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SHAKESPEARE'S TROILUS AND CRESSIDA
AS A MIXTURE OF GENRES.**

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SHAKESPEARE'S TROILUS AND CRESSIDA
AS A MIXTURE OF GENRES

by
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FOREWORD

I would like to express my indebtedness to Professor Josephine Waters Bennett for the considerable work and time she has expended, in order to help me plan, shape, and revise this dissertation. Her numerous suggestions have enabled me to correct excesses of exposition and weaknesses of style and organization. I greatly appreciate her circumspect analyses of my ideas, her frequent encouragements, and her efforts to help me find more viable and less vulnerable forms for many of my conceptions.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Troilus and Cressida, as most Shakespearean scholars know, has been among the most controversial plays in the canon for many years. And almost all disagreement can be reduced to the problem of its genre and its dominating tone: is it a historical tragedy or a satire or some third thing? In other words, are we to take seriously and to some extent respect the majority of its characters, or are we to scorn most of them, as exhibitions of human folly and vice? Critics who choose the latter interpretation were not rare in the nineteenth century, for, as Professor W. W. Lawrence indicated in 1931, the satiric viewpoint had already been set forth by Ulrici, Schlegel, Rumelin, Fleay, and Furnivall.¹ On the other hand, some writers of the early twentieth century like Professor J. S. P. Tatlock were impressed by some of the majestic verse and by scenes in which the heroes appear in a more noble light.² Even Professor Lawrence, after granting a marked unpleasantness in most of the characters, finds "a very different spirit from that of Cervantes" in Shakespeare's treatment of chivalry and maintains that "his play is no genial exposure of absurdities, no shattering of the conventions of romance, but an earnest, concentrated philosophical analysis of universal human passions in a corrupt

society."³

However, until recently, disagreement over the play had been largely a clash of impressionistic judgements. No scholar had embarked on a thorough analysis of genre in relation to this play, and no one had arrived at a coherent theory which could claim to answer the objections of the other side. In 1938, however, Professor Oscar James Campbell made a thorough study of the play and arrived at a coherent theory, namely that Shakespeare, influenced by the new genre which Jonson and Marston had initiated, tried his hand at comical satire.⁴ The merits of Campbell's study were soon recognized as formidable, not only by Shakespearean scholars, but by scholars in general. For here was no mere spider-web spun out of a critic's noble sensibilities, but a theory firmly based on a historical fact--the ban on formal satires in 1599--and on a close study of the contemporaneous works of Marston and Jonson, as a foundation for the study of Troilus and Cressida.

Moreover, Campbell offered one of the first close analyses of the English formal satire, as well as a discussion of the theory of satire and comedy--a question which up to that time rarely entered into critical discussions. It is true, of course, that the pattern of historical causation which he formulated does not hold up very well under scrutiny, for he leaves the impression that because of the ban "the satirists" turned to the

stage; whereas Jonson was not a formal satirist before 1599, but already a playwright, while Hall, Donne, and Guilpin did not turn to the stage; indeed, the ban on formal satire as a motivation for writing satiric plays could apply only to Marston.⁵

Nevertheless, Campbell's thesis was an impressive and striking one, and it started a whole new line of thinking about the drama of the period and, indeed, about what constitutes dramatic satire. Many writers, including his sharpest critics, are indebted to Professor Campbell for his study of the drama of the period; and some of the ideas on the theory of satire in the present study--although in their developed form they diverge sharply from Professor Campbell's ideas--received their initial impetus from his thinking.

In spite of the virtues of his thesis, however, a large number of writers have not considered it a satisfactory explanation of the play. Professor Harold N. Hillebrand, one of the two editors of the Variorum, Professors Willard Farnham, Hardin Craig, Theodore Spencer, Kenneth Muir, William Empson, I. A. Richards all either disagree categorically that the play can be a satire, or disagree on essential points.⁶ Similarly, Professor Robert Presson's able study of the sources of the play makes him conclude--as Tatlock and R. A. Small did before him--that the Homeric influence is very strong and that Shakespeare to a large extent adapted and

dramatized the Iliad, rather than satirizing it.⁷

Professor Rudolf Stamm, in his remarkable article on implicit stage directions which are incorporated into dialogue, time and time again shows how these "mirrors" of action enhance the pathos and dramatic tension of scenes:⁸ elements in the work which would be inappropriate to satire, but appropriate to tragedy. Again, Professors Alvin Kernan and James Sutherland, specialists in English satire, strongly doubt that Troilus and Cressida can qualify for this genre.⁹ And two years before Campbell published his work, Professor Kittredge, in about as sensible and balanced a judgement as one could desire, furnished convincing arguments against the viewpoint that Shakespeare debases or satirizes the Greek and Trojan heroes.¹⁰

It is Professor E. M. W. Tillyard, however, who has perhaps more thoroughly than anyone else attempted to answer Professor Campbell's thesis. He points out, for example, that Shakespeare's play lacks "the Jonsonian repose" and the "steady belief in good sense"¹¹--in other words, the magisterial certainty and stern conviction necessary for a consistently disparaging outlook.

Furthermore, he goes on:

Campbell's thesis fails when applied to this play partly because it misses its complexity. The Trojans may have their faults, but they have them differently from the Greeks. Hector may err, but he is noble compared to Achilles. And to turn Troilus into an adept in lechery is to wreck one of Shakespeare's masterpieces of characterization

and to go flat against what his poetry is telling us . . . of a noble devotion, which we know is tragically misplaced. But the misplacement does not alter the nobility.¹²

Nevertheless, in spite of the many reservations and refutations which a number of eminent writers have expressed, Professor Campbell's thesis has endured and, in the absence of a better one, may still be regarded as the majority viewpoint (although not all critics who adhere to it openly endorse it). Professor Alice Walker, for example, in the reputable New Cambridge edition of the play, pursues the satiric interpretation of the play quite markedly.¹³ Professors G. B. Harrison, Hiram Haydn, Muriel Bradbrook, David Lloyd Stevenson, and Geoffrey Bullough all, for one reason or another, judge the play largely along the lines of Campbell's position.¹⁴ Professor Robert Kimbrough, who in a recent study became one of the first published scholars since Campbell to devote an entire book to the play, hesitates to call it a comicall satyre, but makes a large number of particular judgements throughout the book which stress the satiric deflation of many characters.¹⁵ Professors Gilbert Highet and Edgar Johnson, specialists in satire, also side with Campbell.¹⁶ Finally, recent writers like Professors Norman Rabkin, Derick Marsh, and Alice Shalvi have manifested a marked inclination to embrace the satiric viewpoint;¹⁷ so that, as of 1966, Professor Campbell's thesis is still a healthy one and apparently

on the upsurge again. Even those who disagree with him on the whole frequently support (perhaps unwittingly) particular judgements of his.¹⁸ In effect, although many writers are unwilling to endorse Campbell's position openly (because of the numerous and impressive strictures which eminent scholars have set forth), they have continued to perpetuate this or that judgement by Campbell; so that the cumulative weight of these judgements, one supported by some writers and another by others, actually constitutes a corpus of beliefs about the play which collectively is a fair replica of Campbell's original position.

Consequently, we have in a sense not progressed beyond Professor Campbell's position in 1938, in our interpretation of the play. True, in theory, this position, having been exposed to extensive criticism, is not wholly reputable: cautious writers shun an absolute identification of themselves with it, because it now smacks of a lack of moderation. In practice, however, it is Professor Campbell's way of thinking to which a majority of critics are drawn in their evaluation of the play.

However, it should be made clear that the satirical interpretation of Troilus and Cressida continues today to be the more or less accepted one primarily because those who oppose it have failed to offer a better one.

Professor Campbell's coherent views in 1938 boldly filled a vacuum of contending impressionistic theories which had not been thoroughly worked out. But it is my position that, like the Trojans in Ulysses' speech, Campbell's interpretation of the play survives today, not because of its strength, but because of the weakness of alternative theories of the play; and because of the ultimate weakness of the criticism which has been brought to bear on his position.

I hope in this dissertation to propose a coherent alternative explanation of the play which will be more satisfying than the satiric. I analyze the play, not as an attempt to emulate Jonsonian comical satire, but as an experimental attempt to combine the three main genres of drama: comedy, tragedy, and satire. As an important part of this analysis, I have tried to establish some of the requirements of satire according to ancient and modern theorists and then, using these requirements, have re-examined and disputed Campbell's contention that a new genre, the comical satire which appeared in 1599, was Shakespeare's model. I have also studied a few key scenes, notably the Greek and Trojan council scenes, in order to show on stylistic, as well as other grounds, that they transcend satiric treatment, are grave in tone, and are characterized by verse and rhetoric which Renaissance and classical writers universally agreed are

suited to epic and tragic poetry; whereas an entirely different style is suited to satire. I have examined as well Homer's Iliad, Lydgate's Troy-Book, Caxton's Recuyell, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, and several minor sources, in order to show that, contrary to the view frequently expressed by those who have never (or only sparingly) read most of these works, Shakespeare did not systematically debase or burlesque his sources. Furthermore, I have suggested that the picturesque tirades of Thersites have colored the judgements of many commentators--even after they have acknowledged that Thersites cannot be regarded as a reliable spokesman for Shakespeare: a Janus-like stance in these commentators which constitutes the "Thersitean fallacy."

In general, then, I believe that Troilus and Cressida is a mixture of genres: a blending of a comic love-plot which ends tragically, with a historic war-plot which ends tragically. Added to these is a strong element of satire, largely restricted to Thersites. Specifically, I have tried to show in this study that a tone of amorous comedy and comedy of wit prevails in I.i (Troilus and Pandarus), I.ii (Cressida and Pandarus), III.ii (all three), and IV.ii, first half (all three). I believe the second strand, that of tragedy, prevails in II.ii (Trojan council), IV.ii, second half (the news of the exchange), IV.iii (the parting), V.ii (the "ocular proof"), V.iii

(Hector and Andromache); while I.iii--although it is not tragic in tone--has the gravity and dignity of the high historical mode, as does most of IV.v (the "loving interview"). Satire appears in III.i (Helen and Paris), V.i (Thersites' tirades), V.ii (Thersites' commentary), V.iv-ix (Thersites' commentary intermingled with several "historical" actions), and V.x (Pandarus' epilogue). I do not think that this satiric trend infects the other ones, and I have tried to show that the impression that it does is almost always based on a tendency to equate the comical and laughable with the satirical and corrective. Nor does the satiric element have a privileged frame of reference which nullifies other tones and modes. Rather, it co-exists with them, notably in Act V, where through Thersites it jarringly contends with the tragic material and contributes to a final complex tone of despair mingled with cruel humor.

This view of the play (which necessarily will appear rather unsophisticated in this schematic form, without strong proofs) may strike some as too eclectic a theory; for it provides, it seems, something for everyone. However, the diversity of materials should not obscure the fact that tragedy is finally predominant, and if I were pressed to give my conception of the play in terms of a single genre, I would not hesitate to say, "tragedy." But it is my view that, in analyzing the

nature of a work, we must do justice to all of its ingredients. And if this procedure leads us to a conception of the play as a kind of "gallimaufry"¹⁸ 9 which has sufficient variety of matter to satisfy the classifying inclinations of all critics, we need not fear the charge of indefiniteness or obligingness. Elizabethan dramatists themselves were noted for their eagerness to provide their audiences with a sufficient variety of matter. Hence, it is more likely that the idea of mixed genres conforms to one of the actual procedures of Elizabethan dramatists (compare, for example, some of Marston's odd concoctions) than that it simply represents an elusiveness or a lack of decisiveness in the formulation of our position.

Perhaps the theory that Troilus and Cressida is a play of mixed genres appears rather sickly when compared to Campbell's bold and decisive position. However, it seems to me that it is more important to arrive at an accurate and fair representation of the play, even if this representation appears indecisive, than it is to arrive at a decisive, but distorted one. Monistic theories are always attractive because they seem to account for a large number of details in accordance with one principle. But, as we shall see, the satiric interpretation of Troilus can account for many details in the play only by a wrenching of these details from

their natural meanings. And, when this difficulty becomes clear, the most plausible recourse for those whose minds are essentially uncommitted is to re-adjust to an interpretation which does justice to the multiplicity of Troilus and Cressida.

NOTES

¹W. W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, 2d ed. (New York, 1960), p. 172. See also Frederick Boas, Shakspeare and his Predecessors (New York, 1900), pp. 373-384, and Jean Jusserand, Literary History of the English People, III (New York, 1906-1909), pp. 253-254.

²J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 753, 760-761.

³Lawrence, Problem, pp. 122-123, pp. 123-124, p. 140, p. 141, p. 246; p. 171.

⁴Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938).

⁵Middleton, if he is indeed the author of Micro-Cynicon, did go on to write satiric comedies, but none of these are literally comicall satyres, and Campbell does not consider his work for the stage, since they were written largely after Campbell's period of interest, 1599-1603.

⁶A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Troilus and Cressida, ed. Harold N. Hillebrand and T. W. Baldwin (Philadelphia and London, 1953), p. 383; Willard Farnham, "Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire," SQ, XV (Spring, 1964), 257-264; Hardin Craig, An Interpretation

of Shakespeare (Columbia, Missouri, 1948), pp. 237-240; Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), pp. 110-121; Kenneth Muir, "Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Survey, VIII, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge, 1955), p. 37; William Empson, Some Versions of the Pastoral (London, 1935), pp. 34-42, pp. 140-143; I. A. Richards, "Troilus and Cressida and Plato," Hudson Review, I (Autumn, 1948), 362-368.

⁷Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), especially p. 73, pp. 140-141.

⁸Rudolf Stamm, "The Glass of Pandar's Praise," E & S, n. s. XVII (1964), 55-77.

⁹Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven and London, 1959); James Sutherland, English Satire (Cambridge, 1962).

¹⁰The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Boston, 1936), p. 880. See also Peter Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays (London, 1961), pp. 32-44; Richard C. Harrier, "Troilus Divided," Studies in the English Renaissance Drama, ed. Josephine Waters Bennett, et al. (New York, 1959), pp. 143-155; Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy (Toronto, 1957). These writers disagree wholly or in part with the view that the play

is a satire.

¹¹E. M. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), pp. 46-47.

¹²Ibid., p. 47.

¹³Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1957), x-xlvi.

¹⁴G. B. Harrison, Shakespeare's Tragedies (New York, 1956), pp. 113-130; Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950), pp. 605-612; Muriel Bradbrook, "What Shakespeare Did to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," SQ, IX (Summer, 1958), 311-319; David Lloyd Stevenson, The Love-Game Comedy (New York, 1946), pp. 216-222; Geoffrey Bullough, "The Lost 'Troilus and Cressida'," E & S, n. s. XVII (1964), 24-40.

¹⁵Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964).

¹⁶Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962); Edgar Johnson, A Treasury of Satire (New York, 1945), p. 156.

¹⁷Norman Rabkin, "Troilus and Cressida: The Uses of the Double Plot," Sh Studies I (1965), 265-282; Derick Marsh, "Interpretation and Misinterpretation: The Problem of Troilus and Cressida," Sh Studies I (1965),

182-198; Alice Shalvi, "'Honor' in Troilus and Cressida," SEL, V (1965), 283-302.

¹⁸See, for example, R. A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered," UTQ, XXXII (January, 1963), 142-154; Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d ed. (Garden City, 1956), pp. 64-80; Franklin M. Dickey, Not Wisely But Too Well (San Marino, 1957), pp. 118-119; L. C. Knights, "'Troilus and Cressida' Again," Scrutiny XVIII (Autumn, 1951), 114-157; Albert Gérard, "Meaning and Structure in Troilus and Cressida," ES, XL (June, 1959), 114-157.

¹⁹John Lyly uses this word to describe his own play, in the prologue of King Midas. See The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford, 1902), III, p. 115. As Alfred Harbage has pointed out in Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (New York, 1952), however, "Polonius' term 'tragical-comical-historical-pastoral' describes most of the plays 1560-1613 better than our usual labels" (p. 65).

II. THE TROJAN COUNCIL SCENE

I propose to begin with the Trojan council scene because it seems a logical starting-point for a discussion of the tragic features of Troilus and Cressida, since it is in this scene that the Trojan princes make the crucial decision which leads inexorably to the devastation of Troy. The key issue in this chapter, then, will be whether Shakespeare's representation of this erroneous decision is one which stimulates scorn and disdain in the viewer (the response suitable to a satiric treatment) or whether Shakespeare's tone and manner are straightforward, dignified, and grave enough to qualify as the tragic manner.

Critics who find satiric overtones in the scene concentrate naturally on excesses and flaws of character in the Trojan princes. For example, Professor Campbell finds a link between the "hot passion of distemp'ered blood" (II.ii.169) of Troilus during the debate and his pursuit of "unreasonable pleasure" with Cressida.¹ Similarly, Professor Kimbrough characterizes Troilus' position as "steel-fisted consistency."² Professor Alice Walker describes the entire proceedings as "lively silliness."³ Again, Hector's startling volte-face has received much derogatory criticism: Professor Campbell regards it as Machiavellian, while Professor Kimbrough considers it

sophistical and also believes that it "undercuts the elevated seriousness of the debate," a view which Professors Theodore Spencer, Harold Wilson, and Robert Ornstein have also set forth.⁴

On the other hand, numerous critics, especially during the last decade, have studied the scene from a variety of new perspectives, all of which have in common the assumption that Shakespeare has treated his material with great earnestness and has presented the misguided decision of the Trojan leaders as regrettable rather than as laughable or blameworthy in any satiric sense. For example, Professor Virgil K. Whitaker has analyzed the relation of the moral psychology of the scene to the writings of Hooker, while Professor M. D. H. Parker finds that the conflict between will and reason in the scene closely parallels St. Thomas Aquinas' discussion of the subject. Similarly, Professor William Bowden applies to the Trojan leaders Professor Lily B. Campbell's thesis in Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion.⁵ These three views are, of course, in harmony because of the intellectual affinity among the three conceptions of psychology and ethics. More important, however, they all appear to operate on the assumption that the moral frailties revealed in the scene lend themselves to solemn philosophical analysis, and thus belong to the realm of the grave and tragic, rather than to the realm of the scorned and derided.

A comparable evaluation of the scene appears in a rather esoterically written, but highly perceptive article by Professor R. J. Kaufman, who has offered the most thorough presentation thus far of the thesis that Shakespeare's study of the Trojans is a "critical prolegomena" to later explorations of "crucial psychological error."⁶ Again, Professor Richard C. Harrier has presented a cogent vindication of Troilus' reasoning as a valid position, not merely a blind worship of the will.⁷ Finally, Professor Willard Farnham makes Troilus' role as spokesman for honor-- as well as his idealistic attachment to the infinite-- eminently more respectable, in the light of Renaissance doctrines and outlooks on these subjects.⁸

The Renaissance doctrine of honor is, indeed, the ideal starting-point for an understanding of Troilus' viewpoint as arguable and therefore, though ultimately mistaken, as immune to scorn or derision from a Renaissance audience. But before this sixteenth century outlook can be properly understood, we must recognize the considerable gulf that exists between that culture and ours. Modern disillusionment with unthinking patriotism, demagoguery, and the glorification of military prowess has understandably increased since 1914. But the suspicion and contempt with which these values tend to be viewed by intellectuals today

should not be read back into a period four hundred years earlier, when, though a critical outlook did exist in the writings of men like More and Erasmus,⁹ these same values were being cultivated in their naïve freshness, with the rise of sixteenth century nationalism. And, corresponding to this outlook on the national plane, were equally compelling standards of personal esteem and aspiration; indeed, the speeches of Troilus and Paris illustrate perfectly how the sanctity of national honor frequently coalesced with the incitement to personal exaltation. But aspirations like these--naïve, Dionysian, and self-destructive as they may appear to us--were thoroughly consistent with the Renaissance admiration for virtu--for strength of will, mind, assertiveness, and achievement: an admiration which uneasily co-existed with the more orthodox values of Christian humility and control over the aspiring spirit.¹⁰

It would, of course, be unwise to minimize the importance of the Christian tradition, of which eminent writers like Erasmus, More, Elyot, Ascham, Hooker, and Spenser were articulate spokesmen. But on the other hand this pervasive influence did not succeed in eradicating the contrary tradition--at least as old as the Roman esteem for virtus and the Greek esteem for kudos--which, in spite of the contradiction, continued

to be pursued by men who considered themselves Christians. Consequently, as Professor Curtis Watson observes, "the pejorative connotation now attached to honor, fame, and glory are . . . the reverse of the favorable connotations which the words possessed in Elizabethan times."¹¹

Professor Hiram Haydn sets forth a comparable view when he writes that "under the names of Honor and Love, two related and essentially courtly ethical traditions . . . sprang up in the Counter-Renaissance to challenge the supremacy of the traditionalist-humanist's allegiance to Virtue and Reason."¹²

The Renaissance writers on honor, on the courtier, and on the gentleman, moreover, almost always maintain that valor and the pursuit of glory through military exploits were values hardly to be questioned.¹³

Castiglione, for example, held that "the principal and true profession of the Courtier must be that of arms," that one's reputation must be maintained "in every time and place," and that praise is the reward of excellence in combat.¹⁴ Moreover, the courtier must excel in riding, tilting, jousting, fencing--arts traditionally considered proper to chivalry.¹⁵ Again, Sir Philip Sidney's apparent emulation of the courtier created by Castiglione,¹⁶ his preoccupations as a writer in the Arcadia, his proud and wrathful conduct during his disagreement with the Earl of Oxford, his defiance of

Queen Elizabeth on one occasion, and the manner of his death¹⁷ all suggest a code of honor which was a somewhat contradictory mixture of virtue and virtù. Similarly, Oxford's own duel and feud with Sir Thomas Knyvet over the dishonor which Oxford brought to the Knyvets by getting Anne Vavasour pregnant¹⁸ appears to represent a code of conduct based on reputation and manliness rather than on morality: extra-legal, but accepted and even admired by the more mercurial among the nobles. The stature and popularity of Essex and Raleigh, who were notorious for their amour propre and manly fits of pique, further attest to the mystique of fearlessness, exploits, and wrath which fascinated the emotions, if not the reason, of Elizabethans; and there is little evidence that Essex's debacle wiped out the widespread admiration for men of great will and aspiration who cannot be "braved."¹⁹

Troilus' position in the council scene, then, would not necessarily have struck an Elizabethan audience--as it might a modern one--as adolescent rodomontade or wild, dangerous rant--or even as a quaint appeal to an outmoded form of conduct. Indeed, his viewpoint must have been recognized as quite familiar, very much a contemporary one, and, though not morally defensible, quite appealing as an unofficial mode of conduct--especially to the young gentlemen who are usually evoked

by critics as the original audience.

An examination of Shakespeare's other plays also reveals, as Professor Watson has pointed out, that Shakespeare had a continual interest in the importance of reputation, valor, and glory throughout his career.²⁰ Military exploits, duels, or heroes of unquestioned valor figure in twenty-seven of his thirty-seven plays.²¹ In Richard II John of Gaunt laments England's dishonor and loss of reputation in II.1.57-68. Again, a number of creditable Shakespearean characters are clearly concerned about their reputations: Hamlet asks Horatio to restore his wounded name by telling his whole story (V.11.343-348); Othello, before killing himself, gives precise instructions on the way his deeds should be represented to posterity (V.11.338-356); Cassio laments that his reputation has been irreparably wounded (II.111.259-270), and assuredly Iago's stoical paradox on the triviality of reputation should not, in this context, be regarded as nullifying Cassio's attitude. In a similar fashion, Macbeth uses his new honors and the "golden opinions" which have been added to his name as arguments against killing Duncan (I.v11.31-35).

The glories of military life also are not neglected by Shakespeare: Henry the Fifth glorifies death in battle and conjures up a stirring picture of honor after death (IV.111.95-106). Coriolanus urges his men on by

saying that "brave death outweighs bad life" (I.vi.71), and Shakespeare uses the word "honor" in Coriolanus no less than thirty-five times.²² It is quite true that Coriolanus is hardly a model for ideal or even plausible conduct; but it should be remembered that Shakespeare makes his vehemence and his peremptory nature, not his valor and pursuit of glory, the cause of his downfall. All in all, then, these examples indicate that valor, reputation, and glory as aspects of honor cannot be dismissed as unworthy values in Shakespeare's plays, even when, in several instances (Hotspur, Macbeth, and Troilus himself), the valor or the thirst for glory or power is excessive and leads to dire consequences. Nor can we assume as self-evident that these values are presented in a scornful or derisive light during the Trojan council scene.

Moreover, the stylistic details which produce the derogatory or mocking effect necessary for satire do not appear in Troilus' speeches. His language is spirited and his tone militant, but it is far from the nonsensical rant of Pistol (which is the kind of language Shakespeare would probably have employed had he been striving for the satiric effect); and it is less soaring and less self-intoxicated than Tamburlaine's or Bussy's. Indeed, Troilus' spiritedness is not mocked in this scene even to the extent that Hotspur's is in I.iii of

1 Henry IV; for Hotspur's passionate nature, it will be remembered, drives him to splutter and rave on, while others must wait until he returns to the subject (ll. 194-258). Yet Hotspur himself is by no means a simple victim of satiric attack, but a partially admirable, partially laughable figure who is treated with sympathy and even fondness by Shakespeare.

Perhaps the most crucial element in the total picture of Troilus, however, is his critical attitude toward reason. Here, again, there is a danger of oversimplification. For Troilus' outlook is not merely a crude and lawless glorification of the senses. His emphasis is as much on the defects of rationality as on the importance of the will. And, when we consider Hamlet's predicament, Troilus' contempt for reason does not seem as much an appeal to moral anarchy and recklessness as a warning against the "craven scruple/ Of thinking too precisely on th' event" (Hamlet, IV.iv. 40-41). For Troilus says:

Manhood and honour
Should have hare-hearts, would they but fat
their thoughts
With this crammed reason. Reason and respect
Make livers pale and lustihood defect.
(II.ii.47-50)

Surely this is the same sentiment as Hamlet voices in III.i.83-88:

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Just as Troilus disdains pale livers, so Hamlet fears the he is "pigeon-livered" (II.ii.604) and speaks of the "pale cast" of thought. And Troilus' criticism of "respect," though it may make him seem to us like a juvenile delinquent, actually--like Hamlet's stricture against "this regard"--is in Elizabethan English simply a criticism of deliberation when action is needed.

Another link to Hamlet which makes Troilus' position look more respectable has been proposed by Professor Presson, who correctly suggests that Troilus' argument against reason is derived from Deiphobus' Hamlet-like reflection in Caxton, II.522:

If in all the works that men should beginne,
they should be aduised euer in the
particularities and singular things that
might happen or fal, they should neuer
enterprise nor do valiant act by hardiness.²³

Since Deiphobus is the main character whom Shakespeare has removed from the scene as Lydgate and Caxton have it,²⁴ the logical conclusion is that Shakespeare incorporated Deiphobus' idea into Troilus' speech, which does not have this idea in the two sources. Thus, Shakespeare has strengthened Troilus' position by making him, not simply the firebrand he is in Lydgate and Caxton, but also an articulate critic of reason.

Again, Professor Tillyard has found an equally

revealing parallel to Troilus' glorification of honor, in the Fortinbras speech of Hamlet, IV.iv.47-56;

Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.

As Tillyard proposes, "Helen in the Trojan council has exactly the same position as the barren piece of land in Hamlet's questioning: her final justification is that she is an argument of honor."²⁵ Moreover, Hamlet here is in essential agreement with Troilus' rhetorical question, "What is aught but as 'tis valu'd?" (II.ii.52). It would be possible, of course, to insist that Hamlet is "wrong" for admiring Fortinbras; but the danger in this viewpoint is that, for the sake of consistency, the modern conception of honor is for the second time being substituted for the Renaissance conception. Instead, it would seem more plausible to conclude that Troilus, Fortinbras, and Hamlet share a common view of honor, a trait of men who "for a fantasy and trick of fame/Go to their graves like beds." (II. 61-62). What seems clear is that Fortinbras' gratuitous valor is not represented as an excessive or turpid outlook worthy of our scorn. Hence, it is far from self-evident that Troilus' outlook, which is essentially the same, should arouse derision or scorn

in us.

A close examination of Troilus' arguments themselves, moreover, reveals that they are not lacking in substance and should not be reduced to the caricature that he exalts unreason, follows his appetites, and worships the chimera of glory. He actually presents four separate arguments of his own, while one of Paris' tends to become absorbed as his. We have already considered his contention that "Reason and respect/Make livers pale and lustihood defect" (ll. 149-150). Moreover, his arguments from honor itself are too familiar to require discussion (reputation in ll. 124-125 and glory in ll. 199-202). A third argument, however, is somewhat different from these: it is that "the worth and honor of a king/So great as our dread father" must not be weighed" in a scale/Of common ounces" (ll. 26-28). Once again, it is necessary to evaluate this statement, not from the standpoint of anti-monarchic advocates of democracy, the position of most individuals today, but from the standpoint of fervent believers in a single ruler, as most Elizabethans were, at least in their writings. Thus, our knowledge that in his history plays Shakespeare devoted himself to a study of the dire consequences emerging from a lack of reverence for the monarch, and our knowledge that the earlier age viewed the king as virtually sacred and as a symbol of the

nation and the people, should make us cautious about dismissing Troilus' appeal to these values as demagogic nonsense, however ingenuous and insubstantial they may appear to us today.

Troilus' fourth argument deserves as much attention as Shakespeare expended lines (ll. 61-96) and apparently effort upon its reasoning. So far, it seems that only Professor Richard C. Harrier has grasped the underlying sense of this long passage ("I take to-day a wife"), which is far from a naïve or crude exalting of the will and the passions over reason, as many writers have claimed. Instead, as Professor Harrier maintains, its reasoning is that "if reason can redefine value according to occasion, honor and value cannot exist at all."²⁶ For Troilus claims that the original evaluation of Helen has changed, not because it is now recognized as mistaken or because her abduction is now recognized as morally wrong, but because fear (l. 93, l. 96) and the bloodshed and losses which Hector describes (ll. 18-21) have persuaded the "equivocator," reason, to find good arguments to prove her worthless.

This position cannot be dismissed lightly. Like the criticism that deliberation can thwart action, it penetrates to one of the internal weaknesses of reason: its voluntaristic aspect, its super-serviceability--now for one side of an issue, now for

the opposite side, in accordance with the needs and desires of the moment. Troilus' position is thus, though morally wrong in the last analysis, well-matched with Hector's. And it gains further strength from the knowledge that Helen's abduction was not, as Hector implies (ll. 174-177), a simple matter of the violation of a natural law binding a wife to her husband; for the purpose of her abduction was, as Troilus reminds them, to avenge the earlier abduction of Priam's sister, Troilus' aunt (ll. 77-80), who, as everyone who had read Caxton knew, had been held in sexual bondage by Ajax' father, Telamon, and was still a captive (l. 80). Thus, Troilus maintains that the Trojans originally had a justifiable cause (revenge) in stealing Helen, that they considered her "inestimable"²⁷ as long as possessing her did not exact its price in lives (ll. 78-88), and that, by implication, their change of heart actually makes reason serve their desire to end the sufferings brought on by the war. Troilus, on the other hand, contends that the truth must be constant and not, as Professor Farnham puts it, "a changing array of 'facts' in one's surrounding world."²⁸

Troilus' reasoning, then, is far more respectable than those who depict it as a crude glorification of the passions allege. Like Hotspur, he is a young firebrand. But, as Professor Haydn has shown, the spirit of the

time was pervaded by ardor, aspiration, insatiability--most notably in the writings of Pico, Bruno, Marlowe, Chapman, Raleigh, Donne--and thus, high-spiritedness, if a flaw, could be regarded as an ambiguous or admirable flaw.²⁹ Moreover, since Shakespeare does not emphasize the flaw as a disabling eccentricity, but simply presents Troilus as a peremptory, disdainful, overly earnest young man, it would seem that his excess of spirit belongs to the class of grave shortcomings which lead to genuine disaster, and that the mocking tone which some perceive in the scene is an intellectualization from the mimetic actuality. Indeed, it could well be maintained that Troilus' stature as a charismatic personality has grown by the end of the scene, for, as Professor Harold Hillebrand points out, there is actually more "persuasive efficacy in Troilus' arguments, since they move Hector against his practical judgement."³⁰ This outcome, it may be added, should be compared with what occurs in the corresponding passage in Lydgate and Caxton, where Troilus is widely praised and admired for his speech, but Hector does not openly capitulate.³¹ Apparently, Shakespeare has preserved Troilus' personal forcefulness and magnetism and even enhances them, by having him win Hector over to his side, as he does not do initially in the sources.

But it is the positive side of Troilus' character

which ensures him of a dignified status in this scene. For, as Professor Peter Ure proposes, "Shakespeare shows both the glorious and the self-destructive character of Troilus' absoluteness, his truth to himself."³² And the negative side of this absoluteness should not be allowed to obscure the genuine values which accompany it, since truth to Troilus is, in Professor Farnham's words, "loyalty, fidelity, constancy, steadfastness. It means keeping one's words to the death when one has solemnly promised adherence to a person or a cause."³³

Obviously, this youthful and ingenuous belief that events and persons must be as steadfast as Troilus himself is, produces an augmented pathos in Act V, when it is betrayed not only in the war-plot, with the death of Hector and the imminent ruin of Troy, but in the love-plot, by Cressida's inconstancy.³⁴ It is in this sense that his absoluteness is self-destructive. It is also naïve and immature, and, as the "This she?" speech (V.ii.137-160) shows, it is a disastrous error of judgement, the dissolution of which is tantamount, to Troilus, to the dissolution of the cosmos. But ingenuous idealism, immaturity, and errors of judgement, in the absence of stylistic and structural techniques of derision, belong more properly to the realm of the tragic than to that of the satiric. It is thus no surprise that Professor Farnham and Professor Ure

consider Troilus the tragic hero of the play.³⁵ The chapter on the tragic features of Troilus and Cressida will examine in more detail Troilus' qualifications as a tragic hero. Here, however, what needs to be emphasized is that Troilus' views, though ultimately mistaken and a grave error in judgement, represent an arguable position during the Renaissance period, and that hence his contribution to the Trojan debate is free from the scorn or derision of satiric attack.

Hector does two things in this scene which critics have regarded as rich in potentialities for interpretation as undercutting. The first is his sudden, unexpected capitulation to Troilus and Paris. The second is his announcement, soon afterwards, that he had issued a challenge to the Greeks--a fact which the attentive reader would already have known, since Aeneas delivers the challenge two scenes earlier in I.iii, but which many view as a contradiction that undermines Hector's whole position in the debate.

The first deed by Hector, his sudden capitulation, no doubt is abrupt and not carefully prepared for. Indeed, it is possible that the sudden shift represents one of Shakespeare's rare failures in craftsmanship. However, one aspect of Hector's transition of thought has been neglected:

Hector's opinion

Is this in the way of truth; yet, ne'ertheless,
My spritely brethren, I propend to you
In resolution to keep Helen still.
(11. 188-191)

What has been passed over here is the apparent distinction between the "way of truth" and "spritely," a distinction which corresponds roughly to that between logos and pathos in argumentation. In other words, Hector is conceding that, although his arguments are logically more valid, Troilus' pathos has won him over. And the fact that Shakespeare, in a recent play, had Marc Antony win over Brutus in precisely the same manner (by a combination of logos and pathos, whereas Brutus used logos alone),³⁶ suggests that Hector's concession of victory to Troilus is not an irresponsible turnabout, but the recognition of his brother's superior élan and superior rhetorical "truth."³⁷ Macbeth, it will be remembered, makes an even more admiring tribute to Lady Macbeth's "undaunted mettle" (I.vi.74), when her pathos overcomes his logos and leads him, like Hector, down the path of hamartia (tragic error) and unforeseen ruin. Professor Kaufman has a somewhat different, but equally valid understanding of Hector's change of heart, when he writes that Hector, "while not denying truth as he has learned it, 'propends' to his opponents, that is, he defers civilly to the ceremonial sense of identity he shares with his brothers in Helen's captivity."³⁸

Actually, a study of the sources of the Trojan council not only throws light on Hector's mystifying action, but also tends to confirm Kaufman's interpretation of it. Professor Kenneth Muir, for instance, has discovered, among other parallels, a passage in Greene's Euphues His Censure to Philautus in which Hector argues thus: "Nature . . . hath taught vs . . . to mayntagne my Brothers deed with the Sworde, not to allow such a fact honorable, but as holding it princely, with death to requite an injury."³⁹ The idea that it is knightly to retaliate appears, of course, in Lydgate's Hector (II.2185-2192), and Greene may have derived it from that source; but the distinction between "honorable" and "princely" appears to be Greene's own and might have been adapted by Shakespeare into the distinction between moral reason and spirited rightness which seems to underlie Hector's decision.

On the other hand, both Lydgate and Caxton have passages which may account more adequately for Hector's motivation. It will be remembered that in both these sources Hector does not argue after his initial speech, does not oppose Troilus, and hence does not have to yield explicitly as he does in the play. It would seem, then, that Hector's turnabout is an invention of Shakespeare. However, later on in the Troy Book, when the Greeks propose a truce that is disadvantageous to

the Trojans, Hector strongly opposes it, but, after giving all the rational reasons against it, suddenly assents, saying:

Sethen ye alle assenten and accorde,
Fro youre sentence I wil nat discorde,
In no wyse to be variunt.

(III.3655-3657)

a In the Recuyell, the parellel with the reversal in Shakespeare's Hector is equally clear: "how be hit he wolde not abide onely by his entente ayenst thoppynyon of so many wyse men And agreed with the other" (p. 601). It seems very likely that Shakespeare combined this volte-face in Lydgate and Caxton with their versions of the council scene, in order to arrive at his own version in the play.⁴⁰ In both cases, moreover, the explanation of the turnabout boils down to Professor Kaufman's formulation that Hector "defers civilly to the ceremonial sense of identity he shares with his brothers." Whether he defers to Troilus' more passionate eloquence, however, or to a semi-mystical respect for the general will, or (as is most likely) to both, his decision is neither irresponsible nor inexplicable. It is, like Macbeth's (and for that matter to a large extent like Brutus'), a serious and irrevocable mistake. It is also indicative of a flaw of character: for example, lack of independence of thought or lack of firmness. But we must remember that not all weaknesses and reprehensions belong to the sphere of satiric attack;⁴¹

and there is no indication in Shakespeare's stylistic manner that Hector's weakness is being reprehended abusively or mockingly. Rather, his dignified speeches and likeable demeanor during this scene and throughout the play indicate that his weakness is that one lamentable failing in a great personage which inevitably leads to his downfall. And Professor Tatlock's shrewd observation that Shakespeare elevates Hector in this scene from the Hector of Lydgate and Caxton by making him argue that continuing the war is unrighteous (whereas they had made him argue that starting the war would be imprudent)⁴² only adds to the impression that Shakespeare has presented Hector in as favorable light as possible in this scene.

Hector's second act in the scene which has stimulated derogatory criticism is his announcement of his challenge to the Greeks. However, contrary to the impression in the minds of many commentators, the challenge is not to a single combat which will decide the outcome of the war, as Achilles' challenge to Hector is in Lydgate and Caxton; nor is it even one unambiguously intended to result in the death of one of the combatants, as Hector's challenge to the Greeks is in Iliad VII.⁴³ Instead, it is an invitation to a "sportful" display of manly arts designed by Hector, "Who in this dull and long-continued truce/Is rusty

grown" (I.111.262-263), and is probably designed as a means of staying in condition. It is also possible that Shakespeare hints at a connection between the challenge and Hector's anger at being struck down by Ajax (I.11.32-34); and certainly Achilles' surmise that the challenge was meant for him is as plausible as it is a symptom of his vanity (II.1.141). But whatever Hector's true reason (as he sometimes does, Shakespeare offers a number), there is no suggestion that the challenge is tantamount to continuing the war.

Two details, however, tend to strengthen the impression that the encounter will have a wider significance than a "sportful combat," as Nestor calls it (I.111.335). The first is that Nestor goes on to warn Ulysses about the effect a victory or loss will have on Grecian morale (ll. 340-356). The second is that Hector's announcement of his challenge in II.11, coming directly after his agreement to continue hostilities, sounds as if he is offering the news of his challenge as proof of his pugnacity; and, since the challenge precedes the debate, the impression is left that this earlier proof of pugnacity had been underlying the debate all along, contradicting and undercutting it, while Hector's dove-like role in the debate had been a cynical pose.

Both of these details, however, only superficially

affect the status of the combat as entertainment. The first, Nestor's warning, merely shows that, at the time Aeneas issued the challenge, both Trojans and Greeks assumed that the war would go on after the truce and the combat were over. Indeed, Nestor's discussion of the potential effect of the combat on future morale shows in itself that he assumed that the war would have a future, and thus that the combat could not have been meant to settle the war.

In the meantime, however, between the challenge (I.111) and the Trojan debate (II.11), Nestor makes a peace offer with the condition that Helen is to be returned--an offer which Priam reports at the opening of II.11 and which is the basis of the ensuing debate. Here again, the assumption underlying Nestor's peace offer must be that it is in no way contradicted or rendered ineffectual by the approaching match (unless he too, like Hector, is a "cynical Machiavellian"), since Nestor above all knows of this match. Hence, it is evident a second time that Nestor sees no connection between the combat and the question of continuing or ending the war.

The second detail, Hector's alacrity in reporting his challenge, is more complicated, but it is nevertheless consistent with the premise that the combat is not directly relevant to the war. The difficulty arises no

doubt from the tendency to view Aeneas' issuance of the challenge and Hector's announcement of it by themselves, without the necessary reminder that a crucial event, Nestor's peace offer, intervenes and is rejected--an event which changes the character of the combat. For when Aeneas lays down Hector's challenge in I.iii, Hector obviously could not have known of Nestor's peace offer in II.ii.1-7. Hence, when the challenge was originally made, it was understood by all as pure sport. The issue of ending or continuing the war does not arise until Nestor makes his peace offer. It is only later on, when the Trojans reject the peace offer and are united in zealous expectancy of the renewed hostilities, that Hector represents the challenge as proof of his combativeness and defiance toward the Greeks. But, because the Trojans debate the issue of continuing the war or not, the mistaken impression arises that this issue was already operational when Hector made his challenge.

This relationship between the challenge, the peace offer, and Hector's report of the challenge also explains why Hector does not mention the challenge during the debate. If the match was, at the outset, mere sport and only took on new symbolic import after the Trojans had decided to continue the war, then it would have been irrelevant of Hector to introduce the subject of a duel during a war council. But when the debate ends, a new

situation prevails: warfare is to be resumed, a new mood of belligerency reigns, and the combat is no longer a mere sporting event. Now that Hector is one of them again ("I am yours"), he festively offers, as further evidence of his solidarity with them, the reassurance that he will match their ardor and combativeness in the future. And his symbolic offering for this reassurance is the sportful competition which will give the Greeks a "baby figure of the giant mass" of the deeds he and the Trojans will perform in the future. In other words, he implies that the combat will be a preliminary "rousing"--a warm-up for more extensive and mortal "sport." But all in all his report of the challenge cannot be held to be tantamount to an admission that he was pre-committed to continuing the war from the start. Indeed, it should be pointed out that it is logically contradictory to maintain that Hector is guilty both of weakly submitting to Troilus' passionate eloquence and of being secretly pre-committed to continuing the war: for if he yields because he is swayed by emotion, then it cannot be that he yields because he has already decided to; and vice versa.⁴⁴

We come now to the problem of how to evaluate the wrong choice which the Trojans, and especially Hector, make. On the subject of war, heroics, and bloodshed in the name of honor, the door to the perception of

folly is always open, and Erasmus took this view of war in general and Horace of the Trojan War in particular. But that able writers have held this view of war in the past, and continue to do so up to the present moment, should not be taken, by association, to mean that Shakespeare was a priori disposed to follow this path.⁴⁵ The text alone--the language, techniques of presentation, the manner--and not the theoretically possible a priori influences can determine whether an objective, earnest, approving, regretful, or derogatory tone prevails.⁴⁶ And in a satirical treatment, the clear sense of attack, it must be remembered, should always be present. The character who violates normative conduct must in some way be unmasked as either preposterous or turpid. And although the stimulation of laughter is not necessary, the exposing of motives or of secret modes of conduct which are less pious and savory than the ones he displays to the world is, as several recent analysts of satire have maintained, a distinctive mark of the satiric sting.⁴⁷

For this exposé, Hector's announcement of his challenge (had its significance been what many writers thought it was) would have been ideal--especially if Hector had actually specified that the whole debate had been a formality which he had allowed his brothers to run through in order to arrive at the decision which

he had favored all along. Then, his defence of reason and morality would have been exposed as sheer hypocrisy--the purely formal adoption of a position for the sake of a debate. But since Hector's challenge has no bearing on the continuation of the war and since his arguments in favor of reason and morality cannot therefore be considered insincere and hypocritical, then there is no unmasking and no satiric sting.

It could be argued, of course, that there is an element of unmasking in Hector's sudden reversal in another sense: namely, in that it reveals that Hector is, after all, not the paragon of rationality and piety he presents himself as, but is subject to the passions and to the misguided preference of them over reason. This interpretation would have some force, if Hector's decision did not resemble much more closely the pattern of the wrong choice which is characteristic in a very different, yet related genre. For in this genre, as Professor Virgil Whitaker puts it, "If the hero has knowledge adequate for the right choice, or the means of acquiring such knowledge (and he always has in Shakespeare), his failure is sin. Unnatural, irrational, and immoral become synonymous as applied to conduct, and tragedy is grounded in moral choice."⁴⁸ Tragedy, then, is the related genre in which an important figure who should know better makes a wrong-headed and disastrous

choice, but in which the emphasis is not so much on his folly and his deviation from desirable conduct (the aim of satire) as it is on his personal ruin and on that of his society (as in Troilus and Cressida).

Thus, although Hector may not be a full-fledged tragic hero--because Shakespeare has not given him the concentrated, heightened attention which he gives to all his full-fledged tragic heroes--, nevertheless the wrong choice represented here is too grave in its consequences, too dignified in its language, too close to the tragic formula which depicts worthy men as over-mastered by passion, to yield easily to satiric interpretation. Hector is no more "unmasked" than Macbeth is when he submits to Lady Macbeth's more passionate reasoning or than Othello is when Iago's sophistry and pathos lead him to his mistaken and deplorable conclusion. The grave and dignified context in which these events occur, and in which Hector's mistaken decision occurs, makes them the lamentable enslavement to passion and the dereliction from righteous conduct which is the stuff of tragedy. This understanding of the scene is essentially the same as that of Professor Virgil Whitaker, who says that "Troilus and Hector make the same kind of moral choice as Shakespeare's tragic heroes. But, unlike the heroes, they explain their thinking in the technical terminology

of contemporary ethics and psychology . . . debating a conflict which, in the tragedies, is internal."⁴⁹

From this line of analysis, it is evident that susceptibility to the passions is common to satire and tragedy. It is therefore important to establish guidelines for distinguishing between the two experiences, so that the tendency which appears in some writers to speak of Troilus and Hector as satirized figures and, at the same time, "slaves of passion"⁵⁰ will be placed under some sort of regulation. Here, the criterion of tone and its objective counterparts--diction, imagery, meter, and rhythm--can effectively be employed to establish a distinction. And in both Renaissance and modern criticism the same views on these stylistic details prevail. Tragedy and epic require lofty diction and imagery, with stately rhythm and meter; whereas satire requires lower diction--colloquial or even degraded--, disabling imagery, and unpretentious, rough, or innocuous meter.⁵¹ The style of the Trojan council scene clearly belongs to the first type: the diction is precise, rich, and proper to princely figures; the imagery is cogently illustrative, its exuberance controlled by the pressure and heat of the quarrel; while the rhythm and meter are as graceful, vigorous, and flowing as Shakespeare's are at their best. These stylistic details produce an elevated

tone, not the debased or mocking one of satire. And the suggestion that perhaps the mock-epic mode is at work in this play⁵² would hardly be appropriate, since that mode involves the use of elevated diction, imagery, and meter for a trivial subject. The only conclusion is that Shakespeare's observes a decorous harmony in this scene between style, tone, and import, and that the elevation of all three points in the direction of tragedy.

But another distinction may be useful in helping us to keep tragedy and satire somewhat apart. For the passion or weakness in a satire occurs in a person who is generally not admirable or worthy in other respects--indeed, whose other traits the author may ruthlessly suppress, in order to enhance the vividness of the dominant foible. The tragic figure, on the other hand, is as admirable in many respects as he is flawed in one respect (or a few). Thus, his tragic weakness is truly "lamentable," because it is like a hidden fissure in a treasured vase, which ultimately rends that vase into pieces; but the satiric weakness, since it appears in a person who is not otherwise of estimable value, is merely contemptible or laughable.

Hence, it is difficult to see how Hector's weakness, appearing in a man whose magnanimity, graciousness, intellect, and moral rectitude Shakespeare repeatedly stresses,⁵³ can be regarded as contemptible

or laughable. That this reaction to it would be somewhat moralistic, intolerant, and unjust becomes clear when we compare this weakness as a moral offense with Othello's and Macbeth's crimes or as a fall from insight with Lear's demand that his daughters' love be measured by protestation. Indeed, Lear offers another excellent example of the area shared by tragedy and satire, yet kept apart by tone and by the discernible difference between tragic and satiric weakness. For the original situation in Lear depicts an inherently outrageous lack of insight--an absurdity and a self-contradiction in an august figure, far more clear-cut than the mild contradiction in Hector's change of heart. Yet, the perception of this incongruity does not encourage genuine laughter or scorn at his folly, but rather dismay, because the gravity of his error and the anticipated gravity of its consequences are far too evident.⁵⁴

The same is true of Hector's fall from reason: it is not a bathetic or contemptible fall, because its consequences--death for him and ruin for Troy--are too grave to encourage derision or scorn. Indeed, Professor Alice Walker would seem to be inadvertently undermining her own thesis that the play is a satire when she points out that in Lucrece, 2 Henry IV, and the Player's speech in Hamlet, "Vergil's picture of the fall of Troy was for

Shakespeare the symbol of tragic loss and horror . . . Vergil may have supplied the hint for Trojan wrong-headedness which Shakespeare developed in this play."⁵⁵ It appears that Professor Walker has inadvertently used Shakespeare's view of the fall of Troy as a tragic calamity, in his other works, as evidence that he views this fall as a satiric debacle in Troilus and Cressida.

The Trojan council scene, after we have corrected some factual misapprehensions and some judgements which are inconsistent with criticism of other plays of Shakespeare, thus turns out to be a straightforward representation of a disastrously misguided decision. Moreover, the traditional techniques of satire--exaggeration, caricature, inadvertent self-parody, preposterous rant, debased language, extravagant amplification of absurdity, delightfully obvious and underlined self-contradiction--are conspicuously absent. And it should be self-evident that, where satirical technique does not exist, satire cannot exist either.

Instead, once we grant that honor and virtù were not automatically regarded with disfavor and scorn in the Renaissance; that some of Troilus' arguments actually have merit; that his devotion to truth has a positive side and can be viewed as admirable; that

Hector's volte-face is not merely an absurd or cynical self-contradiction and is not presented in a rebuking manner; that his challenge does not undercut his moral position during the debate; and that the elevated style throughout the scene precludes the presence of debasing animus--then we come to understand that the scene does, indeed, depict wrongfulness, but in the grave and straightforward manner befitting tragic hamartia.

Thus, the acumen and usefulness of Puttenham's observations are once again revealed: not all reprehensions need be satirical, for tragedy and comedy also, in their own ways, reprehend.⁵⁶ We are left, then, with a scene which at its conclusion presents a solemn and by no means amusing picture: a likeable, but belligerent and arrogant youth has swayed his prudent, ethically mature, but surprisingly pliant brother (who is perhaps over-concerned about family solidarity and the loneliness of the dissenter) into a course of action which will have dire consequences. The zest, pride, and mockery toward the "drowsy" Greeks (l. 210) with which they embark on this course of action give rise, it is true, to a strong dramatic irony. But the objective presentation and the mirthless atmosphere in which this sanguine self-deception takes place should indicate to the alert observer that the

more proper response to this hubris would be, not cynical amusement, but subtle regret.

NOTES

¹Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London, 1943), p. 109.

²Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 120.

³Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1957), xxxi. See also Derick R. C. Marsh, "Interpretation and Misinterpretation: the Problem of Troilus and Cressida," Sh Studies I (1965), 189; and Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d ed. (Garden City, 1956), p. 73.

⁴Campbell, Satire, p. 110; Kimbrough, p. 51 and p. 119; Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy (Toronto, 1957), p. 131; Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), p. 113; Robert Ornstein, The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison, 1960), p. 244.

⁵Virgil Whitaker, Shakespeare's Use of Learning (San Marino, 1953), pp. 203-205; M. D. H. Parker, The Slave of Life (London, 1955), pp. 82-83; William R. Bowden, "The Human Shakespeare and Troilus and Cressida," SQ, VIII (Spring, 1957), 167.

⁶R. J. Kaufman, "Ceremonies for Chaos: the Status of Troilus and Cressida," ELH, XXXII (June, 1965), 144.

⁷Richard C. Harrier, "Troilus Divided," Studies in the English Renaissance Drama, ed. Josephine Waters Bennett, et al (New York, 1959), pp. 143-155.

⁸Willard Farnham, "Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire," SQ, XV, 11 (Spring, 1964), 257-264.

⁹Hythloday's picture of contemporary Europe, with its mindless practical preoccupations with war, may be taken as a satiric mockery. See Utopia, ed. H. V. S. Ogden (New York, 1949), pp. 18-24. Erasmus' views against war appear in many of his colloquies, but his most extended treatment of the subject appears in two essays in the Adagia: "Dulce bellum inexpertis" and "Aut regem aut fatuum nasci oportere." See The 'Adages' of Erasmus, tr. Margaret Mann Phillips, (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 213-215 and pp. 308-354.

¹⁰The upsurgence of nationalism in the sixteenth century is a phenomenon which is discussed in almost any textbook on political science or modern European history. See, for example, Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Political and Social History of Modern Europe (New York, 1931), I, pp. 3-10.

¹¹Curtis Watson, Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor (Princeton, 1960), pp. 11-13.

¹²Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950), p. 555. Nevertheless, Professor Haydn considers Troilus markedly satirical.

¹³Stephano Guazzo, George Whetstone, Barnaby Rich, George Pettie, Count Annibale Romei, Robert Ashley, Giovanni della casa Galateo are among the most prominent writers on these subjects after Castiglione. Skill in arms and the importance of defending one's honor and reputation are either explicitly stated or obviously assumed in most of them. Even when, as in Guazzo, letters are preferred to arms (The Civile Conversation, ed. Edward Sullivan, [London and New York, 1925] I, pp. 216-217), the necessity and value of military prowess are not questioned.

¹⁴Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, tr. Charles S. Singleton (Garden City, 1959), p. 32.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁶See Kenneth Orne Myrick, Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman (Cambridge, 1935), Chapter III.

¹⁷See The Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (Oxford, 1938),

XVIII, pp. 224-228.

¹⁸See Josephine Waters Bennett, "Oxford and Endimion," PMLA, LVII (June, 1942), 355-358.

¹⁹Essex's death was regarded by most Englishmen, including Queen Elizabeth, as a tragedy. The common people sang ballads lamenting his fall, and some popular poets wrote satiric attacks against his enemies, Cecil and Raleigh. See J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth I (New York, 1957), pp. 393-396. The glories of military achievement and patriotism also could hardly have suffered a damaging blow, since less than two months after Essex' execution, Mountjoy won a resounding victory over both Tyrone and the Spaniards in Ireland. See Neale, p. 401. Men of valor, high spirit, military prowess, and honor continued to be highly respected and even glorified as long as continual warfare among European states prevailed and as long as the military profession was one of the few by which ambitious and energetic young men could advance themselves. The Cavaliers continued the tradition of honor during the reign of Charles I, and the restoration of monarchy during the reign of Charles II initiated a resurgence of a code of manliness which, perhaps more than ever before, stressed aristocratic wildness and amorous virility. It was not until the early Enlightenment

that bourgeois rationalism began to be a dominant note among important writers and began to make serious inroads on the code of the duel, of reputation, and of military glory. See, for example, Richard Steele's Conscious Lovers (1722) for a repudiation of the duel as a means of defending one's honor.

²⁰Watson, p. 384.

²¹The only plays which do not have one or several of these elements are Temp., MWW, MM, LLL, MV, HV VIII, Err., MND, and Tam. See The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. George Lyman Kittredge (Boston, 1936). All future references to Shakespeare's plays will be to this volume.

²²See William Rosen, Shakespeare and the Craft of Tragedy (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), pp. 163-164.

²³Robert K. Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 101. Professor Ornstein, Moral Vision, p. 242, also says of Troilus that "he shares Hotspur's contempt for wariness and for niggling calculations of profit and loss."

²⁴See Lydgate's Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen, E. E. T. S., Extra Series, (London, 1906-1935), II.2847-2863;

Raoul LeFevre, The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye,
tr. William Caxton, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (London, 1894),
II, pp. 522-523.

²⁵Problem Plays, p. 69.

²⁶"Troilus Divided," p. 148.

²⁷The gracious reception and honor which the Trojans accord Helen in Heywood's Iron Age I may tend to make Troilus' evocation of the earlier esteem with which they regarded her more meaningful, especially since Elizabethans were more familiar with this part of the story, through Lydgate and Caxton, than we are. Priam welcomes her thus:

What Earth, what all mortality
Can in the height of our inuentions finde
To adde to Hellens welcome, Troy shall yeeld her.
(p. 289)

And Hector tells her: "We count you in the number of our daughters" (p. 289). That the Trojans all, including the aged Priam, fell in love with Helen and rejected the offers of Greek ambassadors before the war was traditional. See The New Century Classical Handbook (New York, 1962), p. 1120.

²⁸Farnham, 261.

²⁹Haydn, pp. 325-374, esp. p. 350, pp. 365-367.

³⁰Variorum, p. 398.

³¹See Lydgate, II.3070-3078, and Caxton, II, p. 524.

³²Peter Ure, Shakespeare, the Problem Plays (London, 1961), p. 41.

³³Farnham, 261.

³⁴Ure seems to be thinking along the same lines when he speaks of "Troilus' passionate commitment to the view that time and fortune cannot modify original virtue," p. 41, and when he writes, "But 'once' for Troilus is 'always,' as the debate showed. This is the source of his agony in the last of the love-story scenes" (p. 42).

³⁵Farnham, 264, Ure, p. 41.

³⁶See Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York, 1947), pp. 283-286, for an admirable discussion of the rhetorical procedures in this scene in Julius Caesar.

³⁷Farnham seems to be proposing an analogous idea when he proposes, 262, that "it would seem that we are called upon not to condemn Hector for first seeing truth and then being false to it but rather that he sees . . . validity in two truths."

³⁸Kaufman, 148.

³⁹Robert Greene, The Life and Complete Works, ed.

Alexander B. Grosart (New York, 1964), VI, p. 161.

⁴⁰Presson, p. 97, calls attention to this later passage too, but he does not suggest that Shakespeare uses it as the basis of Hector's volte-face.

⁴¹See Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Dodge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 31-32.

⁴²J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 752.

⁴³See Presson, p. 32. See also Chapman's Homer, I, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (New York, 1956). All future reference to the Iliad will be to this edition.

⁴⁴Determining the exact nature of Hector's wrongful conduct is important, because if he is swayed by his emotions, then he is only a fallible human being and thus (if otherwise estimable) a potentially tragic figure; whereas if he is a dissembler, then his failing is an active, not a passive (the "passions") one, and he tends to move away from the point midway between goodness and viciousness, in the direction of the latter. It seems evident, however, that he cannot be a dissembler and that his failing belongs to the realm of the passions.

⁴⁵Alice Walker seems to follow this line of reasoning in xxvii-xxx.

⁴⁶In other words, the sheer fact that war is irrational and uncivilized and that the Trojans re-embark on it for morally wrong reasons is not sufficient grounds for the claim that the criticism of their folly takes on a satirical coloring. Some anti-war works have been quite grim, tragic, and void of either derision or scorn, or even of blame toward any particular person or group. The mode of presentation always determines the special character of a work, and that mode may be impartial, regretful, or derisive; which it will be, furthermore, depends on the style and techniques employed.

⁴⁷See, for example, Edward W. Rosenheim, Jr., Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago, 1963), pp. 12-13; Edgar Johnson, A Treasury of Satire (New York, 1945), p. 8.

⁴⁸Whitaker, p. 202.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 204-205.

⁵⁰See Alice Shalvi, "'Honor' in Troilus and Cressida," SEL, V (1965), 286; Campbell, Comical Satyre, p. 197; Walker, xv and xlvi.

⁵¹For Renaissance theory, see Puttenham, pp. 155-157, pp. 173-181; for modern theory, see Gilbert Highet, Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), p. 18, p. 103, p. 104; Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven and London, 1959), p. 5, pp. 43-44, pp. 58-59; Rosamond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago and London, 1963), pp. 192-247.

⁵²See Walker, xxx.

⁵³As Harbage points out, "Troilus and Cressida is a hard play, but the gentleness of the great warrior Hector is remarked upon with peculiar insistence." See As They Liked It (New York, 1947), p. 175. Harbage identifies at least six passages in which this gentleness or magnanimity is mentioned or shown: IV.v. 106 (Ulysses); IV.v.1.182-191 (Nestor); IV.v.227 (Ulysses: perhaps a mere courtesy); V.111.1-2 (Andromache: by inference); V.111.37-38 (Troilus); V.vi.14 (to Achilles). Ajax also says (IV.v.139), "Thou art too gentle and free a man." The concentration of this "peculiar insistence" into the later scenes of the play, IV.v to V.vi, also suggests a heightening of the nobler side of Hector for greater tragic effect.

His graciousness is shown especially in IV.v toward the Greeks, but his almost paternal handling

of his firebrand brothers, although at times it seems patronizing in II.ii, bespeaks a kindness which the situation did not require. His statement to Troilus, "I would not have you fight today" (V.iii.50) once again shows his concern and consideration for others. His intellect requires little demonstration. It is his moral rectitude, however, which deserves a few words. His position in II.ii before the reversal quite clearly establishes this trait; the reversal, of course, diminishes it. But a just appraisal of Hector requires that we understand that the reversal does not nullify his righteousness: it simply shows that he has both deep moral sensibilities and frailties which permit him to neglect these sensibilities: a moral situation which is virtually a formula for tragedy.

⁵⁴The situation itself might encourage a comic-satiric treatment. However, Shakespeare has avoided this effect by his control of language, by his minimizing of the incongruity, and by his minimizing of the perception of that incongruity on the part of the other characters. For example, Kent, instead of acting as ironic commentator (as he might have in a satiric treatment), vehemently takes Lear's action as a grave error and bids him to check "This hideous

rashness" (I.1.152-153).

⁵⁵Walker, xxiii.

⁵⁶See Puttenham, pp. 31-32.

III. COMICALL SATYRE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The aim of this chapter will be to explore Campbell's concept of "comicall satyre," in order that we might fully understand it before we determine its applicability to Troilus and Cressida.

An understanding of the term "comicall satyre" depends to a large extent on a knowledge of the Renaissance conception of satire itself. And at the heart of this conception lie several important distinctions, either explicit or implicit: between comedy and satire, Old Comedy and New Comedy, satire of monologue and satire of scene, wrathful satire and genial, comical satire and tragical. These distinctions must be grasped before the full meaning of "comicall satyre" can become clear.

Professor Campbell has already covered some of this material in the pioneering first chapter of his book, and Professor Alvin Kernan has added new insights in his The Cankered Muse.¹ However, a fresh look at the material is necessary, because, although the meaning of "comicall satyre" may seem self-evident, its exact nature still remains somewhat problematic. For example, since the form seems to represent a fusion of comedy and satire, are we not obliged to determine which of the two elements, if either, Jonson meant to emphasize? Again,--a related

question--is the prevailing tone wrathful and misanthropic, or genial and corrective, or a little of both? As long as any vagueness surrounds the concept, we cannot determine clearly whether or not Troilus and Cressida is formally a comical satire. It is therefore necessary to review ideas expressed in the Renaissance about both satire and comedy.

Unfortunately, discussions of satire as a distinct genre are relatively sparse during the period. The word is mentioned often enough, as Kernan points out, by English writers like Barclay, Langley, Rankins, Withers, and of course Hall, Marston, Jonson, and others,² but no one carries out a systematic, or even an extensive, discussion of its nature and techniques, and often descriptions of it are hardly distinguishable from descriptions of comedy. Nevertheless, when the fragmentary statements on the subject are collected and arranged, a pattern emerges from which we can make important deductions. Preeminent among these statements are those of Lodge, Puttenham, and Jonson himself.

Lodge's discussion is important because, although at times he speaks of comedy and satire in the same terms, at one point he appears to recognize a significant difference. For, in outlining the familiar history of comedy, he says that the Greeks

"presented the liues of satyers, so that they might wiselye, vnder the abuse of that name, discouer the follies of many their folish citesens. And those monsters were then as our parasites are now adayes: such as with pleasure reprehendeth abuse."³ But then he distinguishes these reprehensions by the satyrs from comedies: "As for commedies, because they bear a more pleasanter vain, I will leave the other to speake of them." He goes on to give Cicero's [Donatus]' famous definition of comedy ("the imitation of life, the glass of custom, and the image of truth")⁴ and then adds that "their matter was more pleasant, for they were suche as did reprehend, yet quodam lepore [in a pleasant manner]."⁵ We have here, then, an elementary distinction between the abusive reprehension of the satyrs and the pleasant or witty reprehension of the writers of comedy.⁶

Puttenham's more weighty analysis offers somewhat more refined distinctions, as well as an intriguing theory of genres which, as we have already seen, helps to explain some of the problems we face in classifying Troilus and Cressida. For he sets forth the view that satire, comedy, and tragedy all have one feature in common: the correction of faults. There are, he maintains,

three kinds of poems reprehensive, to wit,
the Satyre, the Comedie, and the Tragedie.

And the first and most bitter inuective against vice and vicious men was the Satyre . . . But when these maner of solitary speeches and recitals of rebuke, vttered by the rurall gods out of bushes and briers, seemed not to the finer heads sufficiently perswasive, nor so popular as if it were reduced into action of many persons, or by many voyces liuely represented to the eare and eye, so as a man might thinke it were euen now a doing, the poets deuised to haue many parts played at once by two or three or foure persons, that debated the matters of the world . . . but neuer meddling with any Princes matters nor such high personages, but commonly of marchants, souldiers, artificiers, good honest householders, and of vnthrifty youtnes, yong damsels, old nurses, bawds, brokers, ruffians, and parasites, with such like, in whose behaiours lyeth in effect the whole course and trade of mans life, and therefore tended altogither to the amendment of man by discipline and example . . . And this kind of poem was called Comedy, and followed next after Satyre, and by that occasion was somewhat sharpe and bitter after the nature of the Satyre, openly and by expresse names taxing men more maliciously and impudently than became, so as they were enforced for feare of quarell and blame to disguise their players with strange apparell, and by colouring their faces and carying hatts and capps of diuerse fashions to make themselues less known. But this bitter poeme called the old Comedy being disused and taken away, the new Comedy came in place, more civill and pleasant a great deale, and not touching any man by name, but in a certaine generalitie glancing at euery abuse.

This detailed passage is rich in material and implications. It distinguishes between the declamatory rebukes of the satyr, the malicious, impudent correction of Old Comedy, and the milder correction of New Comedy; yet it unifies them by describing a gradual evolution based on a lessening of bitterness in the castigation.

It identifies as a crucial change the one from solitary speeches to the interaction of many voices--a change which is at the same time one from non-mimetic declamation to dramatized mimesis and a fable. This distinction, moreover, provides the basis in Renaissance theory for the distinction we have already encountered between satire of monologist and satire of scene or imitated action.⁸ Again, the distinction of rank, by which comedy is restricted to the activities of the merchant class and the commonalty and dare not venture into the realm of princes and the highborn, should be kept in mind when we speak of the war-plot of Troilus and Cressida, which largely involves princes. The view is especially important because it is virtually a commonplace of the Renaissance, assented to by Donatus, Scaliger, a large number of Italian critics, and also perhaps, implicitly, by Plato and Cicero.⁹

Above all, Puttenham's description of New Comedy as more "civill and pleasant a great deale" than Old Comedy, like Lodge's, suggests that Satyres and New Comedy represent two extremes of a continuum (Old Comedy occupying the middle) and that these two extremes, moreover, are roughly equivalent to the spirit of satire (harsh castigation) and the spirit of comedy (civil and pleasant castigation). Some Italian critics,

especially Dolce, Carriero, and Bulgarini, reflected this view; however, others, notably, Robortello and Cinthio, differed substantially.¹⁰

The relevance of this discussion becomes clear when we consider that the term "comicall satyre" combines the spirit of comedy and the spirit of satire and that we cannot know exactly what Jonson meant by the phrase until we decide what the proportions of each tendency are in his early work.

His own definition of what he is attempting to do is, of course, very useful; for, after giving Cicero-Donatus' definition of comedy, he adds that the play should also be

a thing throughout pleasant, and ridiculous,
and accommodated to the correction of manners.¹¹
(Every Man out of His Humour, III.vi.
207-209)

The emphasis here seems to be on the "comicall" element and to preclude harsh castigation--if we identify pleasantness and the ridiculous with comedy. Unfortunately, however, the situation is not as simple as this passage may make it appear, since there are two features in this very play which seem to involve harshness. The first is that Cordatus compares the work to Vetus Comoedia during the Grex, line 231; the second is that Jonson has provided the play with no fewer than three harsh declaimers: Asper, Macilente, and Carlo Buffone.

The usual understanding of Old Comedy--especially as reflected in the passage by Puttenham--is that it leans toward the harsh rather than toward the pleasant. However, as the succeeding discussion by Cordatus and Mitis shows (ll. 235-70), the comparison is on grounds of freedom of form, rather than bitterness of tone:

I see not then, but we should enioy the same
licence, or free power, to illustrate and
heighten our inuention as they did; and not
be tyed to those strict and regular formes,
which the nicenesse of a few (who are nothing
but forme) would thrust vpon vs.¹²
(ll. 266-70)

Elsewhere, Jonson criticizes the scurrilous laughter of the Old Comedy and apparently endorses instead the genteel laughter which Puttenham, Sidney, (and Aristotle) had endorsed before him.¹³ But Jonson's attitude toward Old Comedy, what attracted him to it, what he rejected, what the sixteenth century as a whole thought of it, all constitute a by no means simple picture.¹⁴ Suffice it to say that Cordatus' mention of it seems to relate primarily to the structure of the play and not to the harshness of the denunciation.

On the other hand, we must take quite seriously the bitter tone of Asper, Macilente, and Carlo in their frequent revilings of character. It is useless to deny that they introduce an unpleasant note into the drama. Moreover, Campbell's thesis that the origin of these railers and of all the railers in the drama of the

period was the jaundiced persona of the formal satire, who ultimately derived his character from the satires of Juvenal and Lucilius,¹⁵ must be accepted as sound. Nevertheless, the presence of this unpleasantness should not impel us to abandon Jonson's own definition of his mode of comedy as "pleasant," or to forget the "comicall" because of pressure from the "satyre."

The solution to this apparent contradiction becomes possible only if we make use of the distinction between satire of Menippean scene and satire of Juvenalian monologue. Menippean satire, as Professor Kernan defines it, operates "under cover of a fable."¹⁶ In other words, characters display their foibles by their own actions during the course of a mimetic fiction. Juvenalian satire, on the other hand, usually does not make use of a fable or mimetic fiction, but exposes vice and folly by means of invective, in a conversational monologue. The two forms are as different as Aristophanic drama is from the ancient Satyre.

With the aid of this distinction, we can now easily see that Jonson's comicall satyres actually make use of both methods, the satire of scene being largely pleasant and ridiculous and the satire of the monologist being largely unpleasant and stern. For it should be evident that the parade of eccentrics in Every Man Out, for example, --Puntarvolo, Fastidius

Brisk, Deliro, Fallace, Saviolina, Fungoso, Sogliardo, Shift, Clove, and Orange--are all foolish, laughable, harmless characters who encourage pleasant derision.

(It is true that Sordido is a harmful fool, but his vice of selfish greed which prospers through others' misery is presented in such a hyperbolic and ludicrous light that it inspires laughter rather than loathing.) It is only Asper, Macilente, and Carlo--the Juvenalian commentators--who maintain a steady stream of harsh invective. If we are to take E. M. O. as a model, then, the comical satyre is more purely comic in scene and more purely satiric in declamation. The two, comedy and satire, cannot, of course, be separated with exactitude, and many more specimens of mixtures exist than there are pure comedies or pure satires. Nevertheless, in order to understand comical satyre, we must distinguish in thought between the two somewhat different trends.

Another very important term in Jonson's brief definition of comedy which helps to clarify exactly what he was after in his comical satyres is the word "ridiculous." Nowadays, we tend to think of this word in terms of ridicule and absurdity, but the more Latinate Elizabethan era grasped the idea of "exciting laughter" more readily. In fact, as Professor Marvin T. Herrick suggests, the Latin ridiculum (laughable) corresponds to and is a translation of the Greek

τὸ γελοῖον , which Aristotle uses in his discussion of the basis of laughter.¹⁸

The theory of the ridiculous, which Herrick terms the "risible," has a long and interesting history--and one which will illuminate Jonson's use of the word in his definition of comedy. Perhaps the most profound discussion of laughter, and the one most pertinent to our problem, appears in Plato's Philebus, 48-49. There, referring to men who lack self-knowledge, Socrates proposes that

those of them who are weak and unable to avenge themselves, when laughed at, may be truly called ridiculous, but those who are powerful and can defend themselves may be more truly described as formidable and hateful; for ignorance in the powerful is hateful and horrible, because hurtful to others both in reality and in fiction, but powerless ignorance may be reckoned, and in truth is, ridiculous.¹⁹

Probably the most important concept here for the history of the ridiculous is that of powerlessness or harmlessness in the ridiculed person; for it suggests that characters suitable for comedy (the form of the laughable) must be incapable of inflicting real pain or hurt upon others. On the other hand, the powerful, whose hurtfulness can be "hateful and horrible" appear to be suitable characters for tragedy (the form of the terrifying and pitiable). Moreover, it is conceivable that the Renaissance distinction between comedy and tragedy on the basis of rank might have been based on

this passage rather than on a misunderstanding²⁰ of Aristotle's more famous dictum that "tragedy attempts to imitate men who are better and comedy men who are worse than those about us."²¹

Aristotle, in his remarks on the laughable, appears to select the idea of painlessness from Plato and to join it with his own idea of ugliness:

For the laughable is a sort of fault and deformity that is painless and not deadly, as indeed the comic mask is an ugly sort of thing and deformed and yet does not suggest pain.²²

It is not clear here whether Aristotle means that the fault must be painless to the spectator or to the derided person. In fact, Bywater translates the passage as "a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others."²³ However, it is probably that both meanings are permissible, since elsewhere Aristotle treats buffoonery as excessive to some extent because buffoons often fail to "avoid giving pain to the object of their raillery."²⁴

Moreover, Cicero--with whom Renaissance writers were more familiar than with Plato and Aristotle--includes both senses in his discussion of the laughable:

For neither outstanding wickedness, such as involves crime, nor, on the other hand, outstanding wretchedness is assailed by ridicule, for the public would have the villainous hurt by a weapon rather more formidable than ridicule; while they

dislike mockery of the wretched, except perhaps if these bear themselves arrogantly . . . All laughing-matters are found among those blemishes noticeable in the conduct of people who are neither the objects of general esteem nor yet full of misery, and not apparently merely fit to be hurried off to execution for their crimes.²⁵

Thus, Cicero would exclude from the realm of the laughable situations involving heinous deeds, wretchedness, and personages worthy of respect ("objects of general esteem"); the third category perhaps suggesting decorum and the distinction of rank.

Among Renaissance critics, Valla, Mantinus, and Trissino all echo Aristotle's dictum that the laughable arises from ugliness. They echo as well the view of both Plato and Aristotle that this ugliness should not be a cause of pain.²⁶ Usually, they do not indicate to whom the pain should not occur. However, Trissino does so and makes an interesting attempt to account for laughter in a way which also derives from Plato; for he proposes that "man is by nature envious and malicious."²⁷ He also distinguishes between grave misfortune and lesser misfortune as a criterion of laughter, thereby placing the emphasis on absence of genuine pain to the derided person:

If the evils, then, that we see in others are deadly and painful, as are wounds, fevers, and injuries, they do not move laughter, but rather pity through fear that similar ills may come to ourselves . . . The small ill, then, not painful or deadly, that we see or hear in others, as ugliness of body, and

folly of mind, when it is not or we believe it is not in ourselves, is what pleases us or makes us laugh.²⁸

But it is Minturno's views on comedy which brings us very close to Ben Jonson. Indeed, it is probably that e his definition of comedy was the source of Jonson's definition in Every Man Out. For Minturno writes that comedy

is an imitation of life, mirror of custom, image of truth, or that which treats of civil and private affairs devoid of danger, or what I think Aristotle most approves; it is an imitation for representing, in pleasant, plain speech, some action of civil or private matters, not renowned, not serious, but certainly cheerful and ridiculous, and truly suited to the amendment of life . . . introducing characters who do not arouse grief or horror but, as it were, amuse and delight by their acting. (My italics)²⁹

Minturno's adherence to the classical idea that pain and suffering are inappropriate to comedy is evident in the phrase "devoid of danger" and in his exclusion of characters who "arouse grief or horror." And the possible influence of the passage on Jonson is made more plausible, not only by the italicized words, but by Minturno's design of quoting Cicero's definition and then adding, as Jonson did, the idea of pleasantness, ridiculousness, and correction of manners.

The purpose of this brief discussion of the theory of the risible from Plato and Aristotle to the Renaissance critics should now be clear: it is to show that, when Jonson used the word "ridiculous" in

Every Man Out, he was probably not using it in a loose sense, but rather in full cognizance of the time-honored classical belief that comedy, if it is to be laughable and pleasant, must represent characters whose faults are essentially incapable of resulting in genuine harm to others and whose mishaps do not produce genuine suffering to themselves. Consequently, Plato's "powerful" men do not belong in comedy, because their vices could have dire repercussions, which are the proper concern of tragedy. The true sphere of comedy is, then, as Minturno says, "some action of civil or private matters, not renowned, not serious."

It may legitimately be objected that Elizabethan playwrights did not feel bound by classical rules and that theatrical enargia often superseded decorum and Aristotle; whose works, moreover, were known for the most part indirectly, except by competent readers of Greek. Indeed, Jonson's Prologue to Every Man Out (Grex, ll. 235-270) states his independence from the rules of the Terentian commentators, and Shakespeare's fine disregard of many classical laws is well-known. However, this violation of theory by the practice of the playwrights should not be so over-emphasized that we begin to imagine that they followed none of the classical rules at all. For, especially with regard to the exclusion of genuinely heinous or wretched

characters, genuine pain, and genuine danger from comedy, they followed decorum by and large--if for no other reason than that Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero were "right" in their reasoning: these grave elements suppress and confound laughter and dispel pleasantness. Indeed, a comic writer of any acumen would avoid these elements without any knowledge of classical theory: although, as with many rules, there are, under special circumstances, notable exceptions.³⁰

But Jonson's critical remarks indicate quite clearly that he does, in many areas, adhere to the rules of the ancients. In particular, he would exclude the vices of the powerful from the domain of comedy, if we are to believe his Prologue to the revised version of Every Man in His Humour. For there, after ridiculing the theatrical techniques of Shakespeare's Henry VI plays and of Henry V, Jonson says that he would use, not these,

But deedes, and language such as men doe vse:
And persons, such as Comoedie would chuse,
When she would shew an Image of the times,
And sport with humane follies, not with crimes.
(Prologue, ll. 21-24)

The "crimes" alluded to are apparently those of the Yorks and Lancasters mentioned earlier in the Prologue (l. 10) --the "powerful" of Shakespeare's early histories.³¹

This distinction by Jonson seems to point in the direction of assigning to tragedy, not only the

reprehension of crime, but also the reprehension of vices harmful to others; while restricting to comedy the reprehension of follies. However, there is no doubt that characters subject to dangerous and hurtful vices appear in comedy. Jonson, for example, exposes and ridicules Sordido in Every Man Out, Corvino, Voltore, and Corbaccio in Volpone, and Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome in The Alchemist: all men of unjust and harmful intention. But what is noteworthy is that each of these men is balked and his power is allowed to threaten the harmless characters only temporarily. Moreover, comic techniques of hyperbole and caricature succeed in making them laughable, rather than menacing.

What the separation between vices and follies does accomplish, however, is a sharpening of the relationship of satire, on the one hand to tragedy, and on the other hand to comedy. For it has long been recognized that the function of satire is to castigate both folly and vice. Hence, it occupies a position directly between comedy and tragedy, being capable of reprehending both mere foolishness and hurtful depravity.

This dual role of satire has given rise to the distinction between comical satire and tragical satire, the latter being devoted to the exposure of the villainous deeds of vicious men. But an exposure of this kind is unpleasant, largely misanthropic,

unforgiving, and rarely relieved by more than one or two admirable characters. Moreover, it is productive, not of laughter, but of a wry, malicious satisfaction at the spectacle of evil running amuck and wickedness rampant and unashamed.³² Plays like The Jew of Malta, The Malcontent, The Atheist's Tragedy, and The Revenger's Tragedy, where lurid villainy approaches the grotesque, melodramatic, or even farcical, fit into this classification. As Professor Kernan observes, "the characters are given a sinister turn, and mixed among them are more dangerous types: the flatterer, the Machiavel, the parasite, the traitor, and men whose lust and greed are cast in a heroic mold. The fools become the instruments of the villains, and the stakes of the struggle are now life, thrones, honor, power."³³ It can easily be seen that these "dangerous types" struggling for thrones and power would be out of place in comedy. That these plays are satiric in impact there can be no doubt: they depict men in unrelentingly derogatory and ugly terms. They are, in fact, related to the wrathful, misanthropic satires of Juvenal, whereas comical satires are related to the more genial and urbane satires of Horace.³⁴

The usefulness of this distinction becomes clear when we compare Jonson's comical satyres with Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida in terms of vice and folly, harmfulness and harmlessness, power and

impotence. For the comical satyres are devoted almost exclusively to the derision of harmless men and women, with no power--and devoted almost exclusively to their follies. Troilus and Cressida, on the other hand, depicts powerful men whose moral failings are more vices than follies and are responsible for great harm both to individuals and to societies. Achilles' pride, for example, has produced disintegration in the Greek camp. Troilus' excessive valor and thirst for glory, and Hector's submission to it against his better judgement, produce dire consequences: the devastation of Troy is no laughing matter. Achilles' murder of Hector and Cressida's betrayal of Troilus (the two key events of the play) are hardly pleasant, and more harmful than ridiculous.^{34a} Therefore, whereas Jonson's plays are truly comical and Horatian satire, Troilus and Cressida, to the extent that it is to be regarded as satire at all, must be placed with those unpleasant, grim studies of vice and crime--that is, with tragical, Juvenalian satire. Hence, Professor Kernan--although he does not believe that Troilus and Cressida is finally a satire--discusses it among the tragical satires.³⁵ However, as later chapters in this work will show, not even this designation will fit the play.

A closer study of the actual comical satyres

themselves gives rise to another reason to doubt that Troilus could have been of this genre; namely, the fact that, of the five plays designated by Professor Campbell as comical satyres, only one of them perfectly fits his definition of the form. And we therefore must ask whether the comical satyre was indeed a form, or simply a strong influence during the years 1599-1601, which later became transformed into the "satiric comedies" of the Jacobean period.

Professor Campbell maintains that the most distinctive of the new conventions of the comical satyre was the presence of at least one commentator, and usually two, upon the characters and the dramatic action:

The first was a buffoon, a fellow animated by a bitter spirit of detraction and equipped with a mordant imagination and an arsenal of slashing similes. He raked the fools with his vocabulary of wrath and scorn. Mirth of a crude sort he could arouse among the spectators, but they were made to realize that it was indecorous and vacant, and obviously joined to no intelligent criticism of manners or of morals. The second commentator more clearly represented the dramatist in his newly assumed role of satirist. His was a keen intelligence, sharpened often by envy until it could cut to the quick of the folly dominating the derided character.³⁶

What is immediately evident about this clear and forceful analysis is that it fits Every Man Out quite well (except that Macilente is too repulsive to represent the dramatist and only does so when he becomes Asper again). But what is almost equally evident is that the pattern

fits Jonson's other two plays much less felicitously.

For, in the first place, the presence of two distinct commentators--roughly, an irresponsible one and a responsible one--applies only to E. M. O. In Cynthia's Revels, Crites, Mercury, and Cupid are satiric commentators, but they are all controlled and critical--i. e., responsible. And in Poetaster only Horace, once again a responsible observer, can qualify; Tuoca gives vent to a few diatribes (one against the players), but he is too often a member of the gallery of fools in the Menippean scene to qualify as a Juvenalian observer. In short, the buffoon disappears from Jonson's two later plays and only the more balanced kind of commentator remains.

In the second place, as Kernan remarks, the main satirists of the two later plays (Crites and Horace) are not at all repulsive or envious, but have only admirable qualities. Their reprehensions are not fierce, envious, and wrathful, but grave and exemplary. Unfortunately, Kernan adds, the loss of vitriolic temperament results in a loss of effective attack.³⁷

But these technical flaws in the theory of comical satire as a distinct form are relatively unimportant when compared with a more serious weakness--namely, that, whereas E. M. O. is comical and satiric throughout, both Cynthia's Revels and Poetaster introduce material and

tones which do not at all belong to the mode of reprehension. In Cynthia's Revels, the mythological, masque, and courtly elements further dilute the reprehensive effect, which had already been decreased by Crites' benign temperament and by Mercury's and Cupid's divine insouciance. But in Poetaster, the diversity of tones and genres becomes even more marked. For, although Crispinus, Demetrius, Albius, Chloe, and Tucce are clearly objects of ridicule, it is difficult to show that Ovid, Gallus, Tibullus, and Propertius are subjected to the same treatment. For example, Propertius' grieving over Cynthia's death and his decision to shut himself up in her tomb are presented gravely, with neither derision nor disapproval. Similarly, the catastasis of the play, IV.vi, in which Augustus surprises the revelling Ovid, his fellows, and Julia in the midst of sacrilegious festivities, is hardly laughable, generating enough consternation virtually to qualify the scene for tragedy. Again, Ovid's lament over being banished (IV.viii) and his exchange with Julia about parting (IV.ix), in spite of Herford's criticism,³⁸ could plausibly be inserted into a tragedy: the level of the sentiment and verse is one which Jonson rarely attempted before or after this play. And Caesar's speech forgiving Gallus and Tibullus (V.1.1-32) has the oratorical sweep and rhythms of a formal address by one of Shakespeare's kings. Finally,

Jonson's own translation of Book IV of the Aeneid (interpolated under the guise of a reading by Virgil of his own work before Caesar and the poets, V.11) is a sincere effort at making Virgil's epic come alive; while Jonson's translation of Ovid's Elegy XV in I.1 and his adaptation of Horace's Satire IX in III.1 are also noteworthy. All three are constructive humanistic endeavors and are far from the destructive and derisive spirit of satire (although the Horatian satire with Crispinus, III.1, is satiric in its content).³⁹

Professor Campbell has made a vigorous effort to integrate the material relating to Ovid into a coherent satire by proposing that Jonson portrayed him and the other younger poets as "exquisites" whose "dangerous eroticism" is exposed by the action of the play.⁴⁰ This theory certainly has one strong point: Ovid and his companions fall when they are at the height of their eroticism and recklessness. But, as Campbell himself admits,⁴¹ beyond this point there are several difficulties: Ovid and Julia do not repent or stop loving each other, sentiment inappropriate to satire arises, and the last act shifts the emphasis of the play to the exposure and humiliation of Crispinus; whereas, if the vices of Ovid and his group were the main object of Jonson's satire (and Campbell believes they are), the fifth act should be devoted to their dishumoring, and

not to that of the mediocre poet. Campbell considers this shift of emphasis "an artistic blemish."⁴²

But actually this play is first and foremost a satire of Crispinus, the Poetaster, and Jonson quite properly untrusses him in the final act. There are in addition two secondary satires, one upon Chloe and Albinus, who seek to imitate the manners of their superiors, and the other, as Professor Harbage observes, on the legal and military professions and on the actors of the public theaters.⁴³ But Ovid and his fellows occupy an approved position in the play from the very outset. In the second scene of the play, for example, Ovid defends poetry against the philistine attacks of both his father and Tucca. In a play which is about false and true poets, it is certainly significant that Ovid, like Lorenzo, Jr. in Every Man in His Humour, should in his first appearance be cast as an articulate spokesman for poetry.⁴⁴ It is also far from self-evident that eroticism and sacrilege (against pagan gods notorious for eroticism themselves) would be regarded with disapproval at the Blackfriars: if we are to believe Professor Harbage, a degree of eroticism was welcomed at the private theaters.⁴⁵ Moreover, as Campbell admits, "both the erotic poetry of England during the 1590's, and the satire of lust during the same decade, suggest that many persons of high social

position were frankly expressing, in their lives, Ovid's philosophy of love."⁴⁶ Yet, persons of this social position probably made up the dominant portion (though not the exclusive portion, Harbage warns)⁴⁷ of the audiences at the private theaters; so that condemnation of libertinism would not necessarily be piously assented to there.

But the clearest evidence of Jonson's generous and sympathetic attitude toward Ovid and his group appears in Horace's outraged reaction when he learns of Lupus' betrayal of them:

Was this the treason? this, the dangerous plot,
Thy clamorous tongue so bellow'd through the
court?

Hadst thou no other proiect to encrease
Thy grace with CAESAR, but this woluish trainee;
To prey vpon the life of innocent mirth,
And harmelesse pleasures, bred, of noble wit?
Away, I lothe thy presence: such as thou,
They are the moths, and scarabes of a state;
The bane of empires; and the dregs of courts;
Who (to endeare themselues to any'employment)
Care not, whose fame they blast; whose life
they endanger. (IV.vii.37-47)

These words, in the mouth of Horace (generally believed to represent Jonson) indicate that the energy of satiric attack is directed against informers and fomenters of calumny, not against those who indulge in "innocent mirth" and "harmelesse pleasures bred of noble wit."⁴⁸

What Jonson has done, then, in the Poetaster has been to mingle his satire of false poets, false gallants, and false, treacherous moralists with a "history" of Ovid and

Julia and a humanistic "history" of the famous poets Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius. The latter group of poets have the obvious function of favorably contrasting with the poetasters, just as Ovid and his revellers contrast with the "pseudo-exquisites." Moreover, Jonson's efforts to display his powers as a classicist and translator no doubt were meant to bolster his implicit claim to represent the true poets, as opposed to the poetasters, of the contemporary theater. And to some extent, posterity has vindicated these efforts.⁴⁹ All in all, however, Jonson's imaginary reenactment of events which involved historical personages but which could not have happened,⁵⁰ introduces material and tones more suitable to romantic comedy (the gay repartee and revels of the young poets), history, and tragedy; and these elements share the stage with the tone of recrimination.

The status of the comicall stayre as an independent genre becomes even less secure when we examine the three plays of John Marston which Campbell discusses.⁵¹ From the design of Campbell's book and from his preliminary remarks, the reader might well conclude that Marston was consciously engaged in writing comicall satyres between 1599 and 1601. However, a study of Campbell's analysis of the plays shows that he himself regards them as hybrids, rather than as pervasively satiric. For it

soon becomes evident that he believes Antonio and Mellida does not satisfactorily fulfill the requirements of the genre; that he regards Jack Drum's Entertainment as "a hodge-podge of undeveloped romantic, comic, and satiric motifs," in which the main plot, the romantic adventures of two lovers, "is unrelated to the satiric elements in the play"; and finally that What You Will is largely farce and ends in "hilarious celebration."⁵² Moreover, it is significant that Marston did not, as Jonson did, name any of his plays comically satyres on his title pages.⁵³

Campbell's explanation for Marston's hybrids is consistently that his inferior craftsmanship prevented him from writing coherent comically satyres, without distractions and irrelevancies from the realms of melodrama, the romances, amorous comedy, and Senecan tragedy. In all fairness to Marston, however, he must be credited with reviving interest in Senecan tragedy and with initiating the whole Jacobean thrust toward lurid Italianate paratragedy. His stress on this trend in Antonio and Mellida must therefore be regarded as a serious interest on his part, and not a lamentable intrusion upon his satiric interest: our knowledge that he wrote formal satires in 1598 should not compel us to restrict his output in 1599 to that mode. Nor can his interest in romantic adventures and light amorous

affairs be dismissed easily: his Ovidian poem of 1598 is ultimately more erotic than satiric; or, on the other hand, it may be regarded as evidence that the two impulses existed side by side in him. In any case, he was, at the outset of his theatrical career, obviously experimenting with numerous modes simultaneously; he appeared to recognize that fact; and he evidently did not care if the result was a hodge-podge. This careless (or perhaps carefree) attitude is reflected in the Induction of What You Will:

Dor. Ist Commedy, Tragedy, Pastorall, Morall,
Nocturnall, or Historie?
Phy. Faith perfectly neither, but even What
You Will, a slight toye, lightly composed, to
swiftly finisht, ill plotted, worse written,
I feare me worst acted, and indeed What You
Will.⁵⁴

Marston's catalogue of genres and his apparent suggestion that his play defies these categories inevitably suggests Polonius' mock-catalogue of genres, with the hybrids "pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" (II.ii. 416-418). Moreover, it is worthy of note that Shakespeare used What You Will as an alternate title for Twelfth Night. These references to the hybrid play, or the play which defies classification--all occurring in 1601 or very close to it--suggest that the mixture of genres was a well-recognized practice; and the mild parody in Polonius' depiction of it does not preclude the use of

these mixtures by reputable authors, including Shakespeare.⁵⁵

The concept of the comicall satyre as an independent genre thus loses much of its substance. What remains of it is the ineluctable fact that Jonson used the term on the title page of each of the three plays; that the railer, probably transformed from the speaker of the formal satires, was a popular figure in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean drama; and that Jacobean drama, both comedy and tragedy, retained a strong satiric flavor for many years.

But, with regard to the first fact, what Jonson probably meant by his new term was not so much that he was inventing a new form, but that his comedy--unlike the comedy of adventures and amours--would perform a corrective and didactic function. And even if Jonson believed he was inventing a new form, what he has actually left us is three different kinds of play, only one of which is a perfect comicall satyre.

With regard to the second fact, the popularity of the railer in the period 1599-1613 paradoxically lessens the likelihood that he is a characteristic feature of comicall satyre. For, if he can appear in romantic comedy (Jaques), tragedy (Timon), and paratragedy or tragic satire (Vindici), it would seem more plausible that he is a device which playwrights found intrinsically

theatrical for a time--for a variety of purposes; rather than that he belonged exclusively to one single mode. This conception of the railer conforms, indeed, to Professor Kernan's understanding of his function in Elizabethan drama:

The flamboyant character of the satirist, his colorful railing, and his parade of fools were, it appears, simply theatrical sensations which were added to the set rhetorical speeches, swordplay, gorgeous costumes, dancing, songs, exchanges of wit, sententiae, and low comedy devices which were jumbled together in most Elizabethan drama. The better dramatists, of course, managed in time to make of the satirist something more than a mere 'getpenny' . . . but throughout his stage career the satirist was first of all a spectacular figure designed to attract and delight audiences.⁵⁶

Campbell is thus correct in stressing the importance of the railer in the drama of the period. But he would appear to be mistaken in linking him exclusively to one mode, and in relying on him heavily to make that mode an independent genre.

Finally, an apparent contradiction between the section of this chapter dealing with the theory of comical satire and the section dealing with the practice of comical satire must be cleared up. For the section devoted to theory spent much time attempting to show how comical satire came to exist; whereas the section devoted to practice attempted, in effect, to show that comical satire never really existed at all--at least as a separate genre.

The difference between "comical satire" (a general mode) and "comical satire" (a mode limited historically to 1599-1601) holds the key to this apparent contradiction. In the theory section, the comic and satiric impulses and their combination were the subject of formal analysis; the aim was to formulate the nature of these impulses as they would operate in any period. And, in this sense, comical satire existed long before Ben Jonson; for, as we have seen, the Old Comedy--midway between the Satyres and the New Comedy--had (if we take Aristophanes as a model) already sought to correct the conduct of men through ridicule and reductio ad absurdum of their failings, rather than through relentless and bitter exposures of their ugliness. And, if we momentarily allow comedy to step out of the theater, many writers like Lucian, Erasmus, Rabelais, and Cervantes have pursued the path of benevolent derision, rather than malevolent censure. Comical satire, indeed, later became one of the chief forms of Jacobean comedy--in the work of Jonson and Middleton especially.⁵⁷ As always, the ultimate criterion by which this kind of satire can be distinguished from the more severe and vituperative tragical satire is the presence of the techniques of hyperbole, caricature, extravaganza, blatant self-contradiction, sudden reversals, sudden exposures, ingeniously wrought and just defeats of the eccentric

unjust--and the curative laughter attendant upon these techniques; whereas the more severe satire presents a succession of ugly and hateful pictures of nefarious men and their nefarious deeds--pictures which are designed to repel and to dissuade the spectator from this kind of life; moreover, laughter is usually absent, and if there is humor at all, it is the kind of humor which paradoxically stimulates the very same depravity in the spectator which the satire ostensibly seeks to dissuade him from.

On the other hand, the chief subject of discussion in the section on practice was the five (or six) plays of Jonson and Marston during a historically limited period, 1599-1601, and it is these, not comical satires, which were said not to have existed as an independent genre--primarily because all of them except Every Man Out merged the satiric material with romantic, melodramatic, "history," or Senecan material. Nevertheless, it must be added that the satiric energy present in these plays undoubtedly influenced--indeed, led to--the development of comical satire in the Jacobean period, and Professor Campbell must be credited with initiating interest in this trend and its origins.

NOTES

¹Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938); Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven and London, 1959).

²Kernan, pp. 54, 55, and 56-57.

³Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Gregory Smith (Oxford, 1904), I, p. 80.

⁴See Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Madison, 1954), p. 72 and p. 407, Marvin T. Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana, 1964), p. 20, and Gregory Smith, I, lxxvi. Writers of the Renaissance generally regarded the words as Cicero's.

⁵Gregory Smith, I, pp. 80-81.
⁶But

⁶But Lodge also seems to fuse comedy and satire at times. For instance, he speaks of the Greek comedies almost as if they functioned as dramatic satires which "kept men in awe" and "restrayned the vnbridled cominaltie" (p. 81). He also mentions Lucilius while discussing comedy, wishing "our realme could light vppon" one like him. The Greek comedies, of course (if we take Aristophanes as a model), were actually a fusion of satire and comedy, so that here Lodge's

thinking is understandable.

⁷The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 31-32.

⁸Strictly, this distinction does not appear in Renaissance writing, as far as I know. However, it is strongly implied by Puttenham when he says that the solitary speeches "were reduced into action of many persons, or by many voyces liuely represented to the eare and eye, so as a man might thinke it were euen now a doing," a passage which could serve as a definition of mimesis. Moreover, the marked difference between Jonson's satires of 1599-1601 and his four great satires clearly arises from his change in emphasis from that on the satiric commentator who tells, to that on the satiric scene which shows.

⁹See Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (Chicago, 1961), I, pp. 148-149 (Sansovino), II, p. 746 (Scaliger); Madeleine Doran, pp. 106-107 (Donatus-Diomedes); Herrick, p. 70, p. 81 (Chrytraeus), pp. 84-85 (Trissino); Plato, tr. Harold N. Fowler, (London and New York, 1925), III, p. 336; Cicero's De Oratore, tr. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), II, p. 375.

¹⁰See Weinberg, p. 143, for Dolce, where he says that comedy exists "to scold men for their vices," satire "to remove vices"; Carriero (pp. 596-597) says, "Satire scolds wicked people and their vices--essentially unpleasant things--in order to arouse laughter and to generate hatred for these same vices. But comedy imitates pleasant things . . . It may be defined as 'an imitation of the worst men, which by discovering their ugliness and their obscenities induces laughter in the spectator'"; Bulgarini (p. 598) writes that he "would distinguish comedy, which moves to laughter, from satire, which moves to indignation"; on the other hand, Robortello's list of the objects of satire, as Weinberg points out, "resembles those traditionally cited in discussions of comedy" (pp. 399-400), while Cinthio (p. 443) sees satire as "a genre combining the characteristics of both tragedy and comedy."

¹¹Ben Johnson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1927), III. All subsequent quotations from Jonson's plays will be from this edition.

¹²Cordatus actually is talking about the changes which Menander, Philemon, Cecilius, and Plautus made from the practice of Aristophanes. But in this

context, in opposition to the exemplar of classical rules, Terence, all these poets are considered to be Old Comedy.

¹³See Timber: or Discoveries, ed. Felix Schelling (Boston, 1892), p. 99; Puttenham, p. 291; Sidney in Gregory Smith, I, pp. 200-201; Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, tr. H. Rackham (London and New York, 1926), pp. 245-249.

¹⁴It is true that Jonson disapproved in general of the scurrilous laughter in Old Comedy, but as Herrick points out (p. 56), Jonson speaks on the very next page of Discoveries in a more approving way of this kind of laughter: "Perverse and sinister sayings (and the rather unexpected) in the Old Comedy did move laughter; especially where it did imitate any dishonesty; and scurrility came forth in the place of wit: which who understands the nature and Genius of laughter cannot but perfectly know" (p. 100).

¹⁵Campbell, Comicall Satyre, pp. 6-8.

¹⁶Kernan, p. 13. As Professor Gilbert Highet shows in The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), pp. 36-37, Menippus is credited with inventing a kind of satire which mingles prose and verse and is not a discursive monologue, but a narrative of fantastic

adventure. Petronius, Lucian, and Julian the Apostate are said to follow his method. But modern critics have extracted from this specialized meaning of "Menippean" the formal element of mimesis, in order to distinguish the mode from the monologue.

¹⁷See A Latin Dictionary for Schools, ed. Charlton T. Lewis (New York, 1916), under "ridiculus." The proper meaning is "exciting laughter, funny." The "pregnant" meaning is "silly, absurd, contemptible."

¹⁸Herrick, Comic Theory, pp. 37-38.

¹⁹The Dialogues of Plato, tr. B. Jowett (Oxford, 1953), p. 608.

²⁰See Doran, p. 105.

²¹The Poetics, in Literary Criticism from Plato to Dryden, tr. and ed. by Allan H. Gilbert (New York, 1940), p. 71.

²²Ibid., p. 74.

²³Ingram Bywater, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1909), p. 15. Lane Cooper, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry (Ithaca, 1947), p. 14, also has "to others," but S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (London, 1920), p. 21, has no "to others," while a recent translation by Gerald F. Else,

Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 183, renders the passage as "not painful or destructive to life."

²⁴The Nicomachean Ethics, tr. H. Rackham (London and New York, 1926), pp. 245-249. Herrick quotes this passage in another translation.

²⁵De Oratore, tr. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), II, p. 375.

²⁶See Herrick, pp. 38-41.

²⁷Philebus, 48-50, Jowett, p. 621.

²⁸Gilbert, pp. 226-227. See also Herrick, p. 41.

²⁹Herrick, pp. 83-84.

³⁰Harmful characters or even heinous ones can produce a bemused smile or a half-scornful, half-approving shake of the head. Barabas, Richard III, Iago, Edmund, Vindici, Malevole all achieve this effect. In fact, as T. S. Eliot has suggested, The Jew of Malta is as much a farce as anything else (see his Selected Essays, 1917-1932 [London, 1932], p. 123). The scene in which Richard III wins over Lady Anne, the widow of Edward, whom he has recently killed, (I.ii) has the odd quality of presenting a monster in a puckish light. Similarly, the scene in which Richard poses as

a pious, other-worldly figure reluctant to accept the crown (III.vii) has a broad humor, with him in the role of sly trickster, rather than of villain. Iago and Edmund often have this quality too; and the intimate soliloquies of all three establish a conspiratorial rapport with the audience which makes the injurious schemes ambiguous in their impact.

³¹Campbell is aware of Jonson's distinction. See Satyre, pp. 36-37. See also Butcher, p. 375 for his interpretation of Aristotle on this point.

³²Juvenal's Satire VI, ll. 634-640 is often given as a foundation for tragical satire. See Kernan, p. 192. However, Puttenham's remarks on the reprehensive nature of tragedy are also instructive. For he writes of monarchs that "their infamous life and tyrannies were layd open to all the world, their wickedness reproched, their follies and extreme insolencies derided, and their miserable ends painted out in playes and pageants, to show the mutabilitie of fortune, and the iust punishment of God in revenge of a vicious and euill life" (p. 33). The nobility of the tragic hero, his hamartia, his character midway between good and evil are all neglected, and instead sheer deplorable wickedness, the domain of tragical satire, seems to be emphasized.

³³Kernan, p. 193.

³⁴See Kernan, p. 149, where he maintains that Jonson's comical satyres are Horatian. See also Hight, pp. 235-238, where he discusses the essential differences between Juvenalian and Horatian satire.

^{34a}Achilles' elimination of Hector by means of his Myrmidons lacks any of the techniques which would make it appear laughably deplorable or cowardly. It is simply a base, vicious, unmanly act--and above all humorless. Cressida's betrayal of Troilus is more complex, because the constant presence and commentary of Thersites lends it a sordid tone and provides a comic mockery. However, it would be rash to conclude that the scene is essentially comic, for this conclusion would be tantamount to accepting Thersites' outlook as the correct one. On the other hand, without Thersites, the action is dramatic and disturbing, especially if we concentrate on Troilus' perspective; whereas, if we stress the aspect involving Cressida and Diomedes, a comic perception arises only if we assume that Cressida is experiencing no conflict, but has already decided--an assumption which has no warrant in the dialogue and is actually contradicted by it.

³⁵Kernan, p. 205 ff.

³⁶Campbell, Satyre, p. 79.

³⁷p. 162.

³⁸He finds the scene "uninteresting and even grotesque in itself" and "a mere disturbing incongruity" (I, p. 431).

³⁹Herford (I, pp. 427-432) also calls attention to the "history" side of Poetaster. He also stresses the antisatiric adulatory treatment of Virgil and quotes the appended To the Reader, lines 101-105 to show Jonson's essential motive for the play and his great esteem for the true poets depicted in it:

And therefore chose AVGVSTVS CAESARS times,
When wit, and artes were at their height in
Rome,
To shew that VIRGIL, HORACE, and the rest
Of those great master-spirits did not want
Detractors, then, or practisers against them.

⁴⁰Satyre, pp. 113-114.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 116, 117, 128-129.

⁴²Ibid., p. 129.

⁴³Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (New York, 1952), p. 79.

⁴⁴Herford makes the same point, I, p. 429.

⁴⁵Harbage, Rival, pp. 201-221.

⁴⁶p. 113.

⁴⁷Harbage, Rival, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁸Harbage also takes this view and quotes part of the passage, p. 161.

⁴⁹See Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker, The Renaissance in England (Boston, 1954), p. 558.

⁵⁰Ovid was banished in the year 8 A. D., which would be approximately the time of his fictitious debauchery with Julia and the others. But he was 51 at the time, and Horace had died in 8 B. C., Propertius in 16 B. C., and Virgil and Tibullus in 19 B. C.

⁵¹He actually discusses Antonio and Mellida as a comical satyre, although he does not include it in his earlier list of Marston's dramatic satires. He does not consider Histrionastix, which he does not believe to be Marston's.

⁵²pp. 150-151.

⁵³See The Plays of John Marston, ed. H. Harvey Wood (London, 1934-1939), which provides title-pages for each play.

⁵⁴Wood, II, p. 233.

⁵⁵It is not an accident that the three plays of

Marston, as well as Jonson's Poetaster and, we should add, Twelfth Night, all produced 1599-1601, should mingle satire with romantic comedy and other elements, during the same period when Troilus and Cressida was written.

⁵⁶pp. 151-152.

⁵⁷At the same time, the railer began to pass out of comical satire.

IV. THE "SATIRIC COMMENTATORS" IN TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

The final problem which we must consider about comicall satyre is, of course, its relation to Troilus and Cressida. Our prime concern in this chapter will be, therefore, the exact nature of the two shrewd observers in the play; for one of the main considerations which led Campbell to regard Troilus and Cressida a comicall satyre was the marked resemblance of Ulysses and Thersites to the responsible and irresponsible commentators, respectively, of his formula for comicall satyre.

It should be stated at the outset that Campbell's perception of the resemblance, especially Ulysses', is a feat of subtle thinking. In fact, ironically enough, Ulysses and Thersites, as a twosome, parallel Macilente and Carlo Buffone more closely than do the commentators, single or dual, in either of Jonson's two other plays. On the surface, then, the parallel between Troilus and Cressida and Every Man Out appears quite sound. However, as we shall soon see, differences between Ulysses and Macilente are so great that this parallel must be held to be a remarkable coincidence; while, although Thersites ostensibly is a railer par excellence, he differs from Carlo and from all the other satirists of Jonson and Marston in one essential aspect which makes all the

difference.

Ulysses, like Jonson's judicious commentators, analyzes the ills of men; he carries out a faintly mischievous stratagem to deceive Achilles into a more proper line of conduct (i.e., by lionizing Ajax); he deeply analyzes Achilles' faults for him; finally, he contrives the situation in which Troilus can be disabused of his belief in Cressida's fidelity. But similar as these activities may seem to the exposures and dishumorings by the judicious satirists in Jonson's plays, essential differences also exist. For example, Ulysses shows no evidence of being envious.¹ Moreover, he does not merely lament over the follies of men in his degree speech; his analysis is not for the sake of correction qua correction (that is, for moral betterment), but for the pragmatic purpose of survival. Again, his stratagem, although it finally (after the combat of Hector and Ajax) moves Achilles to issue a challenge to Hector (IV.v.268-269), does not dishumor Achilles of his pride. In fact, in the scene in which the dishumoring presumably should take place (III.111)--the scene graced by Ulysses' time-wallet image--Achilles acquits himself as a rather articulate young man, whose qualities of mind are difficult to reconcile with the more usual image of him as a brainless mastiff; while Ulysses does not expose or disgrace him, but only maneuvers him into re-thinking his position

somewhat after the manner of Socrates (whom he is quoting),² so that it will be of greater value to the Greeks. Achilles' pride remains, then, and Ulysses cannot be said to have dishumored him.

The scene in which Troilus is disabused is also a dishumoring only in a superficial sense. For Troilus' passion for Cressida is, in the first place, hardly a humor, because falling in love and even falling in love with an unworthy woman, are too widespread and "natural" for even the sternest moralist to hope to eradicate. Secondly, Shakespeare does not satirically stress Troilus' mistaken conception of Cressida from the very outset and throughout the play, but dramatically delays this discovery until the final act,³ so that it virtually or actually has the force of an anagnōr̄sis. Indeed, if we wish to see the difference between Jonson's satires and Troilus and Cressida, we could not hope to find a better illustration than the contrast between Troilus' recognition scene and the scene in Every Man Out (V.xi) in which Macilente disabuses Deliro, the uxorious husband, about his wife, Fallace, who has been carrying on with Fastidius Briske. Deliro's discovery, unlike Troilus', is a genuine dishumoring for two reasons: first, Deliro's over-solicitousness toward his wife, in the face of her perverse and systematic mistreatment of him (obvious to all but himself), is a genuine

humor--a true lack of insight which socially disables him. Secondly, this humor is openly displayed from the very outset and is maintained throughout the play as a condition to be cured. Consequently, it is quite evident to the spectator that Deliro morally "deserves" to have his illusion about Fallace removed, in fact needs enlightenment for his own well-being; but, with Troilus, in terms of the presented actualities of the play itself (if we set aside, as we must, our prior knowledge of the outcome), there is no hint that Cressida is actually capable of infidelity until Act V; so that Troilus' love is not presented and defined exclusively, as Deliro's is, as a ludicrous myopia which cries out for amendment.

Hence, when Deliro comes to his senses, even though the recognition potentially could be painful to him, this pain is absorbed and transcended, because Jonson does not elaborate on the emotional potentialities of Deliro's disturbing recognition (as a tragic writer would), but simply records what is a festive event, the restoration of his moral balance (accompanied by a few curses), and the restoration of Deliro to his role as master in the house (ll. 16-23). Troilus, on the other hand, is not cured in any comparable sense; instead, Shakespeare carefully amplifies the young lover's disturbance both during and after the "ocular

proof." Troilus' pain is not absorbed and transcended: and pain usually is antithetical to laughter, amusement, or even contempt. Thus, Troilus' sense of loss and disillusion is in sharp contrast to the sense of recuperation in Deliro's case, and in his triumph over his erring wife. All in all, then, in these two parallel scenes Ulysses functions very differently from Macilente--as, indeed, he does throughout Troilus and Cressida.

Thersites, on the other hand, appears to be very similar in most respects to Carlo Buffone--"a buffoon, a fellow animated by a bitter spirit of detraction and equipped with a mordant imagination and an arsenal of slashing similes." Moreover, the observation that his vehement, loathsome, envious, and distorted personality impairs the reliability of his judgement as a satiric interpreter has considerable force, but it does not reduce his resemblance to Carlo or to Marston's Lampatho Doria; for, as Kernan has shown, the more extreme railers all have distorted personalities and all run the risk of self-invalidation.⁴

Thersites differs from the other buffoons, however, in this important respect: that, whereas with them, pathological as they are, there is still a near-perfect correspondence between their venomous criticisms and the actual faults of those they attack,

with Thersites there is only an imperfect and problematic correspondence. In other words, the victims of Carlo's attacks incontestably are about as foolish in their deeds as they are in his portraits of them. Thersites' victims, on the other hand, are often less culpable or turpid than he makes them; and often there is little connection between his portrait and the observable actions of the character he portrays. In short, he makes ample use of the techniques of caricature, over-simplification, hyperbole, and downright calumny.

These techniques appear throughout Thersites' execrations, but they reach a fever pitch in Act V, where the frequency and uncontrolled, heaped-up nature of the insults make Thersites more preposterous a figure than those he seeks to ridicule:

Now they are clapper-clawing one another; I'll go look on. That dissembling abominable varlet, Diomed, has got that same scurvy doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm. I would fain see them meet, that that same young Trojan ass that loves the whore there, might send that Greekish whoremasterly villain with the sleeve back to the dissembling luxurious drab of a sleeveless errand. O' th' t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals--that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses--is not prov'd worth a blackberry. They set me up, in policy, that mongrel cur Ajax against that dog of as bad a kind Achilles; and now is the cur Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles and will not arm to-day; whereupon the Grecians began to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion. (V.iv.1-18)

What is perhaps most noteworthy about this passage is that

not one character is ever named without a belittling epithet attached to his name: Diomedes, Troilus, Cressida, Nestor, Ulysses, Ajax, Achilles are successively given derogatory labels, until the form of this game (the ingenuity of devising epithets and the virtual taboo against the name unadorned by one) becomes of greater interest than the content of the insults. Indeed, Thersites here approaches the mode of pure, indiscriminate detraction and strongly resembles the buffoon-soldier of more recent wars (and probably of all wars) who cannot use a noun without an obscene adjective before it.

Perhaps even more important about Thersites' invective here is that several of his allegations are without any foundation at all; while some are malicious reductions, to their lowest state, of essentially true conditions. For example, there is no warrant for calling Diomedes a "dissembling abominable varlet" and "that Greekish whoremasterly villain": Diomedes is simply pursuing the understandable goal of seducing a beautiful woman in the swiftest and most effective manner; he displays no particularly vicious conduct in doing so.⁵ Similarly, Nestor's hoary age does not constitute a particularly blameworthy or foolish trait, while "dog-fox" is rather low for the spiritual mainstay and intellectual luminary of I.iii. Again, Troilus, for all his youthful folly, is something more than an "ass" or a "scurvy dotting

knave," while Cressida--within the confines of Shakespeare's play, which is not Henryson's poem, as some would have it--barely reaches the status of promiscuity, and does not even approach the status of a whore, if words are to have their customary meaning. Even Ajax and Achilles are of a higher order than curs. It would not be necessary to point out some of these obvious details, were it not for the tendency among many competent critics to identify these characters with the very images which Thersites, in his feverish and distorted way, creates in passages like this one.⁶

In another passage, Thersites contributes to the false picture which some have of Agamemnon as not too bright, by asserting that "he has not so much brains as earwax" (V.i. 58); yet, this picture is clearly contradicted by Agamemnon's complex and philosophical oration in I.iii (which has been criticized for its over-intellectual quality) and by other somewhat metaphysical speeches, like that in IV.v.165-170); moreover, Agamemnon's language is picturesque, masterful, and laconic in II.iii.121-147, where he delivers his ultimatum to Patroclus.

Thersites apparently does an equal injustice to Patroclus by calling him "Achilles' brach" (II.i.126) and his "masculine whore" (V.i.19), although in the very next scene (V.ii.192-195), Thersites himself states, after

watching Cressida and Diomedes, "Patroclus will give me anything for the intelligence of this whore. The parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab. Lechery, lechery!" Moreover, if Patroclus is actually a masculine whore, his naïvete is extraordinary, for he appears not to know what Thersites means by the term "male varlot" (V.1.18). Yet, many writers appear to accept Thersites' slander of Patroclus without further consideration.⁷

The discrepancy between Thersites' Menelaus and the deeds and words of Menelaus himself is also noteworthy. One would have expected, if the play were to be satiric in nature, that Shakespeare would exploit Menelaus' hapless plight as a cuckold. Instead, the Greek king's demeanor, in his few appearances, is dignified, and, when the subject of his cuckoldry arises in a serious context, he dismisses it with firmness but grace:

Hect. Your quondam wife swears still by Venus' glove.

She's well, but bade me not commend her to you.

Men. Name her not now, sir; she's a deadly theme.

Hect. O, pardon! I offend. (IV.v.178-181)⁸

Shakespeare apparently did not see fit to follow Chapman's lead in making Menelaus a rather fatuous figure.⁹ But Thersites gives full vent to the portrayal of Menelaus in his aspect as cuckold,¹⁰ listing all the lowly animals and loathsome creatures he would rather be than Menelaus (V.1.60-73).

In a similar fashion, Thersites harps on Achilles' stupidity, saying, "I had rather be a tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance" (III.111.314-315), and telling Achilles to his face that he is the "idol of idiot-worshippers" (V.1.8). Yet, although Nestor tends to confirm Thersites' claim (I.111.328-330) and to bracket Achilles with Ajax as a brace of blockheads (I.111.391-392),¹¹ Achilles' own speeches place him in a higher intellectual category than Ajax', indeed in a respectable one; and his problem is not lack of brains, but vanity, conflicting allegiances, and youthful irresponsibility. He is nowhere more thoughtful than when he recognizes his own lack of insight: "My mind is troubled like a fountain stirr'd,/And I myself see not the bottom of it" (III.111.309-311). Blockheads simply do not talk this way.

The cumulative effect of Thersites' attempts to portray Ajax, Achilles, and Agamemnon as stupid (although only Ajax really is) and Nestor, Menelaus, and Ulysses in degraded, subhuman terms is that a strong impression is created that the entire Greek enterprise has been masterminded by incompetents, consists of a series of debacles, and ends in ludicrous futility. Indeed, this picture of the Greek enterprise is precisely what many commentators represent as the actual progress of the play's war-plot; moreover, it is obvious that characters

and events like these are the very stuff of satire.

However, close attention to the characters and events of Troilus and Cressida reveals that the leaders are far from incompetent (for example, how can Ulysses' stratagem with Ajax and Achilles be considered incompetent and crafty at the same time?);¹² that the steps of the plot, managed by Ulysses, Nestor, and Agamemnon, proceed circuitously but inexorably toward Achilles' (that is, his Myrmidons') slaying of Hector; and that the Greek enterprise actually succeeds in the end: the proud "curs," Achilles and Ajax, end their peevish withdrawal, go to battle, and the tide turns in favor of the Greeks.

The idea that the efforts of the Greeks result in ludicrous failure and that their leaders are bunglers arises, then, less from the actual events than from Thersites' derision. Two speeches of his in particular drive home this theme. In the first, at the opening of II.iii, Thersites begins by reviling "the elephant Ajax" for beating him, proceeds typically to disable Achilles' wit by making him a close cohort of Ajax, and ends by generalizing to the whole Greek camp, because they "war for a placket":

Then there's Achilles, a rare engineer. If Troy
be not taken till these two undermine it, the
walls will stand till they fall of themselves
. . . [Their wit] short-arm'd ignorance itself
knows is so abundant scarce it will not in
circumvention deliver a fly from a spider
without drawing their massy irons and cutting
the web. After this, the vengeance on the whole

camp! or rather the Neapolitan bone-ache! for that methinks is the curse dependent on those that war for a placket.

But more influential, no doubt, is the passage already quoted (V.iv.1-18), in which Thersites mocks the policy of Ulysses and Nestor as not worth a blackberry, since, in their attempts to maneuver Achilles out of his proud inaction, they have maneuvered Ajax into an even greater pride. Admittedly, this design which Thersites underlines savors of a comic reversal and places the "best laid schemes" of Ulysses and Nestor in a less than dignified light. However, as we have seen, their policy ultimately prevails, and the pride of both men gives way to their craving for vengeance. Moreover, Ajax had already changed markedly in IV.v, especially after his combat with Hector: he speaks more articulately, intercedes when Achilles and Hector speak heatedly, handling both men with address, (ll. 260-265) and seems completely free from the attack of dementia and vanity which Thersites had reported in III.iii.251-266.

It is evident, then, not only that Thersites' judgement is not reliable, but that many conceptions about characters in the play have little other foundation--and in some instances no other foundation--than his derisive observations. For it is largely his testimony which had led many to believe that Agamemnon is lacking in intelligence, that Patroclus is homosexual, that Diomedes

is villainous, that Achilles is as stupid as Ajax, that Cressida is a drab and a whore, that Nestor, Menelaus, and Ulysses are animal-like comic figures, and that the play ends in failure for the Greeks and futility for all.

What emerges from this line of analysis is the strong likelihood that Thersites' overpowering personality creates such an intense impression and so colors the judgement of readers that they tend to accept his view as correct, or at least as eminently plausible; even though they rationally realize that he is not the true spokesman for Shakespeare. No doubt a worldly knowledge of men and of their often unsavory motives--a knowledge which leads observers to seek hidden ugliness underlying the fair appearance--operates here, to reinforce the appeal of Thersites' position. But various quirks in his thinking and in his techniques of expression should make us very cautious about accepting his evaluations as undistorted, in much the same way that we are hesitant about accepting Iago's portrayals of Othello, Desdemona, and Cassio. For--apart from caricature, hyperbole, and epithet--Thersites' other favorite tools, synecdoche (the whole war is over a "placket") and tapinosis¹⁴ (degrading words like "drab," "ass," "earwax," "waterflies"), should warn us that he is less interested in the strict truth than he is in the harsh and startling effect. In short, he is an excellent satirist and is the strongest

argument that there is a satiric dimension in the play: it may be said that, through Thersites, Shakespeare opens the door to the satiric perspective. But the very fact that Thersites uses the distorting devices of satire, which are often in this play at odds with the details of the mimetic actuality, makes his interpretation of the action suspect as an accurate perspective, and certainly as an exclusive one. In genuine satire, on the other hand, the derogatory outlook is the exclusive one, shared by the author and his spokesman (e.g., Jonson is in accord with Macilente, Crites, and Horace); or at least it is the one which is most persistently maintained.

Most writers on Troilus and Cressida do not fall prey to the fallacy of confusing Thersites with Shakespeare. Most carefully assert that he is not Shakespeare's spokesman. But then many fall prey to a more insidious fallacy, which is that, after making obeisance to reason by affirming that he is not the author's spokesman, they proceed in their judgements of the play as if he is. Some of the degraded impressions of characters created by Thersites which we have been examining are typical of this process. The frequent quotation of "wars and lechery" as a summary of the play (as if the phrase fully described Shakespeare's conception of the Trojan War) is another example.

In conclusion, Thersites' outlook is attractive to

sophisticated readers not awed by idols and not enchanted by hortatory portrayals (which masquerade as accurate descriptions) of human excellence. As Plato might have argued,¹⁵ Thersites' malicious belittlement of men, especially of the mighty, gratifies the malicious and envious side of our own characters; and sophisticated readers are the first to respond to this kind of confirmation of Man's general depravity. Again, Thersites' dogmatism and ruthless reductionism (often confused with realism) also appeal to the aspect of human thinking which is impatient with illusions and sentimentality and would like a rest from the complexity of viewing human conduct from the interior as well as from the flattening impersonality of history. But a play as complex as Troilus and Cressida forbids precisely this kind of rest and requires us to hold other perspectives in our minds, side by side with that of Thersites'.¹⁶ Finally, it is precisely this lack of a dogmatic, unified moral perspective on Shakespeare's part which makes his play essentially different from Jonson's one complete comicall satyre, from comical satire as a mode, and from satire in general.

NOTES

¹This detail is another in which Campbell's scheme breaks down. Only Macilente among the judicious commentators is envious. Crites, Cupid, Mercury, and Horace are not.

²See Churton Collins, Studies in Shakespeare (New York, 1904), pp. 33-35.

³It is not really valid to argue that we know Cressida will prove unfaithful from the very outset, any more than it is to argue that we know Desdemona cannot escape Othello. Aesthetic experience requires, not only a suspension of disbelief, but a suspension of previous knowledge of the story, at least within the "pretending" layer of consciousness. Another layer may, of course, retain this knowledge and perceive ironies and fore-shadowings. But the play in its pristine condition, theoretically prior to anyone's experience of it (and that is what the literary critic, especially the New Critic, is most interested in) presents a Cressida who has vowed undying love and who apparently believes in her own capacity to fulfill this vow. There is no warrant in the play itself for believing she will do otherwise until Act V, unless one persuades oneself that he could really tell by her loose conduct and

speech. But argument from hindsight or from knowing the story in advance always seems to be in operation here.

⁴Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven and London, 1959), p. 132, p. 156.

⁵He is firm, curt, and unromantic, especially in comparison to Troilus, a comparison which Shakespeare surely had in mind and which Cressida regretfully draws herself, in relation to the pledge ("'Twas one's that loved me better than you will" [V.11. 88]). But Diomedes is hardly ruthless or especially cruel. He is simply a man of the world, who knows that firmness and aggressiveness are necessary to win over women.

⁶See Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1957), xxxiv; Alice Shalvi, "'Honor' in Troilus and Cressida," SEL, V (1965), 284; Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d. ed. (Garden City, 1956), p. 78.

⁷Patroclus speaks of Achilles' "great love" for him in III.111.221, but the word had great flexibility then, as now. Ulysses only seven lines previously had told Achilles, "I as your lover speak." Our knowledge of homosexuality in ancient Greece should not color our judgement of the presented actualities of the play. Moreover, the idea that Patroclus could esteem drabs

as much as Thersites claims he does and still be Achilles' "male varlot" is quite perverse and belongs rather in a play by Genet than by Shakespeare.

⁸Achilles calls Menelaus "the cuckold" when he and the other Greeks snub him in III.iii.64. Diomedes' words on Menelaus are the most unflattering in the play other than Thersites' (IV.1.53-62). Thersites (V.vii.9-12) derides Menelaus and Paris as "the cuckold and the cuckold-maker," but the comic possibilities of this encounter are not stressed or even displayed, but restricted to Thersites' perception.

⁹See Phyllis B. Bartlett, "The Heroes of Chapman's Homer," RES, XVII (July, 1941), pp. 265-268.

¹⁰The distinction between Thersites and Shakespeare should not be carried too far. Thersites is, after all, a creation of the playwright and not an independent being. Nevertheless, we must be cautious about unwittingly assuming that his observations are the considered opinions of the author.

¹¹In any play of Shakespeare, the testimony of reliable observers is important. Characters like Helena and Coriolanus have almost another dimension created for them by the consistent praise they receive from discerning and normative characters the Countess of

Rossillion or Cominius. Nestor is this kind of character, in spite of the tendency of some to see him as a doddering fool. However, the observations of these characters are not final, and, if the speech and actions of the analyzed person clearly contradict their perceptions, the latter evidence would appear to be more fundamental.

¹²Later chapters will deal in greater detail with the competence of the Greek leaders.

¹³See T. W. Baldwin, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare (Philadelphia and London, 1953), pp. 450-451, and Robert K. Presson Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy, p. 73, for similar views on the inexorable progress of the plot.

¹⁴George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), p. 259.

¹⁵Philebus, 48-50, Jowett, p. 621.

¹⁶These and other perspectives will be the concern of subsequent chapters. For similar views on Thersites, see Kernan, pp. 196-197; Peter Ure, Shakespeare: the Problem Plays (London, 1961), p. 33; E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), p. 60;

Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 89; R. J. Kaufman, "Ceremonies for Chaos: The Status of Troilus and Cressida," ELH, XXXII (June, 1965), 158; Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy (Toronto, 1957), p. 124. Kernan suggests that Thersites' railings are "but one perspective on, and one way of dealing with, a confusing and turbulent world." Ure points out that Thersites' "wars and lechery" is a "crude summary" and "not the last word about them or about the experience of Troilus and Cressida." Tillyard thinks that to make Thersites into an "authentic commentator" is ridiculous. Presson states that "Thersites is an admirable portrait of that common kind of person who cannot see beyond the worst in a present situation, but using that as a foundation, builds a picture of an event or of a character which is really distorted, though partially correct." Kaufman analyzes the defects of the cynic's view. Wilson maintains that Thersites "interprets everything maliciously, vindictively, with an extravagant vehemence that renders him an object of our mirth in the furious career of his invective." It is no longer possible for me to determine how completely my own conception of Thersites had been elaborated before I read these excellent analyses; but my views were essentially in agreement beforehand.

V. THE WOOING AND THE CONSUMMATION: COMEDY OR SATIRE?

In the chapter on comicall satyre, we considered the differences which writers of antiquity and of the Renaissance recognized, explicitly or implicitly, between the comic and satiric spirits. My purpose in this chapter will be to examine the scenes in Troilus and Cressida which are unmistakably treated in a lighter and somewhat mocking vein (primarily those scenes involving Troilus, Cressida, and Pandarus in various combinations) and to determine which of the two spirits we should attribute to them.

The problem which immediately emerges is that in the past the question of whether or not the play is a satire has become merged with the question of whether the play is a comedy or a tragedy--so that to some writers evidence that it is at least partially a comedy appears to lead imperceptibly to the conviction that it is a satire.¹ In other words, the problem of defining the boundaries between comedy and satire remains today, and, as Professor Edward Rosenheim points out, distinctions between the two are widely ignored or obscured.² In order to resolve this difficulty, we will find it necessary to arrive at more precise distinctions than

those usually employed. Fortunately, critics of the twentieth century have increasingly turned their attention to this problem. Moreover, there will be no question of the applicability of their conclusions to an Elizabethan play, since, as we shall see, some writers of the latter period had comparable ideas.

The dominant theme of recent writers on satire is that the difference between it and comedy is a difference between a desire to correct faults and a willingness to ridicule, yet to accept, faults. For instance, Professor James Sutherland writes that the comic author, like the satirist, "is very much alive to the follies and imperfections and faults of men and women," but "he accepts the natural and acquired folly and extravagance and impudence which a bountiful world provides for his enjoyment . . . It is, on the contrary, the mark of the satirist that he cannot accept and refuses to tolerate," but "is driven to protest."³ If we apply this view to the love-scenes in Troilus and Cressida, we will see right away the uneasiness with which the satiric spirit must be fitted to the conduct of the lovers. For example, are we really expected to believe--for all the lovers' awkwardness, vacillating, agitation, sensual enjoyment, and ribaldry--that the tone and the manner of presentation of these scenes indicate a "refusal to tolerate?" It would seem that the very expression is

alien to Shakespeare's thinking, as it was to Chaucer's. For example, after Shakespeare has unmasked or overturned Malevollio, Parolles, and Angelo, he is willing to tolerate them and even to accept them back into society; he even gives mitigating speeches to Shylock and Claudius. Indeed, when we consider tone carefully, it soon becomes quite evident that there is a vast difference between the impression that a scene is "satiric" (in the sense that its characters are largely laughable) and the considered judgement that it is satiric in the more precise sense that the conduct of its characters is morally blameworthy and ought to be corrected. What seems to be happening here is that we often say "satiric" when we really mean "comic": for the comic writer also, it must always be remembered, takes as his domain the follies and faults of men.

But it would be wise to approach this problem, too, from another angle which is perhaps more objective than the criterion of tone. This approach is based on another distinction which some modern writers make, namely, that comedy holds up to ridicule general human faults and the particular faults of familiar stereotypes, whereas satire narrows its domain to particular faults which have previously gone unrecognized or but dimly recognized. Thus, Professor Rosenheim maintains that "an attack upon foppishness as a general human foible is not satiric"

and that "the essence of the satiric procedure is attack, and the attack launched impartially against everyone is no attack at all."⁴ Rosenheim further clarifies his position by adding that "as a stereotype of the sanctimonious dissembler, known to all ages and nations, Tartuffe remains a comic character . . . But Tartuffe may also readily be taken to represent a highly particular, historically authentic manifestation of religious hypocrisy; and so he was taken by his [Molière's] enemies." To the latter extent, Rosenheim concludes, Tartuffe may be considered a satiric character.⁵ If we were to examine Ajax, for example, from this standpoint, we would have to conclude that he is essentially a comic, not a satiric character--a stereotype of the vainglorious, dim-witted performer of exploits; only if we view him as the victim of a more pinpointed attack on a type of Elizabethan soldier or as a lampoon of Jonson can the portrait qualify as a satiric one, according to Rosenheim's theory. Similarly, since erotic agitation, vacillation, dissembling, embarrassment, and elation are virtually universal experiences of young lovers, Shakespeare's representation of these states in Troilus and Cressida, while comic, would not be narrow enough in its scope to rank as a satiric attack, or really as any kind of attack. Only if the eroticism were clearly that of two abandoned voluptuaries, of characters

who--to use Professor Harold Hillebrand's apt expression --are "viciously addicted,"⁶ could we properly call the spirit satiric. It was no doubt his astute recognition of this requirement of satire to reprehend, not just human weaknesses, but those same weaknesses drawn down into the mire of vicious addiction which inspired Professor Campbell to interpret the restless and impatient Troilus as a "sexual gourmet."

It is also worthy of note that, in the Prologue to Every Man in His Humour Jonson shows the wider applicability of his comic play than that of a satire, in his promise to expose "popular errors."⁷ This latter expression is approximately the same one as Sidney's in his discussion of comedy ("common errors"), while Puttenham, and, earlier, Donatus express similar views, Puttenham saying that New Comedy is distinguished from Old Comedy in that New Comedy is more broad in its derision, "not touching any man by name, but in a certaine generalitie glancing at every abuse."⁸ Similarly, the numerous denials by poets that they intend to abuse any particular person (see Jaques' in AYLI, II.vii.70-87) means on the obvious level that he who complains that he is being abused thereby unwittingly confesses that he is subject to the folly under discussion. But on a deeper level the disclaimer indicates a recognition that "the attack launched impartially against everyone is no attack

at all" and hence is not subject to blame by those who feel attacked. In short, criticism of universal or near-universal weaknesses is--according to Jaques and the poets who use this disclaimer--essentially comic in nature, and those who find it a personal attack, or satiric, are failing to recognize the impersonal and thus the unspiteful spirit in which the criticism is made.

Another modern writer, Professor James Feibleman, who has devised an elaborate and subtle theory of comedy, also stresses a quality of comedy which fits in well with its unspiteful nature and its wider applicability than satire's: "Thus, psychologically comedy is not felt as criticism but as an acceptance, an acceptance of the comic aspects of actuality. Much of comedy as experienced is a mere recognition of the absurdity of the actual and is not necessarily a criticism in the sense of a violation of it" (my italics).⁹ Professor Feibleman also stresses that comedy treats of inevitable and inherent discrepancies between what is ("the actual") and what ought to be ("ideal logical order").¹⁰ In other words, his position amounts to the idea that comedy perceives the timeless incorrigibility of the world--the inevitability of errors, flaws, and disruptions--and perceives these with a resignation so purged of despair that it amounts to a hilarious acceptance. The satirist, on the other hand,

refuses to believe that the world is truly incorrigible or that moral weaknesses are inevitable. It may well be, then, that the difference between comedy and satire ultimately leads back to a belief in determinism (and therefore tolerance and forgiveness) in comedy, and a belief in free will (and therefore castigation and indignation) in satire.

Finally, this intolerant spirit in satire also fits in with Professor Edgar Johnson's analysis of satire:

Whether it denounces or only mocks, satire is alien and external to its victims. It laughs at and against, it banishes the objects of its criticism beyond the reach of our sympathy. Even when the satirist attacks faults he knows to be within himself, he establishes as it were a division, decrees the evil to be a foreign growth that is no part of the essential reality that is himself . . . Satire alienates itself from the objects of its scorn and derision, and it alienates us from them.¹¹

When we attempt to apply some of these ideas to the lovers in *Troilus and Cressida*, we get interesting results. For if a weakness which is universal or near-universal is subject only to comic, and not satiric, derision, then the inability of both *Troilus* and *Cressida* to master their erotic yearnings--even in an illicit situation--is merely all-too-human and hence must be regarded as a comic weakness.¹² Similarly, unless we are all to adopt the position of Shakespeare's *Angelo* or of *Savonarola*, this weakness, in moderation, should be classified as natural and inevitable, as *Pompey* plausibly argues in Measure for

Measure (II.1.239-257);¹³ and hence it is once again a theme for the comic writer, not the satiric. It may be argued, of course, and has been, that Troilus and Cressida are not mere ordinary lovers with healthy erotic feelings. But Professor Hillebrand has adequately dealt with this viewpoint:

But most of all is Troilus presented merely or even mainly as a young sensualist? Is he only another case in the war on lust which English satirists had been waging since 1590? Hardly . . . I doubt whether any Elizabethan would bring judgement against an honest young man who (in fiction) sensually desired and won a sweetheart--all the less when he was not viciously addicted and had every intention of cleaving to the woman of his choice. Campbell cannot make a Puritan out of Shakespeare any more than out of the Inns of Court benchers, who he is sure enjoyed the comedy noisily. How astonished they would be at Campbell's moral weighing of Troilus, who in their eyes could scarcely be anything else than a fine fellow in very bad luck.¹⁴

Again, if we accept Professor Johnson's criterion of satire, are we really alienated from Troilus and Cressida during each of their scenes with Pandarus or during their scenes together? Is their conduct so repugnant or ridiculous to us that they are banished "beyond the reach of our sympathy," so that they appear like "foreign growths" to us; or is their conduct frequently rather similar to that of familiar young lovers, or even to what we could imagine our own might be like? Indeed, at times are they not somewhat more noble and gracious in speech than ordinary human beings? In short, it would seem that

the lovers are not flattened against a screen, with scientific detachment, for us to inspect, dissect, and reprove, but have characters which are more complicated than a mere collection of flaws.

Thus, since the love-scenes appear to have a tone of bemused acceptance of erotic desire, rather than an intolerant castigation of insatiable or callous lust; since Shakespeare is depicting general human foibles rather than extraordinary vices; and since the love-scenes (except perhaps in Act V) do not depict either of the lovers as repugnant or ridiculous enough to be beyond our sympathy, it would be safe to conclude that Shakespeare adopts the mode of comedy rather than that of satire in these scenes--more specifically, the mode of amorous comedy, as subsequent discussion will show.

When we turn to the specific scenes involving the wooing and the consummation, it becomes increasingly clear that to regard the spirit as one of amorous or erotic comedy would be much more appropriate than to regard it as one of satire. For it soon becomes evident that actually spelling out a belief in moral condemnation, in scene after scene involving the lovers (rather than resting content with the blanket statement), backs the critic into the trap of inappropriate moralism, compelling him to carry out the thankless and mechanical task of

discovering didactic lessons where there is more probably little more than impartial mimesis. For instance, Professor Campbell's position requires him to believe that the play "cogently teaches the devastating consequences of unrestrained physical passion" and that the first interview of the lovers is an exhibition and exposure "of a vice rampant in the fin de siècle society of the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign--licentiousness."¹⁵ Similarly, Professor William Meader interprets Troilus' joke, "Paris is gored with Menelaus' horn" (I.i.115), as a kind of commentary which "points out clearly the ugliness of courtly love," and finds that the description of Troilus' agitation before he meets Cressida makes the lover's passion "not beautiful."¹⁶ Campbell's moralism also requires him to adopt an unusual position toward the amatory-mythological poems of the 1590's (works which Elizabethans as much as moderns surely must have viewed as delightful and frolicsome):

The principal source of the movement was Ovid's more licentious works, notably the Ars Amatoria and the Amores. This literature was written largely to pander to the taste of young profligates like the Earl of Southampton. Its popularity seems thus not to have been so much the cause as the result of an unhealthy interest in every sort of sex practice, normal and abnormal.¹⁷

This passage is a perfect example of the extent to which our interpretation of the intellectual and moral climate

of the period determines our understanding of the love-scenes. If Professor Campbell is right in his claim that the Ovidian poems were a reflection of an unhealthy interest in sex and were intended largely for profligates, then he would also be right about his claim that Troilus and Cressida teaches "the devastating consequences of unrestrained physical passion." It seems more likely, however, that the Ovidian poems were a reflection of a healthy and cosmopolitan interest in sex and that the love-scenes in the play should be viewed essentially in the same light.

Nevertheless, a surprisingly large number of critics have expressed the view that Troilus' passion is essentially lust--or rather, not surprisingly, since the nature of his passion (healthy or unhealthy; merely sensual, or sensual yet adoring) would be a crucial factor when we come to decide whether the love-scenes represent turpitude worthy of recrimination. Thus, some writers, with more confidence than deliberation, assert without reservation that "as everyone has noticed, the sensuality of Troilus' language gives away the quality of his love."¹⁸ Professor Campbell, of course, is responsible for such colorful and effective expressions as "sexual gourmet," "adept in sensuality," and "refined and calculated sensuality."¹⁹ More specifically, the details which have inspired the most comment on the

question of Troilus' sensuality have been his "I am giddy" speech (III.ii.19-30), his wish that a woman could "feed for aye" her "lamp and flames of love" (III.ii.167), and his discussion of the "monstruosity in love" (III.ii.87-90).²⁰ However, a substantial number of writers have denied that Troilus is a "practiced sensualist." Among these have been Professors Alice Walker, Willard Farnham, W. W. Lawrence, John Russell Brown, Peter Ure, M. D. H. Parker, James Sutherland, and two writers who in other respects are inclined to agree with Campbell--Robert Kimbrough and Albert Gérard.²¹

It would appear that an issue like this one can be resolved and should be. Urbane observers who agree on the meanings of words should be able to remove this question from the realm of imperious and unsupported opinion and place it in the realm of judgements which are widely agreed on as sound. The first step would be to grant that Troilus' yearning for Cressida has a strong sensual element in it and that in the "I am giddy" scene the desire for consummation is very likely uppermost in his mind: he is not going to tea, but to an assignation. It is this obvious fact which no doubt has led many observers to conclude that lust is his exclusive concern in the relationship and that he is, indeed, a sensualist. However, a moment's consideration should expose the fallacy of this conclusion, a fallacy

which appears to be based on that ineradicable kind of thinking which we tend to label "Victorian." For to believe that Troilus' sexual desire excludes the possibility of finer sentiments on his part would seem to belong to this way of thinking, especially since he openly expresses these sentiments in IV.iv.28-29 and V.ii.165-166.

Moreover, the Elizabethans recognized the urgency and naturalness of the fleshly drive as much as we moderns do. The institution of marriage, for example, was viewed unofficially and even officially (in the Book of Common Prayer)²² to some degree as a means of avoiding sin. Similarly, Friar Laurence tells Romeo and Juliet:

Come, come with me, and we will make short work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone
Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.
(II.vi.36-37)

Hence, mere sensual desire does not make a man a sensualist, since this latter word implies a person long devoted to and attached to sensual pleasures. Troilus, however, is probably a virgin, if we are to believe Pandarus, for, when he puts the couple to bed, he seems to be implying, by analogy, that Troilus is:

And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here
Bed, chamber, Pandar to provide this gear!
(III.ii.219-220)

The word "maidens" was used for both sexes during the period,²³ and Pandarus seems to be relating his wish to

Cupid to what he has just wrought, meaning: "as I have just done for the maiden Troilus." But even if Troilus is not literally a virgin, his uncertainty, perturbation, and lofty conceits are hardly symptomatic of the experienced voluptuary, but rather point unmistakably to the trembling neophyte.

Moreover, the idea that sensual enjoyment is his exclusive aim is contradicted by the text at two key places. First, he confides to Ulysses, a stranger, to whom lies would be pointless under the circumstances:

Never did young man fancy
With so eternal and so fix'd a soul.
(V.11.165-166)

Secondly, he tells Cressida that his love is

More bright in zeal than the devotion which
Cold lips blow to their deities . . .
(IV.iv.28-29)

It is possible, of course, that Troilus here is merely using the polite deceptions and exaggerations of love-talk, but that surmise comes into disabling conflict with the almost universal belief that, misguided or not, he is sincere and that he is, as he says, incapable of deception. The view that lust is Troilus' sole motive is effectively contradicted by his entire conduct and speech in Act IV and Act V, during which he acts out with great fidelity the role, laid down by Boccaccio and Chaucer, of the trusting, ingenuous, wronged lover who "loved not wisely, but too well." Indeed, Professor

De Selincourt (probably thinking of the speech by Troilus in which he speaks of his religious devotion to Cressida) believes that Troilus' love is "a religion of which Cressida is the enthroned goddess, in which is concentrated all the romantic aspiration of his chivalrous nature."²⁴ That his love proves to be misplaced does not disturb its idealized quality while he is subject to it.

Nevertheless, the impression that the "I am giddy" speech bespeaks a sensual nature has been a strong one. Indeed, this impression is no doubt the main evidence for those who have confidently called Troilus a sensualist, and it is difficult to eradicate. It would therefore be desirable at this point to show that even in this speech itself the baser motive is not preeminent. For Troilus says:

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

(III.11.19-30)

As Professor John Russell Brown has astutely shown, "Troilus expresses his sense of joy and wonder in words which closely echo the scene in which Portia and Bassanio

discover their mutual love."²⁵ In the parallel passages which he cites, we discover Troilus' fear of swooning and his sense of the overpowering nature of his exhilaration, in Portia's words:

O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess!
I feel too much thy blessing. Make it less
For fear I surfeit!

(III.11.111-113)

Bassanio is also "giddy in spirit" (l. 144); like Troilus, he says, "Madam, you have bereft me of all words" (l. 175); and like Troilus, he experiences a breathless, overpowering sensation close to swooning:

Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude,
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd.

(11. 176-183)

Again, Troilus does not fear that he will become jaded ("lose distinction") after this experience, as Professor Campbell suggests. Rather, the comparison to troops routed in panic indicates his fear that he will lose judgement and reasoning during his ecstasy.

Nevertheless, although Portia hints at food-imagery in her "surfeit," the real difference between the passages in these two plays (apart from the fact that Portia and Bassanio are exhilarated, ostensibly, because they know that they can be married, whereas Troilus'

exhilaration is at the prospect of a more immediate enjoyment) is that Troilus' speech contains more sensual imagery. Of course, on closer inspection, we discover that this sensual imagery is limited to "imaginary relish" (l. 20) and "When that the wat'ry palates taste indeed/Love's thrice-repured nectar?" (ll. 22-23). However, these two details apparently have been sufficient to lead some writers to reduce Troilus' love to an animalistic level. And Professor Spurgeon's sound conclusion that the entire play is pervaded with food-imagery (as critics, who never tire of quoting her on the subject, remind us) appears to reinforce this impression of abandoned, salivating vice.

However, we should be cautious about accepting the alleged testimony of the images unthinkingly. In the first place, it would be unwise to overlook the perfectly traditional use of food-imagery in love-poetry and even in divine-poetry, without animalistic connotations.²⁶ Even the grave Spenser in his Amoretti--the love in which is usually regarded as moral and lofty--uses the image of two golden apples in a silver dish on an ivory table and then says of them:

Exceeding sweet, yet devoid of sinfull vice,
That many sought yet none could ever taste,
Sweet fruit of pleasure brought from paradise
By loue himselfe, and in his garden plaste.
Her brest that table was so richly spredd,
My thoughts the guests, which would thereon
haue fedd.

(LXXXII)

Moreover, a close look at the approximately fifty food-images²⁸ in the play discloses that we cannot uncritically assume that all, or even the majority, of them reflect on the love-affair. For only sixteen have any relation to love or sex (some of these being used for other characters like Achilles); whereas the rest must be regarded as neutral or asexual. Nestor, for example, uses the very images Troilus does, but in distinctly asexual connections. In I.111.337-338 he says, "The Troyans taste our dear'st repute/With their fin'st palate." And in I.111.388-389 he says, "Ulysses, I begin to relish thy advice,/And I will give a taste of it forthwith/To Agamemnon." Furthermore, it is quite difficult to see how Pandarus' chaff, bran, and porridge (I.11.262-263), Ajax's leaven and cobloaf (II.1.15 and 41), or Thersites' biscuit and fusty nut (II.1.43 and 111) contribute in any way to the creation of a voluptuous atmosphere. Indeed, none of the thirty-four neutral food-images do. Admittedly, Professor Spurgeon's astute observation that Shakespeare represents Cressida early in the play as a tempting morsel and late in the play as a nauseating "ort" is quite valid. But it is not tantamount (as several writers appear to believe)²⁹ to a claim that the pervasive food-imagery functions as a latent thematic leit-motif which produces an atmosphere of gluttonous eroticism: and Professor

Spurgeon never explicitly makes this claim. In general, it is quite evident that Shakespeare employs these food-metaphors for a variety of purposes, as he does in other plays in which they are prominent. Hence, the idea that Troilus has a special vice of sensuality can receive little reinforcement from these versatile images. It would be correct to say that he is deeply disturbed by an amorous passion the most gnawing and importunate aspect of which is the craving for physical satisfaction. But worldly observers--who, like Friar Laurence, consider most impetuous young love affairs to be of this order--would never confuse this healthy and somewhat comic urgency with swinish over-indulgence.

Again, Troilus' wish that women could be forever constant in love has been interpreted in a sexual manner too. His words seem straightforward enough:

O, that I thought it could be in a woman
(As, if it can, I will presume in you)
To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;
To keep her constancy in plight and youth,
Outliving beauties outward, with a mind
That doth renew swifter than blood decays!
Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,
That my integrity and truth to you
Might be affronted with the match and weight
Of such a winnowed purity in love!

(III.ii.165-174)

But Professor Campbell believes that this is an appeal for fidelity only on the surface. Actually, he claims, it is "his response to a fear that she will never be able to satisfy the demands of his discriminating, if

voracious, sensuality."³⁰ In other words, Troilus turns out to be, virtually, a clinical study, a victim of satyriasis, whose first question to a woman always is about her sexual stamina and capacity. One almost wishes that this lust-crazed Troilus of Campbell's had encountered the Insatiate Countess of Marston.

But suggestive as some of the language may be to some readers ("lamps and flames of love," "blood decays"), a sexual interpretation of the speech is possible only if we suppress and ignore what is clearly the manifest import and emphasis of Troilus' words throughout the passage. He wishes (ll. 172-174) that his "integrity and truth" could be matched by hers--clearly a question of virtuous loyalty, rather than of well-adjusted appetites. And it would be especially difficult to reconcile with a sexual interpretation the "winnowed purity in love" which Troilus seeks--again, the abstract virtue of steadfastness. Similarly, the phrase "Outliving beauties outward" suggests that his conception of constancy (later on, after youth) is precisely one which transcends love based solely on youth and on physical attraction.

The only details which suggest sensual love--"flames" and "blood"--are, however, by no means exclusively of this connotation. Flames often suggest passion, but they just as often have a spiritual connotation, being identified with life itself, and being used in numerous

religious ways. Indeed, the eternal flame which is used to commemorate the deceased would be the more appropriate association here, since steadfastness is Troilus' theme and since the flame, practically speaking, must be "renewed."³¹ Likewise, Shakespeare's comparison of love's renewal to the swiftness of the decay of blood makes more sense if we take "blood" literally as shed blood, since it quickly coagulates and withers and is associated with destruction (the opposite of constancy), than if we imagine "blood" in the figurative sense of desire. The "decay" of this latter kind of blood does not fit as well as "decay" does the literal sense, and it is noteworthy that here the mind rather than the will is the medium of the renewal. All in all, then, an "easy and natural" interpretation of this speech appears to be more consistent and more free of difficulties.³²

Finally, numerous critics have found confirmation of Troilus' sexual obsessiveness or excessive appetite in his words to Cressida:

This is the monstrosity in love, lady, that
the will is infinite and the execution confin'd,
that the desire is boundless and the act a slave
to limit.

(III.11.87-90)

Professor Campbell remarks laconically on Troilus in this passage: "His mind runs on sexual experience."³³

Professor Franklin Dickey also interprets Troilus' "will" and "desire" as sexual appetite, but Professors Derek

Traversi and David Kaula see these as related to idealistic aspiration and striving for the infinite--tendencies in Troilus which, as we have seen, are characteristic of him in the sphere of honor and martial virtue; Professor Willard Farnham, on the other hand, grants that the sexual level exists, but sees a circle of "impossible deeds" beyond it.

A balanced interpretation of this passage almost inevitably involves us in unanticipated complexities. For example, it would seem imperative that we examine the dramatic plausibility of Troilus' expression of such a sentiment on the occasion of his first meeting with the lady he claims to love surpassingly. If we understand his words sexually, we must take the consequences of this interpretation and imagine a scene in which a young lover, during his first meeting with his prospective mistress, apologizes to her for not being able to offer her coitus around the clock. Thus, when we draw the unavoidable inferences from the sexual interpretation, its plausibility does not preserve the hopeful freshness it enjoyed at first glance. However, those who are committed to the viewpoint that anything which is "in the work" must be taken seriously, can still argue that Troilus, while attempting to express a lofty and romantic sentiment to his mistress, unwittingly uses language which is sexually ambiguous. Indeed, it seems quite proper to understand

his words as simultaneously romantic in context and comic in implication; especially since the scene as a whole, as we shall soon see, often has both of these elements. An Elizabethan or modern audience might well laugh at a young lover who, in his attempt to express his limitless devotion to his mistress, inadvertently lowers the spirituality of his sentiment by using language which easily lends itself to sexual interpretation. But this kind of irony (in which the audience understands something of which one of the characters is not aware) is comic in nature and a far cry from the satiric element which Troilus' speech would have, were we seriously to believe that its manifest content, rather than its latent content, is a wistful lament for Man's limited sexual potency. If we did believe this implausible idea, then the speech would indeed reflect Troilus' morbid sexual tendencies. But actually it is only the latent content which has this implication, and hence Troilus cannot be viewed as explicitly and consciously wishing that he were capable of Herculean exploits of love-making.

Thus, it seems evident that this "monstruosity" passage contributes no more than the other passages we have discussed, to the portrayal of Troilus' desire as the morbid excess or the turpitude it would have to be, in order to be reproved or scorned satirically. Comic elements are no doubt present in the love-scenes. But

an alertness to the difference between the accepting and the intolerant spirits, between all-too-human faults and morbid obsessions, and between alienating portrayals and portrayals which preserve a degree of bemused sympathy--an awareness of all of these makes it seem rather inappropriate to characterize the love-scenes as satiric. In the following chapter we shall consider why the comedy of these scenes has, specifically, a flavor analogous to that of romantic comedy.

NOTES

¹See, for example, Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1957), xi-xii; Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938), passim.

²Edward Rosenheim, Jr., Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago, 1963), pp. 6-7.

³James Sutherland, English Satire (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 2-4; see also pp. 5-10. See also Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), p. 156, for a similar distinction.

⁴Rosenheim, pp. 28-29. For the idea that satire unmasks a vice or foolishness which has previously been unrecognized, see Edgar Johnson, A Treasury of Satire (New York, 1945), p. 8.

⁵Rosenheim, p. 29.

⁶Variorum T & C, p. 383.

⁷Every Man in His Humour in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1927), III, p. 303, lines 26-28. This is the revised version from the folio of 1616.

⁸For Sidney, see G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan

Essays (Oxford, 1904), I, pp. 176-177; for Puttenham, see The Arte of Englishe Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), p. 32.

⁹James Feibleman, In Praise of Comedy (New York, 1962), p. 189.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 178-180. For Feibleman's view that comedy deals with the "insuperable defects" of actuality, see p. 190.

¹¹Edgar Johnson, Treasury, p. 156.

¹²This observation is not meant to imply that mastery of libidinous impulses is impossible or that a reasonable number of human beings in any age are not capable of genuine chastity or continence. What I do mean is that the majority of mortals either lapse into unchastity on occasion, or dwell on the idea of doing so, or overcome the temptation with a greater or lesser degree of difficulty, or possibly neutralize the problem for a time as a result of marriage--although in modern times this custom appears to have less and less effect on quieting the beast. Hence, since the pressure to express the sexual side of man's nature is virtually omnipresent in some form or another in any age, one would expect that honest and generous natures would recognize that scorn for those who do so illicitly--under reasonably tasteful

and romantic circumstances--would be inappropriate, since it is scorn for a weakness which most mortals, including the one who scorns, share. The fate of Angelo or of the minister in Somerset Maugham's story Rain always looms over those who fail to look at these sinners with honesty and generosity.

¹³It might be objected that Pompey's viewpoint should not be facilely identified with Shakespeare's. However, two normative characters (apart from the unreliable spokesman, Lucio) appear to adopt a tolerant attitude toward fornication in the play: Escalus and the Provost. Escalus seems to make Claudio's offense an all-too-human one ("Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive us all"--II.1.37--admittedly a Christian commonplace) and also seems to minimize it in comparison with vice, as a mere "fault" (l. 40). The Provost is more outspoken. With apparent reverence for the natural, he calls Claudio "a young man/More fit to do another such offence/Than die for this" (II.11.13-15). And earlier he sounds the note of tolerance, honesty, and moral generosity implicit in the "Judge not, lest ye be judged" theme:

Alas,
He hath but as offended in a dream!
All sects, all ages smack of this vice--and he
To die for't!

(II.11.3-6)

The near-universality of the weakness is quite clear in this passage.

¹⁴Variorum T & C, p. 383.

¹⁵Campbell, Satyre, p. 232, and Sh's Satire, p. 213.

¹⁶William Meader, Courtship in Shakespeare (New York, 1954), p. 218, p. 223.

¹⁷Campbell, Satyre, p. 45.

¹⁸So Norman Rabkin, "Troilus and Cressida" The Uses of the Double Plot," Sh Studies I (1965), p. 273. See also Derick R. C. Marsh, "Interpretation and Misinterpretation: The Problem of Troilus and Cressida," Sh Studies I (1965), p. 188, and Alice Shalvi, "'Honor' in Troilus and Cressida," SEL, V (1965), 294.

¹⁹Campbell, Sh's Satire, p. 111-112.

²⁰See Campbell, Satire, p. 112; Meader, p. 223; Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d. ed. (Garden City, 1956), pp. 70-71; Campbell, Satyre, p. 213; Willard Farnham, "Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire," SQ, XV, 11 (Spring, 1964), 257; Franklin Dickey, Not Wisely But Too Well (San Marino, 1957), p. 126.

²¹Walker, xx; Farnham, 259; W. W. Lawrence, "Troilus, Cressida, and Thersites," MLR, XXXVII (1942), 429-430; John Russell Brown, Shakespeare and His Comedies (London, 1957), pp. 197-198; Peter Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays (London, 1961), p. 41; M. D. H. Parker, The Slave

of Life (London, 1955), p. 81; Sutherland, p. 140; Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 81; Albert Gérard, "Meaning and Structure in Troilus and Cressida," ES, XL (June, 1959), 151.

²²See Elizabeth Nugent, The Thought and Culture of the English Renaissance (Cambridge, 1956), p. 466: "Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication."

²³See O. E. D., "Maiden," 2b.

²⁴Variorum T & C, p. 550.

²⁵Brown, pp. 197-198.

²⁶See, for example, Herbert's "Love (III)," which concludes with Love's (God's) telling the distraught poet:

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

²⁷Here, it should be pointed out, the use of allegorical interpretation would not eliminate the literal level, but only enrich it.

²⁸See appendix for the food-images.

²⁹See, for example, Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), p. 120n. See also Shalvi, 295n, and Rabkin, p. 282.

³⁰Campbell, Satyre, p. 213.

³¹I have found that this interpretation is neither original nor as implausible as it might appear to those who favor the sexual interpretation. The Variorum offers it as the only commentary on the line. See Variorum, p. 159. The view was offered by Steevens in 1793, who linked the lamps with the perpetual lamps in sepulchres.

The association with passion, of course, is inevitable, but in the context of Troilus' wish, the kind of passion to which he is referring is psychological, not physical: ardor, or desire that is lasting rather than transitory. The association with passion-in-action, or sexual intercourse, would seem to me inconsistent with this kind of yearning for inextinguishable love.

³²The Variorum (p. 160) represents both viewpoints. Malone favors "desire," whereas Steevens suggests the physical meaning. As with the "lamps and flames," the sexual interpretation is possible, but it appears to me wholly inconsistent with the rational import of the passage, which is one of idealistic love. In order to make "blood" work as "desire," we would simply have to throw out Troilus' "integrity and truth," his "winnowed purity in love," and his "outliving beauties outward."

³³Campbell, Sh's Satire, p. 112.

³⁴Dickey, p. 126; Traversi, p. 80; Kaula, "Will and Reason in Troilus and Cressida," SQ, XII (Summer, 1961), 275; Farnham, 257.

VI. ELEMENTS OF AMOROUS COMEDY

I believe that our understanding of Troilus and Cressida will be enhanced somewhat if we recognize that the love-scenes not only belong to comedy rather than satire, but belong specifically to the kind of comedy which involves young lovers. For the word "comedy" by itself suggests absurd patterns of action, poseurs, cuckolds, braggarts, affected characters, and imbroglios --as well as lovers. Hence, if we call the love-scenes in Troilus and Cressida simply comic, we tend to suggest that they are nothing but laughable and rather pleasant. But whenever the emphasis is on young, personable characters who seek the fulfillment of their love and in any way succeed, then another element arises which may be combined with the laughable element (and usually is), but which is not the same as the laughable element. I am speaking of the festive element¹—the celebration of amorous striving, of obstacles overcome, and of eventual amorous union. None of these in themselves produce laughter, but instead stimulate in the audience a vague wish that the young couple will achieve their aims. Moreover, these actions produce in the observer a half-conscious, sympathetic enjoyment both of the couple's

efforts to succeed and of the success itself. Hence, it appears proper to speak of a special kind of comedy involving lovers, namely, amorous comedy.

It is obvious, of course, that Troilus and Cressida violates the expected pattern of amorous comedy because --although the lovers' union occurs in Acts III and IV-- the play ends, not with the success of the love, but with the failure. However, this difference does not markedly detract from the resemblance. What we are proposing is not that Shakespeare's play is amorous comedy--a thesis which both the war-plot and the events of Acts IV and V clearly contradict--but that it contains elements of amorous comedy in Acts I, III, and early in IV--festive elements which the later grave outcome does not nullify, but simply complicates. Furthermore, a moment's reflection should reveal that Shakespeare has ample precedent for this structure (love treated comically or merrily at first, but ending tragically)--both in Chaucer's version of the story and in his own Romeo and Juliet.

It may also be objected that Shakespeare treats love with unusual realism in IV.11 and sketches in some realistic details in I.1, I.11, and III.11, and that this kind of anti-romantic treatment is contrary to normal practice in amorous comedy. But this frankness and realism are precisely my reasons for withholding

the term "romantic comedy" as a description of the love-scenes; whereas "amorous comedy," I feel, is a more neutral term which would not necessarily exclude erotic details. On the other hand, we should not close our eyes to the fact that Troilus' idealization of Cressida (misguided or not), Cressida's confession of love, and the lyrical tone of the lovers' speech in III.11 create a romantic element which is not destroyed by the realistic details, but only brought into a state of tension and opposition with them. To discount either aspect of their love would be to falsify Shakespeare's representation of it.

Nevertheless, since full-fledged romantic comedy conventionally is idealized and excludes sensual love except under the aegis of marriage, it would be semantically confusing and controversial to describe the love-scenes in Troilus and Cressida literally as romantic-comic. However, I believe that it would be useful to keep in mind that the amorous comedy in this play--although it is too Ovidian to be called romantic comedy--is intrinsically related to that genre. Perhaps a brief look at the historical origin and essential features of the genre will help us to see this relationship more clearly.

Romantic comedy has been traced back to the New Comedy of Menander, through Plautus and Terence, through

sixteenth century Italian comedy, and finally into Elizabethan drama, especially in the work of Lyly, Greene, and Shakespeare.² The basic pattern, as Professor Northrop Frye presents it in his discussion of New Comedy, is quite familiar: "What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is restricted by some opposition, usually paternal, and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables the hero to have his will."³ In the Latin versions of this pattern, the girl was usually a courtesan, the object of the young man was usually a liaison, not marriage, a witty slave often acted as the contriver of the intrigue and as the one whose ingenuity resolved the dilemma. The familiar romantic trappings (separations, recognitions, tokens) were often present, but, although the young man was ardent in his desire to live in erotic bliss with his lady, the Roman playwrights did not stress sentiment, an important element in full-fledged romantic comedy.⁴ Some critics have made the same restrictions about Italian comedy, but a few have perceived a limited introduction of sentiment in the latter.⁵

The harder outlook toward love in the Roman plays has naturally made possible the introduction of satiric trends, but as Professor Madeleine Doran has suggested, in Latin Comedy satire is usually incidental to witty plot and situation.⁶ On the other hand, in plays in

which the satiric spirit is marked, as in Jonson's, love can rarely be taken seriously, and when Jonson seems to do so in Poetaster (Ovid and Julia) he gets mixed results and even may have produced a mixed genre.

Similarly, when Shakespeare concerns himself primarily with a few folly-blinded characters who must be relieved of their "humours" and a number of "irregular humorists" within the same play, as he does in The Merry Wives of Windsor,⁷ he has little room for a convincing representation of romantic love, so that Anne Page and Fenton, the young lovers in the play, are pale and in the background. On the other hand, when he gives nearly equal weight to an eccentric character in need of correction and to estimable young people in search of love, as he does in The Taming of the Shrew, he is able to alternate the comic-satiric plot (getting Kate out of her humour of shrewishness) with a fairly convincing love-plot (Lucentio and Bianca). And, whereas his success with a similar kind of alternation in The Merchant of Venice has been subject to controversy (getting Shylock out of his tragic-satiric vice of mercilessness),⁸ Twelfth Night undoubtedly succeeds and is perhaps Shakespeare's most happy blend of the romantic-comic with the comic-satiric.

This brief background of satirized figures and young lovers in Shakespeare's other plays should be

useful to us in fixing the characters of Troilus and Cressida in one or the other category. For example, do they belong with Kate and her immoderate, incapacitating habit of vehemently rejecting men, when we know that she really wants a husband (II.1.31-36); or with Falstaff and his preposterous belief that he is desirable to married women; or with Ford and his pathetic distrust of his wife; or with Malvolio and his arrogant intolerance and self-conceit? Or do they rather belong with the other group of characters: Portia and Bassanio, Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra--characters with whom they have frequently been compared (usually to their disadvantage, it is true); but frequently enough so that it should be evident that they are of the same essential type--young lovers--and not of the same type as the exaggerated and preposterous figures, Falstaff, Ford, Malvolio, Shylock, and Kate. Moreover, that a lover has serious flaws of character does not necessarily disqualify him from the mode of amorous comedy: Proteus, for example, betrays both his beloved and his best friend. Indeed, is not Cressida a kind of feminine and unredeemed version of Proteus? What is really essential for amorous comedy is, not that the lovers be moral paragons, but that they openly express or indirectly reveal that they esteem each other highly and are subject to a strong yearning for each other.

Moreover, both usually have the attributes of beauty, breeding, intelligence, fine speech, and the admiration of others which are usually associated with the traditional image of young lovers. It is precisely their lack of these features which makes Falstaff and Malvolio ridiculous in their wooing of women. Troilus and Cressida, on the other hand, both by their speech and by what others say of them, reveal that they fit quite convincingly into the amorous role.

Furthermore, indirect evidence that the story of Troilus and Cressida can well be viewed, in its earlier phases, as amorous comedy comes from Chapman's play Sir Giles Goosecap. As Professor Thomas Marc Parrott has astutely shown, this romantic comedy is a fairly faithful version of Chaucer's Troilus which ends with the consummation and discards the tragic events of Books IV and V.⁹

Several other factors contribute to the impression of romantic comedy in the love scenes. As Professor John Russell Brown, Ernest Schanzer, and B. Ivor Evans have noticed, Shakespeare's language in these scenes occasionally slips into the conceits and imagery of an earlier period, the period of Merchant of Venice and Romeo and Juliet.¹⁰ Moreover, Cressida's rhyming in I.ii and V.ii, rather than being "vapid," is more probably symptomatic of the romantic mode, especially in her confession of love in I.ii: both Beatrice (III.i)

and Helena (I.i) lapse into rhyme for their confessions of love.¹¹ Finally, as Professor Harbage has (rather incidentally) shown, Troilus belongs in the select company of young romantic lovers because of a feature of his speech: "No lewdness ever issues from the lips of Valentine, Lucentio, Romeo, Bassanio, Lorenzo, Fenton, Orsino, Sebastian, Florizel, Ferdinand, or even Troilus."¹²

Of the twenty-four scenes in the play, thirteen are entirely, largely, or partially comic. We shall discuss most of these scenes. Let us begin with the first scene of the play.

The opening of the play presents the archetypal situation of Latin comedy: the young man beside himself with longing for his lady, conferring with his "servant" about the progress or lack of progress of the affair. Troilus' plight is treated comically, because the sensation of mingled agony and elation--young erotic love--can be comic if the involuntary aspect (cf. Bergson's inelasticity)¹⁴ and the tantalizing aspect are emphasized. The comic tone is further strengthened by the ironic discrepancy between Troilus' importunate need and Pandarus' platitudinous advice, as well as his tendency to exacerbate Troilus' desire (by evoking images of Cressida), rather than to alleviate it.

Two details in the scene, however, have encouraged

critics to see satiric overtones in it. Both are images. The first occurs in ll. 103-107, in Troilus' fanciful consideration of what Cressida and Pandar are:

Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl;
Between our Ilium and where she resides,
Let it be call'd the wild and wand'ring flood,
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar
Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

Professor Tillyard asks, "Does Shakespeare associate the lowered tone of the play with the spread of the new commercialism?", and Professor Gérard thinks along the same lines.¹⁵ More recently, Professor Raymond Southall has done a thorough and impressive study of the mercantile imagery throughout the play and views it as evidence of the new capitalistic spirit of the period and as an unglamorous reflection on the proceedings of the play as a whole.¹⁶

Nevertheless, as Professor John Russell Brown has ably shown, Shakespeare has used the image of commercial enterprise in other love stories, notably in Romeo and Juliet and in The Merchant of Venice.¹⁷ Romeo says:

I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.
(II.ii.82-84)

Similarly, Juliet says, "O, I have bought the mansion of a love,/But not possess'd it; and though I am sold,/Not yet enjoyed" (III.ii.26-28). Again, Bassanio likens Portia to a "golden fleece" (I.i.170). Moreover, as

Professor G. Wilson Knight notes,¹⁸ Romeo, upon first seeing Juliet, likens her to "a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear" (I.v.48); Cassio, when Desdemona arrives at Cyprus, says, "The riches of the ship is come on shore!" (II.i.83). Othello himself, it may be added, believes at the end of the play that he "threw a pearl away/Richer than all his tribe" (V.ii.346-347). The use by John Donne of the metaphor of the "wealth of both Indies" as a compliment to the ladies of his poems is well known; and even if in his case the presence of irony is usually probably, it seems likely that we can regard the image of the pearl, the jewel, and costly treasure as commonplaces of love-poetry during the period and thus not to be taken as a derogatory reflection on Troilus' love.

The second detail which has attracted the attention of critics is Troilus' use of the image, "the open ulcer of my heart" to describe the love-wound from which he is suffering. It should of course be pointed out that the love-wound (produced, presumably, by Cupid's arrow) is a commonplace of love stories and that dire sickness is sometimes the outcome of unrequited love. True, an ulcer is a more advanced stage, a festering, of the wound; but all that this variation of the image may express is that Troilus' love-sickness has persisted for a long time and that the "wound," without a remedy, has taken the natural course.

It is, however, difficult to get rid of the impression that the open ulcer is somehow more ugly and more morbid than the ordinary love-wound. Nevertheless, it is equally difficult to imagine that Troilus, in the course of praising Cressida, deliberately deflates and mocks his own love by choosing, to describe it, an image which is clearly associated with disease. The only means by which we can resolve this problem is by the increasingly popular method of paradox: Troilus unwittingly chooses language which contradicts the romantic intent of his speech and which, indeed, foreshadows the unwholesome outcome of the affair. But a paradox is not truly meaningful if one of its terms is conceived of as nullifying the other: just as with an ambiguity, the two meanings must co-exist. Hence, although Troilus' "open ulcer" introduces an ugly, anti-romantic undertone, the ostensible and dominant effect of the speech remains the comic one: that Troilus is exasperated by Pandarus' praises of Cressida, which ironically intensify his suffering, when he is in fact asking Pandarus to help assuage them.

The following scene, Cressida's, may well be regarded as typical of romantic comedy from Ilyly onward: it is in essence a wit-and-fool scene. The wit, Cressida, by means of puns, logical tricks, and irony, completely overturns everything that the "fool," Pandarus,

says. An analogous scene occurs between Launce and Speed in Two Gentlemen (II.v). Moreover, Julia in the same play (V.11), with her series of deflationary asides directed at the "fool" Thurio shows the same talent as Cressida's for turning a speaker's language to mocking uses. Hamlet, although he is no fool and although he is not in a romantic comedy, encounters the same kind of playful parrying in the grave-digger (V.1.128-150). Pandarus, of course, is not really a fool either. It is just that he is defeated before he starts: Cressida simply will not respond at this time to any attempt on his part to portray Troilus as desirable. But Shakespeare has given her an abundance of wit, perhaps as great as the wit he has given any of his other women. The comparison with Beatrice's sharp-tongued mockery is almost inevitable. Both Professor Hamill Kenny and Professor Peter Ure regard Cressida as part of the Witty Woman tradition, and Professor R. A. Foakes is confident that we laugh with her in this scene.¹⁹ Indeed, there can be little question that her exchange with Pandarus invites the audience to share with her the sense of superiority over him and that this sharing tends to create a measure of respect and mild admiration for her. Her ironic superiority--based on her awareness of what Pandarus is trying to do and on her mischievous ingenuity in undermining his efforts--reaches its comic climax in her question, "What sneaking

fellow comes yonder?" (l. 246). This portrayal of Troilus is clearly derisive, but it is just as clearly ironic on Cressida's part (cf. 11.310-311). And to suggest that this derogatory element can compare in impact with her comic and playful confounding of Pandarus would be to see the scene out of proportion. At this stage of the wooing, the amusing and acceptable oddities of love-strategy and maneuvering are of prime importance.

Once again, however, two details seem to introduce an element which goes beyond tolerant amusement and hints at a more critical tone. The first is Cressida's rather indecorous references to her belly (l. 284) and her allusion to pregnancy (l. 294). But we should not treat these outspoken remarks outside the context of the thinking of other Shakespearean heroines. For example, Beatrice alludes not only to her own possible pregnancy, but also to the means of it:

Pedro. You have put him [Benedick] down, lady;
you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord,
lest I should prove the mother of fools.

(II.1.292-295)

Similarly, the virtuous Hero is capable not only of imagining Beatrice and Benedick "between the sheet" (II. 111.141-143), but also of a witty and rather bawdy pun:

Beat. . . . By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distill'd carduus
benedictus and lay it to your heart. It is the
only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.²⁰
(III.v.72-76)

However, the part of I.ii which has attracted the most attention is Cressida's soliloquy, in which she expresses sentiments which have appeared to many commentators unmistakably those of a cynical and calculating woman--in other words, a woman who is being unmasked in an anti-romantic fashion. Nevertheless, it would be wise, before we draw this conclusion, to compare her ideas with those of other Shakespearean characters, especially those heroines who disguise their true feelings. Julia in Two Gentlemen of Verona, for instance, who is also approached by a kind of go-between, Lucetta (see I.ii.40-45), reviles her, refuses the letter from Proteus, and then, alone, says:

And yet I would I had o'erlook'd the letter.
It were a shame to call her back again
And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.
What fool is she, that knows I am a maid
And would not force the letter to my view,
Since maids, in modesty, say 'no' to that
Which they would have the profferer construe
 'ay'!

(I.ii.50-56)

This passage indicates Shakespeare's awareness of one of the facts of life: that the position of women in society requires them to dissimulate to some extent, and that this dissimulation can be quite blameless and even amusing. Again, the implicit option given the audience to find a sexual ambiguity in the last two lines places Julia's understanding of the love-game rather close to Cressida's.

A similar observation about the deviousness of women appears in the same play, surprisingly enough in the words of the virtuous Valentine:

A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her.
Send her another! Never give her o'er,
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you.
(III.i.93-97: my italics) 20

These remarks reflect the same psychology of love as Cressida's sentiments, which have inspired numerous rebukes:

Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is.
That she was never yet that ever knew
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue.
(I.ii.315-317)

But even Prospero understands this feature of the love-game, the necessity for a contrived period of waiting for Miranda and Ferdinand:

But this swift business
I must uneasy make, lest too light winning
Make the prize light. (I.ii.450-452)

Similarly, Marlowe's Hero and Leander is studded with comparable analyses of feminine strategy in his portrayal of the charming, comparatively innocent, but cunning Hero:

Thereat she smiled, and did deny him so,
As, put thereby, yet might he hope for mo.
(First Sestiad, ll. 311-312)

Yet, evilly feigning anger, strove she still,
And would be thought to grant against her will.
(ll. 335-336)

And many poor excuses did she find
To linger by the way, and once she stayed
And would have turned again, but was afraid,

In off'ring parley, to be counted light.
(Second Sestiad, 11. 6-9)

Her painted fan of curled plumes let fall,
Thinking to train Leander therewithal.
(11. 11-12)

Treason was in her thought,
And cunningly to yield herself she sought.
Seeming not won, yet won she was at length;
In such wars women use but half their strength.
(11. 293-296)

Again, Spenser--though in a more marital frame of mind--alludes to the same psychology of valuing as Cressida expresses:

So every sweet with soure is tempred still,
That maketh it be coveted the more:
For easie things, that may be got at will,
Most sorts of men doe set but little store.
(Amoretti XXVI, 11. 9-12)

Not surprisingly, Ovid's The Art of Love, which Shakespeare almost certainly read, contains numerous observations of the same order. Ovid advises the man: "You may believe she does not want you. You are mistaken. Deep within her heart she wants to yield. Man is naturally a very poor dissembler. Woman, just as naturally, is the very born actress and artificer."²¹ Similarly, Ovid advises the woman to scorn her man somewhat, in order "to beget more love" in him, but not to go too far in her aloofness.²² He also expresses the commonplace (as Cressida and Prospero do) that lovers value the ungained and the difficult higher: "A ready conquest is slightly valued, and you had better keep him off with promises just when he least expects to be

rebuffed."²³ Andreas Capellanus echoes these common-places,²⁴ and, although it is doubtful that Shakespeare read him, the presence of these ideas in three periods of history--Roman, Medieval, and Elizabethan--suggests that they are perennial ideas, truisms about relations between men and women. Hence, Cressida's expression of them, seen in context, cannot be viewed as evidence of flagrant wantonness or cynicism. It is true that a woman who has the boldness to expose this well-known feminine strategy may strike one as somewhat saucier and more worldly than most women. But Professor Campbell's claim that Cressida uses "those arts of coquetry which she knows will most successfully tease and intensify her lovers' passion"²⁵ simply transforms a fact of life about the love-game into a salacious anomaly.

Perhaps most important, we ought not evaluate Cressida's dissimulation out of the context of other Shakespearean heroines as a whole; for it is remarkable how prominent a role feminine deceptions and ruses have in his plays. Furthermore, Shakespeare seems quite aware that women operate under the disadvantage that convention discourages them from communicating their love. Portia says that "a maiden hath no tongue but thought" (III.ii.8); Juliet says that she blushes because Romeo has overheard her confession of love (II.ii.85-87); and it is Cressida herself who gives fullest expression to

this idea:

I wish'd myself a man,
Or that we women had men's privilege
Of speaking first.

(III.11.135-137)

Hence, it seems understood that women must use their ingenuity to compensate for and circumvent the disadvantageous position which decorum imposes on them. Deception, boldness, adventurousness, and strong but hidden erotic feeling are therefore present in most of Shakespeare's heroines, and disguises and ruses abound.

For example, not only does Julia dissemble in I.11 of Two Gentlemen, but Silvia too must devise a ruse to tell Valentine that she loves him: she has him write a love-letter to her, which she then hands to him, as her love-letter to him; but she carries out her stratagem with an air of scorn and aloofness (II.1.100-174).

Similarly, Olivia, through the device of the ring which she pretends Viola left (II.11.1-26) practically throws herself at Viola, who herself is carrying on a rather advanced game of duplicity. Bianca (Taming) sums up the feminine paradox of not encouraging and not discouraging (that is, of making her true feelings an enigma) in her words to Lucentio, "Presume not, despair not" (III.1.44-45). Portia cannot openly profess love to Bassanio--"There's something tells me (But it is not love)/I would not lose you" (III.11.4-5)--but she devises a slip of the tongue to accomplish her aim:

"One half of me is yours, the other half yours--/Mine own I would say" (III.ii.16-17). Again, both Kate and Beatrice have a noticeable split between their public disavowal of men and their private (Kate, II.1.31-36) or unacknowledged (Beatrice) desire for marriage. Helena's ruse is, of course, a masterpiece of deception and suggests an erotically forward woman, since--although she is married to Bertram--her seizing of the sexual initiative is an act of which not every woman would be capable, especially a "modest" one; and it is this forwardness--which she shares with Rosalind, Portia, and the adventurous "pages"--that makes her, like Cressida, odious to neo-Victorian critics. Finally, Desdemona's method of getting Othello to propose to her is an excellent example of the combination of forwardness and deception which the best of Shakespeare's heroines display. In general, then, Cressida's dissembling, boldness of thought, adventurous attitude toward love, and strong erotic feelings, when seen in the context of similar trends in other Shakespearean heroines, can be viewed, not as the traits of a professed wanton, but rather as more worldly and advanced forms of the traits which his typical romantic heroine display.²⁶ Indeed, the love-plot as a whole would seem to be a continuation and more advanced version of Shakespeare's increasingly realistic analysis of love, rather than, as Professor

David L. Stevenson argues in his excellent study, a qualitative break with it.

The next scene with comic material in it, II.1., is low, has horseplay, and is far from edifying, but an attempt to make it satiric would not succeed, since it lacks the qualities of genuine attack, unmasking, and moral correction necessary to satire. Ajax is too hopelessly dense of intellect to be attacked or corrected, and his very stupidity prevents him from adopting a mask which can be torn aside. Similarly, Thersites is too hopelessly warped for any of these three processes to be pertinent to him. Together, the two characters produce a scene of deliciously unseemly humor. Scenes of this nature are appropriate in the subplot of both romantic comedy (servants) and history plays ("irregular humorists"). Thus, Launce and Speed provide a comparable scene of stupidity pitted against wit; Dogberry and Verges emphasize stupidity; the mechanicals in Midsummer Night's Dream also stress uneducated thinking; Falstaff and Pistol in 2 Henry IV and Pistol and Nym in Henry V have comparable scenes of ludicrous enmity and violence. The comic element, as in most low comedy, is based on the sense of social superiority which arises in the audience when they observe characters whose mental processes are pathetically inadequate to the situation. Ajax and Thersites qualify for this role (although

Thersites has the mental potential), because they allow their communication to be reduced to sheer abuse and hence do not speak like rational men.²⁷

In II.iii, Ajax's stupidity again relieves him of any genuine attack, although he is exposed as a very proud man who condemns pride. The preposterous contrast between his beef-witted attacks on Achilles' pride and the revelation of his own pride in the asides by Ulysses, Nestor, and Diomedes--as well as the pathetic helplessness which his stupidity ensures--make this scene broadly comic and hardly the representation of a vice or folly which is to be, or in Ajax's case can be, corrected.²⁸ Similarly, Thersites, after a genuinely satiric piece of invective at the opening of the scene (ll. 1-25), lapses into the genial mode of the witty page or the professional fool of romantic comedy in ll. 47-73, where he "declines the whole question" of fools for Achilles and Patroclus.

The first forty-four lines of III.i, between Pandarus and the servant, also are pure comedy, with no attack and no victim. This episode is simply another example of calculated non-communication, such as occurs in Two Gentlemen, II.v. This kind of Lylian parrying is obviously quite at home in romantic comedy, but Shakespeare also uses it in the graveyard scene in Hamlet and in the curious sub-scene in Othello between

Desdemona and a Clown (III.iv.1-13). The sequence in Troilus ends, however, with an unmistakably satiric pun by the servant, which associates the love-affair with the brothel:

Serv. Sodden business! There's a stew'd
phrase indeed!

(1. 45)

One of the crucial scenes in the play (III.ii) immediately follows, and close attention to it should be rewarding. We have already considered the "I am giddy," the "monstruosity," and the "feed for aye" speeches and have attempted to show how their sensual quality has been exaggerated in the past, so that the atmosphere of romantic exhilaration in the scene has been largely neglected. Certainly, Troilus' "O Cressid, how often have I wish'd me thus!" (1. 66) gives us a hint of this exhilaration (although those who seek after the salacious in every line could argue that Troilus is referring solely to his future possession of her, and not to the whole range of satisfactions which being in her presence will bring him.) Similarly, Cressida's excitement is consistent with her avowal of love for Troilus in I.ii. She is not a widow as she is in Chaucer, and we have no grounds within the play for claiming that she has had sexual experience before Troilus. Her agitation and shame are therefore plausible, especially since Shakespeare seems to emphasize it:

Pan. . . . She does so blush, and fetches her
wind so short, as if she were fray'd with a
sprite. I'll fetch her. It is the prettiest
villain! She fetches her breath as short as
a new-ta'en sparrow.

(11. 32-34)

Pan. Come, come, what need you blush? Shame's
a baby.

(11. 42-43)

The speculation that Cressida is merely pretending to be excited and bashful, or that Pandarus is deliberately playing up her excitement in order to inflame Troilus' desire more, suffers from the absence of any stylistic or tonal sign in the text to substantiate it. Essentially, perceptions of characters' hidden motives or pretenses like these--when there are no grounds for them except inference--amount to psychologizing;²⁹ and it is much more natural a reading to view Cressida as less self-assured at the time of actual yielding than she is in her role of Witty Woman--and hence as genuinely shame-faced. Moreover, her capacity for tremulous diffidence at the prospect of the encounter enhances the atmosphere of amorous comedy, since skittish behavior in this situation (feigned or not) is virtually archetypal in young lovers whose experience has not yet given them a degree of nonchalance.

Indeed, the belief in Cressida's consistent feigning is dramatically contradicted within this very scene, for her confession to Troilus, 11. 121-141, largely amounts to a revelation of self and can be taken literally as

dissimulation only if we invent a new meaning for this word. In fact, her words to Troilus agree in three essential points with her report of her own duplicity in I.ii: (1) that her resistance was only a pose ("Hard to seem won," I. 125); (2) that she has loved him strongly for some time (II. 121-122); and (3) that she resists the idea of losing her sovereignty to him ("Achievement is command," I.ii.319; "If I confess much, you will play the tyrant," III.ii.127). These correspondences between her private and public testimonies are not typical of the skilled dissimulator. Rather, we should grant her a measure of frankness and sincerity in this scene. In fact, if we take a comprehensive view of all Cressida's alleged feignings, we see that commentators who believe in them appear to use this belief as a mechanism for undermining her character in advance of Shakespeare's revelation of its unreliability in Act V. But there is really only one demonstrable act of dissembling by Cressida, and that is her pretense of indifference toward Troilus in Act I. Beyond this allowed pretense, critics may claim that she feigns love for Troilus (but see I.ii.320), that she feigns diffidence and frankness in III.ii, that she feigns grief in IV.ii and IV.iv, that she feigns resistance to Diomedes in V.ii, and that she feigns regret in the same scene. But this series of assumptions, which makes the picture of her as a

wanton consistent, is a heavy burden of inferences indeed. A simpler, more economical, and more dramatically sound interpretation would be that Cressida feigns only when she states that she does in I.ii; that until Act V she naively and deludedly believes in the constancy of her love for Troilus and in her own moral sturdiness; and, as Professor E. K. Chambers proposes, that passive weakness, not active cunning, is responsible for her swift change of lovers.³⁰

Another indication that the tone of III.ii is at least partially romantic is the remarkable number of parallels between Cressida's confession and Juliet's (II. ii.85-106). This contention may seem unorthodox, since the innocent, lyrical love of Romeo and Juliet is frequently contrasted to that of Troilus and Cressida. However, just as Juliet says, "In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond" (l. 98), so Cressida admits that her fondness is excessive: "I love you now; but till now not so much/But I might master it" (ll. 128-129). Similarly, just as Cressida exposes the psychology of feminine caution and pretended forbiddingness with her "Hard to seem won," so Juliet shows her acquaintance with this strategy:

Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
(ll. 95-97)

Again, just as Cressida wishes to take her leave rather abruptly (ll. 147-159), so Juliet tells Romeo all at once:

Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night.
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden . . .
. . . Sweet, good night!

(ll. 116-120)

Likewise, Juliet says, "At lovers' perjuries/They say Jove laughs" (ll. 92-93), while Cressida voices a similar melancholy sentiment about lovers: "They say all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform" (ll. 91-93).

Another feature of III.11 which enhances the romantic atmosphere is the language, which is consistently elevated and lyrical. Troilus' first speech ("I stalk about her door") is said to have appealed to Keats.³¹ It ends with a Cupid-conceit quite similar to those of Sidney:

O gentle Pandar,
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings.
And fly with me to Cressid!

(ll. 14-16)

Similarly, the "I am giddy" speech, however we are to take it, has the exoticism and the sense of the extraordinary which belong to the romantic way of thinking. It is true that Pandarus keeps introducing an element of the down-to-earth and the pragmatic. But when he leaves for a time, the lovers converse for over forty lines without this distraction, gravely discussing the nature of love,

in what might well be an informal conversazione.³²

Cressida's confession and the mutual vows of both continue this vein of fine speech, which is more sophisticated and less obviously rhetorical than the speech of Shakespeare's earlier lovers. The dramatic reason for this gracious and harmonious tone is obvious. As Professor Wolfgang Clemen aptly puts it:

It is as if we had before us two courtly lovers from the early comedies, where such agglomeration of clever comparisons was the fashion . . . Before the course of the play brings the tragic termination of their love, Shakespeare shows the two lovers in a mood of lyric ardour which stands in greatest contrast to the sceptical coolness and the bitter disillusionment of the following scenes. In order to enhance this effect, and to emphasize the unsuspecting, unconcerned, and almost playful mood of the lovers, Shakespeare lets both speak here in a style which recalls the imagery of the early comedies.³³

And Professor E. K. Chambers provides a succinct and crowning summary for this point of view:

The illusion must convince, before it is pricked and shown to be a bubble.³⁴

After Thersites, Achilles, and Patroclus carry out a comic pageant of Ajax in III.iii, the next scene with amorous or comic material is IV.ii, the morning-after for the lovers. This scene has a mixed tone: it contains tenderness, bawdy, elation, banter, and a slight mockery. But the predominant effect is one similar to that in III.ii--"the unsuspecting, unconcerned, and almost playful mood of the lovers," which will be abruptly

overturned by the news of the exchange, in the midst of a sexual jest by Cressida (ll. 37-40). The "ribald crows" of l. 9 seem to be an objective correlative of the lovers' sensual joys, mocking them slightly in an anti-romantic fashion. But the reference to the lark as harbinger of the morning (l. 9), as Professor E. K. Chambers suggests, tends to evoke the debate between Romeo and Juliet about the lark and the nightingale under parallel circumstances.³⁵ Pandarus constantly introduces an element of teasing and salacious mockery (l. 24, ll. 27-28, ll. 32-34), but the conversation of the lovers, especially before the appearance of Pandarus, has a hushed, intimate quality that romantically balances his earthiness.

Professor Campbell, however, apparently views this scene as a dramatization of Catullus' famous slogan about the melancholy which succeeds coitus:

Cressida is petulant. She accuses Troilus of being tired of her. Men never stay long enough. Troilus, now released from the enchantment of his Circe, replies realistically that she had better be prudent--put more clothes on, one infers--or she will take cold and curse him for it. This is not the morning after an experience of love's "thrice repured" rapture. It is the fretful dialogue of two sated sensualists.³⁶

This interpretation of the scene is spirited, forceful, and amusing, but it fails to detect the tender, bantering tone of the elated lovers. Cressida clings to Troilus' company, but we need not understand her

entreaties and playful chiding as petulance: Juliet also begs Romeo to stay in the parallel scene (III.v.1-16). Indeed, a moment's thought should reveal that Cressida's behavior is quite recognizable and touchingly feminine; for Shakespeare here is treating one of the amusing paradoxes of love: that the evasive and forbidding woman becomes, after consummation, the more ardently affectionate of the two. Moreover, Troilus does not, as Campbell wittily suggests, propose that she put more clothes on, but that she get out of the morning air: for, clinging to his company, she wishes to see him outside to the gate:

Tro. Dear, trouble not yourself; the morn is
cold.

Cres. Then, sweet my lord, I'll call mine
uncle down; He shall unbolt the gates.

(11. 1-3)

We cannot dismiss their addressing each other as "dear" and "sweet" as mere hypocritical formality. Likewise, solicitous affection is evident in Troilus' wish that sleep as carefree as a babe's will overpower her "pretty eyes" (11. 4-6). When she banters with "Are you aweary of me?", he seems to answer that he is chary of her honor: "And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer" (1. 9). The situation is clearly one of clandestine, courtly love, and Troilus' rebuke of night and its briefness, an abbreviated aubade, not only strengthens the relation of their love to this tradition,

but parallels Troilus' aubade in Chaucer's poem.³⁷ It would seem, then, that Professor Campbell--by his use of loaded words like "petulant," "Circe," "fretful," and "sated sensualists" and by his jaundiced view of the lovers' words and actions--has reduced the passage to one of disillusion, irritation, and prurience and has neglected the serene and lyrical elements which link it more properly to the spirit of romantic comedy.

The next scene with comic content is IV.v, Cressida's arrival at the Greek camp. This episode has been widely regarded as an unglamorous reflection on Cressida, since in the scene immediately preceding she has expressed immoderate grief and has had a strained parting with Troilus; whereas here she seems gay and appears to accept the kisses of the men with alacrity. However, as Professor Rudolph Stamm has astutely pointed out, Cressida's light-heartedness is somewhat contradicted by the depression "mirrored" in Achilles' first remark to her:³⁸

I'll take that winter from your lips, fair lady.
(1. 24)

Moreover, the idea that from Troilus "Cressida goes directly to the Greek camp, and kisses all the men, with an abandon much greater than the liberal customs of Elizabethan salutation prescribed"³⁹ suffers from a number of inaccuracies. First, Cressida does not actively kiss the men, but is kissed by them. Secondly,

the "all" turn out to be only four: Agamemnon, Nestor, Achilles, and Patroclus--Ajax, Menelaus, Ulysses, and Calchas do not kiss her. Thirdly, Cressida does not display abandon: the Elizabethan custom of salutation allowed men to kiss women upon meeting them; it did not specify numbers; and Cressida more accurately submitted to the kisses, rather than seeking them with abandon.

Once we see that the numerous kisses are a normal Elizabethan custom and not a flagrant example of frivolity or wantonness, we can understand that by and large the scene is, as Professor Tillyard has noted, "broadly comic."⁴⁰ Assuredly, Ulysses' estimate of Cressida just after her exit is one of the truly satiric attacks in the play, yielding in virulence only to Thersites' railings and to Diomedes' attack on Helen (IV.1.54-66). Moreover, Ulysses' analysis of Cressida's character may be said to reflect back on her conduct just before, so that the numerous kisses--although they are conventional and innocent--can now be viewed as a symbolic foreshadowing of her future promiscuity. But her dialogue with the princes and the kisses themselves, as they are happening, are--as Nestor says (1. 22)--courtly. Patroclus, Menelaus, and Ulysses engage in witty repartee with Cressida, and she appears to handle a difficult situation fraught with implications (a single woman among men without women) rather graciously, by

relying on her wit. Indeed, her courtly grace impresses Nestor (l. 53), although Ulysses, who "looks/Quite through the deeds of men," discovers moral instability beneath her wit and her saucy manner. It may be significant, however, that it is Ulysses himself who initiates the idea of general kissing (l. 21) and who then appears to base his estimate of her largely on her comportment during the kissing. It may be that he is putting Cressida to a test: one in which the discerning observer can detect her true nature.

Thus, it is evident that a more precise distinction between the satiric and comic spirits can be fruitful in our evaluation of a large number of specific scenes. Heretofore, many of them have left the impression that, because characters have follies and faults, they are being satirized. But when a number of these scenes are understood to have a tone of tolerant amusement, festive merriment, or lyrical elation, we can then recognize that this story of two estimable lovers, whose longing for each other produces nervous excitement, falls easily into the pattern of New Comedy and can be called, at least in the first three acts, amorous or erotic comedy. Similarly, we can see, in this light, that characters like Pandarus, Ajax, and occasionally Thersites belong in this kind of comic mode, rather than in the corrective and didactic mode of satire, with its

characters in need of moral transformation. Moreover, the style of the love-scenes, the fine speech and the frequently lyrical mood, often produce something very close to a romantic impression. And when we understand that the commercial imagery, the taste imagery, and the disease imagery are not loosely to be equated with derogatory comments on the love-affair and that the scenes with erotic and ribald content are not flagrant or degenerate enough to produce moral disapproval either today or in Elizabethan times, we are well on the way to re-thinking the entire love-affair as an erotic comedy which ends tragically, rather than as a satiric exposé.

From this new view of the love-affair, Cressida emerges--at least until her betrayal of Troilus--as typically feminine in her psychology of strategic aloofness, as rather similar to a host of Shakespearean heroines in her combined forwardness and deception, and as a somewhat candid mistress in her admissions to Troilus, rather than as an arch-dissimulator. Finally, it becomes evident that an amiable and personable Cressida in the early stages of the romance is a much more dramatically astute choice for a playwright than a transparently worthless Cressida; and this kind of astuteness is exactly what we would expect from Shakespeare. If he had made Cressida the vulgar slut or the calculating courtesan that some see her as, then

Troilus' grief over his loss of her would have been so incongruous that we could justly laugh at him for his lack of insight, in the same way that we laugh at Pinchwife of The Country Wife--even at the height of his cuckold's agony--because his own immoderate humour of jealousy has brought about his own cuckolding. But Cressida is believable enough as a well-bred woman to make her turning "haggard" a considerable blow. When a vulgar slut proves unfaithful to one of her lovers, no one is surprised and no one except the lover is disturbed. When a character from something quite close to romantic comedy, however, reverses the comic curve and frustrates the festive resolution of amorous bliss, then a sense of waste and melancholy is possible. In this way, it can be seen that characters from amorous comedy may sometimes qualify for tragedy if their union miscarries; and that the love-plot of Troilus and Cressida, no less than that of Romeo and Juliet and of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, fits into this unusual, but compelling genre.

NOTES

1 C. L. Barber's Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (Princeton, 1959) has explored this element thoroughly. I use the word "festive" in a more limited sense here.

2 See Madeleine Doran, The Endeavors of Art (Madison, 1954), pp. 171-182; Marvin T. Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana, 1964), Chapter V; Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), pp. 163-175.

3 Frye, p. 163.

4 See Doran, p. 173.

5 See Marvin T. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana, 1960), p. 129 and p. 160.

6 Doran, p. 167.

7 Falstaff is literally whipped out of his humour of vanity, lust, and the belief in his attractiveness to married women. Ford, a victim of the traditional humour of jealousy, is also cured of this disabling fault. Hugh Evans, Dr. Caius, Slender, Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph are all highly eccentric. The romantic element is submerged in this gallery of fools, and I would like to suggest that this play, although it is usually designated farce, is Shakespeare's most

"Jonsonian" work, and not Twelfth Night, as Herford once suggested.

8 Shylock's vice is potentially too harmful to sit well with romantic loves. In general, the tragic-satiric tone does not appear to blend as well with the romantic-comic as the comic-satiric does.

9 The Plays of George Chapman, ed. Thomas Marc Parrott (New York, 1961), II, pp. 894-896. Parrott credits Kittredge (in an earlier article) with the discovery.

10 John Russell Brown, Shakespeare and His Comedies (London, 1957), pp. 45-46, 197-198; Ernest Schanzer, "Atavism and Anticipation in Shakespeare's Style," Essays in Criticism, VII (July, 1957), 243; B. Ivor Evans, The Language of Shakespeare's Plays (London, 1952), p. 117.

11 R. A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered," UTQ, XXXII (January, 1963), 144, has already made this observation.

12 Alfred Harbage, Shakespeare and the Rival Tradition (New York, 1952), p. 216. Harbage recognizes that Troilus is not literally in a romantic comedy. He would perhaps be slightly wrong about Troilus' clean speech, though, if we were to consider his jest about Paris and Menelaus (I.1) lewd. However, as Partridge points out, discussion of cuckoldry even in mixed

company (cf. Much Ado, I.1.105-108) was not considered improper in Shakespeare's time.

13 An unusually stupid character cannot be satirized, because he cannot be corrected.

14 Henri Bergson, Laughter, ed. Wylie Sypher (New York, 1956), passim.

15 Albert Gérard, "Meaning and Structure in Troilus and Cressida," ES, XL (June, 1959), 144-149; E. M. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), p. 85.

16 "Troilus and Cressida and the Spirit of Capitalism," Shakespeare in a Changing World, ed. Arnold Kettle (New York, 1964), pp. 217-232.

17 Brown, pp. 45-46, p. 197.

18 G. Wilson Knight, The Wheel of Fire (London, 1930), p. 63.

19 Hamill Kenny, "Shakespeare's Cressida," Anglia, LXI (1937), 166; Peter Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays (London, 1961), p. 36; Foakes, 143.

20 Carduus Benedictus is the name of a prickly thistle. Hence, the first meaning of the pun is that Margaret goads (pricks) Beatrice by associating the

remedy for her ills with a name close to Benedik. However, since the manner of the remedy--especially to Margaret's mind--would obviously be sexual, there is a further pun in the verb Hero chooses, which as a noun had a sexual meaning too in Shakespeare's time (see O. E. D., 17).

20 Valentine uses these observations as part of his scheme to deceive Silvia's father and they therefore may not represent his true outlook. However, there is also no valid reason for claiming that they do not represent his true outlook. They appear to be typical advice to men in love, quite similar to Ovid's, and whether Valentine believed them does not much matter. What is important is that they were current during the period and were considered acceptable, not flagitious, ideas.

21 The Art of Love, tr. Charles D. Young (New York, 1931), p. 24.

22 Ibid., p. 83.

23 Ibid., p. 84.

24 The Art of Courtly Love, tr. John Jay Parry (New York, 1941), p. 185 (rule XIV), p. 99, p. 133.

25 Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938),

pp. 212-213.

26 E. K. Chambers, Shakespeare: A Survey (London, 1925), p. 194, says that Cressida's "oncomings and shrinkings do not differ much, save perhaps for a touch of hotter blood, from those of Rosalind in As You Like It."

27 Cf. Tillyard, Problem Plays, p. 60.

28 Cf. Tillyard, Ibid., p. 70.

29 It may be argued that to conceive of Cressida as not feigning is just as much psychologizing, since this viewpoint proposes to analyze her mind as free from stratagems. However, it would seem to me that guilelessness is a more neutral condition than guile and that the burden of proof is therefore on those who wish to demonstrate that a neutral condition does not, in fact, exist.

30 Chambers, Survey (p. 196), also stresses her all-too-human nature and denies that she was a wanton schemer. He believes the spirit of Shakespeare's conception of her was, "she was but a woman."

31 See Peter Alexander, Shakespeare's Life and Art (London, 1946), p. 197.

32 See John W. Draper, "Shakespeare and the Conversazione," Italica XXIII (March, 1946), 10-12. Professor Draper does not consider Troilus and Cressida in this article.

33 Wolfgang Clemen, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (London, 1953), p. 100.

34 Survey, p. 194. Quoted by Clemen, p. 100.

35 Survey, p. 195.

36 Campbell, Satyre, p. 213.

37 III. 1422-1442.

38 Rudolf Stamm, "The Glass of Pandar's Praise," E & S, n. s. XVII (1964), 68.

39 Campbell, Satire, p. 115.

40 Tillyard, Problem, p. 74.

VII. THE GREEK COUNCIL SCENE I: AGAMEMNON AND NESTOR

We have now sufficiently explored the comic features of Troilus and Cressida. It is time to turn once again to the aspect of the play which will eventually, in Acts IV and V, become the dominant one--namely, the war-plot, which we first considered in our discussion of the Trojan council scene. And the most striking scene in the war-plot, next to this Trojan debate about the continuation of the war, is undoubtedly the Greek council scene. Indeed, some would probably, on grounds of style, consider it more remarkable and memorable than the Trojan debate.

The Greek council scene, I.iii, has inspired widely varying reactions among readers. On the one hand, a number of commentators, notably Professors Gladys Willcock, Milton Kennedy, and Norman Rabkin, have accepted the scene as a straightforward one, full of weighty and majestic argumentation.¹ On the other hand, a rather large group of critics--some of whom see the scene as part of the larger design of comprehensive satire--have found in the Grecian orations subtle flaws, comic excesses, and ironic inconsistencies which would make them more properly the object of ridicule or scorn than of admiration.

Of the latter group, some, especially Professor Alice Walker and Professor R. A. Foakes, appear to be greatly influenced by the manifestly comic spirit and content of the two preceding scenes (Pandarus with Troilus, I.1, and Pandarus with Cressida, I.11) and appear to deduce from this spirit that it was necessary for the play to continue in a comic vein.² Others, like Professor Johannes Kleinstück, stress the "orotund" and "superfluous" quality of the orations, maintaining that they "use the most high-sounding terms in order to say what could be said rather simply and need not be said at all."³

Agamemnon's ceremonious address appears to irritate modern sensibilities somewhat more than the speeches of the other two Greeks. Professor Albert Gérard, for example, discovers in it "a querulous stoicism which finds its proper expression in obscure generalese."⁴ Professor Tillyard maintains that Agamemnon is "slow-witted and genuinely pompous."⁵ In a more analytical vein, Professor Derek Traversi proposes that the Greek chieftain's speech

proceeds not from point to point according to a definite logical sequence, but by a series of indeterminate digressions which illustrate his incapacity to come to a conclusion . . . The repeated doublings of words . . . all lay emphasis on obstruction . . . a defect which indicates the discrepancy in the Greeks between thought and action.⁶

Professor F. Quinland Daniels also calls attention to stylistic details like doubling--which suggest

irresolution and bombast--and maintains that the whole speech manifests "some confusion and general imprecision of thought."⁷

Nestor's fate is hardly better. Although his speech is only 24 lines (whereas Agamemnon's is 30 and Ulysses' is 67, with a 43-line encore), the most frequent charge against the ancient counselor is that he is garrulous in this scene--presumably because very old men are traditionally so; or perhaps because Nestor actually is so in the Iliad, as Chapman pointed out in his notes.⁸ Of this alleged trait in Shakespeare's Nestor, Professor Gérard presents perhaps the most derogatory picture: "Agamemnon's speeches are ludicrously echoed in Nestor's garrulous, redundant, and senile oratory."⁹

On the other hand, those writers who have extolled the eloquence of the three speeches have stressed their rhetorical structure. Professor Milton Kennedy, for instance, maintaining that all three speeches are, technically, demonstrative orations with a hortatory function, draws attention to the fact that orations appear in Shakespeare numerically most often in history plays (48 out of a total of 63) and that their use is "particularly noticeable in those plays of Shakespeare developed about classical stories. In these plays, the lofty tone of the oration fits in naturally and harmoniously with the development of the plot as a

whole."¹⁰ Moreover, Professor Kennedy finds in the first two speeches of the Greeks a mastery of forensic art: "The speeches of Agamemnon and Nestor represent Shakespeare's hortatory rhetoric at its best, when colored by the imagery of poetry."¹¹

Similarly, Professor Gladys Willcock--one of the editors of Puttenham's The Arte of Englishe Poesie and a specialist in rhetoric--discovers sound and skillful rhetorical practice in the first two addresses:

Agamemnon introduces the topic in the tone of the leader, the Chairman, the responsible Minister, inured to long delays . . . Nestor's experienced tongue . . . expends itself, somewhat unexpectedly, purely in the 'coloring' or emotive task of rhetoric. It sounds the recall to heroism; it is the reply of valiant blood . . . and the bulk of it consists of pictorial amplification and variation as full as any in the earlier plays, but moving now with the new pace and rhythm--to us, therefore, less 'rhetorical.'¹²

Indeed, some admirers of the speeches have maintained that they give the council scene an "epic grandeur."¹³

It should be evident that, as with many Shakespearean problems, there are able advocates for both sides. However, until someone makes a thorough analysis of the speeches, especially the neglected ones of Agamemnon and Nestor, the problem of whether they are the inflated utterances of ridiculous men or, on the other hand, carefully argued rhetoric and excellent poetry will remain unsolved--fair game for impressionistic criticism, ex cathedra proclamations, and witty sayings. The scene,

in short, suffers from a lack of discussion based on tangible evidence from the text. The position I wish to set forth in this chapter is that both Agamemnon's speech and Nestor's speech (whatever their inadequacies as solutions to the plight of the Greeks) have too much substance and too much rhetorical and poetic excellence to be symptomatic of characters who are being systematically derided. Each of the two orations may have eccentricities--although many of these, as we shall see, are the result of the modern outlook toward style. I hope to show, however, that the positive virtues of the two speeches outweigh these eccentricities and infuse the scene with a dignity which tends to exclude, or at least to over-ride, the satiric mockery which some critics find in the scene.

Agamemnon's speech, it will be remembered, begins I.iii as a formal address to four princes and "others," by which is probably meant a rather large number of councilors.

Princes,
What grief hath set these jaundies o'er your
cheeks?
The ample proposition that hope makes
In all designs begun on earth below
5 Fails in the promis'd largeness. Checks and
disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,
Infects the sound pine, and diverts his grain
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.
10 Nor, princes, is it matter new to us

That we come short of our suppose so far
That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls
stand;
Sith every action that hath gone before
Whereof we have record, trial did draw
15 Bias and thwart, not answering the aim
And that unbodied figure of the thought
That gave't surmised shape. Why, then, you
princes,
Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works
And call them shames? which are, indeed, naught
else
20 But the protractive trials of great Jove
To find persistive constancy in men;
The fineness of which metal is not found
In Fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,
25 The hard and soft, seem all affin'd and kin.
But in the wind and tempest of her frown
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away,
And what hath mass or matter, by itself
30 Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.
(I.iii.1-30)

When it is isolated and closely read in this manner (rather than passed over as superfluous verbiage), this speech appears to have the authentic Shakespearean ring. The copious Ciceronian periods, the flawless, yet flexible rhythm, the strict underlying logical design, the crowded imagery taken from Nature and full of action, the ample unfolding of illustrative antitheses (ll. 23-25), the essay-like and gnomic manner in which the speaker handles his theme--all these are characteristic of the poet during the period of his greatest complexity and richness. And it would hardly be appropriate to apply modern standards of directness and simplicity to a studied composition which clearly bears the imprint of a

century during which Cicero and Quintilian were idols. Those who are impatient with formal expository speeches and with copious or exuberant language should remember that, without these, Shakespeare would hardly be Shakespeare.

Moreover, a comparison of Agamemnon's oration with similar ceremonious addresses in other plays by Shakespeare will perhaps make the familiarity and normality of Agamemnon's speech-mannerisms clearer. For example, in its formalism, its balanced cadences, and its sinuous grace, Agamemnon's oration resembles that of Henry IV at the opening of that play, as well as that of Claudius early in Act I of Hamlet. The fact that each of the three speakers is the highest-ranking man in the play and is speaking for the first time, on a formal occasion, gives some validity to the resemblance among the three speeches and fully accounts for the great dignity and prepared oratorical quality of their compositions. Ceremonial convention, then, might be said to have determined largely the ritualized nature of these kingly addresses.

The opening fourteen lines of Claudius' speech in particular resemble Agamemnon's manner, especially in the heaped-up balancing of antithetical ideas and in the serpentine periods:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole
kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
5 Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,
10 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
With an auspicious, and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in
marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife. (I.ii.1-14)

The speech is not a model of straightforwardness, of economy, or of the laconic ideal. It is repetitious by modern standards; the thought is often interrupted; and Claudius' dwelling on his oxymorons (ll. 10-13) may strike the modern reader as rather tedious and complacent. The predicate of the first sentence is postponed until the very end of the thought (l. 6); the predicate of the second sentence, interrupted by even more phrases, arrives in the seventh line (l. 14). There is much duplication of the idea of grief (ll. 1-2, 3, 3-4, 6); Gertrude is called the queen and immediately afterward the "imperial jointress"; while lines 10-14 invent five different variations of the paradox of grief and joy, which also take the form of antitheses. All in all, the address is no less full of vices, by modern criteria, than Agamemnon's--but also, by Renaissance criteria, no less full of graces.¹⁴

Like many other set speeches in Shakespeare--the

"mercy" speech in Merchant of Venice, the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, the "ages of man" speech in As You Like It--Agamemnon's oration, far from being inconclusive or digressive, is a complete little essay with a clearly discernible theme. Here, the controlling idea is that disappointment and the frustration of men's schemes are inherent in the nature of things, but that adversity need not dismay superior beings (like the Greeks), since superior beings do not reveal their full virtue and excellence until they encounter adversity. This idea, in spite of the circuitous fashion in which it is expressed and in spite of the considerable embroidery, should be quite evident to the attentive reader who is accustomed to literature of a greater complexity than the declarative sentence. Professor Traversi's claim, then, that the speech "proceeds not from point to point according to a logical sequence, but by a series of indeterminate digressions" (alluring in thought and language as this criticism is), does not accurately describe the oration. For the address is in fact quite strong and even simple in its logical design; there are no digressions, but rather amplifying illustrations which are part of the substance of his argument; and Agamemnon comes to a palpable conclusion in the last five lines. By Elizabethan standards, the speech is not unusually diffuse or obscured by interruptions.

Again, the proposal we often hear that Agamemnon's Latinate diction makes him seem pompous and affected does not hold up well under analysis, primarily because it arises from an anti-Latinate cultural milieu, our own. Indeed, the majority of these heavy, abstract words are used elsewhere by Shakespeare (e. g., "deracinate" in Henry V), and a brief look at Onion's Glossary will disclose that Shakespeare's vocabulary throughout his plays contains dozens and dozens of equally difficult and out-moded words. Moreover, when Shakespeare wishes to satirize inkhornism and the various vices of language which involve bombastic or affected diction, his effect is usually quite clear, as in Love's Labour's Lost, 2 Henry IV, and Hamlet: clearly comic figures like Armado and Pistol use high-sounding words while discussing trivial subjects. But here, Agamemnon is using Latinisms and abstract diction during a carefully reasoned oration which addresses itself to a problem of great magnitude to the Greek nation, not to an incongruously trivial subject. Words like "conflux," "tortive," "errant," "protractive," and "persistive" are therefore appropriate to the "high design" of the speaker. It is also important to note that Ulysses, whose speech is usually regarded as more "realistic" and cogent--the expression of a man of action--also uses a number of Latinisms: "insisture,"

"deracinate," "oppugnancy," "deputation," and "preventions." In short, there is no evidence of a comic discrepancy between the baseness of the meaning and the pretentiousness of the language in Agamemnon's speech (as there is in Armado's, Pistol's, and Osric's eccentric utterances--and in Hamlet's parody of the latter). Instead, the more plausible explanation of its loftiness, elevated diction, and intricate periods would be that these features are the marks of the grand style, which is the appropriate one for a classical story of historical magnitude: the story of the fall of Troy.

The idea that Agamemnon's stoicism is weak and self-defeating also suffers from the prejudices of the modern outlook, since this "stoical" doctrine at the same time happens to be a traditional Christian doctrine which was taken quite seriously during the sixteenth century (whereas today it is often viewed with suspicion)--namely, the theme of purposeful suffering and of spiritual growth through it--a doctrine usually identified with the influence of St. Paul. It is true that in other plays Shakespeare sometimes allows suffering characters to point out to the counselors of forbearance that they would reject this counsel if they themselves were in the position of sufferer;¹⁵ but he usually chooses a dignified character to express the advice, as a worthy philosophical position and as an

essentially Christian outlook, and thus as one to be taken seriously. The suggestion that Agamemnon's stoicism is presented in a mocking light is therefore far from self-evident. On the contrary, just as it is difficult to imagine that Shakespeare would be portraying Ulysses as rather ridiculous at the very moment that he is ably expounding what most critics agree is respectable Elizabethan cosmology and statecraft, so it is implausible that Agamemnon's philosophizing should be considered fatuous when it has, in fact, a respectable Christian status during the Elizabethan era. The outlook was not a cogent remedy for the Greeks' troubles, but it was an arguable position and therefore not subject to derision and scorn, as it might be to modern perceptions.

Moreover, the idea that God (or Jove) purposefully and benevolently makes Man suffer must have been congenial to Shakespeare, since it marks the philosophical climax and intellectual reconciliation in Cymbeline, when Jove tells Posthumus:

Be not with mortal accidents oppress . . .
Whom I love best I cross; to make my gift,
The more delayed, delighted. (V.iv.99-102)

Again, when Hermione recovers from the first shock of Leontes' accusation, she comforts her weeping ladies thus:

This action I now go on
Is for my better grace. (WT, II.i.121-122)

Indeed, the outlook--that great suffering is finally

rewarded by grace and felicity--underlies all the romances, including (perhaps especially) Pericles.

That Agamemnon's address is weighty and to be taken in earnest becomes more clear, however, when we turn from parallels to a close analysis of the thought and imagery. Essentially, the speech has two main conceptual trends. The first, which dominates the first 17 lines, stresses the gulf between men's aims and the execution of those aims. The second, occurring in lines 17-30, actually constitutes a constructive answer--namely, as we have said, greatness through suffering.

Agamemnon adheres faithfully to each of these conceptual trends in turn; and the obstruction which some have found in his thinking is, we can discover from a study of his language, more a product of reiterative diction and imagery than the result of redundant and digressive thought. For Agamemnon, in his attempt to drive home the idea of the inevitable deflection of events from their planned course--an idea not so commonplace that Robert Burns could not later immortalize it--piles up words and phrases like "Fails in the promised largeness" (l. 5), "Checks and disasters" (l. 5), "diverts his grain" (l. 8), "comes short of our suppose" (l. 11), "did draw/Bias and thwart" (ll. 14-15), and "not answering the aim" (l. 15). In other

words, obstruction is Agamemnon's conscious theme, not a characteristic of his speech-patterns which Shakespeare has given him to reveal his ineffectuality. Thus, the belief that his thinking and speech have "impediments" probably derives inadvertently from his steady repetition of this theme of obstruction.

Moreover, the adroitness with which Agamemnon handles a variety of images which evolve into each other in a crowded, but graceful fashion during the last 10 lines of the speech, reinforces the impression that the Greek leader has a goodly measure of intellectual incisiveness and muscularity and tends to counter-balance the abstractness of the first part of the speech. For, after counseling "persistive constancy" in line 21, Agamemnon quickly transforms the abstraction into an image, that of "metal" (l. 22)--a figure which will permeate the rest of the play as a metaphor for inner worth. The imagery then begins to appear dense and mixed, when misfortune is personified by the commonplace of the "tempest" (l. 26), and the new metaphor of winnowing is introduced. For Agamemnon is now juggling "metal," "wind," and "winnowing." But the pattern is nevertheless sound: from the tempest there is a natural progression to the related instrument of wind:

Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away.
(ll. 27-28)

And Agamemnon's conclusion skillfully fuses this metaphor of valuable grain with the earlier one of valuable metal by applying words easily associated with metal to the winnowed grain: "rich," "virtue," "mass," and "unmingled":

And what hath mass or matter by itself
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled. (ll. 29-30)

Texture and complexity like this would be wasted in a speech which is supposed to reflect a bungling and somewhat comic mentality.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that, although some of the metaphors are rather commonplace, Shakespeare could not have been using them to depict a dull and commonplace mind, since he uses many of them elsewhere in a straightforward manner. For example, as we all know he uses the metaphor of the tempest, with much more important functions, twice after Troilus and Cressida (King Lear and The Tempest). Likewise, he uses the image of metal for inner worth again in All's Well, when the First Lord speaks of the impending test of Parolles, which is designed to determine "to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted" (III.vi.39-40). Similarly, the winnowing image apparently appeals to Shakespeare as late as Cymbeline, where Iachimo tries to explain away his attempted seduction of Imogen thus:

The love I bear him
Made me to fan you thus; but the gods made you,
Unlike all others, chaffless. (I.vi.176-178)

The image is, of course, at least as old as the Gospels,

since the fan is used in Luke 3:17 as a metaphor for the means of determining spiritual worth among men.

It may be concluded, then, that Agamemnon's oration contains too much respectable philosophy, has too strong a conceptual design, has--in the second half--too skillful a development from image to image, and contains too many metaphors which Shakespeare uses in earnest elsewhere to be understood as the thinking of an aimless babbler or of a tedious man parroting commonplaces.

Nestor dutifully picks up his leader's ideas and illuminates them with less conceptual and more turbulent imagery. He succeeds both in reinforcing Agamemnon's views and in bringing the mode of discourse closer to planning and action. Thus, the three speeches represent a graded series of increasing practicality--from almost pure philosophy and exhortation, to Nestor's dramatization of imagined actions, to Ulysses' realistic analysis of the problem and his proposed solution.¹⁶

Nestor says,

In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men. The sea being
smooth,
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail
Upon her patient breast, making their way
With those of nobler bulk!
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold
The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains
cut,
Bounding between the two moist elements
Like Perseus' horse. Where's then the saucy

boat

Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now
Corrivall'd greatness? Either to harbour fled
Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so
Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide
In storms of fortune. For in her ray and
brightness

The herd hath more annoyance by the brize
Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks
And flies fled under shade, why then the thing
of courage

As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathize,
And with an accent tun'd in selfsame key
Retorts to chiding fortune. (I.iii.33-53).

Here, the vitality of the images, the workmanship and the control of the reasoning, the spirited questions and forceful answers, and the effortless fusion of oratorical formality and conversational authenticity--all combine to produce a splendid speech. And the stricture that it is inflated, pompous, and full of platitudes¹⁷ or that it merely reiterates, in a flattering fashion, the ideas of his leader, seems rather captious before its heightened music and pictorial richness. Indeed, if there are repetitions, we can easily find the reason, not in Nestor's senility, but in Shakespeare's love of grammatical schemes. And we need only compare Nestor's discreet use of antithesis (valor's show and valor's worth) and word-play (reproof and proof) with Polonius' manifestly doddering use of schemes when he expounds on Hamlet's insanity (II.ii.85-108), in order to see how remote Nestor's rhetoric is from the inflated or the senile.

Similarly, if the speech contains platitudes, we cannot conclude from this quality that Nestor has a doddering personality. For Shakespeare has used a number of these commonplace images in serious contexts elsewhere. For instance, the Queen of Cymbeline calls Caesar's ships "Poor ignorant baubles" (III.1.28). Similarly, Coriolanus virtually summarizes Nestor's speech in IV.1, when he reminds his mother:

You were us'd
To say extremity was the trier of spirits;
That common chances common men could bear;
That when the sea was calm, all boats alike
Show'd mastership in floating. (ll. 3-7)

The fact that the adherent to this doctrine is here Coriolanus' mother, who contributes to his downfall, should not, of course, encourage us to imagine that Shakespeare was disapproving of the view; since the basic distinction between the strong-ribbed bark and the saucy boat appears in Sonnet 80 as well, where the saucy boat is the poet, the young man's worth is the wide ocean, and the rival poet is the "proudest sail." Again, the distinction in this form also appears in, of all places, Ascham's The Scholemaster.¹⁸ Cato, in Jonson's Catiline (1611), follows the form of the figure as Nestor states it.¹⁹

Nestor's diction and imagery, striking and picturesque enough in themselves, are also variations on themes initiated by Agamemnon. However, as Professor Willcock

has suggested, he employs a different mode of rhetoric from Agamemnon's--that of emotional coloring. Although he claims merely to be "applying," no doubt out of deference to his leader, he actually carries Agamemnon's passive forbearance (and confidence in just rewards for the worthy) a step further--into a call for active defiance and resistance toward fortune.²⁰

If we look upon the two speeches as integrally related, we see that Agamemnon's speech leads into Nestor's almost as the solo parts of a musical composition often do: Nestor simply picks up Agamemnon's concluding idea, that misfortune separates the wheat from the chaff among men, and gracefully echoes it in his own language: "In the reproof of chance/Lies the true proof of men" (ll. 33-34). Again, his extended metaphor of the boats (ll. 34-45) restores Agamemnon's contrast between valuable and trifling metal, with the word "bauble" (l. 35). Agamemnon's analogous contrast between what is light and what has mass also is reiterated in Nestor's contrast between "shallow" boats and those of "nobler bulk" (l. 37). In a similar fashion, Agamemnon's tempest subtly reappears in Nestor's little parable (which reinvigorates the commonplace image for misfortune), in his "ruffian Boreas" (l. 38). And the idea of distinction is vigorously given further pictorial dramatization by the dividing motion of the "strong-ribbed

bark," as it cuts "through liquid mountains" (l. 40). Finally, the contrast between the worthy and the unworthy is strikingly enhanced when Nestor elevates the strong-ribbed bark into an almost other-worldly, sublime figure:

Bounding between the two moist elements
Like Perseus' horse. (ll. 41-42)

whereas he degrades the saucy boat into a "toast for Neptune" (l. 45).

The ornament of this oration is, of course, the little parable of the boats, which, although it is not as extended as Menenius' allegory of the belly in Coriolanus I.1, vies with it for liveliness and humor of narration, as well as for illustrative aptness. But, when it is over, Nestor's speech does not exactly come to an end: the last eight lines, although they lack the surface brilliance and movement of the pragmatographia which precedes, contain a rather startling succession of metaphors which might appear mixed, were they all not further exempla of the theme that distress goads men to greatness.

In other words, the function of illustrating this theme is taken over from the boats by the gadfly (brize) and herd of ll. 47-49, with the continued use of fortune and weather ("in her ray and brightness") acting as a bridge. However, when Nestor comes to the contrast, misfortune ("the splitting wind"), he swiftly passes

over the herd-image and progresses to the two new images of the oak and the flies, to intensify the idea of dire turbulence among both large and small, and then transforms the sufferer into "the thing of courage," a more generalized subject, so that he can proceed to yet another figure for expressing the sufferer--the musical metaphor which has the heroic individual "retorting" (that is, singing back twice as fast)²¹ to fortune.

This odd but just mixture of images is rather remote from the commonplace. Indeed, it is characteristic of Shakespeare's style during its most luxuriant phase, when metaphors and images evolved or imperceptibly phased into each other before the captious side of one's critical faculty had a chance to invoke rules of moderation and feasibility. The similarity to Donne's procedure here may also account for the observation made by some that the style of Troilus and Cressida is "metaphysical."

As we shall later see in the chapter on Homer's heroes, it is unwise to treat the characters in Troilus and Cressida in a literary vacuum, without a comparison to previous versions of them; since Shakespeare did not invent these characters, but elaborated them out of a number of traditions. With Agamemnon, this comparison will expose the fallacy of interpreting Shakespeare's leader as conspicuously irresolute, when in fact Homer's Agamemnon is far more of a defeatist and far more

noticeably lacking in perseverance; so that Shakespeare, with a model before him which amply lent itself to a stress on comic incompetence, actually reduced this disabling trait in Agamemnon and thereby both elevated him slightly and abstained from an auspicious opportunity to heighten the satiric possibilities in the Greek leader. Similarly, Shakespeare's Nestor is hardly garrulous when compared to Homer's. Indeed, it seems likely that those who attribute this quality to Shakespeare's character are unwittingly merging him with their memory of the Homeric figure both in the Iliad and in the Odyssey. For in the Iliad, Nestor unfolds a mighty tale of 133 lines to Patroclus in Book XI,²² an epic digression which recounts events of an earlier time. Again, at the games for Patroclus' funeral (XXIII), he instructs his son on how to race with chariots, in a manner not unlike that of Polonius with Laertes; Chapman wryly (and interpretively) translates Homer's conclusion of the passage, "Thus sat Neleides, / When all that could be said was said" (ll. 327-328) and adds in a marginal note, "A Comment might well be bestowed upon this speech of Nestor"--a rather dry bit of litotes for Chapman. Nestor also rises to heights of ceremonious tautology in his brief address to Agamemnon in Book IX.²³ On the other hand, his garrulity in the play is hardly stressed, and when it seemingly is referred to, there is only a mild hint: during the

interview between Hector and the Greeks (IV.v), Ulysses cuts Nestor off as he is about to launch into a reminiscence to Hector: "I have seen the time--" (l. 210).

Thus, the poetic and rhetorical virtues of Nestor's oration would seem to outweigh whatever tediousness and ineffectuality critics have found in it. At the very least, I would propose that these virtues complicate the view that he is a satirized figure and, in fact, dilute this view considerably. Indeed, with Nestor's speech even to a greater extent than with Agamemnon's, it seems unlikely that Shakespeare would produce eloquence of considerable richness and enargia, if the effect for which he was striving was to represent the old man as somewhat fatuous and aimless in his thinking. Rather, Nestor's speech, which--for sheer image-making and éclat--surpasses even Ulysses' more analytical one, firmly establishes the atmosphere of majestic argumentation which Agamemnon's speech had ably initiated and which Ulysses' great-souled exposition completes. In fact, if we temporarily suppress all allegiance to the satiric viewpoint and weigh these orations for their intrinsic value alone, it becomes possible to view them as the most impressive passage of uninterrupted eloquence in the entire canon--not excepting the more dramatically effective, but more subdued and mundane speeches of Brutus and

Antony in Julius Caesar. The immense prestige which Ulysses' speech has always enjoyed should have made commentators alert to the impropriety of regarding the scene of which it is the culmination as essentially one of mockery. But if the other two speeches are correctly to be regarded as of one continuous substance with Ulysses' and, in their own ways, of comparable dignity and grandeur, then the three together must surely constitute an extraordinary set-piece of classical oratory, in no less than the epic mode.

It would not be difficult to discover why Shakespeare chose the grand style and the epic mode for this scene in particular. For not only is it the first scene in the play which sets forth the situation and problem of that world-famous event, the Trojan War. It also corresponds roughly to those books of the Iliad in which the elaborate set-speeches of Nestor, Agamemnon, Ulysses, and Achilles in council play a crucial role both in initiating important action and in creating a tone of majestic discourse--that is, Books I and II. These two books, which Chapman translated in 1598 and which Shakespeare had every reason to read and none not to, would have provided him with noble expanses of sustained oratory to emulate. It seems probable that in I.iii he did emulate these passages, and I would like to propose that he has surpassed them in richness of language, pictorial beauty, and sturdiness of thought.

NOTES

1 Gladys Willcock, "Shakespeare and Rhetoric," English Association Essays, XXIX (1943), 57-59; Milton Kennedy, The Oration in Shakespeare (Chapel Hill, 1942); Norman Rabkin, "Troilus and Cressida: The Uses of the Double Plot," Shakespeare Studies I (1965), pp. 265-282.

2 Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1957), xxxi; R. A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered," UTQ, XXXII (January, 1963), 144. Neither critic explicitly states the necessity, but both appear to regard I.iii as "infected" with the comic spirit of I.ii and I.i and both appear compelled to integrate successive comic and serious material under a common banner--in this case a comic one.

3 Johannes Kleinstück, "Ulysses' Speech on Degree as Related to the Play," Neophilologus, XLIII (January, 1959), 61. See also Mark Van Doren's colorful invective against the style of the speeches and of the play as a whole in Shakespeare (New York, 1939), pp. 202-209; see also, Foakes, 144.

4 Albert Gérard, "Meaning and Structure in Troilus and Cressida," ES, XL (June, 1959), 150.

5 E. M. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), p. 57. Van Doren, p. 207, using a rather burlesque

style, calls Agamemnon a "mouther."

6 Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d ed. (Garden City, 1956), p. 76.

7 F. Quinland Daniels, "Order and Confusion in Troilus and Cressida," SQ, XII (Summer, 1961), 285-291.

8 Chapman's Homer, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (New York, 1956), I, XXII.280-329.

9 Gérard, 150.

10 Kennedy, pp. 72-73.

11 Ibid., p. 107.

12 Willcock, 58.

13 See F. E. Halliday, The Poetry of Shakespeare's Plays (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 129; Tillyard, Problem, p. 55; Una Ellis-Fermor, The Frontiers of Drama, 2d ed. (London, 1946), p. 61.

14 It is true that the effect of Claudius' rhetoric is to portray him as compromising, self-satisfied, and pragmatic. However, Shakespeare's use of schemes here to hint at the speaker's character is not the same as mockery of that character. Claudius' capacity for self-exculpation is exposed, just as Agamemnon's penchant for theological speculation emerges; but Agamemnon's

inadequacy for the role of dynamic, problem-solving leader is no more held up to ridicule than Claudius' glib rationalizations are.

Another noteworthy parallel is that Agamemnon's appeal to the immemorial experience of mankind ("Sith every action that hath gone before/Whereof we have record, trial did draw/Bias and thwart") is also used by Claudius in relation to excessive grieving, which he says is

To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died today,
'This must be so.'

15 See, for example, Brabantio's speech in Othello, I.111.212-219.

16 F. Quinland Daniels has studied the speeches of Agamemnon and Ulysses in an analogous fashion; but his stress has been on the contrast between Agamemnon as inaction and Ulysses as action, his treatment of Nestor being rather negligible. See his article, "Order and Confusion," 285-291.

17 See, for example, Tillyard, Problem, p. 57.

18 Roger Ascham, The Scholemaster in English Works, ed. William Aldis Wright (Cambridge, 1904), pp. 205-206.

19 Catiline, in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1954), V, III.64-74.

20 Here is a typical example of the kind of alleged contradiction which some critics view as subtle mockery, or as undermining by one speaker of another: Nestor says he will merely apply, but then proceeds to go beyond his leader's enthusiasm to a more vigorous proposal. But these super-subtle perceptions would probably be washed out in the rush of a dramatic presentation. If we treated every internal contradiction in Shakespeare's plays as ironic undermining, the canon would consist of thirty-seven satires.

21 See Walker, Troilus and Cressida, p. 151.

22 Chapman's Homer, I, ll. 571-704. It should be pointed out that tradition allowed digressions like this one, and the speaker--who drew parallels to events of an older period--was not properly to be exposed to the accusation of loquacity. Moreover, Nestor was the obvious character to perform this time-binding function. Beowulf is famous for similar passages. Nevertheless, what counts is that readers from antiquity on have found Homer's Nestor too talkative; moreover, at the games for Patroclus' funeral (XXIII), he seems, actually and objectively, to have this trait.

23 This effect is clearer in Lattimore's translation:

Son of Atreus, most lordly and kind of men,
Agamemnon,

with you I will end, with you I will make my
beginning, since you
are lord over many people, and Zeus has given
into your hand
the sceptre and rights of judgement, to be
king over the people.
It is yours therefore to speak a word, yours
also to listen,
and grant the right to another also, when his
spirit stirs him
to speak for our good. All shall be yours
when you lead the way. Still
I will speak in the way it seems best to my
mind, and no one
shall have in his mind any thought that is
better than this one
that I have in my mind either now or long
before now . . .

(IX.96-105)

See Richmond Lattimore, The Iliad of Homer (Chicago, 1965).

VIII. THE GREEK COUNCIL SCENE II: ULYSSES

Since all but a few commentators¹ agree that Ulysses' speech is a splendid piece of analysis and eloquence, those who see the play as satiric devote little energy to finding flaws or ironic deflations in the speech itself, but concentrate instead on the relation of Ulysses' words to his subsequent action in the play. For example, Professor Theodore Spencer finds that the speech is ironically contradicted in later scenes, because "instead of order we have anarchy, instead of degree there is violent personal rivalry."² Again, many writers, including Professor L. C. Knights, Derek Traversi, and Norman Rabkin, find--as Knights puts it--that the Greek leaders "descend to a stratagem that, in the working out, is not a very impressive piece of statecraft"³; the implication being that Ulysses' lofty words are deflated by his actions.

More subtle ironic deflations have also been uncovered. Professor Kimbrough, for example, calls attention to an ironic inconsistency in Agamemnon's claim to Aeneas that the Greeks "with one voice/Call Agamemnon head and general" (I.iii.221-222)--a statement which, Kimbrough believes, indicates "that Agamemnon does not

realize the importance of Ulysses' diagnosis."⁴ A similar (or perhaps contrary) mockery of Ulysses' earnest words of counsel occurs, according to Professors Derick Marsh and Johannes Kleinstück, when Aeneas fails to recognize Agamemnon as head of the Greeks, a failure which, according to Marsh, deflates Ulysses' words on Sol.⁵

Again, critics have discovered in Ulysses' speech itself features which suggest that, even as he affirms degree and order, he puckishly contradicts himself and subtly mocks Agamemnon and Nestor. Thus, Professor Gérard maintains that he "takes an unmistakably perverse pleasure imitating Patroclus imitating Agamemnon and Nestor: the parody is quite to the point and certainly invalidates any application of Ulysses' theories on degree to the Grecian army."⁶ Similarly, Professor Kleinstück proposes that Ulysses' words, "The general's disdain'd/By him one step below, etc.," subtly hint that the real cause of insubordination is Agamemnon's weakness;⁷ moreover, he adds that Ulysses' later action with Ajax and Achilles "inverts degree" and "breeds emulation."⁸ And Professor Alice Shalvi believes that, when Ulysses says "Amen" to Aeneas' "Now heaven forfend such scarcity of youth!" (11. 302-303), he is mocking Agamemnon and Nestor for the vigor with which they show their willingness to defend Greek women against Hector, if no one else comes forth.⁹

These perceptions of ironies, deflations, and contradictions are clearly of varying merit. But before we discuss their effect on Ulysses' speech and on his overall status in the play, it would be well to consider the question of contradictions and inconsistencies in general. To begin with, they appear in some form in many of Shakespeare's plays--and almost invariably without the claim on any critic's part that they mock the proceedings in any way. For example, everyone is acquainted with the confusions of place in Two Gentlemen of Verona, yet few would venture to suggest that they were anything more than "slips of the pen or the mind" (Kittredge, Works, p. 34). And it would certainly be stretching matters to find an ironic joke, rather than a mere oversight, in Borachio's words to John, in which he outlines his plan to have Claudio and Don Pedro "hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio" (MA, II.ii.43-44); when Hero (Margaret) should term him "Borachio" if the deception is to be effective. Nor has anyone, to my knowledge, proposed that the proceedings are being ironically deflated in Julius Caesar, when Brutus speaks as if he does not know of Portia's death (IV.iii.183-187), although he has just informed Cassius of it in l. 147. Similarly, as Professor A. C. Bradley (who has surveyed most of the inconsistencies in the tragedies) writes:

No sort of reason is given why Edgar, who lives

in the same house with Edmund, should write a letter to him instead of speaking; and this a letter absolutely damning to his character. Gloster was very foolish, but surely not so foolish as to pass unnoticed this improbability [sic]; or, if so foolish, what need for Edmund to forge a letter rather than a conversation, especially as Gloster appears to be unacquainted with his son's handwriting?¹⁰

Surely, a critic could find ludicrous improbabilities in the whole situation--could even claim that Shakespeare was parodying the improbably plots of melodramas; but the gravity of the events and tone and the rush of dramatic presentation preclude this kind of interpretation.

An inconsistency in Hamlet which Bradley does not discuss, but which would lend itself to the kind of deflationary interpretation which has been directed toward Troilus and Cressida, is that involving the character of Polonius. For we are given ample justification by his speech, by his actions, and by what others say of him, to regard him as "a tedious old fool." And yet, he is the trusted counselor of the shrewd politician Claudius. One passage in particular stresses his acumen:

Pol. Hath there been such a time--I would fain know that--

That I have positively said 'Tis so,
When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

(II.ii.152-154)

If we wished to make Hamlet into a satire, what more promising start could we have than a kingdom with a Lord Chamberlain whose alleged acumen is placed in doubt almost every time he speaks, whose understanding of

Hamlet is wide of the mark, and whose schemes miscarry much more profoundly than Ulysses' scheme does? Similarly, after Hamlet has spent the entire play in intrigues, has pretended to be insane, has contrived a play to trap Claudius, and has ingeniously out-schemed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Claudius' assurance to Laertes that Hamlet is "free from all contriving" (IV.vii) is surely a contradiction; and it would not be surprising if this line were to bring a guffaw from the more sophisticated members of the audience. Yet, the idea that the contradiction constitutes an ironic deflation is highly improbable; indeed, in spite of the contradiction, Hamlet's character is so complex that on a more primary level Claudius is still right about his ingenuousness; but without reflection Claudius' remark seems comically inappropriate.

If we probe deeply enough, examples like these might be found in almost any play of Shakespeare. For instance, after Richard III spends a large part of his opening soliloquy discussing his inadequacies for the role of lover, he succeeds, in the very next scene, in winning over--not just any woman--but precisely the woman who should have been the most difficult for him to persuade: the wife of a man he has slain. To protest that Shakespeare has made him superhuman will not satisfactorily explain this contradiction; because, superhuman or not, he has just finished expatiating on his own

unsuitability for love, saying that he is "not shap'd for sportive tricks/Nor made to court an amorous looking glass" (11. 14-15) and that he "cannot prove a lover" (1. 28).

Again, as Professor R. A. Small has shown, Troilus and Cressida itself has a goodly measure of contradictions which do not necessarily suggest an ironic deflation. The inconsistencies regarding the state of the war (truce or battle) are so confused that it is probable that no consistent pattern can be made out of them.¹² The only plausible explanation is that here, as elsewhere, Shakespeare has employed a double time-scheme. But Small's other observations are not as easily dealt with. He notes that although "the war has lasted seven years, Cressida does not know the Trojan heroes, and Pandarus carefully points them out to her." Similarly, "Hector does not know the Greeks (IV.5); but Aeneas knew Diomed in battle (IV.1.9), and Nestor recognizes Hector even in a helmet (IV.5)"¹³--an astuteness on Nestor's part which contradicts the picture of him as a doddering fool. Small gives plausible explanations of these inconsistencies, on the basis of dramatic technique; but it should be obvious that, if a critic is so inclined, he could see in them ironic deflations. Indeed, both The Rehearsal and The Critic exploited the tendency of playwrights to make gross oversights which pass by in

the rush of events and which indicate that at times the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. The very inconsistency involved in Pandarus' identifying famous Trojan warriors to a Trojan lady seven years after the war began is ridiculed in The Critic.¹⁴

What this line of reasoning is driving at should be obvious: that not all contradictions and inconsistencies need be regarded as ironic deflations. They may be quite accidental oversights; or, as Small has argued, they sometimes may serve a useful dramatic function: that Hector does not know by sight the men he has fought for seven years (while Nestor knows him) is implausible, but the lack of familiarity makes for a momentous meeting, whereas familiarity might have made the meeting banal.¹⁵

What is of paramount importance, however, is that the existence of fortuitous and gratuitous contradictions in many of Shakespeare's plays cannot be denied--and that they may be no more relevant to the intrinsic organization of a work of art than are the superfluous scraping sounds which are heard along with the precisely struck notes during the performance of a composition for cello. And once this kind of contradiction is acknowledged by a critic, then it is incumbent upon him, whenever he encounters an inconsistency in the text, to consider first whether or not it might be merely fortuitous and gratuitous, before he makes the hasty inference that

mockery or deflation is present. The introduction of this kind of judgement into the discussion brings us, of course, into the problem of the intentional fallacy, but a full consideration of this subtle issue is not feasible here. What is more important for our discussion is that greater caution should be employed in the evaluation of contradictions in Troilus and Cressida, since most of those attributed to Ulysses' actions and words turn out to be either accidental, or illusory when related to other elements in the play, or easily explainable in the larger context of the play.

The chief ways in which critics have claimed that Ulysses either contradicts himself or is ironically deflated by events are: (1) he contrives a rivalry between Achilles and Ajax and thus contradicts his degree speech; (2) the inconclusiveness of the combat between Ajax and Hector makes his scheme appear pointless; (3) the inconclusive ending of the play enhances this impression that his schemes are all for nought; (4) he himself subtly mocks Agamemnon during the degree speech and thus violates his own doctrines even as he is uttering them; (5) the baseness of his stratagems against Ajax and Achilles violates the loftiness of his oratory.

However, the idea that the personal rivalry between Ajax and Achilles contradicts Ulysses' speech on degree turns out, on closer analysis, to be illusory. It is

true that Ulysses himself stimulates the rivalry between Achilles and Ajax, but this personal rivalry has a curative and constructive aim (the return of Achilles to battle) and is quite different from the aimless flouting of authority, the neglect of the chain of command, and the destructive emulation leading to anarchy which Ulysses deplors in his speech on degree.

Similarly, the idea that the combat between Ajax and Hector ends inconclusively and shows up the futility of Ulysses' scheming is actually based on a misunderstanding of the function of the combat. For, as we saw in the chapter on the Trojan Council, the combat will not influence the outcome of the war. Indeed, it is not even intended to be fought to the death, since, although the two warriors have the option of carrying the fight "to all extremity" (IV.v.68), both sides (Diomedes and Aeneas) intervene after the first exchange--an indication that neither side wishes a mortal combat. Moreover, Achilles' contemptuous designation, "A maiden battle, then?" (l. 87) before they start, established the sportful nature of the combat, in the absence of an explicit agreement.¹⁶ Finally, if Shakespeare was following Homer here (and he must have been, since the Hector-Ajax combat does not appear as a formal encounter in Caxton or Lydgate, nor is there a challenge or lottery, as there are in Homer and Shakespeare), then the playwright's decision to stop

the struggle short of a mortal injury simply follows Homer's treatment, in which two heralds interrupt the battle because night is approaching (VII.241-247);¹⁷ so that what appears to some to be the deflation of inconclusiveness is actually an adherence to the source.

Much the same kind of misunderstanding envelops the end of the play and the alleged collapse of Ulysses' scheme which accompanies it. For the play ends neither inconclusively nor chaotically. It is true that there is considerable bustle and confusion, but there is considerable bustle at the end of Macbeth and Lear and during the battle scenes in Antony and Cleopatra: when Shakespeare tried to compress the action of many hours, days, or years, and of many locales, into a number of brief representative scenes, the effect was often schematic and--to Ben Jonson at least--occasionally ludicrous.¹⁸ But Professor Kittredge has argued ably for the continuity and integrity of the last scenes of Troilus and Cressida.¹⁹ What matters in relation to conclusiveness is that the ending of the play completes a unified action--the central subject of the war-plot: the clash of Hector and Achilles. And this climactic action results in the inevitable denouement, the death of Hector, which is the catastrophe in both senses, since its consequence is the ruin of Troy. This last action, of course, does not actually occur during the course of the play; but surely, whether the audience

was a select one or that of the Globe, it had heard of the ensuing pandemonium (for example, from the Aeneid) which the death of Hector brought upon the city of Troy. Moreover, that Hector's role as the Protector was well known is suggested by Thomas Cooper's statement in his Thesaurus about Hector that "for so long as he lyved, Troy could neuer be taken."²⁰ Ulysses seems to be referring to the same idea when he calls Hector the "base and pillar" of the Trojans (IV.v.212). And if the audience has momentarily forgotten the famous consequence of the Trojan leader's death, Ulysses reminds them in IV.v.217-221, when he tells Hector:

Sir, I foretold you then what would ensue.
My prophecy is but half his journey yet,
For yonder walls, that pertly front your town,
Yon towers, whose wanton tops do buss the clouds,
Must kiss their own feet.

Once again, however, if Shakespeare completes his action without going on to represent the true conclusion--the destruction of Troy--that omission should not be interpreted as an incomplete ending or an ironic comment on Ulysses' ineffectiveness, since Homer too ends without passing on to the burning of Troy. Thus, Shakespeare was again simply following his source, rather than representing a chaotic and inconclusive situation which lends itself to satiric interpretation.

Moreover, this completed action--the death of Hector --follows inevitably from Ulysses' original scheme. As

Professor Tillyard perceptively observes, "It is Ulysses and no one else who announces [V.v.40-52] that the thing he had worked for all along has been achieved: the return of Achilles to battle. And it is his ally Nestor who adds just after, 'So, so, we draw together.'"²¹ Brief and hurried as this section is, it announces the restoration of what has been lacking all along in the Greek camp--its unity and cooperation--and signalizes the ultimate success of Ulysses' scheme. It may be objected that chance--in the form of Patroclus' death--and not Ulysses' ingenuity is what ultimately drives Achilles back to battle. But Patroclus' death does not exactly come about by chance. Just as in Iliad XI, Patroclus' feelings are stirred by Nestor's pathos and just as he later follows Nestor's suggestion that he lead the Myrmidons himself, so in Troilus, Patroclus is more affected than Achilles by the humiliation of III.iii and, it may be inferred, enters the battle in reaction to this humiliation, since no other explanation is given:

A woman impudent and mannish grown
Is not more loath'd than an effeminate man
In time of action. I stand condemn'd for this.
They think my little stomach to the war
And your great love to me restrains you thus.
(III.iii.217-221)

In other words, although Ulysses' scheme ultimately fails to move Achilles because of his love for Polyxena, it succeeds indirectly by moving Patroclus to go to wars out of shame. Thus, as Professor Baldwin has shown, the

second, third, and fourth acts all end with success in one stage of the plan to arouse Achilles;²² and despite apparent set-backs, this plan drives forward with the momentum of the inevitable toward its preordained goal. Indeed, the alternation of movements toward the death of the protagonist with illusory retardations of those movements may be regarded as a typical tragic technique, and Shakespeare used it most effectively in Romeo and Juliet. Hence, Achilles' overthrow of the movement toward the death of Hector in V.i should be regarded, not as an ironic reversal of Ulysses' scheme, but as a structural device which--like the reconciliation of Lear and Cordelia or like Juliet's taking of the potion--falsely appears to avert the catastrophe.²³

Finally, the last two scenes of the play (V.ix and V.x) should remove all doubt regarding the completeness and conclusiveness of the action. For Agamemnon once again spells out the significance of Hector's death, in another apparent allusion to the commonplace found in Cooper's Thesaurus:

If in his death the gods have us befriended,
Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars ended.
(V.ix.9-10)

And Troilus makes the ensuing devastation doubly certain:

Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smite all Troy,
I say, at once! Let your brief plagues be mercy,
And linger not our sure destructions on!
(*my italics*, V.x.7-9)

Thus, the Greeks clearly are on the verge of prevailing at

the end of the play, and Ulysses' strategy--circuitous as its fulfillment may have been--is vindicated.

In a similar fashion, the mockery and self-contradiction which some have found in Ulysses' words--in spite of the great appeal these perceptions have to sophisticated minds--would appear to be implausible within the larger context of the scene and of the play, and may more reasonably be regarded as attractive but specious intuitions. For example, the claim that Ulysses mocks Agamemnon and Nestor when he reports Patroclus' parody of them appears to overlook the detail that the amusing little story is, after all, only a report, by which Ulysses hopes, not to indulge in "unmistakably perverse pleasure," but rather to make dramatically clear to the princes the insulting and derisive forms which insubordination is taking. Ulysses can hardly be considered a mocker because of the accuracy and vividness of his report of mockery; especially since the impact of his report obviously would depend to a large extent on this accuracy and vividness. As Professor Willcock observes, "by a ruthless sharpening of the rhetorical weapon which Puttenham christened the 'fleering frumpe' he applies the goad to wounded egoism."²⁴ Ulysses' aim is thus to rouse the princes to action against insubordination, not to enjoy a private and aimless joke of his own.

Much the same applies to the claim that, when

Ulysses observes that "The general's disdain'd," he is himself falling prey to the spirit of disrespect and lawlessness. For Ulysses' purpose in his dispassionate and frank analysis quite clearly is--as it is throughout the play--to locate and extirpate the causes of Greek disunity; and to regard his loyalty to the truth as a symptom of disloyalty to his monarch would be as inappropriate in his case as it would be in that of Kent in King Lear or that of Enobarbus in Antony and Cleopatra--both of whom in their loyalty display much more blunt frankness and "inverted degree" to their misguided lords than does Ulysses to Agamemnon.

On the other hand, the observation that, when Ulysses descends from oratory to statecraft, he operates on a much lower plane, would appear to have more substance than the ironies we have been discussing thus far. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that a certain degree of lowering is inevitable and in the nature of things when the descent is made from the heights of eloquence to the arena of necessary actions. Moreover, the scenes in which Shakespeare handles matters of state in a less-than-serious and slightly undignified manner--the gulling of Ajax, II.iii, and the slighting of Achilles, III.iii--are far from unique. Indeed, they would seem to represent a blending of serious and comic material which is characteristic of the playwright at all stages of his

development, rather than deflation, specifically related to a satiric undertaking. For example, no one would call 3 Henry VI a satire, and yet in III.11 Shakespeare depicts a significant historical event, the grave error which Edward IV makes in falling prey to the charms of Lady Grey (an error which leads directly to the revolt of Warwick and to Edward's temporary loss of his crown), in a less than dignified, comic light. For throughout the scene Richard and Clarence make an extended series of mocking asides which unmask Edward's erotic interest in his bewitching suitor.

Similarly, in Richard III matters of state are often represented--and even more flagrantly--in a manner unbecoming their dignity as historical events. The most vivid example is Richard's almost farcically hypocritical pose as a pious and other-worldly figure in III.vii--in accordance with correct Machiavellian procedure--when he wishes to impress the multitudes with his "reluctance" to accept the crown. Again, his outrageous near-seduction of Anne in I.11 and his parallel persuasion of Queen Elizabeth in IV.iv for her daughter's hand--directly after he has murdered the loved ones of each--both represent pseudo-historical events in the life of an English king in a grotesquely comic manner. And the Bastard in King John, from the very first scene in which he appears (I.1), introduces a note of puckish mockery into affairs of state--most notably in II.1.

Perhaps even more noteworthy are the rather fumbling attempts of Claudius and Polonius to discover the nature of the disturbance in (what is to the king) that dangerous threat to the state, Hamlet. Indeed, Ulysses' stratagem is no more undignified than the techniques which the crafty king employs to fight for his political life. And, whereas Ulysses at least retains a large measure of dignity by playing the role of wit and contriver while Ajax plays the gull, Polonius is clearly gulled by Hamlet in II.ii. The discrepancy between the grave purpose of Claudius and the levity of the scenes in which the investigation is actually carried out is at least as great as the discrepancy between the objectives of the Greek leaders and the stratagem they use to achieve them. Yet neither the lowered dignity of the Lord Chamberlain in II.ii nor the lowered dignity of both Claudius and Polonius in III.i (as they skulk about attempting to solve quandaries of statecraft in the manner of farce, eavesdropping behind arras) has led any critic, as far as I know, to interpret these base recourses as satiric deflations of the predominantly grave endeavor of the play. Nevertheless, if one were to make an insistent endeavor to find pervasive satire in Hamlet, these instances of mediocre scheming for the sake of political aims of great magnitude--namely, the protection of the throne from the unpredictable acts of

a madman--would qualify as examples of bathetic lowering as much as the stratagem of Ulysses. Instead, however, commentators have usually reacted to this discrepancy in Hamlet, not as a lowering, but as a daring and admirable mixture of serious and comic material. There appears to be no reason to apply different standards to Troilus and Cressida, a play which in date, imagery, philosophical preoccupations, stylistic ambitiousness, and melancholy has been justifiably considered a mate or counterpart of Hamlet.

Further reflection must also lead to a questioning of the assumption that Ulysses, in arguing for reason and order, thereby commits himself to an ideal and lofty ethic. For conservatism with regard to maintaining degree and order in no way implies the abandonment of the pragmatic outlook in politics. Ulysses is first and foremost a "statist" who must pursue the middle way of practical compromise and who is ready to engage in whatever machinations are necessary to achieve collective harmony in the Greek camp--to him, ultimately the only true ideal. Moreover, his craftiness and "leasings" are traditionally among the dominant traits of his character, as statements by such writers as Erasmus and Thomas Cooper show;²⁵ and only a reader unfamiliar with this tradition would regard his unseemly device as an overturning or lowering of our expectations, rather than

what this device in actuality is: a fulfillment of our expectations--given a Ulysses full of leasings.

Professor Millard MacLure appears to appreciate this demand for less-than-ideal conduct in a statist when he quotes from More's Utopia, Book I, in connection with both Troilus and Coriolanus. For, although More's complex irony makes it difficult to judge which of the speakers he endorses at any given time, it seems probable that his words in the character of More, in reply to Hythloday, receive at least guarded approval and have the force of vindicating what MacLure calls the "art of temporization, the middle wisdom which partakes of but cannot achieve perfection."²⁶ More's words, indeed, recall the adaptable, persevering Ulysses:

"That is what I was saying," Raphael replied.
"There is no place for philosophy in the councils of princes."
"Yes, there is," I replied, "but not for the speculative philosophy which thinks all things suitable for all occasions. There is another philosophy that is more urbane, that takes its proper cue and fits itself to the drama that is being played, acting its part aptly and well . . .
". . . If evil opinions cannot be quite rooted out, and if you cannot correct habitual attitudes as you wish, you must not therefore abandon the commonwealth. Don't give up the ship in a storm, because you cannot control the winds. And do not force unheard-of advice upon people, when you know that their minds are different from yours. You must strive to guide policy indirectly, so that you make the best of things, and what you cannot turn to good, you can at least make less bad. For it is impossible to do all things well unless all men are good, and this I do not expect to see for a long time."²⁷

Shakespeare's awareness that a governor sometimes must "correct habitual attitudes" by striving "to guide policy indirectly" is, of course, later shown in his Measure for Measure, in which the Duke, realizing that lawlessness cannot be extirpated directly once it has reached epidemic proportions, resorts to the ruse of appointing a deputy and pretending to go on a trip. In a similar fashion, it seems quite plausible that Ulysses considers the insubordination in the ranks too deeply ingrained to be eliminated by direct discipline. The fact that in choosing a more indirect and subtle method, as Professor Kleinstuck suggests, he "breeds emulation"²⁸ need not be taken as a contradiction, for it is primarily disrespect for superiors, not competition and rivalry, against which Ulysses inveighs. What he does is to take the harmful pride and vanity of Ajax and Achilles, which has been producing sheer purposeless insolence in them, and turns these qualities to a more constructive use, giving them a purpose--namely, the desire to be the preeminent warrior among the Greeks; a desire which eventually drives the stung Achilles to invite Hector to his tent and issue a challenge to him in IV.v. In short, as a "physician," Ulysses uses homeopathic remedies, rather than the more obvious and often harsher allopathic ones.

But beyond all these reasons for the inadequacy of the position that subsequent action undermines the Greek council scene, there is a more general and more profound reason: namely, that this argument suggests that Shakespeare has in effect deceived his audience. And it is one of the near-axioms of Shakespearean criticism that he rarely if ever allows confusion or ambiguity to arise about the basic sense of a scene. But the argument that the council scene is later undermined essentially means that this basic sense is one thing (dignified and serious) as it is happening and the opposite (bombastic and mere words) later on. However, this kind of retrospective undermining would appear to be alien to Shakespeare's technique as a dramatist.

Indeed, it is doubtful whether retrospective or retroactive satire can work at all, under the conditions which exist in Troilus and Cressida. For this technique involves an ironic contradiction between one part of a work and another, the technique of ironic reversal or deflation. Indeed, Professor Derick Marsh argues that this technique is the principle of construction in the play.²⁹ However, a look at one of Professor Marsh's examples will expose the inappropriateness of applying the idea of ironic reversal to Troilus and Cressida. For he proposes that Helen's luxurious state with Paris in III.1 is a deflation of the grandiose representation of

the war in the Prologue.³⁰ It is true, of course, that Helen's sybaritic and frivolous conduct in III.1, upon reflection, relates ironically to the over-all situation of a prolonged war. However, the distance between the Prologue and III.1 is too great to allow for what Marsh calls "ironic juxtaposition." Juxtaposition, the placing together in close proximity, is precisely what these two elements lack and what true deflation requires. The scholar in his study, of course, who is free to examine more closely and re-arrange these elements as he sees fit, may see them as juxtaposed; but the genuine reversal, the clear-cut irony which arises when a contrasting affirmation or mood follows hard upon the original one, is absent in this example and in several others.³¹

On the other hand, the procedure by which a writer takes characters and situations with utmost seriousness for a considerable time and then overthrows them is one which is characteristic of romantic irony, especially of Byron's Don Juan. But it is not likely that Shakespeare would have employed this later technique; moreover, even in romantic irony, the overthrow is much more explicit and involves a much clearer contrast of tone than the contrast between the orations and the later actions of the Greeks do. In order to achieve this kind of deflating contrast, Shakespeare would have had to represent Ulysses as engaging in actions which contradict

his views on order much more clearly than his gulling of Achilles and Ajax does. These actions should also have followed his speech much more closely in time, rather than with several attention-dispersing scenes intervening. For example, if he had turned from his speech and joined Achilles and Patroclus in their tent, where he would outdo Patroclus in travesties and defeat Thersites in coining slanders, the effect of comic or satiric self-contradiction would have been clearly achieved. Or--on the Trojan side--if Hector had remained ostensibly unpersuaded by Troilus and then had gone to meet his secret amour, Helen, thereby showing that his pious arguments had been designed to conceal his true motive by inverting it, then once again the effect of deflation would have been achieved. Flagrant contradictions in conduct like these are the stuff of satire. They unmask the hypocrite, deflate the pious, expose the unsavory motive, and reveal the fool. But in the work which is truly satiric, it is quite manifest that the satiric spirit delights in underlining these contradictions and exposing their foolishness or viciousness as they occur or soon afterwards, not in subtly hiding them at a distance from each other. The difference between the orations and the subsequent action, on the other hand, is rather one of different planes of conduct, of different modulation; and the sharpened definition

between the two, the derisive juxtaposition, the studied accentuation usually present in ironic deflation, are all absent here.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the shift from Ulysses' mighty address to his actions as an ordinary human being is properly modulated by Shakespeare in Ulysses' first lines to Nestor, which signalize a shift from his public to his more private personality. All the others have left, and he remains with Nestor.

Ulysses. Nestor.

Nestor. What says Ulysses?

Ulysses. I have a young conception in my brain;
Be you my time to bring it to some shape.
(11. 310-313)

He is no longer the copious and weighty orator, but a laconic and unceremonious administrator speaking in a more private mode. And as his level of discourse changes, so does his level of strategy. His character, which, as Professor Presson has astutely shown, has absorbed much of the forensic and advisory skill of Homer's Nestor,³² now shifts to that of the wily Odysseus in the Odyssey, from that of Olyseus-Nestor in the Iliad. His actions thus become appropriate to the man whom Homer shows in his second epic escaping from the Cyclops by a pragmatic but hardly dignified device; to the man who, as Professor Highet says in speaking of the Odyssey, "although brave and resolute, is preeminently clever, even to the point of devising unnecessary lies to tell those who love him."³³ Shakespeare, then, is only following classical

tradition when he makes Ulysses a clever trickster; indeed, when we consider the picture of him in Euripides' plays and in Erasmus' De Copia as a treacherous and deceitful politician,³⁴ we see that Shakespeare has mitigated this tradition and has actually elevated Ulysses, possibly as a result of Chapman's influence.³⁵ The true contrast, then, is not between Ulysses the pious orator and Ulysses the base schemer, but between Ulysses the public orator and Ulysses the private strategist, whose pragmatic trickery here is devoted exclusively, it must be remembered, to the worthy cause of restoring Grecian unity. The same contrast exists between Marc Antony's ostensibly bereaved, public-spirited character in Act III (with the motives of self-serving and vengeance below the surface) and the hard, cynical, almost ruthless character he displays during the selection of citizens to be executed in IV.1, which follows almost immediately. Yet, we do not call this more underlined contrast a satiric deflation, but rather regard it as a deepening or a darkening of characterization, and as a commentary on the often amoral ethics of statecraft.

Throughout this and the previous chapter, a major argument has been that eloquence does not sit well with satire. But turning the argument around and asking what the style suitable to satire is (especially what the Renaissance believed it is) casts even graver doubts

upon the satiric theory of Troilus. For, speaking of the typical stylistic weapons of satire (irony, colloquialism, obscenity, violence, exaggeration, etc.), Professor Highet observes that if the satirist "uses these devices only in certain sections of his work, then those sections alone may properly be satirical."³⁶ This explanation would certainly fit Troilus and Cressida, in which the base style, with its colloquialisms, obscenity, and violence, occurs almost exclusively in scenes dominated by Thersites. Indeed, the Elizabethan satirists, both in theory and in practice, believed, as Professor Alvin Kernan says, that the proper style for satire would have "harsh meters, coarse language, and frank descriptions of the most unattractive kinds of vice."³⁷ This stylistic requirement for satire appears in Puttenham, Scaliger, and various Italian critics.³⁸ But, although some of these features may apply to parts of Troilus, none of them fits in any way as a description of the Greek council scene. On the contrary, the style of this scene conforms perfectly to the requirements of what writers on eloquence from Cicero and Quintilian to Ascham and Puttenham have called the "grand style"--suitable for the epic and for tragedy.³⁹ And it is noteworthy that, whereas Elizabethan satirists--especially Marston--often shifted from the base to the epic style and thereby achieved a "mad mixture of high and low materials,"⁴⁰ Shakespeare does not mix styles

in Troilus within the same scene or speech. The elevated scenes are carefully isolated from the base ones, so that the strange mixture of levels typical of Elizabethan satire does not occur.⁴¹

The style of the Greek council scene, then, not only produces an impression contrary to that of satire, but produces an impression of weighty and history-making events which later frivolity can but partially blur; especially since this higher muse constantly recurs later on as well, in the speeches of Ulysses, Troilus, Hector, and even, in III.iii, Achilles. It is no doubt this persistent thread of heightened speech which has led Tatlock to affirm of the heroic scenes that Shakespeare "has here risen far above Caxton in dignity and beauty,"⁴² and which has led Professor Hardin Craig to write that Shakespeare did not satirize Homer's heroes, but "has elevated rather than debased" the medieval Troy story.⁴³ But even more noteworthy is the view of the importance of stylistic considerations expressed by Professor Kimbrough, who supports Professor Campbell in many of his arguments for the satiric thesis. For, in answer to the question, "Is the play a comicall satyre?" Kimbrough makes the following important reservation: "An affirmative answer is possible here only if it is heavily qualified, for one simply cannot ignore the great amount of heroic pageantry and serious debate, public, semipublic, and private,

which abound."⁴⁴

But the truly remarkable admission, one which has been widely neglected or overlooked, comes from Professor Campbell himself, in his Shakespeare's Satire, which appeared five years after his Comicall Satyre. In this later book, he grants that "the profundity of the tone in which Shakespeare has all the characters express themselves also obscures the satiric thrust of his drama. It sicklies o'er with thought the half-grim, half-derisive mood demanded of an author of satiric plays."⁴⁵ The observant reader will probably notice that Campbell represents this complication as a failure in technique, rather than as part of a deliberate design, and gently chides Shakespeare for failing to conform to the demands of true comicall satyre. But Professor Campbell's later remarks take him yet farther away from his original thesis of 1938. For he concludes about the play:

It need no longer be regarded as a confused and incomplete tragedy. Nor need it be condemned for the author's failure to adopt all the principles of the new comicall satyre. In Troilus and Cressida Shakespeare shows his unfailing independence of models. He combines his satire of the vices of power politics and of lust with a long philosophical and lyrical debate.⁴⁶

In his last sentence, Professor Campbell concedes, without actually saying so, that he no longer believes the play to be homogeneously a satire: he sees the philosophical and lyrical debates as a separate and independent element.

This viewpoint is fundamentally the one being set forth in this dissertation, and it is the Greek council scene where the fissure in the monolith first becomes evident. It is true, of course, that Professor Campbell assimilates his new outlook into a mode of expression which will preserve his original thesis; for he says, finally, that the play is "Shakespeare's highly original version of a recently devised form--the comicall satyre of Jonson and Marston⁴⁷ (my italics)." But once he has admitted that the debates do not belong to the satire, but co-exist with it, he can no longer strictly say that the play is consistently critical or derisive toward its characters, or that it is a satire through and through. In effect, his final statement means, as Cressida might have put it (I.1.93), that "This is, and is not, a comicall satyre."

NOTES

1 See Johannes Kleinstück, "Ulysses' Speech on Degree as Related to the Play," Neophilologus, XLIII (January, 1959) 59-60; Herbert J. Muller, The Spirit of Tragedy (New York, 1956), pp. 181-182.

2 Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), p. 112.

3 L. C. Knights, "Troilus and Cressida Again," Scrutiny, XVIII (Autumn, 1951), 147; Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d ed. (Garden City, 1956), p. 78; Norman Rabkin, "Troilus and Cressida: The Uses of the Double Plot," Sh Studies, I (1965), p. 269.

4 Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 141.

5 Derick Marsh, "Interpretation and Misinterpretation: the Problem of Troilus and Cressida," Sh Studies, I (1965), 186; Kleinstück, 59.

6 Albert Gérard, "Meaning and Structure in Troilus and Cressida," ES, XL (June, 1959), 150.

7 Kleinstück, 59; Kimbrough, p. 140.

8 Kleinstück, 59-60.

9 Alice Shalvi, "'Honor' in Troilus and Cressida," SEL, V (1965), 298.

10 A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (Cleveland and New York, 1964), p. 207.

11 When we consider how foolish Polonius appears throughout most of the play, we might be tempted to infer that Claudius is being ironic here. However, Claudius' consistent confidence in Polonius' judgement and his entrusting of important matters to the Lord Chamberlain would seem to preclude this interpretation.

12 Roscoe Addison Small, The Stage Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and the So-Called Poetasters (Breslau, 1899), p. 150.

13 Ibid., p. 150.

14 The Plays and Poems of Richard Sheridan, ed. R. Crompton Rhodes (Oxford, 1928), II, pp. 218-220.

15 Roscoe Addison Small, The Stage Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and the So-Called Poetasters (Breslau, 1899), p. 150.

16 Robert Presson has already expressed this conception of the combat. See his Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 289.

17 Shakespeare has derived the relationship of cousin between Ajax and Hector from Lydgate and Caxton, but neither of these sources has the battle occur as a formalized combat, as in the Iliad and in the play.

18 See Jonson's Prologue to the revised version of Every Man in His Humour, in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford, 1927), III, p. 303.

19 George Lyman Kittredge, The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Boston, 1936), p. 880.

20 See Thomas Cooper, Thesavrvs Lingvae Romanae & Britannicae (London, 1565), under "Hector."

21 E. M. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), p. 81.

22 Variorum, p. 451.

23 Presson has also noticed that Achilles' reversal of the action is a structural device, p. 301. The term peripeteia is often used more or less loosely to describe this kind of reversal. The more complete reversal, which would occur at approximately the same juncture as it does in Troilus (end of Act IV or beginning of Act V) and which introduces an unexpected and serious new conflict, has been called the catastasis or counter-turn.

Achilles' decision does not turn out to be crucial

enough to qualify as a catastasis, but it may be regarded as a peripeteia insofar as it temporarily overturns or reverses the main direction of the plot.

24 Gladys Willcock, "Shakespeare and Rhetoric," English Association Essays, XXXIX (1943), 59.

25 See Erasmus, "De Copia," in Opera Omnia (Petri Vander, 1703), I, pp. 79-81, and Cooper, Thesaurus, under "Ulysses."

26 Millard MacLure, "Shakespeare and the Lonely Dragon," UTQ, XXIV (January, 1955), 109-115.

27 Utopia, ed. H. V. S. Ogden (New York, 1949), p. 23.

28 Kleinstück, 59-60.

29 Marsh, 184.

30 Ibid., 186.

31 See also Rabkin, 270.

32 Presson, p. 33.

33 Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), p. 38.

34 See Richmond Lattimore, The Iliad of Homer (Chicago, 1965), Introduction, and Erasmus, "De Copia," pp. 79-81.

35 See Phyllis Bartlett, "The Heroes of Chapman's Homer," RES, XVII (July, 1941), 260, for a discussion of Chapman's conception of Ulysses as the real hero.

36 Hight, Anatomy, p. 18.

37 Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven and London, 1959), p. 58.

38 George Puttenham, The Arte of Englishe Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 148-153; for Scaliger and the Italian critics, see Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (Chicago, 1961), II, p. 747, and I, pp. 148-149. See also Marvin T. Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana, 1964), pp. 76-77, p. 81.

39 See Rosamond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1963), pp. 230-237; p. 232n.

40 Kernan, pp. 103-105.

41 Even though the scenes which depict the gulling of Ajax and the humiliation of Achilles are comic in nature, they are not written in the base style. As J. S. P. Tatlock suggests in his article, "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 760, in Troilus and Cressida "there is scurrility and there is nobility; but they are not mixed."

42 Tatlock, 761.

43 Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare
(Columbia, Missouri, 1948), p. 238.

44 Kimbrough, p. 177.

45 Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London,
1943), p. 120.

46 Ibid., p. 120.

47 Ibid., p. 120.

IX. ELEMENTS OF TRAGEDY

Scholars have disagreed for many years about the inclusion of Troilus and Cressida among the tragedies. Today, this problem may be discussed in at least three ways: (1) in terms of the classification of the play when it was published; (2) in terms of the formal requirements of tragedy; and (3) more specifically, in terms of the extent to which the two most logical candidates for status as a tragic hero, Troilus and Hector, qualify for this role.

The first of these is the easiest to dispose of. For many years, commentators on the play believed that the editors of the First Folio were uncertain about where to place Troilus and Cressida. Indeed, Professor Campbell made use of this apparent confusion as a fundamental argument for his contention that the play was neither comedy, tragedy, nor history.¹ But specialists in editorial problems, notably Professors W. W. Greg, Charlton Hinman, and Alice Walker,² have accepted Professor Edwin Willoughby's claim that copyright trouble with Henry Walley interrupted the printing of Troilus and caused the apparent confusion about its classification.³ Willoughby's discovery of the problem of copyright was published in

1932, and Professor Peter Alexander accepted his findings in 1939,⁴ so that it is somewhat surprising to encounter critics who, even up to the present, continue to refer to the "uncertainty" of Hemming and Condell.⁵ It seems quite evident that the shifting about of the play was due, not to wavering about its genre, but to the exigencies of the printing situation; and that the editors themselves considered the play a tragedy, although the author of the prefatory epistle of 1609 stressed its comic features. But, as Professor Harold S. Wilson points out, "this preface is a publisher's advertisement, of distinctly less authority than the opinion of the editors of the First Folio."⁶

The second problem, the formal requirements of tragedy, is much more complicated. In the first place, our whole conception of Shakespearean tragedy tends to be somewhat distorted because of the inclination of most writers, when they speak of Shakespearean tragedy as a whole, to think in terms of the four exemplary plays, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth.⁷ On the other hand, Titus Andronicus, Richard III, Richard II, Romeo and Juliet, King John, Julius Caesar, Troilus, Timon, and even sometimes Coriolanus and Antony and Cleopatra trail behind and are frequently denied the status of full-fledged tragedy. Many of these appear not to qualify fully because they have the taint of the history play;

and perhaps all of them either lack a protagonist of sufficient stature, or suffer from a protagonist who is predominantly evil.

Nevertheless, we must face the fact that Elizabethan editors, publishers of quartos, and no doubt Shakespeare himself considered all of these "lesser tragedies" as formally correct tragedies and either named them so or gave them titles (like The Life and Death of King John) which would signal to an Elizabethan, at least, that the lamentable fall of an eminent man would be depicted.⁸ It would therefore be wise to avoid a conception of Shakespearean tragedy which is consciously or unconsciously based on the four supreme examples alone. Rather, we should attempt to either arrive at a unified conception which would embrace both these four and the ten less impressive ones, or conclude that there is formally more than one kind of Shakespearean tragedy.

Fortunately, we have good grounds for accepting the less formidable alternative, namely, that there is more than one kind of Shakespearean tragedy. The opportunity for this alternative comes when we recognize that, whereas we are accustomed to thinking solely in terms of Aristotelian or "high" tragedy, Elizabethan drama actually allowed for three types: Aristotelian, de casibus, and Senecan. Indeed, the latter two were the rule, and Aristotelian tragedy a late and rather exceptional type.

Professors Willard Farnham and Lily B. Campbell have been largely responsible for the widely accepted thesis that the medieval conception of de casibus tragedy continued to have an abiding influence on Elizabethan drama, and Professor Madeleine Doran has given the subject extended treatment in her later study.⁹ Unlike Aristotelian tragedy, which requires a representation of men "better" than ourselves, hamartia, and a tragic hero who is "the mean between saintliness and depravity"¹⁰ (requirements which dominate our thinking about tragedy), de casibus downfalls do not require that the protagonist be even half-virtuous. Indeed, both Puttenham and Sidney (whose views of tragedy both seem to be exclusively de casibus) appear to consider a heinous tyrant to be the ideal protagonist and his fall the ideal warning to rulers.¹¹ The central teaching in this type of drama is, of course, the doctrine of the wheel of Fortune, and the warning to all mortals not to confuse present prosperity with unassailable security. Hence, the pattern of reversal of fortune and its moral significance, not the character of the protagonist, are of central importance, although the more pride he has in his illusory good fortune, the better. Also, in Senecan tragedy the Aristotelian requirement of comparative virtue could be somewhat neglected, and atrociously wicked characters modelled after Medea could be protagonists.

It should be immediately obvious that some of Shakespeare's tragedies fit into either the de casibus form, the Senecan, or a combination of one of these with the Aristotelian. Richard III, for example, would qualify as de casibus, specifically of the heinous-tyrant type exemplified earlier by Cambyses. Similarly, Titus is a Senecan revenge-play, in which the wronged-one is driven to heinous crimes which match or surpass those of his tormentors. King John would also seem to be a typical de casibus story, with a ruler more malevolent than virtuous, but with a strong hint of Aristotelian hamartia (tragic error) in John's decision to have Arthur killed, and a strong hint of remorse (implied virtue) which points to the complexities of the later tragic hero. Richard II may well be said to be initially a de casibus tragedy (selfish, flimsy, arbitrary ruler) which evolves toward a tragedy of character. Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra appear for different reasons to have passed the boundary-line between the two types and to be closer to the tragedy of character. The question of where Troilus and Cressida belongs must await further discussion. But it should be obvious at this point that Shakespearean tragedies have a much wider range of protagonists than a preoccupation with the four great tragedies would lead us to suspect. He need not, for example, be sketched "on a grand scale," as Professor

Bradley impressively argued.¹² Richard II, King John, Romeo and Juliet, even Brutus and Antony and Cleopatra are not truly larger-than-life in the sense of monumental passion or will and monumental wrongness--although Titus, Coriolanus, Richard III, and Timon are. Again, the tragic hero may be relatively blameless and not of sufficiently mature character (both Romeo and Juliet). Hence, either we are to eliminate these non-Aristotelian and hybrid tragedies from the class of tragedy altogether--insisting also that the quality of largeness is essential--or we must grant that Shakespeare wrote all three types of tragedy, and various combinations of the three, and that his "pure" tragedies are actually exceptional rather than typical (only four out of fourteen). It would seem that the latter would be the sounder conclusion.

The consequences of this conclusion for Troilus and Cressida should be quite clear. For Hector and Troilus, no matter how sympathetic toward them we wish to be, lack the larger-than-life quality which Bradley with considerable astuteness attributes to the four great tragic heroes. However, if we no longer require this quality of a tragic hero, the lack of it in Troilus and Hector should no longer be used, logically or psychologically, to disqualify them as tragic heroes.

Moreover, if we analyze further the conception of tragedy based exclusively on Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and

Macbeth, we can discover three other qualities which we tend to assume are requirements of all tragedy, but are not: intensity, concentration, and inwardness of characterization. These three qualities the great tragedies undoubtedly have, but several of the lesser ones do not.¹³ Hence, when we examine Troilus and Cressida and find a lack of intensity and concentration of characterization, indeed a dispersal of it among numerous centers of interest, as well as a relative outwardness of portrayal, we need not for these reasons exclude the play from the realm of tragedy: Julius Caesar has a similar dispersal and outwardness. Indeed, these latter features would appear to be intrinsic disadvantages of the chronicle presentation, which, as Professor Baldwin has maintained, is Shakespeare's scenario-procedure in Troilus.¹⁴

Two other theoretical grounds for excluding the play from the realm of tragedy have been proposed by various authors, but each of these, Professor Oscar Mandel has shown, is not essential to tragedy.¹⁵ The first is that, as Professor Curtis Watson puts it, the play lacks a tragic coda in which "trust and fidelity are reaffirmed."¹⁶ The second is that Troilus is denied a "glorious death."¹⁷ Another which immediately comes to mind is that neither Troilus nor Hector undergoes an experience of enlightenment. However, as Professor Mandel points out, the "assertion of

cosmic justice" or "the triumph of the human soul over suffering and disaster" may be themes of tragedy, but they are not "quintessential."¹⁸ Moreover, as Professor Theodore Spencer suggests, "we have, in the case of Troilus, a worse kind of tragedy than death, the tragedy of continued existence after everything that matters has been destroyed."¹⁹ A final consideration may be added: the sharing of the tragic role by Troilus and Hector unavoidably leads to some dilution of intensity; but once again this characteristic of the play disqualifies it from tragedy only by comparison with the four exemplary ones, all of which have a single tragic figure. Both Romeo and Juliet and Antony and Cleopatra have this division of the tragic role in two, and it may be significant that, of the plays which some do not regard as full-fledged tragedies, three of them have both a sharing of the tragic role and a strong love-interest. Also, the presence of two tragic protagonists in Romeo and Juliet and Antony and Cleopatra should dispel any uneasiness we might feel about the contention that Troilus and Hector both qualify for the tragic role; especially since, as Professor Mandel has pointed out, the tragedies of other writers sometimes involve this kind of sharing.²⁰

1. Troilus

Most, though not all, of Troilus' tragic dimension

manifests itself in Act V, especially during the scene in which he and Ulysses watch Cressida consent to Diomedes. In the chapter on the Trojan council, we already saw that, impelled by an excessive love of honor, he had fallen prey to hamartia and, along with his brother Hector, had sown the seeds of later tragedy. However, that tragic mistake, although its consequence is to be of a much more far-reaching nature, is less vividly depicted than the consequence of Troilus' other tragic mistake, his taking Cressida's "assumed virtue for the real."²¹ Consequently, the emphasis in Act V is upon his suffering as a result of Cressida's infidelity, and it is only in the very last scene that the effects on him of the national catastrophe --Hector's death--and of the impending devastation of Troy are swiftly shown, with a less vivid sense of his agony.

The great distress which Troilus feels as he watches Cressida with Diomedes should be emphasized, because it is precisely this acute suffering and his report of it, directly and indirectly, to the audience which makes an exclusively satiric interpretation of the scene implausible and encourages a view that the tragic perspective is at least partially operative. Indeed, it would take a remarkably jaded audience to achieve toward Troilus the attitude of uncomplicated scornful amusement which Professor Campbell maintains we are to feel toward

this deceived and youthful lover. For not only does Troilus use the authentic language of anguish ("O plague and madness," l. 35; "by hell and all hell's torments," l. 43), but Ulysses at numerous junctures enlarges the picture of agitation by his "mirrors" of Troilus' reactions (ll. 36-38, 40-41, 43, 50, 62). Particularly, Ulysses' words--"You are moved," "You flow to distraction," "You shake, my lord, at something"--leave no doubt that, in the eyes of the judicious Greek, Troilus is undergoing unusual distress. And, as Professor Rudolf Stamm remarks discerningly, "The four words, 'She strokes his cheek!' (V.11.51), mirroring the fact so dryly and objectively, are probably the most concentrated and intense expression of passion in the whole play."²² It is possible, of course, for comic cuckolds to express their suffering, as they do in Every Man Out, Eastward Ho, The Country Wife, or The Merry Wives of Windsor, without an inhibition of the comic spirit. But in these instances, the victims, unlike Troilus, are in some way blameworthy in their relations with their wives or in their social relations,²³ or (MWW) they are simply mistaken. Consequently, in terms of correction and the restoration of moral balance, they "deserve" to suffer. With Troilus, on the other hand, it would be strained reasoning to suggest that his love, though misguided and naively trusting, is blameworthy, or that he is an allowed and exclusively comic figure

throughout the play, as the cuckolds in the other plays are.

Another feature of the "ocular proof" scene which points toward a tragic dimension is that it has close analogies with the scene in which Othello observes Cassio and Bianca. It may be that these analogies are more in physical arrangement and tone than in literal situation (for the two scenes are quite different in actual import). Nevertheless, the self-flagellating torment is the same in each, and both are essentially tortured-cuckold scenes. Moreover, it is probably no accident that, just as Othello at one point in the play says of Desdemona, "when I love thee not,/Chaos is come again" (III.iii.91-92), so Troilus, when he sees that he has lost Cressida's love, laments, "The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolv'd, and loos'd" (V.ii.156).

Indeed, Troilus' whole "This she?" speech, in which the previous quotation occurs, has the tone of loss and grief which we associate with the tragic mode; and the eccentricity of Troilus' reasoning, far from undermining the seriousness of the speech, has precedents in other plays of Shakespeare. It is true that Professor Derick Marsh considers Troilus' refusal to accept the truth of Cressida's inconstancy as unrealistic and that Professor Campbell says "emotions endowed with tragic potentialities do not employ language so grotesquely tortured

as this."²⁴ However, Professor Theodore Spencer appears to answer this latter view adequately, maintaining that "the intellectual effort, as in metaphysical poetry elsewhere, only increases and stiffens the tension."²⁵ Moreover, as Professor Watson has suggested, Troilus' refusal to believe his eyes resembles Lear's insistent "No" to Kent about Regan's responsibility for shaming him.²⁶ Indeed, it seems possible that Shakespeare has unofficially invented a new and personal figure of speech, "the vehement denial of reality." This figure, which would belong to that class called "figures of pathos,"²⁷ obviously has strong dramatic potential. Shakespeare uses it also (more mildly) in Henry V.²⁸ Again, Troilus' disbelief also resembles, according to Professor Tillyard, Hamlet's amazement at his mother's swiftness and dexterity in re-marrying (I.ii).²⁹ Finally, as Professor Empson observes, Troilus' speech has an important intellectual function, since it is linked to the degree-order theme: Cressida's disloyalty makes him see unity and cosmic order as disintegrating (V.ii.141, 156) and, in effect, "untunes the string" of reason and orderly arrangement for him.³⁰ All in all, these similar passages in other plays, and the reflection that tortured language and strained, unreasonable thinking are appropriate to one in Troilus' state, make the conclusion that the tone of the "This she?" speech is tragic eminently plausible.

The extent to which we can consider Troilus a tragic hero depends also upon our estimate of his worthiness and stature as a human being. Admittedly, we may hesitate to accept as fully accurate and unbiassed Pandarus' account to Cressida of Troilus' qualities (I.ii.275-278) --a description which, like Ophelia's of Hamlet (III.i. 159-162) and Lady Hotspur's of Hotspur (2 Henry IV, II.iii. 19-33), makes Troilus a model gentleman. However, it is difficult to dismiss Ulysses' encomium of Troilus (IV.v. 96-112). Nevertheless, some writers have found a way to discredit Ulysses' statement, even though they do not hesitate to regard Ulysses as an unimpeachable authority in his estimate of Cressida only a few lines earlier (II. 54-62). Their proposal amounts to a claim that the praise of Troilus is of doubtful value since it is based on Aeneas' report and is therefore hearsay or merely Aeneas' opinion.³¹ But it should be pointed out that Ulysses' astuteness is highly traditional and must be assumed to exist independently of information furnished by Aeneas. As Ascham once remarked,³² Ulysses is renowned for his knowledge of many men, and in this very scene he displays his powers of swift observation not only about Cressida's hidden turpitude but about Diomedes' physical traits:

'Tis he, I ken the manner of his gait;
He rises on the toe. That spirit of his
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.
(II. 14-16)

Moreover, Aeneas' reputation in the Renaissance, as in the

Middle Ages, is very high, and the Elizabethan audience could hardly forget (as we might) that this original authority for Troilus' character is "the man" of "Arma virumque cano," the opening of an epic whose grave and pious hero was respected by Shakespeare's contemporaries as much as (or more than) the hero of the Odyssey.

Hence, the opinion is not just anyone's, and the hearsay is a transmission of observations from one astute observer to another. Furthermore, as Professor Richard C. Harrier stresses, Aeneas' brief conversations with Troilus in Acts I, II, and V show them on very familiar terms, so that Ulysses' statement that Aeneas is "one that knows the youth/Even to his inches" cannot be taken lightly.³³ The encomium, then, is the outgrowth of a close knowledge of Troilus on the part of a reliable authority; and this information is imparted to a man who is noted for his penetrating insight and who is not easily deceived. Consequently, the picture of Troilus in this encomium may be taken as an accurate description of his character--a character which has sufficient worth and spirit to qualify Troilus for the tragic role.

Another factor which is difficult to explain away is the gravity, earnestness, and even eloquence of Troilus' speeches; for these are qualities proper to the tragic tone. For example, Professor Tillyard, in a balanced evaluation, writes: "Troilus is young, very much in love,

changeable, taking himself with terrible seriousness. He is ridiculous, and yet he speaks such poetry that we have to take him seriously as well."³⁴ It is possible, of course, to maintain that this very earnestness has its comic dimension, although no one to my knowledge has taken this line in writing. However, Professor Kimbrough has displayed considerable ingenuity in discovering traces of insincerity in Troilus' "injury of chance" speeches to Cressida in IV.iv. Professor Kimbrough claims that Troilus shows fatigue "and, almost, relief" and that "a self-satisfied smile almost seems to break through" when he tells Cressida that he does not have fears about her infidelity.³⁵ Moreover, Professors Alice Walker and Derek Traversi, as well as Professor Kimbrough, find Troilus' style of speech to be detached and formal;³⁶ although Traversi, at least, as in many of his analyses of speeches in the play, seems to be suggesting that a dissociation of sensibility in the poet, rather than an insincerity of feeling in the lover, is responsible for the relative impersonality of Troilus' discourses.³⁷ Indeed, the latter explanation must always be kept in mind, for Shakespeare, although he undoubtedly had the "most comprehensive soul" among the English dramatists, was not omniscient or impeccable; and not every inadequacy in a character may be regarded as a calculated touch of characterization, but may be a rare inadequacy of

technique. In fact, Troilus and Cressida is precisely the complicated play, full of unwieldy materials, in which these subtle neglects of techniques are bound to occur.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that this detachment and inappropriate formality which some find in Troilus' lines have been missed by most commentators, who regard these lines as impressive poetry. And, significantly enough, Professor Campbell himself finds it difficult to assimilate the eloquence of the "injurious time" speech into his satiric scheme:

But one must admit that Troilus, in the ensuing long speech, closes with so high and level a flight of the imagination that the genuineness of his grief, for a moment at least, makes us oblivious of its unworthy cause. Hence, it seems an admirable expression of the sadness that all sudden partings of loved ones awaken . . . Such eloquence, we have seen, pervades the drama and lends an adventitious air of nobility to opinions and points of view for which Shakespeare manifestly did not wish to win sympathy . . . Nevertheless, it is a moving display, however unjustified, of the powerful emotion that a young man like Troilus would certainly feel at a moment like this.³⁸

Professor Campbell succeeds in rationalizing the eloquence to his own satisfaction; but he never explains why Shakespeare, a dramatist with a fine sense of functionalism, would want to compose moving and imaginative speeches which, at the same time, he did not want us to be moved by. It seems, on the contrary, much more plausible that tone, function, and effect cooperate here, as they usually do in Shakespeare's work, and that Troilus'

grave and earnest outpourings belong to a character worthy of the tragic role, whose sensibilities are suited to tragic suffering.

But it is in the very last scenes of the play that Troilus' stature as a tragic figure has been most obscured. What is usually emphasized is his envenomed bitterness, his irrationality, his hopelessness, and his abandonment of moral restraints in warfare in his argument with Hector (V.iii.37-58). One finds it rarely if ever mentioned that his feats in battle after the death of Hector cause Ulysses to marvel, and raise the crestfallen deceived lover to the status of the "second Hector" of Lydgate and Caxton (an epithet to which Ulysses had himself alluded earlier, IV.v.108-109). For Ulysses describes Troilus in battle thus:

who hath done to-day
Mad and fantastic execution,
Engaging and redeeming of himself
With such careless force and forceless care
As if that luck, in very spite of cunning,
Bade him win all.

(V.v.37-42)

Indeed, Troilus for this brief time assumes the dimensions of one of the invincible warriors in Homer's Iliad.

Secondly, contrary to the usual interpretation, Troilus is not truly hysterical and desperate at the very end of the play. It is true that from line 3 to line 22 of V.x he speaks of Hector's death in the mode of elegaic lament, representing it as the cataclysm for the Trojans

that it always was in tradition. But, after his final lament, "Hector is dead; there is no more to say" (l. 22), he goes on in an entirely different direction:

Stay yet. You vile abominable tents,
Thus proudly pight upon our Phrygian plains,
Let Titan rise as early as he dare,
I'll through and through you! And thou great-
sized coward,
No space of earth shall sunder our two hates;
I'll haunt thee like a wicked conscience still,
That mouldeth goblins swift as frenzy's thoughts.
Strike a free march to Troy! With comfort go.
Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.
(ll. 23-31)

This may strike some observers as irrational rant and impotent vengefulness, but Ulysses' report of Troilus' previous exploits makes his threats to destroy the Greek tents (or themselves, symbolized by the tents) quite credible. Moreover, an earlier part of the speech shows that Troilus has risen to the realm of heroic defiance of Fortune, rather than of irrational rant:

Aene. My lord, you do discomfort all the host.
Tro. You understand me not that tell me so.
I do not speak of flight, of fear, of death,
But dare all imminence that gods and men
Address their dangers in.
(ll. 10-14)

Professor Willard Farnham is perhaps the only commentator who has noticed the heroic quality of this speech, and it appears to be one of many factors which have led him to consider Troilus the hero of the play.³⁹

Again, there is another tragic element in this speech. For the more literate members of the audience

knew that, in both Lydgate and Caxton, Achilles later on brutally and unfairly murders Troilus with the aid of innumerable Myrmidons.⁴⁰ Hence, there would be a mordant dramatic irony in Troilus' unsuspecting apostrophe and challenge to Achilles. Although Troilus does not die during the course of the play, this allusion to Achilles casts the tragic pall of death over him during the last moments that we see him.

Furthermore, he achieves a genuine measure of nobility in the last two lines of the speech. The exclamation, "Strike a free march to Troy!", carries with it a note of renewed vigor and determination. The brief command to his men, "With comfort go," places him unmistakably in the position of the reassuring and consoling leader who has, moreover, begun--like the nobler tragic heroes--to transcend his own suffering and to turn it aside for the sake of the state. The final line, "Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe," contains two elements of tragic experience--suffering and a reconciliation, however elemental and bellicose, to that suffering. Aided by the conclusive and heroic couplet, the speech therefore brings to an aesthetically satisfying, though mournful, close the action initiated by Troilus and Hector in II.ii. Troilus, the crushed and doubly bereaved figure, has passed from the state of youth (passionate love and mercurial pursuit of glory) to the state of manhood (recognition

of evil in the world, through Cressida's betrayal, and recognition of the dire consequences of rash action).

As Professor Aerol Arnold puts it:

Hector's death explodes Troilus' illusions about wars fought for honor, just as Cressida's behavior explodes his romantic ideas about love . . . Thus, Cressida's faithlessness and the ignoble death of Hector, the man who sacrificed love and life to honor, help make Troilus the mature soldier destined to succeed Hector.⁴¹

2. Hector

As we saw in the chapter on the Trojan council, once we eliminate the notion that Hector's challenge to Ajax is self-contradictory, cynical, or Machiavellian, we are set free to see him as a fallible, but estimable and largely admirable figure. For instance, Professor Harbage observes that "Troilus and Cressida is a hard play, but the gentleness of the great warrior Hector is remarked upon with peculiar insistence," and he notes numerous passages in which this gentleness is either referred to by characters or shown in action.⁴² Nestor's encomium in IV.v.183-200 is particularly suggestive in moulding an image of the Trojan champion and in pointing toward a normative attitude toward him. For example, Professor R. A. Foakes suggests that this encomium makes Hector "the noblest soldier of them all,"⁴³ and Professor Rudolf Stamm shrewdly reminds us that Nestor's praise "is particularly impressive because it is the tribute of an

enemy."⁴⁴ Moreover, if there is any lingering doubt about Hector's noble motive in calling a halt to his battle with Ajax (the possibility of cowardice would naturally occur to some), Ajax's tribute to Hector--which is consistent with Nestor's and Ulysses' (IV.v.106-107) observations of him--should dispel this doubt: "Thou art too gentle and too free a man" (IV.v.139).

Nevertheless, some critics have attempted to undermine Hector's magnanimity and thus (perhaps unintentionally) to undermine his status as a tragic hero. Professor Albert Gérard maintains that "Troilus is right and Hector mistaken" in their argument about Hector's code of sparing fallen Greeks.⁴⁵ Professor Alice Shalvi concurs on this point, and Professor Derick Marsh goes beyond both of them by claiming that both Hector and Troilus are wrong.⁴⁶ However, although Troilus uses the phrase "a vice of mercy" (1. 37) to describe Hector, and although Caxton, with uninspired pragmatism, had earlier deplored Hector's sparing of his foes,⁴⁷ it would be less than circumspect to imagine that the preeminent Christian virtue could be regarded as deplorable in a hero during the Renaissance. For instance, the design of the early part of Book VI in Spenser's The Faerie Queene gains much of its force from the contrast between the churlish knight who does not spare and Calidore, the merciful knight who spares. Similarly, the Arcadia has

as one of its pervasive themes the magnanimity and mercifulness in battle of its chief knights, Pyrocles, Mucidorus, Amphialus, and Argalus, as well as the vice of heedless frenzy in battle of the near-villainous knight, Anaxius. Indeed, Shakespeare himself treats the theme of mercy a number of times. Mercy triumphs radiantly in King John, when Hubert spares Prince Arthur after a scene of agonizing entreaty and refusal (IV.1). Mercy in the Second Murderer in Richard III prolongs the suspense in the death of Clarence (I.iv), prevents him from helping the First Murderer, and makes him repent. Again, one of the most famous speeches in Shakespeare, Portia's in IV. 1.184-205, with its Biblical rhythms and language, is surely among the finest praises of this virtue. In short, Hector's excess of magnanimity--like Timon's excess of generosity--carries within it the seeds of tragedy; for surely Shakespeare's repeated emphasis on this virtue in Hector is designed dramatically to lead up to the crucial event in his life--his sparing of the winded and "fat" Achilles (V.vi.14)--which will stand in stark ironic contrast to Achilles' dastardly ambush. Troilus' expression, "a vice of mercy," is thus an oxymoron and would have been recognized as one by Shakespeare's first auditors. Both Professor Adrien Bonjour, who has surveyed the writing on this problem up to 1964, and Professor Robert Presson have come to similar

conclusions.⁴⁸

Much the same can be said for the attempts to depict Hector's insistence on facing Achilles in battle as motivated by his hunger for "glorious reputation" or, in other words, as less than heroic.⁴⁹ Just as in our evaluation of the Trojan council, we must not superimpose our own rather sceptical conception of honor upon the conception of it widely held in the Renaissance. Hector has made a vow, and regardless of Cassandra's subtle religious criticism of that vow (V.iii.16-18), he is, by the code of the knight and the gentleman, honor-bound to keep it. He does not seek glory, but as he says (l. 71) simply wishes to live up to what he conceives of as his duty. The reiteration of this theme should leave no doubt that Hector acts to carry out his moral commitment. For example, he says "The gods have heard me swear" (l. 15). He speaks at length of honor in ll. 25-28. He is able, even in the midst of his conflict with the three suppliants, to feel concern for Troilus, to warn him away from battle, and to offer to "stand to-day for thee and me and Troy" (l. 36). After the related discussion of mercy in battle, he repeats, "I do stand engag'd to many Greeks,/Even in the faith of valour" (l. 67) and "I must not break my faith./You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,/Let me not shame respect, but give me leave" (ll. 71-73).

It may be difficult for us today to treat this kind

of vow with seriousness and respect; it is also quite credible that Shakespeare, balanced somewhere between the Christian and pagan outlooks, tended in this instance to represent Hector as morally in error and Cassandra as finally more wise and just. But even if Hector's honor is to be regarded as an ultimately false value, his action can hardly be viewed as foolish or reprehensible. Rather, as in his sparing of Achilles, he is "a victim of his own chivalry,"⁵⁰ and his adherence to an archaic and not always rational code which causes his downfall seems, in its content and treatment, to be a theme much more suitable to the tragic demise of an otherwise estimable man than to a pointless debacle which would inspire cynical amusement. We must not forget, as Professor Watson writes, that in the Renaissance "Nothing was more damaging to the hero's prestige than to refuse a call to arms."⁵¹ But at least Hector, he points out, like Desdemona to Brabantio, "shows utmost courtesy when he refuses to obey his father."⁵²

Moreover, we should avoid treating the scene in a literary vacuum. In a very real sense, Hector insists on going into battle against the wishes of Priam and Andromache in Troilus and Cressida because he insists on going into battle under much the same circumstances in the Iliad (Andromache and Cassandra are missing and Hecuba is present there). Essentially the same scene appears in

Caxton and Lydgate too. Indeed, as Presson shows, Hector "has no definite reason, no moral commitment" in the latter authors and hence, according to Presson, Shakespeare has improved Hector morally over them.⁵³ Thus, Shakespeare not only has this scene in his play because it is a striking and crucial part of the sources (especially Homer); but he has chosen to follow the account which is more favorable to Hector because it supplies him with a moral reason other than sheer stubbornness--the account, that is, by Homer.

On the other hand, this very comparison with Homer's version has given rise to the observation by Professor Alice Walker that Shakespeare's elimination of Hecuba and Helen constitutes a "rejection of pathetic possibilities," a refusal to concede to sentiment.⁵⁴ Professor Walker uses this interesting argument as part of her general claim that the play is fundamentally satiric, even though elsewhere she doubts that Homer was a significant source for Shakespeare.⁵⁵ The observation that Shakespeare's scene has less pathos than Homer's can hardly be disputed. It seems unlikely that Shakespeare would have either the boldness to represent on the stage Hecuba's baring of the breast which fed Hector⁵⁶ or the space to include Priam's grim pictures of what would happen to him if Hector were to die.⁵⁷

But the lesser emotional impact of the compressed

stage version--when compared with that of the epic, in which Homer had leisure to dwell upon and exploit the pathetic possibilities of the situation--should not be equated with an absence of dramatic tension and sentiment in Shakespeare's version. Actually, in spite of the swift and rigorously economical treatment by Shakespeare, the scene has considerable dramatic force. As in the parallel scenes in Julius Caesar and Hamlet, a sense of foreboding pervades the atmosphere.

Andromache's dreams are like Calpurnia's dreams and Hamlet's "ill" feeling about his heart (V.ii.223).

Moreover, any literate or even semi-literate person knows that Hector, like Caesar, is unwittingly going to his doom, so that there is a pall of dramatic irony over him. Andromache, Cassandra, and Priam speak in exclamations, imperative mood, use "O's" frequently, use figures of supplication, and perhaps (l. 10) address Hector at times on their knees. The scene is cunningly divided into three parts: the first between Hector, Andromache, and Cassandra; the second, a digressive but parallel argument between Troilus and Hector, while Cassandra goes for Priam; and the third, in which the aged Priam rather pathetically fails to command his son to avoid the fated battle. Thus, the conflict moves in successive waves, with the most vehement voice given to the voice of destiny itself, at the end of the episode: for

Cassandra's dire and graphic prophecies certainly give the scene a touch of horror and raise the emotional level to one far beyond scornful amusement.⁵⁸ Professor Aerol Arnold, who has studied this scene carefully, concludes that Shakespeare "sacrificed an opportunity for pathos in the Hector-Andromache scene to the larger scheme of the play" because he wanted to emphasize Hector, not Andromache, and because he wanted to develop Hector as "one steadfast against human considerations and supernatural warnings,"⁵⁹ when these are opposed to honor.

Another important scene in which the dignity and graciousness of Hector (indeed, of all the heroes except Achilles) is affirmed is the "loving interview" of IV.v. Long ago, Professor Tatlock spoke of the "chivalrous cordiality" of this scene and included it among the scenes which balance the scurrility of the play with genuine nobility. One observation he makes seems especially pertinent: "These scenes seem to be largely Shakespeare's own addition to the story, and only a very prejudiced reader can fail to see that he wrote them with perfect seriousness and sympathy."⁶⁰ Similarly, Professor Kimbrough writes: "Shakespeare did not turn Hector's visit into an empty, courtly show or a formal visit of state. Rather, the dialogue is filled with a tone of veneration for the main persons of the siege story and of respect for the values which they represent."⁶¹

Needless to say, it is Hector who is at the center of this tone of veneration and whose graciousness is most admirable. Moreover, it would not be hard to find the reason for the special pathos of the meeting. As Professor R. A. Small pointed out long ago, Shakespeare sacrifices dramatic plausibility by making Hector fail to recognize men he had been fighting for nine years, because the "very point of the whole matter lies in the fact that this is the first greeting of men who have known each other only as a terrible name."⁶² The irony involved in a loving interview among men who have been (and soon will be again) ruthless enemies to each other, coupled with the paradox of mutual admiration on a personal level and senseless mutual destruction on an impersonal level, completes the bittersweet tone of this elevated scene. And, as Professor Rudolf Stamm again perceptively notes, numerous embraces referred to in the dialogue (ll. 135, 148, 157, 199, 202) would enhance the graciousness and pathos of the meeting, when effectuated on the stage.⁶²

The sad wisdom of the two intellects, Ulysses and Hector, in their short exchange (ll. 213-227) only serves to increase the irony and paradox of a loving interview between enemies. Hector's "Ah, sir, there's many a Greek and Trojan dead/Since first I saw yourself and Diomed" (ll. 214-215) has a tone of wistful melancholy, and Ulysses' reply, in which he pictures the future ruin of

Troy, has the element of foreshadowing proper to the tragic vision. In all this, it is Hector who is the center of the tragic implications--for his reply, that he must hope Ulysses is wrong and that Time will arbitrate the issue, surely places him under a cloud of dramatic irony. And the suggestion that his anger at Achilles because of the latter's surly behavior undermines Hector's gracious conduct⁶³ has little force in upsetting his dignity in this scene; for Achilles is clearly in the wrong, as Ajax's chiding of him indicates (II. 260-265); and Hector's justifiable anger and even his bragging (for which he apologizes) have their parallels in the exemplary conduct of Henry V (III.vi.159-160, IV.iii.92-107).

Hector's final moments are not, furthermore, as inglorious as some have believed. Professor Rudolf Stamm has noticed that Shakespeare alludes to the setting sun and impending darkness four times in Act V (vi.23, viii. 3, viii.5-9, viii.17) and suggests that the use of this symbolic detail, "to accompany and render glorious the end of Hector, is appropriate to the nobility and importance of the hero."⁶⁴ Again, the inevitability of Hector's death--which has pursued him since II.ii and has become increasingly insistent since Andromache's dreams, Cassandra's prophecies, and his rash boon to Achilles--places Hector's fate securely in the tragic realm; especially since, as Professor Oscar Mandel maintains,

inevitability is one of the few genuinely essential elements for tragedy.⁶⁵

Finally, we can derive an accurate idea of the manner in which we are to regard Hector's death from Troilus' report of it in V.x. A close look at the scene from l. 3 to l. 22 reveals that Troilus lapses into the mode of the elegy, with his frequent, but well-spaced reiterations of the simple fact that "Hector is gone." This tribute to his dead brother is befitting to a tragic hero, and he himself is the ideal spokesman for it, both dramatically and in terms of his poetic sensibilities. Moreover, his determination to allay his grief by seeking revenge corresponds to the resolution of the elegy on a note of consolation. Hector's death, then, is a measure of his importance in the play: that it is a catastrophe for Troy and for Troilus and that it is treated elegiacally should give us firm clues about his stature as a tragic hero. He shares this role with Troilus, but as we have seen the sharing of the role of tragic protagonist occurs in two other plays of Shakespeare and does not violate the requirements of tragedy.

3. Tragic Plotting

In Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare's plotting, in a number of ways, is typical of tragic plotting. Most prominent among these ways is his disposition of scenes

in Acts III and IV. For here he does twice what he did twice in Romeo and Juliet: he makes a scene of impending misfortune immediately follow a scene of great joy. In the earlier play, this ironic juxtaposition occurs in Act III. In scene three, Friar Laurence tells Romeo, concerning Juliet, "Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her" (l. 147), and Romeo leaves, elated with a "joy past joy" (l. 173). But in the very next scene, III.iv, Capulet executes a reversal of this joy by telling Paris that he will wed Juliet on Thursday. In the following scene, III.v, Romeo and Juliet celebrate their night of love; but within the same scene, almost immediately after Romeo leaves, Lady Capulet ironically reverses their exhilaration by informing Juliet that she is to marry Paris (ll. 113-116). Thus, Shakespeare casts a shadow of dramatic irony over the lovers before and during the consummation of their love, and swiftly follows this consummation with an ironic reversal the very next morning.

Shakespeare repeats this procedure with slight changes in Troilus and Cressida. Immediately after the two lovers retire in III.ii, the scene switches to Calchas, who informs Agamemnon (III.iii) that it is now possible to get Calchas' daughter, Cressida, in exchange for Antenor. This ironic reversal obviously corresponds to Capulet's promise to Paris in III.iv of Romeo and Juliet, in which the prospect of misfortune is introduced and made to seem

menacing, but is not yet accomplished.

Similarly, soon after Troilus and Cressida celebrate their night of love (IV.11) and converse intimately the morning after, Aeneas appears with the news of the exchange: a turn of events which resembles Lady Capulet's informing Juliet of her marriage to Paris--even down to the detail that both reversals occur the very next morning and within the same scene which had enjoyed a tone of intimacy and contentment until the reversal. Shakespeare even increases the sense of destiny's cumulative force in Troilus and Cressida by inserting a brief scene (IV.1) in which, among other things, Paris informs Aeneas that his, Aeneas', mission is to turn Cressida over to Diomedes (ll. 36-38). This increment of apprehension also adds a note of dramatic irony and pathos, since it occurs in earliest morning (the servants use torches) and since the lovers, innocent of their fate, have probably not yet arisen. Surely, then, this careful surrounding of the lovers' night of pleasure with premonitions of misfortune and with the remorselessly swift news of the exchange places them in a tragic position with a degree of pathos; and a derisive element would here be inappropriate.

Moreover, Shakespeare's handling of the transition from the lovers' festive ribaldry to the report that they must part indicates a careful control of irony and pacing,

as well as a fine dramatic sense. As Stamm suggests with a discernment typical of him, a knocking at the door occurs three times during the scene,⁶⁶ twice during the lovers' banter and once after they have withdrawn (ll. 35, 40, and 44). Presumably, the sound of this knocking would be louder and more insistent each time (Pandarus asks after the third time, "Will you beat down the door?"). The symbolic import of these sounds should be quite evident here: the intrusion of the inevitable and the unwished-for into the scene of unsuspecting elation. As Stamm puts it: "The contrast between the hollow sounds, the meaning of which is known to the audience, and the frivolous conversation of Pandarus and the unsuspecting couple is a poignant dramatic effect. It makes this scene a worthy pendant to the knocking at the gate in Macbeth."⁶⁷

Similarly, Shakespeare's treatment of Cressida's reaction to the news ostensibly stresses the tragic side: her agitation and grief (IV.ii.81-115, IV.iv.1-12). And any inference to the contrary would have to proceed on the premise that Shakespeare's stylistic devices of exclamations, supplications, vehement resolutions, hurried metrics, and distracted repetitions have no function; or for some reason are designed to clash with a secretly amusing import of the scenes; or are meant ironically. But irony is a problematic figure, and the stylistic manifold should contain a few details, at least,

which act as cues to the presence of this irony-- exaggeration or self-contradiction, for example. But these devices do not appear here. Only the foreknowledge that Cressida will betray her own protestations introduces an ironic element. But this is dramatic irony, and as everyone knows dramatic irony can be used for tragic effect as easily as (or more easily than) for comic effect. In short, it is more likely that Cressida's frenzied rejection of the idea of leaving Troilus makes her a suffering figure and an unsuspecting victim of her own lack of insight and foresight, than that it makes her a hypocrite who dissembles grief.

Again, the frequent references to the gods, chance, and Time, especially during the parting scene, increase the impression that Shakespeare is reinforcing the tragic interpretation of the lovers' separation through iterative diction. Cressida mentions the gods three times in her exchange with Pandarus (IV.ii.81-114), during which he informs her of the exchange. Troilus refers to the irony of fate in l. 71 ("How my achievements mock me!"), and Pandarus reinforces this idea in l. 76: "Is't possible? No sooner got but lost." Troilus tells Cressida that the gods are angry with him (because he is more devoted to her than to them) in IV.iv.26-29; and Cressida's answer would probably have been recognized in Elizabethan times as a translation of one of the more famous lines

in Virgil's Aeneid: "Have the gods envy?"⁶⁸ It should be clear that this kind of grave classical reference to the manipulation of human fate by capricious gods (a theme which pervades the Iliad and the Odyssey as well) would fit the melancholy tone of the separation; and that the suggestion that this reference is mock-heroic and therefore satiric would be a convenient afterthought, rather than an original insight.

Again, although Professor A. S. Knowland denies the importance of time in the play,⁶⁹ it appears to bulk too largely to be negligible, and it seems to contribute to the sense of tragedy. For example, Paris' remark, coming as it does in the dramatically ironic scene just before the report of the exchange to the lovers, has this effect in particular: "There is no help./The bitter disposition of the time/Will have it so" (IV.1.48-49). But Calchas also speaks of "th' advantage of the time" (III.111.2), Ulysses makes an impressive speech about time as a kind of cormorant (III.111.145-189), Troilus makes a parallel speech in which time is a greedy robber (IV.1v.44-50), and Agamemnon's melancholy nature dwells on time philosophically in IV.v.165-169. The pensive reminiscences and prophecies of Hector and Ulysses in IV.v. 214-226 also have the sense of time in the background and end with Hector's reference to it as "that old common arbitrator." Altogether, these speeches give time a

diverse function, but one in which its link to chance (as in Troilus' speech, IV.iv.35-50) and to inevitability is stressed. Stamm also thinks that Shakespeare stresses the rapid movement of time and the brevity of the lovers' moments together in the morning-after scene, IV.ii.⁷⁰

4. Conclusion

Thus, we can see that, if we do not restrict ourselves to a conception of tragedy which is moulded by the four preeminent tragedies of Shakespeare--and therefore do not require the tragic hero to be focussed upon and scrutinized far more closely than any of the other characters, nor his psychology probed from within--then both Troilus and Hector qualify as tragic heroes. The two brothers err, suffer, and either die (Hector) as a result of his magnanimous nature, or (Troilus) achieve a kind of insight, maturity, and heroic defiance at the end of the play. The affirmation that Troilus and Cressida is a tragedy or that it has strong tragic elements should not, however, be taken as inconsistent with the picture of the play in earlier chapters as strongly tending toward the vein of amorous comedy. For as we saw earlier, Romeo and Juliet and Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde are both precedents for a form in which what begins as amorous comedy ends as tragedy.

On the other hand, the satiric dimension is far from absent, and especially in the "ocular proof" scene it is

necessary to speak of it as co-existing with the tragic dimension. For Thersites' presence in the scene and his satiric interpretation of Troilus' suffering cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, as we have seen, it would be even more improper to give his viewpoint the status of the exclusively valid outlook. Rather, as a large number of writers have already done, we should attempt to see the scene as neither one nor the other (tragic or satiric), but as simultaneously both.⁷¹ At the same time, even this eclectic compromise is subject to further analysis, for the baseness and distorted character of Thersites make his perceptions highly suspect. It is almost as if the scene affords the viewer with the opportunity to indulge the more heartless, less civilized layer of his personality through Thersites; while the more moral layer forbids explicit laughter at Troilus' plight. These complexities apart, however, the play remains predominantly a tragedy which recounts the downfall of two estimable young men and, as a number of scholars have noted, depicts the prelude to the most famous disaster of antiquity.⁷² Conversely, what makes the designation of this play as a comical satire especially improper is that, as Professor Franklin Dickey writes, "in no other 'comical satire' does death darken the comic plot."⁷³

NOTES

1 Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938), p. 187.

2 W. W. Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio (Oxford, 1955), pp. 445-447, p. 447n; Charlton Hinman, The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare (Oxford, 1963), I, pp. 27-28; Alice Walker, Textual Problems of the First Folio (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 71-73.

3 Edwin E. Willoughby, The Printing of the First Folio of Shakespeare (Oxford, 1932), pp. 47-48.

4 Peter Alexander, Shakespeare's Life and Art (London, 1939), pp. 196-197.

5 See Herbert Muller, The Spirit of Tragedy (New York, 1956), p. 180; Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), p. 110; R. J. Kaufman, "Ceremonies for Chaos: The Status of Troilus and Cressida," ELH, XXXII (June, 1965), 145.

6 Harold S. Wilson, On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy (Toronto, 1957), p. 243.

7 This trend of thinking has no doubt been greatly influenced by the approach of A. C. Bradley and Lily B. Campbell, whose books on the tragedies are among the most

important and whose concern was almost exclusively with the four great tragedies.

8 Francis Meres listed King John among Shakespeare's tragedies, and, although his opinion is by no means authoritative, it probably represents the Elizabethan conception of genre, which is somewhat different from ours.

9 Willard Fanham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936); Lily Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion (New York, 1960), pp. 3-24; Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Madison, 1954), pp. 116-128.

10 See Aristotle's Poetics, in Literary Criticism from Plato to Dryden, ed. Allan Gilbert (New York, 1940), pp. 71 and p. 86.

11 For Sidney, see G. Gregory Smith, Elizabethan Critical Essays (Oxford, 1904), p. 177. For Puttenham, see The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), p. 33.

12 A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (Cleveland and New York, 1964), p. 26. Lily Campbell, Shakespeare's Heroes, attacks this conception, pp. 281-287.

13 King John, Richard II, Romeo and Juliet, and Julius Caesar may be said to lack these qualities, at least in

their fullest form, but Titus, Richard III, Timon, and especially Coriolanus have them.

14 Variorum, p. 451.

15 Oscar Mandel, A Definition of Tragedy (New York, 1961).

16 Curtis Watson, Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor (Princeton, 1960), p. 275.

17 Muller, p. 182.

18 Mandel, p. 47. The two quotations are S. H. Butcher's and Gilbert Murray's definitions of tragedy, respectively.

19 Spencer, p. 111. M. D. H. Parker, The Slave of Life (London, 1955), p. 76, also considers the play a "lamentable" tragedy, especially since "it has, for the hero, neither redemption nor the clean cut of death."

20 Mandel, p. 107.

21 Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 133.

22 Rudolf Stamm, "The Glass of Pandar's Praise," E & S, n. s. XVII (1964), 70.

23 For a discussion of the essential difference

between Troilus and the comic cuckold of Every Man Out, see the Chapter IV. Deliro (EMO) is uxorious, Security (Eastward HO) is a usurer, Pinchwife (The Country Wife) is a self-defeating jealous husband, and Ford, of course, is mistaken.

24 Derick Marsh, "Interpretation and Misinterpretation: The Problem of Troilus and Cressida," Shakespeare Studies I (1965), pp. 190-191; Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London, 1943), p. 116.

25 Spencer, p. 119.

26 Watson, p. 267.

27 See Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts (New York, 1947), pp. 242-272.

28 II.ii.102-104.

29 E. M. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), pp. 20-21.

30 William Empson, English Pastoral Poetry (London, 1935), p. 42.

31 See Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 80; Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1957), xv; Alice Shalvi, "'Honor' in Troilus and Cressida,"

SEL, V (1965), 293-294.

32 Roger Ascham, English Works, ed. William Aldis Wright (Cambridge, 1904), pp. 224-225.

33 Richard Harrier, "Troilus Divided," in Studies in the English Renaissance Drama, ed. Josephine Waters Bennett, et. al. (New York, 1959), pp. 145-147.

34 Tillyard, Problem, p. 52.

35 Kimbrough, p. 56.

36 Walker, xix; Derek Traversi, An Approach to Shakespeare, 2d. ed. (Garden City, 1956), pp. 64-65; Kimbrough, p. 57.

37 Traversi, *ibid.*, pp. 64-65, p. 67. On the other hand, Traversi seems to be discussing the inauthenticity of the love affair itself when he says pp. 66-67, "Troilus' passion, for all its surface intensity, has an inadequate foundation."

38 Campbell, Satyre, pp. 214-215.

39 Willard Farnham, "Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire," SQ, XV, 11 (Spring, 1964), 263-264.

40 See Lydgate's Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen, E. E. T. S., Extra Series (London, 1906-1935), 97, 103, 106, 126, IV.2620-2779; and Raoul LeFevre, The Recuyell of

the Historyes of Troye, tr. William Caxton, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (London, 1894), II, pp. 638-639.

41 Aerol Arnold, "The Hector-Andromache Scene in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida," MLQ (December, 1953), 340.

42 Alfred Harbage, As They Liked It (New York, 1947), p. 175.

43 R. A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Re-Considered," UTQ, XXXII (January, 1963), 152-153.

44 Stamm, 74.

45 Albert Gérard, "Meaning and Structure in Troilus and Cressida," ES, XL (June, 1959), 144-157.

46 Shalvi, 292; Marsh, 187.

47 Caxton, II, p. 590.

48 Adrien Bonjour, "Hector and the 'One in Sumptuous Armour'," ES, XLV, Sh. Cent. No. (1964), 107n-108n; Presson, p. 60.

49 Shalvi, 291.

50 Bonjour, 108.

51 Watson, p. 242.

52 Ibid., pp. 368-369.

53 Presson, p. 60.

54 Walker, xlv1.

55 Ibid., xlii-xliii.

56 See Chapman's Homer, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (New York, 1956), I, XXII.36-66.

57 Ibid., XXII.68-70.

58 Stamm, 75, makes an astute observation on the effect of Cassandra (who, contrary to the general impression, is absent from this scene in Homer): "By her prophecy the spectator is attuned to the horror and historic importance of Hector's death, so that the actual death can be passed over rather rapidly."

59 Arnold, 339-340.

60 J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 760-761.

61 Kimbrough, p. 135.

62 Stamm, 62-63.

63 Shalvi, 291.

64 Stamm, 61.

65 Mandel, pp. 24-25.

66 Stamm, 67.

67 Ibid.

68 See The Aeneid of Vergil, ed. Charles Knapp, 2d. ed. (Chicago, 1951), I.11 (p. 140): "Tantaene animis caelestibus irae?" A literal translation would be, "Do divine souls have such angry passions?" "Envy" in Shakespeare's day meant "malice" or "spite." See glossary in Kittredge's edition.

69 A. S. Knowland, "Troilus and Cressida," SQ, X (Summer, 1959), 354.

70 Stamm, 60.

71 See Kimbrough, p. 59; Wilson, p. 129; Spencer, p. 118; Tillyard, Problem, p. 77; Stamm, 71; R. J. Kaufman, 146n.

72 See Muriel Bradbrook, "What Shakespeare Did to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," SQ, IX (Summer, 1958), 311-312; Doran, p. 126; George Lyman Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), p. 117.

73 Franklin Dickey, Not Wisely, But Too Well (San Marino, 1957), p. 120.

X. THE TREATMENT OF THE SOURCES: I. CHAUCER

A recurrent argument of those who believe that Troilus and Cressida is a satire is that Shakespeare deliberately debased his sources and that this debasement reflects a satiric intent. With the war-plot, the argument usually is that the Troy story came to him in a degraded form and that he could not depart, or did not see fit to depart, from this tradition. With the love-plot, the explanation usually is that Shakespeare took the three major characters in Chaucer's poem and lowered them morally. Moreover, critics have been fond of maintaining that the post-Chaucerian tradition of Cressida as a common prostitute left Shakespeare with little alternative but to portray his heroine as a shameless wanton. These beliefs are frequently presented as widely accepted facts, and, although few scholars have attempted to authenticate them, they belong to the body of doctrines about the play which enjoy a certain repute. It is necessary, therefore, to examine Shakespeare's sources fully and carefully, in order to see what truth there is in these beliefs.

Many writers have maintained in the past that Shakespeare's treatment of Troilus, Cressida, and Pandarus

is much harsher and more cynical than that of Chaucer. Shakespeare, they claim, has coarsened the somewhat idealistic love affair and has debased all three major characters considerably.¹ This coarsening process, of course, lends itself quite well to the buttressing of the viewpoint that Shakespeare employs satirical techniques in this play.

However, a close comparison of the two works reveals that Shakespeare is faithful to the spirit of Chaucer's poem more often than not. The most noticeable example of this respectful adaptation occurs in the character of Troilus. For--as Professors Kenneth Muir, Peter Ure, and long before them Karl Young have observed²--Troilus remains substantially the same in the play as he is in the poem. Moreover, a surprisingly large number of details which are frequently cited as evidence of moral degeneracy or reprehensible conduct in the play have close counterparts in the poem, and hence cannot be said to contribute to a satiric debasement of the poem.

That Shakespeare has preserved the essential character of Troilus may not at first seem obvious. But the close resemblance between the two becomes quite evident when we remember that the comic intensity and torment of Troilus' love-craving early in the play--qualities of Shakespeare's portrayal which to many critics indicate satiric derision--appear just as markedly, and perhaps

more so, in the poem: indeed, they dominate the first two books and most of the third. In Chaucer's work as much as in Shakespeare's the plight of the hapless young man at the mercy of an amorous obsession places him in a slightly ridiculous light, but one too familiar and universal to expose him to the corrective criticism of satire. And it is just as evident in the poem as in the play that nothing short of consummation will release the agitated lover from his torment.

Again, Chaucer also amply represents a feature of Troilus' love which, in the play, many have regarded as evidence of debasement: namely, the deleterious influence which the passion has on him.³ For the enervating effect of the love, the foolishness and awkwardness of Troilus' behavior prior to and during his interview with Cressida, and the disease-imagery used to describe the love-affair are all present in the poem as well.

Yet, commentators often distinguish between the two works on precisely these grounds. For example, Professor Muriel Bradbrook contrasts the effect of the love on Chaucer's Troilus with the effect on Shakespeare's by pointing out that in the poem "the wooing itself had acted as a 'spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds' . . . while Shakespeare's Troilus is enervated and drawn from the battle by his love."⁴ But Chaucer's Troilus, although for a time he excels on the battlefield to win Criseyde's

favor (I.477-483), spends much time in bed thereafter (I.547-567, II.1303ff, II.1576ff, V.211ff), is quite sick as a result of his love (I.483-497, II.1520-1533), and wishes he could die (I.460, 526-528),⁵ an extremity which he does not reach in the play. Indeed, Chaucer's greater leisure to dwell on Troilus' anguish results, if anything, in a more vivid and thorough picture of the distressing pains of love-throes and of the degree to which men can lose their self-mastery--that is, can become comically undignified. Actually, the motif of distaste for warfare as a result of love is a persistent one in the various versions of Troilus. Boccaccio⁶ writes, "All thought of the great war and of his own weal fled from him . . . He was eager only to heal the wounds of love."⁶ Karl Young notes that Achilles experiences a comparable "distaste for fighting" as a result of love in the earliest Troilus-Cressida story, the Roman de Troie.⁷ And as far back as Ovid, lovers are described as looking pale, becoming thin, and spending sleepless nights,⁸ details which Boccaccio (and later Chaucer) seems to follow when he says, "love robbed him of his sleep, and turned him from his meat and so weighed down his thoughts that the paleness in his face gave true sign of his trouble."⁹

Moreover, it is frequently overlooked that in the play Troilus, despite his complaint about his love-inspired lassitude, actually does accompany Aeneas to the

battlefield (I.i.116-120) and thus is represented as overcoming the enervated condition he languishes in at the beginning of the first scene. Furthermore, we must not forget that Shakespeare (following Lydgate and Caxton here, rather than Chaucer) imposes a truce throughout most of the play--from I.iii to V.iii, with occasional contradictions¹⁰--so that Troilus could hardly perform exploits in Cressida's honor after I.ii. Finally, the connection in Troilus' mind between love and honorable deeds in war is strongly hinted at by his significant choice of an illustration in "I take to-day a wife" (II. ii.61) during the war-council scene. It is this scene, in fact, from which Professor Bradbrook's quotation "A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds" (l. 200), is taken, and it is Shakespeare's Troilus himself, the speaker, who conjoins love and honor in this fashion.¹¹

Again, the assumption that fever and disease are special metaphors invented by Shakespeare to degrade the love of Troilus and Cressida seems to underlie the writing of many commentators.¹² However, brief reflection on the history of literature should easily remind us that these metaphors are commonplaces of love-poetry and hence do not necessarily indicate a degrading tendency in Shakespeare's treatment. For example, Chaucer's Troilus too is "sick"; Pandarus speaks specifically of a fever (II.1520), which Troilus claims he does not have to feign

(II.1527-1530); and Criseyde, of course, becomes his physician in this scheme (II.1582).

Moreover, the frequent claim that disease-imagery pervades Troilus and Cressida should not be accepted uncritically. Usually, this imagery is taken to reflect derogatorily on the love-affair. However, a study of the function and the speakers of the disease images indicates that there is a very weak foundation for this idea. For of the approximately fifty-one disease images in the play,¹³ fifteen are uttered by Ulysses, Agamemnon, and Nestor in relation to the sickness of the state (a familiar motif in the history plays) or to the problem of applying "physic" to Achilles--neither of which uses reflects on the love-affair. Twenty-five are uttered by Thersites, most of them directed, not toward the lovers, but toward Agamemnon and the other Greeks, with no less than fourteen of them concentrated into one abuse of Patroclus (V.1.20-28). Five of them are Pandarus'--in relation to his own diseases at the close of the play--at best only an indirect reflection on the lovers. With over forty of the fifty-one images functioning in aspects of the play which have nothing to do with love, the only grounds we would have for alleging their influence on the lovers would be an appeal to "tonal atmosphere," and this kind of appeal is often subjective, tricky, and hence ultimately weak. The only images directly relevant to

the love story are Troilus' "feverous pulse" of III.11.38, which, as we have seen, is a traditional metaphor for love-sickness, and Troilus' much-discussed mention of his "open ulcer" in I.1.53, perhaps the only picture in the play which might plausibly be discussed as a jarring and unsavory reflection on their love.

However, even this image need not be interpreted as a derogatory comment, for, as we have seen, not only is the "wound" another commonplace of love-poetry (courtesy of Cupid's arrow: cf. Spenser's Timias), but it also appears twice in Chaucer's version as a metaphor describing Troilus' hapless state, the first time at the conclusion of Book I:

Now lat us stynte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lik a man that hurt is soore,
And is somdeel of akynge of his wownde
Ylissed wel, but heeled no deel moore
And as an esy pacyent, the loore
Abit of hym that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his adventure. (I.1086)

The second time, Pandarus uses the image in his report to Cressida of Troilus' lament over his plight:

"For certes, lord, so soore hath she me wounded,
That stood in blak, with lokyng of hire eyen,
That to myn hertes botme it is ysounded,
Thorough which I woot that I moot nede deyen.
(II.533)

It is true, of course, that an "open ulcer" is a more unsavory image than a wound. However, as we saw in an earlier chapter, the festering may simply reflect the long duration of Troilus' wound (his unrelieved state)

and stresses the severity of his plight.

Again, it can be shown that Troilus' great excitement before his meeting with Cressida, his fear of swooning in the much-discussed "I am giddy" speech (a Grain of Sand in which some have found a World), his awkward and tongue-tied behavior when he finally meets her, are all in the Chaucerian version. And if they are comically degrading aspects of love, then Shakespeare is only following his model, not debasing him. Indeed, Troilus actually does swoon once in Chaucer (III.1092) and once even goes into a death-like trance because of unrequited love (I.722). As Professor Bradbrook herself remarks, "Chaucer shows him feverish and overcome, for the physiology of wooing, as Chaucer understood it, involves deep disturbance and not-unmanly tears."¹⁴

A final detail about Shakespeare's Troilus is worthy of mention. His end is frequently depicted as an ignoble and degrading one: he becomes a furious, embittered madman who lives only for revenge on Diomedes; he seeks his own death; and he is not even accorded the dignity of a "glorious death."¹⁵ But surely we should not neglect the fact that Chaucer's Troilus also is inflamed with the desire for revenge (V.St.244, St.251) and that he also looks forward to death:

"And certeynly, withouten moore speche,
From hennesforth, as ferforth as I may,

Myn owen deth in armes wol I seche.
I recche nat how soone be the day!"
(V.1716-1719)

Chaucer's Troilus, of course, is allowed to die and to ascend to heaven, where he can view human folly with a more enlightened eye. However, a moment's reflection should reveal the practical reason for Shakespeare's decision not to follow Chaucer's lead here. If he had, those who wish to prove that the play is a satire would have had their task immeasurably lightened.

All in all, then, the notion that Shakespeare's Troilus is a debased version of Chaucer's has little substance. On the contrary, most of the traits of the character in the play--erotic urgency, sickness because of love, temporary distaste for fighting, awkwardness, shyness, mental association between love and honor, and strong disillusion and wish for death when he is disappointed--have their source in the poem. Later on, we shall see many other details in which Shakespeare's Troilus derives from Chaucer's. In brief, the idea that Shakespeare debases all three of the major characters is at best correct with only two of them. And one suspects that commentators would be more cautious about interpreting Troilus' actions in the play as satirically foolish or turpid, if they always kept in mind the actions of his counterpart in the poem.

The second major factor in the debasement theory which must be properly evaluated is the considerable difference between the poem and the play in length, scope, and in the poet's leisure for explanation and extenuation. The inherent limitations of the dramatic medium must be taken into consideration. For instance, Shakespeare did not have the liberty, as Chaucer did, to mitigate the effect of Cressida's betrayal of Troilus by saying that he would condone her deed if he could (V.1097-1099). Indeed, these inherent limitations of the dramatic medium offer a simpler, more practical, and more innocent explanation of the many omissions and condensations which occur in the play than does the belief in calculated distortion.

Yet, some critics continue to interpret these very omissions and condensations, which in many cases are plainly unavoidable, in the latter manner. For example, Professor Muriel Bradbrook, in her comparison of the two works, repeatedly stresses Shakespeare's compression of Chaucer, invariably seeing in it a deliberate reduction of a moving love-affair into a base assignation. She observes, with apparent approval, that in Chaucer's poem "the deliberately complex process of wooing . . . allows her to dissolve her hesitations only at the last moment possible."¹⁶

But it should be quite obvious that Shakespeare could

never, within the confines of a two-hour play, have carefully studied, as Chaucer did, the gradual process and phases of Cressida's submission--especially since he was simultaneously telling a story which, as T. W. Baldwin suggests,¹⁷ may have been of greater importance to him--the story of the death of Hector and of the consequent fall of Troy. Within these narrow confines--a much shorter work than Chaucer's in total lines, and an expenditure of only half these lines on the love-story itself¹⁸--it is remarkable that Shakespeare was able to produce a version which gives the sense of satisfying completeness. But a swift, bold, almost schematic effect is almost inescapable. For instance, instead of tracing the course of the love affair from the start, Shakespeare allows himself only 100 lines in I.1 to set forth, in retrospective rather than chronological fashion, the entire course of Troilus' long wooing, the extremity of his passion, the agony of his waiting. Instead of Chaucer's long, savoring suspense (which is actually more erotic) there is a dramatic heightening through conflict and dissatisfaction: Troilus is exasperated rather than in danger of dying; Pandarus feels unappreciated and persecuted by both prospective lovers (I.1.67-69); and Cressida is apparently unmoved: her feigning is not revealed until the following scene. As Troilus complains about the two:

And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo
As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.
(I.1.92-93)

Shakespeare has chosen here, as the moment of attack, the height of the crisis just before her consent, rather than the time in the poem before Troilus had even seen Criseyde; and in this choice of opening the playwright is following classical dramatic procedure. The observant reader or viewer should, however, grasp--from the severity of Troilus' state, from what he says about Cressida's stubbornness (that it is feigned does not lessen its duration), and from Pandarus' complaint that all his "labor" is unappreciated--that the distressing situation has persisted for a considerable time and that Cressida is planning, indeed, "to dissolve her hesitancies only at the last moment possible." Professor R. A. Small, as long ago as 1899, pointed out that the swift dramatic action and economy tended to give the mistaken impression of immediate yielding and of a very brief and casual affair.¹⁹ Professor Hamill Kenny and Professor Presson also have noted this problem.²⁰ Moreover, it would seem injudicious to assume that the rapidity either of stage-time or of "objective" time accurately reflects the psychological flow of time in the story--any more than it does in Romeo and Juliet or Hamlet. Indeed, it seems probably that Shakespeare's omission of Troilus and Cressida as lovers from the entirety of Act II has the psychological effect

of prolonging the period before her yielding, even though not much objective time passes during Act II. Similarly, Aeneas' mention of a "long-continued truce" in I.iii, whereas I.ii represented the Trojan heroes returning from battle, makes the assumption of a long time-lapse between I.ii and I.iii almost mandatory. This lapse must also apply to the lovers and thus prolongs the period before Cressida's yielding even more. Furthermore, the pressures on Shakespeare to economize, to highlight, and to represent the culminations of actions rather than their entire organic development go a long way to explain such matters as Cressida's swift yielding to Diomedes²¹ (even swifter than in Chaucer). Similarly, these pressures offer a more plausible explanation of Shakespeare's condensations of Chaucer's often sympathetic psychological analyses: as operational necessities rather than as calculated degradations.

It has also been held that the moral tone of the play is considerably lower than that of the poem. But when one examines the specific elements which produce this impression, one finds that they do not contribute much to the belief that Shakespeare has markedly debased Chaucer's love affair. For example, the ubiquitous Thersites is usually pressed into service to reinforce this claim,²² but--although there is no doubt that he contributes a

strong sense of vileness to the play as a whole--he does not properly belong to the story of Troilus and Cressida, but rather to the war-plot; and his sardonic comments on the lovers in Act V, as we have seen, are not to be taken loosely and ingenuously as the playwright's own comments. Difficult as it may be, we must continually remind ourselves that the play is not merely a new version of the story of Troilus and Cressida, but just as much--and perhaps more--a re-telling of the clash between Hector and Achilles and of Troy's ruin. Hence, it is not really proper to compare the tone of the play with that of the poem on a one-to-one basis, or to use material from the base plot--involving Thersites, Ajax, Achilles, and Patroclus--in order to show that Shakespeare's version of the love affair is more base. The comparison with the poem must be restricted to the love scenes in the play.

Of these latter scenes, the one which has attracted the most attention is IV.ii, the morning after, which many find to be noticeably more base than in Chaucer. For example, Professor Hyder Rollins writes: "In Chaucer one thinks of the ardent devotion of the two lovers; in Troilus and Cressida the details are so coarsened that one thinks only of the animal nature of their love."²³ Similarly, Professor Bradbrook distinguishes between "the 'high rhetoric' of courtesy" in Chaucer's Pandarus and "the 'low rhetoric' of the stews" in Shakespeare's.²⁴

Yet, when one moves from the realm of impressions to that of concrete detail, one discovers little evidence for this marked contrast. For Shakespeare's Pandarus--if words are to have their customary meanings--is not coarse (that is, crude, direct, and low in his speech); more precisely, he is wittily salacious (that is, he merrily mocks the lovers by allusion). Moreover, it would be white-washing Chaucer's Pandarus to maintain that his speech and comportment the next morning are free from sexual innuendo, and some of his japes in the play have their parallels in the poem.

Indeed, although many critics appear to remember Shakespeare's morning-after scene as pervasively lewd, there are only three details in it which might be regarded as "coarse"--by someone living in the middle of the twentieth century or at the beginning of the seventeenth. The first is Pandarus' exultantly mocking question, "How go maidenheads?" (I. 23). However, the alleged crudity of this question is mitigated considerably when we realize that Elizabethans apparently could use the key word in this sentence frankly and without any hint of prurience. Thus, Juliet, unabashedly anticipating consummation, bids night (in the majority of the quartos and folios)²⁵ to come

And learn me how to lose a winning match
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenheads.
(III.11.12-13)

Pandarus' second "coarseness" in this scene occurs in his mocking question to Cressida, "What have I brought you to do?" (I. 29). But surely, the sly joshing, the sympathetic elation, and the festive approval of pleasure involved in Pandarus' remark are worlds apart from crude language or carnal imagery. Even Professor Agnes Mackenzie, who immoderately calls Pandarus "a thing whose slimy obscenity would be incredible were it not so hideously convincing," concedes that his "actual vocabulary has hardly a word in it that would shock a convent school."²⁶ Professor C. S. Lewis, it would seem, comes quite close to the true spirit of the morning-after scene in both the poem and the play when he compares the banter in Chaucer's work to jokes about christening at marriages;²⁷ he might have added, jokes about the marriage night and the honeymoon. These well-meaning mockeries and teasings are common during wedding festivities in a wide variety of cultures, and it would be unreasonable to view Pandarus' use of them as ugly and degraded.

The third allegedly coarse detail, Cressida's lovers' witticism to Troilus, is probably the only detail in the scene which may be regarded as salacious:

My lord, come you again into my chamber.
You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.
(IV.11.36-37)

Chaucer's Criseyde, of course, never alludes to love-making in this bantering tone. Indeed, realistic details

like this one are what make the use of the term "romantic comedy," as a description of the love-scenes, somewhat inaccurate and require us to speak of amorous or even, here, erotic comedy. However, even if we perceive a lewd ambiguity in the word "chamber," in addition to the more obvious ambiguity, it should be evident to adult observers who are capable of any candor that intimate banter like this is rather typical of the festive and contented atmosphere of the aftermath, as healthy and normal people experience it. In other words, sexually ambiguous speech like this is assuredly not a distinctive mark of characters who are conspicuously debauched or of conduct which is being satirically reprehended. On the contrary, the tone here seems to be gay, light-headed, unthinking, and the banter is an important ingredient in producing it.

Furthermore, the parallel passage in Chaucer's poem also contains an erotic invitation by Criseyde, which probably provided Shakespeare with the germ of Cressida's lines:

"Beth glad, forthy, and lyve in sikernesse!
Thus seyde I nevere this, ne shal to mo;
And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse
To torne ayeyn soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye that it were so,
As wisly God myn herte brynge ar reste!"
And hym in armes tok, and ofte keste.
(III.1513-1519)

It will no doubt be observed by some that Criseyde's invitation is lyrical, earnest, and intoxicated with love, whereas Cressida's is a witticism--and that this

difference is itself a form of debasement. However, promising as this contrast sounds, I believe it is a strained one. Both women are talking essentially about the same thing. Both are joyous about the love they have experienced, and both speak about experiencing again, the one ardently, the other banteringly. But since Shakespeare dramatically tightens the scene by introducing the peripeteia of the exchange even as Cressida is speaking (whereas Chaucer leaves the reversal until Book IV), a proper functional explanation of Cressida's merry witticism would be that it enhances the contrast with what is to follow. In other words, it makes possible the strong dramatic irony which arises when the news of the exchange upsets the illusory contentment and unthinking elation of the lovers.

Similarly, a comparison of the scene in the play with the corresponding passage in the poem (III.1555-1582) reveals that Shakespeare actually derived several of his other ideas from it. For instance, the mocking jape of Pandarus in the play, that Cressida did not, for obvious reasons, sleep that night (ll. 32-33) appears in the poem in Pandarus' sly conceit:

"Al this nyght so reyned it, alas,
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel laiser had to slepe and mete.
(ll. 1557-1559)

The idea expressed by Shakespeare's Cressida that Pandarus brought her to the deed appears in Chaucer too: "God help

me so, ye caused al this fare" (l. 1566). Likewise, Cressida's half-jesting complaint to Pandarus in the play, "You'll ne'er be good/Nor suffer others" (ll. 29-30) seems to be an echo of her pretended reproach in the corresponding passage of the poem:

"Trowe I," quod she, "for al youre wordes white,
O, whoso seeth youw, knoweth yow ful lite."
(ll. 1567-1568)

One detail in Chaucer's morning-after scene, which Shakespeare understandably omits, perhaps because of its stronger suggestiveness on the stage, would almost certainly have been viewed as wanton and coarse if he had retained it:

With that she gan hire face for to wrye
With the shete, and waxe for shame al reed;
And Pandarus gan under for to prie,
And seyde, "Nece, if that I shal be ded,
Have here a swerd and smyteth of myn hed!"
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hire nekke, and at the laste hire kiste.
(ll. 1569-1575)

If this affectionate mockery and harmless fun had appeared in the play, one need hardly speculate what a saturnalian wantonness the satire-seekers would have made out of it.

Thus, when we examine the scene carefully, we discover that there is very little firm evidence to support the impression that it is markedly more erotic than the passage in Chaucer's poem. For when we realize that "maidenheads" was not an improper word for a fourteen-year old Elizabethan girl to use, that Criseyde too spoke of repeating their experience soon, and that in the poem

Pandarus also slyly teased the lovers about their lack of sleep, then it becomes evident that Shakespeare's version is not more lewd so much as it is merrier--primarily because of what is immediately to follow.

Again, the aspect of Shakespeare's Pandarus which seems most repellent to many commentators is his shameless display of vicarious pleasure at the prospect of the lovers' consummation. The implication usually is that a sexual perversion akin to voyeurism is at work. But what is worthy of note is that Chaucer himself (or rather his persona) manifests a similar attitude of relish toward the consummation, an attitude not unlike that of Ovid or of the writers of the erotic-mythological poems during the 1590's:

O blisful nyght, of hem so long isought,
How blithe unto hem both two thow weere!
Why nad I swich oon with my soule ybought,
Ye, or the leeste joie that was theere?
Awey, thou foule daunger and thow feere,
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heigh that al ne kan I telle!
(III.1317-1323)

Chaucer's generous approval of the lovers' pleasure, his envy of them, his impatience with "daunger," and his joyous celebration of their long-awaited union clearly point to a kind of vicarious pleasure, at least in the poet's persona. It may well be that Shakespeare has retained this flavor of tolerant and benevolent delight over the lovers' union by transferring it from the narrator Chaucer to the character Pandarus. Boccaccio, it

may be added, expressed a similar attitude.²⁸ What is the most important inference from this passage, however, is that, in the light of Chaucer's own frankly zestful and anti-prudish attitude toward the lovers' union, it would be inappropriate to consider Shakespeare's picture of their unposing and natural speech of the next morning as either a reprehension of them or a debasing of Chaucer. Both poets, in short, seem to adopt a tolerant attitude toward the consummation itself and to show Cressida-Criseyde in a truly unglamorous light only when the process of betraying Troilus actually begins in the Greek camp.

The impression of hearty approval toward sensual gratification in Chaucer's poem is further reinforced by his rather Ovidian description of the first embrace and of the love-making--a value which Shakespeare could not have hoped to render on the stage:

And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bytrent and writh the swote wodebynde,
Gan ech of hem in armes other wynde . . .

Hire armes smale, hire streghte bak and softe,
Hire sydes longe, flesshly, smothe, and white
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
Hire snowisshe throte, hire brestes rounde and
lite:

Thus in this hevene he gan hym to delite,
And therwithal a thousand tyme hire kiste,
That what to don, for joie unnethe he wiste.

(III.1230f)

In the play, Pandarus' teasing commentary on their first kiss (III.11.42-56) takes the place of this lush description. Unaccountably, his remarks strike some as

prurient; but a comparison of the two passages should show that Chaucer's treatment is clearly more sexual; whereas Shakespeare's bemused representation of a kiss comically prolonged would not be out of place in a high school play. There is assuredly nothing objectionable about Chaucer's physical details. But the sensuality of the passage nevertheless reveals the inappropriateness of the claim that Shakespeare lowered the nature of the love affair by making it sensual.

If, then, the difference between Chaucer's lovers and Shakespeare's cannot be based on an over-simplified and inaccurate contrast between a pure love and a carnal one, what then remains as a possible basis? One can easily imagine what some might propose: namely, a contrast between a love (as in the poem) with strong emotional and spiritual resonances apart from the sensual; and a love (as, presumably, in the play) which is exclusively sensual. However, promising as this contrast sounds, it is no more valid than the first. For it can survive only as long as we dismiss or discredit both Cressida's private testimony in I.ii about her feelings toward Troilus and Troilus' testimony to Ulysses in V.ii about his feelings toward Cressida, as well as his idealized expression of his love to Cressida in IV.iv.26-29. These guileless statements reveal that each of them "loves" the other in ways which cannot be confined to the fleshly, but must be attributed

to that more complex state of exhilaration and attraction which we associate with the word "love." Troilus' surpassing idealization is especially clear:

Never did young man fancy
With so eternal and so fix'd a soul.
(V.11.165-166)

And in our zeal to reprehend Cressida for her dissembling in her first soliloquy, we should not overlook the fact her attraction to Troilus is manifestly based on her estimation of his qualities of character, as well as on more fleshly considerations:

But more in Troilus thousandfold I see
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be.
(I.11.310-311)

As Professor Lily Campbell has ably argued, we rarely if ever have the right to dismiss or discredit statements made by characters privately to the audience.²⁹ Moreover, as Professor R. A. Foakes has pointed out, Cressida's duplicity in this speech merely follows Criseyde's disguising of her emotion in the poem,³⁰ since she is deeply attracted to Troilus when she first sees him (II. 649-679) and is agitated when she sees him again (II.1256-1274), yet to Pandarus she pretends indifference (II.1284) and can offer only the sight of herself to Troilus. In short, neither dissembling nor insincerity can be used to undermine the subjective genuineness of Cressida's passionate attraction to Troilus, an attraction which her own description requires us to understand as one beyond

mere lust. In these respects, then, she is not a degraded version of Criseyde.

It would not seem correct either for us to question the genuineness of the lovers' feeling by passing judgement on tempestuous and transitory love, calling it "not truly love." For to propose that these infatuations which do not have marriage as their aim are "not truly love" would apply equally to Chaucer's hero and heroine. Furthermore, since worldly love is primarily a subjective matter (as Midsummer Night's Dream charmingly showed), the emotion, misguided or not, is what determines whether love exists or not. An external judgement on its "validity" would be pedantic, as well as amiss about the subjective nature of love. Hence, Troilus' and Cressida's statements that, in effect, they love each other must be taken to mean nothing else; and hence, their affair cannot be reduced to a carnal encounter worthy of scorn and derision. But once again, Chaucer's greater scope and his freedom as an omniscient author allowed him to amplify the emotional side of their love in the first three books and to reveal the thoughts of the lovers. The exhilaration is therefore unmistakable in the poem; whereas in the play it is restricted largely to their conversations in III.ii and IV.ii and to their brief, but telling confessions of love.

All in all, then, many considerations operate against the idea that Shakespeare practiced wholesale debasement

of Chaucer's poem. Chief among these is Troilus' close resemblance to his medieval model. Next in importance is the reflection that much of the unseemly swiftness of the love-affair and the relative outwardness and schematic quality of the characterization can be attributed to the practical necessity for drastic compression. Thirdly, the conduct of the lovers the morning-after is, upon close scrutiny, far from repellent and, in fact, has several parallels in the poem. Finally, the claim that Shakespeare's lovers are morally lower than Chaucer's because Shakespeare's lack sentiment and are exclusively carnal in their aims runs counter to at least three passages in the play which represent the lovers' psychological attachment to each other. The next chapter will examine further the evidence that Shakespeare does not markedly lower his main personages.

NOTES

1 See J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 737; Muriel Bradbrook, "What Shakespeare Did to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," SQ, IX (Summer, 1958), 311-319; Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 132, p. 132n; Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938), *passim*.

2 Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources I, 2d. ed. (London, 1961), p. 80; Peter Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays (London, 1961), p. 35; Karl Young, The Origin and Development of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde (London, 1908), p. 180.

3 See William G. Meader, Courtship in Shakespeare (New York, 1954), pp. 216-218; Oscar James Campbell, Shakespeare's Satire (London, 1943), p. 112; Bradbrook, 315.

4 Bradbrook, 315.

5 The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2d ed., ed. F. N. Robinson (Cambridge, 1961). All subsequent references to Troilus and Criseyde will be to this edition.

6 Il Filostrato, in R. K. Gordon, The Story of

Troilus (London, 1934), p. 36.

7 Young, p. 39.

8 Ovid, The Art of Love, tr. Charles D. Young (New York, 1931), p. 37.

9 Gordon, p. 36.

10 For a good discussion of these contradictions, see R. A. Small, The Stage Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and The So-Called Poetasters (Breslau, 1899), p. 150.

11 Troilus' illustration applies ostensibly to Helen, of course, but the woman with whom he would associate matrimony in any sense would be Cressida.

12 See Meader, p. 218; Bradbrook, 313.

13 See Appendix for these fifty-one images.

14 Bradbrook, 315.

15 Herbert Muller, The Spirit of Tragedy (New York, 1956), p. 183.

16 Bradbrook, 314-315. See also, 313.

17 Variorum, p. 450.

18 Chaucer's poem is over 8,200 lines. Shakespeare devotes about 1,700 lines to the love-affair.

19 Small, p. 156.

20 Hamill Kenny, "Shakespeare's Cressida," Anglia, LXI (1937), 175; Presson, p. 111, p. 118.

21 Another important factor is that in both Caxton and Lydgate, who are significant sources in other respects, Cressida yields to Diomedes after one night.

22 Bradbrook, 313.

23 Hyder Rollins, "The Troilus-Cressida Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," PMLA, XXV (1917), 384.

24 Bradbrook, 315.

25 See Romeo and Juliet, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, 15th ed., ed. Horace H. Furness (Philadelphia, 1913), p. 167. The word is "maidenhoods" in Q₂, Q₃, and F₁. It is "maidenheads" in "the rest," which means Q₁, Q₄, Q₅, F₂, F₃, F₄, and all editors from Rowe through Capell. The word "maidenhead" originally did not mean "hymen," but simply "chastity," as it does in Chaucer (e. g., in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue," l. 64, "maydenhede"). It is probably that both Juliet and Pandarus are using the word in this more abstract and less coarse sense, even though both use the word in the plural. But this usage was apparently accepted in Shakespeare's time, since Q₂ and F₁ of Romeo and Juliet

have "maidenhoods," the plural of an abstraction.

26 Variorum Troilus and Cressida, p. 560.

27 C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1948), p. 193.

28 Gordon, p. 62. Boccaccio somewhat mischievously (or realistically) recommends that, in order to capture the lovers' transports of joy, we should imagine our own under the same circumstances, a gambit which Marlowe later used in Hero and Leander and Marston used in Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image.

29 Lily Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion (New York, 1960), pp. 269-274.

30 R. A. Foakes, "Troilus and Cressida Reconsidered," UTQ, XXXII (January, 1963), 143.

XI. CHAUCER: II

A study of Chaucer's *Criseyde* and *Pandarus* yields results which are almost as contrary to received opinion as were the results of our discussion of *Troilus*. It is true that Shakespeare makes significant changes in both the heroine and the go-between, a procedure he did not follow with *Troilus*. *Cressida* seems more self-assured, worldly, sharp-tongued, and willing from the start, while *Pandarus* seems older, less competent, and more ridiculous. But these changes produce only a mild difference in tone and should not be exaggerated until they become evidence of a major shift in conception about the love affair.

For a closer look at *Pandarus* and *Criseyde* reveals that the marked contrast which is said to exist between the two in the poem and the two in the play could stand considerable refinement. For example, Shakespeare has used the traits of Chaucer's *Pandarus* sufficiently to make the resemblances between his go-between and Chaucer's greater than the differences. The Polonius-like garrulity and love of proverbs which mark the stage character also are quite noticeable in the poem (I.624-671, I.760).¹ The vicarious pleasure he takes in the success of the affair appears also in Chaucer's work

(I.994, II.1303-1304). He is given to singing in the play (III.1.106-116) and to dancing in the poem (II.112, II.218). His "japes" occur frequently in Chaucer as well as in Shakespeare (II.130, II.1638, III.554ff, III.1555ff). Moreover, it is hardly proper to question the sincerity of Pandarus' weeping in the play, as some have done, since he does so twice in the poem, once at the same juncture as in the play--at the news of the exchange (IV.351-371); indeed, Pandaro in Il Filostrato weeps at the same point,² and Boccacio is thus the ultimate source for this detail.

Surprisingly enough, it is quite easy to understand Chaucer's Pandarus as the harder and more unscrupulous of the two go-betweens. As Professor Hamill Kenny has pointed out, he practices deception on Criseyde four times;³ whereas--although Shakespeare's Cressida, as we have seen, has resisted Troilus' pleas for a prolonged period prior to the opening of the play--Pandarus does not resort to trickery in the play, but allows her to make a decision on her own. Admittedly, one of the deceptions by Chaucer's Pandarus--his claim that Troilus would die if he did not have her--though transparently strategic and familiar, at least resembles the truth in some degree. But his melodramatic threat to cut his own throat (II.325) carries his manipulation of his niece's sensibilities to an almost ruthless extreme, even if we always remember

that Criseyde is not as naïve as she seems--a consideration which merely reduces the degree of Pandarus' ruthlessness by increasing the degree of her dissimulation.

The same touch of cynicism⁴ is present in his fabrication that Troilus is jealous of Horast (III.792ff), which is designed as a stratagem to make Criseyde unwittingly confess her love. Again, the manner in which he secretly conveys Troilus into his house, where Criseyde is staying, and has him lie expectantly in bed, half-dead with longing, has more of the salacious flavor of Boccacio than has Pandarus' procedure in the play. Indeed, Professor Karl Young has pointed out that the source of this manner of bringing the two lovers together is another work by Boccacio, Filocolo,⁵ and this debt to Boccacio would tend to explain the erotic and almost novella-like quality of this stratagem. It is also worthy of note, as Professor Kenny has observed, that Chaucer's Pandarus "was quicker than Troilus to doubt her [V.St.168] and to despair of her return [ibid.]; but in Shakespeare, her uncle exhibited a positive regard for Cressida."⁶

The implicit cynicism of Chaucer's Pandarus, which is virtually absent in his merry descendant until the last speech of the play, appears most noticeably in the metaphor he uses to guarantee to Troilus the "fall" of his niece:

"Thenk here-ayeins: whan that the stordy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,

Receyved hath the happy fallyng strook,
The greete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
As don thise rokkes or thise milnestones;
For swifter cours comth thyng that is of wighte,
Whan it descendeth, than don thynges lighte.

"And reed that boweth down for every blast,
Ful lightly, cesse wynd, it wol aryse;
But so nyl nought an ook, whan it is cast;
It nedeth me nought the longe to forbise.
(II.1380-1390)

The idea that chaste women ("of wighte") fall harder and more completely than light ones and, once fallen, stay down does not reflect well on Pandarus' mentality-- especially since the "stordy ook" which is to "fall" is his own niece.

Again, those writers who find the officiousness and serviceability of Pandarus in the play repellent had better notice, with C. S. Lewis, that in the poem "when Troilus sinks to his knees at Cryseide's bedside, Pandarus comes bustling forward with a cushion for him to kneel on" (II.964).⁷ Chaucer's Pandarus' also adds a note of fleshly realism and makes it unambiguously clear what Troilus is after when he scoffs at Criseyde's offer of a ring as solace (III.891-892).⁸ Moreover, his gleeful encouragement of Troilus when he first kisses Cressida in the play (III.11.52: "rub on, and kiss the mistress") is hardly as gross as some would like to think, since it is an image taken from bowling⁹ and since it is essentially in the same spirit as Pandarus' encouragement in the parallel passage in Chaucer, where he tells

Troilus that "she will not bite you" (III.737).

In connection with Pandarus' officious, serviceable, and cynical tendencies in the poem, it might be well to mention that Troilus himself unwittingly contributes a somewhat cynical note to the moral atmosphere of the poem by his offer to Pandarus in Book III:

"And, that thow knowe I thynke nought, ne wene,
That this servise a shame be or jape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape,
Be she nevere so fair or wel yshape,
Telle me which thow wilt of everychone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone."
(III.407-413)

It should be pointed out that the offer of Helen invites serious complications, since that lady is already involved in an epic adultery. Moreover, the word "frape" (troop, pack) does not indicate a respectful attitude toward women. Needless to say, moreover, if this offer had appeared in the play it would undoubtedly have been seized upon by some writers as evidence of moral degeneracy. Shakespeare, as a matter of fact, preserves it in residual form, but places it in the mouth of Pandarus as a supposition: "Had I a sister were a Grace or a daughter a goddess, he [Troilus] should take his choice" (I.11.256-257).¹⁰

Many of these considerations have made it possible for some modern writers to view Shakespeare's Pandarus with as much tolerance and even sympathy as Chaucer's Pandarus has received from critics earlier in the century.

For instance, Professor I. A. Richards remarks:

I must in passing protest against the traditional excess of contempt for this tender-hearted and fanciful snob . . . He has, no doubt in a superior degree, the vicarious eroticism of the matchmaker, but the insult I have just quoted from Jusserand is unfair to Chaucer and to Shakespeare as well as to Pandar. It is letting his name take over the offices of perception and judgement.¹¹

Kenneth Muir also holds that, although "he gets a vicarious pleasure from the affair, . . . is sentimental and silly, and . . . is continually indulging in leers and innuendoes," nevertheless he "acts without hope of reward" and "he is not so vile as some critics have painted him."¹² Similarly, Peter Ure, while claiming that Shakespeare is not as kindly to Pandarus as Chaucer is, maintains that the go-between in the play is "a comic bustler, who is certainly not scourged from our sympathy after the manner of Jonsonian satire."¹³ Professor William Bowden also interprets him as essentially a comic character, adding: "An argument that Shakespeare looks on him with loathing can be based only on the epilogue."¹⁴ More than one critic has noticed that in his "loquacity and salacious interest in the lovers' affairs" he is quite similar to (and hardly more objectionable than) the Nurse in the early acts of Romeo and Juliet.¹⁵ All in all, these considerations not only make Shakespeare's Pandarus much less a vile and much more an amusing figure, but also help us to see him as not substantially different from Chaucer's Pandarus. Indeed, as we have seen, the two

are quite similar in ways which have heretofore been under-emphasized. Shakespeare's character is perhaps more prone to sexual teasing and to gloating over the lovers' pleasure; but Chaucer's character is more the consummate strategist in the questionable art of maneuvering a woman into bed against her (expressed) wishes. In short, the vices of one balance the vices of the other, and thus the idea that Shakespeare's Pandarus is a markedly degraded version of Chaucer's would not seem to hold up well under analysis.

When we come to Criseyde, a problem arises which was only a minor one with Pandarus. It is that a line of reasoning which attempts to show the close resemblance between Chaucer's heroine and Shakespeare's by a selection and scrutiny of the former's shortcomings might be misinterpreted as a retrogression to the intolerant view of her held by some earlier writers. It is not, however, my intention to turn back the pages of history or to undo the achievement of twentieth century critics, who have been able to regard Criseyde, in spite of her faults, with a benignity and tolerance worthy of Chaucer. What I would like to do is to review her traits of character, to show that many of Cressida's traits are based on them, and to ask if it is consistent and fair to exculpate Chaucer's heroine and not

Shakespeare's, when Chaucer's indeed is frequently guilty of the same weaknesses for which Cressida is condemned.

We have already seen in the chapter on the elements of amorous comedy that Cressida's wantonness has been exaggerated in the past, that her "holding off" is largely feminine psychology rather than reprehensible machination, that her offense is her betrayal of Troilus rather than her yielding to him, and that her boldness of speech, adventurousness, erotic feeling, and even her bawdy are rather typical of the Shakespearean heroine, rather than exceptional. Indeed, we might say that Shakespeare changed Criseyde not so much by lowering her as by making her more Shakespearean--that is, more outspoken, saucy, and witty. On the other hand, this change means that Criseyde is by comparison much more reserved, less sharp-tongued, and less self-assured than Cressida; and that these traits--in the general realm of the modest--make her yielding seem more reluctant and more ceremoniously decorous than the open-eyed submission of Cressida. But Chaucer's heroine also has less innocent traits just below the surface, and Shakespeare--always with an eye for dramatically bold outlines of characterization--has sharpened and realized more fully these qualities which Chaucer has but lightly sketched in.

Chaucer himself reveals these traits in numerous ways. First, he gives Criseyde a subtle, but ample degree of

dissimulation: for she continues to pretend to be uninterested in Troilus and incredulous toward Pandarus' persuasions in II.1275-1295--indeed, late into Book III--even though she has experienced a strong feeling of attraction for Troilus as early as II.645-651: the beginning of love which Chaucer confirms in II.666-679 and 1265-1274. Secondly, as both Kittredge and W. W. Lawrence point out,¹⁶ Criseyde is not as innocent as she appears to some. She has been a wife, and when she asks Pandarus (III.569) if Troilus will be at Pandarus' house for supper with them, she reveals an understanding of the ways of the world and even a hint of expectation; indeed, Chaucer's following stanza may be taken as an ironically innocent hint that Criseyde suspected that Troilus would be there.¹⁷ This inference is made all the more plausible by Criseyde's later admission that she had yielded mentally before her actual yielding to Troilus (III.1210-1211). Again, her cognizance of the proceedings and her tacit acceptance of them are hinted at even earlier by her unwitting self-exposure in II.1291-1292, when she tells Pandarus that it is "to soone" to grant Troilus so great a liberty as speaking to him--a trend of thought which implies that this liberty and perhaps others are simply a question of time. And Pandarus' references to her "daunger" (II.1240, II.1376) call attention to the medieval conception of love, in which a stage of caution,

feminine forbiddingness, and ceremonial resistance must be passed through by the lover before the guerdon of the lady's love can be granted. As W. W. Lawrence observes, "Nothing was in worse form than for the lady to yield too quickly."¹⁸ When we bring these features of Criseyde's psychology into focus, we are not far, as Professor Presson has already noticed,¹⁹ from the psychology of love expressed in Cressida's first soliloquy.

It would also be worthwhile to trace the interplay of dissimulation and daunger in Criseyde, to show how they relate quite closely to Cressida's strategy, and to show, indeed, how some of the reasoning belongs to the Cressida-figure, Griseida, in Boccacio and even to the first of all Cressidas, Benoit's. In Chaucer's version, for example, evidence of Criseyde's ripeness for a love affair may be found even before she sees Troilus, for her remark that she has dreamed of Pandarus three nights running (II.89-90) may be taken as a figure for her premonition that Pandarus will soon play an important role in her life. But her unacknowledged susceptibility to Troilus does not become clear until her cogitations soon after she has first seen him. By the process which we would today call "rationalization," but which is also a rhetorical figure,²⁰ Criseyde in effect argues that a little bit of love is quite harmless (whereas Pandarus knows that once may make all the difference in a woman of feeling):

"In every thyng, I woot, there lith mesure,
For though a man forbode dronkenesse,
He naught forbet that every creature
Be drynkles for alway, as I gesse. (II.St.103)

Her reasoning about how she should feel toward Troilus is surely meant to be amusing--for beneath the words what she is saying is that, since she ought not to despise a man who loves her, she is therefore permitted to love him:

Ek sith I woot for me is his destresse,
I ne aughte nat for that thing him despise,
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.
(II.715-721)

Boccacio's Griseida follows a similar line of reasoning, and Benoit's Cressida also says, "I should do wrong if I hated him since he loves me," just prior to translating "not hating" to "loving" Diomedes.²¹

But the real moment of truth, the abandonment of pretense and the confession of an earlier mental yielding, comes during the first embrace of Criseyde and Troilus, when she says:

"Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,
Ben yold, ywis, I were now nought heere!"
(III.1210-1211)

This admission, of course, reflects back upon her previous conduct and permits us to regard her prolonged resistance as in some sense a ceremonial pose--in short, as dissimulation.

This understanding of Criseyde also throws light on Pandarus' advice to her about her daunger, which he treats as a necessary convention, but which he warns her she

must not overdo:

"But ye han played the tirant neigh to longe,
And hard was it your herte for to grave,
Now stynte, that he no lenger on it honge,
Al wolde ye the form of daunger save,
But hasteth yow to doon hym joye have . . .
(II.1240-1244)

Boccacio's Pandarus also says to Griseida "Ah, leave this coyness" and more candidly, "A wondrous thing is this to think of--that each woman, when others are by to see, should appear coy and angry about what is most desired by ladies. I have spoken so much of this, thou shouldst not be over-nice with me."²² Assuredly, Chaucer never becomes quite as realistic about ladies' secret desires, but the anger, coyness, and dissimulation in Boccacio's version are quite close to what Pandarus means by daunger in the parallel passage in Chaucer. And a few lines earlier, Pandarus had sketched another aspect of the accepted psychology of long-sustained feminine resistance:

That he to hym of hard now ben ywonne
Oughte he be glad, by God and yonder sonne;
For-whi men seith, 'impresiounes lighte
Ful lightly ben ay redy to the flighte.'
(II.1236-1239)

This psychology, still by no means extinct today, underlies Cressida's admission to Troilus in the play--with its echo of Pandarus' words, just quoted, in the poem--that she was "Hard to seem won" (III.ii.125). And she is only penetrating to the more realistic interpretation of this psychology when she says earlier, "Men prize the thing ungained more than it is" (I.ii.275), an idea which

Shakespeare must not have found cynical or deplorable, since he has Prospero and even the virtuous Valentine of Two Gentlemen express variations of it.²³ The self-protective function of this caution and delay is as obvious today as it was in Chaucer's or Shakespeare's times: men lightly prize what is lightly won.

Another medieval concept, that of sovereignty, completes the picture. Cressida has been, according to the commonplace metaphor, playing the tyrant as long as she has resisted; but she knows that "Achievement is command" (I.ii.279) and that, after this event, the danger is that the man--again she echoes Chaucer's Pandarus, II.1240--"will play the tyrant" (II.ii.127). In short, Cressida's duplicity in the play is thoroughly in accord with the medieval strategy of love, which is present both openly and by implication in Chaucer's poem.

Once the story reaches the stage of Criseyde's removal to the Greek camp, there is not much to choose between, as far as the shabbiness of both heroines is concerned. The mistake which can be and often is made with Chaucer's heroine is to carry so far the process of undoing the old moralistic view by exculpating her, that her deeds in Book V fade away into a mist and glow of idealization, and all that remains is the warm, complex, enigmatic figure of the first three books. On the other hand, Cressida's execution of essentially the same deeds

in Act V continues to be reviled by Shakespearean critics forgetful of Chaucer, in a literary vacuum, as if these deeds are details invented by Shakespeare, not derived from the earlier poem and the long tradition. But reason demands that we include the baseness of Criseyde's conduct in Book V in our scheme and that we recognize that we cannot consider Cressida a consistently debased version of her, when in fact the two heroines betray their lovers by means of the very same deeds. As C. S. Lewis remarks of Criseyde, "It is disgusting that she should give Troilus' brooch to Diomedes, and her last letter to Troilus is abominable."²⁴

Criseyde's dialogues with Diomedes show her in about as unglamorous a light as any details in Book V, including the brooch and the letter, and--properly understood--are no less shabby than Cressida's tactics with him in the play:

"And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so.
Ek, God woot, love and I ben fer ysonder!
I am disposed bet, so mot I go,
Unto my deth, to pleyne and maken wo.
What shal after don, I kan nat seye;
But trewelich, as yet me list nat pleye.

Myn herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bisy day by day.
Herafter, whan ye wonnen han the town,
Peraunter, thanne so it happen may,
That whan I se that nevere yit I say,
Than wol I werke that I never wroughte!
This word to yow ynough suffisen oughte.

To-morwe ek wol I spoken with yow fayn,
So that ye touchen naught of this matere.
And whan yow list, ye may come here ayayn;
And er ye gon, thus muche I sey yow here:
As help me Pallas with hire heres clere,
If that I sholde of any Greke han routhe,
It sholde be youreselven, by my trouthe!

I say nat therfore that I wol yow love,
N'y say nay; bit in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by God that sit above!"
And therwithal she caste hire eyen down,
And gan to sike, and seyde, "O, Troie town,
Ye bidde I God, in quiete and in reste
I may yow sen, or do myn herte breste."
(V.981-1008)

This remarkable specimen of coquetry and double-talk moves from the affirmation that her grief for her dead husband makes her utterly disinclined toward love--a claim which has a familiar ring, since she used it during Troilus' wooing of her--to the suggestion that she may change her mind if the Greeks prove to be victorious--a rather opportunistic sentiment. The implications behind her hardly enigmatic sentence, "Than wol I werke that I never wroughte!," border on the salacious. In the next stanza, she assures Diomedes that if she "should" be interested in any Greek it would be he, the subjunctive mood acting as a transparent disguise of what actually constitutes a declaration that she is favorably disposed toward him. The calculated self-contradictions contained in these two stanzas are then summarized and reduced to a formula which would be enigmatic only to the very naïve man: "I say nat therfore that I wol yow love,/N'y say nay." The angelically inarticulate "I mene wel" and the

archetypally modest act of casting her eyes down complete the performance. It is obvious that Criseyde has declined morally since her affair with Troilus. If there is a difference between her comportment and Cressida's in the parallel scene in the play, it is that Cressida is less the dissembler and more the appetitive woman feebly struggling a losing battle with desire, aided only by a weak conscience; whereas Criseyde continues to play the chaste and dignified woman cunningly. Both Benoit and Boccacio portray this "presume not, despair not" side of Criseyde with Diomedes, and it is thus part of the pre-Chaucerian, more wanton heroine.²⁵

In many other respects, Shakespeare's Cressida simply follows the character of her model in Chaucer--and in several of these, the unglamorous quality goes back to the original and thus cannot be a darkening of Chaucer's heroine. For example, if Cressida is to be considered lacking in filial devotion for "forgetting" her father (IV.11.95-98), she is only duplicating what Criseyde says in the poem (IV.666-668)--indeed, Chaucer has her not only "forget," but even lose all concern about him or about whether he has died. Similarly, it would not seem proper to regard as insincere and ceremonious Cressida's hope that Troilus will remain true to her, when Criseyde makes the same request (IV.1639-1645). And Criseyde just as clearly as Cressida becomes irritated later and accuses

Troilus of distrusting her:

"O mercy, God, what lif is this?" quod she.
"Allas ye sle me thus for verray tene!
I se wel now that ye mystrusten me,
For by youre wordes it is wel yseene.
(IV.1604-1607)

Thus, those who speak of Cressida's irritability during the parting scene ("O heavens! 'Be true' again?", "O heavens! you love me not": cf. "O mercy, God") should recognize that Shakespeare, far from darkening his model or inventing unattractive qualities for his heroine, is merely utilizing material clearly present in the original.

Finally, Criseyde's recognition of her faithlessness, her regret, and her tribute to Troilus (V.1054-1085) contain elements which Shakespeare used in the parallel soliloquy in the play, as well as at other points. Probably the most important of these elements is her recognition that her betrayal will be considered a reflection on her whole sex:

"And wommen moost wol haten me of alle.
Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle!

"Thei wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I have hem don dishonour, weylaway!
Al be I nat the first that dide amys,
What helpeth that to don my blame away?

Criseyde's universalizing here of the dishonor to womanhood appears in the play in Troilus' exclamation, after seeing Cressida with Diomedes, "Let it not be believ'd for womanhood" (V.11.129); and Cressida is really thinking along the same lines when she universalizes the frailty (as Hamlet does in "Frailty, thy name is woman" and

Posthumus does in III.v of Cymbeline), in her line "Ah, poor our sex!" It is true that Shakespeare's truncated version of the heroine's self-understanding and regret lacks the pathos of Chaucer's version and seems merely analytical. But it is undeniable that Cressida recognizes that she is at fault (l. 109), that she has been led into "error" (l. 111: in the theological sense), that she is "full of turpitude" (l. 112); and it is even manifest that she mildly laments her moral helplessness ("Ah, poor our sex"), which--in accordance with contemporary psychology²⁶--she attributes to the greater moral weakness of women. Hence, although Criseyde seems more disturbed about her moral offense, Cressida, with her keener wit, perceives the psychological cause of her fall: her narrow conception of love as a longing produced by the eyes--a conception which almost inevitably encourages swift, transitory loves and inconstancy, that is error. Thus, it can be seen that Shakespeare's heroine is not conspicuously more degraded than Chaucer's in this scene, but instead continues to manifest the less emotional, more perceptive qualities of character which Shakespeare has given her from the start. In short, Shakespeare, rather than lowering Criseyde, has changed her into a more nimble-minded, independent, Elizabethan woman and has reduced her outward expression of feeling. This change, however, is far from a satiric reduction.

Finally, Cressida does not fail to express her tribute to Troilus, as she does in the poem (V.1056-1057), although this recognition of Troilus' steadfast and genuine love appears in the play at a different juncture --not after her submission to Diomedes, but during her psychological struggle with him:

O, all you gods! O pretty, pretty pledge!
Thy master now lies thinking in his bed
Of thee and me, and sighs, and takes my glove,
And gives memorial dainty kisses to it,
As I kiss thee. Nay, do not snatch it from me;
He that takes that doth take my heart withal.
(V.11.73-78)

A few lines later, she adds a significant remark about the pledge:

'Twas one's that loved me better than you will.
(1. 88)

Even though it may be largely selfish, the regret is evident here: she has thrown a pearl away. But her misfortune is that, fully aware of Troilus' superior qualities, she cannot wait the briefest time to experience them again, because she cannot resist the onslaughts of another attractive male who is immediately before her eyes. But, in the final analysis, we can describe Criseyde's falling-off in much the same terms.

A few final considerations should complete this study of Shakespeare's alleged debasement of Chaucer. The first is the very large number of details in which Shakespeare follows or respectfully adapts details from Chaucer's

poem. Numerous examples of this use of Chaucer have already been offered in this and the preceding chapter. The significance of these adaptations is that they weaken the claim that Shakespeare consistently debases Chaucer, since a satiric distortion would put as many details as possible to a degraded use, and not allow a large body of them to be merely neutral and respectful renderings. However, it is remarkable but true, at this late date and after much perceptive scholarship, that reputable scholars like Professors Alice Walker and T. W. Baldwin continue to minimize the importance of Troilus and Criseyde as a source for Shakespeare's play.²⁷

But enough clear parallels exist to make further doubt unnecessary. For example, as Professor Muir--who maintains that the "main source was Chaucer's great poem"--has pointed out, Shakespeare follows Chaucer's structure very closely.²⁸ Indeed, the action of each of the five acts corresponds with great regularity to the action of the five books. No other extant work has this kind of structure, Boccaccio's being the closest, but still rather different.²⁹ The playwright especially follows the poem quite closely in the disposition of events relating to the consummation of the love and the reversal immediately afterwards. Chaucer ends Book III soon after the lovers have parted in the morning and opens Book IV with Calchas' request for the exchange. Shakespeare ends

III.11 with the lovers' retiring into their chamber and follows immediately, III.111, with Calchas' request. Both poets obviously are seeking to achieve dramatic irony, but Shakespeare, as usual, tightens and sharpens the contrast for greater dramatic effect.

Among writers on the two works, Professor R. A. Small has been the most thorough in his assembling of important details in which Shakespeare follows Chaucer.³⁰ He notes that the review of the passing soldiers by Cressida and Pandarus in I.11 of the play appears in the poem in II. 610-651 and once more in II.1247-1258.³¹ Again, the token to which Pandarus refers in I.11.305 corresponds to the letter he will deliver to her from Troilus in the poem, II.1002-1204. The mental confusion of the lovers in the play (III.11.21ff) occurs in the poem in II.1751ff and III.50-203. Small points out that Cressida's declaration of love in III.11 occurs also in the poem, III.1239. Moreover, he notes that the nature of the exchange--which in Caxton and Lydgate is Antenor for Thoas--is Criseyde for Antenor and Thoas in Chaucer.³² Again, he shows that Cressida's protestation of fidelity--which in the play has aroused some derision in critics--has a close analogue in Chaucer (IV.1534-1554). He also has shown that Troilus' injudicious praise of Grecian youth occurs in the poem as well (IV.1485-1491). Criseyde's letter is, of course, another important detail in which Shakespeare

follows Chaucer (V.1590ff). And Small also notices how Troilus' threats to Diomedes appear in the poem as well (V.1702ff).

Professor Robert Presson has agreed with at least four of these observations³³ and has added four more of his own which appear to be equally valid. First, he points out that Pandarus' comparison of Troilus and Hector in I.ii.62-96 has its precedent in Chaucer in II.170-207. Secondly, he correctly perceives that Troilus' brief rebuke of night in IV.ii.12-14 is actually not--as Professor William Meader has maintained³⁴--an indication of the ugliness of the lovers' deed, but rather a shortened form of the traditional aubade, which in Chaucer appears in III.1427-1460. Moreover, he notices that Pandarus' twitting of Cressida in IV.ii appears in the poem in a quite similar form (III.1555-1568). Finally, just as Troilus holds "the injury of chance" responsible for the unhappy turn of events (IV.iv.35-50), so in the poem, he holds Fortune responsible (IV.274-277).

These numerous parallels, as well as the ones which I have discussed throughout these last two chapters, not only make continued opposition to the idea that Shakespeare used Chaucer rather out-dated, but also adds substance to the contention that much of the time, during his depiction of the lovers, Shakespeare was respectfully adapting and dramatizing the greatest of the English poets before

Elizabethan times, rather than consistently lowering him.

Another factor which deserves consideration in any comparison of the two works is the frequent allegation that Shakespeare was compelled by tradition to represent Cressida as a wanton or even a harlot and Pandarus as a pimp, because their names had become virtually synonymous with these professions. Curiously enough, the scholar with whose name this doctrine is most frequently identified is Professor Hyder Rollins, whose able study of the Troilus and Cressida story between Chaucer and Shakespeare is often quoted.³⁵ However, Professor Rollins' conclusion--as perhaps no one except Professor Franklin Dickey has noticed³⁶--is substantially different from this argument that tradition predetermined Shakespeare's portrayals. It is true that he calls Cressida a "wanton" at the outset of the article and that he traces the gradual deterioration of her reputation, especially as a result of the diatribes against her by the "Henrysonian" poets, Gascoigne, Turbeville, Howell, and Whetstone.³⁷ But the soul of his argument is not merely that her reputation deteriorated, but that, with the vivid option before him to represent Cressida as a loathsome creature and as a literal prostitute (Whetstone has her prostitute herself to other Trojans even during her affair with Troilus), Shakespeare chose a much more moderate path. As Rollins suggests:

Shakespeare deserves our thanks for pulling Cressida partly out of the mire in which Henryson's followers had placed her.³⁸

This statement does not sound as if Rollins believed that tradition gave Shakespeare no choice but to make Cressida a despicable creature. And, if there is any doubt about Rollins' true position, he reiterates later on:

In the light of the history of the love story, the remarkable thing is that Shakespeare dealt with her so mildly . . . Certainly he has no apparent bitterness toward Cressida: 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.³⁹

If it had been Shakespeare's aim to debase the love affair unmistakably, his path would have been clear: to dramatize Whetstone's "Cressida's Complaint," by making Cressida into a literal prostitute, and to make Pandarus into a literal pimp. Then the allegations about the "irretrievable deterioration" of their reputations would have made sense. But the very fact that Shakespeare did not choose this path when it was open to him makes it quite evident that his conception of these two characters was considerably higher and more sympathetic than that of the "Henrysonian" poets. In fact, Shakespeare took a considerable step back in the direction of Chaucer's conception, although it would be going too far to claim that his version is as sympathetic as Chaucer's. What is more plausible is to go back behind Chaucer, rather than forward from him to Henryson and his

followers, and to find Shakespeare's Cressida somewhere in between Boccacio's and Chaucer's--not as decorously modest as Chaucer's, but not as frankly Italianate as Boccacio's.⁴⁰ For we must realize that all Cressidas previous to Chaucer's had an element of shamelessness: there is a strong hint of her future promiscuity in Benoit's which might have suggested Henryson's continuation to him,⁴¹ and Guido uses her as a basis for misogynic polemics.⁴² Hence, Shakespeare's decision to make Cressida bold, risqué in her speech, and realistic about love has a basis in the pre-Chaucerian tradition; whereas the post-Chaucerian tradition merely transforms her into a lurid and unrecognizable memento veneris. But even in relation to these earlier versions of the heroine, Shakespeare's Cressida is a more respectable and more richly characterized and charming woman. Thus, although Criseyde is the one to whom she is most frequently contrasted, it is Criseyde, inevitably, to whom she can be more properly likened.

In general, then, not only Troilus, but Pandarus and Cressida as well, are not conspicuously debauched versions of their models in Chaucer, but rather are close enough in essential character for us to conclude that Shakespeare --within the limitations of the dramatic medium--was trying to do a fairly accurate stage version of the

famous poem: always of course with the stamp of his own individual genius. It may also be added that his version of Diomedes is not, as some have said, a coarsened version of Chaucer's, but rather an accurate, though laconic rendering of Chaucer's, who--as Professor Thomas Kirby has suggested--is a somewhat lowered version of Boccacio's more courtly figure.⁴³

Thus, if it is true that Shakespeare meant primarily to dramatize rather than to satirize Chaucer, it may be concluded that Troilus and Cressida was an undertaking no less ambitious than a work which (as we shall see in the next chapter) would be a stage version of the most celebrated war-poem in all literature, the Iliad, and at the same time of the most celebrated love-poem in English, Troilus and Criseyde. If the play is a failure, part of the reason may be found in the immensity of the task of doing justice to both of these two great works--in "what may be digested in a play" (Prologue, l. 29). It is therefore no wonder that Shakespeare's Prologue speaks "not in confidence/Of author's pen or actor's voice" and seems uncertain about the results of the playwright's clearly energetic efforts:

Like, or find fault; do as your pleasures are:
Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war.
(ll. 31-32)

NOTES

1 This feature of Pandarus in the poem has, of course, already been noticed. See C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1948), pp. 192-193 and Thomas Kirby, Chaucer's Troilus: A Study in Courtly Love (Louisiana State, 1940), p. 179.

2 See R. K. Gordon, The Story of Troilus (London, 1934), p. 82.

3 Hamill Kenny, "Shakespeare's Cressida," Anglia, LXI (1937), 165.

4 It is not my intention to return to the moralistic criticism of earlier writers. Whenever I refer to unattractive features of Pandarus and Criseyde, I do so with the full awareness that Chaucer himself, in his tone, consistently was generous about these flaws. However, in the interest of accuracy and fairness, it is necessary to uncover these flaws, so that a proper comparison with Shakespeare's characters can be made.

5 See Young, pp. 142-143.

6 Kenny, 165.

7 Lewis, p. 193.

8 Young, p. 141.

9 See Glossary in Kittredge, Works, under "mistress" and "rub."

10 This line might be based on Pandarus' hypothetical offer of his sister, if he had one, in the poem (I.860-861).

11 I. A. Richards, "Troilus and Cressida and Plato," Hudson Review, I (Autumn, 1948), 368.

12 Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, 2d ed. (London, 1961), I, pp. 80-81.

13 Peter Ure, Shakespeare: The Problem Plays (London, 1961), p. 35.

14 William Bowden, "The Human Shakespeare and Troilus and Cressida," SQ, VIII (Spring, 1957), 172.

15 Franklin Dickey, Not Wisely But Too Well (San Marino, 1957), p. 124; Barbara De Almeida, "Troilus and Cressida: Romantic Love Revisited," SQ, XV (Autumn, 1964), 329.

16 George Lyman Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), p. 131; W. W. Lawrence, "The Love-Story in 'Troilus and Criseyde,'" in Shakespearian Studies, ed. Brander Matthews and Ashley Thorndike (New York, 1962), p. 201.

17 Nought list myn auctour fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of towne yfare,
As if he seyde therof soth or no;
But that, withowten await, with hym to go
She graunted hym, sith he hire that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hire oughte.
(III.575-581)

18 W. W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies,
2d ed. (New York, 1960), p. 148.

19 Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida
and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 116.

20 See Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the
Arts of Language (New York, 1947), p. 214. The figure is
aporia, or doubt. It actually constitutes a debate with
oneself.

21 Gordon, p. 48, p. 15.

22 Ibid., p. 56 and p. 53.

23 See Tempest, I.ii.450-452, and TGV, III.1.93-97.

24 Lewis, p. 189.

25 See Joseph Graydon, "Defense of Criseyde," PMLA,
XLIV (1929), 155; Gordon, p. 12, p. 103, p. 105.

26 Variorum, p. 417.

27 Troilus and Cressida, ed. Alice Walker (Cambridge,
1957), iii-vi; Variorum, p. 449.

28 Muir, pp. 78-79; see also Small, pp. 154-155.

29 Boccacio has nine cantos. See Gordon, The Story of Troilus.

30 Small, pp. 154-155.

31 Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), finds a parallel in Book III of the Iliad. The resemblance to that passage is that Priam discusses the procession of heroes with Helen, whereas Pandarus does not in Chaucer. On the other hand, as Presson notes, Pandarus' description of Troilus' helmet and its hacks in the play conforms to Chaucer's description in the poem. Shakespeare's scene therefore looks like a conflation.

32 Oddly enough, Boccacio is the only source, apparently, in whom the exchange is Cressida for Antenor, as in Shakespeare. This detail might be regarded as evidence that Shakespeare consulted Boccacio, but it could not rank as evidence that Shakespeare depended primarily on Boccacio for his story, since--just to cite two examples--Shakespeare follows Chaucer rather than Boccacio in his conception of Pandarus as an older man, an uncle, and as essentially comic, and follows Chaucer in his conception of Diomedes as brusque, non-courtly, and opportunistic.

33 Presson, p. 115, p. 118, p. 119, p. 127.

34 William Meader, Courtship in Shakespeare (New York, 1954), p. 227.

35 Hyder Rollins, "The Troilus-Criseyde Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," PMLA, XXV (1917), 383-429.

36 Dickey, p. 121n.

37 Rollins, 400-418.

38 Ibid., 409.

39 Ibid., 427.

40 By this term "Italianate" I mean approximately what Ascham meant in his application of the word to gentlemen: a certain licentiousness. Griseida reflects her outlook and perhaps that of Boccaccio's Italy when she says, as an argument for accepting Troilo: "I know no lady in this land without a lover" (Gordon, p. 48).

41 Gordon, p. 19.

42 See Lydgate, Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen, E. E. T. S., Extra Series (London, 1906-1935), 106, III.4270-4342.

43 Kirby, pp. 239-245.

XII. SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE SOURCES: II. HOMER

The argument that Shakespeare markedly lowered the Greek and Trojan heroes and in effect produced a debased version or burlesque of the Iliad recurs either openly or by implication among the writers who claim that the play is a satire, and even among those who do not.¹ Sometimes, the idea of lowering or debasement is simply set forth, without an attempt to draw the conclusion that the satiric technique of parody or burlesque is present.² Professor Gilbert Highet, on the other hand, ventures to describe the play as a "satirical burlesque" and offers several details as evidence.³ Similarly, Professor Tucker Brooke maintains that Shakespeare followed Chapman in turning "Homer's 'temperamental primitives' into arrant cowards, braggarts, and bullies,"⁴ and Professor Campbell heartily endorses him. The fount and origin for this viewpoint, at least in the twentieth century, is Professor Nathaniel Griffin's learned book and article on Dares and Dictys,⁵ which Professor W. W. Lawrence endorsed some decades afterward⁶ and which Professor Campbell apparently inherited from him.

On the other hand, many scholars have resisted the idea that Shakespeare has systematically stripped the

heroes of their dignity. As Professor Empson points out, "Troilus and Cressida is often taken as a sort of parody of the Iliad, but there is little in it that Homer did not imply."⁷ Similarly, Professor Tillyard, emphasizing the importance of a knowledge of the traditions behind the composition of the play, recommends that a study of these circumstances "should, at this hour of the day, have quenched all moanings that Shakespeare was guilty of degrading the high Homeric tradition."⁸ And Professor Kittredge's words are especially noteworthy:

For the idea that Shakespeare has cynically degraded the heroes of the Iliad, Thersites is mainly responsible . . . But his cynical comments upon the Grecian and Trojan heroes do not express Shakespeare's opinion, nor would any Elizabethan audience have taken them in that sense . . . To the Elizabethan audience Thersites was simply the comic chorus. Unless we identify Thersites with Shakespeare, we cannot say that Shakespeare has debased the Homeric heroes. He has merely translated them from the epic dialect into the dramatic; and in this rendition he has varied in no essential trait from his original. They are still heroic, both in speech and action; and in their human imperfections they are true to Homeric portrayal.⁹

The question of which of these two opposing views is more correct depends to a large extent on our conception of the original Homeric heroes themselves: whether they were surpassingly noble and admirable or all-too-human. I propose in this chapter to analyze these Homeric heroes as they appear in the Iliad and to show not only that most of them had marked flaws, but also that Shakespeare actually elevated a few major figures, notably Hector,

Ulysses, and Agamemnon; moreover, that Shakespeare's Achilles is no more heinous than Homer's, in fact is less extreme in cruelty and inhumanity. In short, it will be my contention that Shakespeare could hardly have written an anti-heroic version of the Iliad, since a reasonable familiarity with that work reveals that Shakespeare's portrayals of the heroes are usually faithful to Homer's and often more flattering than his.

Concerning the related question of whether Shakespeare in fact made use of Homer at all, those who continue to have doubts may consult the Appendix, where I attempt to gather together most of the available evidence presented by Professors Small, Tatlock, Presson, and others, and add some further evidence of my own. These numerous parallels, I believe, cannot be minimized and point unmistakably to Shakespeare's use of Homer as one of his principal sources.

The traditional conception of Homer's heroes in the Iliad is that they were semi-mythical beings, more-than-human figures who belonged to an era somewhat before firmly recorded history, virtually contemporaneous with Moses'. And the fact that several of them, like Paris, Achilles, or Hector, communicate with deities (as Moses and other ancient Hebrews did with Jehovah), while others, like Achilles and Aeneas, have a divine parent, only adds to the impression that these personages antedate the degeneration of human beings from a higher state.

The tradition that the original heroes were more-than-human has persisted even into the twentieth century. For instance, W. W. Lawrence has maintained that the Greeks "appear in Homer as radiant and god-like beings," that the Iliad has "the dignity of a heroic civilization," and that modern scholarship throws a "heroic glamor" about Homer.¹⁰ Similarly, O. J. Campbell describes the characters of the Iliad as "a band of youths fighting joyously in the sunlight on the plains of Troy."¹¹ However, as Lawrence concedes, this view of the heroes does not receive unanimous approval in modern times, for there are also critics like Henry Cabot Lodge who believe that "the Homeric poems describe to us the doings of certain primitive tribes who were cruel and treacherous, subtle and cunning, liars and braggarts, and, withal, not over brave, although fighting was their principal business in life."¹² Professor Gilbert Murray also has much to say on the less admirable side of the heroes, especially Achilles.¹³

Actually, however, reservations about the idealized picture of the heroes have consistently accompanied the majority view from ancient times on, although few writers essay a deflation as sweeping as Lodge's. But even Aristotle, who is perhaps more responsible than anyone for the idea of larger-than-life heroes ("Homer represented men better than we are"),¹⁴ affirms a certain turpitude in

Achilles even as he affirms his excellence:

Since tragedy is an imitation of better men than our contemporaries, the dramatist should imitate good portrait painters who, though presenting the right form and making their portraits like the originals, make them more beautiful. Thus the poet in his imitations of wrathful men and cowardly men and others of comparable traits must still represent them as good, as Homer makes Achilles an example of hardness and yet good.¹⁵

Plutarch also perceives this hardness in Homer's Achilles, sees him as a terrible man, and observes that even his best friend, Patroclus, speaks of him as hard-hearted.¹⁶ He also notices Nestor's talkativeness, especially about his "prowess and glorious deeds," and a similar tendency to boast in Achilles and Patroclus; although he finds a justification for all three.¹⁷

Ovid's treatment of the Trojan material is especially interesting because it covers some events which occurred before the war, which are un-heroic, and which are not as familiar to the modern reader as they were to the Elizabethan, whose love of the Metamorphoses is well-known. The main incidents recalled are that Ulysses feigned madness in order to avoid joining the Greeks in their attack on Troy, was exposed as sane by Palamades, and in revenge had Palamades falsely accused and executed; and, two, that Achilles, again in order to avoid fighting in the war, disguised himself as a woman (at the behest of his mother) and was discovered only by a crafty ruse by Ulysses.¹⁸ That these unglamorous details were

familiar to Renaissance readers is evident, since Peele refers to them in his A Tale of Troy.¹⁹ But Ovid also slyly manages to uncover more unfavorable matter against Ulysses, during the course of the war itself. Through Ajax, he reminds the Greek prince that his conduct in battle was not always exemplary, since he fled from Hector's fire when Ajax was defending the Greeks virtually alone and since he deserted Nestor when he was wounded and in distress.²⁰

Erasmus' somewhat unflattering portrayals of the major personages of the Iliad are also noteworthy. He makes Achilles "passionate, not to be moved by entreaty, simple and open of character, single-minded, full of hatred toward rulers, full of hatred toward those who cheat, swift of foot." Ulysses he describes as "crafty, deceitful, a dissembler, all-enduring." Agamemnon is "more gentle of spirit, but greedy for sovereignty and power, afraid of the populace, longing more for sensual pleasure than for war." Of Ajax Erasmus writes that he is "more adept in deeds than in speech, not brooking an effront or a rejection."²¹ Erasmus repeatedly stresses that "in such a way Homer first fashioned" the heroes and that aspiring writers should follow his example; so that it is clear that he is characterizing Homer's heroes, not later versions of them. A further indication that Shakespeare has been influenced by "characters" like

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Erasmus's appears in Thersites' claim that Agamemnon is "one that loves quails" (V.1.57), which resembles Erasmus' "longing more for sensual pleasure than for war." Again, Thersites' main stress in his diatribe against Agamemnon in Iliad II is also upon his lust and greed (l. 195, l. 197, ll. 200-201).

Moreover, Chapman, although he elevates Hector in his additions and extenuates Achilles' acts in his side-notes, does not always treat Agamemnon, Menelaus, or Ajax with respect. As Professor Phyllis Bartlett has observed, Chapman refers to Agamemnon as Arrogancy and Menelaus as Detraction in the Preface of 1598; he anatomizes Menelaus in the commentary on Book II as a foolish, cowardly man, with little to say, "yet speaking thicke and fast," and "even by the wit of Ajax plaid upon"; and he portrays Ajax, in the commentary on Book XVI, as very dull.²² However, Chapman's explanation of apparent contradictions in Menelaus' character (though a coward, he is sometimes valiant, etc.) not only lessens the acerbity of his disrespectful picture, but illuminates very well the viewpoint that Homer represents men, not ideally, but as they appear in Nature:

Nor useth our most inimitable Imitator of nature
[Homer] this grosse and deformed mixture of his
parts more to colour and avoid too broad a
taxation of so eminent a person [Menelaus] than
to follow the true life of nature, being often
or alwaies exprest so disparent in her creatures.
And therefore the decorum that some poore
Criticks have stood upon, to make fooles alwaies

foolish, cowards always cowardly, etc. is farre from the variant order of nature, whose principles being contrary, her productions must needes containe the like opposition.²³

What emerges from a study of these various authors' observations on the Homeric characters is certainly a more complex picture than the traditional one of idealization. True, the majority viewpoint, that the heroes were exemplars of virtue (convenient for use in the didactic theory of literature), prevailed during the Renaissance and, in unexamined form, has persisted until the present time as a kind of harmless truism. However, throughout the ages, there have been observers who, refusing to allow the myth to act as a substitute for the manifest actualities of the Iliad itself, have seen the other, less glamorous side of the picture as well. In our own time, Professor Richmond Lattimore has furnished some more precise details for this other side in the introduction to his impressive translation.²⁴

Since Achilles is the one character in Shakespeare's play who is clearly villainous, whose unmanly and unheroic act climaxes the action, and whose baseness consequently serves as one of the main foundations for the thesis that the play lowers the tone of the epic, it would be wise to examine him in the Homeric poem first.

Achilles' argument with Agamemnon over Briseis in Book I, it will be remembered, leads to the withdrawal of the Greek champion and to the troubled times for the

Achaians which form the dramatic matrix of the poem. But even a casual reading of this disagreement should reveal that it has the unmistakable flavor of an argument between two wilful and stubborn youths--to anyone not over-awed by the copiousness and grandeur of their speeches. And the fact that Agamemnon is equally culpable in the scene, equally obstinate and peremptory in the pursuit of his claim, does not detract from Achilles' vice of inflexible wilfulness: rather, Book I presents both of the heroes in an initially quite unheroic light. That this view of their squabble is not an exclusively modern one is evident from Scaligers' ridicule of the "garrulous Achilles" and of the threats he utters in the assembly.²⁵ Moreover, Anthony Gibson in A Woman's Worth (1599) finds Achilles' possessiveness toward Briseis unseemly, calling him a brothel-hunter "who preferred a brutish kind of affection, before the love of country."²⁶ Admittedly, this moralistic criticism errs somewhat by placing the emphasis on Achilles' carnal desire, rather than on his youthful stubbornness; but the perception of a human frailty in the Greek paragon is nevertheless evident. Bayle's observation in his Philosophical Dictionary, although it makes use of the satiric device of the disabling image, is perhaps more pertinent: "Achilles raging for the loss of Briseis (and his honor) was like a child crying for his doll."²⁷ Indeed, we need go no farther than the later

books of the Iliad to confirm the pettiness and unworthiness of the quarrel. For Achilles himself later admits that he would have preferred that the "wench" had been gored by Diana's javelin before he had received her as a prize and that his anger had been a "distemper" (XIX. 48-56). And Agamamnon also confesses in Book II:

Myself and Thetis' sonne
(Like girles) in words fought for a girle, and I
th'offence begunne (II.331-332).

It is to the credit of both men that they later admit their foolishness; but here we are discussing the unworthy and all-too-human quality of that original foolishness. Moreover, whereas Agamemnon comes to his senses almost immediately, in Book II, Achilles--whose frailties we are considering--"persevers in obstinate condolment" over Briseis until the death of Patroclus and his desire for revenge against Hector overcome his desire to punish Agamamnon and the Greeks.

Again, Achilles' unseemly boyishness appears once more in his relation to his mother, to whom he tearfully laments (I.352-421) and whom he asks to help him in his revenge by using her influence with Jove. It is worthy of note that, by complying with his entreaties, Thetis initiates the squabbles on Olympus and thus produces cosmic disorder. Moreover, the objection that Achilles' weeping to his mother would appear unmanly only to the modern reader is of little force, since Scaliger also

comments on the tears and asks, "Are we expected to believe that this is the strongest of men, the slayer of Hector?"²⁸

But Achilles is guilty of a far more unheroic display of hatefulness than these petty symptoms of immaturity. For, in his plea to his mother, he tells her to appeal to Jove thus:

Kneele to him, embrace his knee and pray
(If Troy's aide he will ever deigne) that now
their forces may
Beate home the Greeks to fleete and sea,
embruing their retreat
In slaughter, their pains paying the wreake of
their proud Sovereign's heart . . .
(I.401-404)

In other words, Achilles' vengeful spite toward Agamemnon is so great that he becomes a traitor to the Grecian cause and wishes for the slaughter of his cohorts--to "teach them a lesson." Actually, it turns out that Thetis' intervention does not bring about the dispersal of the Greeks; but it does lead to the apotheosis of Hector as an unconquerable warrior, and to the slaughter of countless Greeks. In a similar fashion, Achilles expresses a wish to Patroclus that all the Trojans and Greeks might perish, so that the two of them alone might conquer Troy:

O would to Jove, thou Pallas, and thou Sunne,
That not a man housd underneath those towres of
Ilion,
Nor any one of all the Greeks (how infinite a
sunne
Soever altogether make) might live unovercome,
But onely we two (scaping death) might have the
thundring downe

Of every stone stucke in the wals of this so
sacred towne.²⁹ (XVI.89-94)

But Achilles' vindictive and inflexible spirit (which Chapman solemnly calls "free and most ingenuous," p. 191) shows itself most clearly in Book IX, in which he rejects the suit of Ulysses, Nestor, Phoenix, and Ajax. His oration in reply to Ulysses (296-410) is among the longest in the epic. The situation of the Greeks is very grave: the Trojans now threaten to set the Greek ships afire; Hector rages unopposed (228-235); Agamemnon has decided to humble himself, swallow his pride, and offer handsome gifts to Achilles if he will return to battle. The offer (260-288) comprises--apart from gold, tripods, and horses --seven lovely girls and, above all, Briseis herself, whom Agamemnon swears he has not touched. Finally, Achilles is promised a great share of the spoils of Troy in wealth and women, as well as his choice of one of Agamemnon's own daughters.

But Achilles in his lengthy oration haughtily dismisses these remarkable concessions. Instead, he launches into a catalogue of grievances about the past: his ill-rewarded services, his endangering of his life, Agamemnon's greed in dividing the spoils. He appears to gloat over the wretched plight of Agamemnon and the Greeks and becomes virtually an exemplum of unforgiving obstinacy:

I never will partake his works nor counsels as
before:
He once deceiv'd and injur'd me, and he shall
never more
Tie my affections with his words: enough is the
increase
Of one successe in his deceits, which let him
joy in peace
And bear it to a wretched end. Wise Jove hath
reft his braine
To bring him plagues, and these his gifts I (as
my foes) disdain . . .
Nor, would he amplifie all this like sand, or
dust, or grasse,
Should he reclaime me till his wreake payd me
for all the paines
That with his contumely burned like poison in
my veines.

(IX.362-377)

He is, to say the least, being unreasonable in rejecting the offer, not only of gifts, but of the same treasure, girl who was the original cause of the quarrel. His reference to wise Jove's punishment of Agamemnon is as vindictively sanctimonious as are similar attributions of misfortune to divine justice in religions more familiar to us. Moreover, the suggestion that his behavior is excessive and inexcusable here is not a merely modern judgement, for Ajax berates him (ll. 590-609), calling him "rude," "unremorseful," and of a "wild and cruell spirit"; Diomedes worries that the offer of gifts will make Achilles "burst with pride," when he is already "proud enough" (ll. 654-655); and as a whole, the Greeks "All wondred he should be so sterne" (l. 652). Again, as we have seen, Achilles himself later on admits his excessiveness from the start. Professor Tillyard presents

Achilles' conduct in this scene in a more sympathetic light, especially when he "opens his heart to Odysseus and Ajax, the bearers of Agamemnon's offers, whom he respects," but adds later that Achilles "fell into the great error of refusing Agamemnon's attempts to make amends. He rejected the Prayers, that were the daughters of Zeus."³⁰ Professor Cedric Whitman makes a more elaborate attempt to answer the reaction of many readers to Achilles as a "spoiled child" and as "ungenerous and egotistical" in his rejection of the embassy.³¹ But the opening lines of the Iliad, which sound the theme of the dire consequences of Achilles' prolonged wrath and withdrawal, establish the moral design of the poem and effectively answer any attempts to excuse Achilles for his part in the tragedy:

Achilles' baneful wrath resound, O Goddess,
that imposd
Infinite sorrowes on the Greekes, and many brave
soules losd
From breasts Heroique--sent them farre, to that
invisible cave
That no light comforts; and their lims to dogs
and vultures gave.³²

Even up to this point, it should be clear that Shakespeare's Achilles, in spite of his frailties and vices, is more balanced, less excessive in his passions, more a flawed adult than a peevish youth, and above all less inclined to destructive hatred than is the sulking, almost comically unyielding hero of Homer's epic. True, Achilles is snide in Troilus, he lolls about, takes a comic and irresponsible view of life, and is a seriously

disruptive influence on the morale of the Greeks. But he does not hope they will be slaughtered because of what Agamemnon has done to him. In fact, there is no evidence in the play that Agamemnon has done anything to him. As Presson has shown, Shakespeare abandoned the Homeric motivation for Achilles' withdrawal (the loss of Briseis) and substituted mere divisive pride (apparently Shakespeare's main didactic aim in I.iii), as well as-- later on--his love for Polyxena and his concern for Patroclus.³³ Hence, the revenge-motif in the epic, with all its irrationality and its power to reveal the bestial in man, is absent from the play. Instead, Achilles' misguided conduct is anatomized in a more subdued key,³⁴ and he functions more like a rebellious duke in a history play than like a tragic hero: Hector and Troilus, as we have already seen, take over the latter function. But his greater maturity and moderation in the play are nowhere more clear than in the scene in the play which corresponds roughly to the Embassy-scene in the poem. For in his discussion with Ulysses in III.iii he is somewhat ingenuous in the beginning and somewhat confused at the end, and he lacks self-knowledge throughout; but he is at least capable of reasoning, is responsive to Ulysses' advice, and has enough insight to recognize his own shortcomings and confusion. Homer's Achilles, on the other hand, clings to his own opinions

in spite of all attempts to cajole, counsel, and warn him. He is an exemplum of the lamentably misguided and self-convinced youth.

Another dimension of Achilles' character in the poem, of course, is revealed by statements about him by other characters. We have already seen what Ajax, Diomedes, and the Greeks as a whole think of his refusal to help them out of their desperate plight. Perhaps more revealing is what his closest friend, Patroclus, says to Nestor, to explain why he cannot tarry in Nestor's tent:

I see and know, and now can stay no more.
You know, good father, our great friend is apt
to take offence,
Whose fiery temper will inflame sometimes with
innocence.³⁵ (XI.568-570)

Of even greater authority is the speech of Apollo to the other gods, after Achilles has begun to abuse Hector's corpse:

Achilles, that withstands
All helpe to others, you can helpe--one that
hath neither hart
Nor soule within him that will move or yeeld to
any part
That fits a man; but Lion-like, uplandish and
meere wilde,
Slave to his pride, and, all his nerves being
naturally compil'd
Of eminent strength, stalkes out and preyes
upon a silly sheepe--
And so fares this man. That fit ruth that now
should draw so deepe
In all the world being lost to him, and Shame . . .
. . . is not knowne, nor hath the powre to be
In this man's being.

(XIV.40-51)

And Zeus himself confirms the general judgement of Achilles'

half-deranged defilement of Hector, bidding Iris to command
Thetis:

Haste, then, and tell thy sonne
The gods are angrie, and my selfe take that wrong
he hath done
To Hector in worst part of all . . .
(XXIV.122-124)

In other words, Achilles' treatment of Hector's body is regarded as an impiety by the gods.

It will also be noticed that Achilles' stubborn persistence in grief over Patroclus, his lack of "true manly patience" (l. 54), is another aspect of his inconsolable grief over the loss of Briseis and the blow to his pride; so that, right up to the last book and his yielding of Hector's body to Priam, he remains his self-willed and immoderate self. And even when he does yield, he does so only because Thetis reveals Jove's command to him (ll. 136-146), and he recognizes his own impotence before the strongest of the gods: "Jove's pleasure must deprive/Men of all pleasures" (ll. 147-148). Whether he means this statement in a general sense, or in relation to his treatment of Hector's body, is a moot point.

The most damaging evidence against Homer's Achilles, however, is his own deeds, some of which are literally atrocities and more dastardly and facinorous than his slaying of Hector is in the play. The three outstanding acts of cruelty are his slaying of the unarmed Lykaon; his burning of twelve Trojan boys (as well as horses and

dogs) as sacrifices for Patroclus; and his defilement of Hector's corpse, which--when it is read and understood, not as a famous incident, simple and vague, but as a full-scale gruesomeness described by Homer in graphic detail--far surpasses in vileness Achilles' dastardly act, in the play, of coldly directing the murder of the unarmed Hector.

What makes Achilles' slaying of Lykaon egregiously cruel, and the act of a coward, is that the young man not only is taken unawares without sword or armor, but also falls before Achilles, takes him by the knee, and begs pathetically for his life: a lengthy plea in the mode of vehement supplication³⁶ (ll. 71-96). But Achilles, apparently possessed by a bloodthirst for revenge (over Patroclus' death) which recognizes no exception or law, rejects this petition and scornfully slays the young man even as he is advancing "both hands for mercie as he kneeld" (l. 114). Then, Achilles tosses his body into the stream and morbidly gloats:

Go, feed fat the fish with losse
Of thy left blood; they cleane will sucke thy
greene wounds, and this saves
Thy mother teares upon thy bed . . .
The sea shall open, where great fish may keepe
the funeral feast
With thy white fat, and on the waves dance at
thy wedding fate,
Clad in blacke horror, keeping close
inaccessible state.

(XXI.120-127)

One can anticipate the argument that neither Homer's age nor Shakespeare's would regard an act like Achilles' as

egregiously cruel, but the Greek concept of aidos (sense of shame or honor) pervades their literature, and Shakespeare's age was not as cruel as bear-baiting and executions might lead us to believe.³⁷

Achilles' burning of twelve boys and several horses and dogs speaks for itself. Homer's mentioning the deed twice before it is actually carried out (first in Achilles' promise to Patroclus' body, XVIII.298-299, and then again to the corpse of Patroclus in XXIII.17-21) enhances the vague dread surrounding it and suggests that the ritual is an extraordinary one. Professor Gilbert Murray's words on the sacrifice seem to support this view.³⁸ And the manner in which Homer describes the actual sacrifice, the stress on the irony of death for the young and promising, leaves little doubt as to the way we should regard the act:

Twelve Trojan Princes last stood foorth, yong
and of toward fame--
All which (set on with wicked spirits) there
strooke he, there he slew.
(XXIII.158-159)

Homer describes Achilles' abuse of Hector's body twice, first when he specifies the method Achilles uses to attach the corpse to his chariot and furnishes details about the ugly process of dragging (XXII.339-347); and second, when he relates Achilles' half-crazed condition after he has been defiling the body for some time (XXIV.10-22). The very first sentence of the first description reveals Homer's attitude of disapprobation:

This said, a worke not worthy him he set to. Of
both feete
He bor'd the nerves through from heele to th'
ankle, and then knit
Both to his chariot with a thong of whitleather,
his head
Trailing the center. . . .
A whirlwind made of startl'd dust drave with
them as they drew;
With which were all his black-browne curls
knotted in heapes and fill'd.

(XXII.339-345)

Even Chapman calls this act "Achilles' tyranny to Hector's person," but he of course justifies it, adding, "which we lay on his fury and his love to his slaine friend" (p. 449).

The emphasis in the second description is on Achilles' near-madness in pursuing the abuse insatiately and on the "inhumane tyranny" of it, which at last offends the gods:

Although he saw the morne
Shew sea and shore, his extasie he left not, till
at last
Rage varied his distraction. Horse, chariot, in
hast
He cald for, and (those joyn'd) the corse was to
his chariot tide,
And thrice about the sepulcher he made his Furie
ride,
Dragging the person. All this past, in his
pavilion
Rest seisd him; but with Hector's corse his rage
had never done,
Still suffering it t' oppresse the dust. Apollo
yet, even dead,
Pitied the Prince, and would not see inhumane
tyrannie fed
With more pollution of his lims; and therefore
coverd round
His person with his golden shield, that rude dogs
might not wound
His manly lineaments (which threat Achilles
cruelly had usde in furie).

(XXIV.10-22)

Homer's emphasis seems to be on Achilles' impious fury,

which here, as in the rest of the epic, brings misfortune and disorder to many men and which, until it is finally laid to rest, results in prolonged suffering for all. And presumably, civilized men both in the Elizabethan period and now would also regard this display of ruthlessness as deplorable and repulsive.

In a similar fashion, Achilles' pitiless spirit and insusceptibility to civilized covenants reveal themselves vividly in his combat with Hector, when the Trojan prince proposes that they both agree the winner shall not defile the loser's corpse. Achilles' reply is quite lacking in magnanimity and is far from the generous spirit we expect of a true hero:

Hector, thou onely pestilence in all mortalitie
To my sere spirits, never set the point twixt
thee and me
Any conditions; but as farre as men and Lions
flie
All termes of covenant, lambes and wolves, in
so farre opposite state
(Impossible for love t' attone) stand we, till
our soules satiate
The god of souldiers . . .39
(XXII.224-229)

Moreover, when he mortally wounds Hector and Hector begs him not to abuse his corpse (ll. 291-295), Achilles remains true to the heartlessness which Homer makes his dominant trait:

'Dog,' he replied, 'urge not my ruth by parents,
soule, nor knees.
I would to God that any rage would let me eate
thee raw,
Slic't into peeces, so beyond the right of any
law

I tast thy merits. And beleve it flies the force
of man
To rescue thy head from the dogs.
(ll. 296-300)

Homer's picture of Achilles, then, departs radically from the myth of a statuesque, largely admirable figure which those who have never, or only noddingly, read the Iliad have handed down through the centuries and eagerly have referred to as a widely known truth. On the contrary, Homer, with a keen naturalistic eye and a forceful candor not unlike Shakespeare's, has created an outrageously self-willed, immoderate, cruel, unforgiving young man whose only redeeming qualities are his own knowledge of his impending death (which gives him a tragic dimension), his eminence as a warrior and his central position of the epic (which make his vices those of a tragic hero), his forthrightness, his youth (which, as with Shakespeare's Bertram, can explain and forgive much), and his final yielding, which--though enforced--ends the tragic epic on a note of harmony and peace. Like Shakespeare, Homer saw and depicted both the good and evil in men, both the grandeur and the baseness. In this respect, Troilus and Cressida and the Iliad have essentially the same spirit.

The discrepancy between the reputation of Homer's Hector and his actual character in the Iliad is assuredly not as great as the discrepancy we have just been discussing in the case of Achilles; that is, Hector is

not consistently as vicious and more nearly approaches the noble conduct we usually associate with true heroes. However, compared to Shakespeare's creation, Homer's Trojan prince is far less consistently admirable. For, once we dispose of the fallacious notions of Machiavellianism or double-dealing in the Hector of Troilus,⁴⁰ his only flaws are his lack of unswerving devotion to his own principles in the council scene, and his excessive magnanimity in sparing fallen enemy soldiers.

It is true that Homer's Hector also has this trait of magnanimity (and Lydgate's certainly has). Indeed, Homer, with astute irony, chooses Helen to comment most articulately on it, just after his death, of which she is the remote cause (XXIV.678-685). But, in spite of this admirable quality, in spite of his greater humanity than that of Achilles, in spite of evidence that he apparently did not find war natural to him,⁴¹ the character of Homer's Hector is in many respects far from noble. At various times he is boastful, ungenerous, vindictive, even brutal, greedy, and cowardly.

His boasting first appears at the end of Book VIII, where he assures his friends that he can handle Diomedes (ll. 469-479) and wishes he could be as sure of becoming immortal as he is of destroying the Greeks. It closes Book XIII too, where he reiterates this wish to Ajax, in order to express to the Greek prince how certain he is of

victory (ll. 738-744). It recurs in his angry reply to Polydamas' prudent counsel in Book XVIII, where he claims that Jove has given him means to achieve glory (ll. 259-260) and that, even if Achilles opposes him, he will not take flight (ll. 269-273: a boast which, as Professor Lattimore points out, he later cannot support, XXII.119-126).⁴² His bragging to the dying Patroclus--"I (farre best of Troy in armes)," XVI.767--takes on a taunting and vindictive note, especially when he reminds Patroclus that "on thee shall Vultures prey,/Poor wretch" (XVI. 769-770).

Hector's brutal streak becomes clear in Book XVII, when he hales off Patroclus' body "with intent/To spoile the shoulders of the head and give the dogs the rest" (ll. 96-97). This intent is reiterated in XVIII, when Iris rouses Achilles to save Patroclus from being defiled:

amongst whom most of all
Is Hector prompt; hee's apt to drag thy friend
home; he your pall
Will make his shoulders, his head forc't; hee'l
be most famous; rise,
No more lie idle; set the foe a much more costly
prise
Of thy friend's value than let dogs make him a
monument,
Where thy name will be graven.

(ll. 154-159)

Thus, Hector's lust for defilement of the enemy cannot be overlooked. It is less heinous than Achilles' only because it fails and is therefore not graphically depicted; and also because it is not dwelt upon as a demented

obsession.

In a less flagrant manner, Hector also has an ungenerous moment when he refuses to help Sarpedon in distress, because Sarpedon had reproved him before the host (V.696-703).⁴³ Similarly, his magnanimous nature appears to lapse somewhat when he wishes for the death of the man who has caused all the Trojan's troubles, his brother Paris:

whom would the earth would yeeld
And headlong take into her gulfe even quicke
before mine eyes,
For then my heart, I hope, would cast her lode
of miseries.

(VI.295-296)

Hector's greed for armor (perhaps more for the glory than for the possession) appears in Book XVII.98, where he seizes Patroclus' (actually, Achilles') shield and arms and has them sent to Troy. The reprehensibility of the deed is shown by Zeus' disapproval of the violence done to Patroclus' body:

Thou putst on those armes as braving him
Whom others feare, hast slaine his friend and
from his youthful lim
Torn rudely off his heavenly armes, himselfe
being gentle, kind
And valiant. Equal measure then thy life in
youth must find.

(11. 171-174)

There seems to be a hint of poetic justice in the last line: brutality is rewarded with a short life.

It may seem surprising to suggest that Hector, the mainstay of the Trojans, who throughout much of the Iliad

shows almost superhuman strength on the battlefield, acts in a cowardly fashion at any time. But he actually flees from Achilles in fright and is chased by him three times around the walls of Troy (XXII.119-114) before Achilles slays him. Similarly, he flees from Patroclus (XVI.603-605) and succeeds in killing the Greek champion only when the latter is dazed and defenceless from a blow by Phoebus Apollo (XVI.719-752). Again, he flees from Ajax, when the latter appears, to protect Patroclus' body (XVII.98-101), and he offers a reward to any Trojan who would kill Ajax and retrieve Patroclus' body (XVII.199-202)--surely a task which we would expect him to attempt personally. Of these acts, the most unflattering are, of course, his flight from Achilles, which Homer describes as a flight of a dove from a hawk (II. 120-123); and his slaying of the unarmed Patroclus, which seems almost as unmagnanimous and dastardly as Achilles' slaying of the unarmed Hector in the play:

When Hector saw him yeeld
And knew he yeelded with a wound, he scour'd the
armed field,
Came close up to him and both sides strooke
quite through with his lance
(XVI.750-752)

None of the more reprehensible qualities and acts among these--cowardice, brutality, the slaying of a helpless enemy--is present in Shakespeare's hero. Hector's only departures in the play from his code of temperance, generosity, and gentleness are quite minor

ideal epic hero, the prince, and the governor, as conceived of by post-Homeric Greek, Roman, and Renaissance writers like Xenophon, Plutarch, Cicero, Erasmus, Elyot, and Spenser. In short, a comparison of Hector in the play with Hector in the poem yields no more evidence of debasement than does a comparison of the two versions of Achilles.

A closer look at Homer's Agamemnon also reveals that Shakespeare has actually elevated, rather than degraded, his original. For in the Iliad he is more clearly irresolute and weak than in Troilus--more incompetent, more of a defeatist. And, beyond these traits, he is obdurate, choleric, and petty in the key first scene, in which his combativeness and arrogance are as responsible as Achilles' for the initial breach. Moreover, there is a strong suggestion in this book that he is greedy and lascivious, while in another book his vengeful bloodthirst toward the Trojans impels him to envisage total devastation and atrocities (VI.57-61).

But his incompetence and irresolution are his most prominent traits in Homer's work. We have already referred to his disastrous test of the Achaians in Book II, which results in a general defection to the ships. And when adversity continues to harry the Greeks, Agamemnon proposes mass flight again in IX.15-28 and

then again in XIV.52-64. As Professor Lattimore (who has already drawn attention to these and other failings in Agamemnon) writes: "In all moods of despair, he must be rallied and propped up by Odysseus, Nestor, and Diomedes, who are tougher than he."⁴⁶ Moreover, what appears in the play as an impractical, but dignified philosophy of forbearance and resignation keeps recurring in the epic as querulous self-vindication: if Agamemnon fails, it is not his fault, but the fault of a hostile Zeus:

O, my friends,
Princes and leaders of the Greeks, heaven's
adverse king extends
His wrath, with too much detriment to my so
just designe.

(IX.15-17)

Whereas Shakespeare's Agamemnon sees in adversity a divine plan and a whetstone for character, Homer's appears to see nothing but unjust persecution by an arbitrary God.⁴⁷

But Agamemnon's defeatist and fatalistic outlook is most clear in Book XIV, when he makes his third proposal to abandon the war:

and now I see as cleare
That (like the blessed Gods) he holds our hated
enemies deare,
Supports their armes, and pinnions ours.
Conclude, then, tis in vaine
To strive with him. Our ships drawne up, now
let us lanch againe
And keepe at anchor, till calme Night; that then
(perhaps) our foes
May calme their stormes, and in that time our
scape we may dispose.

It is not any shame to flie from ill, although
by night:
Knowne ill, he better does that flies than he
it takes in fight.

(XIV.57-64)

That this sentiment is cowardly and disreputable is quite clear from Odysseus' reply, which is a stern reprimand, beginning with the insulting line, "Accurst, why talk'st thou thus?" (ll. 65-81). If Ulysses had ever addressed Agamemnon this way in the play, one can imagine that a large number of commentators would not fail to point out the "inverted degree."

As evidence for Agamemnon's greed, we have only Achilles' two accusations (I.121 and I.151) and Thersites' similar claim (I.225), each of which is unreliable in itself; but, together, and reinforced by Agamemnon's later admissions (II.331-332 and IX.119-124) of his offences against Achilles, they lend color to the suspicion that Agamemnon's appetite for possessions and women provided fuel for the "humorous spleene" (IX.124) he displayed in Book I. On the other hand, his bloodthirst emerges from his own words, when he shows that his sense of vengeance is hardly different from Achilles' in its remorselessness and inhumanity toward all Trojans, men, women, and children:

Not one of them shall flie
A bitter end for it from heaven, and much less
(dotingly)
Scape our revengefull fingers: all, even th'
infant in the wombe

Shall tast of what they merited and have no
other tombe
Than razed Ilion, nor their race have more
fruite than the dust.

(VI.57-61)

Once again, the argument that lawless vengeance like this one might have been morally acceptable in ancient times should not, in a comparative study, be allowed to override the commonly accepted meanings of words like heroic, noble, cruel, or bloodthirsty.

The final character who is elevated in the play is Ulysses. For once the indelible solidity of Ulysses' constructive side is granted, and is not flippantly dismissed or absorbed into a more streamlined picture of him as wholly turpid or laughable, it is easy to see how what Homer left implicit and incompletely developed Shakespeare elaborated. Thus, in the Iliad Odysseus furnishes the will and resourcefulness which Agamemnon lacks, time and time again counselling perseverance and new stratagems when Agamemnon would prefer to admit defeat. But Odysseus is not a mighty intellect or statesman--only a man of great conviction and stamina. Instead, it is wise, ancient Nestor who in the Iliad serves as counselor par excellence and is the most accomplished orator. Shakespeare has, indeed, preserved the resourcefulness and perseverance of Odysseus and has followed Homer in making Odysseus and Nestor together provide the will and fortitude which Agamemnon lacks.

But, as Professor Presson suggests, Shakespeare also invests Ulysses with some of Nestor's traits, making him the greater intellect, the shrewder counselor, the more effective orator (though not the more eloquent or picturesque)--in fact, the man who masterminds the Greek enterprise. In the play, Ulysses' intellectual superiority over Nestor is clear, for instance, in I.iii.310-392, where Nestor is ready to proceed in the obvious manner, pitting Achilles against Hector, but Ulysses fashions a shrewder strategy. On the other hand, the sly craft which he shows in his handling of Achilles and Ajax is only in character, conforming to one of the dominant traits of the Homeric figure in both the Iliad and the Odyssey. He plays the fox rather than the lion in the Iliad, for example, when he and Diomedes steal upon the sleeping Trojans and slaughter them (X.406-421). All in all, then, Shakespeare has made Ulysses a more impressive figure, a subtle analyst of men with a deep knowledge of statecraft which Odysseus shows little evidence of having; while Ulysses' fox-like side cannot be cited as evidence of debasing, since it is very much present in the original character.

Another feature of the Iliad which should not be overlooked is the continual recurrence of cruel taunts to dying and dead men, which produces an atmosphere of brutality and moral baseness alien to the concept of the

heroic life as it is commonly understood. Idomen in XIII.353-362, Polydamas in XIV.375-377, and Patroclus in XVI.677-682 are typical examples. Patroclus' jest over Cebriones' corpse is particularly noteworthy for the kind of gloating sarcasm we usually associate with bullies and villains like Richard III or Iago:

O heavens! For truth, this Trojan was a passing
active man!
With what exceeding ease he dives, as if at worke
he were
Within the fishie seas! This man alone would
furnish cheare
For twentie men, though twere a storme, to leape
oute of a saile
And gather oisters for them all; he does it here
as well.

(XVI.677-681)

It is no doubt significant that, soon afterwards, Hector gloats over the dying Patroclus and taunts him (ll. 762-775); and that soon after this scene, Hector receives the same treatment from Achilles. Only with Achilles' yielding of Hector's body to Priam is the cycle of slaying and gloating taunts ended (at least in Homer's work) and a mood of reconciliation made possible. Part of Homer's theme would appear to be imbedded in this pattern.

Another element which adds to the atmosphere of brutality is related to the taunts: namely, numerous scenes in which the heroes are deaf to pleas for mercy. We have already discussed Achilles' implacable response to Lykaon's pleas and to Hector's petition that his corpse not be defiled. Diomedes perpetrates a similar act of

cruelty in his slaying of Dolon:

With this, as Dolon reacht his hand to use a
suppliant's part,
And stroke the beard of Diomed, he strooke his
necke athwart
With his forc't sword, and both the nerves he
did in sunder wound,
And suddenly his head, deceiv'd, fell speaking
on the ground.

(X.385-388)

Again, the impression of savagery which pervades
Homer's account of this war of attrition certainly is not
decreased by Hecuba's Medea-like curse against Achilles:
"this wretch/Whose stony liver would to heaven I might
devoure, my teeth/My sonnes' Revengers made" (XIV.207-209).
Similarly, the appalling picture Priam makes in his grief
over Hector's death heightens the atmosphere of extreme
passion and flagrant conduct which frequently recurs in
the work:

Dung lay thick
on the head and neck of the aged man, for he had
been rolling
in it, he had gathered and smeared it on with
his hands.⁴⁸

(XXIV.163-165)

A final consideration of the unheroic side of Homer's
heroes concerns their frequently less-than-heroic
performance in the realm of physical courage. Homer is,
of course, to be commended for his realistic portrayal of
soldiers, which concedes that worthy men may experience
fear and even act upon it in an unworthy way--namely, by
taking flight. But men who behave in this way are hardly
to be considered supermen; and Shakespeare's heroes rarely

if ever are subject to failure of courage or even uncertainty in battle: Talbot, Orlando, Hal, Hotspur, Henry V, Hector, Macbeth, Coriolanus, Antony (even Richard III, Romeo, and Hamlet) are uncomplicatedly valorous in battle or duels. But, apart from two outright panics of the entire Greek host (XI.358 and XVII.658-660), Homer has Ajax, Idomeneus, Menelaus, Ulysses, Diomedes, Hector either express fear, flee from battle, or appear less than fully active in battle, as Diomedes is in IV.390-395.

For example, when Ajax and Menelaus are guarding Patroclus' corpse from the Trojan hordes and are in dire danger, Ajax says with disarming (and unwittingly comic) frankness:

Not so much I feare to lose the Corse
(For that's sure gone, the fowles of Troy and
dogs will quickly force
That peece-meale) as I feare my head, and
thine, O Atreus' sonne.
(XVII.211-213)

Similarly, Menelaus earlier goes through a debate with himself about staying or fleeing (a debate which bears a strange similarity to Falstaff's on honor) in XVII.70-84. He decides to flee and get Ajax's help. Ulysses undergoes the same debate (XI.359-365)--apparently a formula--and decides in favor of honor over self-preservation. But in VIII.77-83, we see him fleeing the battle, where Nestor is in grave danger (an act for which Ovid's Ajax later chides him);⁴⁹ and when Diomedes reprimands him and tries to call him back, he is deaf to

all restraints. Again, Idomeneus does not hesitate to admit that he fears Aeneas (XIII.449-450). And Hector, apart from his flights from Patroclus, Ajax, and Achilles, experiences sensations of fear at the very sight of Ajax (VII.189-191). Once again, it must be emphasized that Homer is only being true to life here, but that these fallible heroes are of lesser stature than the mythical superheroes of commentary on the Iliad. More important, Shakespeare passes over this aspect of their nature entirely (with the exception of Thersites and perhaps Paris and Helenus, all of whom are negligible); so that his portrayals are in this respect more flattering than Homer's.

It should be evident, then, that if we neither study Troilus and Cressida in a literary vacuum nor compare it to a mythical Iliad with idealized characters, we discover that Shakespeare's Achilles is no more heinous than Homer's and that the Hector, Ulysses, and Agamemnon of the play are more admirable than their counterparts in the epic. It is true that Ajax, Helen, and (if only by the force of the enlarged role) Thersites appear more unattractive in the play. But Nestor, Priam, Andromache, Cassandra, Aeneas, Diomedes, Paris, and Patroclus are by and large the same--although there could be some disagreement about the last three.⁵⁰

There is, however, such ample evidence of elevation, such insufficient evidence of disparagement, and such extensive indication of approximate equivalency that belief in wholesale debasement would seem to be out of the question; rather, it would appear that Shakespeare more nearly attempted a dramatization of Homer's poem, with a heightening of certain characters and a lowering of others.

What becomes especially clear from a comparison of the two works is that Homer's world was much more bloody and vicious and that the long war had more noticeably eroded humane sensibilities in the combatants; whereas the play actually has very little action on the battlefield (almost exclusively in Act V) and represents instead primarily political, ethical, and intellectual actions, some of which--especially the "loving interview" of IV.v between Hector and the Greeks--present the heroes in a quite gracious and admirable light.

We occasionally hear that Troilus and Cressida is an indictment of senseless war, and the satire-advocates would naturally not object to adding this inference to their arsenal. But if the theme of ten years of carnage and brutality over one woman is what they are referring to, then the Iliad has rendered it much more graphically; while Troilus and Cressida is a pale and polite euphemistic version. In other words, if Shakespeare had

really meant to rebuke war satirically, he would have followed the spirit of the Iliad much more closely, emphasizing the bloodshed and gruesomeness and striving for scenes of great pathos and cruelty, as he did in the Henry VI plays--for example, in the famous "tiger's heart" scene. Instead, he intellectualized and mitigated. If he had done the Troy story in the spirit of the original, he would have written a play closer to Titus Andronicus than to Troilus.

Finally, a quotation from Plutarch's "How to Study Poetry" in his Moralia might serve to show how some writers in the ancient world understood Homer's characters to be "of mingled yarn," rather than paragons of virtue:

The imitation that does not show an utter disregard of the truth brings out, along with the actions, indications of both vice and virtue commingled; as is the case with that of Homer, which emphatically says good-bye to the Stoics, who will have it that nothing base can attach to virtue, and nothing good to vice . . . These are the doctrines that we hear in the schools; but in the actions and in the life of most men, according to Euripides,

The good and bad cannot be kept apart
But there is some commingling.⁵¹
(Phoenissae, 549)

Shakespeare could have read this passage in Amyot's French translation of 1572 or Philemon Holland's manuscript, which was registered in 1600.⁵² He almost certainly was familiar with the passage from Phoenissae, since Gascoigne and Kinwelmarsh translated the play as Jocasta in 1566.

In any case, it is revealing to see Homer's characterization analyzed in a way similar to the way in which critics often analyze Shakespeare's; and it is intriguing to reflect that, shortly after Troilus (the date is problematic), Shakespeare wrote lines quite similar to Euripides':

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good
and ill together.

(All's Well that Ends Well, IV.iii.82-83)

NOTES

1 For those critics who consider the play a satire, see Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950), pp. 605-612; Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), pp. 123-124; Oscar James Campbell, Comical Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938), pp. 187-197; Herbert J. Muller, The Spirit of Tragedy (New York, 1956), pp. 180-185; see also W. W. Lawrence, "The Love-Story in 'Troilus and Cressida'," in Shakespearian Studies, ed. Brander Matthews and Ashley Thorndike (New York, 1962), p. 189, where he refers to the opinion of Furnivall, Gollancz, and Boas that Shakespeare's derogatory treatment of the heroes "was due to dislike for Chapman." For critics who do not consider the play a satire, see Tucker Brooke, "Shakespeare's Study in Culture and Anarchy," The Yale Review, XVII (1928), 571-577 and W. W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, 2d ed. (New York, 1960), pp. 122-158.

2 See Lawrence, Comedies, pp. 122-124, p. 154, p. 246, and Lawrence, "The Love-Story," pp. 190-191, p. 210.

3 Highet, p. 123, pp. 103-113.

4 Brooke, 574-575; Campbell, Satyre, p. 196.

5 Nathaniel Griffin, "Un-Homeric Elements in the Medieval Story of Troy," JEGP, VII (January, 1908), 32-52 and Dares and Dictys (Baltimore, 1907).

6 Lawrence, "Love Story," p. 191.

7 William Empson, Some Versions of the Pastoral (London, 1935), p. 143.

8 E. M. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), p. 51.

9 George Lyman Kittredge, The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Boston, 1936), p. 880.

10 Lawrence, "Love-Story," p. 190; Problem Comedies, p. 154; "Love-Story," pp. 209-210.

11 Comicall Satyre, p. 195.

12 Henry Cabot Lodge, Certain Accepted Heroes and Other Essays (New York, 1897), p. 21. Quoted by Lawrence, "Love-Story," p. 210 and Problem Comedies, p. 156.

13 Gilbert Murray, The Rise of the Greek Epic, 3d ed. (Oxford, 1924), pp. 140-143.

14 Aristotle, The Poetics, in Literary Criticism from Plato to Dryden, ed. Allan Gilbert (New York, 1940), p. 71.

15 Ibid., p. 91.

16 Plutarch's Morals, tr. Arthur Shilleto (London, 1908), p. 187.

17 Ibid., p. 235, p. 319, p. 326.

18 Ovid's Metamorphoses II, tr. Frank Justus Miller (London and New York, 1916) p. 233 and pp. 239-240.

19 The Works of George Peele, ed. A. H. Bullen (London, 1888), II, pp. 214-226, pp. 227-232.

20 Metamorphoses, p. 229, p. 233.

21 Erasmus, Opera Omnia, (Petri Vander, 1703), I, pp. 79-81. The Latin is: "Veluti si tractes Achillem, acrem, inexorabilem, simplicem, infensum regibus, infensum mendacibus, pedibus velocem inducas oportet. Nam hujusmodi primus finxit Homerus. Rursum Ulyssem vafrum, mendacem, dissimulantem, omnia tolerantem. Agamemnonem animo mitiore, sed imperii cupidum, timentem populum, voluptatis avidiorem quam belli . . . Ajacem factis magis quam oratione strenuum, contumeliae ac repulsae impatientem."

22 Phyllis Bartlett, "The Heroes of Chapman's Homer," RES, XVII (July, 1941), 265-267, 269.

23 Chapman's Homer, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (New York,

1956) I, p. 71: Commentarius, Book II.112-120. All future references to the Iliad will be to this edition, unless specified otherwise.

24 Richmond Lattimore, The Iliad of Homer (Chicago and London, 1965), pp. 45-54.

25 Julius Caesar Scaliger, Poetices Libri Septem (Lyons, 1561), p. 216. The Latin is: "Loquax Achilles in concione minas perfert deterioris. Flet etiam apud matre. atq; hic est, à quo virum fortissimum Hectorem interfectum credi vult?"

Scaliger's aim, of course, is to show Homer's failures of decorum and characterization, especially as compared with Virgil's. However, in calling attention to the alleged defects in Homer's artistry, Scaliger indirectly criticizes the characters themselves as well.

26 Quoted by Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 38.

27 Quoted by Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition (Oxford, 1949), p. 281.

28 Scaliger, p. 216. See note 25.

29 Phyllis Bartlett, "The Heroes," 260, calls attention to this passage and says that most of Homer's

commentators were shocked by it, but that Chapman was to be praised for not morally condemning Achilles for his sentiment. Apparently, she believes, as some believe about Chaucer and Shakespeare, that Homer was a pure artist, somehow above morality, who scrupulously eschewed any suggestion of doctrine. Attractive as this picture of the Olympian poet may be--especially to present-day descendants of Pater and Pound--it does not fit him any more than it fits Chaucer or Shakespeare. True, these poets are less openly didactic and perhaps more completely "human" than Virgil, Dante, and Ben Jonson; but to say that a group of philosophical and ethical views does not lie behind their creations would be to impose a twentieth century image of anti-moral aestheticism on them.

30 E. M. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (Oxford, 1954), pp. 26-27.

31 Cedric Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 181-221.

32 It should be added that the next lines in Chapman appear to shift the blame for the entire disaster onto Jove:

To all which Jove's will gave effect; from whom
first strife begunne
Betwixt Atrides, king of men, and Thetis'
godlike Sonne.

But this duplication of blame is in reality the paradox

of God's causality and Man's instrumentality, and does not exonerate Achilles, whose vices only served Jove's will. Chapman's later conception of Achilles, in Revenge of Bussy, supports this view of him:

When Homer made Achilles passionate,
Wrathful, revengeful, and insatiate
In his affections, what man will deny
He did compose it all of industry,
To let men see that men of most renown,
Strongest, noblest, fairest, if they set not
down
Decrees within them, for disposing these,
Of judgement, resolution, uprightness,
And certain knowledge of their use and ends,
Mishap and misery no less extends
To their destruction, with all that they priz'd,
Than to the poorest, and the most despis'd.
(II.iv.14-25)

33 Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and The Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 28.

34 It probably will occur to some that the very excesses of Homer's Achilles make him more "heroic" than Shakespeare's, whose vices seem tame and mediocre when compared with those of the original. However, the word "heroic" has shifted its meaning here, to include anything monumental, whether virtuous or vicious. But in our line of inquiry we have been equating "heroic" with "noble" and "virtuous" and have been asking only which of the two Achilles' is more deplorable and more pernicious. On the question of sheer monumentality, there is no question that Homer's figure receives the palm, since he is virtually an archetype of obduracy and hatred.

35 The word "innocence" must be equivalent to a concrete, not an abstract, noun here--meaning "those who are innocent." Lattimore translates as "he might even be angry with one who is guiltless" (l. 653).

36 See Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York, 1947), pp. 250-251.

37 Shakespeare's age should not be judged by its bear-baiting and its cruel methods of execution alone. Criminals were perhaps treated less humanely than today, but, as we saw in our discussion of Hector's magnanimity (Chapter IX), mercy toward the innocent and virtuous was a high value then as now.

38 Murray, p. 141.

39 Achilles goes on with further and brutal harsh words, but, as Bartlett shows, these are Chapman's additions (ll. 230-235).

40 These fallacious notions are considered in detail in the chapter on the Trojan council-meeting.

41 See Lattimore, pp. 45-46.

42 Ibid., p. 35.

43 Bartlett, 261, has drawn attention to this grudge. However, it must be added that Hector's motive of revenge

in not helping Sarpedon is only implicit in Homer. Chapman adds it as an explanation.

44 Shakespeare's sensitivity to the insidious effects of boasting on the character had already revealed itself earlier in the play, in the speech of Aeneas (I.iii.239-242), where he chides himself for extolling the Trojans in 234-239.

45 See Lattimore, pp. 35-36, p. 46 and Whitman, pp. 208-210.

46 P. 49. Lattimore also goes on more sympathetically, however: "But the uncertainty is that of a king, with whom Homer's aristocratic audience may well have sympathized, and it is his 'kingliness', his concern for those he leads, which grounds his uncertainty. Nevertheless, irresolution and consequent anger combine with the anger of Achilles to motivate tragedy."

47 It is noteworthy that this theme of divine responsibility for misfortune (whether purposeful or arbitrary) appears only in the Homeric and Shakespearean versions and is thus another piece of evidence for Homeric influence. The verbal reminiscence in Agamemnon's word "designe," which plays a very important role in his first speech in the play (I.iii.3 and cf. lines 6, 11, 15, 16, 17), is also provocative. It should be pointed out, of

course, that a belief in the manipulation of men's actions by the long-range plan of the gods was fundamental to the Greek tragic outlook. But, as Odysseus' reprimand suggests, the time for resignation to these mysterious and unknown designs is not when the issue is as yet uncertain, but when the outcome is undeniable and irrevocable. Hence, Agamemnon's fatalism at this point, when the issue is uncertain, is premature and defeatist and not philosophically a "Greek" outlook.

48 I have used Lattimore's translation here to give the flavor of the original somewhat more accurately. Chapman expurgates this passage, mollifying it to "In the midst the old king sate, his weed/All wrinkl'd, head and necke dust fill'd" (ll. 166-167). Priam's elemental speech in XXII, when he attempts to dissuade Hector from going to battle that day (ll. 52-66 in Chapman, ll. 58-76 in Lattimore) is also disturbing in its images of horror and ruin; while Hecuba's baring of her breasts--telling Hector to reverence them and pity her (Chapman, ll. 69-70, Lattimore, ll. 80-83)--also has an elemental and disturbing quality which adds to the over-all-horror and ugliness involved in the devastation of Troy.

Shakespeare is by comparison laconic and subdued in his treatment of this scene. Priam is a dignified and controlled English father who reasons with and commands his son, but does not implore, or evoke nightmarish

images of the terrible consequences. Hecuba is absent from the scene. Andromache is at the center of the conflict, but even she does not engage in terrifying hysterics. Shakespeare's mitigation should not, however, be regarded as a complete evasion of tragic emotion, for his version still contains the sense of the inevitable, and the sense of a cherished person who is to be lost; while Cassandra furnishes an element of disturbing passion and Troilus' vengeful disillusion further adds to it.

49 Metamorphoses, p. 233.

50 Diomedes has a much larger role in the Iliad, but functions more as a lover than as a warrior in Troilus. However, this change need not be regarded as a degradation, since, as we have seen, the play represents very little actual warfare and Shakespeare had very little opportunity to glorify the heroes through their martial deeds. Paris is not admirable in the play as a whole, especially in his scene of wanton luxury with Helen (III.1); however, he is far from dignified in many parts of the Iliad, especially in his relation to Helen, who is antagonistic to him in III.422-432, derides him in III.458-466, wishes Menelaus had killed him in III.460, and complains to Hector of Paris' lack of spirit, sense, nobility, and manhood in VI.385-393. Patroclus is

irresponsible (but in a rather charming way, it must be conceded) in the play; whereas in the poem he is a redoubtable warrior; but we have already seen that Shakespeare's characters cannot fairly be compared with Homer's in martial prowess, since the play takes place largely during a truce. Again, we have already seen as well that the imputation of sexual deviation which tends to discolor Shakespeare's Patroclus has no other authority than the unreliable testimony of Thersites.

51 Plutarch, Moralia, tr. Frank Cole Babbitt (London and New York, 1927), p. 133.

52 STC 20063. Although the Moralia was published in 1603, after Troilus presumably was written, Holland's translation was completed and registered in 1600.

XIII. SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE SOURCES:
III. LYDGATE, CAXTON, AND THE RENAISSANCE TRADITION

It has become almost a commonplace in the criticism of Troilus and Cressida that medieval writers debased the "high Homeric tradition" of the heroes and that by the time Shakespeare confronted the material he had no other choice but to follow the more recent and unglamorous tradition. Professors Nathaniel Griffin, W. W. Lawrence, O. J. Campbell, and Tucker Brooke have favored this view in the past, and it continues to enjoy wide acceptance--the aforementioned writers being cited as authorities.¹

However, scholarly and respectable as this argument may seem, it must be pointed out that it is largely deductive reasoning from a false premise² and that it is widely contradicted by the literature both of the late Middle Ages and of the Renaissance. As usual, the most articulate and positive statement of the view is Campbell's:

The attitude of the English public toward the Homeric characters had been established once and for all by Caxton's Recuyell (ca. 1475), which was representative of late medieval versions of the story. The atmosphere created in these works and in Caxton, as proper for the Homeric characters, was, to paraphrase Tatlock, 'amorous, degenerately chivalric, and devoid of a sense of heroic dignity' . . . Such debased versions of an entirely heroic tale consciously belittle all the Greeks.³

This neat and streamlined summary of the medieval sources is perhaps the most unfortunate of all Campbell's arguments. Not only do Caxton and Lydgate present the heroes in an entirely different light from the one which Campbell attributes to these authors; but Elizabethan literature, with its voluminous references to the heroes as exemplars of noble conduct, contradicts this argument from inflexible tradition at every turn. Moreover, Campbell errs in his understanding of Tatlock's whole position on Troilus and Cressida, which stresses Shakespeare's debt to Homer, not his confinement to the medieval versions, and which affirms the dignity and beauty of many scenes in the play.⁴ There is, indeed, little in Tatlock's article to suggest that he believed the medieval versions "consciously belittle all the Greeks" or confined Shakespeare to a debased version of his own. In fact, the passage which Campbell has paraphrased has quite a different import. For, speaking not of Caxton or Lydgate, but of four later non-dramatic works on the Troy story, Tatlock suggests:

The common tone or spirit is medieval or early modern, superficially chivalric in the contemporary manner. They are not simple, dignified, unified . . . The material is treated just as any other would be treated, with no sense that it is entitled to especial reverence or reserve.⁵

The "superficially chivalric" becomes "degenerately chivalric" in Campbell's paraphrase. The loose, pedestrian, uninspiring treatment for all subjects--a

failure to heighten, rather than a deliberate lowering, and a matter of technique and style, rather than of derogatory tone--is represented by Campbell as typical of debased versions which consciously belittle the heroes. Thus, Campbell's main authority for his contention that Shakespeare was confined in his treatment to degenerate medieval versions actually says neither that Troilus and Cressida followed these versions exclusively (for Homer is Tatlock's main emphasis), nor that these versions themselves are degraded--at least in Campbell's sense of systematic and calculated disparagement of the heroes.

I believe it can be shown conclusively that Caxton and Lydgate presented Homer's heroes largely as admirable figures and that writers of the Renaissance continued to refer to them in favorable terms, although, as we saw in the previous chapter, some authors like Erasmus and Chapman dealt with their less admirable side as well. Nevertheless, a mixed tradition is not an inflexibly derogatory one; and it will be my purpose in the following pages to show that this tradition could not have confined Shakespeare to unflattering portrayals of the heroes, and thus that the conception of the play as a satirical burlesque has little or no foundation.

It would be fair to say that neither Caxton's Recuyell nor Lydgate's Troy Book is an elevated or splendid heroic work. However, it would be a hasty inference to

suggest that the comparative mediocrity of both works represents a calculated lowering of the Homeric figures. Much more sound is the explanation that the limited magic of the authors' language and of their narrative skill is responsible for the rather uninspired versions they have produced. As Professor Kimbrough says, Caxton's work for the most part "is an unsophisticated compilation and translation of traditional material."⁶ Similarly, we should not overlook the modernizing tendency of the Middle Ages, which saw everything in terms of their own chivalric ideals and feudal social structure. Again, Professor Tatlock draws attention to the "historical and modern air, minimizing the pagan supernatural" in both Lydgate and Caxton: a factual and unheightened treatment which by itself would account for the reduced grandeur in these authors. Indeed, the heroes in Caxton, with the exception of Achilles, either are without distinctive characters or are notably admirable. Hector especially receives a laudatory description:

This hector was moche coragious. stronge. and victoryous in batayll/ and a right wyse conduytour of men in Armes . . . And how well that he was the laste that yssued out of his hous or of the cyte/ yet passid he allewaye alle the bataylles and cam apd putte hym self afore in the fyrst bataylle.⁸

For the most part, however, one character is hardly distinguishable from another in the chronicles; for, as Presson remarks, these works emphasized the activities of

the heroes--in contrast to Homer (and Shakespeare), who dwelt on character.⁹ "To dramatize the events as described by Caxton (before the death of Hector)," Presson observes, "Shakespeare would have had little but combat on the stage."¹⁰

On the other hand, Caxton--following the tradition begun in Benoit de Saint-Maure's Roman De Troie¹¹--portrays Hector as a perfect medieval knight who twice defeats Achilles in fair encounters.¹² Troilus is--as he is in the last act of Shakespeare's play--a "second Hector";¹³ Diomedes is high-spirited and fearless; Ulysses is judicious; and even Achilles is surprisingly loyal to Agamemnon when Palamydes leads a movement to make him relinquish his sovereignty.¹⁴ Thus, although the characterization is weak and sporadic in Caxton, what little of it there is can hardly be described as a wholesale belittling of Homer's heroes. The entire case for derogatory portrayals in reality reduces itself to Achilles and his brutal and cowardly slayings of Hector and Troilus.

The notion of wholesale belittling is even less applicable to Lydgate's Troy Book.¹⁵ For there, almost none of the heroes is shown in an unfavorable light (except, as always, Achilles); while Hector, Agamemnon, Troilus, and even--surprisingly--Ajax and Paris are

presented in laudatory terms with great consistency.

Hector is without doubt the peerless heroic figure in the Troy-Book and is a worthy counterpart to Shakespeare's exemplar of generosity and mercy. Lydgate lavishes encomia upon him: he is the "Rote and stok of cheualrie/And of knyghthod verray souereyn flour" (II. 244-245); he is just, prudent, and "loth for to do vengeance," when he could reform abuses (II.1129-1133); he is (as Furnivall summarizes a long encomium) "courteous, gentle, famed in war and peace . . . wise, lowly to rich and poor, benign to his friends, a lion to his foes" (II.4802-4848); he has every gift of Nature (III.487-491). Moreover, his actions bear out his qualities of mercy and maganimity. For instance, he beseeches the Trojans to spare King Theseus, because the Greek had shown him "gentlillesse" the same day (III.1440-1451). Again, as in Caxton (II.589-590) and Troilus and Cressida, he stops fighting against Ajax when he recognizes him and "Whan he of Ajax sawe the worthiness" (III.2077-2095); he also consents to spare the Greek ships when Ajax begs him to (III.2097-2138), a deed which Lydgate regrets (2133, 2144-2146) and for which Caxton rebukes Hector, saying "ther is no mercy in bataill" (II.590). But Lydgate's treatment clearly depicts the mercy, not as deplorable, but as a tragic error based on Hector's trust in Fortune (1966-2035, 2144-2151).

Lydgate's portrayal of Hector is, indeed, so favorable that there is some reason to suspect that the Trojan champion is meant as a compliment to King Henry the Fifth, to whom the book is dedicated and at whose instigation it was written (Prologue, 69-118), in order to represent examples of virtue in ancient times (79-82). Not only does Hector display the full panoply of kingly virtues for which Henry became renowned after his reformation, but one of Hector's deeds recalls one of Hal's acts of military heroism: wounded in the face, Hector nevertheless returns to battle and rallies the fleeing Trojans (III.5525-4540). He is not, of course, perfect: his "couetyse" is mentioned several times (III. 797-811, III.5354-5372); and, as we have seen, his submission to the will and judgement of others makes him appear, as it does in the play, somewhat conciliatory and infirm of purpose:

Sethen ye alle assenten and accorde,
Fro youre sentence I wil nat discorde,
In no wyse to be variunt. (III.3655-3657)

But these flaws do not substantially detract from Lydgate's picture of the ideal knight, champion, and leader, as the poet's lament over his death shows (III. 5480-5496).

Agamemnon receives from Lydgate a treatment somewhat less idealized, but nevertheless warmly favorable. The poet's encomium (alleged to be based on Dares'

description) makes Agamemnon a prudent, manly ruler-- restless, just, "discret and hardy, and wondrous vertuous, /And of speche right facundious" (II.4532-4541). The Greeks' choice of him as governor conforms to the traditional view (as in Cooper's Thesaurus) that it was unanimous:

Thei wer accordid ful by on assent
To be gouerned as Agamenoun
List to ordeyne in his discrecioun.
(II.4440-4444)

His many speeches, especially his philosophical counsel to Menelaus in his grief (II.4337-4427) and his prudent monition against recklessness and pride (II.6517-6719), bear out Lydgate's portrayal of him as discreet and virtuous, while his exhortation to the Greeks (II.5239-5383) shows him as a vigorous and aggressive leader, quite different from the faint-hearted defeatist of the Iliad and the stoically resigned orator of Troilus. Moreover, he is distinguished by his diligence, for he watches all night before a battle (II.8685-8700) and later on is described as preferring to be wakeful, arranging troops into battalions, rather than sleep (III.565-575). The coincidental resemblance to the actions of Henry V the night before Agincourt in Shakespeare's play may be based on Lydgate's knowledge of Henry's French campaign, since the Troy Book was written between 1412 and 1420 (see Introductory Note, Vol. 97, IX) and the battle of Agincourt took place in 1415.

Among the other heroes, Ajax especially receives a treatment free from derogatory elements. Lydgate's encomium of him (II.4581-4597) portrays him as discreet, virtuous, wondrous fair, a fine singer and make of instruments, a noble knight, and one who hates vain glory. In almost single-handedly defending the ships against the Trojans, he performs marvels (IV.1412-1437). Lydgate also revises the classical story of his death by suicide, making him a victim of foul play (V.269-305). This change (which could not have been prompted by ignorance of the classical version, since Lydgate's familiarity with Metamorphoses XIII is apparent in Ajax's speech demanding the prize in V.46-160) clearly suggests an attempt to eliminate unfavorable details from the picture of Ajax; especially since Lydgate leaves out of Ulysses' speech (V.161-216) the references to Ajax's stupidity which keep recurring in Ovid's account.

Lydgate makes Troilus very attractive as well: "A manly man" (II.285), "Yong, fresche, and lusty, & coraious also" (II.2995). Troilus speaks at the council-meeting (II.3001-3069) in much the same vein as he does in Shakespeare's play, but in the poem there is no doubt that his views are righteous and admirably expressed, for all present praise his counsel, his manhood, "His fresche corage and hize prowes,/His feruent zel and his hardines,/And of on hert gretly hym comende" (3075-3077). In his

encomium, Lydgate avers that there is none manlier, that Troilus is a "second Hector," and that he is "in loue as trewe as any stele," just, stable, persevering, and "of wil immutable/Vp-on what thing he onys set his herte" (II.4861-4895).

Even Paris escapes critical treatment. In Lydgate's "character" of him, nothing appears of Paris' luxurious temperament or neglect of warfare. Instead, (II.4897-4909) he is the handsomest of men, the best archer alive, and in the war proved he was "of might." Nor does Menelaus appear foolish, as a cuckold or as a coward: he receives a complimentary "character" (II.4542-4547), and his grief over losing Helen is depicted with some sympathy and pathos (II.4300-4314). Moreover, Priam receives some attention early in Book II as a kind of heroic founder of New Troy (479-710); his folly in reviving the conflict with the Greeks is depicted, not with rebuke, but as a tragic error brought about because he is overmastered by passions, reckless, trusting in deceitful Fortune (II.1797-1902); and his honorable character is revealed when he remains temperate despite the insolence of Ulysses and Diomedes to him, and resists the counsel of Aeneas to kill them (II.6800-7039).

Almost no one other than Achilles conducts himself in an unworthy manner during the siege part of the long poem, and Lydgate attributes unattractive traits to very

few. He makes Ajax Oileus rude and reckless in his speech and a coward in his heart (II.4578-4580). He follows tradition in portraying Ulysses as full of wiles, wondrous able to form lesings, but balances these qualities with the judgement that he is noble and worthy, discreet and prudent in counsel, "And in his tyme the moste elloquent, /And halpe to Grekis often in her nede" (II.4598-4607). Again, Diomedes has undesirable traits: he is testy, disputatious, and lecherous; but he is also very strong and fierce in battle (II.4608-4621).

Lesser characters like Aeneas (II.4910-4929), Andromache (II.4979-4997), Cassandra (II.4998-5015), and Patroclus (III.577) all receive predominantly favorable treatment.

As a whole, then, Lydgate's portrayals of the Greek and Trojan heroes constitute an idealization far more than they do a debasement of their originals. Again and again we return to the fact that there is very little evidence of degradation, or of conduct unworthy of a chivalric knight, except in Achilles' slaying of Hector and Troilus. Indeed, these two deeds seem to be the sole foundation of this claim, so far as Lydgate's Troy Book (which does not even have the added feature of a comic Ajax) is concerned. What appears to have happened is that the advocates of debasement have seized upon the sole fact of Achilles' viciousness, have read back

Shakespeare's Ajax into Caxton and Lydgate, and from these two elements--one not valid--have generalized to the entire dramatis personae of the medieval Troy legends, reinforcing their stand with the uncritically accepted myth of medieval disrespect or animus toward the ancient heroes--a disrespect which Lydgate's own praises and narrative confute at every turn.

As far as the reputations of the heroes in the Renaissance is concerned, the literature reveals, not that they had deteriorated irretrievably, as Campbell implies, but that conceptions of the classical characters were mixed and that, if anything, references to them usually were favorable. Moreover, the argument that these favorable references were to the original Homeric heroes, and not to their later debauched versions, must quickly be stamped as specious.¹⁶ The reason, moreover, for the persistence of the favorable tradition would not be hard to find. For the age of Humanism has, as its sine qua non, a familiarity with and a preference for the Greek and Roman classics. About such an age, it would be almost self-contradictory to assert that the allegedly debauched versions had superseded the original figures of classical tradition.¹⁷ Again, the claim that this transformation might have occurred among the less educated, less humanistic sector of the public--those who read Caxton, but not the classics--would have little cogency with

regard to Troilus and Cressida, since the premise of the satire-advocates themselves is that the play was written for and acted before a more highly educated audience.

The most frequent use of the Homeric heroes in Elizabethan literature appears to be as exemplars of virtue. Elyot, Sidney, Spenser, Chapman, Greene, Heywood, all at some time evoked the magic Greek names to illustrate noble conduct or abstract virtues. For example, Elyot praises Achilles because he assuaged his wrath by playing on his lyre.¹⁸ Sidney associates Achilles with valor, Ulysses with wisdom, and Diomedes with temperance.¹⁹ The didactic function of literature depicting these heroes is quite evident in William Webbe, who maintains that, "by declaring and setting forth so lively the Grecian assembly against Troy, together with their prowesse and fortitude against their foes," Homer has enabled a prince to "learne not onely courage and valiantnesse, but discretion also and policie to encounter with his enemies, yea, a perfect form of wyse consultations with his Captaynes."²⁰ Puttenham's words suggest that the epithets attached to the heroes were so widely accepted that they were commonplaces of the didactic view. For he praises Homer's ability to depict "the wrath of Achilles, the magnanimitie of Agamemnon, the prudence of Menelaus, the prowess of Hector, the maiesties of King Priamus, the grauitie of Nestor, the pollicies and

eloquence of Vlysses."²¹ The Renaissance conception of Agamemnon especially would appear to have been rather fixed, since Thomas Cooper's Thesaurus says that he "for his wisdom and magnanimitie was by the consent of all the Greekes, chosen to be their generall Capitaine,"²² while Fluellen says, in *Henry V*, III.vi.6-7, "The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous as Agamemnon."²³ Cooper also has Ulysses excelling all the other Greeks "in eloquence and subtiltie of wytte,"²⁴ and Erasmus makes Hector "of exalted spirit, unconcerned about death, paying no heed to auguries, placing his country before all things."²⁵

Spenser's references to the heroes are, as could be expected, to their classical versions and largely favorable. The debased Ajax of Ovid appears nowhere; instead, his mighty defence of the Greek ships from Trojan fire and his noble combat with Hector are described in Virgil's Gnat.²⁶ Spenser also compares Hector to the glory of Rome; Nestor is to him "the sage Pylian sire"; Achilles appears as the classical example of the man immortalized by a poet and as one of the undying examples of love (for Patroclus) in the Hymn of Love; Ulysses' ambush of Ajax is perhaps the only derogatory reference to the Homeric heroes.²⁷ Above all, we should not forget that Spenser claimed that he used Ulysses and Agamemnon as models for Arthur in The Faerie Queene.²⁸

Again, Robert Greene's Euphues His Censure to

Philautus should not be overlooked or deemed negligible, simply because its artificial and precious style does not appeal to modern readers. For in this work Greene romanticizes and idealizes the heroes, placing them in a setting which is more appropriate to Castiglione or to The Arcadia than to the siege of Troy. They conduct themselves like chivalrous knights who speak in courteous and eloquent language.²⁹ Achilles, Hector, Troilus, and even Cressida engage in a courtly dialogue on the nature of the perfect soldier.³⁰ All is intelligent, admirable, elegant. Ajax is absent from the gathering.

Another representative work of the period which portrays the heroes as largely admirable is Heywood's Iron Age, Part I. Heywood stresses Hector's magnanimity;³¹ he makes Ajax high-spirited, choleric, and a ranter, but far from beef-witted or comic;³² he actually elevates Thersites from Homer, making him astute, virtually a counselor, and a positive force.³³ With Achilles, however, Heywood follows the pattern laid down by Lydgate and Caxton.³⁴

Nestor's reputation would seem to have been especially sound in the sixteenth century. Cooper singles out his immense value to Agamemnon as a counselor,³⁵ Elyot cites him as an example of circumspection in ancient times,³⁶ and, above all, the author of the inscription on Shakespeare's bust at Stratford compares the poet-

playwright to Nestor in judgement.³⁷ Similarly, Elyot selects Ulysses as his ancient example of majesty.³⁸ Again, Chapman should be the last author to be overlooked on this subject: surely his attributing of "Achilleian vertues" to Essex in his dedication to Achilles' Shield³⁹ must have been meant as flattering to both and was free from irony.

It should be evident from all this material that the reputations of the Greeks and Trojans were largely favorable in the sixteenth century--at worst, mixed. For, although Professor Kimbrough is correct in speaking of "the wide variety, contradictions, and stereotypes prevalent in the Trojan literary tradition,"⁴⁰ the idea of wholesale degeneration must be rejected, and with it the idea that Shakespeare was confined, by the literary traditions of his period, to derogatory portrayals of the heroes.

NOTES

1 Nathaniel Griffin, "Un-Homeric Elements in the Medieval Story of Troy," JEGP, VII (January, 1908), 32-52, and Dares and Dictys (Baltimore, 1907); W. W. Lawrence, Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, 2d ed. (New York, 1960), pp. 123-124, and "The Love-Story in 'Troilus and Cressida'," in Shakespearian Studies, ed. Brander Matthews and Ashley Thorndike (New York, 1962), p. 191; Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, 1938), p. 189; Tucker Brooke, "Shakespeare's Study in Culture and Anarchy," The Yale Review, XVII (1928), 571-577.

2 It would be more sound a procedure to show first, by meticulous "induction," that Shakespeare actually does represent the heroes as debased--with abundant evidence from the play and by means of a thorough-going comparison (debased from what?) of the Iliad and Troilus and Cressida. Then, it would be permissible and interesting to show why Shakespeare "had" to treat the story in this manner. Instead, however, the advocates of debasement have uncritically assumed that the Iliad depicted the heroes as glorious and have concentrated on finding the cause of their debasement by Shakespeare. Having discovered this cause in the myth of medieval debasement since Dares and Dictys, they have "deduced" from this

cause the existence of debasement in Troilus and Cressida, meanwhile underestimating the importance of a study of both the Iliad and of Lydgate and Caxton, in order to show that Shakespeare's heroes are actually a falling-off from Homer's and a continuation of the vulgarized versions allegedly produced by Caxton and Lydgate.

3 Campbell, Satyre, p. 188.

4 J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 753, 760-761, 762. Lawrence also appears to misunderstand Tatlock's emphasis on Shakespeare's use of Homer. See Problem, pp. 123-124 and p. 246.

5 Tatlock, 697. Actually, Tatlock is not even discussing the medieval versions themselves, but much later works by Peele, Greene, Heywood (Troia Brittanica), and the author of the anonymous Hector, all of which, he claims, have a medieval or early modern tone.

Campbell quotes Tatlock correctly in a footnote, p. 188, but only in part and out of context. Like Lawrence, he also makes use of another major article, by Hyder E. Rollins, "The Troilus and Cressida Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," PMLA, n. s., XXV (1917), 383-429, to support his claim that Cressida's reputation has degenerated irretrievably by 1602. However, as we saw in Chapter XI, the final import of this article is quite different.

Rollins actually concludes that Shakespeare's Cressida is more sympathetic and less repellent than that of Gascoigne, Whetstone, Turbervile, Howell, and others of Henryson's "school." Shakespeare is not, as many aver, confined by tradition in his characterization; instead, as usual, he combines and selects as he sees fit.

6 Robert Kimbrough, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and Its Setting (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 31.

7 Tatlock, 681.

8 Raoul LeFevre, The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, tr. William Caxton, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (London, 1894), II, p. 578.

9 Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 5.

10 Ibid., p. 21.

11 See Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (New York, 1957), p. 8, and Presson, p. 5.

12 Caxton, p. 592 and p. 595.

13 Ibid., p. 582 and p. 632.

14 Ibid., p. 561 and pp. 616-617.

15 John Lydgate, Troy Book, ed. Henry Bergen, E. E. T. S., Extra Series, 97, 103, 106, 126 (London, 1906-1935).

16 The mere fact that Elizabethan writers continued to speak admiringly of the original Homeric heroes is evidence that the classical tradition had not succumbed to the medieval, if indeed the medieval actually was, as some maintain, less favorable than the classical.

17 It may appear unnecessary to dwell on this point, since, once the evidence is considered, its veracity is quite obvious. However, extended discussion is necessary precisely because scholars are quite familiar with the evidence in other connections, but, because they do not apply it to the present problem, they continue to accept (or neglect to dismiss) the claim that the reputations of the heroes had deteriorated and that Shakespeare was forced to represent them in this way.

18 Sir Thomas Elyot, The Boke Named the Governour, ed. Ernest Rhys (London and New York, 1907), pp. 25-26.

19 Sir Philip Sidney, An Apologie for Poetrie, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Oxford, 1904), I, p. 165.

20 William Webbe, A Discourse of Englishe Poetrie, Smith, I, p. 234.

21 George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), p. 4.

22 Thomas Cooper, Thesavrvs Lingvae Romanae & Brittannicae (London, 1565), under "Agamemnon." See also De Witt T. Starnes and Ernest William Talbert, Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries (Chapel Hill, 1955), p. 113. As they point out, Agamemnon's words to Aeneas about himself in I.iii.221-222 of the play represent one of the traditional statements about him: "Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice/ Call Agamemnon head and general." Indeed, these words may well be regarded as a paraphrase of Cooper's definition. T. W. Baldwin has concluded (I.490) that Shakespeare frequently consulted Cooper's Thesaurus, and Starnes and Talbert appear to endorse this view.

23 Starnes and Talbert, pp. 112-113, call attention to this reference to Agamemnon.

24 See Cooper, under "Ulysses."

25 Erasmus, "De Rerum Copia, II," in Opera Omnia (Petri Vander, 1703), I, pp. 79-81. The Latin is as follows: "Hectorem animo sublimi, mortis et auguriorum negligentem, patriae omnia posthabentem."

26 The Works of Edmund Spenser, A Variorum Edition:

The Minor Poems, II, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, et al (Baltimore, 1947), p. 96, ll. 493-496 and ll. 513-525. Henry Gibbons Lotspeich's Classical Mythology in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser (Princeton, 1932) has been indispensable in locating references to the Homeric heroes.

27 For Hector, see Variorum: The Minor Poems, II, p. 146, ll. 191-196; for Nestor, see The Faerie Queene II.ix.48; for Achilles, see Variorum: The Minor Minor Poems, II, p. 49, ll. 430-434 and I, p. 201, l. 233; for Ulysses, see II, ll. Virgil's Gnat, ll. 531-536.

28 Spenser, Variorum I, p. 167.

29 Robert Greene, The Life and Complete Works, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (New York, 1964), VI. See Hector's speech, pp. 157-158, to which Achilles listens "as in a trance," Troilus', pp. 167-168, and Cressida's, p. 166. As Kimbrough discerningly suggests, Cressida's speech is highly moralistic--"in language quite similar to that which Shakespeare gives his own Hector--about the Trojans' wasting blood in defense of a worthless woman all because of honor" (p. 35).

30 Greene, p. 200. Tatlock appears to be mistaken in his characterization of Greene's style here as later medieval or early modern (697). It is clearly euphuistic.

31 Thomas Heywood, The Iron Age I (New York, 1964),

pp. 266, 314, 321.

32 Heywood, pp. 291, 328-329, 333, 335-337, 341.

33 Tatlock, 723, had previously called attention to this elevation. As he adds, of course, Thersites is still Thersites in other respects.

34 Heywood, p. 321.

35 Cooper, under "Nestor."

36 Elyot, p. 102. Actually, Elyot says that Nestor persuaded Agamemnon to be circumspect, but his arguments to Ag. also show his own circumspection.

37 See E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems (Oxford, 1930), II, p. 182. The full inscription reads, "Iudicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem." Pylius is an epithet for Nestor, who was the king of Pylos.

38 Elyot, p. 122.

39 Chapman's Homer, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (New York, 1956), I, p. 547. See also xii.

40 Kimbrough, p. 45.

XIV. CONCLUSION

The procedure of this dissertation has been, in general, to raise doubts about the widely held conceptions of characters and events in Troilus and Cressida and to show that, at numerous key junctures of the play, an understanding of the tone as either grave or comic, rather than satiric, would be more appropriate. I have contended that Troilus and Hector make an honest but mistaken decision in the Trojan council scene--an error more worthy of regret and consternation in the viewer than of scorn. Moreover, I have tried to show that the speeches of Agamemnon and Nestor, though ceremonious and highly rhetorical, are hardly the utterances of fools: they are decorously correct in view of the high seriousness of the occasion, and they have much more substance and poetic quality than commentators in general have heretofore recognized.

Likewise, the discrepancy between Ulysses' splendid oration and his subsequent actions does not, as we have seen, constitute an ironic juxtaposition and deflation. And a close scrutiny of Troilus' and Hector's actions and speech in Act V reveals that each of them qualifies for the role of tragic hero--that is, if we do not

subconsciously assume that this title can be given only to a character who dominates the audience's attention throughout the play and who has been given monumental qualities of character, good or bad. Furthermore, I have argued that Shakespeare has comprehensively debased neither Chaucer nor Homer, and has even elevated some of the characters of the Iliad, notably Hector, Agamemnon, and Ulysses.

I have also concluded that neither Jonson nor Marston wrote regular comicall satyres except in the case of E. M. O.; that they themselves tended to mix satire with amorous comedy and even with tragedy; and hence that comicall satyre was not a new form but rather a new influence which playwrights--including Shakespeare in Troilus and Cressida--blended with other appealing elements. Thus, the nature of comicall satyre from its very inception--ancillary or complementary to other elements (and sometimes predominant), rather than pervasive or autonomous--would tend to undermine the thesis that Shakespeare's use of comicall satyre made his play a satire through and through. Moreover, I have tried to show that Ulysses and Thersites do not really qualify as satiric commentators in the way that Jonson's and Marston's did and that often the critic's impression that the play is strongly satiric can be attributed to his acceptance of Thersites' judgements at their face value,

even though this same critic has officially made obeisance to the caveat that Thersites cannot be Shakespeare's spokesman.

Again, I have maintained that the scenes involving the lovers--even the scenes just before and just after consummation--should be viewed by urbane audiences, like those of Elizabethan times and our own, as amorous comedy rather than as satire, since Shakespeare depicts the uneasy erotic love of comparative neophytes, not the jaded or luxurious love of those who are "viciously addicted." Similarly, Cressida emerges from these and later scenes, not as an unambiguous wanton, like the creatures produced by the imaginations of Marston, Middleton, and Tourneur (and even Jonson in Epicoene and Catiline), but instead as a weak woman who is presented somewhat engagingly in Acts I, III, and IV, so that her base infidelity in Act V will be so much more a blow to the unsuspecting Troilus.

My conception of the play as a mixture of genres, moreover, is integrally related to Shakespeare's use of his sources. I mean that he followed a tradition begun by Benoit of treating the love affair between Troilus and Cressida within the larger context of the Trojan war story. In other words, this fusion of a heroic war-plot with a love-plot--a fusion carried on by Lydgate and Caxton--established a tradition in the Troy

material which had as an inherent feature a mixture of martial deeds and love. However, in Benoit, Lydgate, and Caxton the love-story was a minor event buried in a welter of combats and council meetings. It was Boccaccio C who first concentrated on the love-affair and treated the Trojan war merely as a historical context; and Chaucer, as we know, followed suit. Hence, Shakespeare's indebtedness to the Benoit-Lydgate-Caxton tradition is primarily the simultaneous treatment of love and war (plus a number of specific details of plot); but, apparently unsatisfied with their meager representation of the lovers, he consulted Chaucer for a deeper, more detailed, and more authentic treatment. His use of Chaucer naturally strengthened the romantic element, which is virtually lacking in the chronicles, and thereby both heightened the contrast with the martial material and increased the impression of a bold mixture of tones. Finally, of course, Shakespeare was also apparently dissatisfied with the level of discourse of Caxton and Lydgate in the war-plot, with its loose, rambling narrative, so that he consulted Homer as well, with the result that he was able to intensify the drama and grandeur of his war-scenes and to set limits to the scope of his treatment of the war.

Hence, although Lydgate and Caxton furnished the broad outlines of Troilus and Cressida, for his own intensified version Shakespeare infused the work with an

adaptation and dramatization of both Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and key material from Homer's Iliad. The result was that, not only did Chaucer's poem furnish a more rounded and convincing treatment of the lovers, but Chaucer and Homer together furnished a more lamentable and moving conception of the agony of Troilus and the fall of Troy. Thus, Shakespeare's sources determined to a large extent, not that his play should be a bitter vulgarization of a great war-poem and a great love-poem, but that it should be a mixture of a comic love-plot which ends tragically (Chaucer's) and a historic-tragic plot which ends tragically (Homer's). In other words, if Troilus and Cressida is a mixture of genres, the primary cause can be found in Shakespeare's decision to intensify the story as it appears in Lydgate and Caxton and to merge the essential elements of Chaucer's poem with the essential elements of an entirely different kind of work, Homer's poem. The secondary cause, of course, would be Shakespeare's decision to give Thersites a disproportionately large role--a judgement which added a strong satiric element to the comic and tragic elements.

To scholars who have specialized in satire, this co-existence of the comic, the tragic, and the satiric does not seem implausible; indeed, it is quite familiar. As Professor Rosenheim explains, we should accept the possibility that

satire may be juxtaposed to, or proceed concurrently with, other kinds of writing, and the likelihood that these other kinds will be precisely those which, because of their frequent identification with satire, must be distinguished from it. It should be added, however, that this view relieves us of the burden under which analysts of satire have at times labored unnecessarily, namely the explication of all parts of a work in order to show their contribution to a purely satiric end.¹
(My Italics)

Professor Gilbert Highet also recognizes that a dramatist may combine satire with "normal comedy" or romance or tragedy² and adds, "It is always tempting for a brilliant writer to mix literary genres. Both Aeschylus and Shakespeare put far more comedy and fantasy into their tragedies than other authors would venture."³ Similarly, Professor James Sutherland, calling attention to the passionate speech of the lovers, maintains that "Professor Campbell, eagerly pursuing his satiric quarry over fences and ditches, does not give sufficient weight to those utterances of Troilus and Cressida. Since Shakespeare is so obviously being satirical elsewhere in the play, he feels that Shakespeare must be satirical here too. I cannot believe it. Whatever Shakespeare may have meant to do (and I am willing to believe that he was consciously writing a comical satire) he could not confine himself to that stylized and ultimately monotonous form all the time."⁴ Professor Harold Hillebrand expresses a similar idea when he writes that "if we admit Campbell's thesis . . . we must then admit that

Shakespeare failed to understand the genre of comical satire, or that, having undertaken it, was quite unable to go through with it."⁵ Professor Baldwin concurs with this view: "if the play began as a satire intended for the consumption of a private and sophisticated audience . . . it ended by being something very different."⁶

Again, Shakespeare's success in rendering the satiric effect would seem indirectly to be belied by the continuing controversy over Troilus and Cressida, since, as Professor Rosenheim points out, a requirement for the satirist is that "the true position which he wishes, however obliquely, to convey must emerge clearly if his satire is to be successful."⁷

Another over-all consideration about the play, to which it may be rewarding to turn now, is the complexity of most of its characters--or, to turn this thought around, the failure of these characters to conform to the mould of single-minded satirized figures like those of Jonson and Molière. We have already seen amply that Troilus, Cressida, and Hector combine attractive qualities with both minor and grave weaknesses. Similarly, Agamemnon and Nestor--though comparatively weak as leaders and contrivers of stratagems--have some stature as speakers and as gracious hosts of their mortal enemy, Hector; while Ulysses is a combination of steadfastness, acumen, and resourcefulness with amoral cunning.

But this doubleness of character is not restricted to the major figures alone. For example, Achilles, although he is a vicious and unforgivable bully in Act V and an irresponsible mocker, by report, in I.iii, yet in his first appearance (II.1) he is completely dignified and indeed is the voice of reason, who attempts to settle the difference between Ajax and Thersites. Moreover, although his silly games with Patroclus are detrimental to the state and apparently not as funny as he thinks, yet they show a modicum of wit in him and are not unlike the pranks of Prince Hal, which were also detrimental to the state, but nevertheless funny; and Hal's travesty, with Falstaff, of his father only enhances the connection between the two sleeping champions. Indeed, Achilles' satiric wit emerges in his speech at times, as in his mild parody of courtiers' polite language in III.iii.270-275. But it is earlier in III.iii, in his dialogue with Ulysses, that he enters into a new and higher dimension. For, not only does he speak with what is for him some intelligence, but Shakespeare shows him uncertain and troubled about his harmful conduct: he seems aware that it is destructive to himself as well as to the Greek enterprise. In fact, as Professor Rolf Soellner has shown, the image which Shakespeare places in Achilles' mouth, "My mind is troubled like a fountain stirr'd" (1. 310), is one which Plutarch, the Stoics, and especially

Erasmus used to symbolize the mind troubled by passions, and one which Shakespeare uses for this purpose in Hamlet and Macbeth.⁸ Hence, we might deduce that in this scene Shakespeare is investing the reckless and superficial Achilles with some of the doubt and disturbance which he gives to some of his tragic heroes--in short, that he is giving Achilles for the moment a tragic coloring.

Similarly, the "beef-witted" Ajax, who can barely speak in II.i without cursing, undergoes a remarkable change, apparently as a result of his encounter with Hector. After his bombastic outburst (IV.v.7-11), and after his combat with Hector, in which the latter demonstrates his civility and restraint, Ajax himself becomes a kind of courtier:

If I might in entreaties find success,
As seld I have the chance, I would desire
My famous cousin to our Grecian tents.
(IV.v.149-151).

And soon afterwards, when Achilles' insolence and braggadocio toward Hector anger the Trojan champion, Ajax becomes the voice of reason:

Do not chafe thee, cousin;
And you, Achilles, let these threats alone,
Till accident or purpose bring you to't.
You may have every day enough of Hector
If you have the stomach.
(IV.v.260-264)

Likewise, Pandarus, however lecherous and degenerate some may regard him, fails to conform to this unsavory picture of him consistently. For instance, he shows his

generous and considerate side when he sees that Paris has returned unharmed from battle:

Why, this is brave now. Who said he came hurt
home to-day?
He's not hurt. Why, this will do Helen's heart
good, now, ha!

(I.ii.233-235)

Similarly, earlier in the same scene, his first explicit reminder to Cressida of Troilus' suit soon takes the form of an appeal to her compassion, rather than to her sense of profit or advantage, as we might have expected from a degenerate pander:

I'll be sworn 'tis true. He will weep you an
'twere a man born in April.

(I.ii.188)

Again, his reiteration of his concern for Troilus' sanity and life as a result of the separation (IV.ii.77-78, IV. 11.90, IV.ii.98-99), though odd in its negligence of Cressida's plight, indicates a genuinely sympathetic reaction which in this context seems utterly free of the vicarious eroticism that in other contexts makes his sympathy ambiguous. And his weeping (IV.iv.55-56), since there are no valid grounds for considering it inauthentic, only adds to this impression of a character who is essentially a well-meaning helper and confidante. Of course, it would be less than complete to speak of Pandarus without the observation that his good intentions and sympathy almost always have the comic quality produced by a busybody's concern for others. Indeed, even in

IV.iv, before he goes in to weep, his inappropriate bustling and "goodly sayings" introduce a silly note into the otherwise solemn parting. However, it seems less true, all in all, to say that Pandarus is a lecherous old fool than to say that he is a sentimental old fool-- although he is at various times partially both.

The consequences of this line of reasoning should be evident. Troilus and Cressida differs from the classical conception of satire (embodied perhaps most perfectly in the work of Jonson and Moliere) in that most of Shakespeare's characters in this play have traits other than those which are reprehensible or worthy of derision --traits which may even be praiseworthy. The full-fledged satirist, on the other hand, suppresses other dimensions of character, which dilute the effect of his moral criticism by distracting the audience's attention. Instead, he preoccupies himself and the audience almost exclusively with the traits of character which need to be corrected and thus tends to define the personages of his work in terms of those traits.

I would also like to suggest that a strong appeal of the satiric viewpoint has always been that it is ostensibly more sophisticated than the viewpoint which interprets Shakespeare's tonal manner as, to a marked extent, sympathetic and in earnest. Anyone who has confronted a class of younger college students knows

that the perception of irony, parody, self-contradiction, etc., is largely restricted to the other side of the desk and to a small minority of discerning wits among the students. Consequently, among teacher-scholars I think there is a tendency to identify the denial of irony with youthful innocence, and the perception of irony with cultivated subtlety; and hence, there is a tendency perhaps to discover more patterns of mockery in the literature we study than actually exist. Thus, in Troilus and Cressida, the ample patterns of mockery which are indisputable apparently have given rise, "as if increase of appetite had grown/By what it fed on," to a desire for an over-all satiric pattern. But, compelling as this desire may be, I believe that ultimately it is a call of the Sirens and that we must bind ourselves firmly to good sense and resist this appealing call. For, although the satiric outlook is typically more urbane and genially cynical than the straightforward one, we have found in this study that a satiric interpretation of several scenes--especially those involving sex--places the supposedly cosmopolitan critic in the position of a prim and unworldly soul who mistakes healthy eroticism for unsavory vice. Hence, in the last analysis, a straightforward and "innocent" interpretation of many scenes, like Erasmus' foolish wisdom, is closer to the truth than sophisticated wisdom--which is often more

reliable, but which in the interpretation of this play often finds itself inverted into naïvete.

Finally, in the eleventh hour the idea of a more conciliatory position on Troilus and Cressida almost naturally suggests itself and is on the surface quite appealing. I am referring to the position that the play can be read with equal consistency either as a mixture of amorous comedy and tragedy or as comprehensive satire. This kind of compromise has the obvious merit of investing Shakespeare's play with the kind of complexity and ambiguity which is very attractive to modern critics. Furthermore, it echoes trends in modern science to develop models which are internally consistent and which satisfactorily explain physical phenomena, but which are not regarded as exclusive explanations; indeed, they may co-exist with a number of other internally consistent models. Again, the more conciliatory position represents a generous acknowledgement of the virtues of both sides and evades the inevitable charge of extremism. However, my final survey of the actualities of the play requires me to conclude that a co-ordinate reading of the play as a satire through and through would not be supported by a large number of scenes, and that we can assign to the satirical element in Troilus and Cressida a role as only one component among several, in a mixture of genres.

NOTES

1 Edward Rosenheim, Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago, 1963), pp. 11-12.

2 Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, 1962), pp. 156-157.

3 Ibid., p. 157. As I have already pointed out, Professor Highet, in spite of his views on these pages, considers Troilus and Cressida a satire.

4 James Sutherland, English Satire (Cambridge, 1962), p. 140. As I have indicated in an early chapter, Campbell gave more weight to these lyrical passages and others in the play in his later book, Shakespeare's Satire.

5 Variorum, p. 383.

6 Ibid., p. 384.

7 Rosenheim, p. 33.

8 Rolf Soellner, "The Troubled Fountain: Erasmus Formulates a Shakespearean Simile," JEGP, LV (January, 1956), 70-74.

APPENDIX A: FOOD IMAGERY

Since I count as imagery conspicuous diction as well as metaphors and similes, my total is somewhat larger than that of Professor Spurgeon. My justification is that conspicuous diction, even though it does not involve a comparison, constitutes a reiteration and a reinforcement of motifs in a poem or play and that, when critics refer to the "pervasive food-imagery" in Troilus and Cressida, they loosely include in this idea the recurrence of food in the speech of the characters in any linguistic form, figurative or not. Some modern critics allow this understanding of diction as imagery.

- (1) The Prologue, l. 12: "disgorge," a buried metaphor.
- (2) The Prologue, l. 29: "digested," a buried metaphor.
- (3) I.1.15: "cake," "wheat," etc.
- (4) I.11.145: "addle egg."
- (5) I.11.147: "chicken i' th' shell."
- (6) I.11.159-160: "fire," "pot."
- (7) I.11.262: "chaff and bran."

- (8) I.11.263: "porridge after meat!"
- (9) I.11.280: "date in the pie."
- (10) I.111.28: "winnows."
- (11) I.111.45: "toast for Neptune."
- (12) I.111.337-338: "taste our dear'st repute/
With their fin'st palate."
- (13) I.111.388: "relish."
- (14) I.111.389: "taste."
- (15) II.1.13: "whinid'st leaven."
- (16) II.1.41: "Cobloaf!"
- (17) II.1.43: "biscuit."
- (18) II.1.112: "fusty nut with no kernel."
- (19) II.11.6: "In hot digestion of this
cormorant war."
- (20) II.11.48-49: "would they but fat their
thoughts/With this crammed reason."
- (21) II.11.66: "distaste what it elected."
- (22) II.11.70: "the remainder viands."
- (23) II.11.123: "distaste."
- (24) II.11.144: "You have the honey still."
- (25) II.111.44: "my cheese, my digestion."
- (26) II.111.128-129: "Yea, like fair fruit in
an unwholesome dish/Are like to rot
untasted."
- (27) II.111.164: "eats up himself."
- (28) II.111.167: "devours the deed in praise."
- (29) II.111.195: "bastes his arrogance with
his own seam."
- (30) II.111.205: "to enlard his fat-already
pride."

- (31) II.111.211: "And how his silence drinks
up this applause."
- (32) III.1.44-45: "for my business seethes.
Sodden business! There's a stewed phrase
indeed!"
- (33) III.11.20: "Th' imaginary relish is so
sweet."
- (34) III.11.22-23: "wat'ry palates," "Love's
thrice-repured nectar."
- (35) III.11.98: "Praise us as we are tasted."
- (36) III.111.46: "drink."
- (37) III.111.48-49: "for supple knees/Feed
arrogance."
- (38) III.111.136-137: "How one man eats into
another's pride/While pride is fasting in
his wantonness!"
- (39) III.111.148: "Those scraps are good deeds
past, which are devoured/As fast as they
are made."
- (40) III.111.237-238: "I have a woman's
longing,/An appetite that I am sick withal."
- (41) IV.1.59: "Not palating the taste of her
dishonour."
- (42) IV.1.61-62: "He like a puling cuckold
would drink up/The lees and dregs of a flat
tamed piece."
- (43) IV.1v.3: "The grief is fine, full, perfect
that I taste."
- (44) IV.1v.7: "Or brew it to a weak and colder
palate."
- (45) IV.1v.49-50: "And scants us with a single
famish'd kiss,/Distasted with the salt of
broken tears."
- (46) IV.v.293: "But still sweet love is food
for fortune's tooth."

- (47) V.11.55-57: "How the devil luxury, with
his fat rump and potato finger, tickles
these together! Fry, lechery, fry!"
- (48) V.11.158-160: "orts of her love,/The
fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy
relics/Of her o'ereaten faith."
- (49) V.1v.12: "dry cheese."
- (50) V.1v.13: "blackberry."

As with the disease-imagery, the vast majority of these images are used asexually or neutrally and in a variety of ways. The ones which can easily or with some imagination be construed as related to love are numbers 3, 4, 9(?), 20, 21, 23, 30, 31, 32, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46. Thus, it would be proper to say that an undercurrent of food-imagery is identified with love. But to suggest that all or most of the food-imagery contributes to an atmosphere of luxurious eroticism is not supported by the language of the play.

APPENDIX B: DISEASE IMAGERY

As in the Appendix on food-imagery, I have included conspicuous diction because I believe continual reiteration of the idea of disease contributes to the impression in many critics that the play "is pervaded by disease-imagery."

- (1) I.1.53: "open ulcer of my heart."
- (2) I.111.1: "jaundies."
- (3) I.111.8: "infects."
- (4) I.111.91: "medicinable eye."
- (5) I.111.96: "plagues."
- (6) I.111.103: "Then enterprise is sick!"
- (7) I.111.132: "sick."
- (8) I.111.133: "envious fever."
- (9) I.111.139: "The fever whereof all our power is sick."
- (10) I.111.140: "sickness."
- (11) I.111.174: "palsy."
- (12) I.111.187: "infect."
- (13) I.111.378: "physic."
- (14) II.1.2: "biles" (boils).
- (15) II.1.6: "botchy core."
- (16) II.1.12: "plague."

- (17) II.1.28: "itch."
- (18) II.1.29: "loathsom'st scab."
- (19) II.1.56: "scurvy."
- (20) II.11.122: "brainsick raptures."
- (21) II.111.21: "Neopolitan bone-ache."
- (22) II.111.38: "lazars."
- (23) II.111.80: "dry suppeago."
- (24) II.111.93-94: "lion-sick," "melancholy."
- (25) II.111.187-188: "plaguy proud," "no recovery."
- (26) II.111.223: "He will be the physician that should be the patient."
- (27) III.11.38: "feverous pulse."
- (28) III.111.44: "derision med'cinable."
- (29) III.111.229: "Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves."
- (30) III.111.232: "danger like an ague subtly taints."
- (31)-(45) V.1.20-28: Fourteen diseases heaped up and conferred upon Patroclus by Thersites.
- (46) V.1.72: "lazar."
- (47) V.11.101: "tisick."
- (48) V.11.104: "rheum."
- (49) V.11.105: "ache."
- (50) V.x.35: "aching bones."
- (51) V.x.57: "diseases."

It will be noted that in I.111 twelve consecutive images or words which belong to the disease-motif (2-13)

refer to the sickness of the Greek enterprise exclusively. Then, six (14-19) are part of Thersites' and Ajax's odd exchange of cursing, three (20-22) are Thersites' curses of the Greeks, three (24-26) refer to the pride of Achilles and Ajax, three again (28-30) to Achilles' moral ailment. Then, fourteen words which are not strictly images, but which afford a picturesque contribution to the atmosphere of disease, are offered by Thersites (31-45). He adds one more (46), and then Pandarus concludes with his five (47-51). Thus, we see that the disease-imagery and disease-diction are almost entirely either in reference to the social and political ills of the Greeks; or in reference to the Greek commanders whom Thersites is reviling; or to Achilles and Ajax, whose sickness is pride; or to Pandarus, who late in the play claims that he is literally suffering from a number of diseases. Only image (1) and (27) refer directly to the lovers.

APPENDIX C

Continued doubt and uneasiness still appears to exist on the part of scholars concerning Shakespeare's knowledge of and access to Homer.¹ The obsolescent tradition of Shakespeare's limited learning has been dying a slow death; and for some reason the proposal that Shakespeare knew the Iliad seems to imply to many that he knew it in the original--a belief which Jonson's expression, "small Latin and less Greek," clearly confutes. Again, Shakespeare's use of Chapman's translation of seven books in 1598 is often evaded, apparently, as a possible explanation, because the unsubstantiated myth of Shakespeare's life-long hatred for the "rival poet" nullifies it. But a hard look at the probabilities indicates that Shakespeare did not have to know Greek to know Homer: he could have gotten most or all of the information he needed for Troilus and Cressida from the books his respected contemporary Chapman translated in 1598 (I, II, VII, VIII, IX, X, and XI, and part of XVIII);² or, if these were not sufficient, he could have used, as Tatlock shows, the Ilias Latina (a Latin epitome) two French translations (Samxon's and Salel's), and any one of five Latin

translations, including Valla's and Spondanus' (the latter two of which Chapman consulted).³

But further speculation about what Shakespeare could have done is unnecessary, because abundant evidence exists in the play itself that he must have used the material of the Iliad, in one translation or more. The medieval sources, including Caxton and Lydgate, simply do not furnish sufficient material to account for all the action in the play. Furthermore, they cover a much longer period both before and after the siege, whereas Shakespeare's span (falling near the end of the war only) corresponds very closely to Homer's epic concentration. Again, the characterization in Caxton and Lydgate is often flat and lacking in distinctiveness, whereas Shakespeare's heroes consistently manifest the traits depicted by Homer, or (as with Thersites, Ajax, and to some extent Hector) largely hinted at by Homer. Finally, there are a host of important details in which the play follows or echoes the Iliad--details absent from the medieval sources. It should be emphasized, of course, that arguing for Homer does not in any way constitute an argument against Caxton and Lydgate. There can be no question that Shakespeare used the former extensively and--as Professor Tillyard and Professor Henderson have proposed⁴--probably the latter as well. But the combined efforts of Professors R. A. Small, J. F. Palmer, J. S. P.

Tatlock, T. W. Baldwin, and more recently the thorough study by Professor Robert Presson--as well as numerous new parallels to be set forth here--would appear to make continued doubt on the question of Shakespeare's use of Homer somewhat of an anachronism.

For instance, one of Shakespeare's important themes, which is missing from Caxton and treated cursorily in *Lydgate*⁵ is the emphasis on the disintegration of the Greeks' discipline and will to win. This theme is very prominent in the first three acts of the play and, in Homer's Iliad, throughout Achilles' retirement from the battlefield. In the latter, as Presson says, Homer has "depicted a society disintegrating because of the dissension of powerful individuals whose passions are so excessive that reason cannot control them."⁶ By the opening of the Iliad, this disintegration has become so advanced that, when Agamemnon tests the morale of the men by proposing that they return to Greece, pandemonium breaks loose, the men race en masse to the ships, and only Odysseus' reasoning and reprimands can stem the mass flight.⁷

A related Homeric feature of the play, not present in the earlier versions, is Shakespeare's explanation of the deadlock and of the delay in the Greeks' victory: namely, the dissension among the ranks. In Caxton, for example, there is no dissension among the Greeks until

after the death of Hector.⁸ Moreover, as Presson points out, in Caxton Agamemnon does not attribute the long suspension of victory to "any underlying weakness in his army." Instead, Caxton "accounts for the delay, until the death of Hector, by the well-matched strength of the contestants."⁹ Indeed, as we have already seen, it would have been impossible for Caxton to make dissension and the crippling effect of Achilles' retirement the key dramatic issues they are in Shakespeare and Homer, since in Caxton's version these two events do not occur until after Achilles has slain Hector.

Other striking details relate to the markedly different treatment, or even absence, of characters in the less classical medieval versions. Tatlock points out, for example, that Thersites does not appear at all in Caxton.¹⁰ It is true that he appears only for a few lines (II.181-234) in Homer, but Shakespeare's portrait is clearly an elaboration of the Homeric character's railing, malice, cowardice, exposure to beatings (I. 231), and his role as buffoon (II. 183-185)--with further suggestions taken from Jonson's and Marston's satiric railers. Indeed, Shakespeare's Thersites resembles Homer's so closely in these five traits, especially the last three, that it would be difficult (and unnecessary) to find a source other than Homer for this character,¹¹ and he by himself is strong evidence of Shakespeare's

use of the Iliad in some form.

Similarly, the Nestor of Troilus and Cressida is the aged, loquacious counselor of Homer and of classical accounts (Cooper says he was three hundred years old);¹² whereas in Caxton, as Tatlock observes, he "is little distinguished; a strong fighter (571, 579, 585), he is only once spoken of as old (545), and his wise eloquence is little dwelt on (542, 630-2). As the venerable and eloquent sage of Shakespeare he is probably due to the Iliad."¹³

Furthermore, the plot-element which dominates the greater part of the play (in the war-plot)--that is, the rousing of Achilles from his slumber by pitting Ajax against Hector--could not have been taken from the medieval versions. Instead, as Tatlock stresses, "Hector's challenge to single combat, the choice of Ajax by lot, and the fight (I.iii.260ff; IV.v) follow Iliad VII."¹⁴ It may be added that the combat ends as inconclusively in Homer as in Shakespeare, for the heralds Idaeus and Talthybios bring it to an end in the Iliad (VII.242-247), claiming that night is approaching and should be obeyed.¹⁵ Again, even though Shakespeare appears to follow Caxton closely in representing Hector's visit to Achilles' tent, the scene does not eventuate in the Homeric conclusion, the slaying of Hector, in Caxton; for there, Agamemnon will not permit a single

combat to decide the war (p. 603.18-27). Apparently, then, Shakespeare had to combine Caxton and Homer to secure the cause-and-effect relationship between these two events.

Another way in which Lydgate and Caxton depart from Homer, whereas Shakespeare appears to follow him, is their treatment of the death of Patroclus. First, they have him die in the first year of the siege, although Homer placed his death in stronger dramatic position, the ninth year; Shakespeare, of course, also contrives his death very near the end of his work--in the seventh year and in an even more dramatic position than in Homer. Second, Lydgate and Caxton do not make Patroclus' death the motive for Achilles' return to battle. As Presson puts it, "only in the epic and in the play does Patroclus' death rouse Achilles to instant action."¹⁶ Again, it is also possible that Shakespeare took his hint for making Patroclus have "little stomach to the war" (III.iii.220: a trait absent from the romances) from Briseis' lament (Iliad, XIX.279-296), in which she portrays him as one "ever being kind,/ Ever delightsome, one sweete grace fed still with one sweete mind." Shakespeare thus may have derived his ostensibly original idea of Patroclus' peaceful nature from Briseis' portrait of his kind and sweet nature, which she contrasts to Achilles' heartlessness.¹⁷

Details concerning other characters also appear to

have their origin only in the epic. For instance, as Palmer suggests, Thersites' association of Ajax with an ass (II.1.48, 49, 74) is probably based on Book XI.485 of the Iliad (among those books translated in 1598, Palmer adds), where Homer compares Ajax to a mill-ass. Likewise, Palmer notes that Menelaus, whom Chapman describes as laconic, speaks only two words in I.111, six in III.111, and speaks very concisely in IV.v. Perhaps more striking among Palmer's finds is his observation that Patroclus' travesty of Nestor, which Ulysses reports in I.111, might have derived the naturalistic detail of Nestor's palsy from Iliad VIII.93-94, where Diomedes refers to it, and might have derived the whole idea of Nestor's "arming to answer a night alarm" (l. 171) from X.61-67, where Agamemnon rouses him and "he quickly started from his bed when to his watchful eares/Untimely feet told some approach: he took his lance in hand."¹⁸ Finally, Hector's motive for not listening to Andromache, Priam, Hecuba, and Cassandra in Lydgate and Caxton is, Presson proposes, little more than "unreasonable stubbornness"; whereas in both Shakespeare and Homer he pleads moral commitment to a previous vow.¹⁹

Again, a passage for which there is no parallel in the romances, but which is quite close in spirit to the corresponding passage in the play, is the one in which Hector chooses to forgo further combat with Ajax, praises

his strength, and argues for friendship rather than bloodshed:

'Ajax, since Jove to thy big forme made thee so
strong a man,
And gave thee skill to use thy strength so much
that for thy speare
Thou art most excellent of Greece, now let us
fight forbear.
Hereafter we shall warre againe till Jove our
Herald be,
And grace with conquest which he will: heaven
yeelds to night, and we . . .
That men of Troy and Greece may say: "Thus
their high quarrell ends:
Those that, encountring, were such foes, are
now (being separate) friends."
(VII.251-261)

Hector's words of praise and conciliation to Ajax in IV.v of the play, "By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms" (l. 136) and "Cousin, all honour to thee!", with its allusion to Jove and its praise of Ajax' size, strength, and honored place among men, seems to be based on the first three lines of this passage in Homer. Similarly, Hector's magnanimous and conciliatory attitude in "The issue is embracement" (l. 149) and in his description of the coming visit to Agamemnon and Achilles as "this loving interview" (l. 155) appears to be an amplification of the last two lines. Moreover, the scene, with its epic sentiment--the momentary paradox and pathos of peaceful amity within the larger and more inexorable context of bloodshed--does not appear in any version other than Shakespeare's and Homer's.

Another parallel which is restricted to the play and

the epic is that between Ulysses' use of the bee-image in his degree speech and the figure of the bee in Iliad II. 71-77. T. W. Baldwin has proposed that Shakespeare probably fused Homer's version of the image with the much more familiar adaptation by Virgil and that the traditional comparison of the two classical versions, as in Spondanus' notes, probably formed the basis for Shakespeare's fusion.²⁰ Similarly, another figure in the Iliad resembles Ulysses' long allegoria on time, with its elaborate personification. In Book IX.467-481, Phoenix begs Achilles to mitigate his mighty spirit and listen to prayers:

The Gods themselves are flexible, whose vertues,
honors, powers
Are more than thine; yet they will bend their
breasts as we bend ours.
Perfumes, benigne devotions, savors of offrings
burnd
And holy rites the engines are with which their
hearts are turned
By men that pray to them, whose faith their
sinnes have falsified.
For prayers are daughters of great Jove, lame,
wrinkled, ruddie-eyd
And ever following Injury, who (strong and sound
of feet
Flies through the world afflicting men.
Beleeving prayers yet
(To all that love that seed of Jove) the
certaine blessing get
To have Jove heare, and helpe them too; but, if
he shall refuse
And stand inflexible to them, they flie to Jove
and use
Their powres against him, that the wrongs he
doth to them may fall
On his owne head and pay those paines whose
cure he fails to call. (My italics)

The personification, the action-imagery, the didactic

quality of the theme, the speaker's role as paternal admonisher all resemble Ulysses' speech to Achilles in III.111; and the influence of the Iliad on Shakespeare in this passage is made all the more plausible when we consider that the situation is essentially the same in the play as in the poem. Both are part of the Embassy scene, in which the Greek leaders visit Achilles' tent to request his help; and Ulysses' speech has the same objective as the speeches of both Ulysses and Phoenix in the epic (IX.222-295 and IX.413-569)--namely, the return of Achilles to the battlefield.²¹ The main difference is one of distribution: Homer spends almost all of Book IX on the plea to Achilles; where Shakespeare (unable to lavish space and time on the mighty orations of Phoenix, Achilles, and Ulysses, some over 100 lines) only suggests the plea by an Embassy in II.111 and shifts the true persuasion and admonition to III.111, where Ulysses alone assumes the function of diplomat and counselor, which the entire Embassy--and especially Phoenix--had performed in the poem. Once again, of course, although the romances have comparable scenes, since Achilles does not withdraw from the fighting until after the death of Hector,²² the dramatic import is not the same as in Homer and Shakespeare.

A number of more subtle details and parallels should also receive attention. As Tatlock mentions, Shakespeare

twice calls Achilles "Thetis' son"--the Homeric practice --but Caxton refers to Thetis, not as part of the epithet for Achilles, but in her own right as a character, during his later narration after the fall of Troy.²³ Similarly, Tatlock points out that the brief mention by Cressida's servant of Hector's disgrace at the hands of Ajax in the play (I.11.34-37: Ajax "struck him down") must be based on the passage in the poem in which Ajax strikes down Hector with a great stone (XIV.339-350), since the encounter does not occur in this manner in the other versions.²⁴ Similarly, Ulysses' reminder to Achilles that his "glorious deeds, but in these fields of late,/Made emulous missions amongst the gods themselves/And drave great Mars to faction" (III.111.188-190) neatly summarizes the action of the books in which the gods--especially Ares (Mars)--actually war against each other.²⁵

Another probable allusion to the Iliad occurs when Nestor suggests that Achilles would see that Hector's challenge is meant for him, "were his brain as barren/As banks of Libya (though, Apollo knows,/'Tis dry enough)" (I.111.328-329). It seems likely that Nestor is not using Apollo's name as one merely by which to swear. For Apollo in Book XXIV of the Iliad speaks of Achilles as a mindless brute, as

one that hath neither hart
Nor soule within him that will move or yeeld to
any part

That fits a man; but Lion-like, uplandish and
meere wilde,
Slave to his pride, and, all his nerves being
naturally compil'd
Of eminent strength, stalkes out and preyes
upon a silly sheepe.

(11. 41-45)

Similarly, a parallel occurs when Achilles denies Hector's dying request in the Iliad and Hector replies (XXII.308-309) that he foresaw "Thy now tried tyrannie, nor hop't for any other law,/Of nature, or of nations." The linguistic resemblance to Hector's statement about Helen in the play that "these moral laws/Of nature and of nations speak aloud/To have her back return'd" (II.iii.184-186) is quite striking; especially since the key phrase appears not to be in the original, but to be one of Chapman's additions.²⁶ The fact that it is Hector both times, though in very different circumstances, who is the spokesman for "the law of nature and of nations" argues for a relation closer than coincidence.

The death of Hector also presents possibilities for the discovery of Homeric parallels. For, although Shakespeare appears to follow Caxton rather closely here (especially in that Hector in both works is in the act of despoiling a fallen Greek of his armor when Achilles and his men come upon him: quite a different treatment from Homer's), still there is a significant difference. In Caxton (p. 613.20-28), Hector has laid his shield aside in order to facilitate his removal of the Greek's armor;

whereas in Troilus and Cressida (V.viii.1-4), he has apparently completed this task, lays aside his sword, and says, "I'll take good breath." This idea of disarming and of a rest is not present in Caxton's version, where Hector is eagerly pursuing the acquisition of the armor, when Achilles comes upon him unnoticed and without a word thrusts his sword into him.

However, there is a memorable passage in the Iliad in which Achilles comes upon another Trojan warrior, Lykaon, who is

Naked of helmet, shield, sword, lance (all
which for ease he threw
To earth, being overcome with sweate, and
labour wearying
His flying knees).

(XXI.48-50)

In spite of the boy's pleas and although he is disarmed, Achilles ruthlessly slays him. It seems likely that this episode (quite serviceable for the aim of making the Greeks less admirable than the Trojans) suggested to the medieval authors their version of Achilles' cowardly and ruthless slaying of the defenceless Hector (and of Troilus). Apparently, Shakespeare has embellished his version of Hector's death with the further detail, from the same episode in the Iliad, that Hector, fatigued after a day of battle (1. 3), is resting and disarmed when Achilles and his men appear.

These numerous similarities of structure, parallel passages, and coincidental details demonstrate that

Troilus and Cressida could not have been written solely on the basis of Lydgate and Caxton, but that Shakespeare must have consulted Homer in translation--most likely Chapman's, but probably Spondanus' or Valla's in Latin and Salel's in French as well, in order to get material not covered in Chapman's seven books of 1598. It must be emphasized that arguing for Homer does not in any way imply that Shakespeare did not also use Caxton and Lydgate: several places in the play (e. g., Hector's visit to Achilles tent and Hector's death) bear the unmistakable imprint of one or both writers. But a fair and well-rounded account of sources must take Homer into consideration very seriously; even though the consequence of this admission must be that Shakespeare was not content with the intellectual level or narrative skill of the romances, and was not limited to the allegedly baser (actually, chivalric) conceptions of the characters.

NOTES

1 For example, as substantial a scholar as E. M. W. Tillyard believes that Troilus and Cressida "need bear no relation to those books of Homer published in 1598." See Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), p. 34. On the other hand, even when a scholar concedes, as W. W. Lawrence does, that Troilus and Cressida contains Homeric material, he continues to feel that these borrowings from the Iliad are "best explained by the assumption that Shakespeare was remodelling a piece by a man who knew Homer well." See Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, 2d ed. (New York, 1960), p. 156. Lawrence was, of course, writing originally in 1931, when it was still popular to question Shakespeare's authorship of Troilus and Cressida and of several other plays (understandably, Chapman was pressed into service for the Roman plays and for Troilus and Cressida). Today, however, doubts about Shakespeare's general learning have been largely discredited, and uncertainty continues to exist only in special instances like Troilus and Cressida.

2 See Chapman's Homer, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (New York, 1956), I, xv. See also J. F. Palmer in Variorum, pp. 421-422; for a contrary view on the confinement of parallels with the Iliad to the seven books of 1598, see J. S. P. Tatlock "The Siege of Troy in Shakespeare

and Heywood," PMLA, XXX (1915), 739-742, where he draws parallels which are based on books of the Iliad other than these.

3 Tatlock, 724n and 742. Arthur Hall's translation of the first ten books (1581) was also available, but the fact that it was a partial translation makes it of limited use for the point we are discussing.

4 W. B. Drayton Henderson, "Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: Yet Deeper in Its Tradition," in Essays on Dramatic Literature, ed. Hardin Craig (Princeton, 1935), pp. 142-156; Tillyard, Problem, p. 39.

5 Henderson, p. 142-144. But Lydgate uses "degree" purely in a social sense (II.1182, 1192, 1360) and when Agamemnon warns against pride (II.6517-6719), he is not arguing against indiscipline within the ranks as Henderson claims, but against recklessness toward the Trojans.

6 Robert Presson, Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and The Legends of Troy (Madison, 1953), p. 7. See also R. A. Small, The Stage-Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and the So-Called Poetasters (Breslau, 1899), p. 165, and Tatlock, 739n.

7 Nicoll, Iliad II.94-180. See also Presson, pp. 17-18.

8 Raoul LeFevre, The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, tr. William Caxton, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (London, 1894), II, p. 621, pp. 624-625. See also Presson, p. 16n.

9 Presson, p. 16 and p. 17.

10 Tatlock, 739n.

11 The interlude Thersites (ca. 1537) portrays him as a laughable coward, a braggart, and a foul-mouthed rogue. See Old English Plays, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt, 4th ed. (London, 1874), pp. 389-431. Shakespeare's Thersites is also, as we have seen, a typical railer and satirist of the period 1599-1601, a buffoon who is full of malice. But Homer's brief sketch contains the traits of both the interlude character and the satirist-buffoon, all in one place.

12 See Thomas Cooper, Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Brittanicae (London, 1565), under "Nestor."

13 Tatlock, 739n.

14 Ibid., 739n.

15 The bathos which some find in the combat is probably due to a temporary failure of theatrical sense in these observers and a confusion between text-time and stage-time. It is doubtful that an Elizabethan company would miss an opportunity for a lusty and prolonged duel,

before Hector calls a halt to it. As far as the inconclusiveness is concerned, as we have seen, Shakespeare could hardly have produced a winner without violating Homer¹.

16 Presson, p. 73. See also p. 65 and p. 71.

17 See also Menelaus' words on Patroclus in XVII. 585-587: "Now let some true friend call to mind the gentle and sweete nature/Of poor Patroclus; let him thinke how kind to every creature/His heart was, living, though now dead." Cedric H. Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 195, has called attention to these judgements of Patroclus' kind nature, which had escaped my notice.

18 See Variorum, pp. 421-422. For the rousing of Nestor in the Iliad, see also Robert A. Law, "An Echo of Homer in Henry the Fifth," University of Texas Studies in English, n. v. (1942), pp. 105-109. It was R. A. Small, who first discovered the parallel (see Small, p. 166). It may be proposed that here again we have a serious event in the Iliad reduced in stature, for comic effect, in Troilus and Cressida. However, as we saw in the chapter on the Greek council scene, this satirical representation of Nestor is part of Ulysses' report of Patroclus' unseemly antics, so that the momentary impression of satiric mockery is controlled

by the total context in which it appears: the disapproval generated toward Patroclus' and Achilles' games negates this mockery. But it seems probable that the scene in the Iliad furnished Shakespeare with material which he used for a different purpose.

19 Presson, p. 60.

20 Variorum, p. 400.

21 See Presson, pp. 23-28.

22 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

23 Tatlock, 740n. Small had noticed this detail earlier (p. 166).

24 Tatlock, 740.

25 Tatlock has also noticed this parallel, 740.

26 See Lattimore, Iliad XXII.355-360. See also translations by A. T. Murray (London and New York, 1924), II, p. 481; Theodore Alois Buckley (New York, 1871), p. 412 (literal); Alston Chase and William Perry, Jr. (Boston, 1950), p. 401; Robert Graves (New York, 1959), p. 341; William Smith and Walter Miller (New York, 1944), p. 473. In all these translations, the key expression "of nature and of nations" is absent.

Phyllis Bartlett, "The Heroes of Chapman's Homer,"

RES, XVII (July, 1941), 260, has already pointed out this verbal similarity and also maintains that it is Chapman's addition. If it proves nothing else, it tends to show Shakespeare's familiarity with Chapman's translation--except that Book XXII was not among those translated in 1598. However, private access to the incomplete manuscript is a possibility which cannot be overlooked; especially since Presson finds that the only close parallels between the play and books outside of the eight translated in 1598 are also parallels with details which occur in Book XXII--see Presson, pp. 52-53 and p. 78. Campbell, however, points out that Gentili, who taught in England during the 1580's, also used the expression "the law of nature and of nations." It is possible that the words were in common parlance during Shakespeare's time. However, the fact that it is Hector who is the spokesman of the idea in both Chapman's Homer and Troilus still argues for a closer connection.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I was born August 29, 1929, in Waterbury, Conn. I attended Driggs Grammar School from 1934 to 1942 and Crosby High School from 1942 to 1946. I entered Wesleyan University in 1946 and received my B. A. there in June, 1950. I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1949 and was awarded high distinction in philosophy and distinction in English. In 1950-51, I attended the Columbia graduate school of philosophy for a semester, but was unable to continue because of a lack of funds.

In the succeeding years, I devoted myself to writing short stories, film scripts, and novels, one of which I completed. None of these works was published, and, in order to support myself, I worked as a copywriter, book reviewer, and hotel night auditor. More recently, I began teaching in a tutoring school, and it was through various graduate students I met there that I conceived the idea of returning to graduate school, a decision which I carried out in September, 1962.

I have been married for six years and have one child, a boy, four years of age. After I receive my degree, I intend to devote my time about equally to my scholarly pursuits and to my efforts as a writer of fiction and drama.