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Character and theme in Romeo and Juliet and Troilus and Cressida : a comparative critical study

Charlotte H. Oberg

Character and Theme
in
Romeo and Juliet
and
Troilus and Cressida:
A Comparative Critical Study

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Charlotte Henley Oberg
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Director of Thesis

Chairman of English Department

Dean of the Graduate School

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Introduction

Shakespeare's versatility is nowhere more apparent than in his early romantic tragedy, Romeo and Juliet (c. 1595), and his later sombre comedy, Troilus and Cressida (c. 1601). Both are love stories set against a background of strife--the Trojan War in Troilus and Cressida, and a feud between two noble houses of Verona in Romeo and Juliet. Each play reaches a tragic end through the separation of the lovers resulting from the basic conflict forming the background for the love story. Each play has as its protagonist an idealistic young man whose life is greatly affected by an overwhelming passion. The heroine of each play, though not at all similar in character to the other, is more mature in outlook and in greater control of her emotions than her lover.

A number of minor elements in the plays are also analogous. The lovers in each play are aided and urged on by an older person who displays a lewdness which wavers between comedy and mere vulgarity. In each play, a minor character comments on the action in a scurrilous fashion. Each play has a character who seems to represent reason or wisdom, but whose plans result in chaos and disaster.

Many of these elements may be clichés, and analogies could perhaps be drawn from a number of Elizabethan plays. The question is not so much why the plays are similar,

but why they are so different despite their similarities. To explore this question is the purpose of this paper. To this end, consideration is given to the characters of Romeo and Troilus in their relations to the themes of the plays. The characters of Juliet and Cressida are contrasted, and consideration is given to the analogous characters of the Nurse and Pandarus, Mercutio and Thersites, and Friar Laurence and Ulysses, with respect to the functions of each in the action of the plays.

Various critical opinions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are presented throughout the paper in order to indicate the broad areas of interpretation which must be considered in arriving at an intelligent appraisal of the levels of meaning to be found in each play. The diversity of critical opinion to be found on each point testifies to the complexity and universality of Shakespeare. To give historical depth to these critical discussions, the Restoration adaptations of Romeo and Juliet, The History and Fall of Caius Marius (c. 1679) by Thomas Otway, and of Troilus and Cressida, Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth Found Too Late (1679) by John Dryden, are considered as a form of critical comment.

Chapter I

Romeo: Fate and Free Will

A judgment on the relationship of love and war in Romeo and Juliet is dependent on several basic questions. Are Romeo and Juliet really "star-crossed lovers," helpless pawns of fate? Or is their suffering brought on by their (particularly Romeo's) own actions? If the lovers are controlled by their unalterable destinies, then it would seem that Fate or Providence chooses to sacrifice them in order to bring about peace between the Montagues and Capulets, and that their love, in its transcending of death, triumphs over war and strife. On the other hand, if this is a true tragedy, and their suffering is caused by their own actions, then is the misdeed for which they are punished an excess of passion, or is the misdeed Romeo's rejection of the obligation of his love for Juliet in killing Tybalt? If Romeo or Juliet or both indulge in an excess of passion, then one passion is mirrored in the other--an excess of love and an excess of hate (implied in Romeo's retaliation against Tybalt). If, however, Romeo's fatal mistake is his turning away from love and accepting hate in killing Tybalt, then love is in conflict with hate. Which, then, is triumphant? Is the love of Romeo and Juliet

utterly destroyed by war and death, or is it triumphant in its redemptive power in spite of death?

The answers to these questions lie in Romeo's character. As the main protagonist, he is the key to the meaning of the play, and the play's contradictions can be traced to the paradoxes within Romeo.

When Romeo first appears, he is suffering from love melancholy brought on by his hopeless passion for Rosaline. Franklin M. Dickey points out Romeo's similarity, in the first part of the play, to the comic victims of love in Two Gentlemen of Verona and Love's Labour's Lost. Mr. Dickey develops the idea that Renaissance critics considered love more appropriate for comedy than tragedy, and that very few tragedies before Romeo and Juliet were motivated by love. He further points out that "no other tragedy preserves the comic spirit for so long a time . . . two full acts, or very close to half the acting time of the play." This affinity in Romeo's "textbook case of love melancholy before he meets Juliet" with the love folly of the comic heroes is an indication, according to Dickey, that Romeo is a victim of the "destructive effects of passionate love," which is eventually to culminate in disaster.[1] Shakespeare did treat a very

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[1]Franklin M. Dickey, "Shakespeare's Presentation of Love in Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra, and Troilus and Cressida" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1954), pp. 165-169, 188, 20.

similar story as farce in A Midsummer Night's Dream, in the mechanics' play of Pyramus and Thisbe. Marchette Chute points out that Shakespeare's source for Romeo and Juliet, Arthur Brooke's poem, The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet, is "strongly reminiscent of Bottom's immortal production of Pyramus and Thisbe."[2]

The mingling of farcical and tragic elements in Romeo and Juliet must have puzzled Thomas Otway when he wrote his adaptation of the play, The History and Fall of Caius Marius,[3] which, although termed the "most absurdly incongruous of all the Restoration versions" by Hazelton Spencer,[4] was an "extraordinary success" in the season of 1679-80, and succeeded in banishing Romeo and Juliet from the stage until 1744, when Theophilus Cibber's less outrageous version was produced.[5] The coarse humor of Mercutio and the Nurse probably would have appealed to the debauched tastes of the court-dominated audiences of the Restoration, though even the

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[2]Marchette Chute, Shakespeare of London (New York, 1957), p. 153.

[3]See Appendix A of this paper for a synopsis of The History and Fall of Caius Marius.

[4]Hazelton Spencer, Shakespeare Improved (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), p. 292.

[5]Spencer, The Art and Life of William Shakespeare (New York, 1940), pp. 221-222.

Nurse's licentiousness must have seemed pale in comparison to the not-unusual dramatic subjects of incest, venereal disease, and unnatural sex-relationships,[6] and Otway did accentuate the comic elements. At the same time, Otway's innovation of allowing Lavinia (Juliet) to awake in the tomb before Young Marius' (Romeo's) final death agony heightened the tragedy of the conclusion.[7]

Despite comic elements, that Romeo's love for Juliet is genuine seems universally accepted. Hazlitt (1818) calls Romeo "Hamlet in love." He is lost in love, and, to him, the world is only a passing dream.[8] The mellowing effects of this pure love transform him into a would-be peacemaker between Tybalt and Mercutio. But is he true to this love when, stricken by the death of Mercutio, he retaliates by fighting and killing Tybalt? Around this point revolves the whole question of fate versus free will as the motivating force in the play. There are widely divergent views on the meaning of Romeo's decision. Stopford Brooke writes that Romeo is "driven against his

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[6]Allardyce Nicoll, A History of Restoration Drama (Cambridge, England, 1940), pp. 1-28.

[7]George Henry Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (New York, 1932), p. 100.

[8]Quoted by F. E. Halliday, Shakespeare and His Critics (London, 1958), p. 159.

will by an outside power to slay him. Shakespeare makes that plain."[9] Harold Goddard disagrees. According to him, Romeo decides between the "stars" (the philosophy of the "fathers") and love. The "fathers" win when he kills Tybalt. Romeo does not give quite all to love; the spirit of Mercutio enters him.[10] Harley Granville-Barker agrees with Goddard that it is the change in Romeo upon Mercutio's death that causes his downfall.[11] Dickey adds that Romeo succumbs to the passion of hatred when he kills Tybalt, pointing out that the Elizabethans did not sanction street brawls, and quoting H. Edward Cain that the Italianate duelling code was the "butt of frequent attack by English authors who feared the civil dissention it led to."[12]

Romeo's rashness of action is apparent in other scenes in the play, notably in III, iii, when he wallows in despair on the floor as the Nurse enters despite the Friar's warnings, and again in the churchyard scene when he kills Paris. According to Dickey, Shakespeare makes

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[9]Stopford A. Brooke, On Ten Plays of Shakespeare (New York, 1905), p. 55.

[10]Harold C. Goddard, The Meaning of Shakespeare (Chicago, 1951), pp. 125-133.

[11]Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, II (Princeton, 1947), 311.

[12]In the Shakespeare Association Bulletin, XXIII (1947), 12-14, quoted by Dickey, pp. 160-161.

it plain in this scene that Romeo is at fault; Paris does not challenge Romeo, but only attempts to "apprehend" him--Shakespeare could just as easily have had Romeo defend himself against an unjust attack. Dickey regards this as another signpost that Romeo's passionate will, not fate, is the cause of the catastrophe.[13] In contrast to this point of view, Dr. Rötscher sees Count Paris' death by Romeo's hand as symbolic of the triumph of free choice rightfully opposing itself to authority, or the will of the parents.[14]

Several critics remark on Romeo's immaturity in comparison to Juliet. Brandes notes that he is less resolute than Juliet and has less self-control.[15] Dickey adds that Juliet's constant display of "more courage and good sense than Romeo" is in contrast to his passionate, rash nature.[16]

Some critics are of the opinion that Romeo and Juliet are the helpless sacrifices of a power behind

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[13]Dickey, p. 217.

[14]Heinrich Theodor Rötscher, Philosophie der Kunst, Volume IV, Romeo and Juliet Analyzed, with especial reference to the Art of Dramatic Representation (Berlin, 1842), in Romeo and Juliet, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, edited by Horace Howard Furness (New York, 1963), p. 454.

[15]George Brandes, William Shakespeare, A Critical Study, I (New York, 1898), 100.

[16]Dickey, pp. 203-204.

human life which is careless of the individual but works for the good of the whole. Romeo and Juliet must die in order that the Montague-Capulet feud may end.[17] In contradiction to this, Granville-Barker points out that both families are weary of the feud and it is somewhat reluctantly taken up again (at the beginning of the play) because of an ignominious servants' quarrel, fanned by the quick temper of Tybalt, who would fight about anything.[18] Harold S. Wilson believes that the pathos of the play lies in the inevitability of the catastrophic ending, which is plainly indicated can be expected from the beginning of the play.[19]

What are the evidences for astral determinism in Romeo and Juliet? According to Dickey, the evidence is weaker than it first appears, consisting of only four passages which specifically attribute power to the stars ("aside from general references to fate and fortune"). The first is the reference to a "pair of star-

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[17] S. Brooke, pp. 48-49, takes this position.

[18] Granville-Barker, p. 303.

[19] Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy (University of Toronto, 1957), p. 19.

crossed lovers" in the Prologue, and the rest are spoken by Romeo, who is the only character in the play who believes his destiny is controlled by the stars:

> For my mind misgives
> Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars
> (I, iv, 106-108)[20]

Dickey points out that this reference to the power of the stars is nullified by lines following in the same speech:

> But he that hath the steerage of my course
> Direct my sail!
> (I, iv, 112-113)

The next passage attributing power to the stars occurs in Romeo's speech upon hearing of Juliet's death:

> Then I defy you, stars!
> (V, i, 24)

Last, Romeo speaks in the tomb scene:

> Oh here
> Will I set up my everlasting rest,
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world-wearied flesh.
> (V, iii, 109-112)

As Dickey notes, these assertions by Romeo are contradicted by the warnings of Friar Laurence and by Prince Escalus' speech at the end of the play, and the Friar and Escalus are commentators in the play who make it clear that Romeo and Juliet is not a tragedy of blind

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[20]All quotations from the plays are from G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare, Major Plays and the Sonnets (New York, 1948).

fate, that fortune is not the "prime mover but the agent of a higher power." Dickey's analysis of Renaissance attitudes about astrology have brought him to this conclusion: "The whole science was controversial, but one thing remains clear; the stars may affect humors but they cannot make a man do anything against his will." He cites evidence from King Lear, Othello, and Julius Caesar to show that in none of Shakespeare's plots do "the stars determine the action although some of his characters think that they do." Shakespeare "saw will as the key to character." The virtuous man was exempt from fate's onslaughts. Elizabethan tragedy was based on a belief in individual responsibility, and the "wayward passions of men were the cause of their downfall."[21]

Otway's remaking is interesting in this connection, for Young Marius (Romeo's counterpart) calls himself "the Slave of strong Desires,"[22] and the play "completely ignores the element of fate," as Spencer complains.[23]

It is obvious, however, that chance does play an important role in the action of Romeo and Juliet. Wilson

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[21]Dickey, pp. 134-136, 145-149, 129-134.

[22]Thomas Otway, The Complete Works of Thomas Otway, II, edited by Montague Summers (Bloomsbury, 1926), 95.

[23]Spencer, Shakespeare Improved, p. 298.

remarks that the series of accidents "prominently displayed" by Shakespeare point up the workings of a greater power.[24] This echoes Granville-Barker's idea that Romeo and Juliet is not a "tragedy of fated disaster, but . . . of opportunity muddled away and marred by ill-luck."[25] Maginn considers Romeo "designed to represent the character of an unlucky man," well-intentioned, but "so unfortunate as to . . . involve all whom he holds dearest in misery and ruin."[26] Dickey concedes that fate or chance is immensely important in the action of the play (the meeting of Romeo and Juliet; the accident which prevents Friar Laurence's letter being delivered; Friar Laurence's too-late arrival at the tomb; Juliet's too-late awakening; and the premature arrival of the watchman, preventing the Friar from removing Juliet from the tomb), but points out that Shakespeare's audiences were accustomed to such paradoxes as fate versus free will, which is no more paradoxical than Calvinist theology, widely adopted at that time. Since Brooke's poem was full of references to fortune, Shakespeare may have simply incorporated these ideas into his

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[24]Wilson, p. 28.

[25]Granville-Barker, p. 303.

[26]William Maginn, Shakespeare Papers (London, 1860), in Furness, p. 427.

play. Dickey concludes that "Romeo like Orestes is an agent of God's justice but remains responsible for his own doom."[27] A. L. Rowse suggests that the mixture of these ideas in Romeo and Juliet is explained by the fact that the tragic idea was developing in Shakespeare but was not yet ripe.[28]

Possibly the most original interpretation of the role of the stars in Romeo and Juliet is Goddard's contention that Romeo and Juliet are "star-crossed" not in the sense of heavenly bodies exercising an inescapable occult influence, but in the sense of the "psychological projection on planets and constellations of the unconsciousness of man, which in turn is the accumulated experience of the race." Love is the only "agency powerful enough in youth to defy and cut across this domination of the generations . . . a 'star' but in another more celestial sense." Romeo and Juliet is the first of Shakespeare's plays in which the subject of the relation of the generations is central, which theme is to culminate in King Lear and The Tempest.[29]

Goddard does not accept fate, chance, accident, or ill-luck as elements in the play. According to him,

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[27]Dickey, pp. 127, 143, 124.

[28]A. L. Rowse, William Shakespeare, A Biography (New York, 1965), p. 232.

[29]Goddard, pp. 118-119.

fear, not fate, is the true pestilence. It is Romeo's fear of the code of honor which causes him to kill Tybalt; it is fear of the plague which prevents Friar Laurence's message from reaching Romeo; it is fear of poverty that causes the apothecary to sell the poison to Romeo. Fear makes Friar Laurence stumble and become too late to prevent Romeo's death, and fear makes the Friar desert Juliet too soon. "Fear is the evil 'star' that crosses the lovers. And fear resides not in the skies but in the human heart."[30] An interesting substantiation of this point is Caroline Spurgeon's observation that fear is the counter emotion to love which Juliet feels as she prepares to take the potion:

> I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
> That almost freezes up the heat of life.
> (IV, iii, 15-16)[31]

Thus, according to Goddard, the "stars" are symbols of the evil domination of the "fathers," the accumulated memory and experience of man, taking the form of "fear," and its result, "war." Goddard sees the theme of the play as the interaction of love and violence.[32]

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[30]Goddard, p. 138.

[31]Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us (New York, 1936), p. 155.

[32]Goddard, p. 118.

Does love triumph in Romeo and Juliet? On this point, there are wide differences of opinion. E. E. Stoll notes that the contrast is always present of love versus hatred; youth versus age; love versus death. But, he adds, the struggle is external and the play is really a lyric poem about love's triumph. The struggle of the lovers is not with each other or within themselves, but only with their families or against the stars. Stoll rejects the concept of the tragic fault as applied to this play. He believes that in Romeo and Juliet love conquers all.[33] Wilson agrees that love is triumphant; the lives of Romeo and Juliet are blighted, but their love is not.[34] Dickey, following his discussion of the first part of the play as a conventional comedy of doting love, disagrees with these comments, holding that hate is the opposite passion which punishes those who indulge in the passion of love. He concludes that the theme of the play is emphatically not that love conquers all but that "death is the common catastrophe of those who love unwisely."[35] Interestingly, this view

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[33]Elmer Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare's Young Lovers (London, 1937), pp. 8, 4.

[34]Wilson, p. 31.

[35]Dickey, pp. 163, 150, 222-223.

is reminiscent of Arthur Brooke's professed purpose in writing his poem:

> To this end (good reader) is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to dishonest desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends, conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars . . . abusing the name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts, finally, by all means of unhonest life, hasting to most unhappy death.

William Painter's justification for his translation of the story was that it would teach readers "how to avoid the ruin, overthrow, inconvenience and displeasure that lascivious desire and wanton will doth bring."[36]

Dickey believes Renaissance attitudes about love indicate that Shakespeare, even while writing of the glory of love, "warns that such a love contains the seeds of death."[37] And, according to Gervinus, the leitmotif of the play is that "excess in any enjoyment, however pure in itself, transforms its sweet into bitterness."[38]

Stopford Brooke, on the other hand, writes of their love as heightening "their whole nature--moral, intellectual, passionate, and imaginative." According to him,

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[36]Quoted by Marchette Chute, p. 155.

[37]Dickey, p. 125.

[38]G. G. Gervinus, Shakespeare Commentaries, Volume I (1850), translated by F. E. Bunnett (London, 1863), 285, in Furness, p. 455.

Romeo is changed by love from a dreamer into a man of action, although he does not explain the rashness of some of these actions. Brooke praises the purity of the love of Romeo and Juliet; while "they break every convention . . . they must have marriage and the blessing of the Church."[39]

Marchette Chute interprets Romeo and Juliet as a "tragedy of haste. The tragic flaw in the characters is that they are all in too much of a hurry." She comments on Shakespeare's telescoping of the story into a few days.[40] Caroline Spurgeon, commenting on this point, relates the swiftness of the story to its imagery, remarking that the story must have been seen by Shakespeare as an "almost blinding flash of light."[41]

Dickey points out that Shakespeare nowhere gives a "consistent moral view of the universe," presenting a "slice of life without comment" in his tragedies. Therefore, the ambiguous interaction of love, hate, free will, and fate in Romeo and Juliet need not cause undue concern.[42] In this connection, Hazelton Spencer flatly states that Romeo and Juliet has no ethical purpose and that to

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[39]S. Brooke, pp. 49-50.

[40]Chute, p. 155.

[41]Spurgeon, p. 312.

[42]Dickey, pp. 122-123.

search for moral lessons or tragic flaws is the "idlest of critical follies."[43] Dickey's conclusion, however, is that the view of the play most consistent with Shakespeare's other plays is that it is a

> carefully wrought play which balances hatred against love and makes fortune the agent of divine justice without absolving the principals from responsibility for the tragic conclusion.[44]

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[43]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 221.

[44]Dickey, p. 121.

Chapter II

Troilus: The Several Faces of Love

Most critical writing about Troilus and Cressida is in agreement that the basic ingredients of the play are love and war. These opposing and mutually destructive forces yet engender each other, as the rape of Helen causes the war and the war causes the separation of Troilus and Cressida.[1]

While Romeo and Juliet is consistent with the Renaissance ideals glorifying married love, as Dickey points out, Troilus and Cressida, with its basis in the adulterous aims of courtly love, is inconsistent with the religious views of the Renaissance. The difficulty of reconciling Renaissance love concepts with courtly love conventions is, therefore, central to the problem of the play.[2] Karl Thompson observes that Shakespeare is neither consistently ironic nor ennobling with respect to courtly love.[3]

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[1]See Goddard, pp. 391-392; Dickey, p. 319; G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (London, 1941), p. 77.

[2]Dickey, p. 40.

[3]Karl F. Thompson, "Troilus and Cressida: The Incomplete Achilles," College English, Vol. 27, No. 7 (April, 1966), 535.

In Dickey's view, both Troilus and Romeo are victims of an excess of passion. Further, Troilus and Cressida, like Romeo and Juliet, "is built about passions which affect not only the lives of the principals but the whole state." In both plays, passions are punished by the passions to which they lead. The destructive love of Troilus is converted to his own destruction in the end as he seeks death. Troilus is like Romeo in that he is young and blinded by passion, but whereas Romeo's doting love is the cause of his tragedy, Troilus exemplifies outright lust, which never produces anything but misery in Shakespeare's plays.[4]

Effeminacy because of excessive passion is seen in Troilus and Cressida not only in the character of Troilus, but is echoed in Paris and Achilles.[5] It could be argued that Achilles' being wrenched from his effeminacy by the death of Patroclus is analogous to Romeo's incitement to kill Tybalt by the murder of Mercutio. Charlton interprets Paris' refusal to arm because his "Nell would not have it so" as the "dramatist's version of the domestic realism of sexual in-

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[4]Dickey, pp. 40, 308, 328, 331-332, 318. G. Wilson Knight, p. 68, disagrees that Romeo is responsible to any degree for his fate as "the adverse forces work from without"; in Troilus and Cressida, "they are implicit within long before the separation of the lovers."

[5]Dickey, pp. 321, 332, 334.

fatuation" far removed from the "epic poet's picture of the bliss of ideal love."[6] (Hallam suggests that Romeo's character of "excessive tenderness" and "constitutional susceptibility" displayed in his first passion for Rosaline might be mistaken for effeminacy if his courage were not aroused by the loss of Mercutio.)[7]

Not all agree that Troilus' love for Cressida is a mere lustful passion. Hardin Craig writes that Troilus is a "model of love and courage suggesting Romeo,"[8] and de Selincourt believes that Troilus, in his worship of Cressida, comes from "that same noble family from which Shakespeare drew all his tragic heroes."[9] To Spencer, he is "Hotspur in love," who has a "touch of the tragic about him."[10] Knight calls the love of Troilus for Cressida a "thing essentially pure and noble," and his "dynamic and positive passion" is symbolic of

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[6]H. B. Charlton, Shakespearian Comedy (London, 1945), p. 238. The Iliad, however, does not depict the love of Paris and Helen as ideal.

[7]Henry Hallam, Introduction to the Literature of Europe, II (London, 1855), 281, in Furness, p. 427.

[8]Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (New York, 1948), pp. 237-240, in Harold N. Hillebrand, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Troilus and Cressida (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 546.

[9]E. de Selincourt, Oxford Lectures on Poetry (Oxford, 1834), pp. 88-90, 101-103, in Hillebrand, p. 550.

[10]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 289.

his championship of not only Troy, "but the fine values of humanity, fighting against the demon powers of cynicism."[11]

Knight's conception of Troilus as a "metaphysical lover" is scorned by Dickey. He points out the "downright sensuality in the images Troilus uses."[12] Spencer insists that anyone can see that lust, not love, is the subject of the main plot, as Shakespeare unmistakably indicates in IV, ii, where the principals make very clear the level of their feelings;[13] Henri Fluchère calls Troilus and Cressida "strangely degraded copies of Romeo and Juliet";[14] and Henderson writes that Troilus is a "loveless mad Romeo."[15]

Some critics believe Troilus and Cressida is Shakespeare's attempt at a comedy of reason. John Palmer takes this view but adds that the comedy of the man who loves too much breaks down and Troilus becomes pathetic at the end.[16] In this vein, an interesting view of the

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[11]Knight, pp. 65-77.

[12]Dickey, pp. 320-322. Miss Spurgeon, pp. 320-321, shows that the dominant image of the play is that of food and taste--anticipation of delicious food and disgust at greasy and rotten food.

[13]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 289.

[14]Henri Fluchère, Shakespeare and the Elizabethans (New York, 1959), p. 199.

[15]W. B. D. Henderson, "Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida Yet Deeper in Its Tradition," in Hillebrand, p. 534.

[16]John Palmer, Comedy (The Art and Craft of Letters) (1914), pp. 18-21, in Hillebrand, p. 531.

play is that of O. J. Campbell, who sees the tragedy of Troilus not as that of the "inexperienced young idealist who is seduced and ruined by a sensual and calculating woman," as some critics think. Even Troilus' witnessing of Cressida's faithlessness is not tragic because it "inspires him to no nobility of thought or action." When Troilus declares himself a servant of his "Will" (which meant physical desire to the Elizabethans), he rejected Reason as his guide in his emotional as well as his public life and thereby "disrupted his entire personality and rendered himself distraught and futile." Campbell considers that Troilus is "depicted as a slave of passion," whose "mind runs on sexual experience." He further points out that, by the time Shakespeare wrote Troilus and Cressida, the character of Troilus had already degenerated into a "warrior ruined by an unworthy love for a wanton."[17] But W. W. Lawrence takes issue with the interpretation of Troilus and Cressida as a comical satire on the grounds that Troilus' name was a "by-word for faithfulness in love."[18]

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[17]Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London, 1943), pp. 111-119, 100.

[18]W. W. Lawrence, "Troilus, Cressida and Thersites," Modern Language Review, XXXVIII (1942), in Hillebrand, p. 552.

All of this speculation about Troilus' nature is germane to the understanding of the play, as he is the central protagonist. Dickey notes that Romeo and Juliet and Troilus and Cressida are alike in that both have "two protagonists in whom we are equally interested" and "in having no Iago, no Iachimo whose deliberate scheming perverts a noble love."[19] Who or what is the villainous agent in Troilus and Cressida?

Goddard suggests that Troilus, as a "conspicuous incarnation of weakness" is the villain.[20] Campbell notes that Troilus is a "chaotic personality," "always in a state of emotional tumult."[21] Considered in this light, as an embodiment of chaos and disorder, Troilus' relation to the play becomes clearer. Williams notes that:

> All the orations in the play, Ulysses' speech about degree, Agamemnon's and Nestor's orations about life's disappointments, find action within Troilus. For him, order is lost when he realizes Cressida's infidelity.[22]

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[19]Dickey, p. 19.

[20]Goddard, p. 118.

[21]O. J. Campbell, pp. 115-117.

[22]Charles Williams, "Troilus and Cressida and Hamlet," The English Poetic Mind (1932), in Shakespeare Criticism 1919-1935, edited by Anne Ridler (London, 1962), p. 195. Charlton, pp. 224-225, would disagree with this statement. He sees Troilus' character improved by his bitter experience. Whereas he is prevented from fulfilling his proper role in society by his excessive passion for Cressida, her faithlessness gives him insight into true values.

Wilson, writing of the council scene (I, iii), notes that it is symbolic of disorder, disregard of reason, will, prompted by the passions of lust and pride, triumphing over reason.[23] The same could be said of II, ii, when the Trojans debate whether or not to relinquish Helen. These qualities can be seen echoed in Troilus' character. Wilson suggests that Troilus and Cressida is a tragedy, but not a tragedy of one man--it is the tragedy of society, of mankind's plight. Betrayals pervade the play: Helen betrays Menelaus; Cressida betrays Troilus; the Trojans wrong the Greeks through a false sense of honor;[24] the Greeks retaliate through the dishonorable slaying of Hector by Achilles.[25] Commenting on the interaction of the individual with society in the play, Charlton judges the theme of Troilus and Cressida to be that value in life is not the pleasure of the particular, but the welfare of the whole. Ulysses' wisdom is Shakespeare's first conscious formulation of the social implications of human goodness,

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[23]Wilson, pp. 130-132.

[24]Frederick S. Boas, Shakspere and His Predecessors (1896), in Hillebrand, p. 529, comments that the play "illustrates and implicitly condemns the quixotic sacrifice of great national interests to a fantastic code of exaggerated gallantry."

[25]Wilson, p. 123.

which he first realized in King Henry IV, King Henry V, and Julius Caesar. Ulysses has a "subtler sense of society than any English king of Shakespeare's."[26] Caroline Spurgeon remarks on the frequency with which the idea of the individual's relation to others as supremely important in life appears in Troilus and Cressida.[27] Rowse goes further. In his view, the play is a condemnation of those who do not accept society's obligations and do not believe in prudence, loyalty, sense, or reason.[28]

Thus, though it is sometimes argued that the play presents the tragedy of a young man disillusioned, the play can be interpreted as the tragedy of society or collective mankind, Troilus being an abstraction representing the whole. Another view is that the play is a satire.

John Dryden, in the Preface to his 1679 adaptation of Shakespeare's play, entitled Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth Found Too Late, though supposing that the story was traditionally intended as a satire on the inconstancy of women, announces his consternation at Shakespeare's failure to punish Cressida for her perfidy and to provide a suitably tragic ending in which both lovers would die.

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[26]Charlton, pp. 240, 226-228.

[27]Spurgeon, pp. 207-208.

[28]Rowse, p. 354.

His play undertook to correct these deficiencies, among others. Of the opinion that tragedy requires virtuous heroes and that pity is the "noblest and most God-like of moral virtues,"[29] Dryden made Troilus a hero and Cressida a heroine in a play meant to be pathetic and "executed on the principle of sentimental drama," which, as did All for Love, represents a break with the dramatic tradition of the past and is a harbinger of the sentimental trends of modern drama.[30] Thus, though

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[29]John Dryden, The Works of John Dryden, VI, edited by Sir Walter Scott (Edinburgh, 1883), pp. 255, 263. Appendix B of this paper is a synopsis of Dryden's play.

[30]Arthur C. Kirsch, Dryden's Heroic Drama (Princeton, 1965), pp. 142-143, 153-154. Kirsch notes that all the main characters in Dryden's play, especially Hector and Troilus, are notable chiefly for their feelings of compassion for one another. The scene between Hector and Troilus in which they argue over whether or not to surrender Cressida to the Greeks is entirely built around the emotion of pity. See Kirsch, pp. 142-143. Gerard Langbaine wrote in 1691 that this scene is a masterpiece. See excerpt from Langbaine's An Account of the English Dramatick Poets, p. 173, in Charles Wells Moulton, ed., The Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors (Buffalo, N. Y., 1901-1905), II, 478-479. The Restoration audiences, to which the theaters of the time catered in their every whim, were not appreciative of any drama which would make too obvious their own shortcomings. The only satire tolerated was directed toward other levels of society than the court stratum, such as the Puritans or other middle-class groups, or either was so general as not to be offensive. See Allardyce Nicoll, Restoration Drama, pp. 1-28, 81. Thus Dryden eliminated from the play any suggestion that the noble Troilus, prince of Troy, was a ludicrous or unworthy character by exaggerating the pathetic and sentimental possibilities of the plot. Nicoll states that Dryden's play shows us the attempt "to make heroic those plays of Shakespeare which to the Restoration seemed to lack the exaggerated sentiment necessary for a tragedy." See Nicoll, p. 167.

Dryden detected a satirical element in the play as Shakespeare wrote it, he took care that his version should be a straightforward tragedy.

Campbell writes at length on the theory that Troilus and Cressida was intended as a "conscious imitation of the comical satires of Jonson and Marston." He notes that, as the play would have been too philosophical for a mass audience, and too vituperative for the court, Peter Alexander's theory that it was designed for an audience of barristers is logical. Campbell remarks that the story had traditionally provoked satiric treatment as a "comment on woman's infidelity" beginning with Benoit's Le Roman de Troie.[31] Genée writes that since Cressida had already been made into a "pattern of faithlessness" Shakespeare was able to use her unchanged as the heroine of a satiric comedy.[32]

Though there is a critical tendency to regard the play as a satire, there is no general agreement as to just what Troilus and Cressida satirizes. Dickey observes that Shakespeare's choice of a basically tragic story as a "vehicle for his satire on lust accords with

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[31]O. J. Campbell, pp. 98-100.

[32]Rudolph Genee, William Shakespeare in seinem Werden und Wesen (Berlin, 1905), pp. 338-340, in Hillebrand, p. 530.

the cast of his mind as it manifests itself in the erotic poems and the other plays."[33] Brandes writes with a hint of indignation about Shakespeare's "satire on the ancient material, and . . . parody of romanticism." According to him, Shakespeare profanes and ridicules

> the Iliad's most beautiful and most powerful elements, Achilles' wrath, the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus, the question of Helen being delivered to the Greeks, the attempt to goad Achilles into renewing the conflict, Hector and Andromache's farewell, and Hector's death.[34]

What is beautiful about some of these elements, particularly Hector's death, is not clear. Brandes amplifies this idea in a subsequent comment:

> All turns to discord under his touch; love is betrayed, heroes are murdered, constancy ridiculed, levity and coarseness triumph, and no gleam of better things shines out at the end.[35]

Wilson echoes this thought, noting that the reversal of human values is complete at the end of the play, when there is no indication of a transcending power, and brutality, treachery, lust, disorder, and dishonor are triumphant.[36] Conversely, Hazelton Spencer cautions

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[33]Dickey, p. 318.

[34]Brandes, II, 206.

[35]Ibid., p. 226.

[36]Wilson, pp. 136-138.

that Thersites' comments on the Greek heroes should not be taken as Shakespeare's. Achilles' effeminacy in war because of his love for Polyxena was not Shakespeare's invention, and Hector could not die in a fair fight, since he was traditionally thought of as the noble representative of the Trojan ancestors of the British, treacherously slain by the villainous Greek, Achilles.[37] Hardin Craig considers that Shakespeare elevated rather than debased Homer's tale, serving the Greeks "much better than the tradition warranted."[38]

An interesting connection between Troilus and Cressida and A Midsummer-Night's Dream is pointed out by Charlton. Both, he writes, are a complete "exposure of the foundations of romantic love." "Troilus in act exemplifies what Theseus has preached; only, of course, Troilus found himself and lost the lady." The sixteenth century was a time of questioning mere martial heroism and the medieval assumptions on which the creed of romantic love was based. Shakespeare was not an innovator in this attitude.[39]

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[37]Spencer, Art and Life, pp. 286-288.

[38]Hardin Craig, Introduction to Troilus and Cressida in The Complete Works of Shakespeare, edited by Hardin Craig (Chicago, 1951), pp. 863-864.

[39]Charlton, p. 235.

Achilles' refusal to fight because to seek the death of Polyxena's kinsmen would be a violation of the chivalric code is an indication that the play is a satire on the cult of courtly love which was having a vogue in the Elizabethan court.[40] Hardin Craig, commenting on the incompatibility of the ideals of courtly love with Renaissance ideals of married love, writes that the story, without the spirit of Chaucer's time, is merely disappointing.[41]

Perhaps it was this precise quality of irrelevancy to Elizabethan standards which gave Shakespeare the idea of using it as a framework for a satire. If the play is disappointing (and it is, to those who have become acquainted with Shakespeare through his popular comedies and great tragedies), it may be, as Rowse suggests, that Shakespeare's genius was not at its best in the medium of satire.[42] If the play was intended as a satire, it is, as Wilson remarks, satire "of the grimmest sort," neither comic nor tragic, but "blended with disillusionment and sadness."[43]

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[40]O. J. Campbell, p. 104.

[41]Craig, Complete Works, p. 864.

[42]Rowse, p. 352.

[43]Wilson, pp. 136-138.

Chapter III

Juliet and Cressida: The Fair and the Foul

How similar or dissimilar Romeo and Troilus are considered depends upon whether either or both are innocent pawns of fortune, slaves of passion, or mixtures of the two. The roles of Juliet and Cressida, however, offer a more clear-cut differentiation. The great difference between them is possibly the most striking difference in the plays. They are direct opposites: Juliet is direct, yet innocent; Cressida is evasive, yet decidedly not innocent. Juliet faces death rather than faithlessness; Cressida cannot be constant for one day. It is not surprising that Juliet is traditionally depicted as a blonde, whereas Cressida is invariably thought of as a "Dark Lady," since the Elizabethans equated fairness with goodness and darkness with evil.

Most critics unanimously praise Juliet for the idealized qualities of womanhood she exemplifies. Stopford Brooke, for instance, wonders at her intelligence, her "intellectual charm," her "fidelity and resolution," her "quiet reasoning and self-control."[1] Juliet's

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[1] S. Brooke, p. 50.

nature has a very practical side. Her maturity and self-control, so superior to Romeo's, are among the interesting aspects of the play because of Shakespeare's stress on her extreme youth. Granville-Barker notes that it makes no difference whether she is Shakespeare's fourteen or Brooke's sixteen. Juliet is "meant to be just about as young as she can be." He cites her child's "bald innocence," and "simple trust in her nurse," her "passionate rage at the news of Tybalt's death," and her "terrors when she takes the potion."[2]

Goddard suggests that Juliet becomes a woman when she rejects the immoral advice of her nurse. Abandoned by her family and her religion (when she is deserted by Friar Laurence in the tomb), she must depend for courage on love alone.[3]

But Juliet, though quick to acknowledge the love she feels, is never impetuous. While Romeo is overcome with vague enthusiasm during their first love scene, Juliet is thinking already of marriage.[4] Brandes also cites her cool pretence of acquiescence in her parents' plan for her marriage to Paris; her unhesitating deter-

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[2]Granville-Barker, p. 344.

[3]Goddard, pp. 137-138.

[4]See Brandes, I, 101-103; Stoll, p. 25.

mination after Tybalt's death while Romeo, in Friar Laurence's cell, despairs hysterically.[5] Writing of the love duet (II, ii), Dickey notes that Juliet's speech is more restrained than Romeo's "overheated language of love." She knows that "love may be folly and that vows made in passion are often broken. . . . Unlike Romeo, Juliet retains her gentle sense of humor."[6]

Finding Romeo dead beside her in the tomb, she does not waver, but does the only thing worthy of her love--she seeks her own death.[7] Gervinus notes Juliet's "cunning self-command," but observes that she loses some of her self-control when informed by her mother of her coming marriage to Paris, and criticizes her subsequent trifling with "confession and sacred things in a manner not altogether womanly."[8]

An explanation for the rapid maturing of the lovers is offered by Hazelton Spencer, who suggests that Shakespeare, after writing the first part of the play, may have put it aside for an interval during which his

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[5]Brandes, I, 101-103.

[6]Dickey, pp. 198-199.

[7]Stoll, p. 25, praises her fortitude in following through with her suicide.

[8]Gervinus, in Furness, pp. 456-457.

conception changed. Spencer admits, however, that Shakespeare may have been deliberately depicting the development of character.[9]

Juliet is sometimes charged with immodesty and sensuality because of her soliloquy (III, ii) in anticipation of her wedding night. Hallam wrote facetiously in 1855 that Juliet's impropriety of thought and speech may be blamed on her assimilation of the "lessons and language" of her nurse, and that

> those who adopt the edifying principle of deducing a moral from all they read may suppose that Shakespeare intended covertly to warn parents against the contaminating influence of such domestics.

Hallam does not consider Juliet's voice to be "the voice of virgin love."[10] Charges of sensualism have also come from German critics, notably von Hartmann, and the Swedish critic, Schuck. Brandes defends Juliet on the grounds that her passion is so intense it cannot be divided as to soul and body.[11] Granville-Barker takes the position that there is nothing sensual about Juliet; her passion is of the imagination.[12] W. W. Lawrence compares Juliet's sensuality with that of Troilus, pointing out the unmistakability of each, and adding: "Shakespeare never

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[9]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 216.

[10]Hallam, in Furness, p. 426.

[11]Brandes, I, 101-103.

[12]Granville-Barker, p. 344.

blinked the fact that normal sexual love has a strong element of sensuality."[13] Stopford Brooke describes Juliet's soliloquy as "exquisitely balanced between sensuous and spiritual passion," and sensibly remarks that this speech, like certain other soliloquies, "must be considered as representing thought, not speech."[14]

In contrast to the scholarly controversy over the existence of Romeo's tragic fault, Juliet's lack of responsibility for the tragic end of the lovers seems clear. As Dickey notes, it is Romeo who starts the chain of events which end in her death; she has been throughout patient and constant.[15]

A significant contrast between Romeo and Juliet and Troilus and Cressida is that, while both lovers meet their death in Romeo and Juliet, both are simply left hanging in Troilus and Cressida. Campbell suggests that death or punishment would have given Troilus and Cressida the dignity of tragic figures, and that, whereas Troilus does not deserve a soldier's death, Cressida deserves a noble end even less.[16] Charlton points out that Cressida's influence for evil is nullified at the end of the play because the Greeks, unlike

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[13] W. W. Lawrence, in Hillebrand, p. 552.

[14] S. Brooke, pp. 55, 69.

[15] Dickey, pp. 21-22.

[16] O. J. Campbell, p. 118.

Troilus, recognize her for what she is.[17] Thus considered, Cressida, like Troilus, is reduced to frustration and impotence at the end of the play. Though alive, both are ineffectual. Their death is spiritual rather than physical.

Rollins thinks it unlikely that Shakespeare would have disappointed his audience by leaving the fates of Troilus and Cressida unresolved, especially as the ending of the story was so well-known to the Elizabethans. He suggests that Shakespeare undertook his play to compete with the two Troy plays of the Admiral's men and it was finished later by someone other than Shakespeare, who probably revised his helper's work slightly.[18]

The unresolved ending of Troilus and Cressida has been a source of consternation since Dryden's time. He rectified this oversight on Shakespeare's part in his version of the play by having Achilles round off the carnage at the end of the fifth act by killing Troilus subsequent to his murder of Hector and Cressida's suicide (which suicide was termed a "stale expedient," by Sir Walter Scott.[19])

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[17]Charlton, pp. 226-227.

[18]Hyder E. Rollins, "The Troilus-Cressida Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," PMLA, XXXII (1917), 428. Rollins is referring to Chettle and Dekker's Agamemnon (1599) and Heywood's Iron Age (1596), although other plays on the subject are known to have existed.

[19]Scott, Works of Dryden, VI, 243.

Dryden's "flabby perversion" of Shakespeare[20] is of interest not only because it reflects the mood of his times but because, in his play, the character of Cressida loses the tarnish she gained between Chaucer and Shakespeare and becomes a full-blown tragic heroine. Spencer remarks that Cressida, "if too naughty in Shakespeare, is in Dryden too much the other way," becoming a "model heroine."[21] Dryden's radical change in characterization was possible because the Troilus story had declined in popularity since Shakespeare and the universal Elizabethan prejudice against Cressida was no longer operative.[22] In Shakespeare's day, however, Cressida had become "the type of woman false in love,"[23] "a creature to deplore and deride."[24]

The great difference between Chaucer's gay lady and Shakespeare's wanton, which was a source of wonder to Brandes in 1898,[25] has been accounted for by more modern scholarship. Cressida's pre-Shakespearian history has been exhaustively traced by Hyder E. Rollins. He points out that Robert Henryson's Testament of Cresseid (1532),

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[20]Nettleton, p. 53.

[21]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 290. In Shakespeare Improved, pp. 224, 232, Spencer writes that Dryden did to Cressida exactly what he did to Cleopatra: "turned the complex woman into the puppet of a ruling passion."

[22]Scott, Works of Dryden, VI, 243.

[23]Craig, in Complete Works, p. 863.

[24]O. J. Campbell, p. 100.

[25]Brandes, II, 193-194.

itself sympathetic to Cressida, provided the basis for the degradation of her character as a common strumpet. Henryson's poem, according to Rollins, presents the inevitable dénouement to Chaucer's story, given the character of Diomedes as Chaucer presents him.[26] Henryson's sequel relates Cressida's desertion by Diomedes, her subsequent fall to prostitution in the Greek camp, followed by leprosy as punishment for her blasphemy against the gods for her cruel fate, and her pitiful death following Troilus' unrecognizing alms-giving.[27] Henryson's addition was considered Chaucer's work by most readers.[28]

Chaucer's treatment of the story is not puritanical, and Henryson's sequel adds elements of "poetic justice" and "Christian morality."[29] Rollins points out that Cressida is not condemned in Lydgate's Troy Book, the Laud Troy Book, or Caxton's Recuyell. The story was the subject of several plays and a number of poems before and after Henryson's poem was written, and, although some poets obviously had not read beyond Chaucer's Third Book, since they were recommending Cressida as a model for

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[26]Rollins, pp. 396-400. See also J. S. P. Tatlock, "The People in Chaucer's Troilus," PMLA, LVI (March, 1941), 94-95.

[27]See Henryson's poem in The Story of Troilus, edited by R. K. Gordon (New York, 1964), pp. 351-367.

[28]Rollins, p. 399.

[29]Spencer, Art and Life, pp. 286-287.

their mistresses to emulate, Cressida's name soon became a synonym for faithless woman. In Shakespeare's time, the story was the subject of several coarse ballads, which in themselves could have accounted for Shakespeare's distaste for the story.[30] Tatlock argues that Troilus and Cressida should be regarded in the same light as the historical plays, the material of which came to Shakespeare largely fixed beforehand.[31] Rollins considers it remarkable that Shakespeare was as kind as he was to Cressida, since the play must have been distasteful to him:

> He does not punish her as did Henryson; he does not make her a common harlot as did Henryson, Whetstone, Howell, and the rest; nor does he make her the wholly contemptible creature of Heywood's or the miserable leprosy-stricken beggar of the Dekker-Chettle play.[32]

This is the material Shakespeare had to work with, and it does not seem surprising that the playwright should have left her much as he found her. Even so, some critics have found her to be an attractive and maligned character. Brandes thinks Ulysses' estimate of her character is unfair, as Cressida has thus far done nothing offensive. but has spent a night with Troilus out

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[30]Rollins, pp. 387-394.

[31]Tatlock, in the Tudor edition of Troilus and Cressida, pp. xix-xx, quoted by Rollins, p. 385.

[32]Rollins, pp. 427-428.

of love for him, much as Juliet did with Romeo. Furthermore, the greeting of the Greeks with kisses would not have been deemed improper in Elizabethan times. Brandes argues, therefore, that Ulysses' speech about her (IV, v, 54-63) is unjustified. In a subsequent comment, Brandes does throw a few stones, writing that while Cressida is "sensually attractive," she is "spiritually repulsive and unclean," having only desire, not love for Troilus.[33] Tucker Brooke writes that Cressida's character shows us "the pathos of a daintiness reaching vainly after nobility, a wistful sincerity which knows it lacks the strength to be the thing it would be."[34] And John Palmer writes that she is "one of the loveliest of Shakespeare's tragic figures."[35]

That Cressida's "kind of love can lead only to misery is one of the central themes of the play," according to Dickey.[36] If Shakespeare meant her to typify mere loveless physical desire, which seems likely when the reputation Cressida already had with Elizabethan audiences is considered, then, as Fluchère asks: "How can a moral judgment be passed on Cressida if she is convicted before-

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[33]Brandes, II, 193-194, 218.

[34]C. F. Tucker Brooke, Yale Review, n. s., XVII (1928), 573-574, in Hillebrand, p. 556.

[35]Saturday Review, CXIV (1912), 732-733, in Hillebrand, p. 554. Two years after this comment, Palmer reversed himself, writing that Cressida is "Shakespeare's comic presentment, dryly observed, of the wanton." (Quoted by Hillebrand, p. 531.)

[36]Dickey, p. 330.

hand of the frailty of her feelings?" Fluchère suggests that the study of character is almost always in Shakespeare "subordinated to a conception of human relationships."[37] O. J. Campbell observes that Cressida, as Troilus, was designed to "exemplify lust," and was intended as a sort of villain, to be rejected by the audience.[38] In discussing Cressida's pre-Shakespearian history, Arthur M. Sampley observes that Troilus is not caused to view her as anything else. "In spite of an otherwise valid parallel, he is no Romeo attempting to bind his Juliet in eternal marriage and respectability."[39] Rollins reiterates this point, and states that the love scene (III, ii) is the "most frankly sensuous" of any Shakespearian scene, and neither one of the lovers is a sympathetic character because of the apparent animal nature of their love. Elizabethan audiences, however, were probably not repelled by such scenes, and All's Well and Measure for Measure show that Shakespeare himself "saw no particular moral significance in them."[40]

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[37]Fluchère, p. 201.

[38]O. J. Campbell, pp. 110-111.

[39]Arthur M. Sampley, "A Warning-Piece Against Shakspere's Women," Shakespeare Association Bulletin, XV (1940), 38, in Hillebrand, p. 559.

[40]Rollins, pp. 383-384.

Whether Troilus' passion for Cressida is considered noble or base, there is a considerable contrast in their characters. Coleridge writes that Cressida is the portrait of a "vehement passion" caused by "warmth of temperament" and "fastens on" its object by "liking and temporary preference." Troilus, on the other hand, exemplifies "profound affection."[41] Dickey, commenting on the lack of depth in Cressida's feeling for Troilus, notes that, far from being love-sick like Troilus, she shows a sense of humor in her verbal fencing with Pandarus which Troilus lacks. In contrast to Cressida, who "goes into the affair with her eyes open," Troilus, "although a sensualist, is not aware of his folly."[42]

Cressida has been suggested as a forerunner of Cleopatra.[43] Dickey notes that both are sensual artists,[44] but Stoll's opinion is that while Cressida is a coquette, Cleopatra is in love.[45] Hazelton Spencer adds that Cressida, though charming, "is more whore than coquette and more wanton than charming." Her surrender is sensual and not the yielding of innocence, passion or generosity.

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[41]Quoted in Halliday, pp. 229-230.

[42]Dickey, pp. 322, 325.

[43]Louis Gillet, "Shakespeare: Les Femmes de Son Theatre," La Revue Hebdomadaire, XXIX (1930), 77-80, in Hillebrand, p. 558.

[44]Dickey, p. 322.

[45]Stoll, p. 3.

She is a "perpetual symbol" of fickleness rather than infidelity.[46]

Girardin Saint-Marc, comparing Cressida with Lady Anne in Richard III, writes that Shakespeare

> knows that the intoxication of a new love easily possesses a heart that is disturbed and dazed by grief for a lost love.

Cressida's sin is fickleness--her feeling is genuine so far as it goes.[47]

That Shakespeare's portrayal of Cressida is related in some way to a period in his life when he suffered the torments of love for an unworthy woman has been the subject of much critical speculation. Opinion as to the validity of this interpretation falls into two divisions, termed by Hillebrand the "subjective" and "objective" points of view. The subjective school, flourishing among British scholars, looks to Shakespeare's private life for his motives in writing the so-called problem plays. In support of this point of view, Hillebrand points out that Shakespeare was not forced to write a "scathing arraignment of woman's inconstancy."[48] The

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[46]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 289.

[47]Girardin Saint-Marc, Cours de Litterature Dramatique ou de L'Usage des Passions Dans le Drame, IV (Paris, 1899), in Hillebrand, p. 553.

[48]Hyder Rollins' theory that the play was written to compete with contemporary plays on Troy explains why the subject was chosen. See p. 35 of this paper.

objective, predominantly American, school of thought calls attention to the fixed tradition of the story in Elizabethan times.[49]

The many speculations as to the actual identity of the "Dark Lady" who, it is supposed, so profoundly disturbed Shakespeare's thinking, are not pertinent to this paper, but it is of interest to note the other Shakespearian women who, with Cressida, are sometimes assumed to be representations of her. Cleopatra, as noted, is an often-cited variant character, but the Dark Lady of the Sonnets is considered by many to represent realistically Shakespeare's unworthy beloved, who influenced him in his characterizations not only of Cressida, Cleopatra, and Lady Anne, but also of Gertrude in Hamlet.

Brandes suggests that the Sonnets could have been written during the excruciating period when the poet was alternately tortured and exalted by his love for the Dark Lady; that Antony and Cleopatra reflects the still-fresh memory of that bittersweet enchantment though the fever itself had passed; and that Troilus and Cressida is the outcome of his final revulsion from a defunct folly.[50]

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[49]Hillebrand, pp. 387-388.

[50]Brandes, II, 196-197.

Miss Mackenzie writes that Troilus and Cressida is

> the first reaction to some horrible emotional experience which had the effect on Shakespeare's mind that he afterwards drew so potently in Hamlet's first soliloquy.[51]

John Middleton Murry, writing of Hamlet, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida, and All's Well That Ends Well, considers them all products of a "period of profound disturbance." Whether this disturbance is identical with the experiences recorded in the Sonnets, he writes, is of minor importance, but "the disturbance is most clearly to be distinguished in his treatment of love."[52] Spencer considers that the biographical explanation may be correct but can only be a surmise,[54] and Miss Mackenzie comments that "The only objective point that matters is what he tells us himself--that it had something to do with a woman."[54] Sampley writes that Cressida, of all Shakespeare's women, is the only "unlikable woman who is at the same time real," and that she "might easily be a portrait of the dark lady."[55]

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[51]Agnes Mure Mackenzie, The Women in Shakespeare's Plays (Garden City, 1924), pp. 186-187, in Hillebrand, p. 386.

[52]John Middleton Murry, Countries of the Mind: Essays in Literary Criticism (1922), pp. 11-22, in Hillebrand, pp. 386-387.

[53]Spencer, Art and Life, pp. 281-282.

[54]Mackenzie, pp. 186-187, in Hillebrand, p. 386.

[55]Sampley, p. 38, in Hillebrand, p. 558.

With Gallic appreciation, Gillet writes that Cressida is

> another dark lady . . . with that kind of perverse charm, smacking of guilt, and with that jet-black hair and those coal-black eyes which disarmed the poet only too easily.[56]

A more metaphysical explanation of the connection between the Sonnets and Troilus and Cressida is advanced by Wolfgang Schmidt--that the conflict in the dark lady sonnets is between lust and truth, chaos having overcome love and truth through the ignoring of reason by love. This conflict is solved in Troilus and Cressida.[57]

The attitude of the objective school of thought on the biographical aspects of Troilus and Cressida is summed up by Joseph Quincy Adams. According to him, there is no need to

> suppose that in Cressida he is giving venomous expression to his disillusionment at womankind; for we make of the drama a poor thing indeed if we do not allow a great literary artist to portray so well-known and conventionalized a story without accusing him of dragging before the public his own more sordid experiences. We may be sure that the play has no more significance for the student of Shakespeare's life than his other plays.[58]

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[56]Gillet, pp. 77-80, in Hillebrand, p. 556.

[57]Wolfgang Schmidt, "Sinnesänderung und Bildvertiefung in Shakespeares Sonetten," Anglia, LXII (1938), 297, quoted in A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Sonnets, Volume II, edited by Hyder Edward Rollins (Philadelphia and London, 1944), 273.

[58]Joseph Quincy Adams, A Life of William Shakespeare (Boston, 1923), p. 353, in Hillebrand, p. 387.

Goddard's opinion is that it is immaterial whether or not the dark lady was a real person--she was real to Shakespeare's imagination. While the young man represents spirituality, the dark woman represents sensuality, and both qualities are in conflict in the poet's mind. The symbolic representation of the earthy by woman and the celestial by man is carried out in Troilus and Cressida as in the Sonnets, but as Troilus finally realizes when he speaks of his own Cressid and Diomedes' Cressid, both principles are present in both sexes.[59]

Within the play, there is an obvious parallel between the stories of Cressida, Troilus, and Diomedes, and Helen, Menelaus, and Paris. Both stories are illustrative of the miseries caused by fickleness and doting love.[60] Helen's worthlessness and the incongruity of a war being fought for her are mentioned a number of times in the play, by Trojans and Greeks alike. According to Rowse, the folly of the war points up the idea that "love is not worth it" and this idea is enforced by the story of Troilus and Cressida.[61] According to Charlton, Helen is the charm bewitching

> men into flagrant denials of evident and rudimentary obligations . . . drawing man not to a

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[59]Goddard, pp. 393-395.

[60]See Dickey, p. 332; Boas, pp. 378-80, in Hillebrand, p. 529.

[61]Rowse, pp. 355-357.

> higher destiny but to a destruction of the self-evident laws of human society; to chaos, not to salvation.[62]

Helen symbolizes yet another idea, that of corruption covered by beauty. This idea is expressed by Hector after he slays the "one in sumptuous armor":

> Most putrefied core, so fair without.
> (V, viii, 1)

Hector, the noblest character in the play, brings about indirectly his own death by coveting the sumptuous armor. While resting after his fight with the owner of the armor, he is set upon by Achilles' Myrmidons, and is thus destroyed through his failure to reject the false values of outward beauty. Bethell calls attention to the symbolic nature of the "sumptuous armor."[63] According to Fluchère, the corruption is not so much in Helen as all around her. He sees significance in the many metaphors taken from illness and digestion; the Trojan State is more rotten than the Kingdom of Denmark.[64]

It seems clear that Shakespeare's treatment of Helen in the play is intended to add another dimension to his portrait of Cressida as an abstraction of faith-

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[62]Charlton, p. 238.

[63]S. L. Bethell, "Troilus and Cressida," in Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism, edited by Leonard F. Dean (New York, 1961), pp. 262-265.

[64]Fluchère, pp. 197-198.

less woman and to relate the concept of faithlessness in woman to dishonor, corruption, and disorder within the state.[65]

Olwen W. Campbell sums up the essential differences between Cressida and Juliet:

> Whatever 'distant and perverted echoes' there may be of Juliet's language, she is Juliet's opposite in all points of character. Her very treatment of her uncle, who has been compared to Juliet's nurse, shows up the contrast. She replies to the coarse jokes of Pandarus where Juliet neither heeds nor understands those of her nurse: and we seem to see her praised cheeks covered with a guilty flush when her uncle teases her for giving way to her passion, where Juliet would never have heard him speak. In Scene 2 of the third act she is thinking entirely of herself: how much she may betray to Troilus; how she will appear in his eyes. . . . In the second and fourth scenes of Act IV, where Troilus is indeed another Romeo, his tenderness is met by harsh coquetry; and though Cressida, when alone, luxuriates in 'the fine full perfect grief' that she 'tastes,' and chews the cud of her insipid emotions, she responds to Troilus' earnest appeals that she will be true with querulousness and suspicion.[66]

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[65]Boas, pp. 378-380, in Hillebrand, p. 529, comments: "Helen and Cressida are made to figure in exactly the same light. Both are heartless and disloyal, yet they awake a devotion of which they are utterly unworthy."

[66]Olwen W. Campbell, "Troilus and Cressida: A Justification," The London Mercury, IV (1921), 51-52, in Hillebrand, p. 555.

Chapter IV

The Minor Characters: The Envoys; The Commentators; The Wise Men

The Envoys

The Nurse in Romeo and Juliet and Pandarus in Troilus and Cressida are frequently cited as analogous characters. The parts they play as go-betweens for the lovers as well as the licentiousness of their speech are similar. There are, however, various interpretations of their functions in the two plays.

Harold Goddard regards Juliet's Nurse as one of the vilest characters Shakespeare ever created, and sees her function in the play as a contrast to the purity of Romeo and Juliet's love. Goddard even goes so far as to blame the Nurse, along with Mercutio, as one of the instigators of the tragedy.[1]

Dickey discusses at length the Nurse's correspondence to "the bawd of classical comedy." Like the "bawd of Roman comedy and the ruffiana of the commedia dell'arte," she is "lewd and talkative and full of advice--largely mistaken--in affairs of the heart." A

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[1]Goddard, pp. 119-120, 391.

further similarity between the Nurse and these classical character types is her infuriating method of delivering news. According to Dickey, her moral function in the play is to underline the comedy of young love by reminding us that sexuality, which may be a laughable human folly, is present even in the most exalted passion. When Juliet rejects the Nurse, she rejects the love concept symbolized by the Nurse.[2] Stopford Brooke writes that Juliet is "lifted into womanhood by her love," and she sees how conscienceless is the old woman whose "only religion is a pleasurable excitement."[3] Otway makes his Nurse an outright villain who treacherously raises an alarm when Lavinia flees to join Marius Junior.[4]

While Juliet's Nurse is greeted with mixed critical reactions, Goddard's attitude that she is one of the main malefactors of the piece is rare. Some seem to find her an admirable character in spite of her faults. Stopford Brooke regards the Nurse as "endurable," "human," "charming in her garrulity."[5] Taine, a nineteenth century French critic, writes that though the Nurse is "garrulous, foul in language, . . . stupid, impudent, and immoral,"

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[2]Dickey, pp. 177-181.

[3]S. Brooke, pp. 46-47.

[4]Appendix A of this paper is a synopsis of Otway's play.

[5]S. Brooke, pp. 46-47.

she is "yet otherwise a worthy soul, and indulgent to her young charge."[6] How her worthiness shines through these other qualities is not explained.

Gervinus considers that the Nurse was "designed already in her entire character in Brooke's narrative";[7] however, Dickey points out that Shakespeare invented the Nurse's bawdiness along with her Plautine message-delivering. Though Brooke's Nurse is loquacious, "she neither talks bawdily nor delays in giving her news." Pandarus is similar to the Nurse not only in his "loquacity and salacious interest in the lovers' affairs," but his "delaying and complaining until Cressida is frantic" is quite similar to the Nurse's way of telling Juliet of Tybalt's death.[8]

Pandarus' exact relation to the love story of Troilus and Cressida has also been a subject for speculation. Van Doren argues that Pandarus' role is to cheapen the lovers, but that Cressida is already so gross and crude that "to be cheaper Pandarus must be worth nothing at all."[9] Samuel Johnson's comment is in this same vein:

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[6]H. Taine, Litterature Anglaise, II (Paris, 1866), 190, in Furness, p. 442. M. R. Ridley writes that though the Nurse, like Pandarus, has a "vulgar mind," she has also a "kind heart." See Shakespeare's Plays, A Commentary (New York, 1939), pp. 148-149, in Hillebrand, p. 561.

[7]Gervinus, in Furness, p. 457.

[8]Dickey, pp. 180, 321, 326.

[9]Mark Van Doren, Shakespeare (Garden City, 1954), p. 177.

"His vicious characters sometimes disgust, but cannot corrupt, for both Cressida and Pandarus are detested and contemned."[10] According to O. J. Campbell, Pandarus is "official commentator for the love story" as Thersites is for the events of the war. He is neither a buffoon nor a railer, but maintains a derisive attitude on the part of the audience. His spirit broods over the love story.[11]

Pandarus is regarded in a more kindly light by those critics who see Troilus' love as noble and pure. G. Wilson Knight, who regards Troilus as a "metaphysical lover," writes that to be "repelled by Pandarus' lax morality in helping these two to illicit love" is to miss the point of the theme. He sees nothing disgusting in Pandarus' speech, regarding his humor as "always kindly and sympathetic."[12] If the love story is regarded in the light of the conventions of courtly love, it is true that there is nothing reprehensible in the relationship of Troilus and Cressida. According to

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[10]Quoted in Halliday, p. 229.

[11]O. J. Campbell, p. 117. Dickey, pp. 323-324, reaches a similar conclusion: Pandarus' "loquacious prurience underlines the sexual basis of the love affair."

[12]Knight, pp. 65-67. Ridley agrees with this estimate, arguing that Pandarus is genuinely fond of the lovers and is simply helping them get what they want, unconcerned with the morality of it. In Hillebrand, p. 561.

Knight, though Pandarus' part in the love story corresponds in the beginning to that of the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet, he is more nearly akin to the Fool in Lear when tragedy strikes.[13]

Dryden was not repelled by Shakespeare's Pandarus, considering him "unfinished" although "promising," and he "improved" the character, as he did Hector, Troilus, and Thersites.[14] Although Dryden's Pandarus does not seem very different from Shakespeare's, as Hazelton Spencer points out,[15] Allardyce Nicoll considers that Dryden, in making Pandarus "inexpressibly coarse," generally debased Shakespeare's humor.[16] Sir Walter Scott, lamenting that Chaucer's tale, having suffered at the hands of Shakespeare, was further degraded by Dryden, writes of Pandarus that his character is so "grossly heightened, as to disgrace even the obliging class to whom that unfortunate procurer has bequeathed his name."[17]

Sometimes considered as comic characters (by those who are not repelled), Pandarus and the Nurse are

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[13]Knight, pp. 65-67.

[14]Dryden, Preface to Troilus and Cressida, Works, VI, 255-256.

[15]Spencer, Shakespeare Improved, pp. 225, 232.

[16]Nicoll, p. 166.

[17]Scott, Works of Dryden, VI, 245.

inevitably compared with Falstaff. Brandes, however, makes the point that Pandarus, though clever and witty, elicits no sympathy, as Falstaff does,[18] and Goddard condemns the Nurse as utterly unlike Falstaff because of her lack of imagination.[19]

The Commentators

Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet and Thersites in Troilus and Cressida are two of Shakespeare's most interesting minor characters, possibly because of their ambiguous natures. Their parts in the action are quite different, since Mercutio is involved in the plot, his fiery nature and resultant death being the cause of Romeo's killing of Tybalt, whereas Thersites remains always outside the action of the play. Their foul-mouthed cynicism they have in common, however, and so they may be considered analogous insofar as their commentaries on the action are concerned.

Dickey sees Mercutio in the tradition of the commentator in love-comedy, in which the "cooler characters" of the play and the audience enjoy a burlesque of love and sex. Mercutio's function is to prevent the audience taking the lovers too seriously at the beginning of the play.[20]

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[18]Brandes, II, 218.

[19]Goddard, p. 120.

[20]Dickey, p. 176.

Van Doren sees Mercutio as contributing to the variety of the types of love brought out in the play. All the characters talk only of love, but there is much difference in what is intended. Mercutio believes only in sex, and the low pornographical level of the opening dialogue of the servants, Sampson and Gregory, is repeated by Mercutio later in the play on a slightly higher level.[21] Spencer comments that "Mercutio's amusing ribaldry (II, i) only makes more pure and sweet the incomparable duet which follows."[22]

Although Goddard considers Mercutio one of Shakespeare's vilest characters,[23] most critics find him attractive. This point of view is supported by the fact that his part is considered by most actors to be the plum of the play.[24] While some Romanticists have suggested that Shakespeare had to kill him off in the third act so that Romeo would not be completely overshadowed,[25] Coleridge points out that a certain amount of attractiveness is necessary to the plot, since Romeo must be sufficiently upset by his death to retaliate.[26] Spencer agrees that Mercutio's death strengthens the

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[21]Van Doren, pp. 56-57.

[22]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 214.

[23]Goddard, pp. 119-120. Gervinus' opinion of him is not much higher. See Gervinus, in Furness, p. 456.

[24]Margaret Webster, Shakespeare Without Tears (Greenwich, 1964), p. 110. See also Spencer, Art and Life, p. 219.

[25]See Gervinus, in Furness, p. 456.

[26]Quoted by Halliday, pp. 159-160.

motivation for Romeo's exile while at the same time solving the awkward problem of a too-attractive minor character, "one of the most scintillating things Shakespeare ever did," although rather light for tragedy.[27] Noting that Otway, in his Caius Marius, gave many of Mercutio's lines to Sulpitius, the commander of Marius' guards, Spencer remarks that Sulpitius' part lacks "the airy nothings that decorate and almost hide, but do not, that fine and noble nature."[28] Coleridge describes Mercutio as possessing all the elements of a poet combined with the manners and feelings of a "perfect gentleman."[29] Coleridge apparently does not find it inconsistent that, as Goddard points out, Mercutio's every word is permeated with indecency.[30] Granville-Barker suggests that Mercutio is modeled on the typical young English man-about-town of Shakespeare's time. To Granville-Barker, Mercutio is "the complete realist, the egoist justified," and has the "soundest common sense." "Dominating the stage with his lusty presence, vomiting his jolly indecencies, we see the sensual man, Mercutio."[31]

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[27]Spencer, Art and Life, p. 219.

[28]Spencer, Shakespeare Improved, p. 298.

[29]Quoted by Halliday, pp. 159-160.

[30]Goddard, p. 122.

[31]Granville-Barker, pp. 335-337, 307.

Others describe Mercutio as brave, audacious, witty, imaginative, and with a touch of genius,[32] and "fascinating, mercurial and bawdy."[33]

Goddard draws a provocative parallel between Mercutio and Paris, commenting on the line:

> Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.
> (Troilus and Cressida, II, ii, 110)

He writes that the fire with which Paris burns is lust, not pugnacity, reminding one of Mercutio, who burns with both.[34]

Thersites' function as commentator on the action is obvious, as is his unpleasantness as a character. Harrison, intimating that Thersites' vituperation is not always deserved by those against whom it is directed, suggests that Thersites represents the "political malcontent," who revenges himself on the world for his frustrations by denigrating every action.[35] Goddard comments that Thersites voices no small amount of truth despite his nastiness.[36] Brandes and Bethell agree with Goddard that Thersites is used as a type of chorus, Brandes making the point that he is a kind of "satyr-

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[32]S. Brooke, pp. 42-43.

[33]Rowse, p. 232.

[34]Goddard, p. 410.

[35]Harrison, Introduction to Troilus and Cressida, in Major Plays, p. 658.

[36]Goddard, p. 389.

chorus,"[37] and Bethell comparing his role as a "scurrilous chorus upon the futility of war" to Falstaff's in the battle scenes of Henry IV, Part I.[38] Fluchère argues that as a personification of the satiric spirit, observing the situation from outside and transcending it through the acidity and aridity to which he is confined, Thersites is like, not Falstaff, but Apemantus in Timon of Athens.[39] Brandes also notes that, though Thersites could be a sketch for Caliban without his "heavy, earthy, grotesque clumsiness," he is most closely related to Apemantus.[40]

Thersites' most Falstaffian actions are his cowardly refusals to fight Hector (V, iv) and Margarelon (V, vii), which recall Falstaff's trickery to avoid combat with Douglas. Charlton, commenting on this similarity, observes that the exposure of the "contemptible though specious triumphs" of Falstaffianism is one of the constructive elements in Troilus and Cressida.[41]

In contradiction to Goddard's view that Thersites "seems at times to be the author's mouthpiece,"[42] O. J.

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[37]Brandes, II, 208.

[38]Bethell, in Dean, p. 261.

[39]Fluchère, p. 197.

[40]Brandes, II, 224.

[41]Charlton, pp. 246-247.

[42]Goddard, p. 389.

Campbell, writing about Troilus and Cressida from the point of view that it is a satire, argues that, since Thersites does not present the moral or religious principles of the author, or values by which the characters should be judged, he is not a chorus, and is more like a court fool than a clown, since he evokes aversion simultaneously with amusement.[43] Charlton, noting that Thersites is known by all in the play to be of no credit (this is true also in Homer's Iliad), agrees that Thersites is not the voice of Shakespeare.[44]

According to Wilson, Thersites provides a "safety valve for our disgust; he is the clown whose very excesses warn us against laughing merely derisively, or in the wrong place."[45] Van Doren interprets Thersites' purpose as the cheapening of the heroes, in order to sink below whom, "Thersites must bubble in eternal mire." The heroes accomplish their own degradation, leaving nothing for him.[46] According to Knight, Pandarus' humor is like "health-bringing sunshine compared with the sickly eclipsing cynicism of Thersites' jeers." While the Trojan forces stand for "human beauty and worth," the Greeks stand for the "bestial and stupid

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[43]O. J. Campbell, pp. 105-107.

[44]Charlton, p. 237.

[45]Wilson, p. 124.

[46]Van Doren, p. 177.

elements of man, the barren stagnancy of intellect divorced from action, and the criticism which exposes these things with jeers."[47]

Brandes summarizes Thersites' relationship to Shakespeare's earlier clowns:

> The light wit and deep humour of the earlier clowns is displaced in him by the frantic outbursts of a contemptible scamp. Throughout, Thersites is intended as a caricature of the envious and worthless (if sharpsighted) plebeian, of whose wit Shakespeare has need for the complete scourging of an arrogant and corrupt aristocracy, but whose politics are the subject of his utter disgust and scorn.[48]

The Wise Men

Gervinus regards Friar Laurence as representing the part of the chorus in Romeo and Juliet, when he reiterates several times to Romeo what to Gervinus is the main idea of the play, that an excess of love must be punished. The Friar expresses the idea instructively in his first soliloquy (II, iii, 1 ff.) when he speaks in terms of the powers of the herbs:

> Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
> (II, iii, 21)

and later, when uniting the lovers, he speaks warningly:

> These violent delights have violent ends,
> (II, vi, 9)

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[47]Knight, pp. 67, 51.

[48]Brandes, II, 224.

and, finally, he repeats the idea reprovingly to Romeo when the latter is distraught in his cell (III, iii, 108 ff.).[49] Dickey suggests that "Shakespeare's Friar, unlike Brooke's, is . . . a real chorus whose words give the necessary moral base from which to judge the tragedy."[50]

In spite of the unbelievably bad planning of the Friar,[51] the Friar has been described as a "man of the world,"[52] and "a wise natural philosopher, a shrewd politician."[53] Brandes goes so far as to term the Friar an "embodiment of reason," pointing out that it is useless to reproach him with the stupidity of the poison plot, as Shakespeare simply accepted this from his source.[54]

It is as an embodiment of reason that the Friar can be compared with Ulysses in Troilus and Cressida. Wilson comments that Ulysses, as an "advocate of order" and a "symbol of reason," is a fitting companion for Troilus when he witnesses Cressida's betrayal of him.[55]

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[49]Gervinus, in Furness, p. 455.

[50]Dickey, p. 208.

[51]Wilson, p. 26, points out that the marriage would probably have reconciled the families, and that Shakespeare manipulated his characterization of the Friar to further the tragic ending.

[52]S. Brooke, p. 53.

[53]Theodor Sträter, Die Komposition von Shakespeare's Romeo and Julia (Bonn, 1861), pp. 29-31, in Furness, p. 461.

[54]Brandes, I, 94.

[55]Wilson, p. 128.

Brandes, on the other hand, writes that Ulysses, though intended to represent wisdom, "is as trivial of mind as the rest," and "not one whit more sublime than the fools with whom he plays." The incongruity of Ulysses' giving "vent to profound political and psychological reflections" is one of the contradictions of the play that make it so attractive.[56] Karl Thompson suggests that the scene in which Troilus and Ulysses observe Cressida's behavior with Diomedes is a "grotesque piece of voyeurism," and inconsistent with Ulysses' character as shown elsewhere in the play.[57]

Bethell, developing the idea that the characters of Troilus and Cressida are symbolic, notes that while Thersites recalls the Old Vice, Ulysses suggests an abstract Worldly Wisdom. This symbolism is especially significant in the scene of Cressida's arrival at the Greek camp (IV, v). Cressida reveals her character in the test devised by Ulysses; his refusal to kiss her himself gives him "judicial aloofness." His abstract deific quality absolves him from being "ungentlemanly."[58]

While Harrison praises Ulysses' wisdom, especially in his plot to bring Achilles to his senses by having

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[56]Brandes, II, 213, 220.

[57]Thompson, pp. 535-536.

[58]Bethell, in Dean, pp. 259-260.

Ajax win the lottery,[59] Goddard comments that Ulysses, "as a deranger of degree and fomenter of the very anarchy he pretends to hate, . . . turns out to be an advance agent of his own Universal Wolf."[60] Karl Thompson suggests that Ulysses, by making both Achilles and Troilus objects of sport and mockery, prevents both characters from realizing their true tragic potential.[61]

Ulysses' speeches on order and time mark him as the representative of wisdom in a play most of the characters of which present varying degrees of folly. The aims which Ulysses desires to effect do come about--but the chaotic ending of the play indicates that order has not been restored.[62] Ulysses, then, can be regarded as the exemplification of worldly wisdom gone awry, as all mere human efforts must go when not reinforced by the basic order of being. The Friar, too, speaks for moderation and order. But his efforts result in order only after most of the principals are dead through the miscarriage of his pathetic plans.

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[59]Harrison, Introduction to Troilus and Cressida, Major Plays, p. 658.

[60]Goddard, pp. 398-401.

[61]Thompson, pp. 535-536.

[62]The suggestion by Brandes, II, 224, that Ulysses, in his intelligence and wisdom, is a prefiguration of Prospero is not valid in light of the play's ending. Prospero's machinations result in final harmony at the end of The Tempest; Ulysses' maneuverings end with death, dishonor, and futility.

The minor characters all represent different aspects of mistaken human endeavor; the Nurse and Pandarus are instrumental in furthering disastrous love affairs doomed from the beginning and not really in need of their coarse ministerings; Mercutio and Thersites express the lowest human interpretation of the love affairs; and Ulysses and the Friar exemplify the final ineffectuality of what passes for wisdom in human terms.

Chapter V

Conclusion

In this paper various analogous elements in Romeo and Juliet and Troilus and Cressida have been discussed; except for the obvious differences in the characters of Juliet and Cressida, the reasons for the dissimilarity in total effect of the plays have not been explored. That these plays do produce unlike impressions on audiences is evident in the fact that, while Romeo and Juliet has been a consistently popular play during and after Shakespeare's time, Troilus and Cressida was advertised as "neuer stal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulgar" when the second quarto edition was printed, and its stage history since has consisted of sporadic revivals beginning with Dryden's 1679 adaptation.[1] The emphasis in Troilus and Cressida on the sensual aspects of love and subsequent disillusionment in contrast to the pure passion of the lovers in Romeo and Juliet could be the reason for the preference of audiences for the latter play. Another reason may be that, while Romeo and Juliet is first and last a love story, with few philosophical digressions or implications other than the question of fate versus free

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[1]Craig, in Complete Works, pp. 395, 862, 864.

will as the cause of the tragedy, Troilus and Cressida teems with metaphysical implications about the relation of man to society and to the universe. Tendencies in modern theater indicate that over-intellectual dialogue is more discouraging to theater-goers than unpleasant love stories, if, indeed, audiences were ever discouraged by unpleasantnesses enacted on the stage. The marked tautology of Troilus and Cressida, with its profusion of Latinisms, is in contrast to the simpler language of Romeo and Juliet.[2]

Brandes comments that Troilus and Cressida "never once arouses any true emotion, since Troilus himself never really interests."[3] The popularity of Romeo and Juliet indicates that Romeo must, on the contrary, arouse interest. What is the difference in these two characters?

The question of fate and free will as opposing forces in the character of Romeo has been discussed as it affects the meaning of the play. If Romeo is a

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[2]See comments on the language of Troilus and Cressida by Van Doren, pp. 175-176; Spencer, Art and Life, p. 284; Goddard, pp. 387-389; and Williams, in Ridler, pp. 192-193. Bethell, in Dean, p. 258, comments on the externalized imagery of the play, which is "frequently developed almost independently of the situation to which it refers." The story is not the "embodiment of thought," but "an excuse for thought."

[3]Brandes, II, 216-217.

slave of passion, as Franklin M. Dickey argues, then he bears the responsibility of his fate and his love for Juliet is only another facet of his affliction. If Romeo is a helpless pawn of fate, as Stopford Brooke believes, the pathos of the play lies either in the doomed futility of his human love for Juliet, or in the inevitability of their sacrifice to bring an end to human strife. Or perhaps, as Harold Goddard suggests, Romeo is faced with a choice between love and hate, and, choosing the latter, sealed his own eventual doom, as well as that of his beloved. Is Romeo justified in killing Tybalt? Dickey, Granville-Barker, and Goddard say he is not; Rötscher disagrees, seeing his act as a triumph of free will. Otway's Restoration remaking of the play ignores the question of fate and emphasizes the element of enslavement by human passions. While Goddard discounts the role of fate in the action, Granville-Barker, Maginn, Dickey, and Rowse see elements of chance as important in the action, Dickey and Rowse suggesting that the mingling of the ideas of fate and individual responsibility is an inconsequential paradox, perhaps indicating an unformed tragic concept in Shakespeare's mind.

Similar questions arise about the character of Troilus. In his case, however, it is clear that he is the slave of a passion which can never be construed as

ennobling, and is in a state of resultant confusion symbolic of the chaos engulfing the Trojans and Greeks alike. The effects of sexual passion, directed at Helen, Polyxena, and Cressida, are destructive and are mirrored in the war surrounding the principals. This view is held by a number of critics, although Hardin Craig, de Selincourt, Hazelton Spencer, and G. Wilson Knight call Troilus' love for Cressida "pure and noble," although most other critics concede the emphasis on lust and sensuality to be found throughout the play. John Palmer, O. J. Campbell, Williams, Rowse, Spurgeon, and Charlton all note the relation of Troilus' chaotic emotional state to the society he represents.

Satirical elements in Troilus and Cressida have been detected since Dryden's day. Dryden himself eliminated satirical elements in his adaptation by transforming both Troilus and Cressida into models of nobility. Whether Troilus and Cressida is a satire on women, as Campbell argues, a satire on lust, as argued by Dickey, on the Iliad, as Brandes states, or courtly love, as O. J. Campbell suggests, is still a debatable matter; perhaps the answer is that all these elements are present.

The thesis that Troilus and Romeo are alike slaves of passion and the instruments of their own doom is a

provocative one and explains many puzzling elements in the plays. The fact that both plays are intimately concerned with the effects of war and strife upon individual lives, however, indicates that more is involved in Shakespeare's plays than portrayals of victims of love folly. The duality of human passion forms the basis of Troilus and Cressida; in this play, Shakespeare writes of physical appetite and war as though they were two faces of the same human folly, mutually engendering and destroying the other despite the ineffectual machinations of the helpless human pawns. The helplessness of the characters results from their having placed themselves outside the structure of order and degree to which admittance can be gained only through the acceptance of reason and the rejection of human will. Ulysses' speech on order and degree underscores this idea unmistakably. Charlton, Campbell, and Wilson all note the importance of this idea in the understanding of Troilus' character. It is in him that the idea is embodied--held fast in the grip of ignoble passions, he is powerless to extricate himself from the final consequences of human will as the course of the Trojan war grinds on.

Romeo, too, in the final analysis, is unable to alter the final catastrophe which overtakes him and his beloved. But his case is different in that his

love for Juliet is not an ignoble passion but an ennobling experience which almost, but not quite, raises him above the temptation of human will in the form of revenge against Tybalt. The wilful spirit of Mercutio enters Romeo, as Goddard notes, and triumphs over the spirit of love which had so recently prompted him to answer Tybalt's insults with words of friendship. The love of Romeo and Juliet, therefore, is not a passion of human will but an expression of reason and order. In revenging himself on Tybalt, Romeo betrays not only his love for Juliet, Tybalt's cousin, but the reason which might have been his salvation.

The difference in the plays, then, is the difference in the emotions felt by the principals. This is shown clearly in the differing language of the plays, especially in the love scenes. Brandes attributes the enduring popularity of Romeo and Juliet to its "exquisite lyricism." He suggests that the three finest passages are Romeo's declaration of love at the ball, Juliet's soliloquy before the bridal night, and the lovers' parting at dawn.[4] Gervinus, following Halpin, points out that Shakespeare adopted age-old lyric forms in all three passages. The first almost reproduces the Italian sonnet, the second is an approach in matter

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[4]Brandes, I, 97.

and form to the epithalamium, or bridal song, and the third is modeled on the medieval dawn-song, the Tageleid. Dr. Irving White adds to this catalogue the elegiac quality of Romeo's speech over Juliet's body in the tomb.[5] Gervinus concludes:

> As it [Romeo and Juliet] has profoundly appropriated to itself all that is most true and deep in the innermost nature of love, so the poet has imbued himself with those external forms also, which the human mind had created long before in this domain of poetry.[6]

The love scenes in Romeo and Juliet have parallels in Troilus and Cressida, but the language of the lovers is quite different. As Gillet remarks, the parting of the lovers at dawn in Troilus and Cressida is almost a parody of the second balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet.[7] Much of the difference in tone in the love scenes of the two plays can be attributed to the predominant imagery. Caroline Spurgeon has determined that the dominating image in Romeo and Juliet is light, "every form and manifestation of it; the sun, moon, stars, fire, lightning, the flash of gunpowder, and the reflected light

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[5]Irving H. White, class remarks, University of Richmond, Virginia, December 6, 1965.

[6]Gervinus, in Furness, p. 455. See other comments on the language of Romeo and Juliet by Craig, in Complete Works, p. 394; S. Brooke, pp. 68-70; Hallam, in Furness, p. 427; Dickey, pp. 173, 185-186; W. H. Clemen, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (London, 1951), pp. 64-66; Philarète Chasles, Etudes sur Shakespeare (Paris, 1851), p. 141, in Furness, p. 434; and Alfred Mézières, Shakespeare ses Oeuvres et ses Critiques (Paris, 1860), p. 264, in Furness, p. 440.

[7]Gillet, in Hillebrand, p. 557; and O. J. Campbell, p. 113.

of beauty and of love." This "constantly recurring image" of light "shows that Shakespeare . . . imaginatively conceives of love as light in a dark world."[8]

By contrast, the dominating image in Troilus and Cressida is food:

> The main emotional theme in Troilus and Cressida--passionate, idealistic love, followed by disillusion and despair--is pictured with overwhelming vividness through physical taste: the exquisite anticipation by a sensitive palate of delicious food and wine, and the sick revolt and disgust on finding on one's tongue only 'greasy relics' or rotting fruit . . . The disgust at woman's wantonness seems to express itself instinctively to Shakespeare . . . in terms of physical appetite and food.[9]

The larger significance to the play of this emphasis on food and taste is summarized by Fluchère as a foretaste of corruption.[10]

The lofty and spiritual emotion of the lovers in Romeo and Juliet, then, is indicated in celestial terms--the light of love illuminating in a swift flash the dark currents of human passions. The love of Troilus and Cressida, conversely, is neither lofty nor spiritual, but physical, sensual, corrupt, and of a piece with the base forces of human will.

The contrast in the two love affairs finds embodiment in the persons of the two heroines, who are

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[8]Spurgeon, p. 18.

[9]Ibid., pp. 320-321.

[10]Fluchère, p. 199.

diametric opposites. Juliet is faithful unto death; Cressida is faithlessness personified. As noted, Juliet is almost universally admired for the idealized qualities she exemplifies. Her self-control, so admired by Stopford Brooke, is in contrast to the impetuosity of her lover. Her extreme youth, commented on by Granville-Barker, underlines the maturity of character she displays, as noted by Brandes, Goddard, Dickey, Stoll, and Gervinus. Her only detractors among the critics are Hallam, von Hartmann, and Schuck, who consider her rather immodest in her anticipation of her wedding night. Brandes, Granville-Barker, Lawrence, and Stopford Brooke all defend Juliet's "Gallop apace" soliloquy.

It is ironic that the faithful Juliet is dead at the end of Romeo and Juliet, while Cressida lives on, presumably enjoying the attentions of Diomedes. But, as Charlton points out, Cressida is in fact reduced to impotence at the end of Troilus and Cressida, since her true character is known to the Greeks. Campbell suggests that death is too good for Cressida, and, as noted, Dryden raised her to the stature of a tragic figure and killed her off in a fitting suicide. Dryden's elevation of Cressida is interesting in the light of nineteenth century charges that Shakespeare debased the tale of Chaucer, but modern scholarship has

shown that Shakespeare followed closely the tradition of the story in his day. Rollins explores this question in detail, and suggests that the fixed Elizabethan tradition of the Troilus-Cressida story influenced Shakespeare in his treatment. While Tucker Brooke and John Palmer write that Cressida is an attractive character, most critics find her completely unsympathetic, and she is sometimes considered as a representation of the "Dark Lady" of the Sonnets, who has been the subject of so much critical speculation. This subjective interpretation of Troilus and Cressida has been propounded by such scholars as Brandes, Mackenzie, Murry, and Schmidt. Other critics discount the idea, pointing to the fixed tradition of the story in Shakespeare's time. The story of Cressida is echoed in the story of Helen, and both women are fitting symbols of the futile war being raged around them.

Although it is not known definitely which version of the Troy story provided Shakespeare with his source for Troilus and Cressida, the story was so well known and conventionalized in Elizabethan times that his particular source is not of paramount importance. What is inescapable about all the contemporary accounts of Troilus and Cressida is that she was faithless, whether or not her faithlessness was forgivable. For whatever reason Shakespeare undertook to write a play on the

subject, he began with an unsympathetic heroine and had to finish with one. The conventions of courtly love, which lent an aura of social respectability to Chaucer's Cressida in her original yielding to Troilus, had all but vanished in Shakespeare's day. His conception of her as a wanton was inevitable in the light of her popular reputation as a strumpet and his own penchant in his plays for matrimonial cures for all ills.

Juliet, on the contrary, whether or not she was a disobedient child, as inferred in Brooke's and Painter's poems, gave her first love to Romeo with the sanction of the Church and died rather than betray it. To anyone with a modicum of sensitivity, she cannot help being a sympathetic character. It is not surprising, then, that Shakespeare should have written her story with compassion and Cressida's with disgust.

Juliet, as a representation of the noblest qualities of womanhood, symbolizes order, reason, right thinking, and action. Cressida, who personifies deception, sensuality, faithlessness, and corruption, symbolizes chaos, will, evil, and destruction. Had Romeo remained true to his love for Juliet and refused to revenge himself on Tybalt, the catastrophic ending of his life and Juliet's would not have resulted; Troilus' love, on the other hand, was doomed from the

beginning, symbolizing the embracing of disorder and the rejection of reason. Troilus' final unhappiness is symbolic of the inevitable destruction of the city of Troy which had, like him, taken to its bosom a faithless woman, Helen.

Among the minor characters, Juliet's Nurse and Pandarus perform similar functions in the action of the plays. While Stopford Brooke and Taine glimpse a heart of gold beneath her coarse exterior, Goddard regards the Nurse as the villain of the play. A similar division of opinion occurs as to the worthiness of Pandarus' character. G. Wilson Knight's opinion of him as kindly and sympathetic is rare, although several critics point out that he is not entirely to blame for the morals of Troilus and Cressida, and, considered in the moral atmosphere of courtly love, Pandarus does nothing reprehensible. Most critics, however, find Pandarus' conversation, preoccupied with sexual experience, disgusting. The Nurse and Pandarus both represent the lowest levels of understanding of human love. The Nurse utterly fails to comprehend the intense spiritual nature of the love of Romeo and Juliet; Pandarus understands the relationship of Troilus and Cressida all too well. Neither the Nurse nor Pandarus proves to be an influence for good, the Nurse treacherously advising Juliet to commit bigamy and marry Paris, and the affair nurtured by Pandarus turning to disillusionment and betrayal.

Mercutio, aside from his importance in the action of the play, serves as a commentator underlining the physical aspects of love. In this capacity, he fails to cheapen the love of Romeo and Juliet and demonstrates the gulf between the lovers and the rest of the world, which can understand only more prosaic relationships than theirs. How attractive Mercutio is as a character depends upon one's notion of what constitutes an attractive character; as pointed out, many critics consider him more scintillating than Romeo, and his part is coveted by actors. Thersites, on the other hand, arouses no admiration. Homer characterizes him as a scurrilous sort in the Iliad, and he remains so in Shakespeare's play. Whereas Mercutio comments on the love story in Romeo and Juliet, Thersites underlines the ignoble side of war with his vituperative attacks upon the warriors and his continual cry, "War and lechery!" As noted, war and lechery and their interactions form the basis of Troilus and Cressida, and Thersites, repulsive though he may be, speaks truly when he says

> And war and lechery confound all!
> (II, iii, 82)

The voices of wisdom in the plays, Friar Laurence and Ulysses, speak on the side of moderation and order but, ironically, their actions do not bear out their words. Their plans fail to bring about order, but

Romeo and Juliet has a pathetic appeal stemming from the lyricism of a noble and spiritualized love which, though crushed by the destructive forces of hate, rises from its ashes to bring peace to the warring factions. Troilus and Cressida, on the other hand, has no such appeal, because the love story portrayed in it is not noble nor spiritualized, but base and sensual. That the love of Troilus and Cressida ends with betrayal is fitting and proper, not tragic nor pathetic. Troilus, whose feelings are sensual from the start, is not sympathetic, and the feeling at the end of the play is that he has gotten his deserts. There is no romance nor sentimentality in Troilus and Cressida; it is realistic, depressing, and, if it is a comedy, not very humorous. That its appeal through the years has been limited is not surprising; while it contains much that is thought-provoking, audiences are apparently not entertained when their thoughts are provoked. They are entertained with romantic dramas of sad young lovers who give their lives for love--Romeo and Juliet is such a drama.

Appendices

Appendix A

Synopsis of

The History and Fall of Caius Marius

by Thomas Otway (1679)

I, i. (Scene numbers are not indicated in the text.)

Metellus (Capulet), Antonius, Cinna, and Senators bemoan the chaotic state of Roman politics, blaming all on the Consul Marius (Montague), who is accused of underhanded methods in his rise to power. All agree that Sylla (Paris) will be their choice for Consul in Marius' place. Metellus further complains of Marius' request that Lavinia (Juliet) marry his son, vowing that she will be Sylla's wife.

I, ii.

Marius Senior bemoans to his sons, Marius Junior (Romeo) and Granius (Benvolio), his ill-usage at the hands of the patricians, particularly Metellus. He tells Marius Junior that he must forget Lavinia. Sulpitius (Mercutio) enters and in response to Marius Junior's love moans, gives a version of the Queen Mab speech; then pledges support to Marius Senior.

II, i.

Metellus summons Lavinia and, between frequent interruptions by the loquacious Nurse, tells Lavinia she is to wed Sylla. Her objections are met with wrathful insistence by Metellus.

II, ii. (A walled garden belonging to Metellus' house.)

Marius Junior enters, pursued by Granius and Sulpitius, who exchange ribaldries on the subject of Marius Junior's passion for Lavinia. Lavinia appears in the balcony, and exchanges with Marius Junior laments on their thwarted love, telling him of her impending marriage to Sylla. She tells Marius Junior to send word to her on the morrow if he wishes to marry her at once.

II, iii. (The Forum.)

Marius Senior confronts his opponents. A fight ensues, in which Sulpitius kills the son of Quintus Pompeius. Marius Senior emerges victorious from the fray and plans to forestall any advances by Sylla, who is at the gates of the city.

III, i.

Sulpitius and Granius discuss the progress of the struggle for power between Sylla and Marius Senior and speculate as to Marius Junior's whereabouts, lamenting the adverse effects upon him of lovesickness.

Marius Senior and Junior enter, Senior commending Junior's challenge of Sylla. The Nurse enters, accompanied by Clodius (Peter), and is insulted by Sulpitius. Marius Junior confirms to her that he and Lavinia are secretly married, and makes arrangements to visit her that night with the aid of a rope ladder.

Marius Senior re-enters and is informed by his son of the marriage, which news enrages him. Marius Junior pledges not to go to Lavinia until his father consents.

III, ii. (Metellus' house.)

Lavinia soliloquizes in anticipation of her wedding night. The Nurse enters and, after much delay, tells Lavinia that Marius Junior is to come to her that night.

III, iii. (The Forum.)

Marius Senior and Sylla confront each other and a fight follows, in which Marius Senior's forces are overcome and he, together with Marius Junior, Granius, and Sulpitius, are taken prisoners. Quintus Pompeius announces their exile, effective by morning. Marius Senior bids Junior spend his last night in Rome with Lavinia.

IV, i. (The garden.)

Marius Junior parts from Lavinia, after which she resolves to follow him. Metellus, inquiring of the Nurse after his daughter, is told by her that Lavinia loves Sylla. Then Lavinia tells the Nurse of her plan to follow Marius Junior, at which the Nurse raises an alarm, sending for Metellus.

IV, ii. (The country.)

(Much of this scene is reminiscent of Lear's wanderings on the moor.)

Marius' herdsmen, discussing their master's fortunes, are questioned by soldiers as to his whereabouts. As the soldiers leave, Marius Senior and Granius enter and are informed by the herdsmen of their pursuit by soldiers. Another search by the soldiers and self-pitying remarks by Marius Senior precede Lavinia's appearance. She gives food to Marius Senior and is warmly welcomed by Marius Junior. Granius enters with a servant who brings a message from Sextilius that Marius Senior cannot stay in that place. Martha, a Syrian prophetess, enters and tells Marius Senior that his fortunes have changed for the better and that Cinna will join him. A ruffian hired to kill Marius Senior by Sextilius is overcome by Marius Senior and swears allegiance to him in exchange for his life. Sulpitius arrives, then Cinna, who joins forces with Marius Senior. Marius Junior enters with Granius, announcing Lavinia's capture by Metellus' forces and her enforced return to Rome. Marius Senior announces his intention of returning to Rome in victory.

IV, iii. (Metellus' house.)

Lavinia begs and obtains from her father permission for a consultation with the Priest of Hymen (Friar Laurence), who gives her a vial containing the sleeping potion which will give her the appearance of death, outlining to her his plan for her rescue from the tomb. He leaves, and after much fearful imagining, Lavinia drinks the potion.

V, i. (Cinna's camp before the walls of Rome.)

Cinna and Marius Senior receive conciliatory ambassadors from Rome, and prepare to enter Rome triumphant and execute vengeance on their enemies.

V, ii. (Metellus' house.)

Metellus rails against the peace with Marius. He and the Nurse discover Lavinia in her death-like sleep.

V, iii. (The Forum.)

Citizens deplore the reprisals being executed by the vengeful Marius Senior, who heartlessly dispatches several old men, virgins, and children to their death. He is informed by a messenger of the capture of Metellus.

V, iv. (A church-yard.)

Marius Junior wanders through, unaccountably attracted to the place. Catulus enters and informs him of Lavinia's burial. Marius Junior remembers an apothecary nearby, who enters and sells him poison. The Priest enters with tools for opening the tomb and, arguing with Marius Junior, who neither recognizes him nor is recognized, is killed by Marius Junior before he can tell him of the sleeping potion plot. Marius Junior pulls down the side of the tomb and drinks the poison. Lavinia awakes and she and Marius Junior declare their undying love before he dies. Metellus is driven into the tomb by Marius Senior and his guards and dies there. Lavinia reproaches Marius Senior for the death of her father, reminding him of her kindness to him while he was in exile, and then stabs herself. Marius mourns over the body of his son as a messenger brings him news of Sylla's march on Rome. Marius is led off the stage, a broken man. Sulpitius, mortally wounded, speaks Mercutio's death speech.

A rather meaningless Epilogue is spoken by Lavinia, who is disconcertingly alive again.

Appendix B

Synopsis of

Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth Found Too Late

by John Dryden (1679)

I, i. (A camp.)

Agamemnon, Ulysses, Diomedes, and Nestor discuss the prolongation of the war and criticize Achilles' refusal to fight, as well as his and Patroclus' disrespectful attitude toward his compatriots.

I, ii. (Troy.)

Troilus bemoans to Pandarus his lovesick state. Pandarus peevishly declares he will have nothing further to do with the match-making. Aeneas informs Troilus that Paris has been wounded by Menelaus. Troilus returns to the battle to take his mind off Cressida. Aeneas mentions to Cressida that Hector has had a rare fit of pique that day. Pandarus enters and describes the virtues of Troilus to Cressida. The Trojan warriors passing by are variously commented upon. Pandarus is summoned to Troilus by a page, and Cressida then reveals that she is actually in love with Troilus, and merely pretending otherwise to Pandarus.

II, i. (Troy.)

Priam, Hector, Troilus and Aeneas discuss the Grecian proposal of peace with the deliverance of Helen. Hector urges her return, but is opposed by Troilus and Aeneas. Andromache enters with a request for Hector from their son Astyanax that Paris make him a knight so that he may challenge the Greek heroes. Hector, inspired by his son's example, resolves to send a challenge himself. Priam and Aeneas attempt to dissuade him, but he remains firm, encouraged by the war-like Andromache.

II, ii.

Pandarus urges Cressida to accept Troilus. Troilus enters and Pandarus promises him that Cressida will be his, describing incidentally how he visited Paris and found him in bed with Helen. Pandarus conducts Troilus to Cressida; Troilus is giddy with expectation.

II, iii. (The Grecian camp.)

Ulysses tells Nestor of his plan to conquer Achilles' pride by arranging to have Ajax win the lottery to fight with Hector. They decide to cause a rift in the friendship of Achilles and Ajax to further their plan of bringing Achilles to heel. Thersites enters and mocks them. Ulysses enjoins him to provoke a quarrel between Ajax and Achilles. Ulysses and Nestor exit and Ajax enters, whereupon Thersites begins insulting him. Achilles enters with Patroclus and Thersites informs them that Hector will certainly cudgel Ajax on the morrow. Achilles and Ajax then quarrel over who will fight Hector.

III, i.

Thersites mocks the Greek commanders, to the delight of Achilles and Patroclus. Achilles announces that Ajax has won the lottery to fight Hector and requests Thersites to give Ajax a message for Hector--that he is invited to Achilles' tent. Thersites agrees. Achilles goes into his tent, taking Thersites with him, at the approach of Agamemnon, Ajax, Diomedes, and Menelaus. Achilles refuses, through Patroclus, to speak with them, and tells Menelaus he will not fight on the morrow. Ulysses and Nestor enter and Ulysses plays upon Ajax's pride.

III, ii.

Troilus and Cressida declare their love, urged on by Pandarus, who at length leads them into a bedroom. Aeneas, Hector, and Diomedes meet at Pandarus' house for the purpose of escorting Cressida to the Greeks in exchange for Antenor, she having been requested by Calchas, her father. Aeneas and Hector agree that Hector should break the news to Troilus.

Pandarus arranges a serenade to be sung to the lovers. Troilus prepares to leave Cressida, Pandarus joining in the farewells with comments on the preceding night. Hector arrives, seeking Troilus, and tells him of the exchange. Troilus objects and Hector appeals to his patriotism. They quarrel, Hector insulting Cressida's chastity, but finally reach an understanding, and Troilus accepts the fact that Cressida must go.

IV, i.

Pandarus tells Cressida of her coming exchange. Troilus enters and bids tearful goodbyes to Cressida. Aeneas arrives to take Cressida, and Troilus begs her to be true and she swears fidelity.

IV, ii.

Achilles and Patroclus are treated disdainfully by Ulysses, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, and Ajax. Achilles speaks about the fickleness of fortune. The Greeks summon Hector by sounding a trumpet. Hector and Ajax fight and Hector refuses to take advantage of Ajax because of their blood relationship. Hector exchanges courteous greetings with the Greeks and leaves with Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, and Diomedes to be entertained in the Greek tents. Troilus questions Ulysses as to Calchas' lodgings and is told by Ulysses of Diomedes' admiration for Cressida. Achilles declares his warlike intentions toward Hector. Thersites enters and, in a verbal exchange with him, Achilles states that he will keep his oath to Polyxena not to fight. Achilles joins Hector; Diomedes leaves for "important business," followed by Ulysses, Troilus, and Thersites. Calchas advises Cressida to pretend love for Diomedes in order to facilitate their escape back to Troy. Cressida fears for what Troilus will think but Calchas urges her to give a ring, a gift from Troilus, to Diomedes. While Troilus, Ulysses, and Thersites listen, Diomedes extracts a promise from Cressida to be his when the war is over, and she gives him the ring as surety. Aeneas comes to fetch the disillusioned Troilus. Pandarus enters, crowing over Cressida's triumphant reception by the Greeks. Troilus wrathfully banishes Pandarus from his presence, and Pandarus leaves in a welter of self-pity that he is never appreciated. Diomedes enters to hasten Troilus on, as the end of the truce period is near, and Troilus quarrels with him childishly over the ring which Cressida has given him. They draw swords, unheeding of Aeneas' peace-making efforts at first, but finally agreeing to meet in battle on the morrow. After their exit, Thersites laments in a bloodthirsty fashion that their brains may cool off before they fight.

V, i.

Hector prepares for battle, but upon Andromache's pleas that he not fight on account of her forebodings of evil, agrees not to go to battle. Troilus, however, persuades him on to fight, saying he will be thought a coward, hiding behind Achilles' promise to Polyxena.

V, ii. (The camp.)

Agamemnon, Ulysses, and Menelaus discuss the progress of the battle. Thersites announces Hector's killing of Patroclus and Agamemnon orders his body taken to Achilles to incite him to revenge. Thersites soliloquizes on the nature of war and refuses to fight a Trojan soldier, a bastard son of Priam. Thersites then backs down from a fight with Hector. Troilus spares Thersites' life on the condition that he lead him to Diomedes. Hector goes to find Achilles, who, inflamed by Patroclus' death, seeks, with his Myrmidons, Hector, in order to kill him. Troilus and Thersites arrive at Calchas' tent, and Troilus bitterly condemns the priesthood, which remarks are amplified by Thersites. Calchas and Cressida seek Troilus; Cressida to justify herself to him and Calchas to prevent Diomedes' death at his hands, as Diomedes is his only means of escape.

Cressida interrupts their fight and proclaims her faithfulness to Troilus; Diomedes, however, insisting that he has enjoyed her favors. Seeing that Troilus refuses to believe her, Cressida stabs herself, blessing Troilus as she dies. Troilus, repentant, engages Diomedes and kills him, in turn to be killed by Achilles.

Achilles, exulting in his day's work, including his killing of Hector, is reproached by Ajax for his dishonorable methods. Ulysses expresses satisfaction that order has been restored with the fall of Troy.

Thersites speaks the epilogue on the subject of "cruel critics" and "dull poets."

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Vita

Charlotte Henley Oberg, born in Richmond in 1936, attended the public schools of Goochland County, graduating from Goochland High School in 1952. She was graduated from Westhampton College of the University of Richmond in 1956 with the degree of B. A., majoring in English.

In 1962-63, she taught in the public schools of Hanover County on the elementary level, and in 1963-64 and 1964-65, she taught in the public schools of Henrico County on the secondary level. During the summer of 1966, she served as an Instructor in the English Department of Richmond Professional Institute.