Furor

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with the Greek terms Erinyes and Eumenides; the Latin terms Furiae and Dirae (from the adjective dirus "dire" or "dreadful") also appear to apply to them interchangeably. According to Servius on A. 4.609, the Furies live on earth, the Dirae in heaven, and the Eumenides in the underworld, but this schematization is clearly late. Human beings are also as ociated with Furies (e.g., Hele at A. 2.573; Dido at A. 4.376, 4.474; Clytemnestra at A. 4.472), as are the monstrous Harpies (A. 3.252; compare Homer, Odyssey 20.78; Aeschylus, Eumenides 50–51; Apollo ius of Rhodes, Argonautica 2.220). The Furies display chthonic attributes: they dwell in Hades (A. 6.280–81; 6.289), their mother is personified Night (A. 12.845–47; see per onification ), and they have serpentine hair and wing (A. 12.848; see sakes).

Virgil frequently pu s on the ancient ETYMOL­ogy of their name, deum ira "the wrath of the god " (e.g., A. 3.215), e pecially when he connect them with war. For in tance, Ju o employs the Fury Allecto as the instigator of the cla h between Trojans and Latin (A. 7.323–571), while a Fury i used as a metonymy for Troy' de truction (A. 2.337–38; ee SA 22). Furie are al o identified with Discordia, a in the de criptio of the bat­tle of Actium on the field of AE EA (A. 8.701– 3; see also ecphrasi ). Yet at the end of the poem they are found on JUPITER’ threshold and are described a inducing FEAR among mortal and inflicting illness (recalling G. 3.551–53, where Tisiphone emerge from Stygian darkne a the p lague gathers strength), DEATH, and war a pun­ishment (A. 12.845–52).

In two instance (A. 4.469, 6.571–72) the Furie are described as being in agmina, an odd term to use for a three ome. On the ba is of CHOLIA that are preserved in an eleventh-century manu cript (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, M lat. 7930), it ha been hypothesized that Virgil wa aware from Varro that the three sister had the Roman names Agmentis, Pecmenti , and Furina, and that by agmina he allude to the fir t and last of these (Waszink 1963).

**References**


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**furor** Literally "fury" or "madness." Instances of furor are found in Virgil's work in the context of martial anger and bloodlust, god-inflicted madness, and similarly inflicted or otherwise generated erotic madness. It is mostly present in A., where it is often personified as a SUPERNATURAL force akin to or caused by the Furiae ("Furies"), to which it is etymologically linked (see ETYMOL­Ogy; personification). Both words derive from the verb furere "to rage" or "to be crazed"; related adjectival forms include furialis (e.g., A. 7.375 of the Fury Allecto's venom), furibundus (e.g., A. 4.646 of Dido), and furiatus (e.g., A. 2.407 of Coroebus' state of mind). Furor affects both male and female character and all animate beings (G. 3.242–44; compare G. 3.266–83, where it afflicts mares at the climax of this lengthy passage; see animals, domestic), although women or female deitie appear more susceptible to it (see gender).

**Furor** is a major theme connected with love in humans and animals (G. 3.209–83) and also causes the downfall of ORPHEUS in his fateful backward glance at EURYDICE (G. 4.494–95, where Eurydice imputes her own and Orpheus' downfall to furor). This recalls the erotic furor of GALLUS, for which he claims there is no remedy (E. 10.60 medicina furoris). Similarly in A., erotic furor characterizes Didos’ love for AENEAS (e.g., A. 4.65–66) and the madness that results from his abandonment of her (e.g., A. 4.501). The word or related forms appear sixteen times in connection to Dido, more than any other character in the epic. Once stricken by furor, women are described a engaging in maenadic behavior, either meta­phorical (e.g., Dido at A. 4.300–301; the Sibyl at A. 6.77–78) or literal (Amatas at A. 7.373–405), often re ulting in sui ide (e.g., Dido at A. 4.645–47; Amata at A. 12.601–3; ee mae ads; metaphor).

Furor is also found in nature, affecting inanimate forces such as winds (e.g., A. 1.51, 2.304), the EA (A. 1.107), RIVERS (A. 2.498), rain (A. 5.694), FIRE (A. 4.670) or animals (G. 3.266 of horses, with reference to HIPPOMANES, on which see Thomas 1988, 2: 94–95; compare G. 3.458 of ailing heep). Images of fire and madness are employed in the description of disease, in particular the PLAGUE (G. 3.440–566). Here we find vocabulary very similar to that which is used to describe the symptoms of love. Instances of furor in nature and in animals
have been interpreted as symbolic of its influence on the human realm (see especially A. 1.81–156).

_Furor_ is linked with the supernatural, as it is synonymous with divinely inspired prophetic madness (e.g., _Cassandra_ at A. 2.345; the Sibyl at A. 6.100, 6.102, 6.262; see _prophecy_). It is also itself one of the epic’s major supernatural powers, often (though not exclusively) controlled by Juno. The most notable example in this regard is the Fury Allecto, who at Juno’s bidding injects with madness Amata (A. 7.341–58), Turnus (A. 7.406–74), the hounds of Ascanius (A. 7.475–81), and, indirectly, the Latins so as to start the war with Aeneas (A. 7.580–82, 7.624–25; see _Latium and Latini_). Allecto’s action on Amata is a flesh and blood imposition of madness in the form of a snake by gods on humans (A. 7.341–58; see _snakes_), but at the same time Allecto may be seen as merely bringing out what is already present in the queen’s psyche (A. 7.343–45; see _psychology_). _Furor_ is personified as a monstrous creature (most notably at A. 1.294–96, where it is designated as _impius_; as such, it stands for the madness of _civil war_ and is opposed to Aeneas’ _pietas_ and _Augustan ideology_.

Other aspects of _furor_ render it synonymous with the fury and madness in battle that causes _death_ or other atrocities (e.g., A. 10.510–605). It is particularly associated with Turnus’ actions and eventual death. _Furor_ first affects Turnus in the guise of Allecto’s serpents (A. 7.445–74) and, as in the case of Amata, the Fury has been seen by some as merely bringing out what is already present in his mind (e.g., A. 7.409, 7.475, where Turnus is described as already _audax_ “bold” or “rash,” an adjective that attests to his susceptibility to the forces of madness). _Furor_ continues to affect Turnus’ actions throughout the war (e.g., A. 9.691, 9.760, 11.486) but is also used of Aeneas almost as frequently (e.g., A. 2.595, 10.545).

An intense scholarly debate surrounds the ultimate role of _furor_ in _A_. While it has been traditionally interpreted as justifiable and necessary, many see Aeneas’ killing of Turnus at the end of _A._ as a triumph of _furor_ over _pietas_ (see _Aeneid, ending of_). Cairns (1989: 82–84) notes that it is significant that A. 12.946 does not contain the word _furor_ but _furiae_, claiming that _furiae_ can be justified (as it is during the Etruscans’ revolt against Mezentius at A. 8.494). Thomas (1991) argues in response that both _furiae_ and _furor_ are condemnatory terms and that any attempt at a distinction between them only seeks to justify Aeneas’ actions. By contrast, Galinsky (1988) had pointed out that, viewed from an Aristotelian perspective, Aeneas’ _furor_ emerges as completely justified (see _Aristotle; philosophy_). Others, for instance Putnam (1995) and the so-called _Harvard School_, highlight Aeneas’ ethical and moral failures, arguing that his final act is not dictated by _pietas_ but occurs “under the direct impulse of Furies” (Putnam 1995: 194). This divergence of scholarly opinion falls within the larger debate on _A’s_ overall optimism or pessimism regarding Augustan ideology (see _optimism and pessimism_).

_See also_ _emotion_; _Stoicism_

References


Further Reading