problematic, as Plato maintains, but the problem inheres in who hears it, not in the artistic representation per se.\textsuperscript{69} Dido tells us who this certain audience is. It cannot be Venus, or Achates and Ascanius, because Aeneas wanted to tell them the tale (1.1. 245-48, 2.1.23-38; 2.1.120). Clearly, Aeneas is not worried about the effect his narrative might have on them. But as his prefatory warning tells us, Aeneas is worried about the narrative’s effect on the Carthaginian audience, Dido in particular. It appears that Aeneas’ narrative has an ideal audience, those auditors/ spectators who, like Aeneas, are able to bring the emotions tragedy excites under control. The Carthaginian queen is not part of the ideal audience within the play, but Dido’s original, exterior audience already are via their mythic, communal connection to Virgil’s Aeneas as father of a “new Troy.” In the Elizabethan \textit{translatio imperii studiique}, London, the city in which Dido’s audience are watching a revised \textit{Aeneid}, is the new Troy, which is to say that the play’s audience are part of the “endless empire” Aeneas founds. Their connection to \textit{pater Aeneas} is a powerful incentive for them to adopt his catharsis as their reaction to the play proper.

There is little here to challenge Elizabeth I’s claims to Trojan origins but much to promote them.\textsuperscript{70} Dido does not dispute the uses of the \textit{Aeneid} in the period to celebrate Elizabeth, since the play relies on the Trojan heritage of an original audience comprised of her subjects. When Dido anticipates, in the swift removal of Creusa, the \textit{Aeneid}’s endless empire, the play does not simply promote Virgilian ideology. It makes catharsis a prerogative of epic, and of Dido’s original audience because they are living proof of that empire.

What interests me more is that when Dido does not share Aeneas’ emotional experience of the tragedy he tells, she denies all similarity with the hero of the \textit{Aeneid}, and joins Pyrrhus and Sinon as characters who beget tragedy rather than respond to it. This
means that tragedy, embodied in Dido, is the obstacle that must be expelled for epic to continue. *Dido’s* self-reflexive strategies lead the audience, or rather pressure them as implicit members of an ideal audience, to experience, at the sight of Dido’s death, the catharsis that enabled Aeneas to expel the tragedy of Troy and rejoin epic. Indeed, as Joel Altman proposes in his explanation of the explorative play, the “experience of the play”—in this case, the experience of Aeneas’ tragedy-within-a-tragedy—is “the thing” (6; emphasis in original). If the audience were to experience catharsis at the spectacle of Dido’s death, then their reaction would be consistent with the play’s other demonstrative elements but not, this time, of the persuasive kind, for it would prove Aristotle’s definition of tragedy in the *Poetics*. 

It is catharsis—the *Outlet* interpretation not the *Structural* one—that constructs *Dido’s* audience(s), brings about the end of *Dido/Dido*, embodies tragedy in the Carthaginian queen, and works to define Marlowe’s first play as a tragedy. The play’s staging of catharsis to manipulate audience response is another of its engagements with the *Poetics*. The play’s original audience may have been educated, and yet, as Peter Womack argues, they were also “a casual grouping of individuals, whose coherence must come, if at all, from the show itself” (109). Aeneas’ response to the tragedy-within-a-tragedy realizes the potential Womack notes. It is a performance and a rehearsal of catharsis, one that aims to construct the homogeneous audience that Aristotle’s *Poetics* assumes. If there is any didactic function here, it is aesthetic rather than ethical. *Dido* teaches its exterior audience how to respond to tragedy.

In positioning the audience as both the ideal one for tragedy and the homogeneous kind the *Poetics* assumes, *Dido* seems to expect from them the catharsis Aeneas models. Indeed, in the final scene, there is a reminder of the response *Dido* expects: Anna’s plea that the audience “pity” and “rue” the pile of female/feminized bodies on stage (5.1.326-
27). Ending *Dido* through a uniform audience response to tragedy is an important part of Marlowe’s ambition to overtake Virgil as the “better poet.” It offers a way of ending the *Aeneid* and in this way also answers Plato’s objections to tragedy. This is because *Dido*’s manipulation of Plato’s objections results in the argument that the audience’s catharsis expels Dido-as-tragedy. According to *Dido*, then, the function of tragedy is to expel itself. *Dido* thus defends tragedy and the poet who composes it in the same terms Plato uses to rid the ideal city of them both. Additionally, by staging catharsis to gloss Plato’s objections, Marlowe accepts Plato’s call for a defence and a defender of tragedy to come forth, but neither arrives in the form Plato deems acceptable. Plato’s call is as follows:

> We would surely also allow her representatives—men who do not practise the art, but are lovers of poetry—to offer a prose defence on her behalf, showing that she provides not only pleasure but also benefit to communities and to the life of man. And we shall listen graciously; for it will be our gain, I think, if poetry should be shown to be not just pleasurable but also beneficial. (Halliwell 1988, 71)

Yet the defence of tragedy that *Dido* enacts is in verse, not prose, and it comes from a practicing poet rather than from a mere lover of poetry. In Marlowe’s hands, tragedy functions as its own defence. I argued earlier that Aeneas’ narrative is an ecphrasis of an ecphrasis, a strategy that underpins Marlowe’s claim to the Aristotelian title of “better poet.” There is both skill and irony in *Dido*’s deployment of an artwork not four but five times removed from reality to defend tragedy against Plato’s objections. In this light, I propose that *Dido* is a Renaissance defence of tragedy, one that enters the discourse of literary criticism as a modernized *Poetics*.

The strategies I am attributing to Marlowe are possible in theory. Did they work in practice? *Dido*’s sketchy performance history suggests that as a piece of theatre, it did not succeed. And yet, while *Dido* may not have been popular, this does not mean the play failed to meet its theoretical objectives. Let us recall the death of Polyxena in *Dido*, a death that Marlowe moves from *Aeneid* 3 to Aeneas’ narrative. Polyxena demonstrates *Dido*’s
engagement with more of the epic than is currently thought to be the case, as I will argue in
more detail shortly. Polyxena also elicits Aeneas’ pity, contributing to his emotional
“fullness” and his cathartic prerogative. Which ever ways the audience responded to
Dido’s death, and to those of a feminized Iarbus and of Anna, there is still something about
dead women in *Dido* that is meant to excite at least one of the emotions “proper” to
tragedy’s specific pleasure.
I agree with Margot Hendricks on this point. She argues that the entire play “is intended to rehearse the significance of Aeneas, his race and his fate” (172). Troni Grande concurs: “Dido no more challenges the shape of Aeneas’s story than Marlowe changes Virgil’s basic narrative structure” (85).

Heather James explains the *translatio imperii studiiique* as “the myth by which cultural authority migrates from Troy to imperial Rome to England and rival European states” (1997, 8).

Sara Deats has also examined the scene in this way. In her judgement, the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange works as a “proleptic prologue for the play as a whole, prefiguring the numerous violations of traditional patterns of gender and desire enacted in the drama” (1997, 91).

Stephen Greenblatt spends some time on the ways in which Marlowe plays violate audience expectations in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. For instance, Greenblatt argues that *1 Tamburlaine* “repeatedly teases its audience with the *form* of the cautionary tale, only to violate the convention” (202; emphasis in original). Greenblatt extends his argument in relation to *Doctor Faustus*, and “the homiletical tradition [that] is introduced only to be undermined by dramatic spectacle” (203). In a similar vein, Emily Bartels argues that Marlowe “demands that they [the spectators] suspend not only their disbelief but, more importantly, their expectations and biases” (1993, 13-14).

The point is also made by Bartels: “Juno’s interventions in Aeneas’s fate derive not from her allegiance to Carthage (her ‘favourite’ land in Virgil) and a grand hope for a Carthaginian empire, but from her ‘hate of Trojan Ganymede’” (1993, 37).
Critics of the *Aeneid* draw attention to Virgil’s scepticism. Ellen Osiensis, for example, notes that the *Aeneid* “regularly construes heterosexual desire as the enemy, never the support of, social order” (307).

In a reading that supports my own to some extent, Roma Gill argues that the atmosphere Marlowe establishes in the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange “is destroyed, or at least modified by a more expected tone” in what follows Venus’ outburst (1977, 144). In his doctoral study of *Dido* in relation to the *Aeneid*, T. M. Pearce offers a simple explanation of the opening scene: “It dramatises the supernatural epic framework behind the principle tragic theme” (1930, 56-57). Pearce also considers the scene as a prologue, wondering “why Marlowe did not make use of a chorus” (1930, 52).

Critics are keen to note the ways in which Marlowe’s plays generate dramatic tension by setting up audience expectations only to frustrate them. For example, Robert Logan has recently argued that “not playing to audiences’ complacent expectations and desires is the best way to gain attention and keep them engaged” (2007, 151). Logan uses the phrase “aesthetic of ambiguity” to explain the ways in which Marlowe’s plays unsettle audience expectations (2007, 83).

K. W. Gransden calls Juno’s rage a “satanic hatred of the Trojans” (36). Jupiter is sometimes responsible for the *Aeneid*’s more pessimistic elements. As Richard Heinze notes, Jupiter supports the enemies of Troy in the final battle for the city (31), an involvement in the epic’s action that becomes more problematic in Book 12 when Jupiter sends a Fury to intervene in the Aeneas-Turnus contest. Philip Hardie calls the intervention an “unsettling use by the supreme Olympian of an agent normally associated with the Underworld” (315).
Deanne Williams argues that Dido “reworks its Virgilian source material, and the Dido tradition that precedes it, into a negative example of the ruinous effects of love and the desire for marriage upon an otherwise competent (and glamorous) queen” (43). Important support for her argument comes from Stephen Orgel’s analysis of the Sieve Portrait in his essay “Shakespeare and the Cannibals.” As Orgel explains,

the epic iconography here ingeniously provided the queen with both her heroic ancestor and the prototype of her chastity. The sieve, emblem of the Roman vestals and thus symbolic of Elizabeth’s virginity, declares that this Dido will resist the temptations of any modern Aeneas. (qtd. in Williams 41)

The point of Williams’ recourse to Orgel is to foreground “the profound instability of the Dido tradition” (41). Diane Purkiss’ reading of Marlowe’s play takes this instability into account. She suggests that Dido can be read as both celebration and critique of Elizabeth: Dido “was a coterie joke that could also be read ‘straight’ by innocent audiences” (164).

Sara Deats, for example, uses the inclusion of Cassandra and Polyxena as evidence that Aeneas is in his Ovidian guise as the archetypal deserter of women, a role that Marlowe evokes in the narrative to prefigure Aeneas’ abandonment of Dido for Italy (1977, 110-111).

Roma Gill is alert to Polyxena’s death in the Aeneid in her edition of Dido, adding that Marlowe’s invention lies in Aeneas’ frustrated attempt to rescue her (275n).

The point of the Heleneus and Andromache episode in Book 3, according to Richard Heinze, is so that Aeneas can express his pity for the “endless sorrowing” of Hector’s wife (82). In effect, the episode completes Aeneas’ narrative in Book 2, in which it does not appear because Aeneas himself was not an eyewitness to the events, and so cannot speak of them. As Heinze continues:
Just as she is reminded of the death of Astynax, so too Andromache thinks of the sacrifice of Polyxena. Thus two of the most important episodes in the sack of Troy, of which Aeneas himself could not give an eye-witness account, are treated to some extent at this later point. (82)

14 In his commentary to Leon Golden’s translation of the *Poetics*, O. B. Hardison traces the debate about which emotions tragedy moves to the translation of the catharsis clause. He gives the following alternatives:

1. ‘. . . through the pitiable and fearful incidents (tragedy achieves) the catharsis of these emotions’
2. ‘. . . through pitiable and fearful incidents (tragedy achieves) the catharsis of such emotions’ (Golden and Hardison 133, parentheses in original; my emphasis).

In general, according to Hardison, catharsis means “purgation” in the homeopathic sense in the first translation and “purification” in the second. He goes on to note that Aristotle’s *Politics* 8.7 supports the purgation interpretation, while passages in the *Nichomachean Ethics* support the purification interpretation. Hardison defines catharsis in the purgation interpretation as a self-reflexive process in which tragedy arouses pity and fear “but only to drive them out.” In the purification interpretation, pity and fear are transformed “into representative examples of the whole range of emotions that can be harmful if not properly ‘purified’.” The attraction of the purification interpretation is that it does not remove emotions that in their place and in the right measure are “healthy,” since “pity is considered a ‘good’ emotion, and fear—in its proper place—is healthy. They should be controlled but not driven out.” In Hardison’s analysis, the purification interpretation is meant in “purely didactic theories of catharsis even though they use the word ‘purgation’ to translate catharsis” (133-36).

15 The expression is repeated, for example, at 3.48 and 4.280.
Other references to Aeneas’ pity and fear in *Aeneid* 2 in lines 145, 204, 212, 228, 279-80, 411, 559, 685, 728-29, 755.

Murnaghan argues that transference is part of the “underlying logic of the *Poetics*” (772n). Her analysis of *anagnorisis* (recognition) is a case in point. In complex plots, according to Aristotle, *anagnorisis* is recognition that forestalls pathos, notably the killing of blood-kin, as in Iphigenia’s recognition of Orestes in Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Murnaghan posits that characters who experience *anagnorisis* “become similar to spectators, who by seeing a play become aware of dreadful experiences, who learn that such things can happen, but do not actually undergo those experiences” (763). As she goes on to note, “Aristotle also heightens the similarity between tragic characters and spectators by stressing cognition as an element of the audience’s experience much as he stresses recognition as an element of the tragic plot” (763).

Weinberg explains Piccolomini’s stance as follows: “pity must not be the pity of the participants in the action, but of the spectators (thus reaffirming the orientation towards the audience); and pleasure accompanies these passions because we learn about man’s fate and such learning is delightful” (546).

For example, Donald Stump includes Marlowe’s passive Aeneas in his list of the representations that make *Dido* a “travesty” of Virgil (83). Alternatively, T. M. Pearce argues that Marlowe’s Aeneas is a more intrepid hero than Virgil’s character (1930, 80). Of particular interest to Pearce is Aeneas’ description of his flight from the city, “which is not made in the shadows, skirting the foe but through the thick of battle with Achates opening the way at the point of his sword” (1930, 80). Thus, in Pearce’s reading, Aeneas’ effort to save Polyxena is “a last heroic feat” (1930, 81). The *Poetics* authorizes the kind of action that Aeneas’ narrative describes. As Ingram Bywater comments, “Aristotle is quite
aware that there is a rhetoric of action as well as a rhetoric of words”; the dramatic characters “may do things, just as they say things, with a view to exciting pity, fear, etc.,” (257).

20 Aeneas’ actions are useless because, as Venus explains, it is the gods and not men who fight over Troy (2.602-03). Venus also explains that neither Helen nor Paris is to blame (2.601-02), although Dido glosses over this Virgilian fact.

21 Richard Heinze makes the point with special reference to the appearance of Hector’s ghost: “If Hector advises Aeneas to give up all attempts at resistance, we know that resistance really is of no avail. If Hector urges flight, then flight cannot be dishonourable” (17). Benedict Nightingale attests to the power of Aeneas’ narrative in performance, with special reference to Hector’s ghost, when he makes an exception of both in his otherwise lukewarm review of Tim Carroll’s 2003 production at the Globe: “what Jonson was to call [Marlowe’s] ‘mighty line’ . . . pays handsome dividends in the passage when Aeneas recalls the devastation of Troy—you can almost see Hector’s ghost, with his torn-off arms, bleeding breast ‘ashy visage and blueish sulphur eyes’” (London Times, 23 June 2003). The play’s performance highlights the importance of Hector in Aeneas’ narrative.

22 For example, see Rick Bowers (2002) passim.

23 To my knowledge, Bowers is the only other critic who has attributed importance to the fact that Dido ends Aeneas’ narrative in Marlowe’s play. Virgil uses the economical ablative absolute (“factoque hic fine”) to define the moment Aeneas ends the tale in the Aeneid, which happens not in Book 2, as Dido suggests, but in Book 3: “having made an end, he was quiet” (718).
Margot Hendricks also notes the erasure of Aeneas’ identity with the destruction of Troy (169).

Richard Monti, for example, comments that the memory of Troy “encumbers [Aeneas] emotionally,” and further, that this encumbrance pits Aeneas’ personal desire against his public, epic duty, and postpones its fulfilment. According to Monti, the hero’s memory of Troy “is emblematic then of Aeneas’s personal desire which came into conflict with the demands of pietas at the fall of Troy, in Sicily and in Carthage, and as such it distracts him from Italy and a future of bloodshed and war” (81).

Sara Deats calls Aeneas’ fantasies “fluctuations,” suggesting that they and Dido’s fantasies “could be read as exemplifying both the fragmented selves posited by Belsey and Dollimore, and the divided subjects of Lacan and Kristeva, always in a state of becoming” (1997, 97-98).

In 2002, Charles Whitney made a case for the rise of Elizabethan drama based on literary recitations of the fall of Troy. He, too, finds a cathartic or “quasi-therapeutic process” at work in Aeneas’ narrative (77).

Richard Janko concurs with Else. He argues that the therapeutic interpretation of catharsis presupposes that the “best audience for a tragedy will then be composed of people pathologically disposed to feel excessive emotions” (1992, 346).

Aeneas builds two copies of Troy in Book 3. The first he calls Aeneadea and the second Pergamum (17-18, 132-33). He then stops with Helenus, who has himself built “a little Troy with a copy of great Pergamus,” complete with a stream named after Xanthus (3.349-50). David Quint points out that each of the Troys in Book 3 is “successively and more explicitly revealed to be a place of death” (1993, 61).
Sheila Murnaghan examines these practices throughout her essay “Sucking the Juice Without Biting the Rind.”

This is the second time in the *Poetics* that Aristotle denigrates the spectacle. The first is in Chapter 6:

> The Spectacle, though an attraction, is the least artistic of all the parts, and has least to do with the art of poetry. The tragic effect is quite possible without a public performance and actors; and besides, the getting-up of the Spectacle is more a matter for the costumier than the poet. (*Poetics* 23)

Aristotle’s preference for recited tragedy permeates the *Poetics*. It appears again in Chapter 26, when Aristotle weighs tragedy against epic: “That Tragedy may produce its effect even without movement or action in just the same way as Epic poetry; for from the mere reading of a play its quality may be seen”; and “That [Tragedy’s] reality of presentation is felt in the play as read, as well as in the play as acted” (*Poetics* 89-91).

Marlowe’s claim to the Aristotelian title of “better poet” is consistent with the strategies for authorial self-promotion that Georgia Brown finds in his epyllion, *Hero and Leander.* In *Redefining Elizabethan Literature*, Brown uses Marlowe’s poem as the centrepiece in her study of the ways in which the epyllion “speaks on behalf of a literary coterie which it helps to define, but does not present learning as a means to public service, but as an end in itself, an end that confers intellectual and social distinction” (2004a, 111). *Hero and Leander* is about Marlowe climbing the social ladder, for the epyllion involves “an élite group of readers who share the writer’s motives and aspirations” (2004a, 109). Brown demonstrates that *Hero and Leander* appeared just before the publication of *Dido* in 1594. The earliest extant edition of *Hero and Leander* was in 1598 but Brown argues that allusions to it in other epyllia “prove that his poem was known” from 1593 (2004a, 104n).
In *Aeneid* 4, Hermes/Mercury appears to Aeneas first in person (259-78) and then in a dream (556-70).

There is also evidence of the *Emotional fortitude* interpretation of catharsis in the arguments of Minturno and Segni. Minturno is quoted in Chapter 1, above. Segni is quoted in Bernard Weinberg (405-06), as follows:

> When we see similar cases which have happened to excellent people, we support our own calamities more easily; or rather we learn how to bear them. And in this way if we are wrathful or intemperate, we come to purge our souls of such passions, considering those perils and those evils which befall him who is wrapped up in vice and him who is involved in the passions; from which consideration it is inevitable that very great pleasure results.

Krieger uses the Greek, “ekphrasis,” whereas I use the anglicised spelling “ecphrasis.” Kelly Quinn, in her article “Ecphrasis and Reading Practices in Elizabethan Narrative Verse,” also uses the anglicised spelling. She gives a reason with which I agree: “to distance it from the Greek term . . . while also striving not to contradict that original sense” (31-32n). I mean the spelling of ecphrasis to denote Marlowe’s development of the term.

For a summary of the debate and a sensitive contribution to it, see Shadi Bartsch, “*Ars and the Man: The Politics of Art in Virgil’s Aeneid.*”

T. E. Page thinks the number of times that Aeneas’ tears are mentioned to be “excessive” (185).

The irony, of course, is that the mural is part of a temple that honours Juno, “a goddess for whom the extinction of Troy is a triumph” (Barchiesi 277). See also Michael Putnam 244-45.
The responses of both the dramatic and epic Aeneas to the mural are intensely subjective, another similarity between Virgil’s and Marlowe’s texts that the following passage from Bartsch brings to light:

Aeneas’ response is not one of horror or dismay, even though the temple is Juno’s and the intention of the Carthaginian artist must have been to glorify her might as it manifested itself in favor of the Greeks at Troy. Instead, the poet chooses to emphasize the hero’s own participation in the construction of what he is viewing: through his eyes we see, in no particular order, images that were originally arranged _ex ordine_ on the temple (1.456), a process that draws attention to Aeneas’ subjective reception of the images. Through his eyes we hear an account of the images that become a lived reality . . . And in the end, his response to these images is supremely subjective. In what has struck many of Virgil’s readers as a misreading of the temple scene, Aeneas draws hope and comfort from these images, exclaiming that here are the rewards of fame; life spurs compassion, human suffering moves men. . . (337)

Marlowe’s Aeneas, though, experiences feelings of hope and comfort in a different part of the story as Virgil tells it, in the hunting scene in Act 3. This difference is not as problematic as it may seem if we consider it as an issue of invention, in much the same way as Marlowe’s transfer of Polyxena from Book 3 to Aeneas’ narrative. The dramatic Aeneas’ feelings of hope and comfort are not where they are in the _Aeneid_, drawing attention to invention as well as imitation in _Dido_.

40 The Latin term for _enargeia/enargia_ is _evidentia_. The entry in Lee Sonnino’s _Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric_ is as follows:

Vivid illustration or representation is something more than mere clearness, since the latter merely lets itself be seen whereas the former thrusts itself upon our notice . . . The facts . . . are displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind (Quintilian). This style does not state a thing simply but sets it forth to be viewed as though portrayed in colour . . . so that it may seem to be painted, not narrated (Erasmus). (216, ellipses in original)

41 Gransden puts the case as follows:

Everything Aeneas sees there as over and done with—slaughter, sacrilege, destruction—he will live through again: first in his own retrospective
narration of the last days of Troy... and then again in the poem’s Iliadic closing books, the narrative of the Italian campaign. (2-3)

42 In Quinn’s essay, cited in note 35, above, she discusses Samuel Daniels’ *Complaint of Rosamond* (1592), Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and Michael Drayton’s *Mortimeriados* (1596) for their ecphrastic descriptions. She finds these ecphrases to be idiosyncratic compared to classical examples (19). Shakespeare, she argues, puts a particular emphasis on having Lucrece, after her rape by Tarquin, respond subjectively to the tapestry depicting the fall of Troy she sees (1366-1569): “Lucrece makes the tapestry a kind of allegory of her own life” (23). Aeneas’ narrative may be a model for Shakespeare’s practice in *The Rape of Lucrece*. The mural, in both the *Aeneid* and *Dido*, which depicts what Lucrece sees in the tapestry, is Aeneas’ life, both what is past and is to come.

43 As Mary Smith argues, “Although Dido has tactfully chosen her words to incriminate only Antenor, Marlowe must certainly have known that the same legends which indicted him also accused Aeneas of being his partner in guilt” (1977b, 18). The argument is well known in criticism of *Dido*, and is often deployed as evidence of the rival tradition’s influence over the play.

44 Hendricks goes on to argue that “From the moment he accepts Sichaeus’s robe, Aeneas benefits from and participates in the divinely inspired exploitation of Carthage” (172). Bartels agrees in general with Hendricks’ argument, although she maintains that the play gives “competitive equivalence” to the voices of Aeneas and Dido (1993, 29). Other commentators on the passage include Roma Gill, who suggests that “when Dido dresses Aeneas in Sichaeus’s clothes, he ought, by convention, to assume with them their majesty” (1977, 151); and Sara Deats, who maintains that the scene “reverses the relationship of
Virgil’s protagonists” (1997, 94). Deats also proposes that the greeting scene “foreshadows the abortive betrothal in the grotto and the mock coronation of act 4” (1997, 93).

45 The shorter wall in Mary Smith’s proposal replaces the longer one that T. W. Craik and David Bevington argue bisected the stage, with a gate for characters to pass from one side to the other (Craik 17; Bevington 63). E. K. Chambers also argues for a stage divided in half (III, 25-26). The virtue of Smith’s proposal is the “greater flexibility” that a shorter wall allows (Smith 1977a, 179). Smith disagrees with H. J. Oliver’s division of the stage “into three ‘mansions’” (1977a, 178; Oliver xxx-xxxi). Either way, whether the stage was divided into two or three parts does not affect my argument about Aeneas’ central position as he tells his narrative. The greeting scene also seems to me indicative of male control over the stage space, which, as Simon Shepherd argues, Marlowe’s plays show rather than simply allow in order “to foreground the male gaze” (1986, 180).

46 As Desmond explains in more detail:

Virgil’s Dido is a formidable character. Her royal bearing, her wealth and generosity, the civilized city she establishes, and the building campaign she directs all contribute to her significance and power, at least initially, in Virgil’s Aeneid. In this respect, Virgil’s Dido is consistent with the historical figure. However, in the course of Aeneid 4, Dido’s regal status is compromised by her desire for Aeneas. Aeneid 4 departs from the historical tradition in its treatment of Dido as a sexualized figure, a woman tempted by amor to forsake both her oath to Sychaeus (which the historical Dido died to preserve) and her role as leader. (27-28)

Richard Heinze argues that Virgil is conscious of the historical Dido, and of his “over-painting” as a “poetic fiction” (95).

47 The phrase is from Heather James’s “Dido’s Ear: Tragedy and the Politics of Response” In this essay, James makes no reference to Marlowe’s Dido: Shakespeare plays are the object of her examinations. James does not find that sympathetic passions lead to an Aristotelian “purging of dangerous emotions” in the Shakespeare plays she studies (364).
Arguing that Aeneas’ narrative is therapeutic, Charles Whitney makes the following comment: “As Aeneas speaks, Dido provides enthusiastic and sympathetic responses—a performance of her own, really—in order to boost the reciter’s morale and facilitate a cathartic cure” (2002, 77). I suggest that her attempts to stop the narrative indicate that she is suppressing the very emotions that Aeneas is expressing at the same time.

Donald Stump notes the similarity to support his entirely different reading of the play as a “travesty” of Virgil’s epic (86).

Not all criticism of the *Aeneid* agrees with Desmond on this point. Richard Monti, for example, asserts that Iarbus, Jupiter, Mercury, and Dido are all convinced that a marriage has taken place (47).

Dido’s reference to the serpent takes the audience back to Aeneas’ narrative and the reference there to the twin snakes that devour Laocoön and his two sons. Laocoön is the Trojan priest responsible for what is arguably the most enduring line in the *Aeneid*—“fear the Greeks, even when bringing gifts” (2.1.166; 2.49, 199-227). The serpent reference may also show Marlowe’s knowledge of Dolce’s *Didone*, in which Aeneas is described as a serpent “nourished” in Carthage, who “in return for the good he received, he may now kill us with his poison” (reprinted in Thomas and Tydeman 63). Mary Smith and Inna Koskenniemi have both examined Marlowe’s play in relation to Italian Dido drama. Smith finds that “Dolce is original in making it [the serpent] the instrument of Dido’s undoing” (1976, 230). According to Smith, the main parallel between Dolce’s *Didone* and Marlowe’s *Dido* is Anna’s suicide, which does not happen in other Italian Dido dramas, although the manner of her death is different in the two plays. In *Didone*, Anna hangs herself (1976, 231). Koskenniemi adds that “Anna’s tragic end is a theme anciently associated with the legend” (146, 147, 149).
Dympna Callaghan put forward some germinal arguments about tragedy and the category of woman in 1989. She attributes importance to woman’s “unique and crucial relation to tragedy” in her role as “instigator of the tragic action through transgression and as the dead centre of the denouement” (96).

Roma Gill argues that Anna’s suicide denies Iarbus rather than Dido a tragic death (146); Emily Bartels labels the suicides of Anna and Iarbus “comic senselessness” in comparison to the “spectacle that Dido creates” (51); the additional suicides make Donald Stump’s list of the “most ridiculous or grotesque departures from the Aeneid” (83); and Sara Deats labels the deaths a “deflative triple suicide” (114). T. M. Pearce goes further, arguing that “the entire action of Anna and Iarbus could be omitted without imperilling the course of the play although leaving it considerably slimmer in content” (1930, 63).

Critics of the Aeneid are sensitive to the epic’s anti-maternal agenda. As Ellen Oliensis puts it, “Troy’s ‘ancient mother’ is, it turns out, the province not of mothers but of fathers who father sons” (304); M. Owen Lee proposes that “Aeneas must leave Carthage, matriarchy, and Juno, and lead his people to Rome, the pater patriae, and Jupiter” (116); David Quint that the “Western empire is an all male affair” (1989, 9); and Duncan Kennedy, quoting Bakhtin, comments that epic “presents a picture of a valorised ‘absolute past’ that accounts for the present specifically through ‘beginnings’ and ‘peak times’ in the national history, a world of fathers and of founders of families, a world of ‘firsts’ and ‘bests’” (148-49). The pessimistic view of the maternal in the Aeneid is reinforced by the dominant image of marriage, which, as Philip Hardie argues “is the tragic one of wedding-as-funeral, the thalamus as tomb” (321). Of course, Lavinia is a feature of Aeneas’ future, but this does not contradict the anti-maternal stance, since she is not mother of Ascanius. Oliensis maintains that Lavinia is like Creusa, one of the poem’s uncomplicated virtuous
women who “prove their virtue precisely by submitting to the masculine plot of history—Creusa by accepting her relegation to the past, Lavinia by not resisting her exploitation in the future” (303).

55 Gurr argues that the business of the playwright was “either illusion or delusion” and that “the boy companies were more acceptable because they were less deceitful in their counterfeiting” (1992, 180; 1996, 107).

56 The phrase “arts of orchestration” is borrowed from Jean Howard’s work on Shakespeare plays. By “orchestration,” Howard means to suggest that drama is a serial art in which the audience sees and hears things in a predetermined order. . . . How the dramatist controls the temporal continuum of impressions flooding in upon the spectator largely determines the nature of the audience’s theatrical experience and its cognitive and emotional responses. (2)

My use of Howard’s term is intended to draw attention to Dido’s extraordinary stage-consciousness. T. M. Pearce argues that Dido is the most self-conscious of Marlowe’s plays, finding evidence in stage properties and the like (1930, 13).

57 Sara Deats mobilizes Altman’s model of the explorative play in relation to issues of sex and gender in her chapter on Dido in Sex, Gender, and Desire. Mary Smith does the same in her examination of the theme of providence in Dido and other Marlowe plays in her essay “‘Hell Strives with Grace’” (1990, 136), and offers the following summary of how Altman’s model might elucidate Marlowe plays:

Marlowe, arguing in utramque partem, designs his work to provoke in his audience a multiplicity of intellectual and emotional responses. Rather than being perceived as representing didactic or autobiographical positions, Marlowe’s plays can be most usefully seen as dynamic enactments of questions in which paradox, contradiction, and ambiguity work together to make questioners of the audience, even perhaps requiring them to ask questions that are not answerable. Together, playwright and audience are in the pursuit of truth. (1990, 137)
In criticism of *Dido*, the tendency when using Altman’s work is to deploy only his model of the explorative play.

58 Altman explains the investigation of causes with a reference to Medwall’s *Fulgens and Lucres*: “We know the final situation: Lucres has chosen Gaius as the nobler of the two suitors. What we want to find out is why. We discover this by examining the premises underlying the conclusion, thus working back toward some statable proposition” (25).

59 Altman argues that Marlowe plays are an “ironic development” of the explorative play (322).

60 I justify my emphasis on the basis of Virgil’s use of the demonstrative pronoun in the *Aeneid*: “ille Aeneas.”

61 T. M. Pearce reasons that the play “has exaggerated the degradation of Aeneas in order to heighten his obligation to Dido who rescues him” (1930, 57). Pearce’s argument makes *Dido* Virgilian in the sense that Aeneas’ degradation becomes part of the theme of Roman hospitality. See also Emily Bartels, citing Peter Hulme 35. For an argument about the question of hospitality (*hospitium*) in Dido and Aeneas’ relationship, see Roy Gibson’s “Aeneas as *hospes* in Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 4.” Gibson points out that reciprocity is a crucial issue in the Dido and Aeneas episode: even after Dido “has been forced to drop the argument that she and Aeneas are married (*Aen*.4.431) [she] continues to attack Aeneas and the Trojans as bad or faithless *hospites* (*Aen*.4.538-41, 4.596-8), and ends by renouncing *hospitium* with them (*Aen*. 4.622-9)” (184).

62 As dramatic devices that replace performed violence with reported violence, the Messenger and the Chorus participate in the practices of the substitution that Sheila Murnaghan finds throughout the *Poetics*. She argues that Aristotle’s obsession with
strategies for transference, assimilation, and substitution is about bringing the irrationality, disorder and chaos that tragedy represents under rational control. She concludes that the 

Poetics effectively substitutes for the tragedy it sets out to define. Stephen Booth is another critic who likens “the Poetics, an action of artistic inclusion, to the dramatic tragedies it discusses” (89). Michelle Gellrich examines the problem of conflict in Aristotle’s and others’ theories of tragedy at some length. In the Poetics, according to Gellrich, we “first encounter the effort of philosophy to incorporate poetry, and tragedy in particular, into its orbit of the rationally intelligible, by submitting its production to the controls of a techne” (5).

63 In contrast, Richard Heinze notes the modesty of Virgil’s Aeneas as a narrator, the fact that he “says nothing to his own glory” while he tells his tale (20).

64 The play’s self-reflexive references to what audiences do may be read as evidence of what Andrew Gurr calls the struggle in the period to find a proper terminology for the theatre (1996, 86). As Gurr notes, “There is no English term which acknowledges the full experience of both hearing and seeing the complete ‘action’ of the play” (1996, 86). The modern conclusion of the debate over the primacy of hearing or seeing is that the eye wins, but if we accept this conclusion, “we ignore not only the survival of ‘audience’ as the standard word but the vastly greater readiness of Elizabethans to use their ears for all forms of learning” (1996, 90). The success of Dido in terms of audience response relies on both faculties. While hearing Aeneas’ narrative is formative to the audience’s emotional experience of what they see at the end of Dido, the audience are presented here with the central position of Aeneas on the stage, underscoring the importance of the tale he tells and his response to it.
65 The following passage from Richard Heinze’s work on the *Aeneid* captures Sinon’s abuse in the epic:

Sinon’s deception surely started life as a stratagem worthy of Odysseus himself, brilliantly revealing the superiority of the versatile Greek over the barbarian Priam. Now, in Virgil’s hands, this famous exploit becomes a scandalous piece of behaviour, a despicable lie, corroborated by a false oath, compounded by the abuse of a most noble trustfulness, helpfulness, sympathy, piety and hospitality, and designed to destroy those who practise such virtues. (7)

66 In the *Aeneid*, Priam’s hands are “weaponless” in the ecphrasis of the mural, but in Aeneas’ narrative in *Dido*, Priam throws a “powerless” spear (1.487; 2.544). Given that the mural has been in Carthage for some time, we can reasonably assume that the image of Priam’s “weaponless” hands is the one Dido remembers. A number of critics draw attention to the differences between Virgil’s and Marlowe’s representations of Priam’s death. See, for example, T. M. Pearce (1930) 38 and Donald Stump 83. I think there is further significance for the play’s re-creation of a scene that demands pity in both Priam’s death and Aeneas’ evocation of Niobe to explain his own grief before he tells his tale. This helps Aeneas express his own suffering in comparison to that of the Trojan king. As Wolfgang Clemen argues in his analysis of dramatic speeches that evoke the griefs of Priam, Hecuba, or Niobe:

A comparison of this nature provided a background fraught with significance against which the character’s own immediate sorrows were endowed with grand, supernatural associations; and an awareness of this connexion [sic] could lead to a fuller understanding of the speaker’s own sorrows. (231)

I am suggesting that Marlowe uses a common dramatic device to increase the audience’s awareness of the depth of Aeneas’ grief, and to persuade them that it is sincere.
As a faithful revision of the Virgil’s epic, it is important for *Dido* to differentiate Aeneas from Sinon. In medieval versions of the story, as Heather James points out, it is a “Sinon-like Aeneas [who] betrayed Troy to the Greeks” (1997, 163).

H. J. Oliver comments:

The ‘harshness’ of the Myrmidons, the subjects and personal bodyguard of Achilles, was proverbial and is best illustrated by their part in the murder of the unarmed Hector (in one non-Homeric version and in Shakespeare) or the murder of Troilus (in Lydgate, where 3,000 of them surround him) (26n).

As it is the sight of Hector’s ghost that most excites Aeneas’ pity, his reference to the harshness of the Myrmidons at the start of his tale prefigures his emotional difference from them.

Aeneas’ experience of the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis as a model for the audience’s response warrants further investigation in the context of Tanya Pollard’s recent work on the early modern theatre as a metaphor of a powerfully beneficial or dangerous drug. This drug can either poison or cure, or do both, as Pollard argues it does in *Hamlet* (147). By imaginatively identifying with Aeneas, the audience are accepting an invitation to partake of the curative properties of catharsis by expelling the tragedy embodied in Dido. When Achates urges Aeneas to “banish” Dido “from forth [his] mouth,” cited earlier in the main text, he defines the Carthaginian queen as poisonous, and perhaps in a reference to the plague, highly contagious.

Lisa Hopkins is among the critics who have discussed Aeneas as the founder of Marlowe’s—and Elizabeth I’s—Britain, “mythically, through Brut, and historically, both through literal Roman conquest of the island and the metaphorical conquest of its literary allegiances to classical learning” (1996, 18).
The expulsion of Dido from *Dido* invites a consideration of the play in the context of René Girard’s work on the expulsion of the cultural scapegoat to re-establish difference, and thereby turn maleficent violence into beneficent violence. In *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard argues that maleficent violence is reciprocal violence, such as revenge, whereas beneficent violence is generative in that it expels, from the community, the source of social contagion embodied in the sacrificial victim, or cultural scapegoat. Aeneas’ cathartic prerogative defines his difference from Dido, effecting her *peripeteia* from powerful queen to doomed lover, both a second Helen and a second Eve. No longer different as a queen, Dido is now like all women. To apply Girard’s theory, Dido’s sameness makes her sacrificable, as does her original “outsider” status as a refugee in Libya (13). The audience are invited to share Aeneas’ difference from Dido by experiencing the catharsis she does not.

My aim throughout this section has been to show that Aeneas’ narrative is the central “deictic” in a play that is everywhere concerned with controlling its own production, in the sense that Ruth Lunney clarifies as follows:

> [the] sense of ‘pointing to’ or ‘demonstrative’, but adding to this the recognition that such ‘pointing to’ entails an organisation of perspective. Instances of deictic secure audience attention, setting up priorities of perception amidst the multiplicity of signals that engage eye and ear” (21-22).

Lunney does not discuss *Dido* because of dating problems and because the play’s “principal address is to elite (courtly, academic, boy-player) dramatic traditions rather than to the popular stage (189n).

Similarly, Stephen Orgel comments that “theaters create not only their dramas, but their audiences as well” (1975, 2).
3.1: Introduction

Whilst Marlowe deploys the *Poetics* in order to revise Virgil’s Dido and Aeneas story as tragedy, the process does not fundamentally change the story as Virgil tells it. This chapter makes apparent *Dido*’s engagement with more of the epic than is currently thought to be the case, extending Chapter 2’s argument that *Dido* is a faithful revision of the *Aeneid*. From this foundation, I will suggest that *Dido* encodes Marlowe’s authorial aspiration to overtake Virgil by ending the *Aeneid*, which, in the period, was sometimes considered narratively incomplete. We shall see that *Dido* is a hybrid genre, a “tragic-epic,” which has its practical origins in the *Aeneid* and its theoretical ones in the *Poetics*. This species of tragedy has the capacity to close the epic that Virgil left open.

Critics agree that *Aeneid* 1, 2, and 4 are the principle source for *Dido*; for example, H. J. Oliver argues that these books contribute to 95 per cent of *Dido* (xxxviii). In addition, source studies have found that Marlowe was an accomplished translator of Latin to the extent that, as Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman claim, “he had no need to consult any previously published translation of Virgil” (18).¹ We are very sure that Marlowe had the *Aeneid* on his desk when he was writing *Dido*. And yet there is much about the play that seems un-Virgilian, in both content and tone.² This has led to the critical strand, outlined in Chapter 1, which seeks to account for Marlowe’s embellishments of the *Aeneid* by foregrounding the influence of Ovid. This strand currently dominates *Dido* criticism. One
of my intentions in Chapter 2 was to demonstrate that elements of *Dido* that seem un-Virgilian have in fact their source in the *Aeneid*, for example, the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange. There is room for Virgil in our discussions of what appears to be un-Virgilian about *Dido*, which opens up new sites of inquiry. In this chapter, I further explore the possibility, raised in the analysis of the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange in Chapter 2, that *Dido*’s apparent departures from the epic reveal the play’s engagement, at a deeper level of composition than I have so far suggested, with the entire *Aeneid*.

I will argue that *Dido* is a “translation” of the *Aeneid* in which the Dido and Aeneas episode acts as a synecdoche for the entire epic. This translation embodies tragedy in a female character, as the *Aeneid* does, and responds to the epic as a poem in need of an ending. Re-reading *Dido* in the light of the entire *Aeneid* is a new approach. Giving more room to Virgil in our interpretations of the play adds to our knowledge of Marlowe’s attitude to Virgil and his mastery of Virgil’s epic, and of what an engagement with the *Aeneid* afforded the genre of tragedy and its author. It tells us something about the flexibility, capaciousness, and interrelationship of Renaissance dramatic genres, and about the *Poetics* and the *Aeneid* as texts that make possible a myriad of genres.

There are three main sections in this chapter. The first section establishes a Virgilian context in which to consider *Dido* as Marlowe’s attempt to overtake the classical poet by achieving the closure Virgil did not. Deploying tragedy to end the *Aeneid* is the logical outworking in *Dido* of Aristotle’s idea of the “better poet.” This first section begins with an outline of *Aeneid* elements, most of which are beyond Book 4, and explains their significance for *Dido* and for the discussion undertaken in the next sections. The narrative elements that are crucial for *Dido* are Virgil’s characterization of a hero who acts in ways that contradict his *pius* status, the connection between female characters and tragedy, and the ways in which the Carthaginian queen haunts the *Aeneid*. These elements enable *Dido*
as a revision in which the Dido and Aeneas episode works as a synecdoche for the entire Aeneid. The section concludes with a discussion of the centrality of tragedy in the Aeneid, and the epic’s intertextual relationships. We shall see that the Aeneid afforded possibilities for Marlowe’s career aspirations as well as for Dido.

The second section, “Translating the Aeneid,” begins with a definition of what “translation” means in the Renaissance and a clarification of my use of the term. In this chapter, “translation” replaces “revision,” the term I have deployed to this point. The definition of translation waits until this section because only then is there a Virgilian context, one that agrees with a Renaissance one, that sufficiently accounts for the sweeping operations that made “translating” such an enabling practice in Dido. Then I return to the argument I made in Chapter 2 that Aeneas’ unheroic behaviour during the fall of Troy has its source in Virgil’s text. There are two reasons for this recapitulation: first, to further Chapter 2’s arguments, and second, to prepare for a consideration of Marlowe’s Aeneas as a faithful representation of a Virgilian hero who struggles, throughout the Aeneid, to meet the demands of pietas. It will become clear that Virgil’s Dido and Aeneas episode foregrounds some of the tensions that span the Aeneid. These tensions make the epic ripe for picking as a tragedy in which the Dido and Aeneas episode does duty for the entire Aeneid. To further this argument, I examine Dido’s use of some of Virgil’s compositional techniques in the representation of the Carthaginian queen as a second Helen and a second Eve.

The third section begins with Aristotle’s discussion of tragedy relative to epic, turning then to Andrew Fichter’s work on Renaissance attempts to end what he calls the “non-end” of the Aeneid (12). This establishes a context in which to examine Dido in the light of Turnus’ death in Book 12. We shall see that Virgil evokes Dido and her death to embellish Turnus and his. I suggest that Turnus-as-Dido provided Marlowe with the
opportunity to deploy tragedy to end the epic that Virgil left open, and in this way, to overtake the classical poet. Performance, we shall see, is what matters most in Dido because it distinguishes tragedy from epic, and embeds in Dido the potential to achieve the closure that Virgil did not. The word “potential” is important, for I am proposing that the play’s capacity to end the Aeneid lies in the audience’s cathartic response to the spectacle of Dido’s death.

3.2: Context and Opportunities

We begin with an outline of selected elements of Virgil’s epic, most of which are after Book 4. The outline is interpolated by discussions of the Aeneid that provide information about the elements I intend to use in the sections that follow. Critical literature about the Aeneid has a great deal to offer scholars of Dido. It demonstrates that the Aeneid has a circular structure, one that has its beginning in its end, and uses figures of retrospection that make reading the poem, as Gordon Williams points out, “more a process of continual modification and re-reading” (6). The critical literature allows us to see that the Aeneid is a regenerative text, by which I mean that the epic does two things: it galvanizes antecedent texts, and it renews aspects of its first half in its second half. The Aeneid opens the possibility for future texts to take advantage of its regenerative strategies. Dido is a witness to that possibility. Most important for Marlowe’s play is the epic’s renewal of its first half in the second. This renewal exposes tensions in the Aeneid—its dark side—which allow Marlowe to translate more than Books 1-4. Together with the systematic removal of (human) female characters in both Dido and the Aeneid, which I discussed in Chapter 2, the epic’s dark side discloses that Dido re-presents an Aeneas who is not entirely a champion of civilization, and re-activates the Virgilian link between female characters and tragedy.
This is not to say that Dido’s deployment of the dark side of the Aeneid makes the play a pessimistic text, although as a compliment to Elizabeth’s mythic origins it is precariously balanced. Nor is it to say that the Aeneid does not provide a positive aesthetic experience with deeply ethical undertones, or that Marlowe did not appreciate Virgil’s artistic achievement. Rather, it is to propose that Marlowe saw advantages in elements of the Aeneid that warrant closer attention than we have hitherto given them.

The Aeneid revises Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey as one poem to celebrate the Roman gens embodied in Augustus, and the founding of civilization in Rome, the new Troy. The Aeneid tells the story of the Trojan War and its aftermath from a Roman perspective rather a Greek one. To do so, Virgil reverses the Homeric sequence, placing his Odyssey before his Iliad and leading to the common critical division of the Aeneid into “Odyssean” and “Iliadic” sections. The Homeric epics are the main antecedent texts that the Aeneid galvanizes, but as we shall see, they are not the only ones. Virgil’s treatment of antecedent texts establishes a model for the aesthetics of translation in Dido that has professional advantages as well as compositional ones. I suggest what some of these are in the concluding stage of this section.

Book 6 marks Aeneas’ transition from the Odyssean section, in which he is driven off course by Juno’s hatred and attempts to rebuild Troy in all the wrong places, including Carthage, to the Iliadic section, in which Aeneas stands and fights in the Italian campaign for the site of the future Rome. Aeneas experiences a catabasis in Book 6, a descent into the underworld in search of his father’s shade. The catabasis, I will argue, is the inspiration in Virgil’s text for the cathartic experience of Marlowe’s Aeneas.

Before he finds Anchises’ shade, Aeneas meets Dido’s shade. He addresses her “with tender love,” worries that he caused her death, repeats the reason—the “gods’ commands”—to explain his “unwilling” departure from Carthage, and expresses some
surprise that his departure caused Dido such “deep sorrow” (6.450-65). Aeneas is full of pity for Dido. He weeps and wishes to soothe her anger but she turns from him without a word, and “still his enemy,” finds solace and comfort with the shade of her husband, Sichaeus (6.467-74). Dido’s haunting presence, in Book 6 and elsewhere, leads me to propose that Virgil’s Carthaginian queen is the source for Dido as a tragedy. In the second section, I discuss the link between female characters and tragedy that Dido helps forge in the Aeneid, and in the third section, her significance for a translation in which tragedy ends what epic leaves open.

After he fulfils his duty with the golden bough in the underworld, Aeneas discovers the “land of joy” where the shades of Troy’s ancestors reside, including that of his father (6.638). Anchises educates Aeneas in the nature of pietas with a parade of souls that reveals Aeneas’ place in the lineage of imperial Roman emperors culminating in Augustus, and more significant, the place of his son, Ascanius/Iulus, for it is not Aeneas who founds Rome. That event lies beyond the Aeneid but is implicit in it (6.756-892).

Aeneas’ struggle with pietas is the backbone of the arguments in the next sections. Richard Monti defines the moral quality as “the steadfast observation of obligations” (11). Andrew Fichter defines it as “the civic duty of the Roman hero,” in the fulfilment of which “personal yearnings must be converted into a sense of duty to both family and patria, father and fatherland” (26). M. Owen Lee pads out Monti’s definition, explaining pietas as a three-fold devotion to family, country, and the gods, adding that the quality “has nothing to do with emotional display and everything to do with clarity of vision and a sense of purpose” (18, 21). Pietas demands that compassion must be put aside according to Lee; in his final analysis, the quality is “concerned with inner vision, not with the appearances of circumstances. It is the virtue of a man with a balanced perspective” (19, 22). Whether Aeneas meets the demands of pietas in the Iliadic section is a vexed question with
opposing answers. While critics agree that Aeneas fails in this regard in the Odyssean section, some argue that he succeeds in the Iliadic section, and, indeed, that his success is the very point of the epic’s second half. The hero’s struggle with pietas underpins the argument that Dido is a translation of the Aeneid in which the Dido and Aeneas episode does duty for the entire epic.

As Aeneas’ compassion for Dido in the underworld demonstrates, he struggles to meet the demands of pietas before he meets his father’s shade. Anchises’ instruction in the nature of pietas is vital to the plot of the Aeneid. The outcome of that instruction, I suggest, is the Virgilian muse for the dramatic Aeneas’ catharsis. Philip Hardie points out that the plot of the Aeneid is one of transition, “of the geographical passage from the sacked Troy to new cities in Italy, during which Aeneas and his people must pass from their old identity to the possibility of a new identity as ancestors of the Roman race” (320). Until this point, as critics agree, Aeneas’ personal desire is in conflict with the demands of pietas. Monti puts this most important issue as follows:

The tension within Aeneas is resolved by the syncretization of his emotions with the demands of his social mission. The motif of the interconnection of emotional disposition and the fulfilment of obligations is touched upon in the episode of the fall of Troy, is deployed in fully developed form in the narrative of the rupture with Dido, and culminates in the final resolution of the catabasis. Love for his father brings Aeneas to the world of the dead, even at the expense of setting aside his desire for the settled, civilized life. (81-82)

The parade of souls ushers in Aeneas’ peripeteia; his “spirit fired with the love of fame to come,” he now knows where he has to go and what he has to do (6.889-92). Thus we can see the parade of souls as Thomas Van Nortwick does, as “a metaphor for the process dramatized throughout the Aeneid, the systematic purging from Aeneas of all vestiges of his former life and former self, in preparation for the new role the gods have chosen for him” (140). In Chapter 2, one of my concerns was to show the benefits that Aeneas’ catharsis has for him but not for Dido. As we have seen, Aeneas’ experience of the
cathartic narrative re-mobilizes him and the epic business he embodies, business that his
memory of Troy’s fall brings to a grinding halt. The Virgilian Aeneas’ peripeteia leads me
to suggest that Marlowe had the catabasis in mind when he considered staging catharsis
first as the Outlet kind, modelled by Aeneas to expel Troy’s memory, and second, as the
 Structural kind, the driving force behind Dido’s plot reversals. This furthers my argument
that Dido engages with more of the Aeneid than Books 1-4.

The Virgilian hero’s role, it turns out, is to remove the last impediment standing in
the way and on the site of the future Troy, Turnus, who is betrothed to Lavinia, the
daughter of Amata and Latinus. The confrontation between Turnus and Aeneas is delayed
in a number of ways, notably, for my purposes, by the “phantom” Aeneas Juno fashions in
Book 10—a “sine viribus” (“without strength/manliness”) copy that leads Turnus away
from battle with the real Aeneas (636-42), and postpones the action with which the Aeneid
concludes, the death of Turnus. The “unmanly” copy of Aeneas is important to the
arguments I wish to make for two reasons. First, it establishes that the capacity to cause
delay is a feminised prerogative in the Aeneid, in contrast to the multiple references in the
epic that connect male characters to the “breaking off” of delay (4.569; “rumpe moras”).
Juno’s antagonism towards the Trojans drives the postponement of epic fulfilment in both
sections of the Aeneid, for while she cannot change the “immovable” destiny of a Latin
crown and wife for Aeneas, she can “draw out and cause delay to such great matters”
(7.313-15). Other female characters, including Dido, help Juno’s cause in both sections of
the epic. Second, the “unmanly” copy of Aeneas is a continuation, in the epic’s second
half, of the Aeneas who struggles to meet the demands of pietas in the first. Like delay as a
feminised prerogative, then, the struggling Aeneas is present throughout the epic. I
mobilize these narrative elements to further my argument that Dido is a translation of the
Aeneid in which the Dido and Aeneas episode is a synecdoche of the entire epic.
Before and during the final confrontation between Turnus and Aeneas, both characters are described as or engage in action that suggests them both to be a “second Achilles” and another Hector (9.742). The Homeric roles that Virgil’s characters take on in the Iliadic section allow Virgil to accomplish two things: first, to reverse the action of the Odyssean section; and second, to cast the battle for Latinum as a reprise of the battle for Troy, with Aeneas, as Hector, victorious in the end. Standing in for Helen in this scenario, with a twist, is Lavinia, originally betrothed to Turnus, who will be Aeneas’ wife in a marriage that is beyond the Aeneid but implicit in it from Book 7 (68-80, 96-106). The twist is that Lavinia’s perpetually future marriage to Aeneas is lawful; indeed, it is divinely scripted. Amata, recognizing that Aeneas comes to take another man’s bride, labels him “another Paris” (7.321). Then, bitten by a serpent sent from Juno, Amata goes mad. She delays Aeneas’ victory over Turnus and the inevitable marriage with Lavinia that will follow by hiding her daughter in the woods (7.373-88). Amata hangs herself in Book 12 (602-03).

In the next section, I argue that Lavinia and Amata are the basis for Marlowe’s portrait of Dido as both a “second Helena” and a second Eve. The Lavinia-Helen construction is not the first time in the Aeneid that Helen is mentioned. In his narrative to Dido, Aeneas tells of how he finds Helen near Vesta’s shrine in Priam’s palace after he sees the king’s death, and admits to trying to kill her before Venus stays his hand (2.567-603). Whether the Helen episode is the work of Virgil is a much-debated topic. In the next section, we shall see that Marlowe’s Dido/Dido gives a tragic currency to Helen that she does not necessarily have in the Aeneid. Helen gives us new information about the resources Marlowe may have consulted when he wrote his play. In the section “Ending the Aeneid,” the perpetually future marriage of Lavinia and Aeneas is relevant to Renaissance arguments about the Aeneid as a poem in need of an ending.
The significance for Dido of the Amata episode lies in its function as a Virgilian figure of retrospection. The episode is a particularly vivid example of what Monti calls the “parallel literary reminiscences” in the *Aeneid* (91). These are the moments when narrative elements and themes in the *Aeneid*’s first half reappear in the second, inviting the epic’s readers to reappraise what happens in the Odyssean section and why it happens in the light of the Iliadic section. Like “second” copies of characters, parallel literary reminiscences in the *Aeneid* are figures of retrospection that help the poem to regenerate itself. They also contribute to the epic’s circular structure—in other words, the possibility that the *Aeneid* has no end. I shall return to the Amata episode as an example of the *Aeneid*’s parallel literary reminiscences shortly, when I consider other Virgilian compositional techniques and their relevance for *Dido*.

Despite Amata’s attempts to delay the action, Turnus and Aeneas eventually meet in single combat and Aeneas is victorious. Turnus begs Aeneas to spare his life for the sake of the father-son relationship that is so central in the *Aeneid* to the founding of Rome (12.931-38). The quote from Monti, in the outline of the catabasis, above, reveals the importance of patriarchal relationships in the epic. Aeneas hesitates, but when he sees Pallas’ belt, which Turnus takes after he kills Pallas in Book 10 (479-500), Aeneas buries his “raving sword” in the Rutulian’s chest (12.939-51). Turnus’ spirit flies “indignant” to the shades below in the poem’s concluding line (12.952). Critics find the wrath that drives Aeneas to kill Turnus extremely problematic, evidence of a hero who struggles throughout the poem to meet the demands of *pietas*. This is not the first time in the Iliadic section that Aeneas’ wrath threatens his status as a *pius* hero. In Book 10, upon hearing of Pallas’ death, Aeneas goes berserk, taking hostages for a human sacrifice, and killing those who beg for mercy in the name of *pietas*, including a priest (517-604). M. Owen Lee rightly notes that Aeneas’ “sudden act of vengeance is the act of a savage” (85).14 According to
other critics, killing Turnus shows that Aeneas ultimately fails, on the epic’s final page, to meet the demands of pietas.\textsuperscript{15} Aeneas’ wrath and the death of Turnus have relevance for Renaissance attempts to end the \textit{Aeneid}, as we shall see in the third section.

Equally important for Renaissance “translators” of Virgil’s text, and hence for \textit{Dido}, Turnus’ death is not the end of the story, as K. W. Gransden points out:

\begin{quote}
In the \textit{Aeneid}, the death of Turnus and the end of the war in Latium are the same. But they are not the end of the whole story or of the significance of the \textit{Aeneid}. Through various prophetic passages the poet brings into the narrative events which lie beyond the heroic age, events which Aeneas, gazing on the Shield, delights in as pictures, while ignorant of their meaning. (158)
\end{quote}

Critics agree that the \textit{Aeneid} has two endings, one of which is actually a beginning because it marks the return of the epic to Book 1. Gransden is again helpful. As he demonstrates, one of the endings in \textit{Aeneid} 12 is the flight of Turnus’ spirit to the shades below, the poem’s concluding line (952). The other ending is the smile with which Jupiter reassures Juno (12.829; Gransden 209). This smile denotes both an end and a beginning. After the smile, Juno agrees to cease her hostility towards the Trojans: “Juno assented [to Jupiter] and joyfully changed her purpose” (12.841-42). In this way, Jupiter’s smile denotes an ending because Juno’s changed purpose enables Aeneas to fulfil his task of removing Turnus, and the poem’s action to end. The smile denotes a beginning because it is described in exactly the same terms as the one with which Jupiter reassures Venus in Book 1 (254), bringing readers back to the start of the \textit{Aeneid}.\textsuperscript{16}

Jupiter’s second smile exposes the theme of the \textit{Aeneid}, which, as Gransden notes, is “the actual disappearance of the Trojans from the world-stage altogether” (67).\textsuperscript{17} The \textit{Aeneid}’s theme has retrospective implications for three of the arguments in Chapter 2: that \textit{Dido} celebrates Elizabeth’s Trojan origins; that Aeneas’ catharsis expels his disturbing memory of Troy; and that the potential for the audience’s cathartic experience exploits their connection to Aeneas. The epic’s theme does not change the argument that \textit{Dido}
compliments Elizabeth’s mythic ancestry, albeit cryptically, or that the play relies on an audience connection with Aeneas, but it does refine them. “Trojan” in the Odyssean section has negative connotations that the Iliadic section reverses by turning Aeneas, his son, and his men into ancestors of the Roman race. Dido, I suggest, deploys “Trojan” in the sense it is used in the Iliadic section. In Chapter 2, I argued that Aeneas’ experience of the Outlet kind of catharsis expels Troy as a tragedy, and subsequently, that the Structural kind works to re-locate tragedy in the body of the Carthaginian queen. In view of those arguments, I suggest that Aeneas’ catharsis in Dido is an attempt to perform the theme of the Aeneid as Gransden explains it.

Critics agree that Jupiter’s second smile is indicative of Virgil’s sense of the end being in the beginning, and of the beginning being in the end. M. Owen Lee goes so far as to suggest that the epic is unfinished, adding that “If Virgil never really finished the Aeneid, perhaps it is because the Aeneid never could be finished. It is still being written” (175). Dido is itself testimony to the regenerative strategies inbuilt in the Aeneid.

The regenerative capabilities of Virgil’s epic are grounded in the antecedent texts it draws upon and makes active. This establishes a context for reading Dido in which the aesthetics of Marlovian translation are permitted by the classical poet’s own strategies of composition. Virgil is most concerned with Homer’s epics. In particular, as the about face of the Homeric sequence in the Aeneid indicates, Virgil is more concerned with the Iliad than the Odyssey. Gransden argues that “Virgil is not merely alluding to the Iliad, but redeploying it, almost, in a sense, overlaying it with his own visionary misreading or (at the least) recension of it” (4), and Monti comments that the second section of the epic presents, in most general terms, “an inverted pattern of the first” (83). This reversal exposes the revisionist aim of Virgil’s poem, which, as Duncan Kennedy observes, is to reprise the Greek victory over Troy that is prophetic in the Iliad in a way that discloses the
“previous story as but one element in a grander narrative” (151; Iliad 6.488). Joseph Farrell asserts that what this means is not that Virgil re-writes the Iliad but that Homer’s epic “stands emphatically unaltered as a model by which to understand [the] subsequent event” that is the story the Aeneid tells (236). Farrell’s assertion precisely describes my view of Dido’s relationship to the Aeneid—Virgil’s epic is the model by which to subsequently understand Dido as tragedy.

The classical poet permits the intention I am attributing to Marlowe because Homer’s epics are not the only antecedent texts that the Aeneid galvanizes. Critics have examined the large number of texts by Virgil’s predecessors, apart from Homer’s epics, that the Aeneid animates. Authors other than Homer include Catullus, Lucretius, Callimachus, Plato, and Athenian tragedians (Lee 11). The antecedent texts that the Aeneid galvanizes come together especially in the representation of Dido, testifying to her crucial status in the epic. Sources for the Carthaginian queen include:

Homer’s Circe, Calypso and Nausicaa; Medea in Euripides, Apollonius and Varro Atacinus; Apollonius’ Hypsipile; Catullus’ Ariadne; Timaeus’ account of Elissa preserved by Polyenous; as well as historical accounts of Cleopatra and even Scribonia (the wife whom Augustus divorced). (Laird 289)19

While Marlowe may not have been familiar with all these sources for his and Virgil’s character, he was clearly well aware of the tragic potential of the Carthaginian queen. And tragedy is particularly active in the Aeneid, in the representation of Dido and elsewhere, as critics point out. The large amount of work on tragedy in the Aeneid is comprised of some that deploys the Poetics, although this methodology is contested.20 Critics agree, however, that Virgil is both an epicist and a tragedian. Richard Heinze, for example, defines the Dido and Aeneas episode as a “tragic epyllion” (96), and Philip Hardie draws attention to Virgil’s “epic rewritings of tragedy,” foregrounding the Aeneid’s engagement with Roman tragedy as a genre that “tends to the epic, understood as the genre of praise poetry” (324,
325). If this is so, Hardie continues, then “Virgil’s adaptations of tragic models represent a movement in the opposite direction, producing a ‘tragic epic’” (325). These comments reveal the capaciousness of the Aeneid, its ability to incorporate multiple genres as well as multiple antecedent texts. In particular, the epic permits both tragedy and the movement Hardie notes towards a hybrid genre. I suggest that Dido takes advantage of the generic possibilities the Aeneid encodes in order to regenerate the epic as “tragic epic” but in a way that visions the hybrid genre differently from Virgil. In the third section of this chapter, I argue that while the practical origins of Dido as a tragic epic are in the Aeneid, its theoretical origins are in the Poetics. We shall see that the modernization of the Poetics that occurs in Dido enables tragedy to end the Aeneid.

Antecedent texts permeate the entire Aeneid for professional reasons as well as compositional ones, shedding new light on the kudos that translating Virgil’s epic afforded Marlowe as an author. As Charles Martindale argues, “Authors elect their own precursors, by allusion, quotation, imitation, translation, homage, at once creating a canon and making a claim for their own inclusion in it.” (2). Gordon Williams, in his valuable study of techniques and ideas in the Aeneid, draws early attention to Virgil’s “capacity to write in such a way as to require readers to recall the texts of predecessors” (viii). This “provided a special opportunity,” Williams continues, “for Virgil to make the texts of his great predecessors active in his own” (viii). In addition, Farrell claims that Virgil’s aim in the Aeneid is “to create a text that will knit together any number of cherished ‘pre-texts’ into a vast, continuous intertext—a project that Virgil did not begin or complete, but that he did much to advance” (236); and Lee that the poem itself is “a compendium of Greek and Roman literature of all ages, a kind of index to the whole civilization of which Augustan Rome was the culmination” (11). For the aspiring and well-educated playwright we know Marlowe to have been, the Aeneid offered a plethora of opportunities.¹¹ Not the least of
these may well have been the occasion for Marlowe to link Dido to the Virgilian intertextual network, thus creating a canon and claiming a place within it for both himself and his play. While Marlowe may have approached the Aeneid wearing Ovidian glasses, as a number of critics argue, what this brings into focus is the surfeit of possibilities that Virgil’s text affords the playwright and his play.

This is not to say that Marlowe or Dido were successful in the ways I have suggested. We can never know how Dido was received by its original audience. But we do know that the Dido and Aeneas episode was remarkably popular in the period, leading, as Marilynn Desmond notes, to “approximately forty Renaissance dramas about Dido” in England and the continent (20). Re-reading Dido in view of the entire Aeneid provides fresh insights into why the episode was so popular.

3.3: Translating the Aeneid

We now have the extended Virgilian context to further explore Dido as a tragedy that “translates” the entire Aeneid at deeper levels of composition than I proposed in Chapter 2. This exploration is the foundation for the claim that Dido deploys tragedy to end the Aeneid, which I shall argue in the next section. We begin this section with a definition of what “translation” means in the Renaissance, and a clarification of my use of the term. The discussion then turns to evidence of an Aeneas who acts, in both sections of the epic, in ways that contradict his pious status. This element of the epic’s dark side, together with Virgil’s figures of retrospection, facilitates a translation of the epic as a tragedy. The Helen question and the Amata episode, which I go on to consider, reveal the Virgilian source for Marlowe’s portrait of the Carthaginian queen.

In the Renaissance, imitation was invention, and “translation” was a creative exercise. The reference is to translatio rather than transcriptio, and the important difference between them. In Chapter 1, I noted that Troni Grande defines translatio as
adaptation, in contrast to transcriptio, or strict word-for-word translation (100). Translatio, Grande comments, is “writerly invention . . . understood in its rhetorical sense as a new arrangement of what has been previously known, rather than . . . as an original discovery of the yet unknown” (80). A recollection of a little more of her argument and a brief summary of Thomas Greene’s pioneering work on imitatio will further define “translation.” Their work, in view of what we now know about the Aeneid’s intertextuality, helps establish what the term may have meant to Marlowe when he set to work on dramatizing Virgil’s epic.

According to Grande, there is no “anxiety of influence” in the practice of translatio; rather, the translation acknowledges and accepts its relationship to its sources (81). Translation is “a kind of usurpation” in Grande’s analysis (80). When it comes to Dido, Grande finds that Marlowe’s attitude to the play’s sources is ambivalent. Such ambivalence does not, however, affect the play as necessarily a “new arrangement” because the changes to Virgil’s text that Marlowe makes in Dido are “inherent in the very exercise of Renaissance translation” (81). In The Light in Troy, Thomas Greene does find a source of anxiety, not in the relationship between “original” texts and their translations but in the translating author’s “recognition of linguistic mutability” as the classical text is adapted (6). Greene’s focus is imitatio in “texts that can be said to possess historical self-consciousness” (16). These texts “manipulate or dramatize or incorporate their intertextual makeup as constitutive structural elements . . . [and] reflect a consciousness of their historicity and build upon it” (16-17). Imitatio in the Renaissance is a dynamic process in Greene’s view:

The major author declares himself through his power in extending and violating the mundus [mundus significans: the signifying universe], a power so dynamic and fruitful as to alter it irreversibly. Yet even his violations have to be understood in terms of the norms they challenge. (20)
Greene posits that to “read in terms of a mundus is not to close off the polyvalence of the text, but to seek its potency within the richness of the writer’s play with his own codes” (21).

I mean my use of translation to carry the creative dynamism and disciplined practice that Greene attributes to imitatio, and the absence of anxiety and idea of usurpation Grande attributes to translatio. I also mean the term to carry a sense of rhetorical sweep and scope, and of homage to the antecedent text that the disciplined practice of translation implies. The benefit of understanding translation in this sense is that it concurs with Virgil’s attitude to the antecedent texts he activates in the Aeneid, noted in the “Contexts and Opportunities” section. And Virgil’s attitude concurs with Quintilian’s definition of translatio. Sonnino notes that Quintilian exerted a “particularly noticeable” influence in Renaissance rhetorical practice, so much so that Ben Jonson would remark that a thorough knowledge of Quintilian was all that a poet needed (2). Given Marlowe’s education and the prevalence of the Aeneid and Quintilian in the system, it is hard to imagine he did not know of the intertextual relations in Virgil’s epic, and even harder to imagine that he had no knowledge of Quintilian. Marlowe also most probably knew the high esteem in which Quintilian held translatio, a regard that Quintilian eloquently indicates in the following passage:

The commonest and by far the most beautiful of tropes. . . . For if it be correctly and appropriately applied it is quite impossible for its effect to be commonplace, mean or unpleasing. It adds to the copiousness of language by the interchange of words and by borrowing and succeeds in the supremely difficult task of providing a name for everything. A noun or verb is transferred from the place to which it properly belongs to another where there is no literal term or the transferred is better than the literal. (qtd. in Sonnino 181-82).

Here Quintilian explains the use of translatio within small grammatical structures like sentences. But translatio enjoyed more sweeping operations, as Grande’s and Greene’s discussions make apparent. Translatio could be practiced on larger structures, including
entire texts, in a way that was not limited by strict adherence, of the *transcriptio* kind, to the text that was being translated.

While Quintilian’s definition foregrounds improvement, there is still an implied homage to the text upon which the translator goes to work. Otherwise, there would be little point to the exercise and little professional kudos for the translator. This implied veneration is more directly stated in Greene’s discussion of *imitatio*. I suggest it is Marlowe’s attitude to the epic that *Dido* translates, as it was Virgil’s towards the antecedent texts the *Aeneid* galvanizes and revises. To my mind, what *Dido* does with the *Aeneid* is similar to the play’s modernization of the *Poetics*. We can approach *Dido* as an occasion to “improve” both the *Poetics* and the *Aeneid* by investing them with contemporary significance—to defend tragedy by performing the benefits of catharsis, and, by translating Virgil’s epic, to make the *Aeneid* relevant in the emerging tragedy of the period.

We come now to the ways in which *Dido* puts the “most beautiful of tropes” to work on the entire *Aeneid*. The link between female characters and tragedy that Virgil forged with Dido’s haunting presence in his epic, the Helen question, and the Amata episode are the focus of the discussion. Overarching these is the Aeneas who struggles with *pietas* in both sections of the *Aeneid*. Chapter 2’s discussion highlighted this struggling Aeneas in the Greek attack during the battle for Troy, “the lowest point in Aeneas’ moral history” according to Roger Hornsby (64). Another look at the episode and Aeneas’ subsequent treatment of the Carthaginian queen prepares us to re-consider as Virgilian what we currently think is un-Virgilian about *Dido*.

Aeneas’ participation in the Greek attack is a vivid example of the *Aeneid*’s dark side. Donald Stump’s comment—that Aeneas is an “exemplary leader” in Virgil’s epic (84)—suggests that he at least is unaware of, or prefers not to acknowledge, this side of the *Aeneid* and the eponymous hero’s contributions to it. And what critics in general find un-
Virgilian about Marlowe’s Aeneas comes largely from his narrative: Sara Deats criticizes Aeneas’ “unheroic performance during the sack of Troy,” arguing that it “further tarnishes his epic image” (2002, 111); Rick Bowers suggests that Aeneas’ passivity in Marlowe’s version of the tale betrays the Trojan’s complicity in the fall of Troy (99); and Ethel Seaton, some time ago, argued that if Marlowe’s Aeneas “knew in such dire detail how Priam died, it was because he and Antenor had led Pyrrhus to the king’s palace of refuge, and had even stood by and consented to the murder” (27). Hence, criticism of the narrative has tended to ascribe Marlowe’s representation of Aeneas to the influence of the rival tradition, not Ovid this time but Lydgate’s *Troy Book*. Critics of the *Aeneid* alert us to the possibility that Marlowe’s Aeneas has the unheroic qualities of his epic counterpart. Their work leads me to argue that Virgil’s problematic hero is the lynchpin in *Dido*. As we shall see, the dark side of the *Aeneid* facilitates a translation in which the Dido and Aeneas episode works as a synecdoche for the entire epic.

Virgil’s Aeneas, as David Slavitt argues, is “a difficult hero to like,” adding that Virgil “recognized in Aeneas a dismal grandeur that is all the more depressing because he so inexorably fated to win” (126, 155). For Slavitt, who reads Aeneas’ treatment of Dido in the *Aeneid* in the context of Odysseus honourable treatment of Nausicaa and her father in the *Odyssey*, Virgil’s Aeneas comes off second best to Homer’s crafty hero (110):

> Aeneas behaves quite differently and, unless we assume Virgil to have been a total moron, there has to be some purpose to his curious series of actions, some rhetorical explanation that would reverse the disastrous effect of the hero’s conduct and show it in a different light. The death of Dido may be one more burden Aeneas has to carry, another grief . . . Dido’s pain and death are the pedestal for a heroic figure of Augustus we are continually invited to imagine. (111)

Not all critics of the *Aeneid* would go as far as Slavitt, but his arguments are effective in drawing our attention to the presence of an unheroic Aeneas in Virgil’s epic, and a number of critics do agree with Slavitt on this point. In particular, critics of the *Aeneid* help us to
see a Virgilian Aeneas who is “often inconsistent,” as Craig Kallendorf argues, “in the set of values he articulates” (397). Aeneas’ role in the fall of Troy—his “battle lust,” as M. Owen Lee puts it (37)—is proof positive that Virgil’s hero acts in ways that contradict his pious status because, as R. J. Tarrant comments, “Aeneas himself participates to a disturbing degree in the hatred generated by the fighting” (179).25 In Chapter 2, in addition to noting Aeneas’ unheroic actions, I argued that the problem with Aeneas during the fall of Troy is the fact that he stays, not that he goes, and that this problem concerns Virgil as well. The universal agreement among critics of the Aeneid that the hero struggles to meet the demands of pietas during the fall of Troy supports Chapter 2’s argument that Aeneas’ narrative in Dido is a faithful translation of Aeneid 2. Additionally, it prepares us to consider a problematic Aeneas elsewhere in both Marlowe’s and Virgil’s texts.

As Slavitt’s frank comments suggest, the struggling Aeneas is most clearly in view at Carthage, in the consequences his behaviour has for Dido. These are disastrous for the queen and her city. Aeneas’ relationship with Dido brings her city to a standstill before turning the powerful queen into a woman “fired by a sudden madness” and doomed to a death neither deserved nor fated (4.86-89, 696-97). The un-Virgilian Aeneas that critics find in Dido, either in his version of the fall of Troy or his treatment of the Carthaginian queen, accords with Virgil’s representation. It is even possible that Marlowe treats his Aeneas more favourably than Virgil does his hero.

The Virgilian Aeneas who is often inconsistent in the set of values he articulates is especially apparent in his revenge for Pallas’ death in Book 10, noted in the previous section, and his pitiless slaughter of Turnus, as Kallendorf goes on to note (397).26 Aeneas’ struggle with pietas is also a primary focus in the Dido and Aeneas episode. The problematic hero is, then, a feature in both the Odyssean and Iliadic sections of the Aeneid. This is the backbone of my argument that Dido translates the entire epic because the
struggling hero brings to light the *Aeneid*'s re-presentation of Odyssean narrative elements in the Iliadic section, and vice versa, as I will demonstrate shortly. *Dido* takes advantage of the problematic Aeneas who appears in both sections of the epic, for the character makes possible a translation in which the Dido and Aeneas episode does duty for the entire *Aeneid*.

Virgil’s hero, this time in his “*semiviri*” shape (“half a man/ eunuch”), reveals that the struggling Aeneas crosses backwards and forwards between the two sections. In the Odyssean section, it is Iarbus who calls Aeneas’ manliness into question when he likens the Trojan to “that Paris with a eunuch escort” (4.215). Paris, of course, steals Helen, another man’s bride, as Aeneas will do in claiming Lavinia, betrothed to Turnus, in the Iliadic section. The Aeneas/Paris construction straddles both halves of the epic, as we shall see. It is also Iarbus in *Dido* who draws attention to the effeminate Aeneas when he scorns the queen’s preference for a Phrygian over the king of Gaetulia, telling us that Marlowe was familiar with Virgil’s *semiviri* hero: “Ay, this is it which wounds me to the death, / To see a Phrygian, forfeit to the sea, / Preferr’d before a man of majesty” (3.3.63-65). In the *Aeneid, semiviri* does more work in the Odyssean section than simply calling Aeneas’ manliness into question. It also signifies an Aeneas more dedicated to *otium*, leisure time, than to *negotium*, employment (4.189-94). For Carthage and its queen, the consequences of the *semiviri* Aeneas’ interference are catastrophic, as I have pointed out. They are no less so for the Carthaginian queen in *Dido*, and even more so for Anna and Iarbus, who survive the *Aeneid* but not Marlowe’s play.

The *semiviri* Aeneas’ interference at Carthage is an extremely tense moment in the *Aeneid*, important enough for a visit from Mercury, sent by Jove to remind Aeneas of his *pietas* responsibilities, especially his duty to Iulus (4.274-76). Mercury disgraces Aeneas by using the adjective “*uxorious*”—literally, “of a wife” (4.266; i.e. a wife’s minion).
Aeneas gets the message, “wavers” about how to do go about it, and prepares, without telling Dido, to leave both her and Carthage (4.272-95). It is not a high point in the epic Aeneas’ career: “dissimulent,” to dissemble or conceal, alerts us to the fact (4.291). It is not a high point in the dramatic Aeneas’ career either, as I argued in Chapter 2, so much so that Marlowe chooses a transcriptio of Dido’s rage to engage the force of the Virgilian contempt. There is nothing un-Virgilian about the way in which Marlowe’s Aeneas leaves Carthage and its queen.

Gordon Williams is one critic who has drawn attention to a number of unflattering opinions of Aeneas through the eyes of other characters in the epic’s first half. According to Williams, Mercury’s contempt of Aeneas’ effeminacy is the most “surprising and shocking” (44). In Chapter 2, I highlighted Clare Kinney’s disapproval of the way in which Aeneas prepares to leave Carthage, and of the two visits from Mercury, which Marlowe reverses in his play. Williams’ findings lend support to my argument that Marlowe’s Aeneas, like the play he is in, is faithful to the Aeneid. Williams’ findings also cast the reversal of Mercury’s appearances in Dido in a new light, one in which we can view the play as being as much about invention as it is about imitation. In this instance, Dido’s difference from the Aeneid demonstrates Marlowe’s knowledge and deployment of Virgil’s text.

The “phantom” Aeneas that Juno fashions in Book 10 pushes my argument that Dido is a faithful translation of the entire Aeneid a little further. This “without strength/manliness” copy of Aeneas provides another opportunity to translate the Iliadic section of the Aeneid in the process of translating the Odyssean one. Virgil clearly means the phantom Aeneas who distracts Turnus from the battle to contrast with the real Aeneas who waits for him. The argument is, then, that the real Aeneas has the strength/manliness that the copy does not. And yet Virgil appears anxious about the issue, as is apparent in the
In this scene, Virgil carefully protects Aeneas’ masculinity: the hero wears armour made by Vulcan to protect him from penetrating weapons (12.739-41; Turnus’ sword shatters “like ice” on Aeneas’ armour); his spear is “mighty” and “massive” (12.399, 442); and when he breaks it, Venus gives him another “as large as a tree,” before which Turnus trembles (12.887-88, 916). The sexual metaphors are less than subtle. Virgil appears anxious about the hero he has constructed, which suggests that the poet found his own hero to be as problematically effeminate in the epic’s second half as he is in the first. The *semiviri* Aeneas is another element that makes the *Aeneid* ripe for picking as a tragedy in which the Dido and Aeneas episode does duty for the entire epic.

One of my aims in the discussion so far has been to demonstrate that what we currently think are un-Virgilian elements in *Dido* are in fact Virgilian, which makes Marlowe’s play is a closer translation of the *Aeneid* than it at first appears. Let me extend this argument to a possible allusion in *Dido* to *Aeneid* 5. In this book, Virgil appears to be as anxious about his hero’s tarnished image after the Dido episode as he is about protecting Aeneas’ masculinity in the confrontation with Turnus. That anxiety is palpable in Book 5 in Virgil’s attempt to rescue his hero’s epic status, in part by using, even over-using, the compound noun “*pater Aeneas*” (358, 424, 461, 700, 827), and the superlative adjectives “best” and “greatest” (358, 530; “*optimus*,” “*maximus*”). No other book in the *Aeneid* matches the references to Aeneas in Book 5. The quantity and quality of the references in Book 5 over-determines Aeneas as the epic’s *pius* eponymous hero, and accelerates his and the poem’s movement away from the “idle story” about which Iarbus complains (4.218). That is, the references hasten movement away from the story that reveals Aeneas’ struggle with *pietas* at Troy, a struggle compounded by his treatment of Dido and its consequences.
A note made by both J. B. Steane and Roma Gill leads me to propose that *Dido* engages with Virgil’s anxiety in Book 5. Both critics comment on the sense of rushing and hurrying in the three suicides with which *Dido* ends, and a sense of tragic over-determination that neither critic thinks adds much to the play (Steane 48; Gill 1987, 120). Peremptory endings are not uncommon in plays of the period, and yet I suggest that the triple suicide in *Dido* is also an adaptation of the gathering momentum in *Aeneid* 5 that accompanies Aeneas’ journey away from the “idle story” and all that it involves. At this stage in *Dido*, Aeneas is already on that journey. We know that Marlowe was an accomplished translator of Latin, and perhaps he meant his Aeneas to carry with him the adjectives that express Virgil’s unease about his hero. He may also have meant the triple suicide to match the over-determination, in a different genre, that reveals Virgil’s anxiety. Marlowe’s use of Virgil’s Latin to signal Aeneas’ imminent departure and the hero’s deafness to Anna’s pleas, in *Dido’s* stead, enlarge that possibility, for they suggest a hero rising fitfully to the demands of *pietas*. Putting compassion aside, Marlowe’s Aeneas sails towards the fulfilment of his son’s prophecy, as his duty to his family, his (future) country, and the gods demand. In Chapter 2, I argued that Aeneas’ catharsis has the benefits associated with the *Emotional fortitude* interpretation of the term. It seems reasonable to propose that Marlowe found in the epic Aeneas an opportunity to deploy catharsis in a way that makes the behaviour of the dramatic Aeneas consistent with that of his epic counterpart.

There is copious evidence in both sections of the *Aeneid* that its hero struggles to meet the demands of *pietas*. We can interpret this as an enabling feature of the epic which *Dido* takes advantage of because the *Aeneid*’s dark side makes possible a translation that approaches the two sections of the epic as one. There are other such enabling devices in the *Aeneid*, as will become clear. In the aim of the *Aeneid*’s intertextual negotiations—to
reprise the battle for Troy that is prophetic in the *Iliad*—there is also an opportunity for invention in a way that respects the antecedent texts the epic animates. In the analysis so far, I have foregrounded these features to demonstrate that the *Aeneid* can account for what critics argue is un-Virgilian about *Dido*, in particular Marlowe’s portrait of a not entirely heroic Aeneas. I now turn to a discussion of some of the figures of retrospection in the *Aeneid*, namely “second” characters, delay as a feminised prerogative, and parallel literary reminiscences in the Iliadic section. Lavinia—Virgil’s second Helen—Juno’s hand in bringing about the Amata episode, and Amata herself are the focus. These figures of retrospection, like Aeneas’ struggle with *pietas*, are part of the epic’s stockpile of regenerative strategies that contribute to its circular structure. There is good reason to suspect that Marlowe engaged them in *Dido*.

We come across the Lavinia-Helen in Book 7, the first in the epic’s Iliadic section. The aim of the section depends on Virgil’s revision of Aeneas as another, this time victorious Hector. Lavinia “portends [the] mighty war” in which Aeneas will be victorious (7.80). To portend is not to cause, and neither she nor Helen, to whom she is connected because Aeneas is also another Paris, are blamed in the *Aeneid* for generating violence. It is the gods who topple Troy and Fate that decides Latinum’s destiny in Virgil’s epic (2.602-03; 10.104-112). In contrast, *Dido/Dido* explicitly attributes blame to Helen, “she that caus’d this war” (2.1.292). This is a significant departure from the *Aeneid*, perhaps the most compelling evidence of the translating playwright’s invention. By assigning blame to Helen, *Dido* gives her character a currency in tragedy that she does not necessarily have in the *Aeneid*. This is made apparent in the critical debate about the Helen episode in Virgil’s epic. The debate suggests that the work of Servius, an ancient commentator of the *Aeneid*, is among the texts that influenced Marlowe’s play. The debate about the Helen question
also establishes a context for us in which to re-consider the significance of Helen in Marlowe’s aesthetics of tragedy, in *Dido* and other plays.\(^{34}\)

Helen’s appearance in the *Aeneid* and Aeneas’ impulse to kill her (2. 567-87) have generated much critical debate. On the one hand, there are those who argue that the Helen episode is the work of Virgil (see, for example, Gilbert Highet 174-75). On the other hand, there are those who maintain that the episode is not the work of Virgil but of Servius (see, for example, Richard Heinze 26-30).\(^ {35}\) Whether the Helen episode is Virgil’s or the addition of Servius, these critics agree that Greek tragedy is the source for the Helen episode (Highet 198; Heinze 29). The blame that *Dido*/Dido attributes to Helen suggests that Marlowe may have known and used the Servian commentary to reactivate in Elizabethan tragedy the currency that Helen had in Greek tragedy.\(^ {36}\) Approaching Virgil via Servius offered Marlowe a Helen he could use to embellish his portrait of Dido, and thus help *Dido* translate the *Aeneid* as a tragedy.

While Dido as a “second Helena” may signal another of Marlowe’s departures from the *Aeneid*, he is quick, as with other embellishments, to return to it. Helen may not have a tragic currency in the *Aeneid*, but Dido does. In the Odyssean section, Virgil forges a clear link between the Carthaginian queen and Greek tragedy in a passage that describes her torment in Book 4:

> In her sleep fierce Aeneas himself hounds her in her frenzy; and ever she seems to be left lonely, ever wending, companionless, an endless way, and seeking her Tyrians in a land forlorn—even as raving Pentheus sees the Furies’ band, a double sun and twofold Thebes rise to view; or as when Agamemnon’s son, Orestes, driven over the stage, flees from his mother, who is armed with brands and black serpents, while at the doorway crouch the avenging Fiends. (4.465-473)\(^ {37}\)

The link between female characters and tragedy carries over into the Iliadic section, and it is Juno who does the carrying, as will become clear in a moment. Dido, although favoured by the goddess, is nevertheless a casualty in Juno’s private war against the Trojans. Juno’s
weapon in that war is delay, her ability to postpone but not change “great matters” from Book 1 until Aeneas kills Turnus in the epic’s concluding lines. Dido does not challenge the Virgilian fact of Juno’s wrath. Rather, the play draws attention to it, first in the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange to explain the cause of Juno’s anger, and second, in her hatred for Ascanius, as the following lines demonstrate:

Here lies my hate, Aeneas’ cursed brat,  
The boy wherein false Destiny delights,  
The heir of fame, the favourite of fate,  
That ugly imp that shall outwear my wrath,  
And wrong my deity with high disgrace. (3.2.1-5)

Marlowe’s Juno is appropriately Virgilian. So, too, is the fact that Ascanius survives in Dido, outwearing Juno’s wrath to found the new Troy that is London in the time of Marlowe’s play. The Virgilian Juno in Dido supports Chapter 2’s argument that the Jupiter-Ganymede exchange faithfully treats the Aeneid.

Juno performs another function in the Aeneid that may have interested Marlowe at the deeper compositional level of genre. It is possible to view Juno as a particularly enabling feature for translators of the Aeneid because she presides over the action in both sections of the poem. Via Juno, narrative elements cross back and forth in accordance with the process of continual modification and re-reading that the Aeneid deliberately requires of its readers. Juno highlights the ways in which the Aeneid figures its first section in the second, and vice versa. In particular, she regenerates tragedy and re-activates, as Amata in the Iliadic section, the Dido of the Odyssean section. The following passage prepares for this argument. It is Juno’s command to Allecto to postpone the epic fulfilment of Aeneas’ marriage to Lavinia by inciting the violence of tragedy:

Thou canst arm for strife brothers of one soul, and overturn homes with hate; thou canst bring under the roof the lash and funeral torch; thou hast a thousand names, a thousand means of ill. Rouse thy fertile bosom, shatter the pact of peace, sow seeds of wicked war! In the same hour let the men crave, demand, and seize the sword! (7.335-40)  

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The passage demonstrates that Juno carries tragedy from one section of the *Aeneid* to the next. Thus we can view the action she drives as another of the epic’s regenerative strategies that facilitates a translation in which the two sections of the epic are regarded as one. More important, in the effect of her command to Allecto, Juno enables a translation of the *Aeneid* as tragedy.

Amata is the character that Allecto, armed with the tools of tragedy, visits first. The Amata episode, as I mentioned earlier, is an example of the parallel literary reminiscences in the *Aeneid*.³⁹ As a figure of retrospection, the Amata episode in Book 7 reveals that she is the source for Marlowe’s Dido as a second Eve.

Marlowe’s queen plays Eve via the reference to the “envenomed sting” she suffers as she harbours Aeneas, as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, in her bosom (5.1.165-68). In the *Aeneid*, it is Amata who is poisoned by the “envenomed sting” of which Marlowe’s Dido speaks from the serpent that Allecto flings into her breast (7.341-53). After Amata is stung, she rages through the city, and rolls her bloodshot eyes (7.376-405). Amata’s madness makes apparent that the episode is a parallel literary reminiscence of Dido in Book 4, drawing the Carthaginian queen into the Iliadic section and Amata back into the Odyssean one as a second Dido. In Book 4, Dido rages as Amata does through the city and rolls her bloodshot eyes (68-73, 643). Virgil enhances the parallel literary reminiscence by using “unhappy” (“*infelix*”) to describe both queens, and Rumour (*Fama*) to spread stories about them (4.68, 172-97; 7.376-405). In addition, both Dido and Amata admit to their “crimes,” both “resolve to die,” and both commit suicide in a “frenzy” of grief (4.563-64, 663-674; 12.600-07). To complete the figure of retrospection, Virgil uses “monstrous” to describe both Rumour and Allecto (4.190; 7.328). Marlowe’s serpent-stung queen is appropriately Virgilian, furthering my argument that *Dido* engages, at deeper levels of composition than plot, with more of the *Aeneid* than is currently thought to be the case.
When Amata dies, the *Aeneid* kills Dido for a second time. We shall see that Virgil kills Dido for a third time in the epic’s concluding stages.

3.4: Ending the *Aeneid*

*Dido* responds to the regenerative strategies that Virgil builds into his poem—“second” characters, figures of retrospection and the like. These features contribute to the *Aeneid*’s circular structure and raise the possibility that it has no end. Indeed, as M. Owen Lee suggests, perhaps Virgil left the *Aeneid* unfinished because it “never could be finished. It is still being written” (175). In this section, my aim is to demonstrate that Marlowe brings the *Poetics* to bear on *Dido*, not this time to defend tragedy but to end the *Aeneid*.

The section begins with Aristotle’s definition of tragedy relative to epic, turning then to some of Andrew Fichter’s work on Renaissance attempts to end the *Aeneid*. Aristotle’s definition provides a theoretical context in which to consider *Dido* as a tragic epic. The play engages with the distinction between tragedy and epic that Aristotle makes, and his argument that tragedy, because it is a performance text, is superior to epic in its effect. Fichter’s work foregrounds a Renaissance dissatisfaction with the way in which the *Aeneid* concludes. This allows us to understand *Dido*’s attempt to end the epic as a particular instance of a common practice in the period. Then, via criticism of Turnus’ death and the action leading to it, I establish a Virgilian context in which to consider what is at stake when *Dido* performs the death of the Carthaginian queen.

Epic is important in Aristotle’s discussion of tragedy because what tragedy is depends on what epic is. I suggest it was important to Marlowe as well, providing him with a framework in which to conceive a tragedy that pays homage to both the classical text *Dido* modernizes and the one it translates. Aristotle’s discussion in *Poetics* 5 notes the ways in which epic and tragedy are similar and different. The crux of the argument is that “All the parts of an Epic are included in Tragedy; but those of Tragedy are not all of them
to be found in the Epic (Poetics 17). There is a great deal of compositional license in
Aristotle’s definition of tragedy relative to epic. The definition allows for a hybrid genre, a
tragic epic that has the features of both genres and something that epic does not. Aristotle
never actually tells us what tragedy has that epic does not. Sixteenth-century commentators
claim that it is catharsis. As I argued in Chapter 2, Dido enacts this claim when Aeneas
performs catharsis, modelling a response to the play proper for the audience and in this
way making tragedy out of epic. Performance, we shall see, is crucial to Dido’s potential to
end the Aeneid via the audience’s response to the death of the Carthaginian queen.

Aristotle further endorses compositional license in his argument that tragedy is
superior to epic. The main reason for tragedy’s superiority, Aristotle tells us in the last
chapter of the Poetics, is because of its effect—its greater capacity to provide the pleasure
that is “proper” to its genre. As Aristotle puts it: “it is clear that, as attaining the poetic
effect better than the Epic, [Tragedy] will be the higher art form” (Poetics 91). Aristotle
does not say here that the effect of tragedy is different from epic, only that tragedy is the
more effective vehicle for achieving that effect. It is a decisive point that foregrounds the
similarities between the two genres rather their differences. Put simply, tragedy is “better”
at achieving a function that is also proper to epic.40 The greater aesthetic success of tragedy
in Aristotle’s theory leads me to suggest that by staging Aeneas’ catharsis and its
emotional benefits, Dido performs the reason why, in the Poetics, tragedy is superior to
epic. Dido’s engagement with the Poetics on this level increases our understanding of
tragedy as an emerging discourse in the period.

There are differences between tragedy and epic other than the greater aesthetic
success of tragedy. In his commentary of the Poetics, Ingram Bywater maintains that these
differences come under the heading of “manner” (359)—the fact that tragedy is a
performance text. This affects tragedy’s other features, such as its representational field,
which is smaller than that of epic. Aristotle is reluctant about the actual performance of
tragedy, as his argument about the “better poet” reveals, and yet tragedy’s status as a
performance text is still central to its difference from and superiority over epic.

Performance, I suggest, is the difference between tragedy and epic that gives Dido the
potential to end the Aeneid. I mean here the performance of Aeneas’ catharsis as well as of
the play itself, in particular the ways in which Dido coaches its audience to experience
Aeneas’ catharsis when the Carthaginian queen dies.

Attempts to end the Aeneid were not uncommon in the period. In Poets Historical,
Andrew Fichter argues that Renaissance epics by Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser complete the
Aeneid with the dynastic marriage that Virgil withholds, thus transforming the pagan epic
into a Christian one (3). The important issue for my argument is that these Renaissance
poets considered the Aeneid to be narratively as well as metaphysically incomplete (Fichter
12). Aeneas’ slaughter of Turnus adds to the sense of incompleteness brought about by the
perpetually future marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia. This is not to say that Marlowe
considered the Aeneid from a Christian perspective. Rather, it is to suggest that he was
aware of a certain dissatisfaction with the way in which Virgil’s text concludes—a
dissatisfaction that the idea of metaphysical incompleteness could only emphasize—and of
the attempts in Renaissance epics to complete the Virgilian narrative they import.

In setting up his argument, Fichter draws particular attention to Vegius’ “The
Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid” as a text that literally “undertakes to finish what Virgil
began” (12). What is so striking about the Vegius text, according to Fichter, “is that very
little is added to the plot already projected by Virgil himself” (13). The Aeneid lends itself
to texts that aim to complete it by tying up, as “The Thirteenth Book” does, “all the loose
narrative threads in the Aeneid” (12). Fichter informs us that Vegius’ text “enjoyed a wide
readership during the Renaissance and was commonly appended to editions of Virgil’s
poem from the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century” (12). Ariosto, Tasso, and Spencer, although not quite as concerned to end the *Aeneid* as definitively as Vegius, move in a similar direction by centring marriage in a providential schema. It is through marriage, according to Fichter, that “the dynastic poet forges the genealogical chain that links the world of his poem with his contemporary world” (15). As a practice that adds contemporary relevance to the *Aeneid*, what the dynastic poet does with Virgil’s text seems to me similar to what Marlowe does with it as a dramatist. The question that remains is more about Marlowe’s intention to end the *Aeneid* in *Dido* and the means he uses than about the license to do so.

The Renaissance literary attempts to end the *Aeneid* that Fichter studies are models of aesthetic practice with canonical and national significance. Patrick Cheney has argued at some length that Marlowe sets himself in direct professional rivalry with Spenser, England’s greatest national poet, an argument to which I referred in Chapter 1. We might, then, expect Marlowe to want a piece of the poetic action that Fichter’s study exposes. *Dido* meets that expectation because it has the potential to end the *Aeneid*, not through marriage, as Spenser does, but through genre. Let us take a last look at *Dido/Dido*, this time through the lens of critical responses to the epic’s conclusion, the death of Turnus. These responses bring Turnus into view as a second Dido, furthering the argument that the *Aeneid* facilitates a translation in which the Dido and Aeneas episode functions as a synecdoche of the entire epic. They also establish the Virgilian context in which *Dido*’s potential to end the *Aeneid* is situated.

Critics of the *Aeneid* are familiar with Turnus and his death in Book 12 as a parallel literary reminiscence of Dido and hers in Book 4. David Slavitt is one of many who have pointed out the “painstakingly executed congruencies” in the action leading up to Dido’s
and Turnus’ deaths (152). As Richard Monti notes, these include the hooting of owls (94-95). R. D. Williams fills in the picture for us:

Juturna’s position as a sister who cannot help is similar to that of Anna, and the repetition (871) of the line describing Anna’s grief (4. 673) takes the thoughts back to that other tragedy. The complaint of Juturna that she cannot accompany her brother in death (880-1) recalls Anna’s words to Dido, . . . and her wish to be swallowed up in the depths of the earth (883) is reminiscent of Dido’s words in 4. 24f. In the sympathy it evokes this final tragic death in the poem is thus deliberately made parallel with the death of Dido, the other great opponent of the mission of Aeneas. (499)

When Aeneas kills Turnus, the Aeneid kills Dido for a third time. Virgil seems more worried about putting an end to the Carthaginian queen than he is to his epic.43 For an accomplished translator of Virgil like Marlowe—accomplished enough to fashion his Dido as Virgil’s serpent-stung Amata—Virgil’s apparent obsession and the painstakingly executed congruencies between Turnus and Dido probably leapt off the page, as they do for current Virgil scholars. What is at stake in Turnus’ death and the importance of Dido to it may also have leapt off the page for Marlowe. Turnus’ death is a matter of poetic coherence. As M. Owen Lee comments:

In this final book, Turnus absorbs into himself Dido, Juno, Lausus, Mezentius, Camilla, and all the figures that have opposed Aeneas. We are invited to see the final confrontation between him and Aeneas as a summation of and comment on the major confrontations in the poem. (96)

While Turnus’ death resolves the confrontational issues in the Aeneid, it does not end the story of this epic, as critics agree.

We now have the Virgilian context in which Dido attempts to end the Aeneid. It is a context in which Turnus plays a crucial role in both the epic’s coherence and its “non-end.” It is also a context in which Dido figures prominently. There is something superbly Virgilian about the death of Marlowe’s Carthaginian queen because killing her for a fourth time on stage enables Dido to perform the Aeneid’s concluding lines, the death of Turnus/Dido. But Dido’s audience are watching a play, not reading an epic or listening to a
recitation of it. It is the performance that is crucial.\textsuperscript{44} It is important for \textit{Dido} because performance distinguishes tragedy from epic, and makes it the superior genre. It is important for Aeneas’ catharsis, itself a performance that has subsequent benefits for him but not for Dido. Most important of all, performance matters for the play’s early modern audience. As Stephen Orgel reminds us in a discussion of \textit{Hamlet}, “theater—‘the scene’—is of the essence” (2002, 136), and as Joel Altman comments about explorative drama, “the experience of the play was the thing” (6; emphasis in original). I suggest that the experience of \textit{Dido}’s audience is the means Marlowe has in mind to end the \textit{Aeneid}, and that the essential scene is the spectacle of Dido’s death. Beginning with Aeneas’ narrative, \textit{Dido} works steadily to coach and cajole its audience to experience Aeneas’ catharsis. A response of pity and fear is what \textit{Dido} asks of its audience. Herein lies the potential to end the \textit{Aeneid}. When (if) the audience respond to the performance of Dido’s death with the catharsis Aeneas models, \textit{Dido}, as a tragedy, ends the \textit{Aeneid}.

The argument is theoretically possible but of course we can never know what actually happened, to whom and in what ways. And while there is much about the \textit{Aeneid}, and the \textit{Poetics}, that might have leapt off the page for Marlowe, it might not have leapt off the stage for \textit{Dido}’s audience. There are two intractable features of \textit{Dido}: the play’s classification as a tragedy, announced on the title page; and the play’s failure at the box-office. The influence of Ovid and the rival tradition is often mobilized to argue that \textit{Dido} is not the tragedy its title page claims it to be. I am not aware of any criticism that attributes the play’s lack of success to the Ovidian/rival tradition’s influence. Perhaps more Ovid and less Virgil might have made \textit{The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage} a little more successful.
Thomas and Tydeman are discussing here the translations of Douglas, Surrey, Stanyhurst, and Phaer. They find that *Dido* owes nothing directly to Douglas and Surrey, and nothing at all to Stanyhurst. There is some evidence that Marlowe knew Phaer’s translation but he made no systematic use of it (19). Roma Gill argues that if Marlowe knew Phaer’s and Stanyhurst’s translations at all, he disdained them (1977, 141).

In his classic study of the Tudor education system, T. M. Baldwin demonstrates that Virgil was second to Ovid—the study of the *Aeneid* regularly followed that of the *Metamorphoses*—but that many preferred Virgil because of the “moral weight” of his work (II. 456). For a study of the ways in which the authority of the *Aeneid* is contested in the English Renaissance, see Margaret Tudeau-Clayton’s *Jonson, Shakespeare and Early Modern Virgil*. In her view, what she calls the “Protestant turn” is responsible for interrogating and dis-placing the received Virgilian mediations as groundless fictions of the past, and at the same dis-mantling the structure of authority and the hierarchy of privilege—in short, the politics—implied in their production and circulation as knowledge. (10)

Tudeau-Clayton’s study is “Virgils,” and she distinguishes between “the schoolboy’s Virgils” and “the learned man’s Virgils” (12).

Don Fowler distinguishes “Odyssean,” in which repetition is figured as return, from “Iliadic,” which deploys repetition with variation (261).

As K. W. Gransden puts it:

The end for which Aeneas has laboured is not merely outside himself: it lies beyond his son’s lifetime, in remote centuries which will only start to evolve with Romulus. Only beyond two myths can Roman history begin. That end lies, too, beyond the poem as narrative, yet it is an essential part of any reading of it, since the reader is not meant to be bound by Aeneas’s perspectives, but to see beyond them. (207-08)

On the founding of Rome beyond the *Aeneid*, see also Duncan Kennedy 146.
Richard Heinze is a great defender of Virgil’s Aeneas. He acknowledges the problems with Aeneas in the Odyssean section of the poem, and he summarizes Aeneas’ unheroic actions in the epic’s first half (223; Aeneas’ treatment of Dido is not in Heinze’s summary). He also grants that Aeneas struggles throughout the epic to achieve “the unwavering trust in fate and the gods that befits a man chosen by the gods” (225). Heinze’s aim is to demonstrate that Aeneas approaches the ideal as the story unfolds, “so that by the last books hero and ideal are one and the same” (224).

Richard Monti has drawn attention to Aeneas’ attachment to the settled life of the city. In the Odyssean section, to quote Monti, Aeneas “longs for a fixed and peaceful home which he can think of only as a resuscitated Troy” (71). Monti argues that Aeneas’ “own self-image as the defender of the settled life of the city brings him into conflict with the demands of pietas” (72).

Gransden points out that Book 6 is the “pivot of the entire Aeneid. For Aeneas now, there is no going back, as there was at the end of book 1, when in his narrative to Dido he returned to the burning ruins of Troy in search of the past” (32).

Viewing the entire epic, Heinze notes that the starting point of the Aeneid is the capture of Troy but the end is not the foundation of the city to supersede it. Rather, the end of the epic lies in “the removal of the last hindrance which stands in the way of a permanent settlement: the death of Turnus” (348).

The order is from Mercury on his first visit with Aeneas, in which the god commands that Aeneas “spend not idle hours in Libyan lands (4.271). The number of references to the masculine desire to break off delay increases in the Iliadic section: for example, the Cyclops working under Vulcan’s orders not to delay the making of Aeneas’ armour
Turnus raging against the trenches that delay the battle (9.143); Pallas’ preference for an immediate confrontation to one postponed (10.372); and Aeneas’ decision to “brook no delay” in either the battle for Latinum or the confrontation with Turnus (11.21; 12.430-31, 699). There are some instances of male characters causing delay in the *Aeneid*, for example Anchises’ refusal to leave the burning Troy, which delays Aeneas’ departure (2.638-78). These moments of delay serve the *Aeneid* as a divine revelation, whereas the female characters-delay connection does not. For instance, the delay caused by Anchises’ refusal allows for the revelation of Iulus’ divinity (2.680-701).

Virgil’s complex treatment of the male-delay connection is condoned by an historical event referred to in the poem but in future time, the second Punic War. Hannibal, the avenger who rises from the ashes of Dido, the woman who delays Aeneas in Carthage (4.625-27), is himself delayed by Q. Fabius Maximus, *Cunctator*—one who delays, lingers, hesitates—and the Roman state is “restored” (6.846).

In Book 1, Dido “holds” the Trojan hero and “delays” him with “flattering words” (670), and in Book 4, she conspires with Anna to further postpone Aeneas’ departure by “weaving together reasons for delay” (51). Venus and Juno’s uneasy agreement to also keep Aeneas in Carthage reflects, in the divine sphere, the conspiracy between Anna and Dido to “hold” Aeneas (4.102-127). Iris aids Juno on two occasions. Disguised as Beroë, Iris incites the Trojan women to burn Aeneas’ ships in Book 5 (618-40), and she advises Turnus to attack the Trojans while Aeneas is with Evander in Book 9 (6-13). Similarly, Juno enlists Juturna to delay the final confrontation between Turnus and Aeneas, and thereby postpones the moment of Turnus’ death (12.154-59).

Gransden argues that Aeneas carries out the revenge element of Achilles by killing Turnus, “casting Aeneas simultaneously as rescuer of Lavinia-Helen from an unlawful
alliance and as homecomer to a land legitimately his” (60). He goes on to note that Aeneas must move through a number of roles from Homer’s *Iliad*, including Paris and Hector (122). Turnus calls himself another Achilles in Book 9 (742), and see Gransden 120 for Turnus as Hector.

12 Duncan Kennedy points out that the Sibyl in Book 6 (83-97) explicitly figures the action of the second half of the *Aeneid* as a reprise of the action of the Trojan war, familiar from the *Iliad*, but in contrast with the first half of the poem, repetition now involves not regression but reversal as previous failures are re-run as successes, notably in Aeneas’ climactic dual with Turnus. (147)

13 David Slavitt argues that Aeneas/Paris provokes sympathy for Turnus (149). K. W. Gransden, on the other hand, argues that the Aeneas/Paris formulation casts Lavinia “as Helen, with a more complex variation of the Paris-Menelaus story, in which Turnus must be seen as the wrongly betrothed, Aeneas as the lawful partner coming from over the sea to claim his own” (44-45).

14 R. J. Tarrant agrees with Lee in his argument that Aeneas responds to the death of Pallas “with inhuman savagery, collecting captives to be offered as living victims on Pallas’ funeral pyre” (179).

15 W. R. Johnson points out that “It is no secret that there is general dissatisfaction or uneasiness with this famous closure,” labelling Turnus’ death a scene of “ugly, unheroic pathos” (115). Slavitt extends the argument to the *Aeneid* as a celebration of Augustus. When Turnus dies, Slavitt argues, we turn our eyes away from Aeneas to follow Turnus’s disappearing spirit, which is the last image of the poem. The light of the epic is that of Dido’s pyre, as its gloom is that into which Turnus’s shade flees! Small wonder, then, that many intelligent and sensitive readers have read the work as signifying some contrary, subversive, and perhaps anti-Augustan tendencies in Virgil. (127-28).
Tarrant labels Aeneas’ slaughter of Turnus a “perversion of piety” (181). On the other hand, there are those critics who argue that Aeneas is right to kill Turnus, and that the action is pious because it repays a debt Aeneas owes to Pallas’ father, Evander. The argument is a classical one, proposed by Servius, an ancient commentator of the Aeneid, as Gordon Williams notes (224). The modern critics who agree include K. W. Gransden, who claims that “What ought to surprise the reader, or so it seems to me, is not that Aeneas does not spare Turnus, but that he should have hesitated at all. The hesitation constitutes the surprise” (213). Philip Hardie reminds us that “Aeneas’ apparently private impulse to kill Turnus is in fact pre-scripted on the divine level” (315), and Richard Heinze argues that for Aeneas to have shown mercy towards Turnus “would have been a cowardly failure to do what duty demanded” (166).

16 The original Latin shows the similarity. Virgil writes the smile to Venus as “ollī subridens hominum sator atque deorum” (“on her smiling the Father of men and gods”); and the one to Juno as “ollī subridens hominum rerumque repertor” (“on her smiling, the creator of men and things”).

17 Gransden continues: “With Turnus’s death the ghosts of Hector and Priam are finally laid to rest, and the very name of Troy, sounding out like a musical figure for the last time at 12.828 (the last words spoken in the epic by Juno) vanishes for ever” (173). M. Owen Lee concurs that the disappearance of the Trojans is the epic’s theme because what Jupiter promises Juno is a Rome that “will keep its Italian character and never be a re-creation of the Troy she hates” (100).

18 Gransden notes that Virgil’s sense of beginnings as endings and vice-versa is clearly stated in Book 1, “with its repetition of a key word, finis” (37). Gordon Williams discusses
in some detail the “ring-composition” in the *Aeneid* as a figure of both retrospection and closure. See especially 59-60, and 78.

19 Andrew Laird is referring to a list originally prepared by Pease in the introduction to his commentary on Book 4.

20 Heinze draws heavily on the *Poetics* to explain the plot development in the *Aeneid* and the character of its hero, arguing that Virgil “probably believed” that he had achieved Aristotle’s “best plot” in the *Aeneid* (364). Hardie comments that “Heinze inaugurates a line of critics who use the *Poetics* as a scaffolding for their reading of the *Aeneid* or of episodes within it” (313). The problem with Heinze’s approach, according to Hardie, is that he “looks only to the Greek tragic tradition, but it is important for the *Aeneid* that Roman adaptations of Greek tragic models accentuated even further the genre’s striving after pathos” (313). Hardie approaches the tragic elements of the *Aeneid* via Vernant’s idea that “tragedy turns reality into a problem” (qtd. in Hardie 313). In contrast, Lee argues that “Virgil seems not to have based his idea of the tragic on any notion derived from the theater, and we will ask the wrong questions if we approach Books 4 or 12 via Aristotle” (160).

21 Margaret Tudeau-Clayton traces Jonson’s deployment of the learned voice of Virgil to promote “an aspiring authorial ‘self’” (11) in Chapter 4 of her study.

22 Seaton pioneered work on the influence of the rival tradition in 1959, finding solid textual support for the influence of Lydgate in Marlowe’s use of “stern faces,” “poleaxes,” and “balls of wildfire” in Aeneas’ narrative, all of which are in the *Troy Book*; “stern faces” is particularly noteworthy because it is a “signature tune of Lydgate,” his “significant label for the heroic fighting man” (*Dido* 2.1.186, 199, 217; Seaton 29-30). In
addition, for Seaton, Lydgate’s influence is palpable in Aeneas’ description of the response of Jove’s statue to the slaughter of Priam and of Pyrrhus’ treatment of Hecuba, which differ from the report Virgil’s Aeneas gives (31). Overall, Seaton understands Didon as a “fusion” of the Virgilian and medieval accounts of the role Aeneas played in the fall of Troy, one which dissipated after the Renaissance “because of Western Europe’s admiration for Virgil, and because of England’s pride in her Trojan-Roman descent” (27). She adds that the fusion “results in some anomalies”—the Aeneas-Antenor betrayal of Troy, for example—anomalies that other Marlowe critics have pursued, notably Mary Smith (1977b). See also Richard Martin (1980) 49n, Sara Deats (1997) 106, and Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman 19.

23 Other critics put the problem more diplomatically than Slavitt. Gilbert Highet, for example, acknowledges that “Many readers have felt that there was something lacking in Vergil’s portrayal of Aeneas” (40). He suggests that what we miss “is physical clarity and vividness,” adding that we “have no picture of [Aeneas’] appearance, as we do of the Homeric heroes” (40). M. Owen Lee offers a reason why this is so: “The difference between Aeneas and Homer’s heroes is that they are given epithets to describe their physical or intellectual achievements, while he is characterized by a moral quality” (18).

24 Slavitt’s aim is not to diminish recognition of Virgil’s artistic achievement. His candid comments are simply meant to emphasize the problematic representation of Aeneas. In the criticism I have read, there is universal agreement that Aeneas acts in ways that contradict his pious status, especially in the Odyssean section if not the Iliadic one as well. The person most keenly aware of Aeneas’ failings is of course Virgil. Sometimes hand-in-hand with the argument that Aeneas is a problematic hero is the one that the Aeneid does not achieve its goal of celebrating Augustus because it critiques rather than glorifies the means by
which he achieved the \textit{pax Romana}. This is not to say that Virgil and his poem are unsuccessful, as the following comment from R. J. Tarrant attests:

\begin{quote}
The compassion with which Virgil depicts the war’s human cost has long been recognised by critics; it has indeed been a staple element in the image of Virgil as the poet of refined melancholy, of ‘the infinite pity of things’.
\end{quote}

(179)

Tarrant is quoting here from J. W. Mackail’s 1930 edition of the \textit{Aeneid} (Tarrant 180n).

25 Roger Hornsby is another critic who points out Aeneas’ unheroic actions on the night Troy falls. According to Hornsby, Virgil “implies that the Trojans shared with the Greeks the responsibility of destroying Troy” (13). That responsibility is borne out in Book 8, in Vulcan’s comment that neither “the almighty father nor Fate were unwilling that Troy stand or Priam live for ten years more” (398-99). Hornsby goes on to argue “that the fall of Troy came about through a variety of causes, but chief among them was [Aeneas’] own wilful blindness” (96).

26 Kallendorf points out that it is largely critics of the Harvard School who have reinterpreted the scene “as a key failure in which Aeneas surrenders to the very voices of barbarism and fury within himself that he had struggled throughout the poem to suppress” (397). Richard Monti draws attention to the Aeneas’ struggle with \textit{pietas} in the Odyssean section:

In the ideal that person is \textit{pius} who maintains obligations towards the gods, towards his country, and towards his family. Aeneas succeeds in attaining that ideal only fitfully in the first half of the epic, and, as a result, we see him here engaged in a crisis of \textit{pietas} on a number of occasions. Vergil treats the problem with the highest degree of elaboration and complexity in the Dido episode, but deals with it within a smaller compass in the episodes of the fall of Troy in Book 2 and the burning of the fleet in Book 5, and alludes to it in the opening scenes of the poem. (70)
The crisis of *pietas* that is alluded to in the poem’s opening scenes is Aeneas’ confession that he would rather have died at Troy than undergo what destiny has in store for him (1.94-101). These are the first words Aeneas speaks in the poem.

27 Ellen Oliensis argues that Aeneas’ effeminacy is a logical component of the epic because “both Paris and Aeneas come from the luxurious east, steal other men’s brides, and enjoy the special favour of Venus” (296). Further, as K. W. Gransden notes, the Trojans are “effeminate in dress, oriental in origin, devoted to the worship of strange gods and goddesses” (122). Iarbus’ complaint includes reference to Aeneas’ “perfumed hair” and to the Phrygian cap, which according to the editor for the Loeb edition, “had on either side a band or ribbon, which could be tied under the chin” (4.216-18; I, 411n). See note 30, below.

28 Gransden points out that the *Phryges* were “a people despised by the Augustans for their effeminacy” (122).

29 It is Rumour (*Fama*) who spreads stories about Aeneas’ lack of attention to *negotium* after the “marriage” to Dido. While Rumour sings “alike of fact and fiction,” ultimately she heralds truth (4.173-88). Roger Hornsby argues that “by acceding to his desire for dalliance [Aeneas] will cost Dido her life, and almost destroy himself and his people” (92).

30 Before the confrontation, Turnus calls Aeneas “woman-like,” and a “eunuch Phrygian” with “hair crimped with heated iron and saturated with myrrh” (12.53, 99-100).

31 Sara Deats notes a possible source in *Aeneid 5* for Marlowe’s representation of Jupiter in *Dido* 1.1 (1997, 92).
32 Aeneas is “pater Aeneas” once in Books 2 (2), 9 (172), and 12 (166). After Book 5, the quality of the references is sustained by the adjective “pius,” which replaces “optimus” and “maximus” (6.232; 7.5; 8.83; 12.311).

33 Jupiter vows he will “make no distinction” between combatants in the war for Latinum; rather, “each one’s own course will bring him fortune or hardship” (10.108, 111-112).

34 Most famous, of course, is the spirit of Helen that Faustus conjures to “make [him] immortal with a kiss”: for love of Helen, “Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked” (5.1.91-110). In his desire for Helen, Faustus casts himself as Paris, reminding us of Lancaster’s abuse of Gaveston in Edward the Second as “Monster of men, / That, like the Greekish strumpet, trained to arms / And bloody wars so many valiant knights” (2.5.14-16).

35 Heinze argues that Virgil could never have his pius hero even think of killing a defenceless woman, “above all when it is a woman who has sought protection at the altar” (27). Highet supports his argument by noting Helen’s “triple deed of treachery” in other passages: her false dance, which abolishes all doubt about the horse, her signalling the Greek fleet, and her arranging the death of Deiphobus. He maintains that Virgil introduces Aeneas’ hatred for Helen to condemn her, and asserts that she is “evil, wholly evil—as she appears in Greek tragedy so often. Impossible to omit her from the Aeneid” (175). Priam does not hold Helen responsible in the Iliad, as he clearly states in Book 3 (164-65), and as we can see in her grief for the fallen Hector and her thoughts of Priam as her father in the poem’s closing moments (24.761-75). Virgil follows Homer when Venus makes it clear to Aeneas that neither Helen nor Paris is to blame (2.601-03). For an extended, detailed discussion of Servius and the Helen episode in the Aeneid, see G. P. Goold’s 1970 essay of that title, which was subsequently published, in a very truncated form, some 42 pages less,
in *Oxford Readings of Vergil’s Aeneid* (59-72). In both versions, Goold aims to demonstrate that the “*only authority for the Helen Episode is Servius*” (1970, 101; 1990, 60; emphasis in originals).

36 H. J. Oliver gives no editorial comment on a possible source for the blame Dido assigns to Helen in Act 2, scene 1. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton traces the “canonical authority” (53) of the Servian commentary of Virgil’s works, not just the *Aeneid*, in the English Renaissance in the first two chapters of *Jonson, Shakespeare and Early Modern Virgil*. She demonstrates that commentaries on Virgil by Servius and others “enjoyed canonical status in the early modern world” (26-27). Indeed, Servius’ commentary was held in such high esteem that at least five editions of it were published before 1600 “without the complete Virgilian text” (27). T. W. Baldwin asserts, rather, the marginal annotations in Paulus Manutius’s edition of the *Aeneid*, which “run[s] the parallel between Homer and Virgil, and thus had furnished an outstanding instrument for teaching proper modes of imitation” (II. 457).

37 The translation of this passage is that of H. R. Fairclough for the Loeb edition (I. 427). The editor points out that the reference to Pentheus is from the *Bacchae* of Euripides, and that of Orestes from the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus (I. 426-27n). Philip Hardie argues that Dido’s dream is “a jarring pointer to the theatricality of [her] story” (322).

38 Fairclough’s translation (II. 27).

39 Another example of the figure is the night raid on Pallenteum by Nisus and Euryalus in Book 9 (314-64). The raid itself and the reason for the attempt—the Rutulians are “relaxed with wine and slumber” (9.189, 236)—re-enact the siege of Troy (154). The result is disastrous for the Trojan youths. Euryalus is captured and Nisus, aiming to save his friend,
inadvertently causes his death, after which he dies himself (9.395-445). The function of the night raid and its disastrous consequences is to draw retrospective attention to the human responsibility for the fall of Troy, namely that of Aeneas, within the determinism of the larger cosmic plan. As a feature of the Iliadic section’s revisionist aims, we are meant to see a different Aeneas from the one who struggles to meet the demands of pietas in the Odyssean section. For a reading of Aeneid 7 as a parallel literary reminiscence of Aeneid 4, see Richard Monti 88-92.

40 The issue has divided commentators. For example, on the one hand Ingram Bywater maintains that “In Aristotle’s view epic poetry has the same end as Tragedy; and its immediate effect is the same in kind, the pleasurable excitement of the emotions of pity and fear” (359). On the other hand, Gerald Else maintains that “two pleasures are certainly not identical, though they are not necessarily incompatible, and we have no absolutely certain way of choosing between them” (651). He concludes, “without insistence”:

Both genres aim at [the pleasure based on pity and fear], or should aim at it, but tragedy succeeds where the epic in general fails. Even Homer’s epic cannot achieve the concentration of emotion, and therefore of pleasure based on emotion, which tragedy achieves. (652-53)

Else’s conclusion suggests a tacit agreement with Bywater that the difference between the two genres is one of manner. The issue of epic’s effect draws attention to the likelihood, noted by Stephen Halliwell, that Aristotle “posited forms of katharsis related to epic and comic poetry” as well as tragic poetry (1986, 20).

41 Lauren Seem has studied some of the debates in the sixteenth century about whether the duel between Turnus and Aeneas is honourable (117-18). Her particular focus is the two versions of the duel in Tasso’s Gerusalemme liberata. Seem argues that when read one after the other, the two versions “debate the merits of the two modes of behavior possible for Christian knights—chivalric courtesy or Vergilian ‘dishonor’” (119). According to
Seem, Tasso “doubly reverses” Virgil’s text, concluding his epic “with a scene that displays Christian mercy rather than Vergilian vengeance” (124). The point, as Seem notes, is that “Tasso subscribed at least to some extent to the perennial criticism that the *Aeneid* is narratively incomplete” (124).

42 Tudeau-Clayton also notes the currency of “The Thirteenth Book” (25). She notes that this “completion” of the *Aeneid* was included in Gavin Douglas’ translation into Scots, and the translation into English by Thomas Phaer (25).

43 There is good historical reason for Virgil’s obsession with killing Dido because the Carthage of Hannibal, Dido’s descendent, threatened the established Rome just as Dido’s Carthage, in Virgil’s version of the story, threatened Rome’s founding.

44 Another possible reason why the *Aeneid* has such resonance in *Dido* is that Virgil’s text was treated as a performance text in the Tudor education system. In raising this fascinating fact, I am indebted to Margaret Tudeau-Clayton. She notes that “Substantial portions of the Virgilian texts are to be performed in the course of being studied,” and that “schoolboys’ training in delivery constituted a form of theatrical training” (55).
Chapter 4

Revising Dido: 1 & 2 Tamburlaine

4.1: Introduction

What was it about Dido that the play’s original audience did not like? In an anecdotal answer, Hamlet suggests that Dido was poorly received by its audience because “’twas / caviary to the general” (2.2.436-37). In Hamlet’s view, Dido flopped because it was too intellectually demanding for its audience. This is not to say that Dido did not please Hamlet. He, and others “whose judgements in such matters” were superior to his, apparently thought Dido “an excellent play” (2.2.437-39). Putting aside the possibility of sarcasm, the fault, it seems, lay with Dido’s audience rather than anything inherent in the play itself. As far as we know, Marlowe never wrote another play for a private audience, instead turning his attention to the public stage with 1 Tamburlaine. This play testifies to a sudden U-turn in Marlowe’s drama. In contrast to Dido’s complex plot, that of 1 Tamburlaine is simple, episodic, and repetitive, charting the rise and rise of the eponymous protagonist as he consolidates his power against increasingly stiff opposition. Dido ends unhappily, with the three suicides. 1 Tamburlaine ends happily, with the protagonist taking “truce with all the world” and preparing to marry Zenocrate (Pt. I. 5.1.530-35). Critics agree that Part 1 changed the dramatic landscape of the early modern period. Kimberly Benston, for example, proposes that the play’s “conception of form opened a new era of theatrical experimentation” (216), and Ruth Lunney that “After Tamburlaine nothing was ever the same in the playhouse” (2). In this chapter, I argue that the drama the
Tamburlaine plays exemplify and made possible depends on a precise strategy that criticism has not yet recognised—their revision of Dido’s aesthetic, in particular the role that catharsis plays in Marlowe’s first play. We shall see that the expression of catharsis in 1 Tamburlaine works towards the production of comedy rather than, as it does in Dido, of tragedy, and in 2 Tamburlaine, that catharsis inspires the kind of tragedy that theoretically it is meant to defend.

We know that the Tamburlaine plays were very popular, in stark contrast to Dido’s lack of success. Criticism, especially of Part 1, has struggled to reconcile the popularity of this “new” drama with artistic, aesthetic, and ethical concerns. The play’s structure has been criticized, the violence it represents condemned, and Marlowe’s experimentation with form both questioned and praised. The character Tamburlaine has been explained as more or other than human, and his actions sometimes considered outside both our judgement and our comprehension. The heart of this critical disagreement is that Part 1 does not behave as we expect a tragedy to behave, an expectation planted by the reference to a “tragic glass” in the Prologue:

> From jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits  
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,  
> We’ll lead you to the stately tent of War,  
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine  
> Threat’ning the world with high astounding terms  
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.  
> View but his picture in this tragic glass  
> And then applaud his fortunes as you please. (1-8)

The Prologue promises a tragedy, and yet the rise and rise of the protagonist and the play’s happy ending thwart that pledge. “Aesthetic dyslexia,” alleges an apparently frustrated John Gillies before exclaiming that we simply do not know what to make of the play (1998b, 208). In this chapter, we shall see that something can be made of the Tamburlaine plays in the light of Dido’s lack of success.
I suggest that *Dido’s* failure prompted Marlowe to re-consider his aesthetic practice when he came to write *1 Tamburlaine*. In the first section of this chapter, I argue that Part 1 revises the function that catharsis has in *Dido*. This revision is particularly apparent in the Damascus episode in Act 5—in the sacking of the city, the slaughter of the Damascus virgins, the brainings of Bajazeth and Zabina, and Zenocrate’s long lament for the “bloody spectacle” of the multiple dead bodies (Pt. I. 5.1.340). We shall see that the action which inspires Zenocrate’s lament recollects Aeneas’ cathartic narrative in *Dido*, but departs from the Aristotelian theory behind it. This will prepare us for a consideration of the ways in which Marlowe engages with Sir Philip Sidney’s *Apology for Poetry* in Zenocrate’s lament, an engagement that makes clear the extent to which *1 Tamburlaine* revises the theory that underpins *Dido* in the context of new thinking about the function of tragedy. Zenocrate’s lament evokes Sidney’s theory of the didactic function of tragedy to question its efficacy in practice. This paves the way for rival interpretations of the Damascus episode, from Anippe and Tamburlaine, which challenge Zenocrate’s interpretation of the scene as tragedy, and undermine the theory the lament articulates. In this way, the Damascus episode encourages a range of audience responses, fulfilling the Prologue’s promise of a tragedy the audience can judge as they please. The interpretative license *1 Tamburlaine* gives its audience throws the restrictive role that catharsis plays in *Dido* into sharp relief. In the second section of the chapter, it will become clear that Marlowe takes up the issue of catharsis again in *2 Tamburlaine*. I argue that Zenocrate’s death and Tamburlaine’s treatment of her body put catharsis to work in ways that challenge the function it has in *Dido*, and in other literary theoretical texts of the period that defend tragedy. Part 2 also contests the message of the *Aeneid* as *Dido* delivers it, constructing instead a narrative in which Tamburlaine performs the part of an anti-*pater* Aeneas. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the *Tamburlaine* plays, Part 2 in particular, as
metatheatrical texts that oppose Dido’s achievement as both a modernized Poetics and a faithful translation of the Aeneid.

The Tamburlaine play’s revision of Dido liberates the drama and the audiences of the period from the restrictions that theories of tragedy’s function place upon them both. This is not to assert that the audience were conscious that the Tamburlaine plays revise Dido’s aesthetic—even if they were not, the plays do achieve this. Yet there is reason to suspect that Marlowe knew what he was doing in the Tamburlaine plays, and numerous studies have centred the plays’ self-conscious revelation of authorial intent. The Prologues to both parts have encouraged this critical approach, which, most recently, has manifested as an interest in the ways in which these plays manipulate audience perspective. The interpretations of the Damascus episode from Zenocrate, Anippe, and Tamburlaine are vital to these investigations. The interpretations are prime examples of what Ruth Lunney has called the play’s “contradictory framing perspectives” (185). Building upon Lunney’s arguments, Charles Whitney, in his 2006 study of early responses to Renaissance drama, suggests that Part 1’s contradictory framing perspectives both empower the audience and challenge them to invent responses of their own, empowering them still more (28). In examinations of the Tamburlaine plays’ manipulation of audience perspective, no one has looked at Dido. We shall see that the revision of Dido’s aesthetic is a valuable resource for understanding the power of the Tamburlaine plays, and the influence they exerted over the drama of the period.

4.2: Revising Dido: 1 Tamburlaine

We begin this analysis of the ways in which 1 Tamburlaine revises the role that catharsis plays in Dido with an examination of the Damascus episode. Damascus is the hometown of Tamburlaine’s betrothed, Zenocrate. Tamburlaine destroys the city according to his immovable “custom” because its citizens have not surrendered in the allotted time of
three days (Pt. I. 5.1.126-28). The Damascus episode has troubled critics, and the violence of the scene is particularly problematic. The revision of *Dido* that I suggest occurs in the episode provides a new context in which to consider the Damascus episode, and a new explanation of the violence it stages.

Before her lament proper, Zenocrate describes the ruined Damascus in terms that recollect the fall of Troy as Aeneas describes it in *Dido*, with its “streets strowed with disservered joints of men / And wounded bodies gasping yet for life” (Pt. I. 5.1.323-24). The similarity is made more striking by the “hoisting up” of a troop of “heavenly virgins and unspotted maids” on the lances of Tamburlaine’s horseman (Pt. I. 5.1.326-29). The virgins are sent by the Governor of Damascus to beg Tamburlaine for mercy. Their plea, like Aeneas’ narrative, is loaded with references to the Aristotelian tragic emotions of pity and fear, and like Anna’s last speech in *Dido*, to pity in particular:

```
Pity our plights, O pity poor Damascus!  
Pity old age, within whose silver hairs  
Honour and reverence evermore have reigned;  
Pity the marriage bed, where many a lord  
In prime and glory of his loving joy  
Embraceth now with tears of ruth and blood  
The jealous body of his fearful wife,  
Whose cheeks and hearts, so punished with conceit  
To think thy puissant never stayèd arm  
Will part their bodies, and prevent their souls  
From heavens of comfort yet their age might bear,  
Now wax all pale and withered to the death—  
As well for grief our ruthless governor  
Have thus refused the mercy of thy hand  
(Whose sceptre angels kiss and Furies dread)  
As for their liberties, their loves, or lives.  
O then, for these, and such as we ourselves,  
For us, for infants, and for all our bloods,  
That never nourished thought against thy rule,  
Pity, O pity, sacred emperor,  
The prostrate service of this wretched town; (Pt. I. 5.1.80-100)
```

Tamburlaine is as unmoved by the virgins’ appeal as Pyrrhus was in *Dido* by Priam’s pleas for mercy. The Scythian orders the virgins to be “shown” death, and their “slaughtered
carcasses” hung on the city’s walls for all to see (Pt. I. 5.1.129-31). The scene’s recollection of elements of Aeneas’ narrative is remarkable. Even more striking is the difference between the two plays that this evocation of Dido brings about—the virgins’ bodies make visible to the audience and the characters on the stage the violence that Aeneas’ narrative describes. Unlike Dido, then, the scene flouts Aristotle’s preference throughout the Poetics for the recitation rather than the performance of tragedy. The on-stage brainings of Bajazeth and Zabina, which follow hard on the display of the virgins’ bodies, again defy Aristotle’s preference. The spectacle of the Damascus episode, in Aristotelian terms, shows that Marlowe is “out of touch with Tragedy”:

Those, however, who make use of the Spectacle to put before us that which is merely monstrous and not productive of fear, are wholly out of touch with Tragedy; not every kind of pleasure should be required of a tragedy, but only its proper pleasure. (Poetics 39)

In Chapter 2, I argued that Marlowe’s engagement with Aristotle’s preference for recited tragedy was part of the theory behind Aeneas’ narrative and his emotional reaction to it. The challenge to Aristotle’s preference in the recollection of Dido elements in the Damascus episode suggests that Part 1 evokes the antecedent play to show a theoretical difference from it.

The challenge to Aristotle’s preference for the recitation of tragedy comes at a stage that is crucial for reasons that the work of John Gillies, and of Bryan Reynolds and Ayanna Thompson, has identified. First, the possibility that I Tamburlaine is revising Dido coincides with an action that tests the audience’s complicity with the protagonist’s feats of conquest to the extreme. As Gillies explains: “Marching in triumph through Persepolis is one thing. But cheering on the humiliation of Bajazeth or the massacre of the virgins of Damascus is quite another” (2006, 43). The slaughter of the virgins is at the centre of what Herbert Rothschild Jr. calls the Damascus episode’s “inherent power to appall” (62). While the humiliation of Bajazeth and Zabina precedes the virgins’ slaughter, “the
Bajazeth action is telescoped into the following action centred on Damascus,” as Gillies notes, because Bajazeth and Zabina are viciously ridiculed while the siege is getting underway (2006, 46). “What this means,” Gillies concludes, “is that the Damascus action is registered in terms of the brutal humiliation of Bajazeth. Emblematically speaking, they are different sides of the same combined action” (2006, 46). And the Damascus episode, into which the Bajazeth action telescopes, is built up over five scenes, drawing attention to its importance in the play.10 This is the moment upon which Marlowe’s revised sense of the tragic depends. At this critical moment Marlowe mobilizes an anti-Aristotelian stance, removing part of the theory that informs Did o to make way for the performance of the kind of violence Aeneas’ narrative describes.

The challenge to Aristotle’s preference for the recitation of tragedy is also important because the virgins’ meeting with Tamburlaine is a self-conscious piece of theatre. Brian Reynolds and Ayanna Thompson have astutely observed that the Governor’s plan for the virgins is discussed “as an impending performance” (175):

> both the virgins and the Governor plan to appeal to Tamburlaine through a moment of theatrical artifice, what the Second Virgin explicitly refers to as a “device” (5.1.52). They believe that when Tamburlaine sees and hears their supplication, he will necessarily experience a transversal moment of empathy: he will experience their pain, grief, and terror as if it were his own because of their dramatic reenactment of these emotions. (176)

As the Governor announces, he sends the virgins so that “their unspotted prayers, / Their blubbered cheeks and hearty humble moans / Will melt [Tamburlaine’s] fury into some remorse” (Pt. I. 5.1.20-22). Although none too happy about it, the virgins agree to the Governor’s plan:

> Then here, before the majesty of heaven
And holy patrons of Egyptia,
With knees and hearts submissive we entreat
Grace to our words and pity to our looks,
That this device may prove propitious,
And through the eyes and ears of Tamburlaine
Convey events of mercy to his heart;
Grant that these signs of victory we yield
May bind the temples of his conquering head
To hide the folded furrows of his brows
And shadow his displeasèd countenance
With happy looks of ruth and lenity. (Pt. I. 5.1.48-59)

The deliberate theatricality of the scene recalls the “arts of orchestration” that help build Aeneas’ narrative as a play-within-a-play. The theatricality of the scene is prepared for and reinforced by costumes and stage properties, for in the semiotics of Tamburlaine’s siege warfare, he would be wearing black when the virgins, in white, come to beg for mercy. On this stage, Tamburlaine, the virgins hope, will respond to their plea with the emotions that are traditionally attributed to catharsis, emotions their plea re-enacts. Yet Tamburlaine, more Pyrrhus than Aeneas, is unmoved. Tamburlaine’s emotional difference from Aeneas prepares us to consider the Damascus episode as a revision of the crucial self-reflexive strategy in Dido’s aesthetic—Aeneas’ performance of catharsis.

In 1 Tamburlaine’s revision of Dido, Zenocrine stands in for Aeneas. Her lament offers direction for the play’s exterior audience about how to respond to tragedy but there are a number of differences from Aeneas’ cathartic narrative. The first is that Zenocrine’s lament refers to Sidney’s didactic theory of the function of tragedy rather than the Outlet interpretation of catharsis that Aeneas enacts. The second difference is that Zenocrine’s articulation of the theoretical objectives of a Sidneian catharsis has no practical benefits for Zenocrine, unlike those that accrue for Aeneas after his narrative. Putting it another way, the model of catharsis that Zenocrine articulates does not achieve in practice what it does in theory. Rather, her lament questions the efficacy of the didactic model of tragedy’s function. Her lament also fails to convince other characters, leading to rival interpretations of the Damascus episode from her maid, Anippe, and from Tamburlaine, which further question the efficacy of catharsis, with ramifications for the genre of Part 1. We shall see
that the concept of tragedy is at stake at the end of *I Tamburlaine*, and that revising the role that catharsis plays in *Dido* brings the drama of the period to this decisive point.

Zenocrate calls the spectacle of the dead virgins a “most accursed” sight (Pt. I. 5.1.325). Her lament is not just for them or for her city; it is also for the brained Bajazeth and Zabina. Zenocrate does not see the brainings but the play’s offstage audience does. Her lament offers them a model of response to the violence that attempts to manage the “bloody spectacle” as a tragedy. Zenocrate’s speech takes the audience through the didactic function of *de casibus* tragedy as Sidney theorizes it in his *Apology*. There is good reason to think that Marlowe had Sidney’s theory in mind when he wrote *I Tamburlaine*, but not to promote its authority as *Dido* promotes Aristotle’s catharsis. Instead, the lament deploys Sidney’s arguments to implicitly challenge them.

In Sidneian theory, the audience of *de casibus* tragedy draw a moral lesson from the drama’s representation of the fall of the mighty at the turn of Fortune’s wheel. As Sidney puts it, tragedy “with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded” (*Apology* 118, 1-3). Geoffrey Shepherd comments that Sidney here inverts the Aristotelian emotions, explaining Sidney’s admiration as “a kind of emotional shock, the amazement felt in face of an exceptionally heroic order of behaviour,” and pointing out that the effect produced is a moral one (190n). In Sidney’s theory, tragedy has a particular educational value for the powerful because it is excessive. Tragedy “openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours” (117, 35-37). According to Sidney, tragedy’s function is grounded in a moral *gnosis* and *praxis*, or as he puts it, “with the end of well-doing and not well-knowing only” for the kings and tyrants concerned (104, 29-30). In his close reading of the “maketh kings fear to be tyrants” passage, Stephen Orgel
argues that the tyrants in question are “only stage tyrants” even though Sidney’s syntax makes them identical to kings (2002, 137). Sidneian theory supposes, then, a moral lesson learnt by the stage tyrant, one that “manifests tyrannical humours.” Gorbuduc, a de casibus tragedy, is the only play that achieves the “notable morality” Sidney seeks (134, 3).17

Zenocrate’s lament enlists the arguments in the above outline of Sidney’s theory, and a number of critics have examined Zenocrate’s lament as a conventional response to de casibus tragedy.18 Marlowe still seems interested in staging a theory of tragedy’s function, one that is more contemporary and English than the Italianate version of Aristotle’s catharsis that Dido stages. Yet while the lament recollects Aeneas’ cathartic narrative, it does so to question the efficacy of Sidney’s new thinking about the function of tragedy. This revision of the role that catharsis plays in Dido becomes apparent when we break the speech into five sections and examine each of them in turn.

Zenocrate’s lament positions her as audience to the “bloody spectacle,” recapitulating Aeneas’ position as audience to his own narrative in Dido.19 Unlike Aeneas, however, Zenocrate is responding to a performance of, rather than a narrative report about, an act of violence. She begins her interpretation of the scene by entreating the macrocosmic elements of earth and heaven to respond emotionally to the sight she sees:

Earth, cast up fountains from thy entrails,
And wet thy cheeks for their untimely deaths;
Shake with their weight in sign of fear and grief.
Blush, heaven, that gave them honour at their birth
And let them die a death so barbarous. (Pt. I. 5.1.348-52).

Zenocrate suggests that the emotional response she seeks from heaven and earth is the same as the reaction she is experiencing. Zenocrate is similar to Aeneas in her position as audience but the response she articulates is the conventional message of de casibus tragedy: “Those that are proud of fickle empery / And place their chiepest good in earthly pomp— / Behold the Turk and his great emperess!” (Pt. I. 5.1.353-55). The message of
Bajazeth and Zabina’s tragedy is for Tamburlaine, who Zenocrate hopes will be spared a similar fate. If Tamburlaine is to learn the lesson of *de casibus* tragedy, he needs to respond to the sight Zenocrate sees with the Aristotelian emotions of pity and fear:

```
Ah Tamburlaine my love, sweet Tamburlaine,
That fightest for sceptres and for slippery crowns,
Behold the Turk and his great emperess!
Thou that in conduct of thy happy stars
Sleepest every night with conquest on thy brows
And yet wouldst shun the wavering turns of war,
In fear and feeling of the like distress
Behold the Turk and his great emperess! (Pt. I. 5.1.356-63)
```

The line “In fear and feeling of the like distress” distinguishes, as Aristotle does, a tragedy from a story that “arouse[s] the human feeling in us”: tragedy moves us specifically to pity and fear; “pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves” (*Poetics* 35). The distinction recollects the theory that informs *Dido*, yet Marlowe imbues it with a Sidneian flavour because Zenocrate hopes that the spectacle will teach the stage tyrant Tamburlaine that he, too, is subject to the turn of Fortune’s wheel.

In the second half of the lament, Zenocrate begins to question the function of tragedy she puts forward, picking at the seams that hold *Dido*’s aesthetic fabric together. Zenocrate worries that the spectacle of violence will teach the tyrant Tamburlaine nothing, with potentially tragic consequences for him like those suffered by Bajazeth and Zabina. Tamburlaine requires divine forgiveness, from a god and a prophet, if he is to escape the turn of Fortune’s wheel:

```
Ah mighty Jove and holy Mahomet,
Pardon my love, O pardon his contempt
Of earthly fortune and respect of pity,
And let not conquest ruthlessly pursued
Be equally against his life incensed
In this great Turk and hapless emperess! (Pt. I. 5.1.364-69)
```

Zenocrate is unsure that the spectacle will engender in Tamburlaine either the *gnosis* or *praxis*, which, in theory, the experience of *de casibus* tragedy produces. While Zenocrate
urges the two outcomes of *de casibus* tragedy as the condition of Tamburlaine’s future survival, her plea for divine forgiveness betrays her doubt that it will actually happen. In this crucial section of the lament, Zenocrate is not questioning Sidney’s theory as a model for interpreting the “bloody spectacle.” Rather, she is questioning the model’s practical efficacy, its ability to make any difference to an audience, in this instance, Tamburlaine as a potential audience of the violent scene. There is no problem with theory *qua* theory in Zenocrate’s lament, but in contrast to the cathartic ability that enables Aeneas’ reversal of fortune and its benefits, Zenocrate’s expression of a Sidneian function of tragedy does not foreshadow a positive outcome for Tamburlaine.

In the closing section of her long speech and immediately afterwards, Zenocrate suggests an awareness that the theory of catharsis she expresses may not work in practice for her either. Her awareness is particularly apparent in the lament’s fifth section, in which she measures her own past actions against the outcomes of *de casibus* tragedy. Here Zenocrate calls into question the application of the moral lesson that is vital to Sidney’s defence of tragedy. Zenocrate requires divine forgiveness for her lack of pity in the past, as she believes Tamburlaine does, and is left wondering at the fate that might await her because of it:

> And pardon me that was not moved with ruth  
> To see them live so long in misery.  
> Ah what may chance to thee, Zenocrate? (Pt. I. 5.1.370-72)

Zenocrate argues that the sight she interprets as a *de casibus* tragedy would never have happened except for her lack of pity in the past. She suggests one of the practical outcomes of *de casibus* tragedy, a “well-knowing” on her part that the “bloody spectacle” has taught her. Yet the lament ends in uncertainty, with a question about whether a “well-doing,” either to Zenocrate or by her, will result from her experience of *de casibus* tragedy. The
question implicitly challenges the Sidneian theory Zenocrate articulates because it does not appear that the theory she expounds will fully meet in practice its own expectations.

After her lament, Zenocrate again questions the theory of tragedy she proposes in her lament, for if Zenocrate’s experience produces a *praxis*, then it is a curious one indeed. She goes on to call herself a “cursed object,” a kind of prop on Tamburlaine’s stage (Pt. I. 5.1.414). Then, in a gloss of wishful classical thinking, Zenocrate imagines herself as the Lavinia of Virgil’s *Aeneid*:

My father and my first betrothèd love  
Must fight against my life and present love—  
Wherein the change I use condemns my faith  
And makes my deeds infamous through the world.  
But as the gods, to end the Trojan’s toil,  
Prevented Turnus of Lavinia,  
And fatally enriched Aeneas’ love,  
So, for a final issue to my griefs,  
To pacify my country and my love,  
Must Tamburlaine, by their resistless powers,  
With virtue of a gentle victory  
Conclude a league of honour to my hope;  
Then, as the powers divine have pre-ordained,  
With happy safety of my father’s life  
Send like defence of fair Arabia. (Pt. I. 5.1.389-403).

The claim does not bode well as Lavinia, in Virgil’s epic, “portends a mighty war” for her people (7.80). That war has already happened in *1 Tamburlaine* in the sacking of Damascus, Zenocrate’s hometown. The lesson of *de casibus* tragedy, even if it were to work in practice as it does in theory, comes too late to help either Zenocrate or her Latinum. The lesson of *de casibus* tragedy also comes too late to help Arabia, figuring as Turnus, who dies in the scene that follows.20

The effect of the lament on Zenocrate contradicts the way catharsis works in *Dido*. While Zenocrate may not be the stage tyrant for whom *de casibus* tragedy’s didactic catharsis should be a moral lesson, her lament nevertheless revises Aeneas’ performance of catharsis in *Dido*, and suggests instead that theories of tragedy’s function do not always
work in practice. This is not to say that *1 Tamburlaine*’s audience remembered *Dido* at this moment; most likely they had never seen it. Rather, it is to propose that Zenocrate’s lament helps encourage a range of audience responses rather than restrict them, as does Aeneas’ performance of catharsis. Indeed, Zenocrate almost immediately forgets the lesson of *de casibus* tragedy. After the lament, Tamburlaine “Invest[s] her here [his] Queen of Persia” and Zenocrate submits to his will: “Else should I much forget myself, my lord” (Pt. I. 5.1.495, 501). As Brain Reynolds and Ayanna Thompson observe, “the lesson she so desperately wanted to learn from the sight of the brained Bajazeth and Zabina has already been lost” (178). It seems that female characters in Marlowe’s early plays are excluded from the benefits of catharsis despite their intimate connection to tragedy: Dido, in the play’s second half, embodies tragedy because unlike Aeneas, she does not experience an Aristotelian catharsis; Zenocrate expresses the theory of a Sidneian catharsis but does not experience its practical benefits.

In a landmark essay on theatrical literalization in the *Tamburlaine* plays, David Thurn examines Zenocrate’s lament as an example of the play’s “violent reduction of meaning to the terms of sight” (3). He argues that the Damascus episode produces an excess of signification that leaves room for other interpretations of the “bloody spectacle” (15). Zenocrate, by interpreting the scene as a *de casibus* tragedy, attempts but is unable to control this excess. Her inability to adequately account for the spectacle questions the Sidneian theory her lament expresses, and paves the way for the rival interpretations of the scene from Anippe and from Tamburlaine that undermine the Sidneian theory she expounds. Anippe’s and Tamburlaine’s interpretations contest the meaning of tragedy Zenocrate tries so hard to assign to the violent spectacle, offering the play’s exterior audience other ways of responding to the sight of the dead virgins, and the brained Bajazeth and Zabina.
Zenocrine’s lament fails to persuade even her maid. Although Anippe is positioned as audience to both the Damascus scene and Zenocrine’s interpretation of it, she offers an interpretation of her own:

Madam, content yourself and be resolved
Your love hath Fortune so at his command
That she shall stay, and turn her wheel no more
As long as life maintains his mighty arm
That fights for honour to adorn your head. (Pt. I. 5.1.373-77)

Anippe, as Troni Grande notes, asserts that the dead Bajazeth and Zabina are evidence that Tamburlaine “has seized control of Fortune’s wheel” in direct opposition to “Zenocrine’s charge that Tamburlaine holds ‘earthly fortune’ in contempt” (50). In Anippe’s view there is no didactic exemplum for Tamburlaine or Zenocrine or, indeed, for the play’s exterior audience, to read in the scene. Anippe’s interpretation demonstrates that the kind of catharsis Zenocrine expresses neither fixes the meaning of the “bloody spectacle” as a tragedy, nor informs Anippe’s response to it. Responses to the scene other than the one Zenocrine gives are possible, and do not necessarily lead, as Dido’s non-cathartic response to Aeneas’ narrative does, to catastrophe. Anippe’s claim reduces Zenocrine’s lament to the status of a rhetorical figure that does not work.

Such an analysis of Anippe’s rival interpretation agrees with David Thurn’s assessment of the Damascus episode as one that produces an excess of signification and thereby allows for multiple interpretations of the same violent spectacle. I would add that Zenocrine’s lament, by implicitly challenging the Sidneian function it proposes, allows room for the reading from Anippe that contests it. In the light of Aeneas’ narrative as a “speaking picture,” an argument made in Chapter 2, above, the Damascus scene is a spectacle that is excessive in a way that speaking pictures are not. Averring to something that can be witnessed by the spectator in the concrete terms of a production, Zenocrine’s lament renders description redundant. The tableau of slaughtered bodies beggars
Zenocrate’s verbal representation. At the same time, the failure of Zenocrate’s verbal representation itself testifies to the magnitude of what she, as an onstage audience, is witnessing. The spectacle, then, makes Zenocrate’s cathartic lament conspicuously inadequate. The spectacle also allows for a radical revision of the Virgilian ecphrasis that *Dido* dramatizes as Aeneas’ cathartic narrative because unlike the ecphrastic source that informs Aeneas’ tale—the mural in the temple to Juno at Carthage—real bodies form the relief of the Damascus episode.

Tamburlaine’s interpretation of the “bloody spectacle” further undermines the Sidneian theory of tragedy’s function that Zenocrate expresses in her lament. His interpretation has profound ramifications for the genre of Part 1 that make clear the extent to which this play revises the function that catharsis has in *Dido*. In Marlowe’s first play, Aeneas’ enactment of the Outlet interpretation of catharsis works towards the production of tragedy. In *1 Tamburlaine*, the articulation of Sidney’s didactic catharsis is undermined in order to produce comedy.

Tamburlaine claims that the Damascus scene is not at all the *de casibus* tragedy Zenocrate imagines it to be. He interprets the scene as “sights of power that grace [his] victory” (Pt. 1. 5.1.475). The multiple dead bodies are Tamburlaine’s crowning glory as a stage tyrant, not the lesson Zenocrate hopes will make him fear to be one. Tamburlaine subsequently “takes truce with all the world” and vows to entomb “with honour” the bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina, and of Arabia, whose body has been added to the pile (Pt. 1. 5.1.530-33). Tamburlaine attributes the change in his behaviour to Zenocrate: “She that hath calmed the fury of my sword” (Pt. 1. 5.1.438). The change is a sudden one, and the play is unclear about how, precisely, Zenocrate has brought it about. It is clear, however, that the change in Tamburlaine’s behaviour has nothing to do with the *de casibus* lesson in Zenocrate’s lament because he was not on stage to hear it. The irony is remarkable. The
“notable morality” of *de casibus* tragedy is achieved at the end of *1 Tamburlaine*, as the Sidneian theory in Zenocrate’s lament proposes it must, and yet it is the stage tyrant of tragedy’s object lesson who achieves it. Tamburlaine’s non-cathartic response to the “bloody spectacle” makes a mockery of the theory of *de casibus* tragedy expressed in Zenocrate’s lament.²⁶ Perhaps Marlowe is also mocking *Dido*, distancing himself from the failure of his first play.

Tamburlaine’s response to the spectacle suggests that the violence of tragedy can be managed if it is understood in visual terms. The claim also enables and encourages audience responses to the Damascus episode and the play proper that are not restricted by Sidney’s new thinking about the function of tragedy.²⁷ In the revised aesthetic of *1 Tamburlaine*, the protagonist achieves a conventionally comic conclusion in “rites of marriage” to Zenocrate in the play’s final line (Pt. 1. 5.1.535). Richard Wilson notes that this is the only happy ending in a Marlowe play (2004, 214). It is achieved not simply by the “tyrannical reign over expression” that Kimberly Benston argues the “sights of power” claim to be, but by systematically revising the role that catharsis plays in *Dido* (220). The revision of *Dido* is one facet of the mirror metaphor that dominates *1 Tamburlaine* from the moment the Prologue mentions a “tragic glass”: Zenocrate’s expression of catharsis works towards the production of comedy, reflecting and reversing the procedures Marlowe deploys in *Dido* to construct tragedy. Both *Tamburlaine* plays were originally entered in the Stationer’s Register as comedies (Cunningham 22).²⁸ Cunningham calls this curious, going on to note that the plays’ title page places equal emphasis on “Tragicall Discourses” (22). The revision of *Dido* gives us new information about the way Marlowe achieved a comic conclusion in *1 Tamburlaine*.²⁹

J. B. Steane concluded some time ago that the form of the *Tamburlaine* plays, Part 1 in particular, is dictated by Marlowe’s “manipulation of sympathies for or against the
hero” rather than by considerations of plot (98). How did 1 Tamburlaine’s audience respond to the play? As tragedy or comedy? Or as both? We have a number of contemporary responses to 1 Tamburlaine, many of which are from practicing poets. Joseph Hall, for example, directly refers to the Tamburlaine plays in Book 1 of his Virgidemiarum (1597), informing us that the audience were “ravished” and amazed by the performance:

One higher pitch’d doth set his soaring thought
On crowned kings that Fortune hath low brought:
Or some vpreared, high-aspiring swaine
As it might be the Turkish Tamburlaine.

………………………………………
There if he can with termes Italianate,
Big-sounding sentences, and words of state,
Faire patch me vp his pure Iambick verse,
He rauishes the gazing Scaffolders:
Then certes was the famous Corduban
Neuer but halfe so high Tragedian.
Now, least such frightfull showes of Fortunes fall,
And bloody Tyrants rage, should chance appall
The dead stroke audience, mids the silent rout
Comes leaping in a selfe-misformed lout. . . . (2.9-34; qtd. in Levin 53)

Hall may condemn the protagonist and object to the new verse style but this is not to say that the audience did not approve of the play. Indeed, the opposite seems to have been the case. Richard Jones, the printer of the Tamburlaine plays, attests to the audience’s approval of the plays in his address “To the Gentleman Readers” in the first edition (1590):

I haue here published in print for your sakes, the two tragical Discourses of the Scythian Shepheard, Tamburlaine, that became so great a Conquerour, and so mightie a Monarque: My hope is, that they wil be now no lesse acceptable vnto you to read after your serious affaires and studies, then they haue bene (lately) delightfull for many of you to see, when the same were shewed in London vpon stages. (qtd. in Levin 55)

Richard Levin has examined Hall’s and Jones’s references to 1 Tamburlaine, four other contemporary responses that comment directly on the play, and a “great many brief allusions” to it (55). According to Levin, these texts demonstrate that the play’s contemporary audience responded positively to the character of Tamburlaine (53-54).
Charles Whitney’s more recent investigations of audience responses to Part 1 support Levin’s findings. Whitney finds evidence of a “positive valuation of Tamburlaine’s upward mobility,” as well as “powerful, amoral amazement” and “wish-fulfilling fantasy” (2006, 19). Levin also finds indications that the play’s original audience read an admonitory lesson in both *Tamburlaine* plays but the lesson “is never derived from Tamburlaine’s fate but always from the fates of his victims,” either Bajazeth in Part 1 or the harnessed kings in Part 2 (61; Pt. II. 4.3). It seems that the audience knew the didactic function of *de casibus* tragedy that Zenocrine articulates in her lament but they did not apply it to Tamburlaine. Marlowe gave them no reason why they should. Perhaps Part 1’s audience saw the great Turk in the “tragic glass” the Prologue holds up, and the Tamburlaine of the play’s comic ending reflected back.

*I Tamburlaine’s* revision of the aesthetic that underpins *Dido* produced a box-office smash. A reconsideration of the famous Prologue to Part 1 will allow me to reposition *Dido* in criticism of *I Tamburlaine* and the more liberated drama it both exemplifies and made possible. The Prologue is crucial to *I Tamburlaine’s* critical fame, as is evident in Patrick Cheney’s comment that it is both an announcement about innovative dramaturgy and “an advertisement for Marlowe as England’s new poet” (1997, 122). The Prologue is also crucial to arguments about the play’s influence over the drama of the period. In her work on the ways in which Marlowe’s “newness” lies in reworking rather than discarding the old ways and values, Ruth Lunney asserts that we have taken too much notice of the Prologue, and too little (1-2). I agree for the reasons that follow.

Critics concerned to show *I Tamburlaine’s* influence rely on two main arguments. The first is that the opening lines refer to something that precedes *I Tamburlaine*, although precisely what is unclear, and that this something was not “serious” in the sense that *I Tamburlaine* claims to be. According to Cunningham, the possibilities include Marlowe’s
own work insofar as it contains “or is infiltrated by, scenes of farce and horseplay” but not 
*Dido* in its entirety (113n). The revision of *Dido*’s aesthetic that occurs in *1 Tamburlaine* leads me to suggest that Marlowe may well be referring to his own “old” play, not in this 
instance to *Dido* itself but to its reception—as something silly, ridiculous, a not particularly 
good joke rather than a modernized *Poetics*—and hence the decision to lead the audience 
through a “new” kind of action.

The second argument that critics concerned to show the influence of *1 Tamburlaine* put forward is that the Prologue’s closing lines both issue a challenge to the audience and 
give them an unprecedented interpretative license. Yet in the light of *Dido*’s project of 
directing audience response, Marlowe’s challenge seems even more clearly the words of a 
playwright throwing his hands in the air in exasperation; frustrated by the failure of *Dido*, 
Marlowe re-considers his aesthetic practice in *1 Tamburlaine*. If nothing was the same in 
the theatre after *1 Tamburlaine*, as Lunney and others maintain, then the play’s revision of 
the theory that underpins *Dido* gives us new insight into why and in what ways the drama 
changed.

**4.3: Revising *Dido*: 2 Tamburlaine**

*1 Tamburlaine* was an unprecedented commercial success. The original audience 
clearly enjoyed the play and they wanted more according to the Prologue to Part 2. 
Marlowe obliged them:

The general welcomes Tamburlaine received  
When he arrivèd last upon our stage  
Hath made our poet pen his second part,  
Where death cuts off the progress of his pomp  
And murd’rous Fates throws all his triumphs down.  
And what became of fair Zenocrate,  
And with how many cities’ sacrifice  
He celebrated her sad funeral,  
Himself in presence shall unfold at large. (1-9)
Most critics agree that Marlowe wrote *2 Tamburlaine* in direct response to the success of Part 1. The first of my aims in this section is to demonstrate that Marlowe takes up the issue of catharsis again in Part 2. Perhaps buoyed by the audience’s approval of Part 1, Marlowe puts catharsis to work in ways that contest the function it has in *Dido* and in Sidney’s *Apology*. This is particularly apparent in Zenocrate’s death and Tamburlaine’s treatment of her body. The play also contests *Dido’s* promotion of the *Aeneid*, as we shall see. The result is a metatheatrical text that stands against *Dido’s* achievement as a modernized *Poetics*.

Zenocrate dies in Act 2, scene 4 of the play’s second part. Refusing to bury her, Tamburlaine embalms her body, and as a further preservative measure, places it in a gold-lined coffin, which he has dragged about with him for the rest of the play (Pt. II. 2.4.129-32). At the moment of his death, Tamburlaine conceives a union with Zenocrate’s corpse:

Now, eyes, enjoy your latest benefit,
And when my soul hath virtue of your sight,
Pierce through the coffin and the sheet of gold
And glut your longings with a heaven of joy. (Pt. II. 5.3.224-27)

What thinking is behind Tamburlaine’s desire to “glut” himself on Zenocrate’s corpse? What is so important about Zenocrate that Marlowe kept her dead, preserved, and encased body on the stage of *2 Tamburlaine* so that the protagonist could metaphorically feed on her dead flesh as he dies? Even in the context of the *Tamburlaine* plays’ hyperboles of spectacle—the caged Bajazeth and Zabina, the harnessed kings, the use of Bajazeth as a footstool—the protagonist’s treatment of Zenocrate’s body is extraordinary, as even the following, most basic of comparisons reveals: Bajazeth, alive and dead, spends a total of two and half scenes in his cage, while the dead Zenocrate is on stage for eleven scenes. For a full three acts, the coffin is always on stage, a moveable fixture that accompanies Tamburlaine until he metaphorically consumes the corpse inside it, dies, and the play ends.
The remarkable amount of time that the dead Zenocrate is on stage invites us to consider the function of her corpse in Part 2. Most critics agree that Zenocrate’s death is a sign of the plot’s “downward” trajectory in contrast to the upward movement of Part 1, and that Tamburlaine’s treatment of her body is a sign of his increasing degeneracy, which is part of the downward plot movement. In addition, Mark Thornton Burnett has argued that “what is formulated in Tamburlaine, Part One is ironized or pushed to a thematic extreme in Tamburlaine, Part Two,” and he reads the protagonist’s desire for a union with Zenocrate’s corpse in this light (2004, 127). Giving Zenocrate’s corpse the attention the play invites will enable us to see that the irony and “pushing” that Burnett notes stems from an aesthetic that is being liberated from the tragic theory that underpins Dido.

As the Prologue tells the audience, Zenocrate’s death is the inspiration for Tamburlaine’s violence, a kind of war on the entire world. It is immediately apparent that Zenocrate’s function in Part 2 is different from that in Part 1 because her corpse is the catalyst to the kind of violence she attempts to manage as tragedy in her lament for the sacked Damascus in Part 1. In view of her lament in Part 1, I suggest that the Sidneian catharsis she expresses in that play is contained with her dead body in the hearse that inspires Tamburlaine’s violence. With Sidney’s theory of the function of de casibus tragedy enclosed in the hearse, 2 Tamburlaine indulges in creating the kind of tragedy that a didactic catharsis is designed to defend. This is particularly noticeable in the sacking of Larissa in Act 2, and of Babylon in Act 5.

One scene after she dies, Zenocrate is on stage in her hearse, her death having prompted Tamburlaine to destroy Larissa, the town where she dies: “This cursèd town will I consume with fire / Because this place bereft me of my love” (Pt. II. 2.4.137-38). Larissa is the first of the many cities Tamburlaine “sacrifices” to “celebrate” Zenocrate’s death, as the Prologue makes clear (7-8). There is a certain logic to her death that is the result of
Tamburlaine’s commercial success—alive at the end of Part 1, Zenocrate “calmed the fury” of Tamburlaine’s sword, and so, to inspire Tamburlaine to more “bloody spectacles” like the Damascus episode, Zenocrate dies.

The “celebrations” that begin with the sacking of Larissa continue for the rest of the play. While Part 2’s audience do not see the sacking of Larissa, as they do of Damascus, they are treated to a vivid description of the hell-scape that remains:

So, burn the turrets of this cursèd town,
Flame to the highest region of the air
And kindle heaps of exhalations
That, being fiery meteors, may presage
Death and destruction to th’ inhabitants.
Over my zenith hang a blazing star
That may endure till heaven be dissolved,
Fed with the fresh supply of earthly dregs,
Threat’ning a death and famine to this land.
Flying dragons, lighting, fearful thunderclaps,
Singe these fair plains, and make them seem as black
As is the island where the Furies mask
Compassed with Lethe, Styx, and Phlegethon,
Because my dear Zenocrate is dead. (Pt. II. 3.2.1-14)

At the end of the siege of Damascus, Zenocrate’s birthplace, at least the Soldan is spared and the city walls stand, albeit decorated with the virgins’ bodies. Not so Larissa, the place of her death. It is violence of this scope, then, that Zenocrate’s corpse inspires.

Having burnt Larissa to the ground, Tamburlaine “Forbids the world to build it up again” (Pt. II. 3.2.18). Amidst this perpetual wasteland, Tamburlaine and his sons memorialise Zenocrate with a pillar, a “mournful streamer,” a “register / Of all her virtues and perfections,” and a picture to “show her beauty which the world admired” (II. 3.2.15-26). The razed Larissa is eerily evocative of the sacked Troy, since the fame of Larissa as Zenocrate’s memorial depends, as Troy’s fame does, on the city’s utter destruction. The destruction of Larissa prepares us to consider the anti-epic narrative that Part 2 builds, which I shall discuss shortly.
The audience can expect more violence like the sacking of Larissa, as the Prologue foretells and Tamburlaine himself makes clear when, raging at his impotence in the face of her death, he casts Zenocrate as Helen of Troy:

    Her sacred beauty hath enchanted heaven,  
    And had she lived before the siege of Troy,  
    Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms  
    And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,  
    Had not been named in Homer’s Iliads—  
    *Her* name had been in every line he wrote . . . (Pt. II. 2.4.85-90)

In Act 3, scene 2 Tamburlaine defines Zenocrate as Bellona, goddess of war (34-42). Her “new” function as catalyst to the kind of violence she laments in the Damascus episode contests the function of catharsis in *Dido*. Zenocrate is the inspiration for the kind of violence that Aeneas’ narrative describes, violence brought about by Helen, “she that caus’d this war” (*Dido*, 2.1.292).

The sacking of Babylon is the climax of Part 2’s carnage. The Babylon episode evokes that of Damascus but there are a number of differences. The most significant is that Zenocrate is not alive to try and manage the scene as tragedy. Her silence, I suggest, helps liberate Part 2’s aesthetic from the theory that underpins *Dido*.

Unlike the Governor of Damascus, the Governor of Babylon does not seek Tamburlaine’s mercy on the third and final day of the siege, despite the citizens who plead with him to surrender:

    My lord, if ever you did deed of ruth  
    And now will work a refuge to our lives,  
    Offer submission, hang up flags of truce,  
    That Tamburlaine may pity our distress  
    And use us like a loving conqueror. (Pt. II. 5.1.24-28)

The Governor refuses. Tamburlaine rewards him by having him chained to Babylon’s walls and shot (Pt. II. 5.1.150). Tamburlaine then orders all of the city’s inhabitants, “man, woman, and child,” to be drowned (Pt. II. 5.1.147-170). Despite the Governor’s refusal, some of the hallmarks of the Damascus episode appear in the scene. For instance, the
citizens remind the audience of the virgins in Part 1, and the Governor’s bullet-ridden body, draped on Babylon’s walls, is reminiscent of the virgins’ corpses, punctured by the lances of Tamburlaine’s horsemen and hung on the walls of Damascus.

Techelles’ report to Tamburlaine gives the audience another vivid description of the extent of the violence Zenocrate’s dead body inspires:

I have fulfilled your highness’ will, my lord:
Thousands of men, drowned in the Asphaltis’ lake,
Have made the water swell above the banks,
And fishes fed by human carcasses,
Amazed, swim up and down upon the waves
As when they swallow asafoetida,
Which makes them fleet aloft and gasp for air. (Pt. II. 5.2.202-08)

Tamburlaine’s use of Zenocrate’s body as the muse for his violence reveals that Part 2 fattens itself by defying the Sidneian catharsis that Zenocrate expressed when she was alive. Catharsis begets tragic violence in 2 Tamburlaine, overturning the function that catharsis has in Dido.

Tamburlaine’s desire to “glut” himself on Zenocrate’s corpse bears witness to the decisive liberation of Marlowe’s aesthetic from the theory upon which Dido is built. In terms of the didactic function of tragedy Zenocrate expresses in Part 1, her ever-present coffin should be a reminder of the lesson of de casibus tragedy. But in Part 2, the embodiment of this kind of catharsis is dead, preserved, and contained in the hearse. In a perverse gesture, Tamburlaine invites the audience to metaphorically feast with him on the dead flesh of catharsis when he conceives a union with Zenocrate’s body before he dies. His yearning is a violent one that feeds on what it desires until the object of desire is utterly consumed and the feeder glutted. Tamburlaine’s “heaven of joy,” I suggest, is the metaphoric consumption of Sidney’s didactic catharsis (Pt. II. 5.3.227). This frees Part 2 and its audience from the restrictions of tragic theory. The lasting irony of this play is that Tamburlaine’s desire to “glut” himself on Zenocrate’s dead body draws the curtain on this
violent stage. Only when catharsis is dead and about to be “digested” do the “bloody spectacles” of tragedy end.

How did the audience of 2 Tamburlaine respond? It appears that Part 2 was even more of a commercial success than Part 1, although precisely why is unclear. The liberation of Part 2 from the theory that underpins Dido gives us a new context in which to consider the popularity of 2 Tamburlaine. A number of critics have attributed the success of the Tamburlaine plays to the antitheatrical polemics of the period, which the plays negotiate. John Gillies, for example, labels the Marlovian strategy of audience address “‘ludic anarchism,’ a calculated incitement to moral and political heresy that would have been prosecutable anywhere outside the theatre” (2006, 43). Charles Whitney goes a little further, speaking of a “scandalous dialectic of emotional engagement and reflective detachment” in which “Tamburlaine comes to embody the stage’s shockingly increased power, an increase wrought partly by the ways the plays were able to release and to provoke audiences’ powers of both feeling and interpretation” (2006, 38).44 The aesthetic of 2 Tamburlaine in particular is deeply antitheatrical because it is a tragedy that metaphorically consumes its own function. I suggest that the process of liberating Part 2 from Dido’s aesthetic extends to Marlowe’s deployment of the Aeneid, that Part 2 subverts Dido’s achievement as a faithful translation of Virgil’s epic.45 The geographical context of 2 Tamburlaine and the protagonist’s murder of his eldest son, Calyphas, are evidence of this subversion.

Tamburlaine’s martial progress in Part 2 makes no geographical sense. Indeed, as Clifford Leech comments, for most of the play “we are not even sure where Tamburlaine is” (1964, 42). Tamburlaine’s journey leads nowhere. He marches five thousand leagues forwards and five thousand leagues back, returning to Scythia “where [he] first began” (Pt. II. 5.3.141-44). It is a kind of non-epic journey in contrast to the journey forward that
Marlowe’s Aeneas undertakes when he leaves both Dido and Dido. Apart from sacking numerous cities along the way, Tamburlaine and his army defile the landscape. As John Gillies notes, geography in Part 2 is “merely a grist to the mill of appetite, a consumable, or rather a site of conspicuous consumption, a rubbish tip, a bespattered and clogged vomitorium” (1998b, 224). Gillies is referring to Techelles’ description of the river bloated with dead bodies after the siege of Babylon, quoted above. Gillies argues that “river-violation as such is generally depicted as impious and transgressive” (1998b, 215). I suggest that Marlowe may be perverting the scene in Aeneid 8 in which the river god, Tiberius, appears to Aeneas (31-65). Dead bodies in 2 Tamburlaine turn the “blue Tiber, river most beloved of heaven” blood red, evoking also the “choked” and “groaning” rivers of Troy, filled with the victims of Achilles in Aeneid 5 (804-08).

The geography of Part 2 suggests an anti-epic narrative that becomes more visible in Tamburlaine’s relationship with his three sons. He considers his sons inferior to himself:

But yet methinks their looks are amorous,
Not martial as the sons of Tamburlaine:
Water and air, being symbolised in one,
Argue their want of courage and of wit;
Their hair as white as milk and soft as down—
Which should be like the quills of porcupines,
As black as jet, and hard as iron or steel—
Bewrays they are too dainty for the wars.
Their fingers made to quaver on a lute,
Their arms to hang about a lady’s neck,
Their legs to dance and caper in the air,
Would make me think them bastards, not my sons,
But that I know they issued from thy womb,
That never looked on man but Tamburlaine. (Pt. II. 1.3.21-34)

The issue that concerns Tamburlaine is about who will rule after his death. Calyphas, Tamburlaine’s eldest and most recalcitrant son, is clearly not a successor in his father’s eyes. According to Tamburlaine, Calyphas is a “Bastardly boy, sprung from some coward’s loins” who will not “have a foot” in any of the provinces his father has subdued unless he bears a “mind courageous and invincible” (Pt. II. 1.3.69-73). In his father’s eyes,
Calyphas does not, and so Tamburlaine kills him in Act 4, scene 1 (120). The murder of Calyphas contradicts the ways in which paternal relationships work in both the *Aeneid* and Marlowe’s faithful translation of it as *Dido*. It clearly defies the emphasis on the son, on protecting Ascanius so he can fulfil the program of imperial Roman history as Virgil conceives it. In *Aeneid* 10, Venus gives impassioned voice to the emphasis on the son, Ascanius, in her pleas to Jupiter. She is willing to let Juno pursue her hatred for Aeneas, to toss him on “unknown waves,” as long as Jupiter allows Venus to protect Ascanius (44-50). In addition, the murder of Calyphas prefaces, as John Gillies notes, the “imminent collapse of Tamburlaine’s own dynasty” (2006, 48). Tamburlaine is a kind of anti-*pater* Aeneas, the opposite of the Virgilian hero who leads Iulus from the fires of Troy towards Italy and the founding of Rome, carrying his father on his back and Troy’s household gods in his pocket. Tamburlaine’s murder of Calyphas is deeply subversive of the *Aeneid* and *Dido*’s promotion of the epic’s message because it defies the paternal structures that underpin empire building in both texts. In this way, 2 Tamburlaine undermines the *translatio imperii studiique* in which London is the new Troy, and challenges Elizabeth I’s manipulation of the *Aeneid* to support and promote her authority.

Killing Calyphas is powerful evidence of the anti-epic narrative that Marlowe builds in Part 2. But it is not the first example of Tamburlaine’s disregard for his own flesh and blood. In teaching his sons not to “shun the field for fear of wounds,” Tamburlaine cuts his arm, giving himself the only wound he ever receives (Pt. II. 3.2.109-114). This act of self-mutilation perverts Christian iconography and reveals that Part 2 decisively liberates itself from *Dido*’s narrative engagement with the *Aeneid*.

After cutting himself, Tamburlaine invites his sons to “search” his wound with their fingers, and “wash” all their hands in his blood (Pt. II. 3.2.126-27). There is more glory in the wound, according to Tamburlaine, than sitting on a bejewelled throne in Bajazeth’s
robes (Pt. II. 3.2.117-25). The wound is, then, a “sight of power” more compelling than Tamburlaine’s crowning glory as a stage tyrant in Part 1, for it gives him greater “grace and majesty” (Pt. II. 3.2.118). More important, Tamburlaine’s wound and his sons’ “searching” of it are outrageously blasphemous, perverting the image of Christ transfigured after the resurrection. In the stage picture, Tamburlaine assumes the role of Christ’s body, with his sons all doubting Thomases being convinced, with the irrefutable evidence of the wound, of Tamburlaine’s/Christ’s divinity.  

When read in conjunction with the argument in Chapter 2 about Dido as a second Eve, Tamburlaine/Christ reveals that Part 2 is undermining Dido as a faithful translation of the Aeneid. I suggested in Chapter 2 that Marlowe rewrites the Virgilian “first day of death” (4.169-70) in Christian terms when the Carthaginian queen aligns herself with Eve, casting Aeneas for the serpent in the Garden of Eden (5.1.165-68). Putting it another way, Dido uses Christian iconography to translate Virgil’s epic as tragedy while preserving the message of the Aeneid. Figuring Tamburlaine as Christ subverts this critical part of Dido.

The murder of Calyphas and Tamburlaine/Christ are trump cards in Part 2’s liberation from Dido’s engagement with the Aeneid. By drawing attention to the ways in which Part 2 subverts Virgil’s epic, I do not mean to suggest that Marlowe does not respect either Virgil or his artistic achievement in the Aeneid. Rather, it is to propose that with Part 2, Marlowe is distancing himself further from Dido, his box-office flop.

As a play in which Tamburlaine performs the role of a kind of anti-pater Aeneas, Part 2 opposes Dido’s achievement as a faithful translation of the Aeneid. As a tragedy that metaphorically consumes Sidney’s didactic theory of catharsis, Part 2 opposes Dido’s achievement as a modernized Poetics. I suggest that the antitheatrical force of Part 2 and Part 1 is generated not simply by the violence the plays stage, but by the inefficacy of catharsis that enables the violence. These plays are precise examples of the kind of drama
that a critical tradition since Plato has frowned upon. *1 and 2 Tamburlaine* challenge theory as a means of controlling, organising, and regulating audience responses. These plays dramatize, Part 2 in particular, the main argument against tragedy that Plato makes in the *Republic.*

The *Tamburlaine* plays amazed their original audiences. That much is clear. The plays have amazed critics as well, particularly Part 1: Kimberly Benston calls Part 1 “a dramatic examination of unprecedented vigor and complexity in English literature” (208); Johannes Birringer claims that “No English dramatist, surely, has ever made a more astounding debut in the professional theatre than Christopher Marlowe with *Tamburlaine*” (222); Robert Weimann asserts that the plays constitute “one of the boldest experiments in world literature” (182); and for Thomas Cartelli, *1 Tamburlaine* is the “most expressly spellbinding play in the Elizabethan repertory” (64). Such praise sometimes works to wipe *Dido* from the Marlovian dramatic canon, as it does for Leslie Spence, who goes so far as to say that *1 Tamburlaine* is Marlowe’s first play (198). In the light that emanates from the theatrical and critical success of the *Tamburlaine* plays, we risk not seeing the influence of *Dido.* As I hope to have shown, Marlowe’s box-office flop is a valuable resource in our investigations of how the *Tamburlaine* plays came about and the many possible meanings they have. *Dido* warrants our serious attention for the contributions it makes to the liberated drama that the *Tamburlaine* plays exemplify and enabled.
See also Robert Watson’s claim that the two Tamburlaine plays “liberated English drama from the complacencies of both its academic and its popular conventions” (303), and Donald Peet’s that the influence of I Tamburlaine on other playwrights of the period was “enormous” (137).

Helen Gardner calls the structure of I Tamburlaine “primitive,” adding that it “is extremely simple and could be plotted as a single rising line on a graph; there are no setbacks” (202). John Gillies argues that “Marlowe gives us a willfully lopsided structure in which the illegitimate burgeons into the outrageous and the rise-fall pattern of the medieval tragic tradition morphs into the rise-rise pattern—a kind of structural nonsense” (2006, 35). Eugene Hill claims that I Tamburlaine “is itself an Apocalypse” (38; emphasis in original), while Gillies refers to the play as a Marlovian equivalent of Artaud’s “theatre of cruelty” (2006, 46). Ethel Seaton notes that critics for some time have felt Marlowe failed artistically in I Tamburlaine because of the violence wrought by the protagonist (20). C. L. Barber maintains that I Tamburlaine “is deeply naïve, a drama written partly in defiance and partly in ignorance of the limits of art” (16). Kimberly Benston asks the question that has concerned a number of critics: must we regard “Marlowe’s injury or inattention to form as the price of his exploration of the verbal and philosophical resources of a distinctly English drama” (214).

For example, Emily Bartels argues that the plays’ narrative, “in fashioning a moral, places its hero, and its hero’s cruelty and rage, above and beyond the ordinary realm of humankind, and so, above and beyond reproach” (1992, 6). Donald Peet maintains that the protagonist is above moral judgement: “Tamburlaine is not intended to resemble any actual human being; he is the embodiment of certain more or less abstract qualities, raised to the
highest conceivable power” (153). Herbert Rothschild Jr. thinks that the plays give us a choice, albeit one that is heavily influenced by his argument that “neither play furnishes many reasons to infer that this character Tamburlaine is a man” (62-63).

As Timothy Nelson puts it:

From the first, then, the characteristic of the protagonist that most firmly impresses itself on the audience—whether that audience’s perceptions have been formed by Elizabethan or Aristotelian philosophy and tragic theory—is that he possesses to an almost unsurpassable degree those traits which, in tragedy, traditionally provoke retribution from fate and are meant to be regarded as tragic sins. (249)

Mark Thornton Burnett puts the problems of interpreting the Tamburlaine plays down to their destabilization of just about everything we might use to measure them to the extent that “even sexual demarcations, and divine norms, enjoy a slim purchase” (2004, 127). Troni Grande explains the struggle to interpret the plays as a struggle to “name the generic Signified” (47).

Thomas Cartelli’s chapter on the Tamburlaine plays in The Economy of Theatrical Experience (1991) presents a seminal argument in this growth area of criticism. Cartelli’s account is informed by Freudian notions of pleasure, fantasy, and resistance. He investigates the plays’ appeal within a “theatrical economy of engagement and resistance” that is based on Freud’s “translating Aristotle’s philosophic prescription regarding pity and terror into a psychological description of pleasure and enjoyment” (21). In 2002, Ruth Lunney made a different argument. Lunney is interested in Marlowe’s dialogue with tradition, in the ways in which the plays transform the familiar, particularly the way Marlowe “makes use of—rather than discards—old ways and values” (2). The emphasis of her argument is on the ways in which 1 Tamburlaine in particular “exploits the conventional expectations of early audiences” and thereby changes the audience’s understanding of the materials of the traditional drama, especially the visual sign and
cautionary tale, which the play deliberately evokes (53, 182). In 2006, Charles Whitney extended Cartelli’s and Lunney’s work with his focus on individual rather than collective responses to the Tamburlaine plays.

6 To the contrary, Simon Shepherd argues that 1 Tamburlaine disempowers its audience, trapping them “between the success and cruelty of the hero” (1986, 151). Richard Wilson disagrees: “the prospect he [Tamburlaine] offers his army is precisely that from which London importers would generate their wealth” (1995, 55).

7 Herbert Rothschild Jr. puts the argument as follows:

if there is a single impression of Marlowe’s Tamburlaine that the playgoer takes home, it is surely the Scythian conqueror’s unjustifiable ruthlessness in ordering the annihilation of Damascus simply because the city delays its capitulation until his short period of grace has expired. (61-62)

John Gillies agrees: “For the first time in the play, our sympathies are seriously divided. We wonder why world conquest should absolutely require the destruction of Damascus” (1998b, 204).

8 Kimberly Benston argues that Tamburlaine claims in this scene “to be utterly beyond emotion” (220), and Donald Peet that Tamburlaine shows his “utter ruthlessness” in being able to withstand the eloquence of the virgins’ pleas (144). The issue of Tamburlaine’s sympathy is complicated by the stage directions before his meeting with the virgins, which describe Tamburlaine as “very melancholy” (Pt. I. 5.1.63). Charles Whitney argues that what Tamburlaine reveals here and in the reflective soliloquy on beauty is “a profound aesthetic sensibility with moral implications,” adding that “the hero can be said to have ‘mourned,’ as Nashe puts it, for the consequences of what he has willed himself to become” (2006, 34). One of the consequences for which Tamburlaine “mourns” is the slaughter of the virgins, the “poor fools” who could have surrendered when they had the chance (Pt. I.
5.1.64-73). I suggest Tamburlaine is shown capable of the profound aesthetic sensibility Whitney observes in order to make it more apparent that his aesthetic sensibility has no practical effect. Other interpretations include that of G. I. Duthie, who claims that Tamburlaine is compassionate but refuses to break his oath because of an “old imperfect conception of Honour” (218). Mark Thornton Burnett has also read the play in terms of the Renaissance concept of honour, arguing that characters in *1 Tamburlaine* hold different codes of honour and that the conflict between these codes is partly responsible “for our difficulty in directly engaging with the play and for the contradictory critical responses that it has provoked” (1987, 201).

9 Richard Martin labels the slaughter “an act of brutality unsurpassed in the play” (1978, 256), and Sara Deats calls it Tamburlaine’s “most heinous crime” (1997, 133). Critics have put forward a number of arguments in seeking to account for Tamburlaine’s slaughter of the virgins. Herbert Rothschild Jr., for example, has tried to account for the slaughter by examining four theorists of the *jus belli* in the period, whose work Rothschild claims both Marlowe and Shakespeare knew (55). On Marlowe’s recourse to the manuals of warfare available in the period, see also Robert Logan (2004) 70, and Leah Marcus 307.

10 The point is well noted by Rothschild 62.

11 As Brian Reynolds and Ayanna Thompson conclude: “The theatrical properties of language, spectacle, and action are deemed the most effective means by which to achieve the town’s freedom” (175). They also note an anticipatory irony in the plea, since the virgins hope to pierce Tamburlaine’s heart through his eyes and ears, and yet it is their bodies that end up on the lances of Tamburlaine’s horseman (175).
12 Troni Grande also claims that the concept of tragedy is at stake in the *Tamburlaine* plays (especially 44-46).

13 Although not published until after Sidney’s death in 1586, the *Apology* enjoyed a “fairly wide circulation” in several handwritten texts (Geoffrey Shepherd 2), and Marlowe may have read one of them. There is also circumstantial evidence that Marlowe may have personally known Sidney through his connections with Elizabeth’s intelligence service, which was administered by the father of Sidney’s wife, Sir Francis Walsingham. Further, Sir Francis’s second cousin, Thomas Walsingham, who also worked for the queen’s intelligence service, was one of Marlowe’s patrons. According to Charles Nicholl, Thomas Walsingham was the “first personal link” between Marlowe and Sir Francis’s intelligence service (115).

14 Baxter Hathaway calls Shepherd’s “amazement” the “marvellous,” tracing some of its theoretical history throughout his *Marvels and Commonplaces*. J. H. W. Atkins also sees a connection, arguing that Sidney borrowed the terms “admiration and commiseration” from Minturno (125). On the other hand, Alan Gilbert asserts that Sidney was not as influenced by Minturno as some critics think. Rather, Gilbert argues that Sidney, in his theory of tragedy, had “neglected, misunderstood, forgotten, or deliberately modified” Minturno (461). Elizabeth Donno notes that one of the main differences between Minturno and Sidney is that Minturno specifies “admiration as a function of poetry-in-general” whereas Sidney “restricts his use of the term to the affective power of a particular genre—tragedy” (374). Alternatively, J. R. Mulryne and Stephen Fender argue that *admiratio* has a comic function that Sidney recognised, the “kinship-in-difference of ‘delight’ and ‘laughter’” (53).
Gregory Smith, in his introduction to *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, claimed “Sidney’s metaphor of the ulcer discovers a trace of the Italian tradition which expresses the original medical metaphor of [catharsis]” (I. lxxxvi). D. W. Robertson demonstrates this is not in fact the case. Robertson surveys the ulcer metaphor in the literature of some of Sidney’s contemporaries, finding references to it that “obviously stress the danger of concealed maladjustments” (60). The questions Robertson poses are: “But in what sense does tragedy, opening the wounds and showing the ulcers within, reveal such maladjustments? And what are the evils Sidney had in mind?” (60). The conventional Elizabethan conception of tragedy, as it is evident in Puttenham’s *Arte of English Poesie*, Nashe’s *Pierce Penniless* and Heywood’s *Apology for Actors*, provides answers:

Sidney’s ‘wounds’ are thus the crimes presented on the stage; and the metaphor of the ulcer refers to the content of tragedy, not to its effect. His [Sidney’s] remarks on the effect of tragedy immediately following the metaphor simply reflect, like those of Puttenham, Nashe, and Heywood, the commonplace notion that plays should act as exempla, an idea which Sidney himself dwelt upon in the course of his discussion of the relative merits of poetry and history. There he observed that ‘if euill men come to the stage, they euer goe out (as the Tragedie Writer answered to one who that misliked the shew of such persons) so manacled as they little animate folkes to followe them.’ Aristotle certainly never thought of the tragic stage as a gallery of rogues. (60-61)

Sidney certainly knew the *Poetics*, and he refers directly to it six times in the *Apology* (101, 33-36; 109, 23-34; 114, 5-8; 130, 21-23; 134, 7-12; 137, 3-7; see also Trimpi, especially 191-92). Nonetheless, Sidney’s definition of tragedy is non-Aristotelian, or at least not based on the *Poetics*. Elizabeth Donno makes a case for reading Marlowe’s *Edward the Second* according to Sidney’s theory. She argues that the play is responsive to Sidney’s view of tragedy, and that this “coincides with a developing, particularly non-Aristotelian, Renaissance aesthetic” (372).
Troni Grande argues that the precursors of *de casibus* tragedy for Sidney appear to be the classical tragedians rather than the theorists, “not only Seneca but also Euripides and Sophocles” (53).

Grande isolates three basic principles of *de casibus* tragedy, “all of which point to the genre’s moral emphasis:”

- first, in a tragic universe, retribution overtakes all sinners, especially the ambitious or power-hungry; second, Fortune (often regarded as the servant of divine providence) reigns supreme, and her wily shiftiness can be neither controlled nor eluded; and, third, death is a spiritual as well as a physical fact, leading to self-reflection, repentance, and worldly renunciation. (54)

Deats has read Zenocrate’s lament as a conventional *de casibus* response to the deaths of Bajazeth and Zabina. She argues that the lament “enunciates an alternate value system with which the audience may identify, thus increasing audience ambivalence” when put alongside Tamburlaine’s “sights of power” claim (1997, 151). See also Grande 49-51.

As Charles Whitney notes, Zenocrate is the “plays’ most important audience surrogate” (2006, 44). There are many other internal audiences in Part 1, together forming what Benston calls a “composite audience” that Marlowe structures “into his play” (215; emphasis in original). Indeed, many of the characters in Part 1 in particular are positioned at some time as audience-to-Tamburlaine in the sense that they try, and often fail, to interpret either the protagonist or his actions. For instance, Cosroe calls Tamburlaine and his followers “The strangest men that ever Nature made! / I know not how to take their tyrannies” (Pt. I. 2.7.40-41). See also Ortygius’ speech in Part 1 (2.6.15-23). Sara Deats lists the various interpretations of Tamburlaine given by other characters (1997, 135). She maintains that throughout the play “Tamburlaine cannot hold a single visible shape, as he is constantly constructed and deconstructed by his admirers and his enemies” (1997, 135). That Tamburlaine seems beyond definition has led Bartels to speculate about “bad readers”
in the *Tamburlaine* plays (1992, 18), and other critics, such as Marjorie Garber, to concentrate more specifically on questions of authorial control, and the tensions between writing and performance (1984, *passim*). See also Richard Schoch, who agrees with and furthers Garber’s work on the struggle between the playwright and the protagonist in the *Tamburlaine* plays (1998, *passim*).

20 As J. S. Cunningham explains, the “‘enrichment’ of Aeneas, in gaining Lavinia, was ‘fatal’ to Turnus: the allusion works itself out to Arabia’s cost” (211n).

22 The *Tamburlaine* plays contest Sidney’s literary theory in other, more obvious ways. For example, the time frame and particularly the geographical sweep of both *Tamburlaine* plays flout Sidney’s argument about the dramatic unities in the *Apology* (134, 7-25). As John Gillies notes in his introduction to *Playing the Globe*, Sidney “castigated the popular stage for its addiction to geographically expansive actions it could not possibly hope to rationalize” (1998a, 20).

23 This is not the first time that Tamburlaine contests a *de casibus* interpretation of the action he brings about. Kimberly Benston notes that Tamburlaine’s famous speech, ending in “The sweet fruition of an earthly crown” (Pt. I. 2.7.12-29), is a “denial of the *de casibus* pattern in every sense represented by Cosroe” (210; Pt. I. 2.7.1-11). Troni Grande draws attention to other instances where the tradition is invoked to “circumscribe other kings but never Tamburlaine himself” (62-64). To a large extent, Tamburlaine’s self-appointed role as God’s scourge places him outside the divine retribution that is a crucial feature of *de casibus* theory. His refusal to be circumscribed by *de casibus* law has led Grande to argue that he “bursts the old restrictions” of that particular type of tragedy (55-56).
Zenocrate is often considered to be a foil for Tamburlaine, a character who at best exists to comment, sometimes silently, on the protagonist’s moral failings, or as one who exerts a feminine influence that modifies, for the better, Tamburlaine’s behaviour. For example, Pam Whitfield argues that Zenocrates’s fate, including her death in Part 2, “condemns Tamburlaine for his ambition, amorality and inhumanity” (97). This is not to say that Zenocrate is unproblematically virtuous. Sara Deats is one critic who has noted that Zenocrate is inconstant to her first betrothed, the Prince of Arabia (1997, 145), and Sarah Emsley argues that Zenocrate “makes pragmatic rather than honourable choices” (177). Other critics have attempted to account for Zenocrate’s function by investigating her name. Mary Wehling has found that Zenocrates’s name is the combination of the “god of all,” the poetic Greek for Zeus (divine), with “authority or power,” making Zenocrates, “divine power” (or inspiration), which Tamburlaine calls her in both plays (246). A number of other critics have asserted that her name also means beauty. See, for instance, Barbara Baines 7. Tamburlaine certainly aestheticizes Zenocrates in Part 1, especially in Act 1 (2.87-105). Tamburlaine is also aestheticized in Part 1 (2.1.7-30). Numerous source studies have identified Zenocrates as Marlowe’s invention. According to Leslie Spence, this fact was first noted in criticism in 1883 (181). For a study of Menaphon’s description that prepares us to consider Tamburlaine as effeminate, militarily insufficient, and similar to Mycetes, see John Cutts’s insightful essay “Tamburlaine ‘as fierce Achilles was.’”

Mark Thornton Burnett explains the change in Tamburlaine’s behaviour in the context of his argument that 1 Tamburlaine reflects an Elizabethan concern with vagrancy (1987, 322). Corinne Abate argues that Tamburlaine’s main problem is that of creating legitimacy, and marriage to Zenocrates, “someone in the desired socio-economic position,” is the answer to his dilemma (19). Nina Taunton discusses the “unlawful presences” of the
female characters in Tamburlaine’s army, arguing that space for women in the military is gained by either marriage (Zenocrate) or death (Zabina and Olympia) (140).

26 Ruth Lunney’s comparison of Zenocrate’s lament and Tamburlaine’s “sights of power” claim offers a useful insight into the ways in which the latter is meant to supersede the former. Considered individually, both the de casibus motto and Tamburlaine’s rival claim “can be interpreted in the traditional way, as an index to the reality beyond. The audience is expected to recognise the commonplaces” in Lunney’s view (48). The crucial difference, Lunney explains, is that Tamburlaine’s “‘sights of power’ do not lead simply to conventional messages or ways of seeing” but contest the normal function of emblems, that of “reinforcing a shared sense of how actions should be judged” (49-50). Because the impact of the emblems on the “audience’s making sense is sequential,” Tamburlaine’s “sights of power” is the more persuasive according to Lunney, and thus it supersedes Zenocrate’s earlier interpretative attempt (50). Troni Grande notes that Zenocrate’s reading is superseded first by Anippe’s counter argument (51).

27 Charles Whitney and Thomas Cartelli argue that the audience of 1 Tamburlaine may have experienced a catharsis, but not of the more traditional kinds that I am suggesting the play revises. Whitney proposes that audience pleasure was grounded in a double identification that provided an opportunity to experience a catharsis “that does not so much purify the emotions as dissolve the borders of the self” (2006, 35). The catharsis Cartelli observes is Freudian rather than Aristotelian, as he notes (21). Sara Deats (1997, 127) suggests that 1 Tamburlaine anticipates the alienation effect formulated by Bertolt Brecht. Brecht’s theory of “epic” theatre and verfremdungseffekt (alienation effect) is founded on the rejection of Aristotle’s “dramatic” theatre, in particular of catharsis as a technique for encouraging the audience to emotionally identify and empathise with the protagonist. See,
for example, Angela Curran 291. Brain Reynolds and Ayanna Thompson also raise the possibility that *1 Tamburlaine* may have estranged or defamiliarized audiences in a Brechtian fashion (168).

28 Cunningham notes in his introduction to the Revels edition that the printer, Richard Jones, “declares in a prefatory letter, addressed to the discriminating readers, that he has excised from the text ‘some fond and frivolous jestures’ which had been present in at least some stage performances to the delight of the vulgar” (21). What these gestures were and who wrote them remains uncertain. Nevertheless, as Cunningham notes, there are “varied provocations to mirth” in the text as it now stands (21). Consider the following passage as an example:

*>Mycetes.* Well, here I swear by this my royal seat—
*>Cosroe.* You may do well to kiss it then.
*>Mycetes.*—Embossed with silk as best beseems my state . . . (Pt. I. 1.1.97-99)

Of course, while exchanges such as these may be funny, this does not mean the play is a comedy. Nevertheless, there exists the possibility that “the play had perhaps become notorious for exciting laughter” (Cunningham 22).

29 A number of critics argue that *1 Tamburlaine* ends as a comedy in which reconciliation is achieved. For example, Stephen Greenblatt proposes that “Part 1 ends not in an act of revolt but in the supreme gesture of legitimacy, a proper marriage, with the Scourge of God earnestly assuring his father-in-law of Zenocrate’s unblemished chastity” (212). Greenblatt also sees a comic element in *1 Tamburlaine* in the imposition of the mechanical on the human (195), while Emily Bartels finds that Tamburlaine’s and Zenocrate’s terms finally “coalesce, leaving us with a vision of harmony and triumph” (1992, 21). Johannes Birringer explores *1 Tamburlaine* as a comedy in the sense that it establishes a “comic distance” of the kind identified by Mulryne and Fender (231; see Mulyrne and Fender 54-
55). Critics who disagree include Kimberly Benston (225), and Sara Deats (1997, 147).

John Gillies remains divided on the issue of the play’s genre, going for middle ground in a comment that suggests a certain dissatisfaction:

> The play has been building towards a tragic ending of the Greek or Senecan type (an implosion into incestuous/cannibalistic carnage) but is sidetracked into a banal, tragi-comic conclusion as if in bad imitation of a Restoration epic of love, war, and contrived divisions of loyalty. (1998b, 221)

Richard Martin considers the play a contest between romance and tragedy, perhaps following Ethel Seaton’s earlier argument about Marlowe’s knowledge of romance narratives (Martin 1978, passim; Seaton 21).

30 A number of critics agree because of the Prologue’s pronouncements. For example, Benston maintains that the Prologue “proposes that audience response, not dramatic structure, determines the essential nature of the play” (215).

31 As Levin points out, the audience’s approval of the plays “need not involve moral approbation; it would seem to be something more like amoral wonder” (53). Levin’s arguments challenged the then dominant strand of criticism led by Roy Battenhouse, Douglas Cole, John Cutts, W. L. Godshalk, and Charles Masinton. Levin collectively refers to these critics as the “ironic critics” because their arguments about the Tamburlaine plays depend upon seeing

> a pervasive irony that undercuts Tamburlaine’s ‘apparent’ triumphs and reduces them to a series of failures or defeats culminating in his death, which both judges and punishes him, so that his entire career and its outcome are presented as a kind of negative exemplum or admonitory moral lesson. (51)

For Levin, Roy Battenhouse provides the most striking example of the ironic reading:

> “these ten acts of Tamburlaine offer one of the most grandly moral spectacles in the whole realm of English drama” (qtd. in Levin 67n).
Whitney’s exploration of responses to the *Tamburlaine* plays includes those from people not professionally involved in the theatre. Audience approval of the *Tamburlaine* plays echoes well into the seventeenth century (in particular see Whitney 2006, 52-69).

Two years before Levin’s essay, in 1982, Peter Berek’s article “*Tamburlaine*’s Weak Sons: Imitation as Interpretation Before 1593” was published. Berek’s essay uses some of the evidence Levin would later mobilize but to make a somewhat different argument. Berek finds Marlowe to be brilliant but confused, and the surviving body of Elizabethan critical comment on the *Tamburlaine* plays “too limited and too cryptic to make safe generalizations possible” (56). Nonetheless, Berek argues that dramatic imitations of the *Tamburlaine* plays “provide no comfort for anyone who wants to argue that their popularity arose from audience approval of overreaching ambition” (60).

The audience’s response brings Marlowe’s handling of his sources into the equation. It is well known that George Whetsone’s version of Mexia in *The English Myrror* is a major source, and yet Marlowe often departs from Whetstone’s text. William Brown argues that Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* is a source for Tamburlaine’s treatment of Bajazeth (see especially 43 and 48). Brown’s argument offers a possible explanation for why the play’s original audience may have applied the lesson of *de casibus* tragedy to Bajazeth rather than to Tamburlaine. Charles Whitney views the influence of Foxe’s *Actes* differently from Brown, proposing that the *Tamburlaine* plays “did not aim to manipulate [their audiences’] vulnerability as Foxe did (2006, 26). See also Cunningham’s introduction to the Revels edition (9-20), and Leslie Spence’s more lengthy treatment, “The Influence of Marlowe’s Sources on *Tamburlaine I.*”
John Gillies has persuasively argued that the audience are pressured to accept Tamburlaine’s interpretations, definitions, and redefinitions from at least Act 2, scene 5 (2006, 43). Gillies’ aim is to account for the play’s original popularity in terms of the audience’s complicity in actions of ever-increasing violence, which climax in the Damascus episode. In contrast to Gillies, Timothy Nelson argues that Marlowe’s practice “is to tempt members of the audience into indiscriminate sympathy with the underdog,” forcing an Aristotelian recognition “of the nature of their own selves and of their relationship with superior powers” (257). To the contrary, Janet Clare argues that at “no point in the play does Tamburlaine invite identification or engagement from the audience” (84-85).

Clifford Leech has pointed out that the Prologue undermines its own authority, since the comedic first act, with the silly Mycetes’ attempts to keep his crown and his “puerile imitation of regal language”, contradicts the Prologue’s assertion of “stately” action in “high astounding terms” (1964, 33-34). The comic conceits and Marlowe’s use of “from” may therefore refer to the movement of the play’s action from that centring Mycetes to that centring Tamburlaine.

Brian Reynolds and Ayanna Thompson agree with Cunningham that Marlowe may be referring to his own work but there is no identification of what that work may be (170).

As Charles Whitney puts it, the Prologue “promises a new reach of poetry, a new martial and tragic seriousness, a new challenge to order and degree, and a new respect and license of the audience’s powers of judgement” (2006, 17).

Cunningham asserts in his introduction to the Revels edition that “there is no reason to doubt” 2 Tamburlaine was written solely in response to the success of Part 1 (23). Timothy
Nelson does doubt it. He argues that Marlowe planned a second part to effect a more astounding coup with Tamburlaine’s death than he did in Part 1 with the comic conclusion for the following reason: Tamburlaine’s death turns out to be “not the anticipated homily on the transience of worldly prosperity, but a crowning panegyric in dramatic form on the departing and still triumphant conqueror” (251). Some critics are unconcerned with the relationship between the two parts, such as Reynolds and Thompson, who view Tamburlaine independently and as a stand alone play in their arguments that it is “post-theater” (168).

Mark Thornton Burnett interprets Tamburlaine’s treatment of Zenocrate’s body as “a vain attempt to effect her re-virginization” by “coating her body with protective agents and exotic spices,” and by “stopping up entrances and exits” (1991, 38). Alan Shepard argues that Tamburlaine’s treatment of Zenocrate’s body “divulges his fetishism of the female corpse” (741). According to Sara Deats, this fetishizing happens when Zenocrate is alive as well (1997, 149). Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones have made us aware of the pitfalls of applying a post-modern idea of the fetish to the emergent subject in their analysis of artistic and literary representations of the single glove in the Renaissance (116 and especially 131). There is another context in which to consider Tamburlaine’s desire to “glut” himself on Zenocrate’s corpse, which recent studies of the early modern practice of eating mumia have opened up. Eating mumia is the ingestion of medicinally prepared human flesh and other body parts, including excretions, for therapeutic reasons. Louise Noble defines the practice and examines it at work in Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus. Noble asserts that the “fact that early modern Europeans ate each other for therapeutic purposes is inarguable,” which is not to say that it was unproblematic (681). In this light, Tamburlaine’s desire to “eat” Zenocrate reflects a norm, articulating into Stallybrass and
Jones’s argument about the post-modern fetish as the norm in Renaissance. The physically therapeutic benefits of *mumia* evoke the psychologically therapeutic benefits of catharsis.

41 Roy Battenhouse comments that Tamburlaine, after Zenocrate dies, becomes “increasingly inhuman, savage, and eventually overtly blasphemous” (1971, 42), and Barbara Baines that “With the death of Zenocrate the life-affirming feminine values (gentleness, peace, love, and mercy) that have already been suppressed within Tamburlaine’s nature and in his external world are totally extinguished” (9). More recent critics agree. See Deats (1997) 150, for example. Robert Logan argues that in Part 2, “Tamburlaine becomes a parody of his heroic self as an omnipotent military leader” and that he experiences “an epic degradation” (2004, 77).

42 Georgia Brown notes as much in the case of Troy (2004b, 55). John Gillies argues that Zenocrate’s memorialisation is a kind of Roman triumph, one that is strangely “more evocative of an ancient triumphal ritual than Tamburlaine’s victories are” (1998b, 215-16). Yet according to Gillies, the memorialisation is as “unsettlingly dysfunctional” as are the plays’ other triumphs, perverting the “Roman institution that is their source” (1998b, 211, 213).

43 To the contrary, Charles Brooks considers these lines as parallel to Part 1’s ending: “This marriage-in-death provides Part II the same sense of triumph as the original marriage does for Part I” (10).

44 Jonathan Crewe has examined the *Tamburlaine* plays in the light of William Rankins’ antitheatrical pamphlet, *A Mirrour of Monsters*. For Crewe, Marlowe shows an “overt acceptance” of the monstrous as Rankins defines it to “at least renegotiate its relationship to assumed norms” (332, 325). T. M. Pearce has read Part 2, in particular the military
education Tamburlaine gives his three sons, as evidence that the play is “an answer in the theater to [antitheatrical] charges that poets lacked discipline, that youth preferred capering to a lute and the blandishments of court society to the tents of war” (1954, 21-22; Pt. II. 3.2.53-144). He concludes that the play “may be considered Marlowe’s answer to Gosson and others who called the plays of the time mirrors of effeminate and degenerate ways of life” (1954, 27).

A number of critics have noted some of the very general ways in which the Tamburlaine plays engage with epic. Robert Logan, for example, notes epic conventions in Part 1’s Prologue and Zenocrate’s lament (2004, 67, 70). In 2007, he extended these arguments with a more detailed examination of the Tamburlaine plays and epic, suggesting that Marlowe “seems to have redefined the chronicle play as an epic if not as a tragedy” (148). Kimberly Benston has drawn attention to the ways in which the Tamburlaine plays challenge the Aeneid. She argues that the “Virgilian progression from pastoral to epic [that] will place the hero in a romantic context of fulfilled national mission” is among the major premises of contemporary “high” drama that Part 1 puts in doubt, and that Tamburlaine’s “ethos of ceaseless strife and dynastic displacement” shows him not to be the Virgilian hero of communitas (215, 224-25).

The metaphor of gluttony embellishes the violence in both Tamburlaine plays. In Part 1, the gluttony metaphor reaches its climax in the feast of crowns—two courses of them—in Act 4, scene 4 (108). In Part 2, Tamburlaine sets out to banquet on “the dainties of the world,” consuming cities as he goes: “I will, with engines never exercised, / Conquer, sack, and utterly consume / Your cities and your golden palaces” (1.3.220; 4.1.192-94). Critics who have discussed “eating” in the Tamburlaine plays include Alan Shepard, Mark Thornton Burnett, and John Gillies. Shepard argues that the gluttony metaphor is used “to
make murder regenerative” (739). Burnett examines the ways in which Tamburlaine forces eating, one of “‘low activities of the carnivalesque,” on his enemy, Bajazeth (1991, 35). Gillies views the plays’ preoccupation with consumption as an “expression of spatial mastery” (1998b, 217).

47 Stephen Orgel has commented on images of Elizabeth as the patron of geography (2002, 127) The vomitorium produced by Tamburlaine’s campaigns may well critique the processes behind the colonization, in Elizabeth’s name, of “virgin” lands across the Atlantic.

48 Calyphas is not as cowardly as his father makes him out to be, and at one point, we are made aware that it is Tamburlaine who keeps Calyphas from the fighting: “I would my father would let me be put in the front / of such a battle once, to try my valour!” (Pt. II. 4.1.72-73). For a summary of critics’ vastly different reactions to Calyphas, see Sara Deats (1997) 153. She puts the diversity of opinion down to play’s contradictory portrait of him (153-54). Troni Grande argues that Tamburlaine’s treatment of all three of his sons “typifies [Marlowe’s] innovative handling of the source material: his play draws out and focuses on the ambiguities and contradictions only implicit in the sources” (60).

49 A number of critics argue that the challenge to Elizabeth begins in Part 1 with the slaughter of the Damascus virgins. See Leah Marcus 307 and Lisa Hopkins (2000) 109. Mark Thornton Burnett argues that in Part 2, there is a connection between the decrease in Tamburlaine’s power and Elizabeth’s weak and ageing body (1991, 44).

50 Mark Thornton Burnett is one of the few critics to comment on the Tamburlaine/Christ connection (2004, 138). His comment on the way the protagonist brings Part 1 to a close suggests that the Tamburlaine/Christ of Part 2 is prefigured in Part 1: “by co-coordinating
multiple coronations and his own marriage, [Tamburlaine] executes the role of archbishop” (2004, 134).

Some of Kimberly Benston’s work supports my assertion:

In his resolute depiction of Tamburlaine as tyrant-rhetor, Marlowe evokes not the Ciceronian ideal of Tudor Humanists’ ethical Orator King, but the sophistic wielder of *peitho*, the abrogator of law so feared by Plato for his realization of rhetoric as *tyrannikon ti*—a “sovereigne” mode of will. (208)
Conclusion

One of the aims of this thesis has been to demonstrate that re-reading Dido and its influence opens up new sites of inquiry. This is evident, for example, in Chapter 3’s analysis of Dido’s engagement, at deep levels of composition, with the entire Aeneid. Re-reading Dido and its influence also gives us new information that contributes to our discussions in a number of areas: Dido itself; the literary theorizing of the period as it is expressed as dramatic practice; the feminization of tragedy in contrast to always already masculine epic; the construction of the Tamburlaine plays and the relationship between them; the uses to which the Aeneid was put in the plays, and how, why, and when those uses changed. There are two remaining areas that I wish to consider. First, I examine some of the plays in which the influence of Dido and its revision in the Tamburlaine plays can be felt, and second, I consider Dido’s place in the critical history of catharsis. My intention is to re-position Dido in our criticism of early modern tragedy and its legacies.

In Chapter 4, I argued that the Tamburlaine plays, by revising Dido’s aesthetic, liberated the tragedies of the period from the restrictions imposed by the theory of catharsis. I shall briefly discuss Edward the Second, Doctor Faustus, and The Massacre at Paris in this light, for evidence of a growing gap between the practice of Elizabethan tragedy and the theory designed to defend it. I also suggest some of the ways in which a re-read Dido can enhance our understanding of these plays. Then I consider Hamlet, which
reflects on the growing gap between practice and theory in what to my mind is an eloquent tribute to Marlowe’s intellectual “over-reaching.” My attention then turns to the two interpretations of catharsis that Dido enacts, and their place in the critical history of what the term means. I also raise the possibility that Dido offers another kind of catharsis, one that is yet to be recognised in the critical history of the term.

George Hunter has traced the widening gap between Renaissance dramatic practice and the theory designed to defend it (248-58), Jonathon Dollimore has alluded to it (82), and Johannes Birringer has pointed out the “hopeless division” between rhetorical theory and the affective powers of performance (220-21). Stephen Orgel, in his analysis of Massinger’s The Roman Actor, points to what may be the climax of the disparity between theory and practice in the period:

[The Roman Actor] acts out the charge that mimesis can only be pernicious, since we inevitably imitate the bad and ignore the good; it shows drama confirming us in our passions, not purging them, and far from providing moral exempla, turning us into monsters of lust. (141)

The gap between theory and performance does not seem to exist in Dido but does in the Tamburlaine plays. Part 1’s revision of the role that catharsis plays in Dido, and Part 2’s liberation from the theory that underpins it can be felt in a certain contempt for catharsis in other Marlowe plays. What we find instead of Aeneas’ authentic cathartic experience are hollow “shows” of pity, and sometimes of pity and fear, that mock Aeneas’ narrative in Dido, in particular the peripeteia that results from Aeneas’ enactment of the Outlet interpretation of catharsis. These “shows” demonstrate that interpretations of catharsis do not work in the practice of tragedy as they do in theory, and suggest that the Marlowe plays after 2 Tamburlaine progressively distance themselves from Dido.

There is a powerful example of catharsis not conforming to the theory Dido enacts in Edward the Second, when Lightborn comes to murder the king (5.5.41-119). The scene begins with Lightborn’s promise of “comfort” and “joyful news” (42), and he appears to
weep at Edward’s “piteous state,” as we infer from the king’s question “Weepst thou already?”(50-51). Thinking he has a sympathetic audience—a Dido—Edward tells Lightborn his story, claiming that it will “melt” even the hardest of hearts (52-40). Lightborn responds as passionately as Dido does to Aeneas’ narrative. He interjects twice, the second time with the following Dido-like appeal: “O speak no more, my lord; this breaks my heart” (57, 70). As Simon Shepherd comments, “Edward’s attempt to produce pity and Lightborn’s performance of it are both ploys, necessary steps in getting the victim appropriately ready but also not the real thing” (2000, 114). The audience, including Edward, know it’s a show, one within the show of Edward’s death and the larger show of the entire play. From the moment the performance begins, the audience, including Edward, realize it will bring about not the reversal of Edward’s fortune but the performance of that fortune.

Lightborn’s “show” of pity is more powerful than the real thing, as we can see from the letter Mortimer writes, which “contains [Edward’s] death” (5.4.7):

\[‘Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est;\]
Fear not to kill the king, ‘tis good he die.’
But read it thus, and that’s another sense:

\[‘Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est;\]
Kill not the king, ’tis good to fear the worst’
Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,
That, being dead, if it chance to be found,
Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,
And we be quit that caused it to be done. (5.4.8-16)

Latin kills in this play as we have seen Virgil’s Latin kill, by textual imperative, the Carthaginian queen in Dido. Mortimer intends the letter to neutralize the potential of pity, which the “commons” are beginning to feel toward Edward, to effect the reversal of the king’s fortunes, and, indeed, of Mortimer’s (5.4.1-5). His letter thwarts the agency of any genuinely felt pity. The only kind of pity that works in Edward the Second is Lightborn’s inauthentic show of it. The outcome of Lightborn’s performance of pity in contrast to
Aeneas’s expression of it in *Dido*, and the Latin that kills in both plays, invite us to consider *Edward the Second* in the light of *Dido* and Marlowe’s revision of it in the *Tamburlaine* plays.

There is another performance, this time of pity and fear, early in *Doctor Faustus*, when two Scholars try to reverse Faustus’ decision to enter into a pact with the Devil:

*First Scholar.* Nay, then, I fear he is fall’n into that damned art for which they two [Cornelius and Valdes] are infamous through the world.

*Second Scholar.* Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should I grieve for him. But come, let us go and inform the Rector, and see if he, by his grave counsel, can reclaim him.

*First Scholar.* O, but I fear me nothing can reclaim him.

*Second Scholar.* Yet let us try what we can do. (1.2.33-40)

While the Scholars’ pity may be more authentic than Lightborn’s, it still fails to effect the reversal of Faustus’ fortunes. Rather, like Lightborn’s show of pity, the Scholars’ expression of the emotions “proper” to tragedy drives the performance of that tragedy. The Scholars exit, the scene ends, and Faustus appears, ready to “begin [his] incantations” (1.3.5). In the light of *Dido*, there is a profound irony in the ineffectiveness of the Scholars’ intervention, one that is visible in Faustus’ misreading of Aristotle in the opening soliloquy and his reduction of Aristotle’s works to the *Analytics* (1.1.5-7). As the editors of the Revels edition note, “Bene disserere est finis logices” comes not from Aristotle but from Ramus’ *Dialecticae* (110n). Faustus’ reductive misreading of Aristotle propels him, like the Scholars’ pity and fear, towards the performance of his tragedy. There seems to me to be a comment here about the perils of intellectual “over-reaching” that has at its core a misinterpretation of Aristotle and the ineffectiveness of tragic emotions. This raises the possibility that in *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe may be reflecting on the failure of *Dido*’s achievement as both a modernized *Poetics* and a vehicle to overtake Virgil.

There is a further example of a “show” of catharsis in Scene 18 of *The Massacre at Paris*. Here Bartus describes the “terror of this happy victory,” and Navarre draws
attention to the pitiable cost of it: “How many noblemen have lost their lives / In prosecution of these cruel arms / Is ruth and almost death to call to mind” (18.5, 9-11). The play includes the expression of appropriately tragic emotions. It also contains a reference to Sidney’s didactic catharsis, the kind that “maketh kings fear to be tyrants,” in Bartus’ hope that the “terror” of the victory “will make the King surcease his hate” (Apology 117, 36-37; The Massacre 18.6). Yet neither the tragic emotions nor the hope of a Sidneian didactic lesson effects a *peripeteia*. Instead, the play concludes with Navarre vowing a new act of violence as he prepares to revenge Henry’s death with an assault on the Catholics in Rome (24.108-111). As in 2 Tamburlaine, catharsis is the inspiration to further violence in *The Massacre at Paris*.

As I have aimed to demonstrate in the brief discussion above, the course of the Marlovian dramatic canon beyond the Tamburlaine plays involves Dido and the revision of its aesthetics of tragedy. There is also evidence in the plays after 2 Tamburlaine that they continue to revise Dido’s deployment of the Aeneid, putting the epic to more subversive work. For example, Doctor Faustus echoes Dido to show a difference from it in Faustus’ desire for a union with the spirit of Helen of Troy, and in his wish that the spirit “make [him] immortal with a kiss”: for love of Helen, “Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked” (5.1.91-110; Dido 4.4.123; “And he’ll make me immortal with a kiss”). Faustus desires the tragedy Aeneas’ narrative describes in Dido. His desire is ironic in the light of the fact that earlier he visited “learnèd Maro’s [i.e. Virgil’s] golden tomb” (3.1.13).4 In Faustus’ desire for Helen, he casts himself as Paris, reminding us of Lancaster’s abuse of Gaveston in Edward the Second: “Monster of men, / That, like the Greekish strumpet, trained to arms / And bloody wars so many valiant knights” (2.5.14-16). Charles Forker notes in his edition for the Revels Plays that “Lancaster’s association of Gaveston with the notorious cause of the Trojan war implies also a parallel between Edward II and Paris”
(211n). In these plays, the *Aeneid* performs the more “normative” function of Virgil’s text that Heather James finds in certain Shakespeare plays, for they “contaminate the Troy legend” and thereby “cast in epistemological doubt the ideological ground on which the Tudors had based their myths of political origin” (1997, 33). That doubt may also be seen in *The Jew of Malta*, in Barabas’ Sinon-like plan to enter a city fortified against him and his co-conspirator, Calymath. Like the crafty Sinon, Barabas plans a devious entry, bringing soldiers with him:

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Fear not, my lord; for here, against the sluice,
The rock is hollow, and of purpose digged
To make a passage for the running streams
And common channels of the city.
Now whilst you give assault unto the walls,
I’ll lead five hundred soldiers through the vault,
And rise with them i’ the middle of the town,
Open the gates for you to enter in,
And by this means the city is your own. (5.1.86-94)
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There is further evidence in *The Massacre* of the epistemological doubt that James notes in Henry’s dying wish that Navarre “Salute the Queen of England in [Henry’s] name” (24.104). In the sexual metaphorics of Henry’s “salute” in *The Massacre*, Henry asks Navarre to twice perform a thematic ravishment, first of Elizabeth as Virgin Queen, and second, of an Elizabeth already married to her country.

The adjustments that Marlowe made to his aesthetic practice after *Dido* proved a winning formula for commercially successfully plays, and Marlowe continued to profit from a liberated aesthetic in the plays he would go on to write. These later plays also suggest he reflected upon *Dido*’s failure and the reasons why it flopped. He was not alone. We turn now to *Hamlet*, which, in my judgement, is Shakespeare’s extended reflection upon *Dido* and its afterlife in the liberated aesthetic brought about by the *Tamburlaine* plays’ revision of Marlowe’s first play.
As I proposed at the beginning of Chapter 4, Hamlet gives us a reason why *Dido* flopped. In Hamlet’s opinion, the play was too intellectually demanding for its audience, and as a result, there was no more than one performance (2.2.434-37). Yet there is something about *Dido* that Hamlet remembers and “chiefly lov’d”—a “passionate” speech, Aeneas’ narrative, which he has the Player recite as a test of his “quality” as an actor (2.2.446, 431-32). The Player, like Aeneas in *Dido*, is overwhelmed by the emotions the tale excites in him, and Polonius intervenes to stop him telling it: “Look wh’er he has not turn’d his color and / has tears in ’s eyes. Prithee no more” (2.2.519-20). What I think is most interesting about this allusion to *Dido* is that Hamlet’s comments and the player’s performance of Aeneas’ performance reveal that Hamlet interprets the tragic narrative in *Dido* as a synecdoche of the play proper, for when Hamlet refers to no more than one performance, it is not the entire play to which he refers, but Aeneas’ narrative. This is indeed intimate knowledge of *Dido*, and Robert Logan has gone so far as to argue that Shakespeare had read Marlowe’s play (2007, 170). Hamlet/Shakespeare understands that the function of *Dido* is played out in Aeneas’ narrative, the play-within-a-play, supporting Logan’s argument about Shakespeare’s close familiarity with Marlowe’s play.

Hamlet, of course, later stages his own play-within-a-play—the Mousetrap, prefaced by the dumb show, which is performed in Act 3, scene 2. The function of Hamlet’s play is to “catch the conscience of the king” (2.2.605). There is further evidence here of Hamlet’s debt to *Dido* because the function of the Mousetrap, like Marlowe’s play-within-a-play, is cathartic. Orgel points out that catharsis is the driving force behind the Mousetrap but that it is a different interpretation of catharsis than the therapeutic or structural ones. Hamlet, Orgel argues, has a “pragmatic notion” of tragic catharsis, one that “is designed not for the satisfactory resolution of the plot, nor for the refining and purification of virtuous citizen-spectators, but for the exposure and punishment of
criminals” (2002, 139). The difference between Hamlet’s notion of catharsis and the interpretations *Dido* stages seems to me indicative of the multiplicity of meanings that the term had in the period. Hamlet’s notion is still indebted to *Dido*, as we can see in his comment that Marlowe’s play was therapeutic, “as wholesome as sweet” (2.2.444). The comment suggests that Shakespeare attributed to Aeneas’ performance of the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis the tendency, common in the period, to find social utility in the function of tragedy.

In the Introduction, I noted that H. J. Oliver considers the allusion to *Dido* in *Hamlet* as almost certainly to Marlowe’s play (xxxii). The analysis so far gives us more reasons for certainty. So, too, does the failure of Hamlet’s notion of catharsis because, as Stephen Orgel points out, “Claudius refuses the catharsis” that the Mousetrap is designed to bring about (2002, 140). In practice, then, Hamlet’s notion of catharsis does not work as it does in theory. It is not only Claudius on whom catharsis does not work; in the form of the Player’s performance of Aeneas’ narrative, catharsis also has no effect on Hamlet. The point is well made by Patricia Gourlay:

> In his soliloquy after the player’s speech, Hamlet contrasts his own despairing numbness with the feeling evoked by the “dream of passion” he had just witnessed. He reproaches himself now, not for the failure to kill, like Pyrrhus, but for the failure to feel in response to reality as the player can feel in response to fiction. (224)

I suggest that the failure of catharsis in *Hamlet* enacts the gap between practice and theory that I have tracked in the discussion of other plays by Marlowe. *Hamlet*’s enactment of the gap pays a compliment to *Dido*, one that acknowledges that it failed because of the audience rather than anything inherent in the play itself. *Hamlet* demonstrates Shakespeare’s sensitivity to his fellow playwright’s practice, and takes advantage of what did not work in *Dido* by staging two “shows” of the inefficacy of catharsis. Like the insubstantial show that Mephistopheles stages in *Faustus*, catharsis in *Hamlet* exists purely
to bring about a spectacle that will “delight” the minds of its audience and demonstrate what the playwright, as magician, can “perform” (*Faustus* 2.1.84-85). Since *Hamlet* performs its freedom from the restrictions that theory places on the practice of tragedy, I propose that *Hamlet* pays tribute to the liberated aesthetic that the revision of *Dido’s* aesthetic enabled.

While *Hamlet* enacts the gap between theory and practice in the period, this is not to say that catharsis disappears. Rather, it is to suggest that the term takes on another meaning that we are yet to explore. The critical history of catharsis we have drawn is due for a revision in which this “new” meaning is acknowledged, a revision that recognises the drama as articulating into theory, and developing it. That revision needs to include *Dido* as a source for interpretations of catharsis that would not become available in theory until much later. The *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis that the play enacts would prove enormously influential, two and a half centuries later, in Jacob Bernays’ work. According to Bernays himself, after the first edition of his *Outlet* interpretation “no less than 70 works were published in Germany on the topic. After the second edition, 80 more works were published on the topic” (qtd. in Abdulla 134n and Diamond 169n). The influence of Bernays’ interpretation may also be seen as Aristotle’s catharsis moves to the lecture theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—in the translations and exegeses of the *Poetics* by S. H. Butcher (particularly 227-228) and Ingram Bywater (particularly 152-55)—and, of course, in Freud and Breuer’s practice of cathartic hypnosis as a treatment for hysteria. Aeneas’ performance of catharsis in *Dido* awaits recognition in what has become a dominant interpretation of Aristotle’s catharsis. As for the *Structural* interpretation that *Dido* also enacts, there are two points to consider. The first involves Stephen Halliwell’s argument that this interpretation did not appear until the eighteenth century (1986, 356). The second involves the view of some critics that Gerald Else’s
definition of Aristotle’s catharsis is “famously idiosyncratic” and “most likely wrong” (Murnaghan 772n). *Dido* is evidence that the *Structural* interpretation of catharsis was available in dramatic practice if not in theory before the eighteenth century, and supports Else’s argument that catharsis is an “operational factor within the tragic structure itself” (439).

In Chapter 2, I argued that the *Outlet* interpretation of catharsis drives the *Structural* one in *Dido*. We saw that *peripeteia* carries the cathartic process forward rather than, as in Else’s definition, the *anagnoresis* (439). The two interpretations are intimately connected in *Dido*. I also attributed significance to Aeneas’ narrative as a dramatic version of Virgil’s *ecphrasis* of the mural in the temple to Juno at Carthage. This connection and the debt to Virgil lead me to raise the possibility that *Dido* stages another kind of catharsis, a distinctly English Renaissance kind. Murray Krieger’s work on *ecphrasis* establishes a context in which to consider this new kind of catharsis.

I argued in Chapter 2 that Aeneas’ narrative is a word-painting that creates *enargeia*, a rhetorical figure that Krieger defines as words used “to yield so vivid a description that they . . . place the represented object before the reader’s (hearer’s) inner eye” (14). Krieger goes on to note Aristotle’s explicit call for *enargeia* in *Poetics* 17, where the discussion is about the greater representational field of epic. Krieger translates Aristotle as follows: “The poet should place the scene, as far as possible, before his eyes . . . in this way seeing everything with the utmost vividness, as if he were a spectator of the action” (77-78; *Poetics* 49). Krieger also points out the difference between *enargeia* and *energeia*: in the *Poetics*, *energeia* “characterizes the force that drives the developing plot, whose system of probabilities strives for the realization of all that is potential within it” (76). Given the intimate connection of the *Outlet* and *Structural* interpretations of catharsis in *Dido*, I propose that Marlowe’s tragic-epic stages a kind of catharsis deeply

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embedded in rhetorical theory, one that has a dual function that is responsive to the
demands of enargeia and energeia. In the light of the debt that Aeneas’ narrative in Dido
owes to the Poetics and to Virgil’s ecphrasis of the mural, I suggest “ecphrastic catharsis”
as a title for this kind of catharsis.

Ecphrastic catharsis would repay further investigation. The results of that
investigation may not appear to be Aristotelian—whatever that might mean—but the
process would certainly focus, as Dido and the Poetics do, on drama as the source, rather
than just the object, of theory.
I suggest that Marlowe’s plays valorise performance over writing by staging the gap between theory and practice. For the opposite view, see Richard Schoch 9-10.

There is no significant difference in the Scholars’ exchange in the B-text (1.2.29-38).

Some time ago, Wilbur Sanders labelled *The Massacre at Paris* “a prostitution of art” (36). Simon Shepherd has noted that critical comments of this kind are often incited by the play’s “corrupt” text, and has suggested some of the more “positive” contributions the play makes to our studies of Marlowe (1986, 123). Julia Briggs suggested others in her 1983 essay, in which she points out that *The Massacre* was very successful in its time (257). More recent attempts at re-evaluating the play include the following: Sara Deats’s essay in the *Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe* (193-206), which compares the play, as an “explorative” one, with *Dido*; and Rick Bowers’ essay in the collection *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality* (131-54), which interprets the play as a “consensus narrative”—that is, as “a culturally determined story around which the truths, morals, and self-identifying features of a society revolve”—albeit a “messy” one (132). Robert Logan’s *Shakespeare’s Marlowe* begins the main discussion with an analysis of *The Massacre*’s influence over Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III* (2007, 31-54).

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton argues that Virgil’s tomb is “fetishised as a privileged cultural site,” going on to note a more general point, “namely, that practices of Virgil as mage / magician were regularly associated with the erudition of Virgil the poet” (6-7).

In *A Theater of Envy*, René Girard finds an “inverted catharsis” at work in *Hamlet*, one that proves the existence of the same kind of catharsis in other Shakespeare plays:

The weariness with revenge and catharsis that can be read, I believe, in the margins of the earlier plays must really exist because, in *Hamlet*, it moves to the center of the stage and becomes fully articulated. (272, 273)
This pragmatic catharsis, as Orgel notes, is of the kind that Thomas Heywood would later use to defend the stage in his *Apology for Actors* (1612; Orgel 2002, 139). The story is a well known one, in which a woman is led to confess to the murder of her husband after seeing a play in which that very event is performed, “whereupon,” Heywood tells us, “the murdress was apprehended” (G1v-G2v). He continues: “That this is true, as well by the report of the Actors as the records of the Towne, there are many eye-witnesses of this accident yet living, vocally to confirme it.” (G2v).

There are a number of direct references to the character Dido in Shakespeare’s plays. Bartlett’s *Complete Concordance of Shakespeare* lists these from *The Tempest, The Merchant of Venice, 2 Henry the Sixth, Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet* (369).

There are also possible allusions to the Dido and Aeneas episode in some of Shakespeare’s plays, such as the tale with which Othello woos Desdemona in Act 1, scene 3 (128-70). Patricia Parker has attempted a reading of *Othello* informed by the Dido and Aeneas story in “Fantasies of Race and Gender.” Parker deploys Virgil’s text and various sixteenth-century translations and/or commentaries on it, but not Marlowe’s *Dido*, to chart the chiastic crossings between imperialist discourse, race, and gender in Shakespeare’s play rather than to compare the respective “tales” or their “disastrous consequences” (98).

Lawrence Warner, in an article in progress, challenges Parker’s argument, subsequently made by other critics as well, that Virgil’s Aeneas and Dido story is the source for Othello’s tale. He suggests, rather, that the speech inverts Gilbert Becket’s wooing of St. Thomas à Becket’s mother, a Muslim princess.

To the contrary, Charles Whitney argues that “Hamlet finds a purchase on his inner turmoil and a possible solution to his agonizing predicament emerging somehow from his
shattering reaction to the story of Pyrrhus’s revenge” (2006, 65). Whitney considers
Hamlet’s reaction and the Mousetrap as a legacy of Marlovian tragedy:

This episode illustrates and probes the response pattern bequeathed by
Marlowe and his audience to the theatre in that it represents a dramatic
speech as a passionate challenge to individual playgoers to discover moral
and practical direction. (65-66)

9 In his recent study, Robert Logan traces the Marlovian practices that Shakespeare
“appropriated and, through refinements, made his own, [and] also what he rejected,
especially in the realm of Marlovian values” (2007, 2). The study is firmly grounded in the
pragmatics of the early modern theatre—the discovery and analysis of the dramaturgical
techniques that make for commercially successful plays. Logan demonstrates that Marlowe
and Shakespeare’s relationship was not an antagonistic one because throughout his works,
Shakespeare uses the word rival “without a connotation of hostility to mean exclusively
either a competitor or an associate, a companion” (2007, 4).

10 The entry for energia in Lee Sonnino’s Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric is short,
and more like enargia than it is in the Poetics (216): “Vigour, . . . its peculiar function in
securing that nothing that we say is tame” (Quintilian).
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