I am presenting a reading of the Aeneid, that attempts to reconcile the pessimistic and the optimistic readings but against Parry's thesis of reconciliation through artistic unity. For as the abstract suggests, the recent revival of Parry-esc readings of Virgil's *Aeneid* does not go beyond Parry's original thesis. Against reading the *Aeneid* purely as an ode to Augustus and a "glorification of Rome" because of the historical context, Parry argues that this "orthodox reading" is a very much reductive one. For the character of Aeneas is not simply a Homeric hero. Instead, Aeneas is also a character that has a role in an institution that has a will above his own. Intertwined with the fate of Aeneas, the creation of Rome also brings a great deal of suffering and sorrow. Moreover, in contrast to the glory of Rome, this empty tragedy is immortalized as the work's artistic content. However, Parry's artistic reading of the *Aeneid* uses instances of textual analysis to identify isolated themes. This has the effect of prioritizing the tragic themes of the work above the meaning of the scenes in connection with each other. Instead, by reading the themes that Parry has observed through as a continuous whole, one discovers that the two dimensions of the *Aeneid* do not find unity in an artistic consolation but are different stages of the emergence of a true political order. The handout provides a more detailed summary of Parry's reading of the Aeneid, and some methodological remarks. If you happen to be interested in a more detailed analysis, I can send you the full essay on which this presentation is based.

Parry interprets Aeneas' maneuvers with his men during the fall of Troy as repeatedly failing in asserting himself as a hero, and this failure frames Aeneas as a victim of destiny (114). However, this portrayal presumes that Aeneas' role (at least partially) is that of an isolated individual distinct from the social world and acts for the sake of himself. Instead, Aeneas exists as taking different social roles throughout the work. And the difficulties that he encounters as he carries out his role are not attacks on his individuality but a reflection of the state of the institution that he serves. For it is evident from the scene in which Aeneas' father refuses to flee | that Aeneas' role at first is purely a role of submission with the guidance of piety, not that of a free individual. He first tries to carry his father into the mountains, but after his father asserts his will in dying with Troy, Aeneas decides that he too wants to die despite the explicit instruction from his father to flee (Virgil 2.751,759,771). In this scene, Aeneas submits to his father's will to die with no objection while maintaining his piety by not fleeing. Aeneas shows no sign of doubt but carries out his role swiftly. Moreover, this lack of individuality also exists in Aeneas' previous maneuvers, for his aim has the clear duteous end of "sav[ing] the city in flames… rush onto swords and die" (2.414,415). At this stage, Aeneas is still serving under the gods and leaders of Troy, and his actions are the acts of a servant who knows that his "gods… are gone" and "his country" is dying (B2 344, 411,424). Thus, the difficulty that Aeneas faces is merely a human parallel of "Troy in ashes" (B2 751). Aeneas' role as a servant of Troy only switches into the role of a leader through the commands from three different authorities (a) the societal authority, Hector (2.340), (b) the divine authority, Venus (2.727), and

(c) the familial authority, Anchises (2.825). And these commands from these three authorities are affirmed in three different events. First, the leadership is affirmed by the divine sign of crashing thunder from the sky (2.816). Second, the leadership is granted on a familial level (a) symbolically when Anchises agrees to follow Aeneas' lead and (b) actually when Aeneas carries his father holding the household god, with his son on his side, and wife behind (B2 834-852). Third, the leadership is affirmed on a societal level when Aeneas discovers his people waiting for his lead to the fated land (B2 940-950). So, in conclusion, Aeneas cannot be seen as an individual who is a victim of destiny. On the contrary, the fall of Troy presented in book two shows the transition of Aeneas into the leadership role within both the family and the society with divine affirmation.

Although Virgil begins the plot *in medias res* (the significance of which will be discussed later), chronologically, Aeneas' lamination of Troy occurs between his departure of Troy and his affair with Dido (1.535-566). Parry argues that Aeneas' feeding "his soul on empty picture [of the Trojan war]" allows himself to find a sense of consolation from the pain of the past (Parry 122). However, it is questionable that Aeneas derives consolation from the sorrow represented by the picture. For Aeneas does not claim that it is the artistic representation of suffering that brings about salvation; instead, he claims salvation is brought about by "Troy's renown" (1.568). So, contrary to Parry's claim, the "obscurity and namelessness [of the fallen]" is not removed by the "*imperium* of art" (122); on the contrary, the individuals are only represented through the *imperium* of Troy. Moreover, it is even more questionable that Virgil approves of Aeneas' consolation. For as Parry mentions, the picture is situated on the wall of Carthage, and beside the picture is Juno's temple and the exact place where the Carthaginian excavates Juno's token, "the head of a spirited horse… an augury of success in war and a prosperous people" (1.544-545). So, in context, this scene also shows Aeneas' lack of awareness of the imminent danger, which foreshadows his later encounter with Dido. For Aeneas blindly laminates the fall of Troy while standing beside a temple dedicated to the very Goddess that helps to destroy Troy and "mingling" with the Carthaginians who are gifted by that Goddess (1.535-539). Furthermore, the gift is not only reminiscent of the instrument that allows the Greeks to destroy Troy but also acts as an augury of success in war and prosperity of those Carthaginians (1.544-545). So, the emptiness of Aeneas' feeding seems to reflect his neglect of his newly acquired leadership, thus casting his seeking consolation through the picture as his failing. Aeneas' lamentation of the past is also directly connected by Virgil to the suffering of the future. For the pictorial representation of Aeneas in combat against the eastern ranks and Penthesilea, who is explicitly described as "a warrior queen daring to do battle with man," immediately transitions to the sight of Dido and her beauty (1.604-612). This imagery seems to suggest that the continuation of the struggles, sufferings of the past and Aeneas' neglect of his role in his encounter with Dido. Overall, this scene serves to contextualize the first major plot point, Aeneas' encounter with Dido.

But more importantly, Virgil establishes in the very beginning that the themes of glory and suffering only find unity in the nation.

Parry claims that Aeneas' love affair with Dido further shows Aeneas' failure and powerlessness as a hero under the control of destiny (115-116,119-120). But Parry's portrayal of Dido as a heroine defiled by Aeneas, the failed hero, still relies on the framework of the individual virtue in contradiction with social forces (119). Contrary to Parry's assumption, both Aeneas and Dido are only individuals in so far as they contribute their individual quality to their social role. And their situation is only tragic to the extent that there is a mismatch between their individual qualities and their social role. First, Dido's role as the head of a people is established in the conversation between Venus and Juno. For they view the union of Dido and Aeneas as the "mingling of the races" (4.130). Second, when Dido falls into "unspeakable love," all of the work on the menacing wall, the hallmark of the city, immediately stops (4.100-105). So, it is evident here that Virgil ties Dido's emotional state directly to the progress of the city. And Dido does not have an existence independent from the state of Carthage. One can also observe from Virgil's framing of Aeneas' transition to leadership, the positive affirmation of the role requires the combination of familial, national, and divine approval. In contrast, Dido betrays all three levels validation. For on the familial level, Virgil explicitly claims that her being consumed by love causes her to lose her "sense of shame," which ultimately leads her to break her vow to her husband (4.66,646). On the national level, unable to control her passion, as her sister claims she ultimately "destroyed yourself [Dido], me [Dido's sister], the Sidonian elders," and the city itself (4.795-796). Moreover, she commands the Tyrians to be forever at war with the descendants of Aeneas (4.724-725), thus submitting all subsequent generation of her people under the same passion that destroys Carthage. Finally, on the divine level, her rule is ominous from the start as Virgil portrays the cause of her coming into power as "stain[ing] our household gods with blood" directly in contrast with the household god carried by Aeneas' father (4.25). Despite Venus' role in unleashing Dido's passion, all these failings seem to be an outcome of her inability, which is described as "satisfy[ing] her soul…burned with desires [and]… equally moved at the sight of the gifts" (1.870-874). And Virgil further notes that these desires "dooms her to a wretched end" (1.871). However, he also seems to suggest that these failings are not simply an outcome of her individual flaw; instead, the flaw is generalized to the whole womenkind. For as Mercury teaches Aeneas, "a woman is a worrisome and fickle thing" (4.570).

On the other hand, for Aeneas, his love affair with Dido is the first challenge against his leadership. As Parry observes, since Dido is a clear reference to Cleopatra, Aeneas can very well be Antony (115-116). However, despite following the path of Antony by being integrated into the foreign culture (4.295-299), Aeneas is awakened by Mercury to his duty and the "queen's passion" (4.315-316).

This allows Aeneas to transcend his personal failing through divine aid, which frames Aeneas' leaving Dido as a positive act. Although Dido is indeed "defile[d]" as Parry suggests (115), Aeneas is not the defiler, for he stays "loyal and true" (4.455). Instead, judging from the context, she is defiled by the circumstance in which she as a woman is placed into a leadership role. For as Virgil suggests, her death is "neither fated nor deserved, but [she died] before her day and in the heat of passion" (B4 812-813). Virgil seems to put forward a position that both pities and criticizes Dido. Since the criticism of Dido focuses on her natural inability to control her passion (4.570), it only makes sense that Dido's pitiable death is not fated and before her time because she is placed into power through tragic circumstances. And her death is not deserved because her failure is an outcome of her nature. So, Aeneas' love affair with Dido serves as a critique of women's leadership that stands in contrast with Aeneas'. These themes put forth by Virgil seem to suggest his choice of starting the *Aeneid* with this encounter serves to frame the work as one of development. For starting the work with Aeneas' neglect of his role provides a starting point for the development of a true social order. Moreover, Scholars such as Beck have also identified Aeneas' lack of awareness as a distinct element that Virgil adds to the Homeric Ecphrasis (539). This additional element also seems to suggest a shift of emphasis away from individual heroism to the constitution of the social order in which individuals are components.

So, when the events are analyzed in relation to each other, the central thesis to which they orient can be clearly identified. The two sides that Parry identifies in these scenes are the different phases of the process in which the tragic past is transcended by the proper constitution of different social roles. If one were to continue such an analysis to the end of the work, one finds that all events in the *Aeneid* are interrelated to create this narrative (and you can find some examples in the handout).