

Bellona as Bridesmaid: The Strategies of a trans-epic Juno

Once the Trojans land in Italy, it seems all is lost to Juno. The Trojans have landed, and the Fates have denied her the satisfaction of seeing the Trojan race expunged. In questioning what her efforts have been, Juno realizes that she cannot stop Aeneas. Rather than give up, she summons up her most exacting strategy yet, and it is this strategy which captivates the last six books of the *Aeneid*. This strategy is remarkably different from her earlier tactics; subsequently, Juno commands the battle against Aeneas by both mortal and immortal pawns. Perhaps it is due to her newfound glory that she rebuffs Venus in Book X so forcefully. The time for her cunning words on marriage and her patience with Venus shown in Book IV is done. Juno is *imperator*, the driving force behind an entire war and controlling it with such discipline and force.

While her war soliloquy in Book VII recalls Vergil's forewarning of Juno's savage rage in Book I, Juno's speech demonstrates her audacity to declare war against the Trojans. By the unfortunate marriage to Dido, Juno has already used her sphere of influence to delay Aeneas from Italy. Now that he has arrived, she seeks out his wedding as the seed for new strife. By granting Bellona as bridesmaid to Lavinia, Juno is eloquently uniting marriage and warfare. This speech becomes the central divide in the epic because of her command of the war; it becomes the divide in Juno's character, because she is applying what she has learned at Troy and Carthage to the war at hand.

The speech is central to tying together what drives Juno. By seeing Troy burn, does it consume her ache? By losing Dido and Carthage, what has she gained? If the Fates do not permit to her to exact revenge, what is her identity as wife of Jupiter worth? These remarkably complex questions about her person she asks in this speech, and yet Vergil peppers her answers with craft and warfare. Vergil's refinement of Juno answers her self-doubt and complaints marvelously. The strategies of this trans-epic Juno reflect Vergil's refinement, and by examination of her war soliloquy this trans-epic Juno shows how her strategies of war develop and why her command over the epic is so great.