

DECEPTION AND DELUSION: a study of Theme and  
Characterization in Troilus and Cressida.

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Marilyn Patricia Wortley

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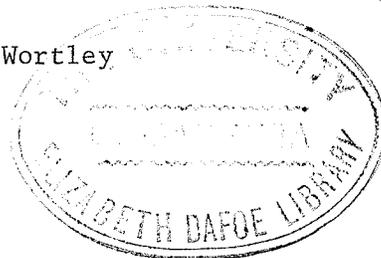


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## ABSTRACT

The past thirty-five years have brought a great resurgence of critical interest in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, and with it much disagreement, particularly with regard to the theme of the play and the nature of its characters. The extraordinary diversity of the views expressed confirmed in my mind the necessity of returning to the play itself, of approaching it devoid of preconceptions and prejudices, and of thus using it to confirm or refute the assertions of past critics and to arrive at a view of the play based on the total evidence of the text.

With this in mind, I have attempted in the first chapter of this thesis to give a brief survey of current conflicting critical views, primarily on the topics of theme and characterization, but also with regard to the more general questions of the class to which this work belongs and the degree of its success. The second chapter and main body of this essay consists of a scene by scene analysis of the text, wherein I have attempted to achieve a deeper understanding of the characters and a clearer insight into the thematic significance of their interaction. In the light of this insight, I have turned in the third and last section to a re-assessment of the most important of the questions raised by the critics.

In general, the conclusions resulting from this analysis are these: first, that the play contains elements of tragedy, comedy,

history, and satire, but cannot be said to be exclusively any of these, and thus that to attempt to force it into a traditional category is a useless and dangerous pursuit; secondly, that one is even more likely to distort the play by seeking in it one dominant theme, whether it be the conflict between intuition and intellect, the destructive force of time, the controversy over the objectivity of value, or the necessity of order in the world and the universe, since all these are present to a greater or lesser degree, and all have a part to play in drawing together the divergent plot lines of love and war, and in uniting the various characters with one another and with the audience; thirdly, that there are no heroes or villains in this play, all the characters being delightfully complex human beings whose behaviour Shakespeare merely reports without any attempt to explain or excuse it; and lastly, that the play is not without flaws, but that nevertheless, when judged from a psychological and realistic point of view, it is one of the most successful in the Shakespeare canon. The key word applicable to all the major characters in the play is, I have suggested, 'deception'; but this is not to say that the tendency they all display either to delude themselves or to deceive others constitutes the theme of the play. If there is a theme at all, it is nothing other than the universal dilemma of the human condition; this tendency to deception is, then, but another facet of life and humanity as Shakespeare portrays them in this fascinating symphony of discordant harmonies.

## CHAPTER I

### THE WRANGLING CRITICS

"Troilus and Cressida has always been," Kenneth Muir remarks, "something of a puzzle."<sup>1</sup> In my opinion, this is one of the most striking understatements in all of English criticism. From the editors of the Quarto who described it as a history on the title page and as a comedy in the Epistle to the Reader, to the most recent critics who have labelled it as everything from a tragedy to an heroic farce, those faced with the task of categorizing and interpreting this play have seemed incapable of arriving at any sort of general agreement as to the class in which it belongs, its theme, the nature of its characters, and the significance of its negative conclusion; indeed, conflict still rages as to whether Troilus and Cressida is a brilliant success or a deplorable failure.

Certainly it has never been among the more popular plays in the Shakespeare canon: we have no record of its performance before 1898, and when it was finally produced in England, The Times suggested that it was a play better left unacted. Nineteenth Century critics who deemed it worthy of notice either dismissed it, like Coleridge and Swinburne, as a hybrid which defied definitive comment, or condemned it, like Hazlitt, as being too loose and desultory. One of the first scholars to make a serious effort to understand the play and explain its difficulties was Dowden, who, in 1875, in his book Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art, classed it with All's Well that Ends Well and Measure for Measure as a 'dark comedy', all three being, he

conjectured, products of a dark period in Shakespeare's life which only later found its appropriate expression in the intensity of tragedy. This biographical heresy was not seriously questioned until 1916, when W.W. Lawrence attempted to absolve Shakespeare of all responsibility for the gloomy tone and faulty workmanship in these three plays by claiming that these elements were present in, and unavoidably part of, the stories upon which he based them. He maintained, for example, that the apparent ridicule of love and honor in Troilus and Cressida was not an expression of Shakespeare's disillusionment, but a product of the public's stereotyped conception of the Troilus and Cressida legend: in the two hundred years which intervened between Chaucer's sympathetic rendering of this tale of woe and Shakespeare's treatment of it, Cressida had become in the minds of all a symbol of infidelity, a prototype of the shameless wanton, and thus "even had Shakespeare desired to do so, he could no more have whitewashed Cressida than he could have whitewashed Richard III."<sup>2</sup>

Lively controversy can either lead to complete ossification as the opposing camps cling more and more obstinately to their original views, or act as a spur to new creative activity and imaginative criticism. Fortunately, the intellectual combat sparked by Lawrence had the latter effect; by focussing attention on the question of Shakespeare's dramatic intentions, he had planted the seeds which began in the early 1930's to yield rich fruit. G. Wilson Knight in The Wheel of Fire (1930) abandoned the historical approach, treating Troilus and Cressida as a 'play of ideas' in which the Trojans stand

for beauty and worth, the Greeks for the bestial and stupid elements in man. O.J. Campbell in 1938 countered this glorification of the Trojans with his view of the play as a satiric comedy modelled on those of Jonson and Marston: "Troilus' infatuation," he maintained, "is presented in a way to provoke mingled feelings of revulsion and derision."<sup>3</sup> Both of these extreme views were generally repudiated by subsequent critics who hastened in droves to pit their intellectual ingenuity against this new challenge, approaching the play through a comparative historical analysis of its sources, through a textual analysis of Quarto and Folio, through an examination of theatrical, social and political influences, or through a careful analysis of the text of the play per se. From such a wealth of critical activity one would expect to emerge a foundation of universally accepted assumptions on which the student newly approaching the play might begin to build his own critical interpretation; however, not only do the critics who adopt the traditionally accepted approaches to Troilus and Cressida arrive at discouragingly conflicting conclusions, but also, to further complicate the problem, the most recent critics, the 'angry young men' of the late fifties and early sixties, claim that these methods of approach must be discarded entirely, even going so far as to suggest that Troilus and Cressida, All's Well, and Measure for Measure have been "forcibly and unequally yoked together" and should be reclassified.<sup>4</sup>

The 'wheel of fire' has come full circle; we are again faced with the question which troubled the editors of Shakespeare over three hundred and fifty years ago: how are we to classify this 'black sheep'

play? After seventy-five years, Dowden's assumption that it is a peculiar type of comedy has been questioned by Brian Morris, who claims it is a tragedy; A.P. Rossiter, who rejects all the usual labels, and calls it an 'inquisition'; R.A. Foakes, who suggests that it "might be called, perhaps, an heroic farce in which the comedy and satire finally reinforce those noble values envisaged in the action"; and Robert Kimbrough, who maintains that it is not a history since "nothing really happens in the play," nor a tragedy since "we not only are not swept up in the action, but we cannot identify ourselves with any of the characters," nor a comedy since it contains too much "heroic pageantry and serious debate," and that therefore we must be content to call it merely a problem play.<sup>5</sup>

It certainly is that, as is evidenced by the diversity of opinions critics express regarding its theme. Wilson Knight, as previously mentioned, sees the Trojans as representing all positive human values:

The love of Troilus, the heroism of Hector, the symbolic romance which burns in the figure of Helen---these are placed beside the 'scurril jests' and lazy pride of Achilles, the block-headed stupidity of Ajax, the mockery of Thersites. The Trojan party stands for human beauty and worth, the Greek party for the bestial and stupid elements in man, the barren stagnancy of intellect divorced from action, and the criticism which exposes these things with jeers.<sup>6</sup>

In brief, "the root idea of Troilus and Cressida is the dynamic opposition in the mind of . . . two faculties, intuition and intellect;"<sup>7</sup> with intuition as represented by the Trojans, Knight sees associated "immediate and personal experience, . . . the infinite, the timeless,"

and with intellect, "the concepts of order and social system . . . the finite world, the time-concept."<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to find any critic who unreservedly supports Knight's reading of the play, but William R. Bowden, writing in 1959, comes as close as any. He appeals to other plays in the Shakespeare canon to prove that the bard "does not subscribe to the doctrine that man's passions should always be ruled strictly by his reason";<sup>9</sup> he then turns to Troilus and Cressida itself, pointing out, for example, the fact that although Thersites and Achilles act rationally on the battlefield we sympathize with the irrational Hector to illustrate that "reason is not a utilizable standard for human conduct," but that instead we must judge actions on the basis of "an essentially intuitive moral standard" according to which superrational qualities such as honor, trust, loyalty and love deserve the highest praise.<sup>10</sup> In short, Shakespeare is saying "that the life of the idealist, of the honorable man, is hard" but is saying it in such a way as to make us respect idealists such as Troilus and Hector and to encourage us to emulate them in our own lives.<sup>11</sup>

Critics of the view originated by Knight and endorsed by Bowden are many. Some, such as L.C. Knights, accept as valid Knight's distinction between Greek intellect and Trojan intuition, but feel that he attributes to the latter "a more positive value than did Shakespeare": "the whole basis of (Troilus') love and of the 'idealism' of which it is a part is subjected to as radical criticism as is the Greek 'reason'."<sup>12</sup> Others, of whom Kenneth Muir is one, reject not only Knight's glorification of the Trojans, but also his concept of dualism:

The only real intellectual in the Greek camp is Ulysses, and even his speeches are no more intellectual than those of Hector . . . Nor can it be said that the Greeks stand for intellect and the Trojans for emotion; for pride and the pursuit of self-interest are no less emotional than sexual desire and the pursuit of honor.<sup>13</sup>

Robert Presson develops this same idea, claiming that Trojans and Greeks, far from being opposed, share to such a degree the same weaknesses that they can be seen to illustrate the same theme:

The overpowering of Right Judgment by Passion is the central theme which binds together the seemingly unrelated parts of the story. The theme is, of course, expressed in the behaviour of the principal characters in the situations they are placed in. Though their stories are very different, Troilus, Achilles and Hector are remarkably alike in 'general nature'.<sup>14</sup>

Kimbrough also sees Achilles, Hector and Troilus as joined in illustrating one theme, but for him it is not the overpowering of right judgment by passion but the conflict between public duty and private interest.<sup>15</sup>

O.J. Campbell, as previously noted, had such a low opinion of the Trojans that he conceived of Troilus and Cressida as a scathing satire, and of Troilus as a "sexual gourmet."<sup>16</sup> Like Knight, his supporters are few, but Pettet is certainly one of the most adamant: "Troilus and Cressida," he claims, "is Shakespeare's most deliberate, sustained, and scarifying satire on the whole romantic code of love and honor; . . . what he was undoubtedly trying to express was his sense of the shallowness and sham of the doctrines of romantic love and the code of chivalric honor."<sup>17</sup> Lawrence, on the other hand, warns us, "we cannot be sure that satire does not exist in Troilus and Cressida, but we must

be extremely cautious about assuming that it is present, and still more that it controls the spirit of the play."<sup>18</sup> Alvin Kernan goes one step farther, claiming positively that the characters' ruins are "no mere satiric object lesson as are the falls of Jonson's Sejanus and Catiline, but a pitiful demonstration of human weakness and ineffectuality."<sup>19</sup> And John J. Enck sums all up in his statement: "On the topic of what the play is not, a consensus favours the opinion that satire, far from dominating it, contributes at best a bitter savor."<sup>20</sup>

Almost all the commentators on Troilus and Cressida stress to a greater or lesser extent the role of time in the play; but unfortunately they do not agree as to what that role is. Wilson Knight sees it as another aspect of the intuition-intellect dualism:

The love-interest turns on . . . the theme of immediate value killed, or apparently killed, by time; which is again the purest form of the intuition-intellect opposition, since intellect and the time-concept are interdependent and irrational, or super-rational faith of some kind or another can alone open to the mind a consciousness beyond the temporal, knowledge of a timeless reality.<sup>21</sup>

Tillyard also stresses the role of time as the destroyer: "the picture . . . is one in which human plans count for little and the sheer gestation of time and what it reveals count for much."<sup>22</sup> Traversi states the same idea in more definite terms: the "supremacy of time" is, he claims, the main theme of the play; "the tragedy indeed consists less in the personal suffering of the lovers than in the overriding influence exercised by time upon human relationships and feelings."<sup>23</sup> A. S. Knowland attacks all these views as products of 'oversimplification and overconceptualiz-

ation'; he chooses, for example, Wilson Knight's statement that "time slays the love of Cressida" and asks:

Does it [this view] . . . measure up to our experience of the play in the theatre? . . . If anything kills Troilus' love for Cressida it is Cressida herself . . . Cressida is false because, in spite of her protestations, she is Cressida, a woman of a certain recognizable type placed in certain circumstances.<sup>24</sup>

Finally R.A. Foakes comes up with a completely novel interpretation of the significance of the stress placed on time in the play: while the characters "succumb to an idea of time as 'envious and calumniating'" and display "weakness, folly, [and] mental blindness," we always, he claims, "measure their failure against their permanent standing in a great historical myth; thus, "the stress on time in the play is designed to enforce this double awareness, and to remind us that the heroism, magnanimity, wisdom, truth, love and charity displayed only fitfully by the characters yet remain to grace them through all time."<sup>25</sup>

Almost all the critics who stress the importance of the time theme in Troilus and Cressida discuss also the value theme, (sometimes called the 'appearance-reality' theme), the two being, they claim, closely related. Wilson Knight sees the Greeks as creatures of "time and appearance"; Charles Williams sees Troilus' conflict---"this is and is not Cressid"---in Act V as the crux of the whole play, and the most cogent expression in it of the appearance-reality theme; Honor Matthews, L.C. Knights, William R. Bowden, Robert Kimbrough, Kenneth Muir and others all make some mention of the problem of value raised in the play,

but, as usual, they do not agree as to its importance.<sup>26</sup> Few would go as far as Una Ellis-Fermor who claims that the central question in Troilus and Cressida is whether value is "objective or subjective to the valuer," nor agree with her answer to this question: "there is no absolute value inherent in the universe imaged in the loves and wars of Greeks and Trojans."<sup>27</sup>

This conclusion is a natural offshoot of Miss Ellis-Fermor's central thesis that Shakespeare in Troilus and Cressida was giving dramatic form to an impression of chaos; the content of his thought, she claims, "is an implacable assertion of chaos as the ultimate fact of being."<sup>28</sup> Thus, in her opinion, the theme of the play is simply 'disjunction', disjunction in the cosmos, in society, and in the universe of the imagination. A.S. Knowland applauds Miss Ellis-Fermor's interpretation because it "keeps the total dramatic impact in view";<sup>29</sup> he himself stresses that the whole play is a "pattern of sharp contrasts . . . between words and actions, between the ideal nobly expressed, be it love, or government, or war, and the failure to reach it in actual fact."<sup>30</sup> But Kenneth Muir sharply criticizes her conclusions, irately denying that Shakespeare was in any way asserting that life is meaningless:

He was asserting something much more limited and much less pessimistic. He was saying that men are foolish enough to engage in war in support of unworthy causes; that they are deluded by passion to fix their affections on unworthy objects; that they sometimes act in defiance of their consciences; and that in the pursuit of self-interest they jeopardize the welfare of the state. He was not saying . . . that absolute values are illusions.<sup>31</sup>

From this sampling of the views of the many critics who over the past thirty-five years have found in Troilus and Cressida a challenge to their intellect and ingenuity, it should be sufficiently obvious that many questions have yet to be finally answered on the problem of theme alone. In the light of the conflict of opinion manifested in this area, it is not surprising to discover that the most salient characteristic of the critics' assessments of the characters in this play is disagreement.

Cressida is absolutely condemned by some: Pettet calls her "one of the most repulsive female characters that he [Shakespeare] ever drew, a kind of meaner, unredeemed Cleopatra"; Presson claims that she is portrayed as a prostitute from the start; Tillyard dismisses her as "hard, shallow and lascivious."<sup>32</sup> These gentlemen, and others who fail to see any redeeming feature in the character and actions of Cressida, place much emphasis on Ulysses' assessment of her (IV, v, 54ff.) which they maintain must be accepted since he alone "sees the times and his contemporaries in a clear light."<sup>33</sup> But there are several who object strongly to this view: A.P. Rossiter, for example, upholds that "the Ulyssian word on her is not final":

Cressida is not simply a little harlot; and though admittedly 'designing', is too frail to stick to her design. Her passion is quite genuine (so far as that goes); so is her grief at her separation from Troilus. Only nothing is deep-rooted in her.<sup>34</sup>

Knight adds his voice to those on this side of the controversy, admitting that Cressida is "shallow and indirect in her thinking and behaviour,"

but maintaining that "we need not suppose her love for Troilus, whilst it lasts, to be insincere."<sup>35</sup> And Traversi goes one step farther, claiming that "the spirit in which Shakespeare created her made it impossible for her to be shown as really responsible for her actions," that "Cressida's falseness does not spring from a deep-rooted perversity or even from a strong personal attraction for Diomedes, but from the mere process of events, from a flaw inherent in the human situation."<sup>36</sup>

Although one might expect the critics to take a much more consistently sympathetic view towards Troilus, this is not the case; as with Cressida, they roughly divide into two opposing camps: those who see Troilus as attaining some sort of heroic stature and representing positive human values, and those who see him as a blind fool or an impatient sensualist who is responsible for his own downfall. In the first group we find Hardin Craig, who commends Troilus as "a model of love and courage," one who delivers in the last scene "the speech of a hero"; Bowden, who claims that by being deeply in love and of a trusting nature Troilus aligns himself with some of the most noble characters in Shakespeare, and therefore is meant to receive our admiration; Tillyard, who maintains that Troilus exhibits a "noble devotion," the misplacement of which "does not alter the nobility"; and Knight, who sees him as "the ardent exponent of absolute faith in a supreme value," and as "an ardent and faithful lover" whose love is "throughout hallowed by his constancy, his faith and his truth."<sup>37</sup> Aligning themselves on the other side of the controversy are: Knowland, who replies to Knight's claims by saying that Troilus' love is not hallowed because he is deceived, and we recognize from the

start the unworthiness of the object of his love; Pettet, who claims that Troilus is himself largely responsible for his misery and suffering since "he is a dupe of his own blind infatuation and chooses to found his happiness in a creature who stands confessed to everyone else as a worthless trull"; Presson, who calls Troilus an "impatient sensualist" who is "so infatuated with desire that his judgment has become blind"; and, of course, Campbell, who sees Troilus as a "sexual gourmet" with the "educated sensuality of an Italianate English roué."<sup>38</sup> Part of the problem here, as in judging Cressida, is to determine whether the assessment provided by Ulysses is reliable; but in the case of Troilus the question is further complicated by the fact that the account Ulysses gives Agamemnon of the character of the young Trojan warrior is admittedly derived second-hand from the report of Aeneas. (IV, v, 96ff.)

Cressida's uncle, Pandarus, who helps bring about the ill-fated union of the young lovers, is also diversely interpreted by the critics. Knight is distinctly fond of the old man: "from the start," he claims, Pandarus' fussy interest in his young friends' love-adventure is truly delightful"; his humour, in contrast to that of Thersites, is "always kindly and sympathetic."<sup>39</sup> Tillyard and Muir treat him with less warmth: the former admits that he is "good-natured" but emphasizes also that "he is coarse, and the kind of love that possesses Troilus is quite outside his experience or power of imagination"; the latter commends him for acting without hope of reward, but maintains that "he gets a vicarious pleasure from the affair, . . . is sentimental and silly, . . . and is continually indulging in leers and innuendoes."<sup>40</sup> He serves as a "bawdy

chorus"; his is "the voice of commentary that cheapens and coarsens their [the lovers'] story."<sup>41</sup>

Hector is the only other important figure in the Trojan camp who arouses the critics to serious disagreement. To Bowden he is "the character in the play to whom the unprejudiced reader responds most warmly": "because he is 'flesh and blood' like Brabantio and Romeo we sympathize with him; . . . at the same time we admire him and look up to him because he acts on another principle that we count higher than reason---honor."<sup>42</sup> Lawrence and Craig follow this same line, but Tillyard takes quite the opposite view:

Hector, for all his nobility, stands for a double ineffectiveness: personally, for a mind divided between reasonable, realistically moral action and unreasoning insistence on a point of honor; symbolically, for the anachronistic continuance of the chivalric code into a world which has abandoned it.<sup>43</sup>

As Kimbrough points out, Hector is both inconsistent and wrong in being "so calm and objective with regard to the public good but so committed and egocentric with regard to his own," and by this inconsistency, as Foakes also emphasizes, he is at least partially responsible for his own downfall.<sup>44</sup>

The other major characters in the play present less of a problem to the critics, but the area of unanimous agreement is still small. All acknowledge the fact that Ulysses is the guiding light in the Greek camp, but disagree as to whether this makes him a "crafty dog-fox" or a "shrewd, wise, kindly (and) great" man.<sup>45</sup> All recognize the extravagant

scurrility of Thersites, but are unable to reach a unanimous decision as to what Shakespeare's intention was in creating this vulgar malcontent: is Thersites "Shakespeare's amused and half bitter comment on a hard-boiled affectation of cynicism in others"; or "a Fool" whose function is "to give a twist to every action and every motive"; or "the explicit or the implicit statement of the mood of disillusionment"; or "cynicism incarnate: a demoniac spirit of keen critical apprehension, who sees the stupid and sordid aspects of mankind . . . (but) is blinded to man's nobility"?<sup>46</sup> An answer which will satisfy all has not yet been found; nor has total agreement been reached as to whether Agamemnon is an ineffectual leader, "slow-witted and genuinely pompous," or a "sagacious and dignified commander of troops";<sup>47</sup> as to whether Nestor is a silly old man and "pompous politician," or one of "the wisest figures in the play."<sup>48</sup> Lack of agreement as to what was Achilles' real motive in withdrawing from action has bred diverse opinions about his character: is he a "selfish coward" deserting the Greek cause because of his swollen pride, or "a slacker, forsaking his military duties for the love of a girl in the citadel of the enemy,"<sup>49</sup> or a thoroughly immoral individual avoiding danger because of an abnormal fondness for Patroclus? Controversy also rages as to whether he is a stupid ignoramus, or just "an example of an emotional man whose balance has been upset by the overgrowth of his passions which have so darkened his judgment that he does not know himself nor his real worth to others in that society in which he should play a major part."<sup>50</sup> It is a refreshing relief to discover that no blood has lately been shed over the natures of the

final three characters worthy of notice: very few dissent from the judgment that Ajax is "a bully and a boaster swollen with his own conceit," Helen is "a woman of extreme silliness and affectation," and Diomedes is a "sensual and brutal" individual who feels no love for Cressida.<sup>51</sup>

Lurking behind these multitudinous minor difficulties in interpretation is the ultimate issue which serious critics and casual readers and viewers of the play alike must eventually face: is Troilus and Cressida a deplorable failure or a great achievement? Before the resurgence of interest in the play which has taken place over the past thirty-five years, it was generally concluded that its seemingly indecisive ending was a sign either of Shakespeare's lack of interest and personal involvement in his theme, or of textual patchwork, the last seven scenes being dismissed by some as the work of someone other than the great master. Now, however, the majority of critics praise it on the grounds that Shakespeare deliberately left the intellectual questions raised 'in the air', either because he wished to show the futility of human struggle, or because he felt that contrived 'poetic justice' would be inappropriate and unrealistic. Lawrence says of it that "dramatically it is weak, psychologically it is strong";<sup>52</sup> and I think that a great many critics would not only agree with this assessment of the conclusion, but would extend it to the whole play. Certainly those who damn Troilus and Cressida most fiercely usually do so on dramatic grounds: Bertrand Evans, for example, claims that "no principle in the management of awareness is discoverable" in it, and as a result

that the play "exhibits uncertainty in the handling even of simple arrangements and a botching of more complex ones."<sup>53</sup> Kimbrough admits that Troilus and Cressida is dramatically faulty, but insists strongly that "a play may be a failure and a work of art," and that, since this play is just that, it should be studied "not as a drama but as a philosophical work."<sup>54</sup> But Una Ellis-Fermor will have none of this 'damning with faint praise': in her opinion the play "is not a great failure to record a phase of experience [disjunction] beyond the scope of dramatic form, but a great achievement, perhaps one of the greatest, in the expression of that phase, transcending those limitations to produce a living work of art."<sup>55</sup>

## CHAPTER II

### 'TABULA RASA'

I would ask the reader now to make a fresh start, to as far as possible erase from his mind all that he has read thus far, and to approach the play as if it were a virgin manuscript, lost for hundreds of years under layers of dust, opening its secrets for the first time to our eyes. Indeed, I would suggest that all this is not as wild a fantasy as it may at first seem: Troilus and Cressida is not a virgin, but is equally far from being a whore; the secrets hidden thus far we may hope to discover if we are willing to throw off all our preconceptions as to what the play is, is not, and ought to be, to work on Butler's maxim that "everything is what it is and not another thing." Only when we have judged the play on its own merits can we make use of it to judge the critics.

The title of the play informs us that we are to be treated to a dramatization of the legendary love of Troilus and Cressida. The prologue introduces the other main concern of the play, the siege of Troy by the 'orgulous' Greeks. The language used here is strangely uneven, the highflown latinized epic style being occasionally interrupted by jarring commonplaces, the general tone of high seriousness degenerating at the end into colloquial flippancy. But in this too it but serves the proper function of a prologue by preparing us for what is to come: light bawdy, fusty rhetoric, scurvy curses, and impassioned poetry weave a similarly strange and discordant harmony throughout the main body of the play. Moreover, just as here the epic language is rudely halted in

full flight and brought crashing to earth by a few paltry commonplaces, so in the course of the play the epic heroes and romantic lovers who come forth to tread the stage are cruelly flung down from their golden pedestals by those things which tradition does not allow them to possess ---human faults and weaknesses. 'Expectation, tickling the skittish spirits' of Troilus, Hector, Ulysses, Achilles and Ajax will lead them to 'set all on hazard'; and one and all, as a result of flaws in themselves and others, as a result of their situation and environment, will lose their stake. To the accusation that we are anticipating too much, let it be answered that this is part of the function of a prologue; and this one, armed or otherwise, does its job well.

The prologue has informed us that the subject of this play is the war raging outside the walls of Troy; Troilus, by his first words as he takes over the spotlight, denies this claim, asserting that for him, and at least temporarily for us, the centre of attention is the war raging within himself, a battle which has made an "open ulcer" of his heart (I, i, 53).<sup>1</sup> The contrast in styles of language evident in the prologue is present here also with new significance: Troilus and Pandarus are both talking of the same thing, but the divergence between the former's impassioned poetic flights and the latter's 'kitchen imagery' points up the fact that they are on completely different wave lengths, conceiving of their common end in incompatible terms. Pandarus is incapable of understanding the emotions raging within his young master, yet is cunning enough to play upon them, turning a proposed rebuke into a humble plea for aid. The sight of this noble warrior easily reduced

by his servant to an abject suppliant testifies to the fact that Troilus speaks the truth when he says, "I am weaker than a woman's tear" (9).

Troilus is somewhat extravagant in his descriptions of his own suffering and of the perfections of Cressida; he tends to dwell almost exclusively on the physical attributes of his beloved; and his annoyance at being interrupted in the midst of his impassioned tirade is rather comic (34). Yet these facts, individually or together, do not indicate that his love is not true. It is natural that Troilus, a green youth, "skill-less as unpracticed infancy" (12) should share with the young and inexperienced of both sexes the world over tasting for the first time the heady wine of infatuation, a tendency to over-dramatize, to indulge in self-conscious hyperbole. Since he has thus far only had a chance to view Cressida at a distance or in the company of others, it is not surprising that all his concern is with her physical beauty, and certainly does not indicate that he is a young lecher. Finally, the fact that he sometimes verges on the ridiculous cannot obliterate the beauty of his poetry which demands that we take him seriously. The inconsistency Troilus displays in rejecting the war in the first line of this scene, indeed totally condemning it after Pandarus' exit (93ff.), and then dashing off to join 'the sport abroad' at the end, gives the final touch to this clever bit of characterization: the young man, desperately infatuated, impatient for the fulfilment of his dearest desires, frustrated by the coy Cressida, balked by the tetchy Pandarus, is, as a son of Priam, deeply concerned with the siege against Troy, yet resentful of the demands it makes upon him at this time, during what seems in

his young eyes to be the most traumatic crisis of his life.

Scene Two presents to us the object of this wild adoration, as well as introducing, directly or indirectly, all the important Trojans we have not yet met. First, we learn something of Hector: that he is usually a patient man (I, ii, 4-5), but that when his personal honor is threatened, he turns into a wild beast:

He chid Andromache and struck his armorer,  
 And, like as there were husbandry in war,  
 Before the sun rose he was harnessed light,  
 And to the field goes he, where every flower  
 Did, as a prophet, weep what it foresaw  
 In Hector's wrath. (6-11)

These words might serve equally well as a summary of Act V, Scene iii; Hector's fatal weakness is already here revealed for those who have eyes to see. Aeneas, Antenor, Paris and Helenus parade in turn across the stage on their way home from the field of battle, all reviewed by the garrulous Pandarus. Helen too is presented to us through the observations of others: Cressida remarks that when she visited Ilium that morning "Hector was gone, but Helen was not yet up" (51); this, as we later see for ourselves, is typical of Helen's lack of concern about the war which is being fought over her. Pandarus' account of the comic verbal battle which recently took place in Ilium between Helen and Troilus (119ff.) further reveals the light and loose nature of this Greek queen, while at the same time giving us a very significant taste of the atmosphere which pervades the palace of Priam: the persons in power in this great city display an unhealthy love of bawdy, and apparently place an

inordinately high value on empty wit. Cressida shows herself in this scene to be very much a product of this environment, playing with experienced skill a game of wit and deception such as even Troilus is forced at times to engage in as Pandarus' story and his own relation of his forced gaiety at Priam's table (I, i, 29ff.) reveal.

All is appearances, and Cressida only removes her brittle mask when she is alone, protected from the prying eyes and ears of even her uncle, the man who, in the absence of her father, should by rights have assumed the role of confidant and protector, but who is in fact directing all his efforts towards trying to lure her to an illicit bed. She shows herself in her short soliloquy to be more experienced than Troilus, and much more in control of her passion; indeed, he with his 'open ulcer' of a heart, and she with her 'firm' but controlled love, seem to be miles apart. Yet both love, and if Cressida seems disturbingly cold and calculating in contrast to her hot and frantic counterpart, this is understandable in view of the desperate need of a woman alone to assure herself of a conquest before she gives herself over to an illicit union which will make her supremely vulnerable, subject to the bawdy jests and ribald laughter of a crass and insensible court.

This scene looks back to its predecessor, emphasizing the extreme youth of Troilus (122, 125, 254), showing us Pandarus, pitted against a new opponent, being soundly defeated at his own game, implicitly contrasting Troilus' vision of a 'pearl of India' with the reality, a flesh and blood, complex woman, 'such a woman' that "one knows not at what ward" she lies (283). It reminds us constantly, both visually and

aurally, of the other major concern of the play, the war without the walls. And it looks to the future, 'tickling with expectation our skittish spirits' as to how this love affair will develop, introducing to us the characters within the walls of Troy who will play a major part in the action to come, and providing us with a few factual details essential to the plot development, such as the fact that Ajax is Hector's nephew (13-14).

The scene now shifts to the camp of the opposition where we find the Greek leaders gathered in council, occupied with saying little at great length. Agamemnon's fusty rhetoric goes in circles, bogged down in its synonyms and latinized vocabulary, conveying in twenty-nine lines what could equally well have been said in one sentence: "After seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand" (I, iii, 12), but this is not our fault, being part of "the protractive trials of great Jove / To find persistive constancy in men" (20-21). The meat of Nestor's speech is equally brief: "In the reproof of chance / Lies the true proof of men" (33-34); but although his rhetoric is less lame and confused than his leader's, he too plays with words to little purpose at great length. The fifteen lines of empty flattery with which Ulysses begins give little promise that his will be a more fruitful effort; but once he has gained permission to speak, he goes right to the point, pinning down in concrete terms the cause of the Greeks' lack of success: "The specialty of rule hath been neglected" (78). He proceeds to illustrate the necessity of maintaining order by detailing the chaos which results when degree is shaken, both in the universe and in the world of men, returning finally to the immediate problem at hand: "Troy in our weakness stands, not in

her strength" (137). He too suffers from verbal diarrhea, but at least his diatribe is well organized: the repetition of the word 'degree' emphasizes the fact that he at all times keeps within the limits of his theme; and his thought progresses in an orderly fashion, suggesting a vitality and originality of intellect distinctly lacking in Agamemnon and Nestor.

The burden of his message is that Agamemnon is a failure as a leader, that this rambling garrulous rhetorician who advocates passive stoicism is himself the reason why "the enterprise is sick" (103):

When that the general is not like the hive  
To whom the foragers shall all repair,  
What honey is expected? (81-83)

But Agamemnon not only is blind to the implied rebuke, but also lacks the astuteness to conceive of any cure for the disease Ulysses has diagnosed: "What is the remedy?" (141) he asks, receiving in reply only a further lengthy account of the symptoms of the illness:

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
Lies mocking our designs; (142-146)

Patroclus "pageants us" (151), (and if we were previously in any doubt about the way in which Shakespeare intends us to view Agamemnon and Nestor, the brilliant parody of them both that here follows must certainly remove it forever); Ajax and many others, as Nestor further informs us, have "grown self-willed" (188), and proudly withdrawn from

the action in imitation of "god Achilles" (169); Thersites, urged on by Ajax, amuses all by matching the Greek leaders "in comparisons with dirt" (194); and every member of this growing faction scorns the planning and strategy of their venerable superiors, calling it "bed work, mappery, closet war" (205). This whole passage is brilliantly conceived and handled by Shakespeare: simultaneously, the characters of the Greek leaders and of their railing opponents are revealed, and all that it is necessary for the audience to know about the situation in the Greek camp is conveyed, while the whole is sufficiently spiced with humour to catch and hold our interest.

But still Ulysses has not answered Agamemnon's question, posed seventy lines ago, regarding the remedy of this gross disease, and the entrance of Aeneas, bearing Hector's challenge, effectively prevents us from discovering what cure, if any, this sharp politician has in mind. The clear forthright language employed by Aeneas in his own conversation and in the delivery of the formal challenge contrasts sharply with the 'fusty stuff' poured forth in abundance at the Greek council, much to the detriment of the latter. Indeed, Agamemnon's pompous reference to "all the Greekish heads, which with one voice /Call Agamemnon head and general" (221-222) appears highly ironic after all that we have heard about the disharmony within the camp.

The phrasing of the challenge reflects back on the character of the challenger: it is addressed to one

That holds his honor higher than his ease,  
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,  
That knows his valor and knows not his fear, (266-268)

from one who "hath a lady wiser, fairer, truer, / Than ever Greek did compass in his arms" (275-276); these characteristics together well describe Hector himself. Here his devotion to personal honor and his love for his lady can both be served by one action; the events of Act V, Scene iii, when these two loyalties are at odds, reveal which allegiance is the stronger. But this climax is yet to come; meanwhile our attention is focussed on Agamemnon and Nestor, whose pompous replies to this pointed challenge are right in character, and can hardly be read or heard without a smile with Patroclus' parody of the former's hyperbolic fustiness and the latter's palsied senility so fresh in our minds.

Left alone with Ulysses, Nestor, cloaking another simple truth in a mass of abstruse verbiage, emphasizes the importance and significance of this challenge:

. . . in this trial much opinion dwells,  
 For here the Trojans taste our dear'st repute  
 With their finest palate; (336-338)

but his 'old eyes' can see no farther, and he is forced, as Agamemnon was previously, to turn to Ulysses for guidance. The latter has assessed the implications of their new situation at a glance:

What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,  
 Were he not proud, we all should share with him.  
 But he already is too insolent,  
 And we were better parch in Afric sun  
 Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,  
 Should he 'scape Hector fair. If he were foiled,  
 Why then we did our main opinion crush  
 In taint of our best man. (367-374)

His solution to this problem is clever, but distinctly underhanded: "dull brainless Ajax" (381) will win a fixed lottery arranged to choose Hector's opponent, will be acclaimed as a better man than Achilles by the Greek leaders, and, whether he win or lose the single combat, will thus be employed to 'pluck down Achilles' plumes'. "Degree being vizarded / The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask" (83-84); yet, in spite of all his fine words about the chaos which necessarily follows such overthrow of degree, Ulysses here sets about to do just that, to set the unworthy Ajax above his better, Achilles. The skill he displays in this scene, hypocritically flattering his superiors, deliberately planning to use other human beings as pawns to serve his own ends, using brilliant oratory to mask a distinct lack of personal scruples, better deserves to be called 'policy' than 'wisdom'.

This is, then, a very long and complex scene serving several functions: it introduces the Greek commanders, showing the ineffectuality of Agamemnon as a leader, the pathetic senility of Nestor, and the craft of Ulysses, who is in effect the driving force in the Greek camp; it outlines the general situation in the Greek camp, giving us some insight into the characters of Achilles, Ajax, Patroclus, and Thersites, whetting our appetites for the sport to come; it provides us with our first opportunity to see Greeks and Trojans together, presenting a contrast which distinctly favours the latter; and finally it arouses our curiosity as to the outcome of two new and related plot lines, the challenge of Hector and the strategem of Ulysses.

Act II, Scene i bears a similar relationship to the scene which

precedes it as Act I, Scene ii did to Act I, Scene i: as in the latter pair the two lovers were presented separately, so here the second faction in the Greek camp is brought onto the stage directly after the withdrawal of the first; in both cases a contrast is set up which is mutually illuminating. Although the reports of Ulysses and Nestor have taught us something of what to expect of this ribald crew, our first meeting with Thersites still comes as a shock: his very first words are about running boils, and these, plus the repeated references to the filthy, the putrid, and the horrible which follow, leave no doubt about the diseased state of his twisted mind. Here he serves as a connecting link with the scene which has gone before by railing at the members of both Greek factions: if Agamemnon did have running boils, he puns, "Then would come some matter from him; I see none now" (II, i, 9-10); old Nestor's wit, he claims, "was moldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes" (115-116); he jeers at Ajax for his stupidity, and says to Achilles, "a great deal of your wit too lies in your sinews" (108-109); finally he accuses Patroclus of being nothing better than "Achilles' broach" (126). All these appear to be more or less legitimate thrusts; indeed, if we are in any doubt that truth can proceed from so foul an instrument, it must be eradicated by this astute comment to Ajax on his position in the Greek hierarchy: "Thou are bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave" (50-52); we have just seen such a bargain being struck. But all of Thersites' remarks, as he later himself admits, are composed of "wit larded with malice and malice forced with wit" (V, i, 63-64); we must take care to separate the two, to pick cautiously the precious grains of truth out of the great volume of chaff, bred by

envy and discontent, which smothers them.

Word of Hector's challenge is spreading, and Achilles' reaction to it (133ff.) is the other main point of interest in this scene. Why does he abruptly break off in the middle of his animated report of it? He recognizes, as have Ulysses and Nestor before him (I, iii, 325), that the challenge is aimed at him; the prospect of meeting the greatest warrior in the Trojan camp obviously interests and excites him; but he suddenly recalls himself and assumes again the superior disinterested pose that Ulysses ascribed to him in the preceding scene. Here is yet another unanswered question arousing the expectations and interest of the audience; here is another individual who is not exactly what he seems, who has donned a public mask.

Act II, Scene ii takes us back to Troy to meet the Trojan warriors and leaders whom we have previously seen only at a distance; they, like the Greek leaders before them, are meeting to discuss a particular problem, but the two councils proceed very differently indeed. Whereas Agamemnon required twenty-nine lines of fusty rhetoric to outline his problem, Priam succinctly sums up the question facing the Trojans in seven lines: the Greeks have offered unconditional peace to their enemies if they will surrender Helen, and the assembled company must decide if the offer is to be accepted. Hector, at Priam's request, first addresses himself to the question, arguing that already the Trojans have lost many men in battle, each of them worth as much as Helen, to guard a thing not their own, and thus that reason demands she be yielded up. Troilus

jumps in angrily claiming that great Priam's worth and honor are at stake, things not to be measured by petty fears and reasons. Helenus aligns himself on Hector's side, and he and Troilus engage in an exchange of personal insults which ends in Troilus' passionate denouncement of reason as the mother of cowardice:

Nay, if we talk of reason,  
Let's shut our gates, and sleep. Manhood and honor  
Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their thoughts  
With this crammed reason. Reason and respect  
Make livers pale and lustihood deject. (II, ii, 46-50)

Hector ignores this emotional outburst, quietly re-asserting his original contention: "Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost / The holding" (51-52). Troilus' query in response to this assertion, "What's aught but as 'tis valued?" (52) carries with it dreadful irony when considered in relation to the high value he places on Cressida, and her subsequent betrayal of him; and indeed, the analogy he uses to illustrate the impossibility of turning Helen back over to the Greeks necessarily calls to mind his own love affair:

I take today a wife, and my election  
Is led on in the conduct of my will,  
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,  
Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores  
Of will and judgment. How may I avoid,  
Although my will distaste what it elected,  
The wife I chose? There can be no evasion  
To blench from this, and to stand firm by honor. (61-68)

Troilus exhibits here the confused thinking which is to lead to his own personal tragedy: his choice of Cressida has indeed been an act of will made on the basis of the evidence of his senses; mature rational judgment

has been given no part to play. To allow one's understanding to be ruled by emotion in a personal matter is one thing; to make a decision affecting the whole future of the state and the lives of thousands on the same basis is quite another. Troilus' emphasis on the role of appetite in guiding the will recalls Ulysses' account of what discord follows when degree is vizarded:

Then everything includes itself in power,  
 Power into will, will into appetite,  
 And appetite, a universal wolf,  
 So doubly seconded with will and power,  
 Must make perforce a universal prey,  
 And last eat up himself; (I, iii, 119-124)

this is the fate which awaits Troilus and the Trojans if they allow passion, appetite, the lust for personal honor to usurp the place of reasoned judgment in their decisions. Troilus' impassioned arguments sound very impressive, but break down drastically under close analysis; he is strong in will, but distinctly defective in wit.

From this abstract argument concerning the nature of value, Troilus returns to the concrete, summarizing the previous events which have placed the Trojans in this difficult position, arguing that to return now the once highly valued stolen prize would be to show themselves base and unworthy of it. Helen, he claims, is "a pearl / Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships" (81-82), a prize well worth keeping and fighting for; this seems a strange declaration from one who angrily proclaimed the last time we saw him:

Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair  
 When with your blood you daily paint her thus.  
 I cannot fight upon this argument,  
 It is too starved a subject for my sword. (I, i, 93-96)

But we ought not to expect consistency from one who bases his judgments entirely on the subjective grounds of passion and will: two objects, love and honor, fill his personal horizon, each drawing him with powerful emotional force; and the dominance of one over the other at any given moment totally governs the tenor of his impassioned outbursts. When the rightful place of reason is usurped by passion, when plausible arguments must be found to support an emotionally-grounded resolution, Helen can appear to be 'a pearl' of great price as much as Cressida.

Cassandra's dramatic entrance at this tense moment is extremely effective; her chilling prophesy, "Troy burns, or else let Helen go" (112), gives substance and weight to the "modest doubt" and fear previously confessed by Hector (10ff.) And indeed it is he who here comments on Cassandra's divination, professing a high regard for her prophetic powers, accusing Troilus of having blood

So madly hot that no discourse of reason,  
Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,  
Can qualify the same. (116-118)

This rebuke is heavy with irony when viewed in the context of his own actions in Act V Scene iii, when the general question of whether the desire for honor should outweigh the voice of reason and prophesy is brought down to the personal level.

Troilus is not to be moved:

Her brainsick raptures  
Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel  
Which hath our several honors all engaged  
To make it gracious. (123-126)

Paris voices his support of his young brother, protesting in the face of Priam's wise rebuke that it is not his personal relationship with Helen that prompts his stand, but a desire to see "the soil of her fair rape / Wiped off in honorable keeping her" (148-149). This argument too Hector refutes in his final speech in which he brilliantly sums up all that has gone before: Paris and Troilus have indeed "glozed but superficially" (165) over the question at hand:

The reasons you allege do more conduce  
 To the hot passion of distempered blood  
 Than to make up a free determination  
 'Twixt right and wrong; for pleasure and revenge  
 Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice  
 Of any true decision. (168-173)

The law of nature and the law of nations, according to which husband and wife are united by unbreakable bonds, demand that Helen be returned to Menelaus:

Thus to persist  
 In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,  
 But makes it much more heavy. Hector's opinion  
 Is this in way of truth. Yet ne'ertheless . . . (186-189)

and here Hector does an abrupt about-face, expressing his determination to keep Helen and continue the war because "'tis a cause that hath no mean dependence / Upon our joint and several dignities" (192-193). He clearly recognizes that the war is being fought over an unworthy object; he foresees that the end of all this bloodshed will be the total destruction of Troy; he realizes that the retention of Helen is against all laws of nature and nations, contrary to both reason and morality. Yet just as Ulysses, after extolling the beauty and stressing the necessity of

degree and order, proceeds to devise a scheme which overthrows the former and disrupts the latter, so Hector, while recognizing the existence of justice as an absolute value, of reason as the supreme governing principle in man, deliberately rejects these realities for a chimera called personal honor. His shift of position is startling in its suddenness; but if we have paid any heed to Alexander's description of him in Act I Scene ii (5ff.), if the memory of his challenge is still fresh in our minds, it should not be entirely unexpected. Hector is as much a slave to his emotions, as much obsessed with personal honor, as are Troilus and Paris; but his capitulation is more tragic than theirs because he possesses a much clearer insight into the nature of what he is forsaking than they do. Hector is strong in wit but defective in will, a weakness which precipitates his destruction.

This scene, then, is not only a companion piece to Act I Scene iii, the Greek Council, but also looks forward, by virtue of the decision here made and the way in which it is made, to the fatal climax of the play's action. Indeed, momentarily disregarding the act-divisions imposed on the play by its editors, I would see this as the last of the introductory scenes wherein all the major characters are presented, the essential background filled in, and the various lines of action set in motion. What will be the outcome of the challenge about which all parties are now informed? How will the lovers be brought together, and what will be the result? How will Ulysses set his little scheme in motion and will it be successful? These are only a few of the questions which have been implanted in the mind of the expectant audience by the

first five scenes of Troilus and Cressida.

The first part of this last question is at least partially answered in Act II Scene iii where we view the successful operation of the first stage of Ulysses' plan: the clever baiting of 'blockish Ajax' by the Greek leaders produces a highly comic and ironic sequence, culminating in Ulysses' brilliantly ambiguous eulogy on the virtues of this 'elephant' whose incredible stupidity and credulity seem to be equal even to the extravagant insults of Thersites:

I will not praise thy wisdom,  
Which like a bourn, a pale, a shore, confines  
Thy spacious and dilated parts. Here's Nestor,  
Instructed by the antiquary times,  
He must, he is, he cannot but be wise.  
But pardon, Father Nestor, were your days  
As green as Ajax', and your brain so tempered,  
You should not have the eminence of him,  
But be as Ajax. (II, iii, 259-267)

'Thy wisdom is like a fence which confines thy many parts': this could be taken to mean either that Ajax' wisdom is so great that it embraces and rules over his numerous skills and talents; or that it is so small that it restricts and hinders the profitable use of the gifts, primarily those of brawn and sinew, that Nature has thought fit to bestow on him. And the whole import of the remainder of this impressive speech is nothing more than: 'if the wise Nestor were as young as Ajax and had a mind like his, he would be like Ajax, except he would lack his eminence (since we would not be likely to flatter and exalt two fools where one puffed-up idiot will serve the purpose)'. The extraordinary cunning of Ulysses, his great talent for saying nothing gloriously, and for manufacturing subtle double entendres, evidenced in the very first speech he

made in the play, where all his extravagant compliments to Agamemnon and Nestor were phrased in the optative rather than the indicative mood, are here made even more obvious; thus forewarned, we should be sufficiently suspicious of him to examine with great care the true import of the fine words with which he later strives to impress Achilles and us.

Achilles is "overproud and underhonest" (132-133): this opinion is expressed in various forms again and again in this scene by all the Greek leaders whose advances he scorns. His virtues, asserts Agamemnon, "do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss" (128), a remark which recalls the question raised in the previous scene as to whether virtue resides within the object or within the eyes of the beholder. Are we to believe the statements of these men whose own pride has here been severely wounded by Achilles' refusal to give them audience, who show themselves in their baiting of Ajax to be distinctly 'underhonest', whose personal interests are here best served by painting Achilles as 'overproud' in order to build up the confidence and inflame the pride of their dupe? As Ajax suggests, "you may call it melancholy, if you will favor the man" (94-95); whether the disease which afflicts Achilles is one, both, or neither of these, time alone will tell.

Thersites is human!---not exactly the type one would welcome as a bosom companion, not infrequently displaying a mind so warped that it very nearly surpasses belief, but human nonetheless, and, in the opening lines of the soliloquy with which this scene begins, mildly pathetic. The man who proclaimed triumphantly regarding his encounter with Ajax in Act II Scene i that "I have bobbed his brains more than he

has beat my bones" (75-76), here in private forsakes his mask and admits that he wishes from the bottom of his heart it were otherwise, "that I could beat him while he railed at me" (II, iii, 4-5). Thersites, as is conclusively established in Act V, Scenes iv and viii, is a rank coward; unable to compete physically with others, he attempts to get the better of them by wit alone, spurred on by the bitter devil Envy to whom he says his prayers. What we see throughout the play is a creature twisted and deformed by the gall of hatred and jealousy which has been for many years poisoning his system; but Shakespeare does not neglect to give us at least a glimpse of the pathetic unhappy soul lurking beneath this venomous and repulsive exterior. He may be beyond our pity, but he at least deserves our understanding.

All the 'spiteful execrations' he spits out here, like those in the first scene of this act, contain a significant element of truth; his ire is here directed more at man in general than at particular individuals, but the content of his remarks differs little. The common curse of mankind, he claims, is "folly and ignorance" (30-31); as for the heroic siege on Troy, "the whole argument is a cuckold and a whore" (77-78). This last view, though crudely expressed, is not as revolutionary as it may sound: Hector, as shown in the previous scene, clearly recognizes that the war is being fought for an unworthy object; Troilus is only blind to the fact when it serves his interests to be; Diomedes and Ulysses later admit to the same realization (IV, i, 68ff. and IV, v, 31). Yet all continue with a conflict which can only bring suffering and destruction, as if Thersites' curse, levelled at Patroclus, "Let thy blood be thy

direction till thy death!" (33) had bewitched them.

The first scene of Act III bears a close and important relationship to several of its predecessors. The pervading tone here differs little from that of the latter part of the scene we have just dealt with: as the Greek leaders amuse themselves by mocking Ajax, so Paris' servant, Pandarus, and Helen play a petty game of words and wit, oblivious to the blood being shed and the lives lost outside the walls within which they pursue their empty pleasure. Pandarus' "fair words," like those of Ulysses, attempt to cloak a secret scheme, but from the ribald puns of the servant ["Sodden business! There's a stewed phrase indeed!" (III, i, 43-44)], and from Paris' educated guess that Troilus plans to sup with "my disposer Cressida" (94), it is obvious that Pandarus' attempts at secrecy and deception have been far less effective than those of the cunning Greek.

In Act I, Scene ii, the door of Priam's palace was opened a crack by Pandarus' story, and we got a whiff of the stagnant atmosphere within; here the door is flung wide open, and our suspicions are amply confirmed. Even the servants have been so infected by their surroundings as to cultivate to extremes the art of empty and bawdy wit. As in his earlier encounter with Cressida Pandarus' attempts to get a serious word or a straight answer from his niece failed dismally, so here his efforts to convey a serious message to Paris are constantly thwarted by Helen's whining interruptions; one gets the impression that, were the people of Troy falling in droves without the palace door, she would dismiss them in the same fashion Pandarus did earlier as "asses, fools dolts . . . chaff and bran . . . crows and daws" (I, ii, 262ff.), and pout for a

bawdy song to be sung for her amusement. Helen's occasional successful witticisms, (for example, "Falling in, after falling out, may make them three" 112-113), recall Cressida's more abundant store;<sup>2</sup> the two are products of the same environment, playing the same game, distinguished only by the fact that Cressida with her superior wit is more successful at it than is her empty-headed counterpart. We come to know Cressida better than we do Helen: her soliloquy in Act I, Scene ii allows us to see beneath the mask and to realize that her excessive wit is a conscious affectation which conceals an astute mind and an affectionate heart; whether or not there is another Helen beneath the empty frivolity displayed here we have little opportunity to judge. The one serious speech she utters after the departure of Pandarus suggests this possibility:

'Twill make us proud to be his [Hector's] servant, Paris.  
 Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty  
 Gives us more palm in beauty than we have---  
 Yea, overshines ourself. (168-171)

But this is hardly definitive evidence, and no more is offered in the play.

"This love will undo us all" (119-120); this is, ironically, one of the very few intelligent comments Helen makes in this scene; it recalls Thersites' exclamation, "War and lechery confound us all!" (II, iii, 82), and Cassandra's grim prophesy, "Our firebrand brother Paris burns us all" (II, ii, 110). Indeed, this scene increases in significance one hundred-fold when viewed in relation to the Trojan Council scene. Is this babbling Nell the prize over which the Trojans have resolved to fight and

die? Is this the pearl "whose price hath launched above a thousand ships" (II, ii, 82)? The slim suggestion made at the end of the scene that a worthier Helen resides beneath this mindless façade would have to be verified many times over before we would question Hector's assertion that "she is not worth what she doth cost / The holding" (II, ii, 51-52).

Paris' confession, "I would fain have armed today, but my Nell would not have it so" (149-150), contrasts sharply with the account supplied by Alexander in Act I, Scene ii of hot Hector dismissing his wife with an angry word and dashing to the field of battle before dawn, and echoes Troilus' earlier resolution prompted by his raging love for Cressida, "I'll unarm again" (I, i, 1). Indeed, the parallel between the positions of Paris and Troilus is emphasized here by the juxtaposition of Paris' confession that Helen's whim kept him from the field, and his question, "How chance my brother Troilus went not?" (150-151). His last words to Helen, "Sweet, above thought I love thee" (172), would be equally fitting in the mouth of his younger brother: both allow passion to usurp the place of reason and to rule their lives.

Paris, as the audience is well aware, was quite correct in his suspicions: the long anticipated meeting between Troilus and Cressida at last takes place in the succeeding scene. We meet Troilus pacing up and down distractedly outside Cressida's door "Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks / Staying for waftage" (III, ii, 10-11).<sup>3</sup> The comparison of his love-adventure to a journey across the river Styx

suggests his own awareness of the immensity and finality of the step he is about to take. Cressida's little strategem has been remarkably effective: delay has brought Troilus' passion to white heat; but he is afraid, afraid that the joys awaiting him will be too fine, too potent for his senses to bear:

I am giddy, expectation whirls me round.  
 The imaginary relish is so sweet  
 That it enchants my sense. What will it be  
 When that the watery palates taste indeed  
 Love's thrice repurèd nectar? Death, I fear me,  
 Swounding destruction, or some joy too fine,  
 Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,  
 For the capacity of my ruder powers.  
 I fear it much, and I do fear besides  
 That I shall lose distinction in my joys,  
 As doth a battle when they charge on heaps  
 The enemy flying. (19-30)

His fears, though expressed in his usual extravagant manner, are not without foundation: the tremendous power, the overwhelming joy and sweetness of love cannot be absorbed and appreciated by the senses alone; mind, soul, and body must be offered at the altar of Venus if the lover is to maintain 'distinction in his present joys' and permanence in his passion. For this is another aspect of Troilus' fear: that the joy of love will be like the taste of good wine, poignant but fleeting, the delight of the night's revels being replaced by a bitter taste and a parched throat the following morning; in short, "this is the monstrosity in love . . . that the will is infinite and the execution confined, that the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit" (88-90). How well this describes the tragedy of Cressida's betrayal: this is the definitive comment on the protestations of never-ending devotion, the plighting of

troths which follow. The Elizabethan audience, long familiar with the Troilus and Cressida legend, must have been as conscious of the irony which permeates this whole scene as we are.

But we must not let our knowledge of what is to follow intrude between ourselves and Cressida and distort our impression of her here. It is true that she is better in control of her passions than is Troilus ---this we have seen already; and that she plays the role of the flirt and the coquette well---what woman on first meeting with a proposed conquest doesn't?---but this is not sufficient reason to suppose that she deliberately leads Troilus on here with the full intention of betraying him. The initial dialogue between the two places Cressida in a similar relation to Troilus as Hector held in Act II, Scene ii: she expresses her fears regarding the outcome of this illicit love, and to his rebuke answers: "Blind fear that seeing reason leads finds safer footing than blind reason stumbling without fear; to fear the worst oft cures the worse" (76-78). Cressida has been delaying this meeting, warned by the voice of reason and by the opinions of others who say that "all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform, vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging less than the tenth part of one" (91-95). The fact that this description of the behaviour of lovers perfectly and ironically describes her own actions in this scene and all subsequent ones in the play in no way reflects on the sincerity of her motives in holding Troilus off until she could be assured that his attraction to her was more than a passing fancy. In her fears, she has consulted the guiding



voice of reason, whereas Troilus, though plagued by the same sense of foreboding, has allowed his passion to carry all.

Reassured by his obviously sincere declaration of unshakeable devotion, she confesses the love which she has thus far concealed from all prying eyes except those of the audience; but having done so, fear floods back again: "Who shall be true to us / When we are so unsecret to ourselves?" (132-133) she cries, acutely aware of her vulnerability now that the dearest secrets of her heart have been revealed. There is, as she herself suggests, (159-160) 'craft' as well as 'love' in this confession and pretty confusion: she is testing him, repeatedly shifting her position until we 'know not at what ward she lies' in her search for further proofs of his devotion to allay her fears. Troilus can keep up with her no better than Pandarus could in Act I, Scene ii; he too behaves perfectly in character, over-dramatizing both his passions and his fears. Yet beneath his hyperbole burns a true light of love; and there is no reason to doubt that the feminine wiles of Cressida cloak an equally sincere, if more controlled, affection.

Pandarus, through his presence and occasional crude comments, performs the same deflatory function here as he did in the first scene of the play. His entrance in the middle of the lovers' tête-a-tête momentarily causes Cressida to don again the mask which Troilus' obvious sincerity has begun to partially break through: to Pandarus' suggestive question, "Have you not done talking yet?" (108-109) she answers sharply, immediately on the defensive, "Well, Uncle, what folly I commit I dedicate to you" (110-111). As far as possible, the lovers attempt to ignore

Pandarus' presence throughout the remainder of this scene, but the audience cannot as easily follow suit: again the object of his interest is the same as that of the young people whom he has brought together thus, but he conceives of their union on a considerably lower plain than they do, and by his presence and comments, these two perceptions are kept constantly before us, grotesquely juxtaposed. The fact that it is he who witnesses and in effect 'blesses' the ironic bargain which concludes this scene in which the three of them seem to step out of themselves and become types akin to those in a morality play, bodes ill for the possibility of their union becoming anything more lasting than a sensual and sexual attachment, a brief taste of a deeper reality made unattainable by the act being 'slave to limit' from within and from without.

Indeed, the seeds of the destruction of this bond are present at the very moment of its making. Cressida, confessing her love for Troilus, admits, "I was won, my lord, / With the first glance that ever---" (125-6); she breaks off in confusion, fearing that she has indiscreetly said too much; but she has gone far enough to reveal the weakness that will precipitate her downfall: her eye directs her mind and heart (V, ii, 110ff.), and as she has been so quickly won by the outward form of Troilus, so she may be again by another. This innate weakness, and the tendency we have already seen her display to be two persons in one, to change with her evolving situation and be all things to all people, bring about a denouement which she herself foreshadows in a speech the full import of which cannot be fully appreciated until seen in the light of Troilus' dilemma in Act V, Scene ii:

I have a kind of self residue with you,  
 But an unkind self that itself will leave  
 To be another's fool. (155-157)

But these 'flaws' in our 'heroine' might never have been fatal to the love of Troilus and Cressida had not the Gods, Fate, or just circumstances if you prefer, snatched her away into a new situation and placed in her view a new object of attraction. The lovers have hardly reached the bed chamber before we hear of the proposed agreement between Greeks and Trojans which is to part them. But the actual dramatization of this severance must wait: the lovers deserve at least a few moments to taste the joy they have been so long anticipating, and Ulysses' plot aimed at arousing Achilles from his lethargy demands attention.

On Ulysses' instructions, Agamemnon, Nestor, Menelaus, and Ajax pass by the tent of Achilles and "either greet him not / Or else disdainfully" (III, iii, 52-3). It might seem strange that the man who has painted in such glowing terms the positive value and absolute necessity of degree should here overthrow the natural order by offering to command his own general; but then, we have noted such inconsistencies in Ulysses before. For the moment, our main concern must be not with the mind of the plotter but with the reaction of his victim. Achilles, in a speech which could well serve as the moral for Timon of Athens, displays his recognition of the grim fact that fortune is fickle and the esteem of men equally so, too often bestowed on a man for "those honors / That are without him, as places, riches, and favor" (81-82), and withdrawn when these fade; yet, Achilles puzzles, since "I do enjoy / At ample point all that I did possess" (88-89), what has caused these men who used

"to come as humbly as they used to creep / To holy altars" (72-73) to scorn me? As Ulysses had hoped, Achilles turns to him for the answer, and the question of value, raised in Act II, Scene ii, and mentioned several times since, is presented in a new light for detailed and serious consideration.

Ulysses, on Achilles' request, quotes from the book he is reading (presumed to be Plato) a passage which may be paraphrased thus: 'No man, no matter how richly he is endowed with virtues, is either conscious of them, or can boast of having them, until they are exercised in intercourse with others, and he can view their effects in them'. Achilles, in response to Ulysses' feigned lack of understanding, attempts to elucidate this quotation through the illustration of the eye which cannot see itself until it sends forth its beam to be reflected back in the eye of another. I understand that, Ulysses replies, but what the philosopher is really saying is that no man is lord of any of his parts until "he behold them formed in the applause /Where they're extended" (118-119). It is a fact commonly recognized by both the moral philosopher and the Christian that certain virtues and talents have no existence in a man outside a social context: it is impossible, for example, for a man to be just if there is no creature outside himself towards whom he can practice this virtue. When an individual does act justly in a social situation, he may be brought to an awareness of the existence of this virtue within himself through observing the effects of his action on the other individuals involved; but the applause of others is not required in order to make the virtue his. Ulysses corrupts the sense of his

authority very slightly, but very significantly. Although he recognizes that there are things "most abject in regard and dear in use", and others "most dear in the esteem / And poor in worth"(128-130), he does not therefore advocate the obvious conclusion that one should strive to be worthy, without thought for the esteem of fickle men. Rather, he preaches that one should seek applause and acclaim, keep lustrous his public image, with no care to the reality within; applause, he implies, does not just teach a man to know his own worth, but somehow increases that worth, as Achilles is soon to realize to his sorrow when the 'lubber Ajax' usurps his high place in the eyes of men.

Achilles seems to be taking the bait nicely, and Ulysses, encouraged, now launches into his famous speech on time:

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back  
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,  
A great-sized monster of ingratitude.  
Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devoured  
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon  
As done. Perseverance, dear my lord,  
Keeps honor bright. (145-151)

Again this overwhelming eloquence is deceptive: the honor for which Ulysses urges Achilles to strive is, as the rest of this passage reveals, little more than empty public applause. He depicts human existence as a brutal rat-race in which each individual is concerned only for his own welfare, and is willing to ruthlessly trample everyone else under foot in order to get to the top. 'Honor' thus attained is a dubious virtue indeed; what he is in fact encouraging Achilles to do is to brutally destroy, by craft or force, all adversaries, in order to keep

in the public eye. He continues:

Oh, let not virtue seek  
Remuneration for the thing it was;  
For beauty, wit,  
High birth, vigor of bone, desert in service,  
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
To envious and calumniating time.  
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,  
That all with one consent praise newborn gawds,  
Though they are made and molded of things past,  
And give to dust that is a little gilt  
More laud than gilt o'erdusted. (169-179)

Here Ulysses seems to be deliberately confusing several different types of value in his cunning attempt to prod Achilles into action: surely 'vigor of bone' and 'friendship', for example, are not in the same class and are not equally subject to the ravages of time. It is a law of nature that, as man's age increases, his 'vigor of bone', his physical strength, decreases; true friendship, on the other hand, is subject to no such law but, as Shakespeare has illustrated in such plays as Hamlet and King Lear, can survive the worst blows of fortune and all the destructive forces of time. The last few lines of this excerpt from Ulysses' eloquent oration reveal conclusively the partial truth upon which all his impressive-sounding advice is based: the 'many-headed monster' is fickle, true, but from this it does not follow that truth and constancy, love and friendship cannot flourish within the individual breast, nor that man's supreme aim in life should be to seek the acclaim of the 'Hydra'. Ulysses thinks throughout in terms of a materialistic world wherein all that counts is public appearances; in such a world certainly time is all-powerful, making 'good deeds' nothing more than scraps 'devoured by oblivion'. But true honor, like any other virtue,

resides first in the individual and only secondarily in the 'multitudinous tongue'; because of this, 'envious and calumniating time' can have no absolute power to destroy it.

What follows next is quite unexpected and more than slightly puzzling: when Achilles still demurs, Ulysses pulls an ace from up his sleeve: "'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love / With one of Priam's daughters" (193-194). Achilles' shock at this revelation is no greater than our own: we have previously received no hint of such an attachment; over and over again, even in this very scene (45ff.), Achilles' overbearing pride has been stressed, and the assumption that this is sufficient and sole reason for his withdrawal from battle has never been questioned. Indeed, Ulysses' whole strategem rests on this assumption. Why, then, when Ulysses has apparently known all along about Achilles' love for Polyxena, did he formulate this plot aimed solely at shaming this proud warrior into action, and place so much confidence in its success? Perhaps he felt that no emotional attachment could be so strong as to overcome a man's greedy lust for public applause; certainly, given his premisses regarding the state of the world and the nature of value, this is a logical conclusion. But we have no reason to believe that Achilles shares Ulysses' selfish and materialistic world view, and thus the revelation of this new aspect of the situation arouses doubts in our minds at least regarding the ultimate success of the strategem of this cunning politician.

His final trump card played, Ulysses adorns it with his usual superb verbiage:

The providence that's in a watchful state  
 Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold,  
 Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps,  
 Keeps place with thought, and almost like the gods  
 Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.  
 There is a mystery, with whom relation  
 Durst never meddle, in the soul of state,  
 Which hath an operation more divine  
 Than breath or pen can give expresseure to.  
 All the commerce that you have had with Troy  
 As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord. (196-206)

The whole import of this majestic utterance is contained in the last two lines: the Greek leaders have been intercepting and opening Achilles' private correspondance; this bit of underhanded, dishonest, and deplorable treachery is the whole 'mystery' of the great omniscient Greek state! 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet'; so the odor of Ulysses' excremental world is in no way altered by the perfumed phrases in which he clothes it.

After Ulysses has departed, compounding his hypocrisy by professing undying love for Achilles as he goes, Patroclus suggests a possible third reason for Achilles' inactivity, which is later phrased in more vulgar terms by the cynical Thersites: "They think my little stomach to the war / And your great love for me restrains you thus" (220-221). Considering Thersites' chronic inability to see anything good or healthy in anyone or anything, I would contend that his insulting reference to Patroclus as Achilles' "masculine whore" (V, i, 20) is hardly definitive proof of an unhealthy attachment between the two. That they are constant companions and extremely close friends has been evident from our first meeting with them; Patroclus' obviously deep and sincere concern for the welfare of his companion expressed here, his suggestion

that the strength of the bond that unites them is such that others may blame him, not entirely without cause, for Achilles' idleness, help to prepare us for the shocking events Act V holds in store.

The effects of Ulysses' poison on the mind of Achilles are already in evidence here. It should be noted that Achilles' two long speeches in this scene, containing his response to the rebuffs of the Greek leaders and his explication of the passage in Ulysses' book (74ff. and 102ff.), are hardly those of a man whose whole wit 'lies in his sinews'; but better minds than his have been duped by the fine words of Ulysses, and thus the agitation which this "derision medicinale" (44) creates in him is not surprising.<sup>4</sup> His mind is diverted from the conflict raging within him by the entrance of Thersites with his account and subsequent miming of the peacock Ajax whose mind Ulysses has so effectively poisoned that he cannot tell the difference between Thersites and Agamemnon (261 ff.). But this interlude of comic relief is only a temporary distraction; Achilles' last words as he leaves the stage vividly reaffirm the violent disturbance created within him by Ulysses' crafty prods: "My mind is troubled like a fountain stirred, / And I myself see not the bottom of it" (310-311).

The wheels which Calchas set in motion at the very beginning of this scene by his request that the captured Antenor be exchanged for his daughter Cressida grind inexorably on throughout the next four scenes, tearing the lovers asunder. Act IV, Scene i brings Diomedes within the gates of Troy to carry out his fateful mission, and tension builds as Aeneas is sent ahead by Paris to warn the lovers of their impending doom. The words of 'noble hateful love' which he exchanges with Diomedes

before his departure serve to remind us forcibly that there is still a bloody and brutal war raging on the plains without Troy, even when our minds are distracted by other concerns. In the light of this reminder and of Aeneas' shocked exclamation, "Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece / Than Cressid borne from Troy" (IV, i, 46-47), Paris' brutally brief dismissal of the whole affair is highly ironic: "There is no help, / The bitter disposition of the time/ Will have it so" (47-49). The time would not be thus bitterly disposed had Paris not been attracted to a Greek queen and rashly stolen her from her rightful lord; the hatred which divides Diomedes and Aeneas, the blood shed on the Ilium plains, the heartache of Troilus, are all the direct or indirect results of Paris' action. We have already noted (III, i) the close parallel between the situations of Troilus and his elder brother by virtue of the overwhelming passion which they both share; and as Hector so sagely pointed out in Act II, Scene ii, the 'bitter disposition of the time' decrees as much that Paris should relinquish Helen as it does that Troilus should part with his beloved Cressida. Yesterday, Paris would not even enter the field because 'his Nell would not have it so'; to-day he is up before dawn to demand of Troilus a sacrifice for the sake of Troy such as he himself is not prepared to make; yet whereas Troilus' sacrifice can only delay Troy's destruction by regaining Antenor, without whom "their negotiations all must slack" (III, iii, 24), Paris' parallel sacrifice could prevent it. The main function of the third scene of this act is to further emphasize the great significance of the fact that, of all the sons of Priam, it should be Paris who is commissioned to bring to Troilus his emotional death-warrant. To the doomed man's moving

exhortation to him to think of Diomedes' hand as "an altar, and thy brother Troilus / A priest, there offering to it his own heart" (IV, iii, 8-9), Paris answers, "I know what 'tis to love, / And would, as I shall pity, I could help!" (10-11). He could help: a few well chosen words at the Trojan Council might have prevented this suffering; but either he is too blind or too selfish to see it.

There is one last passage of significance to be noted in the first scene of this act, and that is Diomedes' scathing attack on Helen. He speaks of her "soilure" (56), her "dishonor" (59), her "whorish loins" (64), her "contaminated carrion" (71), and echoes Hector in affirming that she is not worth fighting over, that "Since she could speak, / She hath not given so many good words breath / As for her Greeks and Trojans suffered death" (72-74). Yet Diomedes, like Hector and Troilus, continues in spite of this insight to fight upon this 'starved subject'. Can any personal honor be won in a dishonorable war? They all seem to think so.

The four short scenes in which the forced parting of the lovers is dramatized are skilfully organized, taking us alternately within and without the house of Pandarus. We have thus far only examined the action taking place outside his abode; let us now slip quietly inside and see if eavesdropping can yield any new insight into the characters of Troilus, Cressida and her pandar uncle.

There is a sense of foreboding as the lovers, betrayed by 'the witch' night who has fled "with wings more momentary-swift than thought" (IV, ii, 14), prepare to part; Cressida's pathetic appeal to Troilus,

"Prithee tarry, / You men will never tarry" (15-16), conveys to us again a sense of her unnamed fear, her feeling of vulnerability and helplessness now that she has given herself to this man who has been hers so briefly. Again, with Pandarus' approach, we see her leap to the offensive, clearly showing her awareness of her uncle's nature, and the chagrin it causes her: "A pestilence on him! Now will he be mocking. / I have such a life!" (21-22). An ominous knock at the door interrupts his bawdy jibing, a knock which frightens Cressida into pulling Troilus back into the seclusion of her chamber: "I would not for half of Troy," she confesses, "have you seen here" (42). How can love be freely given, joyfully accepted, and eternally pledged with the jeers of Pandarus constantly translating every tender word and sigh into his own terms, the language of the whore-house, in a situation where all feelings must be concealed from the outside world and the dread fear of discovery is a haunting presence at every meeting? Indeed, Troilus' reception of the bitter news that Aeneas brings is totally governed by this latter reality: he cannot allow himself to think or to feel until he has escaped from this incriminating house, until he has won from Aeneas his word that he will substantiate his alibi; the protection of the reputation of his dear love must be his first consideration.

Cressida's reception of the grim tidings, unhampered by any such considerations, is unrestrained and naturally violent. Her first reaction is one of defiance: "I will not go;" she declares; "I know no touch of consanguinity, / No kin, no love, no blood, no soul, so near me / As the sweet Troilus" (103-105). This vain and pitiful struggle against forces

beyond her control is pathetic and moving; she is like a beautiful bird caught in a net woven from the decrees of two warring states and her own innate weakness; against both she here passionately swears to fight eternally, but against such odds how futile are such vows!

That her struggle against the first of these forces is indeed vain Cressida quickly recognizes; she must go to the Greek camp, and to Pandarus' plea that she moderate the grief attendant on this realization she answers:

The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,  
And violenteth in a sense as strong  
As that which causeth it. How can I moderate it?  
If I could temporize with my affection,  
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,  
The like allayment could I give my grief.  
My love admits no qualifying dross,  
No more my grief, in such a precious loss. (IV, iv, 3-10)

It seems difficult to reconcile this passionate outburst with the coldly calculating Cressida we saw in Act I, Scene ii, and, even more so, with the gay and frivolous young lady who, in the very next scene, makes her grand entrance into the Greek camp. To write this speech off as a deliberate bit of play-acting hardly seems to be an adequate solution: Troilus is not present; only Pandarus is audience to her protestations of grief, and certainly she can have no motive for desiring to deceive and impress him. No, we must, I think, accept the fact that the sentiments expressed here are genuine and sincere. After much dallying, following the guide of her reason and fears, she has given in to the passion for Troilus she long nourished in concealment, gambling her reputation and her happiness on the truth and sincerity of one man;

and, until fate intervened, she appeared to have won; now, the prospect of increasing joys and blessed security has been cruelly and suddenly snatched from her. Thus, it is natural that she should deeply feel the pain of parting. But she has not yet seen Diomedes!

Troilus returns, now giving full vent to his emotions, blaming the envious gods for this enforced separation, railing at chance and time for the brevity of their leave-taking, in a memorable speech which clearly echoes Ulysses' earlier diatribe against 'envious and calumniating' time:

Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
 Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how.  
 As many farewells as be stars in heaven,  
 With distinct breath and consigned kisses to them,  
 He fumbles up into a loose adieu,  
 And scants us with a single famished kiss  
 Distasted with the salt of broken tears. (44-50)

Aeneas' impatient summons is to Troilus like the call of the angel of death; chaos, destruction, and death have forcibly invaded and are ruthlessly plundering his emotional world.

Pandarus exhibits here, for the first time, some respect for the privacy of the lovers by withdrawing, and his parting words serve to confirm an impression which has been gradually growing in strength ever since the revelation of the fateful news: "Where are my tears? Rain, to lay this wind, or my heart will be blown up by the root" (55-56). The old man is truly and deeply touched by the plight of the young couple whom he has brought together; all his lecherous delight in their union has been replaced by a sympathy and grief which almost equals theirs.

To comfort his 'lambs', his 'sweet ducks', he can think of nothing but a trite verse from his common collection (13ff.), but it is nevertheless a sincere attempt to console those with whom his heart and mind are finally, if briefly, in tune.

Troilus declares boldly to Cressida, "I will throw my glove to Death himself / That there's no maculation in thy heart" (65-66); and indeed, there is none---yet. But his repeated pleas to her that she 'be true' suggest that there lurks more doubt in his heart than he cares to admit to himself; and her resentment of his exhortations further suggests that she is not as sure of herself as she pretends to be. Troilus' fear derives from two sources: his knowledge of the bounteous 'gifts of nature' and numerous arts possessed by the Greek youths, and his doubt about the strength of any woman to resist such temptation. Indeed, Diomedes fits well the picture painted by the jealous Troilus: he begins playing a 'subtle game' from the moment he enters, flattering Cressida, doing his best to make Troilus look like a fool. But, as Troilus has warned, beneath all these sweet graces a devil lurks, a devil whose thoughts on seeing this Trojan prize are turned to the sport of bedding, as the many double entendres in his honeyed speeches reveal: "to Diomed / You shall be mistress and command him wholly" (121-122); "When I am hence, / I'll answer to my lust" (133-134); "To her own worth / She shall be prized" (135-136)---but if his comments on Helen are any indication, Diomedes' opinion regarding the worth of women is very low indeed. That Troilus' second source of fear, his doubt about the 'persistive constancy' of women, previously expressed at length on his

first meeting with Cressida (III, ii, 165ff.), is equally justified, time will prove. The anguished cry of a man haunted by a grim sense of foreboding, brutally aware of the fact that life all too often does not permit the fulfilment of our dearest hopes, rings out here as a dark prophesy of things to come:

But something may be done that we will not.  
 And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,  
 When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,  
 Presuming on their changeful potency. (96-99)

Troilus' reference to his "godly jealousy" (82) reminds us of Othello: both love 'not wisely, but too well'; the love of each is attacked from without before the seeds of trust and faith have barely had time to germinate, let alone sprout strong roots. Although their tragedies are very different, both result from the pitting of cunning against 'mere simplicity', and the subsequent overwhelming and excruciatingly painful victory of the former.

From this point onwards, the speed of the action steadily accelerates as all the plot lines move towards their climax. As Troilus, Cressida, and Diomedes leave the stage, Hector's trumpet sounds, reminding us and the Trojan warriors that the challenge delivered ten scenes ago is finally to bear fruit. Although much time has elapsed, we have been repeatedly reminded of it in the working out of Ulysses' little strategem which the challenge in fact precipitated; now our interest, temporarily diverted by the plight of the lovers, is abruptly turned to the lists where Aeneas informs us we must speed "with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity" (147), a rather unfortunate choice of imagery on his

part, highly ironic in the light of the touching picture so fresh in our minds of a broken Troilus who, twelve hours ago, was just such an impatient bridegroom. Paris' peremptory observation that "'tis Troilus' fault' we are late recalls again the ironic fact that "'tis Paris' fault' we are here at all.

The first person we encounter as we approach the lists is Agamemnon, who is addressing Ajax with the customary overblown hyperboles we have come to expect of him; how close Patroclus was to the mark in his pageant of this eupheuristic rhetorician is evident here as he almost parodies himself. Ajax' exhortation to his trumpeter is in the same vein, and in its exaggerated pomposity suggests that the swelled pride of this thick-skulled dupe has abated little since our last comic sight of him. Here stand two fools, made such, at least in part, by the lying flattery of Ulysses.

But there is no reply to Ajax' trumpet call; as we have seen, the Trojan warriors have been delayed by Troilus' dallying; instead, Cressida and Diomedes enter. Agamemnon greets the young beauty in courtly fashion with a kiss, and the other Greek leaders follow suit until Menelaus, by his wistful comment, "I had good argument for kissing once" (IV, v, 26), precipitates a host of bawdy jibes at his expense. Twenty lines pass after Cressida's entrance before she says a word; faced with a host of strange faces, she takes a moment or two to assess this new situation, to determine what is expected of her; but the problem presented is slight, since the atmosphere here is almost identical with that to which she has been accustomed in Ilium, and thus she easily dons the appropriate

mask, joining with the others in the cruel baiting and mocking of the Greek cuckold.

Ulysses is the last to come forward to beg his kiss, but, when his request is granted, he abruptly spurns her with the words, "give me a kiss / When Helen is a maid again" (49-50). He will not defile his person by kissing this 'sluttish spoil of opportunity' as he has judged her to be by her deportment during this brief encounter:

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip---  
 Nay, her foot speaks, her wanton spirits look out  
 At every joint and motive of her body.  
 Oh, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
 That give accosting welcome ere it comes,  
 And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts  
 To every ticklish reader! Set them down  
 For sluttish spoils of opportunity,  
 And daughters of the game. (55-64)

Yet it was he who gave her her cue, who suggested that she distribute kisses all around (21), who helped create an atmosphere of bawdy frivolity by his jibes at Menelaus. We have known Cressida far longer than he has, and have seen a side of her character which he has had no opportunity to view; and from what we know of Ulysses, of the crass values which are a part of his selfish and materialistic world view, we may suspect that he would not understand and appreciate this facet of her complex person even had it been revealed to him. Are we, then, to take his judgment as the definitive comment on the character of Cressida? No! He is not a competent judge. In Troilus' words, 'this is, and is not, Cressid'.

The Trojans finally arrive, and Aeneas, playing again the role of messenger, conveys to the Greek host Hector's desire that they decide whether or not this is to be a fight to the death. Achilles, perhaps projecting his own faults into his arch-enemy, sees in this offer evidence of gross pride, an accusation which gives Aeneas opportunity to extol the virtues of his lord and to repeat, lest we have forgotten, the fact that Ajax and Hector are kin. This exchange is parallel to that which occurred during Aeneas' first visit to the Greek camp (I, iii, 227 ff.); the Greeks cannot understand the courtly courtesy of their adversaries, and are constantly seeking ulterior motives beneath their gentle words and deeds. The decision is reached that this will be a 'maiden battle' and, while the two champions prepare for combat, Ulysses supplies, in answer to Agamemnon's queries, a thumbnail sketch of the young Troilus, based on a previous report gleaned from Aeneas:

The youngest son of Priam, a true knight,  
 Not yet mature, yet matchless, firm of word,  
 Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue,  
 Not soon provoked nor being provoked soon calmed;  
 His heart and hand both open and both free;  
 For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows,  
 Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,  
 Nor dignifies an impair thought with breath;  
 Manly as Hector, but more dangerous,  
 For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes  
 To tender objects, but he in heat of action  
 Is more vindicative than jealous love.  
 They call him Troilus, and on him erect  
 A second hope, as fairly built as Hector.      (96-109)

Again, as in Ulysses parallel assessment of Cressida, these words convey only a partial truth: Troilus the warrior may not give 'till judgment guides his bounty', but Troilus the lover certainly does; there is almost

as much of a dichotomy in him as in Cressida, and only one facet of his elusive character is captured here. Both the lovers are true children of Shakespeare, delightfully complex, refreshingly human; no comment of a dozen lines can do justice to either.

The conflict so long awaited is over in seconds; Aeneas' emphasis on Hector's courtesy (82), Ulysses' mention of his clemency (106), should have prepared us for this, but it still comes as a shock when all our expectations are so thoroughly crushed. Ajax' comment, "thou art too gentle and too free a man" (139), suggests that ominous consequences may yet attend Hector's gallantry; but the final 'issue' here is 'embracement', a contact in which some of his cousin's gentle courtesy seems to rub off on Ajax: certainly the humble invitation which he issues to Hector to visit the Grecian tents (149ff.) sounds very strange proceeding from the mouth of the overproud peacock we have known.

The Greek leaders each in turn extend a courteous welcome to their valiant enemy: Agamemnon spouts his usual euphemisms; poor Menelaus is forced again to hear of Helen, a "deadly theme" (181) indeed; old Nestor provides us with a brilliant account of Hector's performance on the field of battle before his mind lapses again into the past, to the time when he fought against Hector's grandfather, moving from the sublime to the pathetic as he expresses again, as he did when the challenge was first voiced (I, iii, 291ff.), the vain wish that he were young again so that he might himself meet Hector in armed combat; Ulysses' greeting is short and peremptory, but his reference to Hector as the "base and pillar" (212) of Troy combines with Nestor's vivid account of his skill

in battle and magnanimity to further exalt the young Trojan in our eyes. However, the exchange which follows reminds us again of his fatal weakness: to Ulysses' prophesy that the walls of Troy are doomed to fall he answers:

I must not believe you.  
 There they stand yet, and modestly I think  
 The fall of every Phrygian stone will cost  
 A drop of Grecian blood. The end crowns all,  
 And that old common arbitrator, Time,  
 Will one day end it. (221-226)

He must not believe it, but he does, as he unwittingly admits by his boast that every stone that falls 'will cost a drop of Grecian blood'; Time will end it, but the Trojans, led by Hector, might have robbed the 'common arbitrator' of this office had they payed heed to their reason and their fears at the Trojan Council.

The two arch-enemies, Achilles and Hector, at last here meet face to face in an encounter which is distinctly unfavorable to Achilles: the conceit he displays here is absolutely insufferable; for the first time we may be inclined to fully agree with Agamemnon's judgment that he is 'overproud and underhonest'. Out of the heated words which result from Achilles' insolence comes the prospect of a new climax, as the pride of Greece boldly declares to the pillar of Troy, "Tomorrow do I meet thee, fell as death" (269), and with this new expectation we are left as Greeks and Trojans together depart to the feast.

But two figures remain behind. Just as Act IV, Scène iv ended with a short exchange between Paris, Aeneas and Deiphobus, designed to

direct our attention from the lovers to the lists of combat, so here, the words of Ulysses and Troilus serve to set the stage for the climax of the love plot: Greek will guide Trojan to the place where Calchas, his daughter, and Diomedes, who "gives all gaze and bent of amorous view / On the fair Cressid" (282-3), feast, the location being, very significantly, the tent of the cuckolded Menelaus. The cunning Ulysses is not long in grasping the significance of the 'heavy look' Troilus has worn all day (95), coupled with this strange request: his seemingly innocent question, "Had she [Cressida] no lover there / That wails her absence?" (288-289), is in fact a crafty attempt to substantiate his suspicions with further proof. Troilus' answer, though evasive, tells him all he wants to know, and increases in us the sense of foreboding doom which has been part of the lovers' experience, and hence of ours, from the very first: "She was beloved, she loved; she is and doth; / But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth" (292-293).

The first scene of Act V brings Thersites again to the stage, perceptively hailed by Achilles as "thou core of envy" (4); what other emotion could possibly prompt the tirade of incredibly foul curses he hurls at Patroclus, the one member of the Greek faction who threatens to match him at his game of wit? The imagery of disease and rotteness which always characterizes his discourse here seems to reach a peak of vileness untouched before. But he brings more than just curses: he brings a letter from Queen Hecuba containing a token from Achilles' beloved Polyxena, both urging him to keep the oath he has sworn not to meet Hector in the field. Achilles does not hesitate a moment: "Fall

Greeks, fall fame, honor or go or stay, / My major vow lies here, this I'll obey" (48-49). His decision is the exact opposite of that which Hector makes two scenes later. And with it, the prospect of a new climax crumbles into nothing, as do Ulysses' hopes for the success of his cunning strategem.

The latter part of this scene is primarily devoted to preparing for the betrayal sequence which follows. Technically, Shakespeare sets the stage brilliantly: Diomedes excuses himself from Achilles' banquet on the pretext of 'important business' which requires immediate attention, and strikes out for Calchas' tent<sup>5</sup>; Ulysses and Troilus follow; and Thersites, his keen nose catching the scent of possible sport, trails them. The result of this clever manoeuvring is a fascinating situation in which Cressida and Diomedes carry on their little game on the assumption that they are alone; Troilus and Ulysses see all, each reacting in character and being affected by one another as well as by the pageant enacted before them; and Thersites observes all four, interpreting everything he sees and hears in his usual sordid manner.

The method whereby this complex structure is utilized in order to achieve maximum effectiveness can be seen in microcosm in five short lines (V, ii, 7-11). Cressida emerges from Calchas' tent and whispers a few words in Diomedes' ear. Troilus, bearing in his mind an idealized vision of Cressida, is shocked by this display of familiarity. Ulysses, his mind containing a very different image of her, sees nothing unexpected in her action: "She will sing any man at first sight" (9). Thersites, his mind diseased with vulgarity, sees here only the opportunity for a

bawdy pun: "And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff. She's noted" (10-11). Each observer interprets the drama of Diomedes and Cressida according to his own preconceptions and general character; and the reactions of all are skilfully contrasted with one another.

Cressida has apparently sworn an oath to Diomedes earlier in the day; but now she is having second thoughts about her rash action: "I prithee do not hold me to mine oath. / Bid me do anything but that, sweet Greek" (26-27). Diomedes threatens to leave, cutting her with the words, "I'll be your fool no more" (32): this barb stings Troilus as well as Cressida, bringing to the former the first glimmer of bitter knowledge that he has been and still is the fool of this unfaithful wench, and to the latter the fear that she is going to lose this man to whom she is so attracted. Her plea to her "sweet Greek" for "one word in your ear" (34) draws from Troilus an anguished cry of anger and grief which alarms the practical Ulysses who has heard so recently from Aeneas that this young son of Priam "'being provoked is not soon calmed', and when aroused can be 'more vindicative than jealous love'. Three times Troilus begs his guide to stay, promising to stem his 'flow to great distraction' and remain silent; but this vow is broken twice in a matter of seconds as Diomedes renews his threats to leave and Cressida shows consternation at his anger, calling him back. Ulysses acts here both as a restraining influence to keep Troilus' passions in check, and as a commentator on the progress of the young man's increasing agitation by his more and more frequent cautions and his references to the outward manifestations of the conflict within: e.g. "You shake, my lord, at

something" (50). Troilus, on the other hand, acts as a commentator on the action before him, pointing out mute aspects of the interchange which we otherwise might miss: e.g. "She strokes his cheek!" (51). And Thersites provides a general commentary on the first episode of this progressive betrayal: "How the devil luxury, with his fat rump and potato finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry!" (55-57).

Cressida re-enters the tent to fetch the token her new lover has requested, and emerges with Troilus' sleeve; but again, as she is about to fulfil this new promise, she is struck by a second pang of remorse. The sight of this token reminds her of her Trojan lover who, she ironically imagines, now lies quietly in his bed dreaming of her and hugging to him her glove. She snatches back the sleeve, and swears she will see Diomedes no more; but under the crafty Greek's badgering, she begins again to weaken, first making a feeble attempt at compromise by offering him something else, finally giving in completely. She does so in the full realization that Diomedes is not a Troilus, that he will never love her as sincerely as the latter has done and does; but she is weak. She retains only one vestige of self-respect: she will not reveal, in spite of all Diomedes' bullying, the identity of him whom she has thus betrayed. This knowledge, and the memory of their fleeting moment of sweetness, are hers alone.

Still she makes one last feeble attempt to climb out of the labyrinth; but as she herself says, "'tis done, 'tis past" (97) and it cannot be undone. Diomedes is all she has left now, and his threat to leave her at this point destroys her last defense. "Aye, come. O Jove! Do

come. I shall be plagued" (104-105), she cries, painfully aware that she has made a bad bargain, that no good can ever come of a union with this "false-hearted rogue" (V, i, 95), yet desperately attracted to him. Before following Diomedes off the stage, she turns to say a last farewell to the forsaken Troilus of whose presence she is still ironically unaware:

Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee,  
 But with my heart the other eye doth see.  
 Ah, poor our sex! This fault in us I find,  
 The error of our eye directs our mind.  
 What error leads must err. Oh, then conclude  
 Minds swayed by eyes are full of turpitude." (107-112)

Just as Troilus won her with one glance, so Diomedes has conquered with equal ease but with more immediate success; she has forsaken the maxim of love she previously taught and lived by: "Achievement is command; ungained, beseech" (I, ii, 319). Physical attraction has captured her so totally that the voice of reason has had but little chance against it: she knows that Diomedes will not love her as Troilus has and does, that destruction and grief must ultimately attend this act of faithlessness; yet, though reason on the basis of these facts counsels fidelity, she rejects this guide. But, as we have seen, she is not alone in this rejection: Paris, Hector, Achilles and Troilus himself, when faced with decisions of paramount importance, all display "too much blood and too little brain" (V, i, 53). That we feel for her less sympathy than for any of the others is largely because, throughout her fruitless struggle and subsequent capitulation, we have the agony of Troilus, of which she is the cause, constantly before us.

Thersites further reduces our perception of Cressida as a pathetic figure by his repeated references to physical lust as the driving force in this new union. But again, there are mitigating factors which demand consideration before we irrevocably endorse his condemnation of her as a whore. The love of Troilus does not fit either the world of the Trojans or that of the Greeks: the general rule in both is lust not love, bedding not wedding. For a moment, in and through Troilus, Cressida has been able to escape from this world, to find a new self. But this self, as she recognizes when she first pledges her faith to him, 'resides with him'; without him beside her it can wage but a feeble battle against the "unkind self that itself will leave / To be another's fool" (III, ii, 155-157), the self bred by her environment. She is here back playing the game for which she has been trained in Priam's court, playing it less successfully than formerly because the self briefly vivified by the honest love of Troilus keeps returning to haunt her. Her thrice repeated attempts to abandon the game, which parallel Troilus' three pleas to her to be true, are not, as Thersites comments might suggest, deliberate stratagems designed to baffle and conquer the wily Diomedes: if this were the case she would have abandoned this line of attack after its first sad failure; rather, there is a genuine struggle raging within this woman, a struggle between her reason plus her love for Troilus, and her senses plus the self bred by a world which values the physical and the material above all. When outside influences are added to this---the brevity of her time with Troilus and the prospect of their permanent separation; Diomedes' experienced skill at playing this 'subtle game'---the outcome, though deplorable, is not surprising, nor should it place Cressida beyond

the limits of our sympathetic understanding. She is weak; she is fickle; but she is very human.

Our ban against the intrusion of all critics into our examination of the play must, I think, be temporarily lifted here to allow the entrance of Charles Williams who has, in my opinion, captured perfectly the spirit and the significance of Troilus' moment of supreme agony. He says:

The crisis which Troilus endured is one common to all men; it is in a sense the only interior crisis worth talking about. It is that in which every nerve of the body, every consciousness of the mind, shrieks that something cannot be. Only it is . . . There is a world where our mothers are unsoiled and Cressida is his; there is a world where our mothers are soiled and Cressida is given to Diomedes . . .<sup>6</sup>

And between these two worlds Troilus hovers in what approaches schizophrenic madness: the evidence of his senses and the image of Cressida enshrined in his heart, the evidence of his senses and the whole order of the universe, are in direct and mortal conflict:

This she? No, this is Diomed's Cressida.  
 If beauty have a soul, this is not she.  
 If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,  
 If sanctimony be the gods' delight,  
 If there be rule in unity itself,  
 This is not she. (137-142)

And yet, this is she; how are these two incompatible truths to be reconciled?

Within my soul there doth conduce a fight  
 Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate  
 Divides more wider than the sky and earth,

And yet the spacious breadth of this division  
 Admits no orifex for a point as subtle  
 As Ariachne's broken woof to enter.  
 Instance, oh instance, strong as Pluto's gates,  
 Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of Heaven.  
 Instance, oh instance, strong as Heaven itself,  
 The bonds of Heaven are slipped, dissolved, and loosed,  
 And with another knot, five-finger-tied,  
 The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,  
 The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics  
 Of her o'reaten faith, are bound to Diomed. (147-160)

This magnificent outburst of impassioned poetry brings with it echoes of so much that has gone before: of the speeches of Agamemnon and Nestor on the reproofs of chance and the need for patience in bearing them (I, iii, 17ff.), of Ulysses' speech on order (I, iii, 94ff.), as Troilus, by describing the breakdown of Cressida's love in terms of the negation of cosmic order seems to embody in his own person all the chaos and disorder envisaged by the Greek statesman; of Ulysses' later oration on time (III, iii, 145ff.), where again the Greek's vision of time as a 'great-sized monster of ingrattitudes' devouring 'those scraps of good deeds past' seems to be cruelly fulfilled in the young Trojan's bitter experience; of the controversy on the nature of value which occupied the Trojan Council, as Troilus' own question, "What's aught but as 'tis valued?" (II, ii, 53) is brutally answered here.

"This is, and is not, Cressid!" (V, ii, 146): there is 'no rule in unity itself'. The only way Troilus can escape madness at this destructive dichotomy is to transform that segment of his mind which, against all the evidence of his senses, continues to love and idolize Cressida, into hatred for Diomedes: "As much as I do Cressid love, / So much by weight I hate her Diomed" (167-168). Such hatred can be turned into action,

thus projecting the conflict outwards and relieving his tortured spirit. The decision he made in the very first line of the play to forsake the battle without the walls of Troy for the conflict raging within himself is here completely reversed; having thus affected his self-cure, he can accept the testimony of his senses:

O Cressid! O false Cressid! False, false, false!  
 Let all untruths stand by the stained name,  
 And they'll seem glorious. (178-180)

He departs with Aeneas, leaving Thersites to speak the last word in this scene; that he should do so is appropriate since it is one in which lechery has been victorious.<sup>7</sup>

Hector is bound by the same vow as Achilles: his personal honor depends upon his entering the field to meet in mortal combat his Greek counterpart; he too has made a vow of love in taking Andromache to be his wife, a vow which in the next scene comes into direct conflict with his lust for honor. The forces which should lead him to make a decision identical to that of Achilles are great indeed: to the pleading voice of Andromache is added that of his sister Cassandra, who again emphasizes the fact that if Hector falls, Troy falls with him (V, iii, 66ff.); and finally Priam, King of Troy, attempts by reason and command to prevent his son from entering the field:

Thy wife hath dreamed, thy mother hath had visions,  
 Cassandra doth foresee, and I myself  
 Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt,  
 To tell thee that this day is ominous.  
 Therefore, come back. (63-67)

How Hector's own wise words at the Trojan Council should come back to haunt and guide him as he faces the most important personal decision of his life!---his rhetorical question, "What nearer debt in all humanity / Than wife is to the husband?" (II, ii, 175-6); his plea to Troilus, "Now youthful Troilus, do not these high strains / Of divination in our sister work / Some touches of remorse?" (113-115); his ringing statement, "'Tis mad idolatry / To make the service greater than the god" (56-7); his plea that all those of hot blood obey the discourse of reason and heed the "fear of bad success in a bad cause" (117). But Hector is deaf to all voices from within or without; his blessed honor is at stake: "Life every man holds dear, but the dear man / Holds honor far more precious dear than life" (V, iii, 27-28)---another Hotspur who is destined to meet a similar fate. By acting contrary to the natural law which decrees that his first duty is to his wife, contrary to the ties of blood, contrary to the good of the state, contrary to the law of nations that decrees the King's command should be obeyed, contrary to the dictates of reason, Hector brings about his own death and carries all of Troy to destruction with him. Twice, in the Trojan Council and here, he is given the opportunity to save his doomed city; both times the desire for personal honor leads him to make a decision tragic in its consequences. As Cassandra so wisely says, "Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive" (90).

A new Troilus, mad with hatred, with 'venomed vengeance' riding on his sword, serves in this scene as an effective foil to the honor-crazed Hector. Troilus is as deaf to his brother's ironic pleas to unarm as Hector is himself to the prayers of his wife, sister and father; the

former's impassioned declaration that nothing can withhold him, neither "fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars / Beckoning with fiery truncheon my retire," nor "Priamus and Hecuba on knees, / Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears" (52-55), describes well the forces which vainly demand Hector's withdrawal. On one point only are the brothers in disagreement: to Troilus' bruised spirit, Hector's habitual practice of not letting his sword 'decline on the declined' now appears a "vice of mercy" (37), sheer "fool's play" (43). The youngest son of Priam has exchanged one mad passion for another; his soul-searing experience, instead of giving him a new insight into the nature of truth, has left him with a sense of values even more chaotic and tragically deformed than that which he displayed in the Trojan Council. If chivalry and magnanimity are vices, and ruthless vengeance laudable, Achilles' treacherous murder of Hector must be accepted as morally good and highly commendable: no further proof is needed to damn the doctrine of Troilus.

The arrival of a letter from Cressida at the close of this painful scene adds more coals to the demented fire burning within the young warrior: "Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart. / The effect doth operate another way" (108-109). The tearing up of the letter has a terrible finality about it, marking the ultimate break in communication between these two whose souls fleetingly touched. Pandarus is here not the cunning bawd who in the first scene of the play cleverly transformed his irate lord into a humble suppliant, but the defeated old man who withdrew weeping from the sight of the young lovers' painful

parting; his self-conscious fishing for sympathy by his attempts to convince his distracted master and us that he is one of those unfortunates who suffer from 'the pain that really hurts' is both comic and pathetic.

After being kept aware throughout the play that there is a battle raging without the walls of Troy, we are finally given a glimpse of the action in the last seven short scenes. The various plot lines have been for a long time pointing towards this final convergence on the field of battle, and Thersites, acting as a vulgar chorus, confirms as actuality much that they have anticipated: that Diomedes has come to the field to-day bearing Troilus' sleeve upon his helm; that Ulysses' strategem has "not proved worth a blackberry" (V, iv, 12), since now not only Achilles but also Ajax will not arm. The remainder of this scene serves to illustrate in action the insane wrath of Troilus and the chivalric fair play of Hector emphasized verbally in the previous scene. Troilus' warning to Diomedes, "Fly not, for shouldst thou take the river Styx, / I would swim after" (19-20), recalls his image of himself as a "strange soul upon the Stygian banks / Staying for waftage" (III, ii, 10-11) as he impatiently waited to cross the river to his beloved Cressida; but this voyage brought him not to the Heaven he anticipated but to living Hell, and, his first mad passion having been replaced by an equally violent one, he is now prepared to make the same fatal crossing for a new object. Diomedes' reply, "I do not fly, but advantageous care / Withdrew me from the odds of multitude" (22-23), is also rife with echoes, recalling the cautions of both Hector and Cressida (II, ii, 14ff, and III, ii, 76ff.), ill-headed by themselves as well as Troilus, to let

reasoned fear guide and control impulsive passion. Diomedes' caution is victorious over the blind fury of Troilus, as the first words of the next scene reveal; but, in the mean time, Hector enters and accosts the terrified Thersites. Learning that he is not an honorable knight, but "a rascal, a scurvy railing knave, a very filthy rogue" (30-31)---(How well Thersites characterizes himself!)---Hector spares him and retires to search further for the recalcitrant Achilles.

Scene v is a transitional scene in which we see the Greeks' position change dramatically before our eyes. Agamemnon first brings grim tidings of the havoc the Trojans have wreaked in the ranks of the Greeks; his suspicion that Patroclus is among the slain is confirmed by Nestor who orders that his body be carried to Achilles. The effect of this move is triumphantly proclaimed by Ulysses: both Achilles and Ajax are arming, the former "weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance" (31) on Hector, the latter "roaring for Troilus" (37). This account is immediately verified by the rapid entrance and exit of both Greek warriors on their way to the field of battle in hot pursuit of revenge. Both have been infected with the same disease that boils in the blood of Troilus, the death of one little man who 'had no stomach for the war' having accomplished what all Ulysses' scheming could not do.

Ajax is the first to find his chosen foe, but Diomedes is close on his heels, demanding that the prey is rightly his; Troilus, entering in the midst of this quarrel, reacts in his usual foolhardy and impetuous manner, taking on both simultaneously, and all three exit fighting. Hector enters, and Achilles is not far behind; the latter issues a

challenge, to which the former answers, "Pause, if thou wilt" (V, vi, 14). Such courtesy is typical of Hector, and, quite naturally, serves only to further enrage Achilles; but the latter part of the Greek's response is puzzling indeed:

Be happy that my arms are out of use.  
My rest and negligence befriends thee now,  
But thou anon shalt hear of me again.  
Till when, go seek thy fortune. (16-19)

Why does Achilles, who has dashed out onto the field for the sole purpose of seeking out and destroying the adversary who now confronts him, suddenly change his mind and exit? The only plausible explanation is that his blind rage is tempered by the sight of his formidable adversary, and his newly discovered fear prompts him, like Diomedes, to display 'advantageous care' and withdraw until a better opportunity presents itself. But this is only guesswork: the motive behind his strange words and actions is not supplied; nor is an explanation offered for Hector's subsequent statement, "I would have been much more a fresher man / Had I expected thee" (20-21). Surely it was the fact that he did expect to encounter Achilles on the field of battle that caused Hector, against the advice of all who loved him, to take up his arms. Again a plausible explanation suggests itself: quite possibly someone informed Hector when he first arrived at the field that Achilles had changed his mind and would not be meeting him as he had promised. But, if this is the case, why did Shakespeare neglect to inform us of this and other facts essential to our understanding of this strange exchange? This is one of the problems raised by this play that the critics have little hope

of ever solving.

This puzzling encounter is followed by the return of Troilus who informs us of Aeneas' capture and proclaims his own resolution to save him or lose his own freedom in the attempt; his last words make explicit what has been implied by all his actions thus far: "I reckon not though I end my life today" (26). Hector, left alone again, challenges a passing Greek, who turns and flees with the Trojan in hot pursuit, attracted not so much by his form as by his armor, hunting him 'for his hide'. It would seem that there is little honor to be gained in pursuing a coward across the field of battle with the aim of robbing him of his armor and his life. Whence have fled all the noble and exalted motives, the chivalric courtesy, to which Hector has professed devotion?

While the corner stone of Troy thus debases himself, the flower of Greece is stooping to an intrigue a thousand times more vile: his instructions to his Myrmidons to "empale him with your weapons round about" (V, vii, 5) constitute one of the most heartless schemes of cold-blooded murder ever recorded in literature. And what is the original cause of all this bloodshed past and to come? The entrance of Menelaus and Paris, the cuckold and the cuckold-maker, accompanied by Thersites as lewd commentator on their combat, emphasizes that lechery is at the root of it all. Thersites' vulgar enjoyment is abruptly ended by the entrance and challenge of Margarelon, bastard son of Priam; and here, if ever, Thersites speaks the truth: "I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valor, in everything illegitimate" (16-18). His hasty flight adds the final touch to the portrayal of how

debased this war really is: lechery is at its root; murder and cowardice are the vile fruits it breeds.

"Most putrified core, so fair without" (V, viii, 1): such is Hector's description of his slain prey. In this is symbolized the whole of his mad pursuit of honor: what appears on the surface to be a noble motive loses much of its lustre when it is realized that it conceals transgression of the laws of nature and nations and betrayal of family and state. But although Hector is wrong both in sacrificing everything for the sake of personal acclaim and in the temporary forsaking of the chivalric code in his pursuit of this 'goodly armor', this fact does little to reduce our sympathy for him here or our abhorrence of the crude and cowardly act of Achilles. He and his Myrmidons strike down in cold blood the 'heart, the sinews, and the bone' of Troy; and then Achilles proceeds to compound his brutality with dishonesty and rank callousness, commanding that all proclaim "'Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain'" (14), and that the body of this noble warrior be tied to his horse's tail so that he may drag it in ignominy across the field.

All that remains is for the news of this tragic death to be conveyed to both warring parties. The Greeks, in their reception of the news, display their high regard for Hector; there is here none of the excited exaltation previously expressed at the news that Ajax and Achilles were at last donning arms: rather the atmosphere is one of weariness touched with regret. Ajax' comment, "If it be so, yet bragless let it be, / Great Hector was a man as good as he" (V, ix, 5-6), is highly ironic in light of the brutal butchery we have just witnessed;

and Agamemnon's last words, "If in his death the gods have us befriended, / Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars are ended" (9-10), impress on us again the tragic consequences of Hector's irrational decision.

Troilus too immediately recognizes the full implication of the dreadful news: Troy now faces "sure destruction" (V, x, 9), and his first impulse is to pray the gods that the end may come quickly. Aeneas here tries, as Ulysses did when Troilus was faced with the terrible reality of Cressida's infidelity, to calm the frenzy of this hot-headed young man; but again his self-cure is only affected when he succeeds in turning his inner conflict outwards and focussing it on a particular object, in this case the 'great-sized coward' Achilles. Hector is dead:

There is a word will Priam turn to stone,  
 Make wells and Niobes of the maids and wives,  
 Cold statues of the youth, and, in a word,  
 Scare Troy out of itself." (18-21)

This knowledge of sure destruction, and the dread and ossifying fear it breeds, are as intolerable to Troilus as was the knowledge that Cressida was false, with its necessary consequence that 'there is no rule in unity itself'; as he succeeded then in transforming love into hatred, so he attempts now to exchange despair for a vain hope of revenge, grief for empty comfort. This final desperate attempt to delude himself and his disheartened host is both inspiring and pathetic, a masterful and moving conclusion.

"Hector is dead, there is no more to say" (22); but Pandarus' sudden and totally unexpected appearance on the field of battle at this moment shows that there is indeed more to say, that a play entitled

Troilus and Cressida requires some epilogue to remind us of the lovers whose story was meant to be our central concern. But the reminder, which takes the form of a ribald verse addressed directly to all the bawds, pimps, and pandars in the audience, seems a strange one indeed, considering the depth and intensity of human suffering we have so recently witnessed and been a part of. Perhaps, as some critics have suggested, this dismissal of Pandarus, and his pathetic attempts to console himself in the face of ingratitude, rightly belong at the end of Act V, Scene iii, where Troilus' faithful servant brings him the letter from his faithless love; certainly this is an important question since, as Shakespeare well knew, the final scene does much more than any other part of a play to control our overall reaction to it. Placed in its present position at the end of the play, this bit of light bawdy serves to sharply terminate our emotional involvement in the plight of Troilus and Troy, to force us to return to the reality of a seventeenth or a twentieth century theatre where we sit surrounded, perhaps, by contemporary faithful lovers, betraying wenches, and pandars; for Pandarus here re-assumes his role of a type character, the pandar of the legend and of all time, and as he becomes less of a human being, so we become increasingly detached from the action which has been dramatized before us.

### CHAPTER III

#### 'A POWERFUL IF ASTRINGENT DELIGHT'

There is a dichotomy in this final scene which has in fact existed throughout the play: both those critics who claim that Shakespeare wrote this play in a detached manner solely as an intellectual tour de force, and those who imagine him to have been deeply and consistently emotionally involved in it and to demand that we be likewise, have captured only a partial truth; in fact, detachment and involvement, the cerebral and the emotional, interweave throughout Troilus and Cressida. We cannot, for example, grasp the true import of Ulysses' impressive speeches on value and time if we allow ourselves to be lulled into an intellectual stupor by the emotional impact of his fine words; on the other hand, it is impossible for us to remain emotionally detached from Troilus' agony in the betrayal scene. The final scene in the play, in juxtaposing these two elements within itself, is not unique: the scene in which the lovers first meet and plight their troth (III, ii), for example, also abruptly demands that we withdraw emotionally from the action before us when Troilus, Cressida and Pandarus suddenly are transformed from complex human beings into stereotyped symbols, the types of the legend. These repeated rapid shifts from involvement to detachment, from abstract philosophical discussion to intensely personal impassioned poetry, (with much light bawdy tossed in as a further complicating factor), contribute to the great difficulty critics have had in pigeon-holing this play.

Literary critics all exhibit severe symptoms of neurotic anxiety when they encounter a work which does not readily lend itself to being labelled and filed neatly away in the mental filing cabinet; they are apparently incapable of finding any peace until they have produced a twelve-page article explaining away all the elements in the work in question which prevent it from fitting into the category in which they have previously determined it ought to belong. Shakespeare, I am sure, would be struck prostrate with remorse were he aware of all the agony he has caused successive generations of academic pigeon-holers by not obeying the rules and producing plays which conformed to their pre-conceived ideas. Troilus and Cressida contains a mixture of the elements of tragedy, comedy, history and satire: yet it cannot be said to be exclusively any of these; nor does it seem to me to be terribly enlightening to proceed from this conclusion to the invention of a totally new category tailored to suit this play. At such exercises in linguistic ingenuity Polonius, with his "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral"<sup>1</sup> was an expert, and to him and his disciples I am content to leave this pursuit.

More pressing problems demand our attention: are, for example, the Greeks and Trojans representatives of two opposing sets of values, the former symbolizing intellect and the latter intuition? Kenneth Muir has, I think, effectively exploded this myth by pointing out that Hector in the Trojan Council propounds some of the best-reasoned arguments in the play, displaying much more 'intellect' than either Agamemnon or Nestor with their fusty rhetoric, whereas Achilles is as impervious to reasoned appeal as any of the hot-headed Trojans.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly there is much truth in Wilson Knight's analysis, but he goes too far in attempting to fit the play into the mould he has created. A more fruitful approach is, I think, to search for characteristics which unite the individuals on both sides of the conflict: after all, they are all members of the human race, existing in a situation of war, subject to the curse of original sin, and as such we can expect them to have something in common. I would suggest that the key word, applicable to all the major characters, is 'deception': all in some way either deceive themselves or attempt to deceive others. Since this has, I hope, been established in the course of our detailed scrutiny of the text, a brief summary should suffice here.

Troilus, Hector, Diomedes, and Ulysses all recognize that the war is being fought over a totally unworthy object, yet make no effort to end it, and, in the case of the former two, make a decision which demands that it be continued; if the end is unworthy, the means to it must be equally so; no honor can derive from a dishonorable war, but to this fact they are blind. Both Troilus and Hector, in deciding to continue the conflict, follow a false idealism, adhering to a code of honor which has its basis in 'blood', and can only lead, as the latter at least clearly realizes, to destruction. Ulysses is the exact opposite of Hector, expressing idealistic sentiments but inwardly adhering to a doctrine of cynical materialism, attempting to deceive others while the pillar of Troy strives to deceive himself. Thersites is a Ulysses whose wit has not won for him the eminence of the latter, who seeks to convince others that he is happy with his lot and completely scornful

of them, whereas the truth is that he is desperately unhappy and supremely envious of all those at whom he levels his scurrilous jests. Achilles attempts to convince himself that he cares nothing for the challenge of Hector or for any part of the Greek-Trojan conflict, and succeeds well until its results strike so close to his heart that he is forced to recognize his personal involvement in it; by the action which this realization precipitates, he shows himself to be not the great warrior he has convinced others he is, but a brutal coward who attempts to the last to preserve in the minds of others the illusion he has succeeded in creating. Ajax allows himself to be transported by the false flattery of others into a world of complete self-delusion. Agamemnon, by blaming the ill success of the war on the gods, attempts to avoid facing the reality of his own responsibility for it; and Nestor, by his threats and boasts, strives to avoid the realization that he is a senile old man who has outlived his usefulness.

Along with these deceptions of self and others which directly or indirectly derive from the war are those which are attendant upon love. Cressida spoke a very real truth when she observed that "to be wise and love / Exceeds man's might" (III, ii, 163-164): Troilus recognizes that 'the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit', yet he seems as incapable of applying this truth to himself as Hector is of seeing the relevance of all his abstract reasoning about value to his personal life: he does not moderate his own desires or pay any heed to his fears and forebodings; he deludes himself to such an extent that the shock of Cressida's betrayal almost maddens him; and this too,

plus the shock of Hector's death, he tries to avoid by self-delusion. Paris' attempt to convince himself and others that his plea for the retention of Helen proceeds from lofty and unselfish motives is exposed for what it is by Priam; his inability to see the obvious parallel between his own situation and that of his brother whose heart he leads to be sacrificed is but another manifestation of his general habit of self-delusion. Both Achilles and Cressida try to conceal their love from the rest of the world, with limited success; both attempt to convince themselves that their love is so powerful that it can withstand any challenge: Achilles rejects the lure of fame and honor for the sake of Polyxena, but the passion of revenge overwhelms his devotion and his vows to her; Cressida swears eternal faith to Troilus, but Diomedes' powers of attraction are too powerful for her weak will to withstand. These two, like so many of the other major characters in the play, fall drastically short of their intentions.

To a certain extent, the universal failure of the 'boundless desire' to achieve fulfilment is a result of external forces and circumstances: Cressida, for example, might never have fallen into infidelity if she had not been forcibly separated from Troilus; Achilles might never have forsaken his vow to Polyxena had Patroclus not been slain. But the role of fate or 'envious and calumniating' time should not be overstressed: time brings with it circumstances which severely try the constant faith and resolution of the human creatures under its control, but each of them makes his own decision in the situation forced upon him, a decision for which the responsibility is solely his own.

Such a decision, made in time of crisis, necessarily reveals something of the character of him who makes it, of the values which he endorses. Ulysses, by his decision to exalt 'the lubber Ajax' above his better, Achilles, in order to solve the pressing dilemma facing the Greek camp, reveals that his weighty rhetorical address on the absolute value of degree and order did not come from the heart; Hector, by his decision to uphold the continuance of the war, reveals that all his fine words on reason, natural law, and absolute objective value, are diametrically opposed to the convictions about value whereby he governs his own life. Indeed, whenever human beings are faced with the necessity of choosing between several alternatives, or of influencing others in such a choice, the question of values must necessarily enter either implicitly or explicitly into their conflict and subsequent decisions; hence its presence in Troilus and Cressida. But again, to regard this as the central question and the dominating theme of the play is to tear it out of its proper context and overemphasize its importance: whether value is objective or subjective to the valuer is a question which haunts many of the major characters in the play, just as does the problem of reconciling 'boundless desires' with limited power and the destructive force of time; but these are all merely different facets of the human situation which, because they are shared by all, help to unite the several divergent plot lines in the play, and to impress on us the relevance to ourselves of the action dramatized before us.

The fact that the values of so many characters in this play are tragically distorted, the fact that so many of them delude themselves

with the fancy that they are, or can be, something quite different from what the action proves them to be, leads to a chaotic conclusion which may at first glance seem to suggest that life is a meaningless labyrinth in which struggle is futile. Hector's challenge falls flat, and his proposed meeting with Achilles does not materialize as anticipated; Ulysses' little strategem proves 'not worth a blackberry'; Cressida's and Achilles' vows prove equally worthless; and Troilus, who has suffered most from it all, gains no new moral insight such as Lear achieves through his suffering, but continues to seek solace in self-delusion. This is a depressing picture indeed, one in which all our expectations, like those of the characters themselves, are repeatedly and painfully disappointed; one in which profound philosophical questions are raised and never adequately answered. But in both these respects, is the play not perfectly true to life? Shakespeare here merely observes and reports human behaviour without any attempt to excuse and explain it, or to draw a moral from it: he is not preaching that life is meaningless, any more than he is saying that all women are false and all wars evil.

In this we must find our final response to all the questions raised by the critics. The characters cannot be neatly divided into two camps representing opposing world views: they are all individuals who have one thing in common, their humanity, with all the weaknesses inherent thereto. The critics have erred in painting Cressida too black and Ulysses too white, in trying to elevate Troilus to heroic stature or debase him to the level of an impatient sensualist, in seeing Thersites as 'cynicism incarnate' totally lacking human feelings: these

characters and all others in the play are merely human beings, and in their world and ours, pure blacks and whites, absolute heroes and villains, have no place. The play is one of the most successful in the Shakespeare canon when viewed from a psychological and realistic point of view: it does not end; it breaks off, arousing even in the last scene 'expectation tickling skittish spirits' as it looks to the future. This feeling of incompleteness has troubled some critics so much that they have postulated the existence, at least in Shakespeare's mind, of a second or third play dealing with the Troy saga in which the great bard supposedly planned to pick up all the loose ends left dangling here and carry them through to a neat, emotionally satisfying conclusion.<sup>3</sup> To go to such lengths in an attempt to release Shakespeare from the responsibility of an apparent error in skill and judgment seems to me to be bardolatry at its worst: life offers us few neat denouements, and if Shakespeare here chose to pluck a leaf from her book, this must be accepted and praised or blamed according to personal preference. To me, and to the multitude of scholars who in the past thirty-five years have re-discovered Troilus and Cressida, this play is fascinating by virtue of the way in which Shakespeare has brought alive the traditional figures of legend, united the themes of love and war in such a way that one reinforces the other, brought his children face to face with the universal problems of time, value and order, and set up a pattern of contrasts whereby we are alternately drawn emotionally into the action and detached from it; no tonic chord could possibly bring adequately to rest such discordant harmony. It is not a perfect play,

but, in Tillyard's words:

If we accept it that he meant to leave us guessing, and if we allow that the material and the tradition he inherited forced him to accept a slightly bigger burden than he could bear, we can make all necessary allowances and can end in finding in Troilus and Cressida a powerful if astringent delight.<sup>4</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER I: THE WRANGLING CRITICS

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth Muir, "Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Survey, VIII (Cambridge, 1955), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>W.W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies (New York, 1931), p. 152. In this book, Lawrence summed up fifteen years of work, and re-asserted many of the hypotheses first aired in his article of 1916 (Shakespearean Studies).

<sup>3</sup>Oscar James Campbell, Comical Satyre in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938), p. 217.

<sup>4</sup>Brian Morris, "The Tragic Structure of Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Quarterly, X (Autumn 1959), p. 481. Expressing similar disapproval of traditional approaches to this play are A.S. Knowland, "Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Quarterly, X (Summer 1959), who claims that we must stop looking for symbolic significance in the play and concentrate on its dramatic effects, and William R. Bowden, "The Human Shakespeare and Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Quarterly, VIII (Spring 1957), who asserts that we must be less cerebral and let our emotions be our guide.

<sup>5</sup>Brian Morris, op. cit.; A.P. Rossiter, Angel with Horns and Other Shakespeare Lectures (London, 1961); R.A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered," University of Toronto Quarterly; XXXII (1963), p. 154; and Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and its Setting (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 176-177.

<sup>6</sup>G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (London, 1930), p. 47.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>9</sup>William R. Bowden, op. cit., p. 170. Bowden cites as proof for his claim several instances in which emotional characters, with whom Shakespeare obviously sympathizes, reject the consolation of philosophy from rational ones: for example, Much Ado About Nothing, V, i, 34-38; Hamlet, I, ii, 68ff.; Romeo and Juliet, III, iii, 55-57. He also mentions Octavius in Antony and Cleopatra, and Prince Hal in the two parts of Henry IV as examples of rational characters whom we dislike.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 177.
- <sup>12</sup>L.C. Knights, "Troilus and Cressida Again," Scrutiny, XVIII (Autumn 1951), p. 154.
- <sup>13</sup>Kenneth Muir, op. cit., p. 35.
- <sup>14</sup>Robert K. Presson, "The Structural Use of a Traditional Theme in Troilus and Cressida," Philological Quarterly, XXXI (April 1952), p. 180.
- <sup>15</sup>Robert Kimbrough, op. cit., p. 179.
- <sup>16</sup>Oscar James Campbell, op. cit., p. 212.
- <sup>17</sup>E.C. Pettet, Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition (London, 1948), p. 140.
- <sup>18</sup>W.W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 172.
- <sup>19</sup>Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven, 1959), p. 197.
- <sup>20</sup>John J. Enck, "The Peace of the Poetomachia," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXVII (Sept. 1962), p. 387.
- <sup>21</sup>G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., p. 68.
- <sup>22</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (Toronto, 1949), p. 87.
- <sup>23</sup>D.A. Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare (New York, 1956), p. 67.
- <sup>24</sup>G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., p. 78; A.S. Knowland, op. cit., pp. 354-355.
- <sup>25</sup>R.A. Foakes, op. cit., p. 153.
- <sup>26</sup>G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., p. 151; Charles Williams, The English Poetic Mind (Oxford, 1932); Honor Matthews, Character and Symbol in Shakespeare's Plays (Cambridge, 1962); L.C. Knights, op. cit.; William R. Bowden, op. cit.; Robert Kimbrough, op. cit.; Kenneth Muir, op. cit..
- <sup>27</sup>Una Ellis-Fermor, The Frontiers of Drama (London, 1945), p. 68.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

- <sup>29</sup>A.S. Knowland, op. cit., p. 358.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 361.
- <sup>31</sup>Kenneth Muir, op. cit., p. 36.
- <sup>32</sup>E.C. Pettet, op. cit., p. 142; Robert K. Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 132; E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 90.
- <sup>33</sup>Robert K. Presson, "The Structural Use of a Traditional Theme in Troilus and Cressida," Philological Quarterly, XXXI (April 1952), p. 180.
- <sup>34</sup>A.P. Rossiter, op. cit., p. 130.
- <sup>35</sup>G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., p. 62.
- <sup>36</sup>D.A. Traversi, op. cit., p. 68.
- <sup>37</sup>Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (New York, 1948), p. 245; William R. Bowden, op. cit., p. 173; E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 51; G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., pp. 52, 62, 66-67.
- <sup>38</sup>A.S. Knowland, op. cit., p. 354; E.C. Pettet, op. cit., p. 143; Robert K. Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), pp. 118, 121; Oscar James Campbell, op. cit., p. 212.
- <sup>39</sup>G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., p. 60.
- <sup>40</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 56; Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources (London, 1957), p. 81.
- <sup>41</sup>Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources (London, 1957), p. 81; and E.C. Pettet, op. cit., p. 152, respectively.
- <sup>42</sup>William R. Bowden, op. cit., p. 174.
- <sup>43</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 70.
- <sup>44</sup>Robert Kimbrough, op. cit., p. 121; R.A. Foakes, op. cit., p. 149.
- <sup>45</sup>Honor Matthews, op. cit., p. 105; and Hardin Craig, op. cit., p. 238, respectively.

<sup>46</sup>Arthur Sewell, "Notes on the Integrity of Troilus and Cressida," Review of English Studies, XIV (April 1943), p. 126; E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 64; Una Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., p. 60; G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., pp. 57-58, respectively.

<sup>47</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 60; and Hardin Craig, op. cit., p. 238, respectively.

<sup>48</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 61; and Una Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., p. 60, respectively.

<sup>49</sup>Hardin Craig, op. cit., p. 238; and W.W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 141, respectively.

<sup>50</sup>Robert K. Presson, "The Structural Use of a Traditional Theme in Troilus and Cressida," Philological Quarterly, XXXI (April 1952), p. 183.

<sup>51</sup>W.W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 140; Kenneth Muir, "Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Survey, VIII (Cambridge, 1955), p. 33; and W.W. Lawrence, op. cit., respectively.

<sup>52</sup>W.W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>53</sup>Bertrand Evans, Shakespeare's Comedies (Oxford, 1960), p. 168.

<sup>54</sup>Robert Kimbrough, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

<sup>55</sup>Una Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., p. 56.

## CHAPTER II: 'TABULA RASA'

<sup>1</sup>Citations from Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida in my text are to The Complete Works, ed. G.B. Harrison (New York, 1948).

<sup>2</sup>For other references linking Cressida and Helen see: I, i, 103 and II, ii, 81; I, i, 55ff. and I, ii, 149.

<sup>3</sup>Compare this image to the one used in Act I, Scene i, ll. 103ff., to describe his relationship to his beloved. The distance separating them has decreased, but Troilus' awareness of the importance of the step he is about to take has increased with its proximity.

<sup>4</sup>III, iii, 237ff.: note that both Hector and Troilus, when agitated, use similar imagery of feminine weakness: Troilus - I, i, 9; Hector - II, ii, 11-12.

<sup>5</sup>Only once is the meeting place of Diomedes and Cressida referred to as Menelaus' tent (IV, v, 279); elsewhere (V, i, 92, stage directions, etc.) it is called 'Calchus' tent'.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Williams, The English Poetic Mind (Oxford, 1932), pp. 59-60.

<sup>7</sup>Thersites' comment that Patroclus will be delighted to receive "intelligence of this whore", that he loves a "commodious drab" (V, ii, 194-195), effectively negates the possibility implied by Thersites' reference to him as Achilles' "masculine whore" (V, i, 20) that Patroclus is a homosexual. ~~■~~ Ambi-sexual he may be, but it is far more likely, as previously suggested in the body of the essay, that this barbed insult was rooted in envy rather than truth.

### CHAPTER III: 'A POWERFUL IF ASTRINGENT DELIGHT

<sup>1</sup>Hamlet, II, ii, 417-418.

<sup>2</sup>See pages 5 and 6 of this essay.

<sup>3</sup>See Thomas W. Baldwin, "Structural Analysis of Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare-Studien, (Marburg, 1951).

<sup>4</sup>E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (Toronto, 1949), p. 91.

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