Dido American Style: Teaching Rhetorical Tropes for Fun and Profit

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For those whose passion and profession are focused upon one aspect or another of the humanities and particularly upon the study of literature, the 2020 issue of *The Chronicle Review*'s thematic collection on the state of literary studies describes a disheartening situation: "The academic study of literature is no longer on the verge of field collapse. It's in the midst of it."[1] Contributor Andrew Kay declared that the state of affairs in the liberal arts had "all the trappings of an extinction event that will alter English—and the rest of the humanities—irrevocably, though no one knows what it will leave in its wake."[2] Other observers cite various factors as contributing to this downward pressure upon university English Departments including the ascendency of STEM and the pandemic lockdowns. In my personal experience as a professor who has taught for the last eighteen years in a mid-size university[3]—a designated Hispanic Serving Institution—in California's Great Central Valley, keeping Shakespeare and his contemporaries in my department's curriculum is an increasingly contentious struggle. Whatever the cause, this significant transition for English Departments across the landscape of American universities begs the question: How can professors of literature help students to appreciate the importance of studying the humanities in general, and in particular the historical writers and texts so many of us in such disciplines hold dear? One possible answer is to add value that connects the study of literature to challenges facing students in daily life. In the spirit of the adage that everything old is new again, particularly to those who have not seen it before, the study of literary tropes and figures of speech offers a path to such relevance. Although the study of tropes and figures has long been absent from regular inclusion in the curricula of most American institutions of higher learning, modern-day versions of these rhetorical devices appear with unacknowledged ubiquity in the targeted commercial and political speech of the public sphere. Students must confront the complexities of this intensely influence-focused

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[1] Introduction. *Endgame: Can Literary Studies Survive?* Special issue of *The Chronicle Review* (2020): 4.

[2] Andrew Kay, "Academe's Extinction Event," *The Chronicle Review* (2020): 49.

[3] I am one of two professors of Early Modern British Literature in a department of fifteen tenured or tenure-track professors, twenty-three lecturers (non-tenured), and five teaching associates.

environment; learning how to identify and understand such language will benefit students long after they have completed their Renaissance literature course requirements.

James Arvanitakis and David J. Hornsby find the relevance of a university education in "preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow" by equipping them with a set of "proficiencies and attributes inherent in the Citizen Scholar."[4] Centuries earlier, John Milton valued similar educational outcomes, arguing that the rhetorical analysis of complex literature strengthened the ethical faculty and produced in students a "universal insight into things," making them ideal leaders.[5] Contemporary educational theorists agree: Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi find that a learned facility with Shakespeare's "dense, knotty, and intricate texts" is a "transferable skill set" required for a range of employment opportunities in the twenty-first century.[6] Naturally, Shakespeare and his contemporaries, particularly Marlowe, provide a glittering collection of opportunities for exploration and discovery of the pleasures and the pitfalls of ornamented language. Even apart from studying rhetorical figures, questions may arise about student preparedness and willingness to effectively navigate the Early Modern English of Shakespeare and Marlowe. Some American universities have already dismissed these texts as irrelevant and too difficult for students who may lack adequate tools and training. My experience teaching these writers says that students can successfully engage Renaissance texts, and my university is an ideal testing-ground for that premise. My school comprises a diverse student body, in the multivalent richness of the term: we have many returning non-traditional students alongside young, first-generation students, students with diverse levels of preparedness, goals, styles, expectations, interests, experiences with written texts, and language skills. I have taught students as young as eighteen years old and as old as sixty. Some are financially disadvantaged; some are undocumented; some come to their coursework less academically prepared than the ideal; for some English is a second language; some have long-range career goals in academia; some approach their university education as an instrument expected to yield near-immediate economic gain. Through this paper I aim to help show students, from whatever background they bring to class, how to read Marlowe through his use of particular figures and mannerisms of speech, and, equally as

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[4] James Arvanitakis and David J. Hornsby, "Are Universities Redundant?" in *Universities, the Citizen Scholar, and the Future of Higher Education*, ed. James Arvanitakis and David J. Hornsby (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 14, 15–18.

[5] John Milton, "Of Education," in *John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1957), 637.

[6] Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi, *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centered Approach* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 7–8.

important, I want to foreground the thesis that learning the complexities of the gilded language of the Early Moderns can help students understand the rhetorical challenges they face today in the realms of politics, advertising, and daily concourse. I want to *re*introduce to the discipline and introduce to the students at hand Marlowe's brilliant rhetoric and the rich and complex figures of speech he uses. For students, having a grasp on Marlowe's language facilitates their development as sharper decoders of our own linguistic productions here in America and beyond.

In the following sections, I have prepared two introductory exercises and three scaffolded lessons featuring *Dido, Queene of Carthage* with emphasis upon Marlowe's use of rhetorical figures and tropes. The pedagogical strategies demonstrated in these lessons may be deployed sequentially or individually as *ad hoc* assignments focused on a literary passage or topic. If performed in succession, the assignments would occupy several class periods and two weeks of in-class activities. Upon completing the five-part module's guided close readings and exploratory assignments, students will have developed familiarity with a variety of Early Modern rhetorical figures and the ability to identify and analyze these literary devices in both their historical usage and in current discourses (e.g., advertising, social media posts, or political speech). These lessons are appropriate for English majors taking upper-division courses in the major which focus on literary history or traditions, survey courses,[7] or courses on literary theory and methods;[8] appropriate graduate courses would include seminars focused on literary figures, genres, or movements in the Renaissance.[9] This approach to teaching *Dido* suggests that, freed from the pressure of having to cover an entire play, students and teachers have ample time to investigate an important aspect of Marlowe's art deeply.

Introductory Activity 1: Rhetoric, Words, and Beyond: Marlowe's Portrait

I begin with a discussion aimed at priming students to approach Marlowe and *Dido* with open minds and perhaps even a bit of enthusiasm. Students may be surprised to learn that

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[7] For Example, my department offers English Renaissance Literature, which covers non-Shakespearean British literature from 1500–1603.

[8] Such a course would focus on literary forms and how to analyze and write about them; for example, the gateway to the major in my department is Approaches to Literary Study, which has a counterpart on the graduate level in a seminar, Critical Theory and Research.

[9] I currently use this module in a graduate seminar in Major British Authors: Christopher Marlowe and his Rivals, which covers all of Marlowe's plays and some by his theatrical peers, like Kyd and Shakespeare. The five exercises will fill two, 160-minute meetings.

Marlowe himself is far from being the staid and boring figure some may imagine. Marlowe the "filthy Play-maker"[10] was a rock-star-style celebrity in his day, simultaneously transgressive in his public persona, intriguingly mysterious in his more clandestine activities, and a writer of dazzling talent. Students will meet the Marlowe whose innovative blank verse in iambic pentameter, his "mighty line," revolutionized the theater and prompted George Peele to call Marlowe "the Muse's darling"; the Marlowe who was seen as a belligerent, irreligious "roaring boy" and labeled by his roommate Thomas Kyd as "intemperate & of a cruel hart";[11] the Marlowe whose connections seemingly immersed him in the Elizabethan underworld and who was likely involved in state-sponsored espionage and other cloak-and-dagger activities; the Marlowe whom the Baines Note credited—whether libelously or accurately—with the predatory statement "That all thei that love not tobacco and boyes ar fooles";[12] and the Marlowe who at 29 was "stabd in the head with a dagger & dyed swearing."[13] As part of this introduction, students will be assigned to in-class group discussions of the only extant image purported to be of the young Marlowe, a portrait superscribed with the aphorism *Quod me nutrit, me destruit* ("That which nourishes me, destroys me").[14] Handouts will explain a selection of Renaissance social concepts and tropes (e.g., *sprezzatura, ironia, disinvoltura,* and *amplificatio*) intended to draw students' focus to what may be gleaned from both the obvious and the finer details of the portrait, the subject's demeanor, expression, pose, clothing, and even the colors used. A number of these tropes are applicable to both social displays of status and wealth as well as to literary rhetorical expressions, thus introducing students to concepts which will be explored more fully alongside their reading of *Dido Queen of Carthage*.[15]

Introductory Activity 2: Discovering Close Reading

In practice, close reading is founded upon examining context and subtext on multiple levels, with the aim of deepening the reader's understanding of a text's explicit and implicit

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[10] Constance Brown Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 154.

[11] Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe*, 144.

[12] Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe*, 227.

[13] Kuriyama, *Christopher Marlowe*, 159.

[14] Putative Marlowe Portrait, 1585, 61 X 46 cm, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

[15] To facilitate students' familiarity with the various schemes of figures and tropes, I provide a handout with a brief collection of prominent forms and examples alongside print (Lanham's *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*) and online resources (*Silva Rhetoricae*: http://rhetoric.byu.edu/) with more in-depth information, including pronunciation and etymology.

meaning. Such analysis focuses upon examining word choices and sentence structure, relating what is written/spoken to wider social circumstances and attitudes, considering the relationships among the actors within the text as well as its implied audience of readers. All of these elements are present in everyday social interactions. A useful exercise to prepare students for literary close reading is to raise their awareness concerning what could be called the sociocultural close reading they do in their daily lives. To scaffold students' readiness to transfer their implicit social close-reading skills to literary analysis they will participate in a small-group exercise centered upon analyzing selected text-message conversations. Such messaging, which may include both text and non-text symbols (emoticons and emojis), often contains significant ambiguity, prompting recipients to endlessly ruminate upon the sender's meaning. What ambiguities and shades of meaning are clear or unclear in a reply of "yup," "lol," or a thumbs-up or down emoticon? How does one parse a text message containing positive textual content and a negative emoticon in the absence of face-to-face social cues?[16] Following their small-group discussions in the text-message exercise, students will work with a "beginner" passage from *Dido*, aided by guiding questions designed to assist their development as literary close-readers.

Critical Apparatus for Three Lessons on *Dido*

The three bipartite lessons that follow are scaffolded by the progression of concepts here described:

- **Field of Discovery:** The "Field of Discovery" orients students to the rhetorical situation in the lesson, broadly conceived. What class of emotions or ideas are being tracked or explored?

- **Points of Interest:** Points of Interest are the sets of rhetorical tropes most apposite to a given Field of Discovery, the most likely figures to be encountered. Many of these are defined in-text or are footnoted.

- **Fuel for Thought:** These prompts help activate prior knowledge so that students may readily situate classroom activities into a familiar field or arena of social practices.

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[16] See Genevieve Walker, "Why Tiny Words Like 'Yup' Can Send You Into a Tailspin," BBC (2017), https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20211213-why-tiny-words-like-yup-can-send-you-into-a-tailspin, and Nerea Aldunate et al. "Mood Detection in Ambiguous Messages: The Interaction Between Text and Emoticons," *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00423.

- **On Ramp:** The On Ramp is literary text that the teacher introduces and helps carefully unpack through modelling, close reading, brief exercises, and directed discussion.

- **Up to Speed:** These discussion questions are designed to guide students in close readings of passages from *Dido* and lead to discussions of the text and its relevancy to their lives.

- **Road Trip:** A journey in which the ideas, textual forays, and readings from a lesson are synthesized in a culminating exercise. There are two different types of Road Trip:
  - **Guided Tour:** The teacher "guides" students through portions of text by modelling close reading in real time. While performing a textual reading of a passage, the teacher should explain the meta-cognitive processes governing the interpretation to the students. The teacher ought to stress that the reading presented is only one possible interpretation. I offer suggested readings in this section so that teachers may use or borrow from them—with the understanding that mine are only possible readings among many other possible readings.
  - **Into the Wild:** After the Guided Tour, students should perform close readings on their own. Students should feel free to engage in interpretive play, attending to the text boldly and imaginatively. They should be encouraged to bridge Marlowe's language to their everyday experience.

Lesson 1: Declamatory Rhetoric—Figures of Emotion

The aim of lesson 1 is to help students learn to recognize emotional appeals couched in rhetorical figures, to look beneath the surface of language and dig out rhetorical subtleties.

Lesson 1, Example 1: Declamatory Rhetoric

Field of Discovery: Despair and Grief

Points of Interest: emotional appeals, metaphorical substitutions, and puns

Fuel for Thought: Have you ever tried to express the inexpressible? How does someone voice the deepest emotions in the human spirit (grief, joy, love, etc.)? How does Marlowe the

rhetorician approach this challenge?

On Ramp: *Dido* 2.1.105, 289[17]

> Aeneas. O Priamus, O Troy, O Hecuba!
> Dido. I die with melting ruth; Aeneas, leave!

Up to Speed: Though separated by over 150 lines of text, these utterances are in fact intimately connected: they bookend a first-person narrative account of the fall of Troy. Aeneas's outburst at line 105 initiates the speech; Dido's response, ending with "Aeneas, leave!" (that is, stop telling the story!) also expresses deep emotional distress.

- Arriving on a strange shore after fleeing burning Troy (Priam and Hecuba are the dead king and queen), Aeneas likely suffers from what today would be called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His feelings are ineffable—too extreme and overwhelming to be expressed in normal speech. What is the effect of the exclamatory "O"s? What do they signify? Have *you* ever made that sound? Was it voluntary or involuntary? What were the circumstances?

- Dido seems overcome with emotion as well, as if Aeneas's narrative description has infected her with a similar distress. However, she tries to express herself using figurative language. What does she mean by saying, "I die"? Is that mere hyperbole, or something else?

- What is "melting ruth"? Feel free to consult a dictionary here as you attempt to describe what Dido is feeling and trying to express in compact, figurative language.

- Note that Aeneas and Dido are both in fragile mental states in part because they are both recently widowed: Aeneas lost his wife while fleeing to his ship, and Dido's husband, Sichaeus, is also recently deceased. Shortly after this exchange, the two fall in love. Is this pattern of events at all predictable, given the pair's verbal utterances?

Road Trip (Guided Tour): Aeneas uses the trope *exclamatio*[18] to express the untold grief and despair of losing a wife, a king and queen, a country, a civilization, in the fire and ash of the Trojan war. The loss cannot be adequately captured and contained in discursive speech, but might be inferred from the sonorous "O," which paradoxically also represents the sound

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[17] All quotations from *Dido* are derived from H. J. Oliver's *Dido Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968).

[18] An emotional interjection or exclamation, usually involving the utterance "O!"

of desire and sexual fulfillment (an experience soon to be shared between Dido and Aeneas). Dido's response begins with a figure called *paronomasia*;[19] "I die" puns on the "little death" of orgasm, juxtaposing the transitory state of earthly love with the permanence of the soul's celestial state after the final expiration of the body. The phrase may be enriched by the underlying Neoplatonism, but a character's allusion to "the little death" onstage, especially in moments of heightened emotion, risks dividing an audience's response between gravity and amusement. Dido's invocation of "death" fractures her carefully fashioned self-image as an unattainable widow and monarch as she begins to wither before the vulnerabilities of mortality and erotic surrender. The undercurrent of sexual arousal implicit in the pun finds some measure of resonance in Aeneas' initial meeting with Dido as he wears the clothing of Sichaeus, her dead husband.

A different species of wordplay governs the second part of the half-line, "I die with melting ruth." Is ruth, that is, melting and giving way to "death," to erotic feelings, to grief? Or does ruth have the essential property of being able to melt someone or something, like an adamant or icy disposition? In either case, ruth is endowed with a certain *enargia*, or vividness; the concept takes on the spirit or life-force of a sentient being, a kind of *prosopopoeia*.[20] Ruth is either a fragile thing that melts when assaulted by extreme emotion or is endowed with the power to melt hearts fortified against it. Marlowe may be deploying the figure *syllepsis*,[21] defined by Sophie Read as "the type of pun where a single word or sound has two meanings, both of which are operated by the context either to complementary or ironic effect."[22] When Dido tells Aeneas that she "die[s] with melting ruth," she indicates that her heart, hardened against privileged and eager suitors like Iarbus, is melting in pity for Aeneas and his tale. She may also indicate that, her defenses now down, pity itself has melted and given way to grief and eros, the warring emotions that drive her to suicide.

Lesson 1, Example 2: Declamatory Rhetoric

Field of Discovery: Jealousy and Anger

Points of Interest: emotional appeals, repetition, allusion

Fuel for Thought: The cliché "there's a thin line between love and hate" would seem to

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[19] A pun

[20] Personification

[21] When a single word governs two others but is understood differently with respect to each.

[22] Sophie Read, "Puns: Serious Wordplay," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 82.

apply to Iarbus's feelings in this play, torn as he is between his love for Dido and his jealous anger over her affair with Aeneas. Have you ever held two such warring emotions in balance? How does Iarbus express his paradoxical feelings in language? Why does he use the allusions he does?

On Ramp: *Dido* 4.1.16-24

> ANNA. Behold where both of them come forth the cave.
> IARBUS. Come forth the cave! Can heaven endure this sight?
>   Iarbus, curse that unrevenging Jove
>   Whose flinty darts slept in Typhoeus' den
>   Whiles these adulterers surfeited with sin.
>   Nature, why madest me not some poisonous beast,
>   That with the sharpness of my edged sting
>   I might have stak'd them both unto the earth,
>   Whilst they were sporting in this darksome cave?

Up to Speed: Pawns of the scheming goddesses Juno and Venus, Dido and Aeneas consummate their love affair in a cave during a storm. As they emerge in the morning, Anna and Iarbus notice them from afar. Dido's sister Anna, who secretly loves Iarbus, sees them first, and prompts Iarbus's furious response. The following questions will focus students' attention on the details of the passage and guide them in their close reading.

- The audience is aware of Anna's love for Iarbus, though he remains ignorant of the fact. How might the resulting feeling of dramatic irony influence your reading of this passage?

- Iarbus asks several questions during his outburst. To whom are they addressed, and what is the overall effect?

- Research Iarbus's allusion to Typhoeus (and his mate, Echidna); what effect is created by comparing these monsters to Dido and Aeneas? What other images of "monstrousness" appear in the speech?

- Renaissance writers sometimes pun on the word "cave," a geographical feature that recalls the Latin word meaning "beware" (as in the phrase *caveat emptor*, "let the buyer beware"). How might this double meaning add flavor to your reading of the play at this point? What other associations with caves might be relevant to your analysis of the speech? Use the *OED* to look up other unusual words in this passage, like "surfeited," "sporting," and "darksome"; what effects do these words create?

Road Trip (Into the Wild): Try the following to integrate what has been learned about Marlowe's brilliant use of language with the fun of playing with text messaging. Either give students a list of Marlowe's lines or ask them to choose lines from the play that contain figures or tropes and rewrite these as if the speakers were using text messaging. Then exchange them with group members and see if they can discover which of Marlowe's lines are referenced. What shades of meaning are present in one form that do or do not appear in the other? How does that difference influence the meaning readers might take from either version?

Lesson 2: Anatomizing the Rhetoric of Captivating Charm

Lesson 2 explores rhetorical expressions of beauty, pleasure, and abundance; the state of captivation that results may be one of ecstasy but may also be perilous.

Lesson 2, Example 1: Anatomizing the Rhetoric of Captivating Charm

Field of Discovery: Copious Beauty and Alluring Images

Points of Interest: Repetition, Amplification, Order, Abuse

Fuel for Thought: Cupid is always depicted as a winged child with a bow, and he is sometimes portrayed as blind. This suggests that love is a childish state of mind, can be fleeting, can sting, and that it has nothing to do with logic. Love can induce a dream-like state and can make us look at someone as if surrounded by an aura of magic, like they cast a spell. Have you ever "woke-up" from a dreamy love affair and looked back on it through the lenses of reason? Ever known someone who fell in love and was "transformed"? How did you/they behave while under love's spell?

On Ramp: *Dido* 2.1.304–327

> VENUS. Fair child, stay thou with Dido's waiting maid;
>   I'll give thee sugar-almonds, sweet conserves,
>   A silver girdle, and a golden purse,
>   And this young prince shall be thy playfellow.
> ASCANIUS. Are you Queen Dido's son?
> CUPID. Ay, and my mother gave me this fine bow.
> ASCANIUS. Shall I have such a quiver and a bow?
> VENUS. Such bow, such quiver, and such golden shafts,
>   Will Dido give to sweet Ascanius.
>   For Dido's sake I take thee in my arms
>   And stick these spangled feathers in thy hat;
>   Eat comfits in mine arms, and I will sing.
>   Now is he fast asleep, and in this grove,

> Amongst green brakes I'll lay Ascanius,
> And strew him with sweet smelling violets,
> Blushing roses, purple hyacinth;
> These milk-white doves shall be his centronels,
> Who, if that any seek to do him hurt,
> Will quickly fly to Cytherea's fist.
> Now, Cupid, turn thee to Ascanius' shape,
> And go to Dido, who, instead of him,
> Will set thee on her lap and play with thee;
> Then touch her white breast with this arrow head,
> That she may dote upon Aeneas' love …

Up to Speed: Following Aeneas's withering account of the fall of Troy, Venus detains Ascanius as he follows his father offstage, aiming to abduct the child and substitute Cupid in his place. Students might use the following questions to focus their attention on the details of the passage, which could serve as a model for analyzing or better understanding suchlike scenes in which lyricism functions to deceive or ensnare a listener.

- Examine closely the first nine lines of the passage (304–312). Venus entices Ascanius with sweets and glittering objects, but also with ornamented language. Describe the lyrical qualities of the verses, noting any uses of figurative language. What effect does the language seem to have upon Ascanius?

- Marlowe embeds stage directions in this passage. What actions precede the half-line, "Now is he fast asleep" (316)? Do you think Venus actually sings to Ascanius after saying, "I will sing" (315)? What causes Ascanius to doze?

- In this scene, the goddess, Venus, interacts with her mortal grandson, Ascanius; strangely, the language and gestures resemble elements found in erotic love poetry. Identify diction, word patterns, tropes, and stage action that might appear in a love poem, and comment on their efficaciousness here.

- What is Venus's *tone* in this scene? What elements of her language create this tone? Does the tone shift at all in the passage?

Road Trip (Guided Tour): While this may not be a typical love scene, Marlowe deploys the same rhetorical strategies found in romantic exchanges or episodes of erotic rapture. Those rhetorical nuances may in fact make this encounter into something like a love scene. Young Ascanius is abducted, much like Helen of Troy. Cupid is a changeling boy, a substitute for Ascanius, who furthers the love plot in the play by scratching Dido with his arrow. "The Changeling" is also the nickname for the rhetorical figure *hypallage*, derived from the Greek word for "interchange." George Puttenham understood this trope as an interchange or

reversal of the ordinary relation between words (Lanham cites Bottom's "I see a voice … and I can hear my Thisbe's face" as an example). Quintilian thought of the figure as a form of *metonymy*.[23] The spirit of *hypallage*[24] underwrites the relationships in *Dido*, as lovers are constantly exchanged or substituted for proper partners: Ganymede for Juno (and Hebe), Anna for Dido, Aeneas for Iarbus, Cupid for Ascanius.

The lines spoken by Venus and Cupid provide elegant variation and dulcet sounds through a confluence of rhetorical figures: *epistrophe*[25] (bow / bow, 309–310); *chiasmus*[26] (310–311); *polyptoton*[27] (my arms / mine arms, 313, 315); sibilant *alliteration* (sugar/sweet/silver, 305-6); *slant-rhyme* combined with *assonance* (shafts/Ascanius, 311–12); *diacope*[28] (311); and *congeries*[29] (305–6, 318–20). The language of *Dido* reflects a high incidence of rhetorical figures, a symptom of a culture steeped in language and alive to its possibilities. Renaissance writers like Marlowe believed that rhetoric was a natural and powerful way to convey feelings to listeners. Each trope, no matter how trifling it may seem to a modern reader, carried with it a personality and a rationale to account for its effectiveness. The humble *epistrophe* (also called *epiphora*), for example, which is merely the repetition of the same word at the ends of successive lines, "serveth," according to Henry Peacham, "to leave a word of importance in the end of a sentence, that it may longer hold the sound in the mind of the hearer."[30] In the passage above, Cupid mentions his bow at the end of 309; it is echoed by an acquisitive Ascanius at the end of 310, and then the word is immediately re-echoed by Venus at the beginning of 311, a trope of repetition known as *anadiplosis*[31] that has the effect of holding Ascanius in fixation.

The heaping of images and the repetition of sounds that pile-up in this exchange build force, an important effect known as amplification or *auxesis,*[32] which gives the listener an overall sense of *copia*, abundance or plenty. Like a child who has surfeited on sweets, young Ascanius, overcome by the lyrical rush of resonating sounds, recurring words, and clusters of images, falls asleep in Venus's arms (316); the verbal magic had a soporific effect on him.

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[23] Referring to something by naming one of its attributes (e.g. calling a car your "wheels")

[24] Shifting the agreement, application, or correspondence of words

[25] Repetition of words at the ends of (usually successive) lines

[26] Repetition of grammatical structures in inverted order

[27] Repeating words that have the same root but different endings

[28] Repeating a word with one or more words between them; usually expressive of deep emotion

[29] Word heaps

[30] Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), 43.

[31] Beginning a line by repeating the word or phrase that ended the previous line

[32] Amplifying a concept by using an inflated term, or, arranging words so that they build towards a climax

Sleep and the dreams that come represent a state-of-being distinct and separate from everyday human consciousness. Madness and lovesickness likewise involve a surrender of identity, and these mental states are driven or catalyzed by language. The last line of the above-quoted passage reveals Venus's aim: to have Dido "dote" upon Aeneas so that she may be controlled. "Doting," a subgenre of loving, also has an effect on the mind akin to drowsiness or lethargy. Doting suggests an immaturity, a dreamlike, preoccupied, "in-love-with-love" affect that was considered a form of insanity. In this rhetorically-induced state, lovers are also primed for extreme behavior, sudden mood-swings, and desire for change, exchange, freedom, and bondage—petulant behavior and rashness that might have comic or tragic consequences.

Lesson 2, Example 2: Anatomizing the Rhetoric of Captivating Charm

Field of Discovery: The rhetoric of love's delusions and disillusions

Points of Interest: Repetition, Amplification, Pathos, Description

Fuel for Thought: Love (and other powerful emotions, like hatred) can put a strain on people's mental states, driving them to think and behave in ways they normally do not (it is conventional to say to someone we like, "You drive me crazy," or "I'm nuts about you…" for example). In Marlowe's day, love was considered a species of madness. Have you ever felt a loss of self-control because of love, as if you've been transported from your normal, stable frame of mind? At times like those, how do your emotions translate into language?

On Ramp: *Dido* 4.5.3–11, 22–34

> NURSE. No, thou shalt go with me into my house.
>   I have an orchard that hath store of plums,
>   Brown almonds, services, ripe figs, and dates,
>   Dewberries, apples, yellow oranges;
>   A garden where are bee-hives full of honey,
>   Musk-roses, and a thousand sort of flowers,
>   And in the midst doth run a silver stream,
>   Where thou shalt see the red-gill'd fishes leap,
>   White swans, and many lovely water-fowls:
>   ………………………………
>   I'll be no more a widow, I am young;
>   I'll have a husband, or else a lover.
> CUPID. [*Aside*] A husband, and no teeth!
> NURSE. O what mean I to have such foolish thoughts!
>   Foolish is love, a toy. O sacred love,
>   If there be any heaven in earth, 'tis love,
>   Especially in women of your years.
>   Blush, blush for shame, why shouldst thou think of love?
>   A grave and not a lover fits thy age.

> A grave? Why? I may live a hundred years:
> Fourscore is but a girl's age; love is sweet.
> My veins are wither'd, and my sinews dry;
> Why do I think of love, now I should die?

Up to Speed: In *Dido* Marlowe analyzes different types of lovers. Brian Gibbons points to the play's presentation of "varying kinds of erotic experience and attitudes to passion,"[33] while an earlier study by William Leigh Godschalk focuses on Marlowe's portrayal of love—"the homosexual, the unnatural, the adulterous"—as destructive to social order.[34] Romany and Lindsey describe "self-destructive desire" as "a central preoccupation of all Marlowe's plays."[35] The business of wooing, courtly pursuit and evasion, and marriage practices in the Renaissance was fraught with danger; Marlowe and his contemporaries, however, developed a tradition of love poetry and sonneteering, couching love in an alluring discursive field aligning it with the beauty and pleasures associated with heaven. The prompts below may help readers parse the discourse of love, both the sixteenth-century species and the versions we experience today. Are we really so different in our views of love?

- From the first scene featuring Jupiter "*dandling* GANYMEDE *upon his knee*" to the triple suicide in the play's finale, *Dido Queen of Carthage* is a play about love. In the above passage, the Nurse captures the paradoxical nature of the concept: Foolish is love, a toy. O sacred love, / If there be any heaven in earth, 'tis love (4.5.26–7). Discuss love and what you think it is. What problems might love cause and what are the possible solutions to these problems? Record your ideas about love and note other views as you encounter them in *Dido*.

- Compare the perspectives or attitudes towards romantic relationships in *Dido* with the points-of-view of your friends, your parents, and other groups or institutions today. Compare the lovers in the play with lovers you know or know about (through media, etc.).

- Marlowe portrays love variously as impassioned, as doting, as a kind of madness, and as the result of magic. In Marlowe's day, however, writers extolled the virtues of restraint, measure, harmony, and balance—the "golden mean" was seen as key to a good life. What is the relationship between reason and love in this play? Are any

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[33] Brian Gibbons, "'Unstable Proteus': Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage*," in *Christopher Marlowe,* ed. Brian Morris (London: Ernest Benn, 1968), 45.

[34] William Leigh Godschalk, "Marlowe's *Dido Queene of Carthage*," *ELH* 38, no. 1 (1971): 18.

[35] Romany and Lindsey, Introduction to *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays*, xiv.

characters reasonable, or is everyone dominated by their passions? Is there an "authentic" representation of love, or is all subterfuge and politics? To what extent are the gods in the play parent figures?

- Consider the different love relationships in *Dido*, how they begin, and whether they ever develop or change. For each relationship, pick a key emotional moment in the first 3 acts (Dido falling for Aeneas in 2.2; Iarbus pursuing Dido, Dido pursuing Aeneas, Anna pining for Iarbus, all in 3.1; Dido and Aeneas taking shelter in a cave in 3.4, etc.), act it out, and then pick a moment between the same pair of lovers in act 4 or 5. What emotions seem to dominate, and what uses and types of language accompany these emotions?

Road Trip (Into the Wild):

Dating in the digital age: textual anxiety

"No, I don't think this emoji means she has lost her love for you and is in love with someone else. You may be over thinking the smiley face emoji."

CartoonStock.com

Figure 1. Misreading or overthinking a sender's intentions: one of the pitfalls of modern dating. Image licensed by author.

If love is a rhetoric, its language has changed in some fundamental ways over the last 400 years, change driven, at least in part, by advances in communication technology. The first contact between lovers, so magical from the time of Petrarch and Laura through that of Romeo and Juliet, occurs for many nowadays through dating apps. Lovers often communicate through the clipped language of text messaging, using short catch phrases, abbreviations, emojis, and emoticons. Yet, the messages encoded by senders are often ambiguous or open to varied interpretations, and the decoders, or recipients of the message, tend to read in a way that confirms their hopes or biases. Consider the comic strip, above. What is it in the nature of computer mediated communication that makes it prone to ambiguity or misinterpretation? Why does the lovesick figure on the left misconstrue what seems to be a straightforward message? Imagine that the lovers in *Dido* had access to cell phones. Create a series of textual exchanges between pairs or triads of lovers based on the action of the play, then share these exchanges with others in the class. Would the story of *Dido* and the outcomes change, or would misunderstandings and bad behavior persist? Has modern technology changed the way lovers love, or is it same story, different field?

Lesson 3: The Rhetoric of Transformation—Metaphors at Their Limits
Rather than focusing on figures of speech as a means of expressing emotion, Lesson three has students focus on the nature of individual tropes, especially transformative ones that push boundaries, starting with the most far-fetched trope of all, metalepsis.

Lesson 3, Example 1: The Möbius Trope: Metaphor's Hall of Mirrors
Field of Discovery: Changing reality (through language) to match your mood
Points of Interest: Metaphorical Substitutions, Puns, and Figures of Amplification and Excess
Fuel for Thought: Key ingredients in Marlowe's mighty line include aspiration, outlandish metaphor and hyperbole, superlatives, and expansive and ductile meaning to match his verse. Think of a time you may have used hyperbolic language or exaggerated comparisons to emphasize something you were feeling intensely. At that moment, were you using a trope?
On Ramp: *Dido* 4.3.25–30

> AENEAS. Yet Dido casts her eyes, like anchors, out,
>   To stay my fleet from loosing forth the bay.
>   "Come back, come back!" I hear her cry afar,
>   "And let me link thy body to my lips,
>   That, tied together by the striving tongues,

> We may as one sail into Italy."

Up to Speed:

- In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* I. A. Richards described "metaphor" as "a borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts."[36] Metaphors (and by extension, similes) have two parts: a **tenor** (the subject of the metaphor) and the **vehicle** (the means of conveying the tenor); the similarities between tenor and vehicle are the **ground**, and the dissimilarities make for **tension.** In Robert Burns' "My Luv is like a red, red rose," the **tenor** = luv and the **vehicle** = rose. The **ground** of the comparison might involve an understanding that both are beautiful but could sting; **tension** derives from the fact that the vehicle has a transitory presence in the physical realm, while the tenor does not. Use Richards' scheme to unpack the simile in the above passage from *Dido*. In what ways, if any, is Marlowe's simile more complicated than Burns'?

- Around American baseball fields, a common metaphor used to insult a pitcher is to call him a "rag arm," implying that he cannot generate adequate pitch velocity. Use Richards' scheme to explicate this metaphor. Consider the balance between the ground and the tension.

- A person who habitually drives too fast on American roads is a "lead foot." Use Richards' scheme to parse this metaphor, but this time sketch out the implied causal chain between tenor and vehicle. Would you consider the comparison far-fetched? Is "lead foot" more or less outlandish than "rag arm"? Defend your opinion.

- The figure of speech under scrutiny here is *metalepsis*, which, says Lanham, attributes a "present effect" to a "remote cause": "The remote cause, because several causal steps intervene between it and the result, seems less like a cause than a metaphor substituted for a cause."[37] Others speak of the trope's habitually "preposterous exaggeration."[38] Briefly detail the history and usage of this knotty, complex figure, and then perform a thorough close reading of *Dido* 4.3.25–30.

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[36] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 94.

[37] Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 99.

[38] Burton, *Silva Rhetoricae.*

Road Trip (Guided Tour): Mainstream rhetoricians of Marlowe's day thought of metalepsis as controversial, difficult, and risky—quite like the image Marlowe seems to have cultivated for himself. George Puttenham (Marlowe's contemporary) nicknamed it The Far-fetched: "As when we had rather fetch a word a great way off than to use one nearer hand to express the matter as well and plainer."[39] Quintilian named it "transumption," listing it among tropes involving a change of meaning, like metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche.[40] The tortile figure stretches meaning by reaching across a logical divide to challenge reason by selecting a far-off figure instead of a less obscure one. Metalepsis sometimes masks itself or leapfrogs nearby figures, making it difficult to spot, even when it teeters on the brink of failure. Nevertheless, Marlowe embraced what others considered unrestrained and incautious usage of figurative language, doing so to such imaginatively bold effect that metaleptic phrases such as "the face that launched a thousand ships" still echo in the language four hundred years later.

Marlowe's "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?" (A 5.1.90–91)[41] illustrates Richard Lanham's observation that one attribute that might be termed "metaleptic" is "a kind of compressed chain of metaphorical reasoning."[42] In these two hyperbolic blank verse lines, various images are compressed, so that Helen's face launches ships and burns towers. Brian Cummings perceives in Lady MacBeth's "Was the hope drunk / Wherein you dress'd yourself?" (1.7.35–36)[43] the metaleptic tendency to metonymically replace terms that are themselves metaphorical. In an anfractuous metaphor, hope becomes clothing, but the garments are ill-fitting, sloppy, and therefore drunk. So "drunk" substitutes for "clothing," itself a metonym for "hope." Lady Macbeth wonders if her husband wears a robe of drunken, impaired ambition. Has Shakespeare overreached himself and penned a mixed metaphor? Cummings says no, not in a drama such as *Macbeth*, "which aims to stretch the boundaries of the figurative as far as possible."[44] Through metalepsis, Shakespeare—and Marlowe—test the limits of figurative

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[39] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poetry,* ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 267.

[40] John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 135.

[41] Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*, ed. David Scott Kastan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

[42] Lanham, *Handlist*, 99.

[43] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).

[44] Brian Cummings, "Metalepsis: the Boundaries of Metaphor," in Adamson et al, *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, 224.

language, risking failure to stretch and strain their audience's imaginative capacity. Various forms of metalepsis pervade the world today and are most often used to great effect for the figure's ability to shorten, gloss-over, obscure, or tangle the connective tissue between cause and effect. Advertisers routinely purvey the same short-circuiting of causal connections while creating connections between things like owning a given product and feeling freedom, fulfillment, security, and so on, diverting attention and income towards their goods or services.

In Act Four of *Dido*, Aeneas awakens with a renewed urgency to leave Carthage and sail to Italy to fulfill his destiny, even though Dido wants him to stay. As he gazes at the sea, "Neptune's glassy fields," his resolve collapses:

> Yet Dido casts her eyes, like anchors, out,
> To stay my fleet from loosing forth the bay.
> "Come back, come back!" I hear her cry afar,
> "And let me link thy body to my lips,
> That, tied together by the striving tongues,
> We may as one sail into Italy." (4.3.25–30)

As Aeneas muses over the ocean, his reaction is shaped into language by the figure of thought called *prolepsis;*[45] he anticipates the renewed pursuit and fulfillment of his prophecy as well as Dido's objection to his plans. He attempts to resolve these jarring exertions of will rhetorically, through the artifice of metalepsis. The initial image of this quote is grotesque in its absurdly comic exaggeration—a feature of metalepsis: Dido casts (as one does a fishing line?) her eyes out towards the imagined ships to anchor those ships and keep them from leaving the bay and setting sail on the open sea, towards Italy. The image in the next line moves from the ekphrastic or visual to the auditory, as Aeneas imagines that Dido's cry is itself a kind of anchor or fishing line, reeling him back towards shore. Line 28 layers another image onto this developing figure, as Aeneas transforms into a ship-body attached to Dido not by an anchor, but by her lips (because they uttered a siren's cry in the previous line? Or are lips synecdoche for Dido's body? Are the lips erotic, or are they devouring, like the mouths of Scylla?). In line 29, they are "tied together" by their "striving tongues" (more images of constraint follow in line 51: "Her silver arms will coll me round about…"). Extremities and other body parts like tongues and arms become the tackling, lines, and rigging of a ship. The passage also traffics in puns: Dido wants to "stay" Aeneas's ship, a verb, but a "stay" refers also to ropes collected into the standing rigging that holds up the

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[45] Speaking of a future as if it has already come to pass; rhetorically, a refutation of anticipated objections.

mast of a ship. The figures within this trope are themselves knotted together somewhat awkwardly, recalling the fears of rhetoricians like Peacham over the entangling nature of metalepsis. But metalepsis has the power to stimulate imaginative leaps between seemingly disparate figures, allowing the compression, conversion, and replacement of clichéd terms and conceits and the formation of fresh and daring ones.

Lesson 3, Example 2: The Möbius Trope—Metaphor's Hall of Mirrors

Field of Discovery: Figurative language; detailed analysis of a single trope

Points of Interest: Metaphorical Substitutions, Puns, Figures of Amplification and Excess

Fuel for Thought: This exercise includes sets of tropes that tend toward the human desire to grow, change, and expand. Recall such uses of language in the world around you, through whatever medium. Think of times you have expressed your aspirations with verve; did your language rise to meet the emotion?

On Ramp: A list of rhetorical tropes

Up to Speed:

- I'm so hungry I could eat a horse! My feet are killing me! People use these, and hyperbolic expressions like them, every day. Imagine if these declarations were meant literally! Rhetoricians in Marlowe's day nicknamed hyperbole "the Loud Liar" or "The Overreacher" for its tendency to transgress boundaries. Do you know someone who routinely exaggerates or stretches the bounds of believability? Comment on this person's speech patterns.

- After completing the RoadTrip (into the wild) exercise immediately below, choose one of the tropes listed and 1) provide a brief overview and history of the figure, making sure to include research, and 2) use what you learned about the figure to perform an in-depth close reading of a passage from Marlowe's *Dido.*

Road Trip (Into the Wild): Discovering tropes among us

Analyzing Marlowe's dramatic language exposes students to rhetorical principles still circulating, helping unveil the persuasive strategies used by the politicians, advertisers, and influencers they encounter daily. Can students discern the glitter of Renaissance rhetorical gems in the mundane phrases of advertisers that they hear and see every day? After discovering the tropes among us, students may then revert to *Dido* to find those same tropes there, thus bridging the gap between Marlowe's age and their own.

Below you will find a list of ten rhetorical figures of speech (tropes). If you have successfully completed the previous lessons, you should have some idea of what they are; if not, consult a resource like the *Silva Rhetoricae* website or Lanham's *Handlist*. Identify the trope used in each advertisement in Column A by referring to the list. Then, do the same for the list of *Dido* quotes in Column B. Teachers not working in America should feel free to substitute advertising slogans from their own countries that their students would be more likely to recognize.

Students choose from this List of Tropes: Simile; Polyptoton; Pun (Paronomasia); Zeugma (Syllepsis); Hyperbole; Metalepsis; Metonymy; Synecdoche; Exclamatio (Ecphonesis); Metaphor.

Column A: Advertising Slogans

The best a man can get (Gillette)

Red Bull gives you wings (Red Bull)

America runs on Dunkin (Dunkin Donuts)

Every kiss begins with K (Kay Jewelers)

Where doers get more done (Home Depot)

Have a Coke and a smile (Coca-Cola)

Built for the human race (Nissan)

Like a rock (Chevrolet)

O what a feeling! (Toyota)

Put a tiger in your tank (Exxon, formerly Esso)

Shave time. Shave money. (Dollar Shave Club)

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there (State Farm Insurance)

Column B: *Dido* Quotes

"O Priamus, O Troy, O Hecuba!" (2.1.105)

"Whose yielding heart may yield thee more relief" (4.3.36)

"O foolish Trojans that would steal from hence

And let not Dido understand their drift!" (4.4.5–6)

"Young infants swimming in their parents' blood" (2.1.193)

"…his band of Myrmidons, / With balls of wildfire in their murderous paws" (2.1.216–17)

"O love, O hate, O cruel women's hearts,

That imitate the moon in every change

And, like the planets, ever love to range!" (3.3.66–68)

"Triton, I know, hath fill'd his trump with Troy" (1.1.130)

"These words are poison to poor Dido's soul" (5.1.111)

"I'll frame me wings of wax like Icarus,

And o'er his ships will soar unto the sun

That they may melt and I fall in his arms" (5.1.243–45)

"So much have I receiv'd at Dido's hands" (3.1.102)

"[He] would have grappled with Achilles' son,

Forgetting both his want of strength and hands" (2.1.251–52)

"And with Megaera's eyes stared in their face,

Threat'ning a thousand deaths with every glance" (2.1.230–31)

Concluding Remarks

Consumerism and status-seeking displays of wealth and power—conspicuous or competitive consumption—may well be the defining trait of the age in which Christopher Marlowe lived, at least according to Christopher Caudwell: "Intemperate will, 'bloody, bold and resolute', without norm or measure, is the spirit of this era of primitive accumulation. The absolute-individual will overriding all other wills is therefore the principle of life for the Elizabethan age."[46] England flourished during Marlowe's lifetime: in 1564, the year he was born, the population was about 3,060,000; by 1600, it had grown to 4,060,000.[47] His was an age of exploration, expansion, commerce, science, and art. Visitors to Marlowe's England would have been struck by the signs of wealth and power, including Whitehall Palace, the exquisite buildings lining the Thames, the paved streets busy with commerce, and the sumptuous, colorful clothing worn by the elite. Driven by growth, discoveries, and cultural production, new words to describe this burgeoning world poured into the English language during the three decades of Marlowe's life. Words took on new significations and in some cases developed split personalities, wrestling within themselves for meaning, opening up polysemic indeterminacies and ambiguities ripe for the play and the artifice of figurative language in the literary, commercial, and political agorae of Marlowe's time and ours. To express adequately

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[46] Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1946), 74.

[47] Stephen Greenblatt, introduction to *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016), 4.

the copious variety of the world it had catalyzed, figurative language not only amplified but inflected meaning. Like a perspective painting, tropes and figures offered anamorphic views of the lush allure and dazzling finery of the world—the skull beneath the powdered flesh; the bear and monkey baiting arenas rising-up alongside the public playhouses where the screeches of apes competed with the cries of Lear; the rampant poverty and filthy, worsted-stocking knaves ambling alongside university students bravely clad in silk. Language can build worlds, and although his life was brief, the impact and power of Marlowe and his mighty line are still with us. At the same time, we are immersed in the language of influencers over social media outlets, the appeals of advertisers that vie for our attention, and the rhetoric of politicians and pundits. The broader study of the humanities and of canonical literature, and especially the intricacies of figuratively layered language is vitally important for the intellectual and personal development of modern-day students. Such instruction not only connects them to our collective cultural history but educates them in practical terms that apply to our continued exposure to an array of figurative and rhetorical strategies.

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