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# Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*: A Commentary

by

Lise Maren Signe Mills 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of Political Science

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Lise Maren Signe Mills
#9, 51127, R.R. 255
Spruce Grove, Alberta
T7Y 1A8

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled: **Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*: A Commentary** submitted by **Lise Maren Signe Mills** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Dr. L. Craig (Supervisor)

Dr. Heidi Studer

Dr. Christopher Q. Drummond

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# ABSTRACT

*Troilus and Cressida* is not a play for the sentimental. Those who yearn for a seductive tale of brave warriors heroically defending the honour of fair maidens would be better suited reading something from Harlequin Romance. This thesis explores how, using the ancient story of the Trojan War as his foundation, Shakespeare strips love and glory--the two favorite motivations of men and women in popular romances--of their usual reverence. There are no war heroes, only men slaughtering each other in the service of unmastered, refractory appetites. The "virtuous maids" are, for the most part, wanton and whorish. Faction and disease afflict the armies and individuals of both states; there is treason and sedition, there are traitors, bawds and cuckolds. The cause of these ills is that most prefer the rule of their raging appetites to that of the more constant command of reason. As Shakespeare shows with unblinking realism, the result is no happy ending.

*This work is dedicated to my mother and father.*

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## Chapter One: *Troilus and Cressida*--An Overview and Problems Posed

Set at Troy, *Troilus and Cressida* unfolds amidst the Trojan War. The instigating quarrel is ostensibly the abduction of Helen, a young Grecian queen and wife of Menelaus, carried to Troy by Paris, a Trojan prince. In reply, a Grecian force, composed of Greek royalty and their several armies, are encamped outside Troy's walls and have besieged the city for the past seven years, intent on sacking it.

The play begins with a glimpse of Troilus, the youngest of King Priam's princely sons and brother of Paris. He has just come from battle and is calling to be disarmed. Troilus appears frustrated, distracted, and unconfident, and suggests that he suffers from an inner, "cruel battle" in which he commands neither his heart nor his mind (1.1.3). So disgruntled and dejected is he that he claims he cannot fight for Helen, characterizing that cause as "too starv'd a subject for [his] sword" (93). He attributes his depressed condition to a woman named Cressida. Though consumed by passion for her, Troilus regards her as "stubborn-chaste against all suit", and so depends on the assistance of her uncle, Pandarus, to advance an encounter with her (97). He further reveals that he has tried to mask his affection, primarily from his father and his eldest brother, Hector. It is notable that in this first scene, for Troilus the war between Troy and Greece is overshadowed by a war within himself.

This first scene also introduces Pandarus, who enters with Troilus. He is acting as a go-between for the pair. He too appears frustrated, in his case by Troilus' reaction to something which he has just told him, presumably about Cressida's hesitation. He also complains that he has received only ingratitude for his labours from both Troilus and

Cressida. Pandarus soon departs, vowing no longer to meddle in their affairs (insincerely, as we soon learn.)

Troilus is then met by Aeneas who reports on the status of the battle. Despite his recent claim to have no interest in fighting for Helen, the scene concludes with Troilus leaving with Aeneas to join the 'sporting' combat. This discrepancy between what Troilus says and what he does is curious, and but the first of several such contrasts between what a character says and what he or she does. As a consequence, we are invited to uncover what truly motivates a given character.

In contrast to lovesick Troilus, the initial appearance of Cressida in the next scene shows her as cunning, quick-witted, confident, and endowed with a ready sense of humour. Little is initially indicated about Cressida's family other than her being niece to Pandarus. As we learn later, however, she has a father named Calchas who has defected from the Trojan to the Greek side. He is said to have left Troy on account of something that he has foreseen.

We first see Cressida speaking with a man named Alexander, apparently her servant, in the streets of Troy. Their conversation provides us our initial portrait of Hector and Ajax. Alexander tells of the anger of Hector, a rage, he suggests, that was caused by the "disdain and shame" of being struck down in battle by his nephew, Ajax, a Grecian lord but of mixed Trojan and Greek blood (1.2.35). Alexander describes Ajax in terms which Cressida finds comical: a man composed of so many "crowded humours", who has the parts or joints of seemingly everything, but fails to form a coherent, well-proportioned whole (22).

Their conversation ends as Pandarus arrives and addresses Cressida. Despite his recent avowal to not interfere, Pandarus quickly introduces Troilus into the conversation and spends the remainder of the scene boasting of him. Upon imploring Cressida to observe Troilus among the Trojan soldiers returning from battle, Pandarus argues that Troilus is far superior to all men, including not only his Trojan brothers, but even the most highly-reputed Greek warrior, Achilles, whom Cressida nonetheless insists is Troilus' better. Cressida's responses to Pandarus' second-hand wooing are vague, and Pandarus, interpreting them to mean that she does not fancy Troilus, questions whether she can even distinguish 'best' and 'better' men. This question of qualitative distinctions amongst men, and between men and women, and what properly defines manhood and womanhood, turns out to be a primary theme of the drama. Once Pandarus has left in frustration at her game-playing, Cressida privately reveals that she does love Troilus. Despite her love, however, she asserts that she will never divulge it, citing her belief that love is best when unconsummated; whereas, "Things won are done" (292).

Having introduced the lovers after whom the play is named, the scene shifts to the Grecian camp where the Greeks are meeting in council. Though others are present, only Agamemnon, Nestor and Ulysses speak. The discussion reflects back on their near decade-old failure to fell Troy's walls. Agamemnon attempts to encourage his disheartened fellows by reminding them that adversity and misfortune are inherent in war. Moreover, he argues that such are the means to test their 'constancy', and thus the true mettle or virtue of men. His exhortation is then echoed by Nestor who adds that courage, apparently the true virtue of men, is best revealed in misfortune. Ulysses, by contrast, offers a less reassuring explanation of their failure. He contends that the Greek

force is sick from faction within its own ranks. He attributes this illness to their neglect to adhere to a natural ruling hierarchy he terms "degree" (1.3.83). Degree, he argues at some length, is a ruling principle of the entire cosmos, pertinent to the order or rank of all things, ranging from the motion of the planets to political life. Ulysses' reference to 'sickness' also signals another prominent theme of the play. Disease and illness, figure both literally and metaphorically throughout the play, prompting one to wonder about their causes, what constitutes true health, and why the language of sickness fittingly pervades this story.

Accepting Ulysses' analysis, Agamemnon requests a remedy for the growing ailment. Instead of immediately providing one, however, Ulysses names Achilles as the prime agent causing the discord and, with Nestor adding Ajax, claims that the two no longer make war, but instead stay in their tents and ridicule the Greek leadership. Ulysses also contends that they openly despise the contribution of wisdom and measured calculation in war, favouring force and strength as the primary ingredients of success, and that their behaviour threatens to infect the entire army.

Before Ulysses can propose any cure for this disease, Aeneas, a Trojan commander, interrupts their council and ceremoniously announces a challenge from Hector to "rouse a Grecian that is true in love" to meet him the next day for man-to-man combat (278). Aeneas attributes this duel to Hector's being restless and bored by the current truce. With a promise that the challenge will be answered, Agamemnon secures Aeneas' company to feast before returning to Troy. This first allusion to eating or feasting is but one of many references to a pervasive culinary theme which 'seasons' the play, so to speak. The food theme, like that of disease, is used both literally and

figuratively, and invites the reader to investigate the significance of 'appetite' in this play about love and war.

While the rest depart with Agamemnon and his Trojan guest, Ulysses and Nestor remain behind, whereupon Ulysses proposes his remedy for the factionalism afflicting the Greeks, one which is based on taming Achilles of his overfed pride. Presuming Hector's challenge to be tacitly directed at Achilles, Ulysses' scheme is aimed at preventing Achilles from meeting Hector. He proposes to arrange a rigged lottery so that instead Ajax fights Hector. Thus, whether Ajax wins or loses, the Greeks will still maintain the advantage. If Ajax defeats Hector, they will have succeeded in felling the greatest Trojan hero; lose, and they can still claim to field a better man. Nestor, in agreement, offers to provide Agamemnon with a "taste" of this plan (389). Ulysses' scheme indirectly raises another important subject, the question of who is the true or natural ruler. Ulysses' 'behind-the-scenes' maneuvering is the more striking given that it seems to contradict his recent advocacy of degree. As well, the use of the fixed lottery suggests that effective rule, serving the common good, may require deception.

At 2.1, the action turns to a somewhat different 'faction' in the Greek camp, that between Ajax and Thersites, his supposed servant. Ajax, favouring force, is trying to beat information out of Thersites regarding Aeneas' proclamation. Thersites refuses to help Ajax and instead responds with a barrage of insults. Joined by Achilles and Patroclus, Thersites further subjects them, along with the Greek leaders, to a sampling of his bitter slander. Thersites soon departs with a promise that he will not return but keep himself where 'wit stirs'. Achilles then furnishes Ajax with the proclamation, which, in keeping with Ulysses' plan, informs the Greeks that the challenge from Hector has been put to

lottery. Achilles' version, however, differs from Aeneas', as Achilles claims it is directed to one with "stomach", making no mention of the chivalric conceit concerning one true in love (127). Achilles treats the decree as so much rubbish, and affirms that, had he been chosen, he would have met Hector.

The following scene bears direct comparison with that of the Greek council. Priam, surrounded by his sons, has tabled an offer supposedly from Nestor that proposes peace if Helen is returned. Invited to speak first, Hector initially argues for her release, noting that she is not worth the many Trojan lives lost. He is instantly countered by Troilus who argues most tenaciously for keeping her. Troilus ultimately proposes that she is of value to Troy as a "theme of honour and renown/ A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds" (2.2.200-1). Troilus' defense here of keeping Helen, however, is blatantly inconsistent with his earlier private protest that she is a foolish cause for war. One is left to wonder what Troilus actually does believe. Moreover, in ascribing great worth to Helen, Troilus broaches still another important question raised by the play: the basis of the value (or valuation and evaluation) of things. Throughout the play, one is repeatedly exposed to a variety of perspectives from which characters see or claim to 'know' someone or something. More often than not these perceptions conflict, both between and within individuals, leaving the reader to try to determine what the truth of the matter is. In addition to this analysis, one is further invited to evaluate his or her own valuations.

One of the most puzzling features of this Trojan council scene, and of the whole play, is Hector's strange reversal at the end of it. Despite his having secretly already issued a challenge to 'awaken' the Greeks to resume the war, Hector here first argues

most persuasively for peace and the justness of Helen's return. Accusing both Troilus and Paris of being ruled by their hot-blooded passions rather than reasoned evaluation, Hector maintains that her capture is wrong according to reason, truth, natural and positive law. At the scene's end, however, he does a complete 'about face', arguing that Trojan dignity is higher than any other consideration, and then reveals to the rest the challenge he has already sent to the Greeks. What, then, was the point of his earlier arguments?

Returning to the Greek camp at 2.3, we are provided more evidence of the factionalism Ulysses spoke of as we observe Thersites, seemingly ruled by anger and resentment, privately cursing several Greeks and the war before entering Achilles' tent to entertain his new master. But when Agamemnon and the council members come to speak with Achilles soon after, Achilles feigns illness and refuses to exit his tent. Ulysses, however, enters, apparently confers, and reports back that Achilles has refused to fight. Then, as part of Ulysses' earlier pride-taming plan, attention turns to Ajax, where, following Ulysses' lead, praise and flattery are poured upon him.

Meanwhile Pandarus is observed meeting Paris at 3.1, who with Helen, is listening to harmonious music which he interrupts. Pandarus requests that Paris make excuse for Troilus' absence at dinner that evening should Priam question his truancy. Although Paris openly suspects that Cressida is the cause, Pandarus denies it and persists in claiming that Troilus is merely sick. Despite his suspicions, Paris agrees to make the excuse.

This scene provides the first, and last, look at Helen, the stated cause of the war. Described by a servant as the personification of beauty, Helen's behaviour is child-like and attention seeking. This display, coupled with reports of her teasing and merrily

flirting with Troilus, challenges the merit of warring for her sake and for women like her. Moreover, the emphasis on her beauty again points to the theme of womanhood and womanly excellence. Women are compared in their beauty as men are in their courage. But how important is their beauty, really?

The following scene is the center of the play, wherein we witness the first meeting of Troilus and Cressida. Pandarus has arranged the encounter and, after initial reluctance and skittishness, the two soon prove difficult to separate. Cressida, despite her earlier resolution to "hold off", admits her love; but her affections do not appear as plain as Troilus'. He vows to be true to her even as "truth's authentic author" and will "presume" her constancy to him (3.2.179, 157). For her part, she does not vow to be true in return, but rather to be ever remembered for falsehood if she proves unfaithful. Her behavior seems a mixture of self-conflict and cool cunning. Pandarus, acting as broker to their vows, prays that each will prove true to his and her vows, lest his name ever represent "pitiful goers-between" (199). The two then depart to a bedchamber inside her absent father's house. Troilus' vows of fidelity in this scene focus attention upon another primary theme, as terms related to constancy and 'being true' (i.e. faithful) pervade the play. This theme was first broached during the Greek council scene, as Agamemnon argued that constancy was the best test of manhood, but it acquires heightened importance in the context of this love affair.

While the lovers enjoy their evening, we return to the Greek camp where we meet Calchas who is requesting that, striking off all other debts owed him for his "service" to Greece, Agamemnon have Cressida traded to them in exchange for the Trojan prisoner, Antenor (3.3.1). Although Troy has previously refused to give her up, he contends it will

surely not refuse to exchange her for Antenor due to his import in Trojan affairs. Without him, apparently, Trojan "negotiations all must slack/ Wanting his manage" (24-25). It is puzzling, however, that despite his supposed importance to Trojan affairs, Antenor and his 'good judgement' are never observed at any Trojan council or other discussion of policy. And, if he has already been captured by the time of the Trojan council scene, it is curious that no mention was made of his absence. Be that as it may, accepting the proposal, Agamemnon sends Diomedes to conduct the trade. With respect to Calchas' foresight (presumably the "service" he provided), nowhere in the play is the content of his prophecy revealed.

The exchange plans concluded, action turns to some of the 'medicine' prescribed by Ulysses to cure Achilles of his errant pride. Ulysses instructs the leading Greeks to pass by Achilles and, in contrast to their usual shows of adulation, pay him little respect. Achilles, noticing their strangeness, eagerly questions Ulysses (who intentionally passes by last) concerning this rude treatment. Ulysses proposes that Achilles' fame and fortune are in danger of erosion with his absence from battle. He also notes that men value new deeds, regardless of true merit, over those older and more deserving, and suggests that if Achilles continue his retirement, "lubbers" like Ajax will usurp his high-repute. Thus, Ulysses calls attention to the distinction between reputation and merit.

What is more intriguing, however, is Ulysses' revealing his knowledge of the 'true' reason for Achilles' absence from the war, which again, contrasts with the public explanation spoken of at council: Achilles' is secretly in love with one of Priam's daughters, Polyxena. When Achilles expresses surprise at Ulysses' knowledge of this clandestine affair, Ulysses suggests that such information gathering is the business of a

"watchful state" (195). We, too, must wonder not only how Ulysses knows of this affair, but also why he did not report this reason (which Achilles does not here deny and which later proves true) to the Greek council. Ulysses then departs, but his words appear to have had the desired effect on Achilles who now worries that his reputation and fame are at risk, and so focuses his attention towards combat with Hector. Moreover, Patroclus too is upset at the thought of Achilles losing his renown, and notes that "wounds heal ill that men do give themselves." (228)

Early the next morning prior to the man-to-man combat arranged in response to Hector's challenge, Diomedes, escorted by Paris, is nearing Calchas' house in Troy to trade Antenor for Cressida. Meanwhile, Troilus is awake and preparing to leave for the busy day ahead, despite protests from Cressida to remain. He is then met by Aeneas who has come ahead of the delegation bringing Antenor in order to tell Troilus the disturbing news of Cressida's being traded away. Unlike his tenacious defense of Helen earlier, Troilus' response to the loss of his newly won mistress is strangely tame. Offering no 'knightly' defense of her, Troilus instead shows a conspicuous passivity to this arrangement made by Priam and Troy. We are obliged to question his surprising willingness to have her bartered to the enemy. Troilus then departs with Aeneas, leaving Cressida to be informed of her fate by Pandarus. Pandarus is very upset at the news and appears to blame Cressida for the trade. His show of great concern for Troilus and none for his own niece highlights the question of what Pandarus' motivation is for helping Troilus win Cressida.

After speaking with Paris, Troilus returns (in 4.4) and informs Cressida that she must leave, but promises that he will infiltrate the Greek camp nightly to visit her if she

remains true. Cressida promises to be faithful, but only after accusing him of doubting her. Troilus assures her that his doubts derive not from his view of her character, but from his lack of merit compared to the 'virtuous' Greeks, and his fears that she will be tempted despite herself. It is notable that prior to their consummation, Troilus simply projected her fidelity, whereas here he seems to doubt it. Forbidden by the urgency of diplomatic mission to share a long farewell, both exchange tokens of their love. He gives her his sleeve, and she gives him her glove. Stating that he will be true to her, as being true is his self-proclaimed "vice", he presents her to Diomedes (100). The scene concludes with the signal of Hector's trumpet marking the coming duel, upon which, as Aeneas excitedly announces, rides the glory of Troy.

Awaiting the arrival of Hector in the following scene, the Greeks are first introduced to Cressida, who arrives with Diomedes. Unlike her earlier show of grief and gloom, she merrily greets the Greek commanders with kisses and sharp wit. While most seemed charmed by her, Ulysses is not as he reads her as opportunistic and sexually wanton. Soon after, Hector and his Trojan party arrive and both sides prepare for combat. In the meantime, Agamemnon notices a Trojan who appears forlorn and woeful and asks Ulysses about him. Identifying Troilus, Ulysses describes him as a "true knight" and Troy's second hope after Hector (4.5.96). He claims to have learned about him at Ilium, Priam's palace, during a private conversation with Aeneas who apparently knows Troilus inside and out. It is notable that Ulysses' information gathering seems to extend to his diplomatic embassies to Troy.

Turning back to the duel, the fight is brief and ends without injury to either man. Acknowledging that Ajax is the son of his aunt, Hector refuses to continue fighting lest

he shed any of her Trojan blood. Hector's refusal to fight, despite granting the rules of engagement to his opponent, raises another significant puzzle. Hector boasts throughout of his commitment to honour and is renowned for personifying the honourable man. However, by rejecting Ajax's preference to continue the fight, he effectively dishonours the chivalric code. Thus, the reader is left to question whether Hector truly merits his reputation as an honourable man. Hector is then invited to meet and feast with the Greek commanders. He then meets Achilles, who greets him not with courtesy but with a provocative verbal 'map' of where he shall strike him dead. On the way to feast at Agamemnon's tent, Troilus asks Ulysses to show him to Calchas' tent after dining. Ulysses agrees, and, although Troilus has sought to hide his true intent to see Cressida, one may suspect that Ulysses somehow knows of Troilus' feelings for her, as he immediately asks Troilus about whether she left a woeful lover in Troy.

In the next scene, Achilles is awaiting Hector's visit to feast with him. A letter arrives from Queen Hecuba, Priam's wife, thwarting his battle plans by reminding him of an oath he has sworn. The letter also includes a token from her daughter, whom Achilles refers to as his "fair love" (5.1.39). This letter confirms that Ulysses was correct when earlier he contended that Achilles' war absence was due to his love for Polyxena. Though the contents of this vow remain unknown, Achilles declares that he will abide by it and forget his "great purpose", presumably to fight Hector (37). To be true to Polyxena, he will sacrifice fame and honour, and even allow the Greeks to fail in their siege if necessary. The renewal of his vow also suggests an apparent limitation to Ulysses' pride-taming plan. Despite having initially awakened Achilles to war, Ulysses' plan has been obstructed by the chance arrival of Hecuba's letter. This incident is especially significant

because it illustrates unforeseeable problems that can compromise even the most well reasoned designs.

Agamemnon's dinner concluded, Troilus, accompanied by Ulysses, follows after Diomedes who, as Ulysses suggests, is going to Calchas' tent. Thersites, also trails behind alone, contending that "lechery" and incontinence pervades everyone and everything (5.2.193). Arriving at Calchas' tent, Troilus happens to observe Cressida tease, caress, and flirt with Diomedes, and he struggles not to erupt in anger as she easily discards her vows of fidelity along with his love token. Her infidelity culminates when Diomedes departs and she expressly disowns Troilus as her lover: "Troilus, farewell!/ One eye looks on thee/ But with my heart the other eye doth see" (106-107). Once more alluding to the subject of womanhood, it is curious that Cressida blames her fall on the general fault of her sex. For his part, Troilus practically implodes as his very sense of order appears to be collapsing. We witness a harrowing clash between what he wants to believe versus the truth. His ideal shattered, Troilus fills with fury and hate towards Diomedes and vows to slaughter him at all costs. This scene also calls attention to Ulysses' behaviour. If Ulysses knows what Diomedes and Cressida are up to, which seems very likely, why does he want Troilus to see the truth about Cressida?

Back in Troy, Hector is preparing for war. While arming he is urged by his wife Andromache, his sister Cassandra, and Priam not to fight this day on account of prophetic visions of doom befalling both himself and Troy. Hector, however, heeds no one, and insists that he is bound by his honour to fight. When Troilus arrives, armed and vowing bloody vengeance, Hector tells him to disarm, and is shocked by Troilus' "savage" behaviour (5.3.48). Troilus, however, refuses and states that the only thing that will keep

him from battle will be his own "ruin" (58). Unlike Troilus' earlier reluctance to do battle, stemming from his own inner conflict, Troilus is now unified in what seems a bloodlust for revenge. Prior to leaving for battle, a sickly Pandarus arrives with a letter from Cressida. No longer mesmerized by love, Troilus reads but dismisses her words as meaningless and tears it up. Recalling the subject of disease, it is striking that Pandarus for some unexplained reason now exhibits failing physical health and complains of being besieged by many ailments.

Observing the final battle, which occupies much of the remainder of the play, the reader is given a first-hand look at the heroes at war. Thersites reports that neither Achilles nor Ajax are fighting but keep to their tents. The Greeks have lost several important men, including Patroclus, and according to Agamemnon are on the verge of losing the war if reinforcements are not found. According to Nestor, many of the losses are due to Hector, who has slaughtered several Greeks, his "[d]exterity so obeying appetite" (5.5.27). It is curious that here Hector's "appetite" seems to be driven more by bloodlust than by honour. Ulysses then arrives with uplifting news that Achilles and Ajax are arming and calling for revenge. Achilles is vowing vengeance on Hector, whom he believes has killed Patroclus, and Ajax seeks to kill Troilus, also to avenge a friend's death. Moreover, similar to Nestor's description of Hector, Ulysses adds that Troilus has performed "[m]ad and fantastic execution" as if ruled by "lust" in "spite of cunning" (38, 41).

Consumed by revenge, Achilles challenges Hector to combat. He is, however, quickly rendered helpless by Hector who then spares his life. Scorning Hector for his "courtesy", Achilles attributes his poor form to his lack of battle exercise and warns that

Hector will "hear" from him again (5.6.15, 18). Hector then spots a Greek in beautiful armour, and sets off in pursuit of this "beast" whom he admittedly hunts only for its "hide" (31, 30).

Achilles, meanwhile, instructs his Myrmidon soldiers to seek none but Hector and to strike him dead. While Achilles hunts him, we return to Hector who has managed to chase down and dispatch his well-adorned prey and, having undone its armour, disparages the discrepancy between its fine exterior and its ugly, rotten, "putrefied core" (5.8.1). Hector then disarms, noting that his sword has had its "fill of blood and death" (4). Unarmed, he is met by Achilles and his Myrmidons. Despite his request that Achilles forego the advantage of finding him unarmed and exhausted, Achilles denies him mercy and orders his execution. Hector is quickly slain by the Myrmidons. Achilles then instructs them to boast of 'his' achievement at felling Hector while he drags Hector's body through the battlefield. Again, one is reminded of the disjunction between reputation and merit, as Achilles is honoured for Hector's death despite not having been able to kill Hector himself.

In the final scene, having heard that Hector is dead, Agamemnon hopes that the war will soon end. Also, the Greeks are uplifted and encouraged at Achilles' apparent feat, something which may highlight a benefit to reputation, and even false reputation as in this case. For the Trojans, Troilus reports the sad news and provides his own ominous portent that the loss of Hector will "[s]care Troy out of itself" and paralyze the city (5.10.21). Calling for their return to Troy, Troilus vows revenge, claiming that at first light he will commence his hunt for the `murderer' responsible for his brother's death. He

then suggests that the march home be comforted by thoughts of revenge, thoughts which will hide their inner woe.

The play concludes with Pandarus, who appears sicklier than ever. He comes to speak with Troilus prior to marching for Troy. Troilus, however, gives him no audience, but instead curses him to be forever pursued by "ignomy and shame" (33). Left alone, Pandarus' monologue concludes the play. He disparages his disease, and his fate as the poor, despised agent who receives no thanks for his labors. His very last words, and thus those of the play promise a bequeathing of his "diseases" (57). This conclusion is quite puzzling and unsettling. After a bloody battle scene, which features the death of one famed hero by another of equal renown, the reader is left with a plagued pander speaking of traitors and bawds, and willing his diseases on everyone. There is no conclusion to the war, and no victory or loss attributed to either side. Instead, one is left to contemplate the significance of why the play 'ends', not with health or resolution, but with the theme of 'dis-ease'.

Sufficiently thought about, *Troilus and Cressida* is a very perplexing play, and those puzzles which so far have here been brought to the surface reflect only a part of its many curiosities. Based on a sampling of what others have said, many commentators agree that the play is enigmatic and difficult to understand and often speak of it as an intellectual or philosophic play[1]. However, while agreeing that the play is complex, many disagree in their assessments of what its main difficulties are. Indeed, one commentator was so perplexed that he actually re-wrote the play in an attempt to 'mend' it of its

[1] Stanley Wells notes that it is "Shakespeare's most esoteric play." (214)

'faults' and satisfy his own desire as to what Shakespeare meant[2]. Others, however, (including this writer) do not assume that Shakespeare made errors, but that the 'problems' he poses are intentional and expertly choreographed; and, that serious investigation into them will reward the interested reader with deeper insight into his teaching. Three authors in particular--Allan Bloom, Graham Bradshaw, and Jane Adamson--favour this latter interpretation, and have greatly helped the present writer to gain a deeper appreciation of the play.

While describing *Troilus and Cressida* as one of Shakespeare's bleakest and most baffling, Bloom maintains that the key to unwinding its difficulties is to see the play in light of wisdom or reason. Shakespeare appears to be challenging the ideals of love and glory as the "two greatest and most interesting human motives"[3]. Although always attractive, their grand splendor is "dimmed" by the "corrosive of reason", the result being that reason is depicted as the sole thing left "permanently available to man" that is "noble and choiceworthy". However, despite the constancy of reason, few prefer it to the more 'lively' desires, and would rather applaud men of war and women of beauty than those truly wise.

Like Bloom, Adamson, too, finds the play puzzling and demanding of its audience, and claims that this 'stirring' of the mind is not accidental but integral to understanding the play. *Troilus and Cressida*, "persistently resists one's attempts to sum up its potencies and define them lucidly, even as it continually fires one to try"[4]. The play presents a kind of "interrogative thrust...[and an]...intense *questioning* energy" (74). It accomplishes this dynamic through the use of 'constant' contrasts, juxtapositions, ironies

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[2] John Dryden, *Troilus and Cressida, Or, Truth Found Too Late.*
[3] Allan Bloom, "Troilus and Cressida," *Love and Friendship*, 348.

and double meanings, and through conflict which is the "informing principle of the play" (10)[5]. Because the play invites (and even compels) the reader to examine it from several perspectives, she cautions against attempting to make sense of it by forcing reductive and simplistic conclusions about a character's motivations. Indeed, to appreciate fully this "wittily and wittingly designed" play, Adamson suggests that one must practice a kind of "imaginative patience" and maintain an "agility of mind" to be receptive to the "frictions and contradictions" which saturate it (10-11). However, while heeding this warning against making premature judgements about someone or something, Adamson also contends that the play illustrates a need or tendency for human beings to try to make sense of things; to find order and "meaning and value" in the world around them (165).

In his essay, "The Genealogy of Ideals", Bradshaw also claims that the play's 'problems' and 'inconsistencies' are intentional. Reflecting on the problem of valuation specifically, he suggests that *Troilus and Cressida* makes valuations "problematic by design"[6]. And that the play has been crafted to "frame and generate" disagreement regarding which characters generate sympathy, and which condemnation (131). Like Adamson, he notes that while undermining the notion that human values are objective, the play turns on its own "seemingly reductive, terminal energies" to expose a "human *need* for value and significance"[7] (161). Thus, the only objective value seems to be this

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[4] Jane Adamson, *Troilus and Cressida*, xi.

[5] In similar fashion, L.C. Knights suggests that Shakespeare "directly involves" the "spectators" in the play, that it is "our confusion that largely contributes to the ambiguousness intrinsic to the play." (78) And, citing that the audience would have some preconceptions about the characters: "[Shakespeare] weaves these preconceptions into the texture of the play by the simple device of now appearing to endorse them, now turning them upside down. We are rarely quite clear about the judgements we are required to make." (78)

[6] Graham Bradshaw, "The Genealogy of Ideals," *Shakespeare's Skepticism*, 132.

[7] Using Thersites as his example, Bradshaw notes that as we observe Thersites' apparent pleasure at 'unpacking' or reducing human aims to the lowest motives (i.e., lechery, folly), we are appalled at him. The play's ultimate skeptic is not pictured as noble or beautiful, but as a "physical and emotional cripple" (141).

human necessity to *have* objective valuation, and to attach meaning and significance to things.

Of the puzzles and themes noted, some tend to arise more often than others, thereby suggesting that a careful exploration of them may contribute to one's understanding of the play. One of the most pervasive is the theme of conflict as it occurs both within, and between, individuals. Most often, any peaceful truce or harmonious co-existence, whether in the soul or within and between states, is disrupted as desires and wills conflict and compete for supremacy. Constancy and consistency is rare, and if achieved at all, is not long-lasting. Very often what a character says (and what is said about them) or does contradicts his or her behaviour at a different time. Indeed, the only constant seems to be inconstancy. As one struggles to make sense of these contradictions, the play persists in raising several other pertinent (and permanent) questions. One of the most central concerns the problem of rule: what (or who) should properly be in command. This problem points to a related question concerning what determines better (and worse) men and women, and what distinguishes between men and women. And, the prominence of the two other themes already noted--food and disease--further appears to relate strongly to this primary question of rule.

This thesis will address some of the puzzles highlighted, with the aim of discovering a basis upon which to integrate the identified themes into a more coherent whole, thereby revealing (at least partially) Shakespeare's deeper meaning. A promising means to achieve this goal is to focus on the human body and its relationship to (the) mind. Most of the characters of this play appear to be ruled by bodily appetites, and often seek recognition (and are recognized) for things manifested physically (i.e., courage in

battle for men, physical beauty for women); by contrast, reason is most often relegated to a position of servant to the appetites. And, it appears that this 'body over mind' rule is what contributes most to the failings of many of the characters and to the political problems of both Troy and Greece.

The following chapter will examine this particular version of a 'mind-body problem' by investigating in detail all of the main characters. This chapter is the longest because it is the primary means whereby to examine this problem in a substantial way. It also serves to add substance to the other themes to be explored in the remaining two chapters, one dealing with the man-woman distinction, the other with the prominent 'food' and 'disease' themes.

## Chapter Two: Puzzling People

Many of the characters in the play are puzzling. One may initially appear honourable, another beautiful, yet subsequent exposure will reveal a far less heroic or attractive image. Conversely, those that seem low or unimportant may contribute crucially towards understanding the deeper coherence of the play. This analysis will examine the following characters: the Prologue, Troilus, Cressida, Pandarus, Hector, Ulysses, Thersites, and Achilles.

### 1) A Prologue in Arms

This play begins with a character in armour, suited it claims "in like conditions as our argument" (Prologue, 25). Because the "argument" it introduces is the "quarrel" between Troy and Greece, one may gather that it is armed for war, although it does not specify whether for offence, defense, or both.

The prologue seems to be alerting the reader to keep an eye out for discord. Adamson suggests that the prologue provides the first "shock" of the conflict which permeates the play. As one example, she notes the sense of collision implicit in the Prologue's' description of the Greeks' "vow" to "ransack" Troy (7-8). Here the language seems at odds with itself as the term 'vow' conjures a sense of a "holy and safeguarding purpose" and brutally clashes (and crashes) against the dark "desecrating violence of 'ransack'." (12) The prologue, she continues, casts a 'shadow' of violence over the entire play by presenting:

> an image or a possibility of powerful energies
> surging forward to be met by something that

> impedes or blocks them, or thrusts against them
> with corresponsive force--an image of aims
> being checked or obstructed by a barricade or
> an opposing will (12).

The term "ransack" (meaning to loot or pillage) also calls into question the 'reliability' of the prologue's report as to the true cause of this quarrel. Some of these princes may have found Menelaus' cause fortunate, and have come to Troy, not to save Helen, but to plunder the city's riches. Moreover, this excuse may provide insight into what the prologue means when it acknowledges itself to be "suited" to the argument, but is not "arm'd" in "confidence [o]f authour's pen or actor's voice" (23-24). As the men of Greece may have come to Troy to serve their own private interests (which seems more the true 'quarrel' as the play unfolds), the prologue speaks as if it, too, disregards the intent of its authour and actor. Noting that the audience will judge the play according to what pleases them: "Like, or find fault: do as your pleasures are", here the prologue may also be inclined to do what *it* pleases.

The prologue is also the first to use the 'food' imagery of the play when it speaks of "broils" and digestion; references which may infer that such "arm'd" arguments are perpetual in nature. Beginning in the middle, this war has been 'broiling' for the past seven years, and, at the end of the play it continues still. Interestingly, the reference to digestion implies a kind of moderation or limit: the drama apparently will deal with what "*may be* digested in a play." Perhaps this suggests that it will not attempt to glut the audience's imagination, but will present something that can be absorbed or understood?

Lastly, Bradshaw adds that the armour is a clue that to understand the play, one must disarm or unmask the appearance of someone or something to reveal a somewhat less grandiose reality:

> The arm'd Prologue is here supplying the first examples of this play's most characteristic ironic strategy: the signalled inflation invites us to deflate, to scrutinise and unpack some meaner reality (128).

Heeding this advice, the reader is challenged to see beyond the appearance of a character or action, and unmask what may be "meaner" or far less appealing truths.

**2) Troubled Troilus**

After the prologue the first character we meet is Troilus who is distracted from fighting the Greeks due to a war raging within himself:

> Why should I war without the walls of Troy,
> That find such cruel battle here within?
> Each Trojan that is master of his heart
> Let him to field: Troilus, alas, hath none. (1.1.1-5)

The core of Troilus' frustration seems to be that he cannot master or rule his own heart. So consumed is he with thoughts of Cressida that he cannot concentrate on the real war at hand, which is to keep the Greeks from ransacking Troy. Thus, the first problem posed is that of self-rule.

Troilus also appears to be very sensitive about the claims of manhood. In response to not being able to master his own heart, he castigates himself for being cowardly and "weaker than a woman's tear" (9). Later, when Aeneas asks why he is not in battle,

Troilus responds with a self-proclaimed "woman's answer" which apparently is empty of meaning (106). And, he refers to himself as "womanish" for not being in battle (107). Judging from Troilus, manhood is largely defined on the battlefield, and the man who is not a warrior is weak and womanly. He further seems unsure of himself as a lover, dependent on Pandarus to court Cressida for him. Like a shy teenager fearful of rejection, he is shy and awkward in love. Envisioning a great, un-navigable gulf separating him from Cressida, he is paralyzed without his go-between.

With respect to the war, Troilus initially presents an unflattering view of the current quarrel while musing to himself after Pandarus' departure:

> Peace, you ungracious clamours! Peace, rude sounds!
> Fools on both sides, Helen must needs be fair
> When with your blood you daily paint her thus.
> I cannot fight upon this argument;
> It is too starv'd a subject for my sword. (89-93)

His opinion here suggests that fighting for Helen reflects only folly and senseless bloodshed. And, when Aeneas arrives with news that Menelaus has hurt Paris, Troilus' mocks that the quarrel is merely that between cuckold and cuckold maker. However, showing an obvious discrepancy between his private speech and public deed, Troilus returns with Aeneas to the battle only moments after this critique to enjoy the "good sport" to be had in battle (113). This puzzling action perhaps suggests that Troilus is not very interested in the merit or substance of the quarrel over Helen. Having acknowledged that she is not worth the "appetite" of his sword, we are left to wonder if simply the goal of victory makes the fight worthwhile for Troilus. This image of sport suggests that the deadly 'game' of war is fought primarily to win honour and glory.

Although we do not hear from Troilus again until the Trojan council, he is the subject of the next scene as Pandarus endeavors to woo Cressida on his behalf. Pandarus claims that Troilus has not been "himself" lately (1.2.72). This squares with Troilus' own complaints to Pandarus of a "cruel battle here within" himself. In contrast to Troilus' earlier self-depreciation, however, Pandarus' description of him returning from battle depicts a brave, young man whose sword is "bloodied" and "helm more hacked than Hector's" (236-237). Thus, in contrast to his awkwardness in love, Troilus appears to harbor no trepidation as a warrior.

In startling contrast to his earlier charge that Helen is not a worthy cause of war, when next we see Troilus he voices her strongest defense. During the Trojan council Troilus suggests that keeping her is essential to Trojan masculinity. Moreover, his idea of manhood, apparently, is one in which 'impotent' reason does not figure prominently:

> Nay, if we talk of reason,
> Let's shut our gates and sleep: manhood and honour
> Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their
> thoughts
> With this cramm'd reason: reason and respect
> Make livers pale, and lustihood deject. (2.2.46-50)

For Troilus, reason belongs in the realm of effeminate cowards who prefer slumber to action and is not a feature of the true man[8]. Recalling the theme of what it is to be a man, bowing always to reason here is viewed as incompatible with manhood, while courage is most vital. Troilus' argument, however, has several flaws. Its first is that Troilus necessarily employs 'reasons' in his argument against reason, which seems only to

[8] Troilus' admonishment of Helenus (his "brother priest") for being of "dreams and slumbers" (37), and for using effeminate reason, may tacitly hint of religious impiety--religion, like reason, may not be for real men, but for those who are cowards and not interested in honour.

demonstrate a natural superiority of reason. And, only moments after mocking reason, Troilus suddenly sings it praises when he reminds the council that they are ultimately responsible for Helen's abduction. He now defends reason by arguing that returning Helen would mock the "issue" of their "proper wisdoms" (90)[9].

Troilus further counters Hector's claim that Helen is not worth the high cost of keeping her (i.e., Trojan lives), by suggesting that value is subjective to the valuer:

> What's aught but as 'tis valued? (53)

According to Troilus, value is subject to no objective measure. Helen, then, may not be worth much on her own, but she is valuable in so far as she provides an ideal for manhood in Troy:

> She is a theme of honour and renown,
> A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,
> Whose present courage may beat down our foes,
> And fame in time to come canonize us; (200-203)

Troilus argues that Helen represents Troy's opportunity to cement itself in history as the land of brave and honoured men. However, once more, his argument seems paradoxical. If value is merely subjective (which is his 'objective' rule), so too would his own argument be entirely relative, and valuable only to those who favour it. Nor need her value remain constant; hence, were they to give her up now, they would not necessarily be guilty of inconsistency (as he tacitly claims, 89-93). Moreover, if Trojan honour and glory (which appears to represent what he thinks is the good of Troy) is what gives Helen value, this then is his objective measure. And presumably he believes his opinions to be

[9] Also, his example of marriage (62-69) seems tacitly to imply that he favours reason to his will in

true, while others' (like those of 'cowardly' Helenus) are false. Thus, as his argument against reason seemed to show the necessity of reason, his argument for subjective value instead seems to support an objective standard.

Regarding the discrepancy between Troilus' earlier disdain of fighting for Helen, and his most recent claim that she is a worthy theme for Troy, a distinction perhaps may be made between what he thinks privately, and what he believes is the responsible position to avow publicly. His private opinion expressed earlier, that she is not personally worthy of honour and sacrifice, may be intended to apply only to his own effort. But in so far as the glory of Troy is implicated, he has had to subordinate his own private opinion to pursue this higher goal.

Turning back to Troilus' love life, the valour with which he confronted his brothers at council is nowhere to be found when next we see him anxiously anticipating his first encounter with Cressida. Waiting outside her home for his chaperone Pandarus to guide him to her, much of his behaviour resembles that of a teenager about to embark on his first date. So fearful is he that he compares the occasion to the soul's journey from the land of the living to the underworld realm of the dead:

> I stalk about her door
> Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
> Staying for waftage. O be thou my Charon,
> And give me swift transportance to those fields
> Where I may wallow in the lily beds
> Propos'd for the deserver! (3.2.7-12)

According to the standard 'mythology', once a soul has crossed the river Styx, it cannot return to the land of the living. And, the underworld can be a very hellish place. A soul

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determining his relationship with Cressida (more on page 31).

may land in the Elysian fields of paradise, or be sent to Tartarus, a nightmarish realm of torture and misery. There are also in-between regions, where the soul can reside in a state of nothingness, or of forgetfulness. Thus, whether Troilus realizes what he is saying, love may be heavenly, torturous, or be numbing. And so we may wonder what condition Troilus will find himself after meeting Cressida.

Troilus' imagery may also provide another clue regarding his inner faction and his earlier allusion to himself as womanish and cowardly: he seems to be sexually inexperienced. For example, his image of Hades implies that he is travelling into virgin territory and will be forever changed. In her orchard awaiting Pandarus to bring Cressida to him, Troilus anxiously anticipates their encounter with words redolent with sexual longing and curiosity:

> 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 palate tastes indeed
> Love's thrice-repured nectar? (3.2.16-20)

He is "giddy", and must refer to his imagination (not his memory) when questioning "what" it will be like to taste love's nectar. He also questions whether the "capacity of [his] ruder powers" (which appear to be his sexual abilities) will be sufficient to manage the occasion, and if his future pleasures will be muted by the experience (23). Embraced by "passion" and a "feverous pulse", Troilus remarks that he is powerless at the thought of her, and that his "sense" has been enchanted or bewitched by Cressida (34, 35).

Troilus' allusion to "taste", "sweet", and "relish" also partakes of the food theme which pervades the play. Here, his appetite for Cressida suggests that he longs to satisfy

his sexual desire. Earlier, he also expressed sexual longing in response to Aeneas' comment of the "good sport" to be had in battle. Troilus counters that 'better sport' would be had at home "if 'would I might' were 'may'." (1.1.114) There, he was referring to the more relished "sport" of lovemaking that he could be enjoying with Cressida, if she would have him. Thus, Troilus would rather spend his time in the arms of a beautiful woman than in the bloody arms of battle.

When Troilus finally does meet Cressida, he can barely contain himself and greets her with a passionate kiss. After his initial trepidation he easily offers her words of love and portrays himself as a plain, honest and true lover (although his love speeches are anything but plain):

> Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can
> say worst shall be a mock for his truth, and what
> truth can speak truest, not truer than Troilus. (95-97)

He presents himself as a knight of truth and constancy, one whose love will forever stand as a testament to true faith. However, while he boasts of himself as the true and constant man, he is not always true to himself, as his earlier inability to master himself perhaps best demonstrated[10].

Despite several indications that fidelity is not one of Cressida's strengths, Troilus seems to want to attribute the same constancy to her:

> 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 beauty's outward, with a mind
> That doth renew swifter than blood decays!

[10] He even referred to himself as a "traitor" (1.1.31).

> 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 winnow'd purity in love--
> How were I then uplifted! But alas,
> I am as true as truth's simplicity,
> And simpler than the infancy of truth. (156-167)

Without any special grounds for assuming that Cressida will prove true, Troilus' words resonate with hope that she will be as he envisions. But, his speech also hints of an undercurrent of doubt regarding her fidelity when he speaks of 'presumption', "persuasion", and 'convincing'. He also questions whether any woman can live up to such standards when he asks "Oh that I thought it could be in a woman--". Moreover, his last remark suggests that he wishes for this idealized woman, but "alas" that she cannot exist. Once more he seems to be in conflict (perhaps unconsciously) as part of him wants to believe in her ability to be true, while another remains to be convinced. This shadow of doubt may also be related to his observance of Helen's behaviour. Having been abducted from her husband and home, she is not faithful and grieving for Menelaus and Greece, but is living very merrily in Troy as the wife of Paris.

Troilus' hopes and presumptions regarding Cressida, perhaps more than anything else, suggests that he wishes to believe in high ideals[11]. Lacking prior romantic experience, he has created an imaginary ideal of what a woman should be. In essence, she should be just like him (or as he sees himself) and match his "integrity and truth". This mode of thought seems further to, albeit obliquely, reflect his value relativism. Like Helen, whom he argued had engaged Trojan glory and manhood, Troilus will try to inflate Cressida to fulfil his ideal of womanhood.

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[11] Bloom suggests that for Troilus, "[b]elief or faith is his profoundest longing" (369).

Their dreamy night over, Troilus is up and about early and, appearing like a new man, is ready to leave Cressida and get on with the "busy day" (4.2.8). He no longer resembles the love-struck, un-mastered youth who was so consumed with Cressida that he could neither fight nor eat without distracting thoughts of her. One is left to wonder whether, his appetite satiated, he is now ready to get on with the business of war. Or, perhaps bedding Cressida so quickly has caused his all-consuming amour to lose some of its gloss. This impression grows as Aeneas arrives with news of her exchange. Learning that his newly acquired mistress is about to be traded to the enemy, Troilus does not act as her knight in shining armour and demand that she stay. This is quite puzzling. He will argue for Helen, a woman to whom he is not intimately connected (and seems privately to disdain), but not for the woman he has only just elected to love for all time? One reason for this may be the conditions upon which Cressida is going to the Greeks. Diomedes has not kidnapped her, the exchange has been concluded by "Priam and the general state of Troy." (4.2.69-70) Therefore, to challenge this conclusion would surely not be honourable, and disobeying the rule of his father and state would bring dishonour not only to Troilus, but to his father and all of Troy. At council, much of Troilus' argument was aimed at countering anything that could shame and dishonour Troy. Moreover, the idea of bringing shame to Priam, in particular, may have been the catalyst which spurred Troilus to provide his strong defense of the war (cf. 2.2.25-32). The idea of defending Cressida may be even less palatable given that she is the daughter of a traitor who, presumably, is stained with much dishonour. And, this may also explain why earlier he spoke of hiding his feelings of her from Hector and Priam. Perhaps they may have disproved of a relationship between them due to her traitorous lineage. We may further

note that Troilus has never spoken of marriage[12] to Cressida, despite having waxed rhetorical about marriage in the abstract at the Trojan council:

> I take today a wife, and my election
> Is led on in the conduct of my will:
> My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,
> Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores
> Of will and judgement--how may I avoid,
> Although my will distaste what it elected,
> The wife I choose? There can be no evasion
> To blench from this and to stand firm by honour. (2.2.62-69)

Fuelled by his senses, "will" and "judgement" are posed as two, apparently opposite, shores between which man must navigate. That Troilus describes himself to be led by his will, not by his judgement or reason, suggests that his affection for Cressida is also conducted by his will or pleasure. However, if a relationship with her would be forbidden by his family, and marriage, of course, out of the question, he is tacitly abiding by his judgement. He will maintain Cressida as his private lover, but will not publicly avow his love.

The thread of doubt initially observed in Troilus' speech regarding Cressida's faith is again reflected in his speech prior to her exchange. He no longer seems prepared to grant presumptions or persuasions that she will be true, but now almost openly doubts her ability to maintain her vow[13]. However, rather than suppose that she will fall of her own free will, he contends that she may do so despite herself due to the apparent superior blandishments of the Greeks (cf. 4.4.75-87). Noting that his merit will pale in comparison to the exceptionally natured and nurtured Grecian youths, Troilus suspects that Cressida will lose control and be a "devil to [herself]" when faced with their overpowering

[12] Marriage is further discussed in the chapter on "Manhood and Womanhood".

'virtues', and the even more potent "dumb-discoursive devil" which lurks behind them (93, 89). Thus, Troilus seems to be providing both Cressida and himself an excuse should she fall. Instead of Cressida herself (his ideal) being at fault, he will instead name dark, overpowering seduction as the culprit.

When Cressida questions whether Troilus will be true to her, Troilus fancies himself to be resigned to such a fate:

> Who, I?--alas, it is my vice, my fault.
> Whiles others fish with craft for great opinion,
> I with great truth catch mere simplicity;
> Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,
> With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare. (L.100-104)

Ironically, while in one breath professing to be incurably afflicted by his "vice" of truth, once more Troilus' speech is far from plain. Were he to speak nothing but the plain, literal truth, he could not adorn his words with any poetic tropes, nor romantic metaphor, or other means of beautifying speech[14]. Instead, Troilus looks more like a young lover who may be using the rhetoric of fidelity and constancy to woo Cressida.

Prior to Hector's challenge, we are presented with what turns out to be a startlingly accurate description of Troilus by Ulysses, who cites Aeneas as his source:

> The youngest son of Priam, a true knight;
> Not yet mature, yet matchless; firm of word,
> Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue;
> Not soon provok'd, nor, being provok'd, soon calm'd;
> His heart and hand both open and both free;

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[13] Again, perhaps he is thinking about the ease with which Helen settled into her new circumstances.
[14] This raises the question of whether one can even speak about love in plain, or rational terms. Imagine simply trying to define what the term "love" would mean without recourse to adorning and adoring speech. Or, envision what poetry would look and sound like if one replaced its 'gilded' words with 'just the facts'. One may further wonder whether love and reason and truth could ever go together. Love, especially that between men and women, is mostly a matter of the heart--not of the mind. Moreover, often the two are quite distinct from each other (i.e., eloping with a lover versus an arranged marriage).

> For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows,
> Yet gives he not till judgement guide his bounty,
> Nor dignifies an impare thought with breath;
> Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;
> For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes
> To tender objects, but he in heat of action
> Is more vindicative than jealous love.
> They call him Troilus, and on him erect
> A second hope as fairly built as Hector. (4.5.96-109)

Although many of these attributes have yet to be demonstrated in the play, Troilus has already displayed some. Most notably, his hopeful love vows to Cressida suggest that he is liberal and generous with his love. Evidence that he shows what he thinks may explain why Paris and Aeneas (whoever else) know about his feelings for Cressida, despite Troilus' attempts to hide his woe in "seeming gladness" (1.1.39). However, his prior actions seem to cast doubt on his "free" heart and good judgement. He began this play enslaved by passion, not judgement. Perhaps, Ulysses' description is what Troilus would look like as "himself", that is, were he not plagued by his feelings for Cressida. Thus, the power of love may be what is compromising his ability to master himself.

When Troilus observes Cressida's wanton display with Diomedes a short while later, he plunges again into inner conflict. Here, we witness a battle between truth (the proof of his eyes and ears), and the hope or desire of his heart to believe in her[15]. Although earlier he seemed prepared to grant her leniency on account of overwhelming powers of temptation, in reality he cannot, despite hearing her request that Diomedes "tempt [her] no more to folly." (5.2.18). Initially, he struggles to separate Cressida into two contrary beings: his (true) Cressida versus "Diomed's [false] Cressida" (136).

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[15] Bloom suggests that this display presents the "epic culmination of the play's deepest theme, the quarrel between desire and reason." (369)

> Instance, O instance! strong as Pluto's gates:
> Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven.
> Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself:
> The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolv'd, and
> loos'd;
> And with another knot, five-fingered-tied,
> The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,
> The fragments, scraps, the bits, and greasy relics
> Of her o'er-eaten faith are given to Diomed. (152-159)

Try as he might, his desire to be constant to truth will not allow him to idealize and idolize her without some "image of [her] affected merit." (2.2.61) Ironically, Ulysses' description that "judgement" guide Troilus may truly lead him here. The truth is that Cressida is false, and when faced with this 'objective fact' he can no longer love her. In the end he simply cannot deny the truth of her infidelity, despite his professed value relativism. In the end he dismisses her as "revolted fair" (5.2.185).

Love's sweet nectar having soured, Troilus begins to transform before our eyes. Compared to his earlier, oddly sedate reaction to her exchange, and his seeming resignation to fate, Troilus now begins to take on a more sinister appearance. Tasting his hate for Diomedes, he promises to challenge him no matter if Diomedes were the "devil" himself (95). Instead of 'wallowing in the lily beds' of some Elysian pasture, his affair with Cressida has sent Troilus to the torturous fields of Tartarus. From heavenly bliss, he has plunged into hell; and, as we will observe in battle, he takes on an almost demonic persona in his reckless combat and thirst for revenge. Bringing to mind Ulysses' earlier description, Troilus is engulfed in a "vindictive", "dangerous", "blaze of wrath" which will be satiated only by Diomedes' shattered skull. And, unlike Hector, Troilus will not be merciful, something that he now considers to be a "vice" and "[f]ool's play" (5.3.37, 42).

With Cressida's fall from grace, the reader is confronted with a chilling picture. Troilus' hopeful and idealistic belief, which gave meaning to manhood, has been replaced with ugly truth. The romantic, alluring image of brave men fighting for faithful, beautiful women has clashed against the bitter reality of Cressida as a false strumpet. And this awakening seems to be at the root of Troilus' stretching Cressida's example to all womankind:

> Let it not be believ'd for womanhood.
> Think, we had mothers; do not give advantage
> To stubborn critics, apt, without a theme
> For depravation, to square the general sex
> By Cressid's rule: rather, think this not Cressid. (5.2.128-132)

Although this may more reflect Troilus' desperate attempt to hang on to his beautiful ideal, his speech is deserving of much reflection. He presents a kind of noble lie, a polite turn on the truth which may paint over this unsightly truth for the sake of something higher and more attractive. This ideal highlights the value of seeming, and even occasionally the potential utility of 'white' lies to cover unadorned truth. Truth is not always nice or sweet; it can be dangerous and lead to despair, nihilism and hopelessness.

Once more suggesting the danger of truth, Troilus now shows no regard for his own life and harbors no fear of violent death when he claims that nothing short of his own "ruin" will keep him from battle and the savoring of his revenge (58). Moreover, unlike his earlier regard for obedience and the good of Troy, Troilus now seems to serve only his personal interest at the expense of all else, including the good of Troy (5.3.51-58).

Once afield, Troilus' deeds match his speech as he fights without any apparent care for his own life. At one point he fearlessly takes on both Diomedes and Ajax at the same time. This behaviour is made even starker when contrasted with Diomedes who, for the sake of "advantageous care" and self-preservation, withdraws from the "odds of multitude" while fighting Troilus (5.4.21-22). He also evokes his earlier allusion to Hades. When pursuing Diomedes he says:

> Fly not, for shouldst thou take the river Styx
> I would swim after. (5.5.19)

Earlier this reference referred to his Elysian hopes of love, and was used to describe his fear of the unknown. Now, Troilus needs no Pandar or Charon to ferry him; he is already in hell and thus tempered by no fear. Having lost his ideal, Troilus' noble view of the war has also collapsed. Instead of fighting for the honour and the glory of himself and Troy, Troilus now wars for the sake of bloodlust and revenge. This is reflected in Ulysses description of Troilus in battle:

> ...Troilus, who hath done today
> Mad and fantastic execution,
> Engaging and redeeming of himself
> With such a careless force and forceless care
> As if that lust, in very spite of cunning,
> Bade him win all. (5.5.37-42)

No longer fuelled by lofty beliefs, Troilus now serves as bloody executioner and is ruled not by reason, but by a gluttonous lust for Grecian blood. Indeed, his action in battle is such a departure from his earlier combat that even Hector has trouble recognizing him as

he duels with Diomedes and Ajax: "Yea, Troilus? O, well fought, my youngest brother!" (5.6.12)

As night falls and the play comes to a close, Troilus' brutal announcement of Hector's death once more reflects his deflated ideal of glory and provides a far less graceful or glamorous picture of war:

> [Hector's] dead, and at the murderer's horse's tail
> In beastly sort dragg'd through the shameful field.
> Frown on, you heavens: effect your rage with speed;
> Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy.
> I say at once let your brief plagues be mercy,
> And linger not our sure destructions on. (5.10.4-9)

Instead of promising timeless glory and illustrious fame in the name of a great and enduring city, the battlefield now can boast only sickness and murder in doomed cause. Shame and anger have replaced his hopeful ideals of magnanimity and masculinity. He continues:

> Hector is gone.
> Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?
> Let him that will a screech-owl aye be call'd
> Go into Troy, and say there 'Hector's dead'.
> There is a word will Priam turn to stone,
> Make wells and Niobes of the maids and wives,
> Cold statues of the youth, and, in a word,
> Scare Troy out of itself. (14-21)

Thus, Troilus presents the truer, grittier picture of war deflated of its heroic allure. His noble hope has been reduced to merely a "[h]ope of revenge", which masks not glory, but woe (31). Now, only hate will haunt the battlefield, and one may predict that the next time Trojan meets Greek there will be no courteous greetings or feasting, but only

slaughter. Before marching to Troy, Troilus is met by the ailing Pandarus, whom he greets not with friendship, but with curses to live forever with the "[i]gnomy and shame" of his name (33). Once his useful tool, Pandarus' diseased form seems to represent what he has now become; a reflection of spoiled faith and corrupted ideals. Once the practitioner (a.k.a. "Dr. Feelgood") who sought to cure Troilus, Pandarus' pandering has only worsened Troilus' state.

Thus, Troilus' transforms from the idealistic, hopeful young lover to the "mad and fantastic" executioner. Having begun the play as a man at war with himself, it appears that this conflict has been replaced by a unity of sorts, but one founded on a much darker view of things. Any ideal of love and war has been shattered, his hope of love deflated to unappetizing "greasy relics", and glory for Troy reduced to revenge and woe.

**3) Coy Cressida**

When we first meet Cressida one gets the impression that she is somewhat 'practiced at the art of deception'. She is quite skilled at sweetening speech and playing cunning games, the same 'skills' Troilus spoke of benefiting the Greeks. When Pandarus tries to woo her to Troilus at 1.2 she appears to take pleasure in frustrating and teasing him with intentionally misleading statements, and equivocal responses to his love queries. For example, at his approach (and within his earshot) she compliments Hector's 'gallantry' as if to tease or bait Pandarus into thinking she fancies Hector over Troilus. Her game playing seems successful as Pandarus desperately tries to convince her of Troilus' worth.

Cressida's bawdy humour also betrays a sexual familiarity with men. When Pandarus suggests that Helen would trade Paris for Troilus, her mockery refers to his being sexually aroused: "Troilus will stand to the proof if you'll prove it so." (1.2.131-132) Perhaps she has seen such a display first-hand? Also, this remark may project her own inability to be exclusive as she assumes that Troilus would sleep with Helen despite being in love with herself[16]. Later, when speaking with Troilus she seems to allude to a man's ability to perform sexually:

> They say all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform: vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging less than the tenth part of one. (3.2.83-87)

By "performance" she likely refers to a man's actual physical ability to sexually satisfy a woman, in contrast to inflated verbal bravado. As well, after spending the night with Troilus, Cressida is upset at his early departure, and one suspects that she has encountered this situation before:

> You men will never tarry.
> O foolish Cressid, I might have still held off,
> And then you would have tarried. (4.2.16-18)

Referring to men in plural, Cressida's self-reproach strongly hints that she has been with other men, who also "never" tarried. However, there is some truth to her words as Troilus is preparing to leave for the busy day ahead. Perhaps had she tarried he would have stayed longer, and perhaps even proposed marriage to satisfy his desire?

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[16] Bloom, 351.

When Pandarus leaves, Cressida privately reveals her love for Troilus. However, unlike Troilus' yearning words, her speech does not echo spellbound affection, but a more strategic means of capturing his desire:

> Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:
> Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.
> That she belov'd knows naught that knows not this:
> 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.
> Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:
> 'Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech.'
> Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,
> Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear. (1.2.291-300)

Cressida's ideal of 'love' is not one of enchanted imaginations and 'fevered' passions, but more a realm of power and control. Her goal is to be desired, and not to be won or achieved by a man. Being "stubborn-chaste" is for her a prudential means of ensnaring Troilus' heart so that she can serve her desire to be desired. In contrast, for Troilus to feel successful he must 'achieve' Cressida, and being refused only seems to increase his self-doubt. Thus, Troilus and Cressida (and perhaps men and women in general) seem to have very different views about achieving the most from love.

This speech also adds to our impression that she has had prior 'hands-on' experience with men. Prior to their consummation, Troilus' romantic naiveté was evident in his fearful questioning of what his encounter with Cressida would bear. Cressida, in contrast, does not ponder or wonder about what bedding Troilus will bring, but suggests (like her observation that men never tarry) that she already knows. She is calm, cool and collected as she rationally plans how best to achieve maximum gain from his desire. Her idea that men "prize the thing ungain'd more than it is", is also very similar to Trolius'

"what's aught but as 'tis valued". Cressida 'knows' that men overestimate the value of unattained prizes they seek to possess--a principle which could perhaps also pertain to the war.

Her resolve to hold off, however, swiftly dissolves when she meets Troilus, and she agrees to spend the night with him after only the briefest conversation. Although she does enjoy the sweetness of some beseeching, her vow not to reveal her heart is easily overwhelmed by her sexual appetite. Thus, this is the first example of her infidelity: she is false to her earlier resolve. Her sexual appetite has apparently overpowered her intention to draw out his desire.

There are several other hints which suggest that constancy is not a quality in Cressida's repertoire. For example, throughout her interaction with Troilus, much of her speech is suggestive of inconstancy:

> I have a kind of self resides with you,
> But an unkind self, that itself will leave
> To be another's fool. I would be gone:
> Where is my wit? I know not what I speak. (3.2.146-149)

As if divining her falsehood, this statement does prove true the very next evening when she defects to Diomedes a few hours after her trade. She then follows with an equally suspicious statement:

> Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love,
> And fell so roundly to a large confession
> To angle for your thoughts. (151-153)

Also, her vows are backed not by hopeful terms of truth, as Troilus' are, but by curses and punishment if she proves false. Once their vows have been exchanged and witnessed by Pandarus, her name has already become synonymous with false women:

> let all
> constant men be Troiluses, all false women
> Cressids,..." (200-202).

Rather than asserting everlasting faith, Cressida seems to have sealed her false fate by saying "Amen" to her own future infidelity (205). Sharing a few last words with Troilus before her exchange, Cressida promises to be true to him and suggests that she will be sad and weary among the Greeks. But, when introduced to Diomedes only moments later, her melancholy appears to have already been 'overcome', judging from what Diomedes says to her:

> The lustre in your eye, heaven in your cheek,
> Pleads your fair usage; (4.4.116-117)

Though surely said to provoke Troilus, Diomedes may read sexual desire in Cressida. However, that she may be tempted by Diomedes would not be entirely surprising given that Troilus has just spent their last moments together 'wooing' her to the 'magnificent virtues' of the Greeks.

When Cressida arrives at the Greek camp and is introduced to the Greek nobles, she certainly is not the "woeful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks", but merrily struts her stuff in front of the Greek commanders (55). (Indeed, she contrasts most sharply with Troilus' evident dejection when he arrives moments later with Trojan entourage). She eagerly offers the men kisses, exchanges sexual innuendoes and even mocks Menelaus'

cuckoldry. Despite her enchanting effects on most of those present, when she departs Ulysses dispels any romantic illusion of her:

> Fie, fie upon her!
> There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip--
> Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out
> At every joint and motive of her body.
> O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
> That give accosting welcome ere it comes,
> And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
> To every ticklish reader: set them down
> For sluttish spoils of opportunity
> And daughters of the game. (54-63)

Rather than a precious pearl or ideal maiden, Ulysses sees whore in her every pore, and reads her to be open to any man who desires to have her. Moreover, considering that the formal combat elicited by Hector's 'romantic' challenge follows this scene, we are surely meant to ponder the 'noble', chivalric ideal of fighting for such women.

The next, and last, time we see Cressida is with Diomedes, her "[s]weet honey Greek" (5.2.18). We see her trying once more to savor the sweetest point of love as she baits and angles for Diomedes' desire. Perhaps, her best maneuver is when she coyly dangles Troilus' sleeve in front of Diomedes, bragging that it belonged to a better lover and then feigns outrage at his snatching it from her. However, in Diomedes she seems to have met her match, as he easily recognizes her game and refuses to be her fool. She even ends up beseeching him in response to his threats to leave her, and appears frustrated that her teasing tactics do not overwhelm him:

> You shall not go; one cannot speak a word
> But it straight starts you. (100-101)

And, no one can be in doubt about her true feelings when, Diomedes having left, she says:

> Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee,
> But with my heart the other eye doth see.
> Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find:
> The error of our eye directs our mind.
> What error leads must err; O, then conclude,
> Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude. (106-111)

Her last words mark in speech what she demonstrated in deed; that she is enslaved by desire. She no longer bothers with any vows of holding off, and resigns herself to falsehood and error. Despite what her 'mind's eye' or rational part determines, her sexual appetite easily overwhelms it. Her words present a very bleak portrait of womanhood, as if women are doomed to be forever ruled by their hearts and unable to overcome their passions. The element that Cressida seems to be most lacking, of course, is moderation. Without a soul trained in moderation, it seems that she cannot maintain the resolve of her mind and remain constant. This is something she referred to earlier when Pandarus appealed to her to be moderate in response to her having to leave Troilus. She responded:

> Why tell you me of moderation?
> The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,
> And violenteth in a sense as strong
> As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?
> If I could temporize with my affection,
> Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,
> The like allayment could I give my grief.
> My love admits no qualifying dross,
> No more my grief, in such a precious loss. (4.4.2-10)

Thus, one may wonder whether lacking moderation is perhaps the primary reason that Cressida (and perhaps women generally) fall to more heartfelt emotions. Also, having

Pandarus of all people implore her to be moderate, further emphasises her being incited by forces beyond her control to be immoderate, not moderate.

Crowned in falsehood, the image of the noble knight fighting for his chaste lady is tarnished. However, although she attributes her falsehood to the nature of women as such, it must in fairness be noted that there is precious little to support her chaste maidenhood, especially when it comes to moderation. Her father has deserted her, her uncle practically throws her to Troilus, and she is traded to another man (indeed a whole other state) to serve the political needs of Troy.

**4) Plagued Pandarus**

Turning now to the infamous go-between, Pandarus, we meet him along with Troilus in the opening scene as they speak of Cressida. Pandarus' first words disparage Troilus' sick state: "Will this gear ne'er be mended?" In keeping with the disease theme of the play, Pandarus' words suggest that he is trying to heal or doctor Troilus. What 'Doctor' Pandarus is trying to cure, and how and why, is initially puzzling. Pandarus also indicates the equally pervasive food theme when he cautions Troilus to be patient in his yearning for Cressida:

> He that will
> have a cake out of the wheat must tarry the
> grinding. (14-16)

Wheat is one of the most necessary and versatile ingredients of the human diet. It can be used to meet basic subsistence needs, like bread, or it can be formed into cakes and other sweet desserts. The former suggests a more rational need (i.e. life), whereas the latter

aims at catering to pleasure, and can be unhealthy if one over-indulges (cf. Plato's *Republic* 559a-c). Pandarus' preference for the pleasurable use may provide insight into his character.

Somewhat like his niece, Pandarus also seems to be teasing Troilus or drawing out his desire for Cressida by going on at length about how wonderful she is, while Troilus becomes increasingly agitated at not having her. And, when Troilus criticizes him for only making him feel worse, Pandarus gets 'upset' and vows to no longer "meddle" in their affair before leaving in a huff (83). Pandarus' behaviour is quite melodramatic and it seems that he too desires to be wooed by Troilus. Indeed, at one point Troilus appears to woo him when he refers to him as "[s]weet Pandarus", and when Pandarus leaves, apparently miffed, Troilus complains that he is "as techy to be woo'd to woo" (86, 96).

In the very next scene, we find Pandarus trying to woo Cressida for Troilus (proving false to his vow not to meddle). As he endeavors to sell Cressida on the greatness of Troilus, he questions whether Cressida would "know a man" if she had 'seen' one (1.2.64). This question raises two important issues of the play: that of what it is to truly 'know' anyone or anything; and what truly constitutes a man. This subject is made even more challenging by the need to distinguish reality from appearance. Pandarus adds to this challenge a few lines later:

> Why, have you any discretion?
> Have you any eyes? Do you know what a man is?
> Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, man-
> hood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liber-
> ality and such like, the spice and salt that season
> a man? (255-260)

The reader is now invited to question what are the proper ingredients of a man and (by implication) a woman also, are. This challenge is made the more important in that knowing what truly is *good* for a man or woman presupposes that one first knows the proper nature of each.

Pandarus echoes his earlier reference to healing Troilus when he wishes that Troilus would become "himself" again (72-80). And, it appears that he is willing to do anything for him. This exceptional service is puzzling, and one cannot but wonder what motivates Pandarus to help Troilus. Pandarus seems genuinely fond of the young prince, and notes that he "could live and die in the eyes of Troilus." (246-247). He even muses that he would put his own "heart" in Cressida's body if it would win her to Troilus (79). This last allusion is especially curious. Hypothetically, if his heart were in her body, he then would be Troilus' lover. Perhaps, one may speculate that Pandarus' affection (and thus his motivation) may reflect a more romantic inclination.

When Pandarus introduces Troilus to Cressida at 3.2, he shows no flare for romance or concern for moderation, but actively encourages their speedy coupling. While they kiss, he narrates the moment and seems to derive vicarious pleasure (like a sexual voyeur) from observing them. Later, one gets a similar impression after their consummation as Pandarus solicits Cressida for the sexual details of their coupling (cf. 4.2.20-35). Having brokered their hasty love vows, he then ushers them off to a bedchamber that he has prepared, and gleefully urges them to enjoy their encounter. His last words are very telling:

> And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here,
> Bed, chamber, pander to provide this gear! (3.2.209-210)

Here, Pandarus sounds more like the owner of a brothel, who would encourage even the most innocent maids to indulge their sexual pleasures. Moreover, his reference to the term "gear" again, may suggest that satisfying Troilus' sexual desire is Pandarus' remedy for curing Troilus and returning him to "himself".

When Pandarus learns of Cressida's exchange, his dramatic reaction further suggests that he has some deep, heart-felt feelings for Troilus:

> Would I were as deep under the earth as I am
> above. (4.2.85)

Indeed, his emotional reaction is very similar to Cressida's response as she cries and promises to tear out her hair in grief and scratch her "praised" cheeks (110). And, his question: "No sooner got but lost?", may allude to his having 'gotten' Troilus, only to lose him to some apparent twist of fortune (76). His genuine concern and affection for Troilus seems amply confirmed when contrasted to his "violenteth" anger and disdain of Cressida, whom he blames for Troilus' loss:

> Pray thee get thee in: would thou hadst ne'er
> been born! I knew thou wouldst be his death.
> O poor gentleman! A plague upon Antenor! (88-90)

It is ironic that Pandarus blames Cressida for Troilus' demise considering that it was he who practically forced the two of them together. Also, that he thinks Troilus will be ruined by her loss as if heartbroken, may apply reflexively to Pandarus himself, and to the power that love has over him. Still, his eagerness to 'pander' to Troilus remains puzzling, and perhaps Shakespeare means to suggest that he represents a distinct sub-species of soul, one who simply takes pleasure in pandering to his betters.

We next see Pandarus after Troilus has observed Cressida's infidelity. Apparently ignorant of her fall, he is still contriving to keep their relationship alive as he bears a love letter from her to Troilus. Most notable is Pandarus' physical decline in health as he complains of a variety of ailments, and tries to elicit sympathy from Troilus. Troilus, however, no longer has any interest in 'wooing' Pandarus. His ailments, and Troilus' rejection of him, also mark the end of the play, as Pandarus provides an epilogue of sorts. Focusing on his own disease-ridden form, he complains about the ingratitude he has suffered, and then 'bequeaths' his diseases to the reader. Pandarus' demise may be a kind of poetic justice. Throughout, his pleasure-based cures have served no good end for anyone. His 'cure' for Troilus' served not to mend him, but ultimately to ruin him. He pressures Cressida to break her resolve and fall to her desire--again to no good result. Pandarus panders to the pleasures in people, and primarily to those of the body. Moreover, he encourages people to indulge their private pleasures, even at the expense of the common good. His pleasures do not create harmony or good health, but promote discord and disease. Thus, perhaps all should be grateful that, in the end Pandarus has been stripped of his "honey and his sting" (5.10.43). But, his having 'bequeathed' his "diseases", one may wonder whether humankind will always be plagued by such refractory pleasures and ever pander to them.

**5) Hungry Hector**

Another primary character in the play is Hector. As reported by Cressida's servant, Alexander, our first impression of him is that of a man seething with anger:

Hector, whose patience

> Is as a virtue fix'd, today was mov'd:
> He chid Andromache and struck his armourer,
> And like as there were husbandry in war,
> Before the sun rose he was harness'd light
> And to the field goes he, where every flower
> Did as a prophet weep what it foresaw
> In Hector's wrath. (1.2.4-11)

The reason for this rage, Alexander continues, is Hector's "disdain and shame" of being struck down in battle by his enemy nephew, Ajax (35). As such, our first report of Hector is that of a man, normally moderate, who nonetheless is moved to deadly wrath when humiliated. Similar to Troilus, Hector too appears to be distracted from 'himself', but it is bruised pride and shamed honour that distracts him. This description also bears a resemblance to the 'wrath' of Achilles which begins Homer's *Iliad.* Much of that text is attributed to Achilles' anger and the tragic consequences that it has for himself and for Greece. In Homer's epic tale, Achilles' anger (like Hector's here) is also the result of his pride being shamed. However, the tragedy seems to lie in the anger of Achilles' "heart" overcoming his "mind" and its eventual rule over him[17]. Thus, the reader may be tacitly invited to compare Hector's actions in light of the disastrous consequences of pride.

We next hear of Hector through Aeneas, who delivers his challenge to the Greeks. Hector seeks the man:

> That holds his honour higher than his ease,
> That feeds his praise more than he fears his peril,
> That knows his valour and knows not his fear,
> That loves his mistress more than in confession
> With truant vows to her own lips he loves,
> And dare avow her beauty and her worth
> In other arms than hers... (265-271)

[17] One example is in Book 9 (645-655).

This chivalrous portrayal of Hector, however, is puzzling, because it clashes with the earlier report from Alexander. There, in his fit of anger, Hector did not appear chivalrous or honourable when he "chid" innocent Andromache, and beat his unfortunate servant[18]. Ulysses also infers that Hector has less than honourable motives, and is not challenging just any man, but specifically, Achilles. Proof of this may be evident when Hector speaks to Achilles after his brief duel with Ajax and protests the mere "pelting wars" they have had since Achilles refused to fight. (4.5.266).

Aeneas having issued Hector's challenge to re-ignite the war, we first meet Hector himself at the Trojan council while he presents a "discourse of reason" arguing for Helen's return to the Greeks (2.2.117). He begins by proposing that she is not worth keeping because many Trojan lives have been lost in her defense, and being Greek she is not even worth a fraction of a Trojan soul. When Troilus argues that Helen is valuable, not for what she is, but for what she now represents, Hector counters that an object must have merit beyond one's own "particular will" to make it worthy (54). He then commends Troilus and Paris (who later joins in her defense) for 'saying well' but notes that their reasoning is superficial and reflects not truth and judgement, but passions of blood such as pleasure and revenge. Such passion-induced thought makes it impossible to determine clearly whether keeping her is right or wrong. He then backs his argument with "moral laws/ Of nature and of nations" (185-186). Stating that the debt of wife to husband is a fundamental law of nature, he offers that if this law is corrupted "each well-order'd nation" has a conventional law aimed at curbing "raging appetites that are/ Most disobedient and refractory" (181, 182-183). He then states that this is his "opinion" by

[18] Although Bloom refers to him as "the always gentle and enthusiastic Hector" (368), Bradshaw disagrees and instead cites this example as one of Hector's many inconsistencies. Hector prides himself on being

way of the "truth" (189, 190). What Hector does next, however, seems to negate altogether this apparent 'concern' for truth. Instead of concluding that Helen be returned, as his argument implied, he appears to change sides and agree with his brothers to keep Helen. His stated reason being that their "joint and several dignities" depend upon it (194). As the scene concludes, Hector praises his brothers for their valour and proclaims the "roisting challenge" he has sent to the Greeks (209).

Hector's behaviour at this council is very puzzling. The riddle, however, appears not to be his apparent change of mind at the end of the scene, but that he ever argued for Helen's return at all. It is not strange that Hector wants to keep Helen; this seems to fit with his desire to win honour in battle, which requires that there be a war. What is odd, as Bradshaw notes, is that he poses as the "suddenly sober champion of reason, morality, and Natural Law" in the first place (133). Already aware of his challenge, and verified by Hector himself at the end of the council, we know that Hector seeks to stir up the war and end his boredom. Thus, if Hector never intended to let Helen go, what are his reasons for arguing for her release in the first place? The answer to this may lie in the "spritely" responses he receives from his younger brothers, and especially from Troilus (191). As we observed earlier with Troilus, he initially had a difficult time keeping focused on fighting the war; he would arm, disarm, and then arm again. The primary reason for this seemed to be his private disdain of Helen's worth, and believing her cause to be unworthy of his sword. Given Troilus' inconstancy, Hector may be trying to refocus or reinvigorate Troilus' enthusiasm for war by having him come to see Helen as a

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chivalrous, yet his 'chivalry' is questionable throughout.

worthwhile cause for Troy[19]. Evidence that this is Hector's hidden goal may be noted in their 'debate'. Troilus jumps to Helen's defense immediately after Hector has likened himself to a "lady of more softer bowels" who seeks peace primarily out of fear (11-12). Having already seen how angry Troilus gets at himself for acting "womanish", it is not surprising that he would have a very negative reaction to Hector's most unmanly comparison. Hector, who we must presume to know his younger brothers well, may have been anticipating just such a reaction in hopes of stirring Troilus (Troy's "second hope") to war.

Initially, Troilus' defense is, as Helenus suggests, empty of reasons, and little more than overblown rhetoric. But, Hector seems to task him to fill his responses with more 'reasoned' matter. And, when Troilus follows that the determination of value is up to the individual, Hector pushes Troilus to go beyond his private (disdainful) estimation of Helen and extend her worth to what is (in his mind) the common good--or at least the common honour--of Troy (cf. 54-61). By the end, Troilus has not only incorporated reason into his defense of Helen, but seems to have focused his own mind on her import to Trojan glory. If this is Hector's rationale, his behaviour in this scene is remarkably similar to that of Ulysses, who acts to unify the Greeks in order to serve the common good of Greece. However, dramatically unlike Ulysses, Hector uses reason and wisdom as the tool or 'engine' to achieve the goal of honour. For Hector, reason is "aught but as 'tis valued", it is not the means to seek how to live according to truth, or to natural law or a natural standard of justice. Reason is servant to the desire for honour and glory, which

[19] Hector's behaviour here seems similar to Ulysses' interaction with Achilles at 3.3. There, Ulysses sought to turn Achilles onto the war by appealing to Achilles' love of honour. And, as Ulysses was initially successful in rousing Achilles, here Hector prevails in wooing Troilus back to war by also appealing to his desire for glory, and sense of honour on behalf of his father and city.

in Troy has been elevated to the highest standard. And, despite Hector noting that his private opinion is to return Helen, his much stronger private interest is to achieve his own honour and fame.

We next meet Hector when he comes to defend his challenge against his nephew, Ajax. Prior to the duel, Aeneas announces that Hector will "obey conditions" as determined by his opponent (4.5.73). However, when Ajax would prefer to continue the fight, Hector neglects to "obey" this wish and instead quits, citing as a reason for doing so a concern that, if valid, would have prevented him from fighting Ajax in the first place. Again, Hector's behaviour clashes with his stated commitment to Trojan honour. Having granted his opponent the rules of engagement, by quitting he dishonours not only his word, but also the chivalric rules founding the duel[20]. And, according to Aeneas, much Trojan glory is riding on this fight:

> The glory of our Troy doth this day lie
> On [Hector's] fair worth and single chivalry (145-146)

By refusing to continue, Hector disregards what seems to be the will of Troy. His own desire, once again, takes precedence over the larger goal of securing honour and glory for Troy. Hector's change of heart towards Ajax is also curious. Our first image of Hector was a man consumed with rage at Ajax shaming him in battle. Hector could neither eat nor sleep so eager was he to redeem his repute. Now, however, his concern for honour has apparently been replaced with a new pious regard for not wanting to shed Trojan blood:

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[20] Bradshaw claims that in "chivalric terms" it is not the challenger's prerogative to refuse the fight if the man challenged desires to continue. (134-135)

> The obligation of our blood forbids
> A gory emulation 'twixt us twain. (121-122)

Because Ajax is the son of Priam's sister, the kidnapped aunt, Hector argues that it is the "just gods gainsay" that they not fight (131). This 'piety', however, was not present earlier when they fought in battle, and presumably the same "just" gods would have forbid their bloodshed at that time as well. Despite the glory of Troy, Hector does not want to fight Ajax, and his reference to the gods seems but a face-saving means of bowing out[21]. Similar to his use of reason to validate the goal of honour, Hector appears to be employing the name of gods to serve his own interest. Moreover, if Hector's true intent was to fight Achilles in hopes of beating the 'best man' of Greece, his refusal to fight Ajax only further points to the supremacy of his own private goal of honour. And the fact that big, dumb Ajax has twice proven to be his *physical* superior calls into question this entire 'warrior's view' of what determines the 'best man'.

This scene also illustrates how others, both Trojan and Greek, describe Hector. Before the duel, Aeneas depicts him:

> In the extremity of great and little,
> Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector;
> The one almost as infinite as all,
> The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,
> And that which looks like pride is courtesy. (78-82)

We are invited to 'weigh' Hector well and uncover which truly is "great and little" in him, valour or pride. And, if his courtesy looks like pride, surely his pride can feign

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[21] Harold Goddard, who argues that Hector is "Shakespeare's supreme peace lover", claims Hector's refusal to fight Ajax is one example (of many) of Hector's efforts to end the war (125). However, Goddard does not comment upon Hector's earlier craving to spill Ajax's blood. And, one may wonder if (in addition to

courtesy. After the duel, our image of Hector is enlarged upon his introduction to the Greeks. Commencing with Nestor, the old soldier furnishes a sketch of Hector at battle:

> I have, thou gallant Trojan, seen thee oft,
> Labouring for destiny, make cruel way
> Through ranks of Greekish youth; and I have seen thee,
> As hot as Perseus, spur thy Phrygian steed,
> Despising many forfeits and subduements,
> When thou hast hung thy advanced sword i'th'air,
> Not letting it decline on the declin'd,
> That I have said to some my standers-by
> 'Lo, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life';
> And I have seen thee pause, and take thy breath,
> When that a ring of Greeks have shrap'd thee in,
> Like an Olympian wrestling. (182-193)

Although a brave portrait, this image illustrates the much darker side to this bloody war. Hector is cruelly carving his way through rows of young Greek men in his laborious quest for honour. One cannot ignore the many lives that are being (and have been) lost in the "hot digestion of this cormorant war", all in the name of Hector's honour (2.2.5). Moreover, Hector's 'mercy' for the fallen may instead reflect some god-like pretension that it is he, not Jupiter, who deals in life and death. When Hector meets Ulysses next, Ulysses recalls a prophecy that has been foretold regarding the fall of Troy. Although the substance of this prediction remains a mystery, Ulysses makes it clear that Hector has, early on in the conflict, been forewarned of the apocalyptic demise of Troy. But, Hector has apparently chosen to ignore it (or perhaps vies with the gods to change it). Lastly, Hector is confronted with Achilles who does not bother with any courtly welcome, but rather unpleasantly forecasts where he will butcher Hector once afield. Hector ignores Achilles' threats, noting that even if Achilles were "an oracle" he would not believe him

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wanting to fight Achilles) that Hector may instead fear fighting Ajax–after all, he has already suffered the

(251). Thus, nothing--no truth, no reason, no prophecy, nor any oracle (the word of the gods and symbol of wisdom)--will distract Hector from his ambition.

Having spent the night feasting with his enemies, Hector is up early the next morning and preparing for battle. While arming he is implored by several of his family not to fight on this particular day because it promises doom. Again, we are presented with an unchivalrous Hector as he admonishes Andromache for 'nagging' him, and accuses her of 'training' him to "offend" her (5.3.4). Echoing Alexander's earlier description, Andromache suggests that Hector is not himself, but is "much ungently temper'd" (1). Both she and Cassandra speak of having ominous, bloody dreams and gory forecasts of the day's battle. However, Hector will not decline, but will remain 'true' to his honour which he suggests "keeps the weather of [his] fate" (26). Prior to his going to battle, Cassandra offers one last, dismal image of what the day bodes:

> O, farewell, dear Hector.
> Look how thou diest: look how thy eye turns pale:
> Look how thy wounds do bleed at many vents;
> Hark how Troy roars, how Hecuba cries out,
> How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth;
> Behold! distraction, frenzy, and amazement
> Like witless antics one another meet,
> And all cry 'Hector! Hector's dead! O, Hector!' (80-87)

She concludes:

> Farewell--yet soft: Hector, I take my leave;
> Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive. (89-90)

Perhaps more than at any other time in the play, here we are confronted with the devastating consequences that Hector's insatiable appetite for honour bodes for Troy. While supposedly aiming to benefit Troy, Hector's actions may instead topple her walls

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shame of having lost to Ajax once in battle already, and here Ajax seems to be getting the better of him.

and enslave her people. Moreover, Cassandra's mention of Hector 'deceiving' himself and Troy seems to highlight the danger of ruling (both in the individual and the state) without reason providing the ultimate standard by which to judge. Hector is deceived precisely because he is ruled, not by reason, but by love of honour. And, by idolizing honour as the standard to which all Troy aims, Hector further deceives his family and countrymen.

The next scene provides a first-hand look at Hector in combat. His first challenge is to Thersites, but he soon rejects him because Thersites lacks "blood and honour" and is a "very filthy rogue" (5.4.27, 29). Ironically, by judging Thersites of no value to fight and surely kill, Hector is tacitly deeming him worthy of life. Thus, he will kill the honourable man, but live alongside the dishonourable? As the battle continues, Nestor again provides a narrative of Hector in battle, while despairing at the heavy Greek losses due to him:

> There is a thousand Hectors in the field;
> Now here he fights on Galathe his horse
> And here lacks work: anon he's there afoot,
> And there they fly, or die, like scaled sculls
> Before the belching whale; then is he yonder,
> And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,
> Fall down before him like a mower's swath.
> Here, there, and everywhere, he leaves and takes,
> Dexterity so obeying appetite
> That what he will he does, and does so much
> That proof is call'd impossibility. (5.5.17-29)

The image of Hector is truly harrowing. While throughout some dents in his 'honourable-seeming' armour were detected, here his honour appears thoroughly corrupted by a gruesome and bestial bloodlust. Adding to Nestor's earlier description, Hector is a one-man killing machine who hacks down Greek youths as if Death himself armed with a

scythe. As Bradshaw captures the point, "Hector is slaughtering Greeks with as much discrimination as could be expected from a combine harvester" (136). Hector's figure is more grotesque than heroic as one pictures him butchering *en masse* the young men of Greece in the same fashion that a whale would feed on a school of fish. Moreover, as the imagery of the feasting whale suggests, Hector seems to be feeding an appetite for killing, which in "belching" suggests that he has over-fed but nonetheless continues to glut himself.

Seeking to avenge the death of Patroclus, Achilles meets Hector and, though he first loses to him in man-to-man combat, he promises to return. When Achilles departs, Hector spots yet another opponent:

> Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a goodly mark.
> No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well:
> I'll frush it and unlock the rivets all
> But I'll be master of it. Wilt thou not, beast, abide?
> Why then, fly on; I'll hunt thee for thy hide. (5.6.27-31)

In addition to callously mowing down young inferior soldiers, Hector now hungers after the glorious armour of a fearful man. Even Troilus spoke of receiving no distinction from charging "on heaps/ The enemy flying." (3.2.26-27). But, perhaps the most telling moment is when Hector, having caught and 'skinned' his prey of its handsome armour, is disgusted by its rotten core:

> Most putrefied core, so fair without,
> Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life. (5.8.1-2)

This unmasked corpse recalls the image of the armed prologue. Having exposed his victim to reveal a fetid corpse we are obliged to apply this treatment reflexively to Hector

himself, and see if his 'honourable' appearance masks a more wretched reality. Bradshaw suggests that:

> ...it is tempting to see this curious episode as a grisly, surreal *Gestalt*, which reflects our continuing doubts about what Hector's own fair exterior conceals...(137)[22]

Since Hector more resembles a bloodthirsty murderer than a glamorous, chivalrous knight in shining armour, a distinction must be made between the reality and the appearance of honour. One is invited to reconsider the criteria of what is truly honourable, and thereby distinguish it from the public 'recognition' or 'honouring' of things. Instead of being concerned with whether his actions are truly honourable in themselves, this killing most clearly shows that he is interested more in merely appearing honourable. The public bestowal of honour, is by no means a reliable indicator of what is truly honourable. Hector's actions, though he receives much glory for them, reflect more a diseased appetite for blood--for destroying human life--than something truly worthy of esteem.

With his latest kill, Hector disarms himself, stating that his sword has had its "fill of blood and death." (5.8.4) Unarmed and overfed, he is happened upon by Achilles and his Myrmidon army. Achilles does not fulfil Hector's expectation of mercy or courtesy, but immediately orders his death, whereupon Hector is efficiently and unceremoniously executed by the Myrmidons. And not even his lifeless corpse is afforded respect as Achilles drags it across the field. The news of his death spreading quickly, we are left with the reaction of both sides to Hector's death. The Greeks are encouraged that his

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[22] Here, he asserts, appetite clearly commands Hector as "hunting a human 'beast' for its 'hide' is not in the vein of chivalry" (137).

death will end the war. In Troy, his death, as Cassandra predicted, stands to destroy the city.

Thus, Hector's death is ironic, the result of his thoughtless reliance upon a supposedly chivalrous code, that ultimately destroyed not only him, but the innocent inhabitants[23] of the city dependent upon him. However, it seems the true culprit of this tragedy has been his "mad idolatry" of valuing honour above anything else, including reason and truth. Without recourse to reason for distinguishing what is truly honourable, there can be no standard to measure whether one is acting honourably or not, and whether an ideal of honour is healthy or harmful to self or state.

**6) Understanding Ulysses**

A primary, yet obscure, character in the play is Ulysses. We are first introduced to him during the Greek council as he provides his opinion on the source of the Greek failure to fell Troy. Prior to providing his view, he flatters both Agamemnon and Nestor. Ulysses credits Agamemnon, the "nerves and bone of Greece" in "whom the tempers and the minds of all/ Should be shut up", for being "most mighty for thy place and sway" (1.3.55-60). Nestor, he praises as "most reverend for thy stretch'd-out life" and for his ability to "knit all the Greekish ears/ To his experience'd tongue" (61, 68-69). Ulysses' fair words, however, are highly suspicious. But if we carefully attend to his words, we note that he does not actually attribute to Agamemnon the superior mind or temper of Greece, but only that he *should* be so endowed. Nor does he credit Agamemnon for his own merit or ability to rule, but refers only to his station or rank, in effect claiming that

[23] Like those of Cassandra's earlier forecast: "Virgins, boys, mid-age and wrinkled eld, [and] [s]oft infancy, that nothing canst but cry". (2.2.105-106)

Agamemnon deserves respect not for being a *good* leader, but simply because *he is* the leader. To Nestor, Ulysses does not suggest that the elder minister is valuable for his excellent statesmanship, but because he is old and experienced and a good talker. Thus, one gets the distinct impression that Ulysses is a consummate ironist, staging this "complimental assault" with the aim of wooing them to his speech which, upon closer examination, is actually quite critical of their leadership. Having won their ears to his advice, Ulysses blames neither fortune nor Troy for the Grecian hardship, but instead censures the Greeks themselves. Faction and growing emulation is spreading through the ranks and stands to destroy the camp unless the need for degree or hierarchical rule is recognized and enforced[24]. Having named Achilles as the prime culprit responsible for the growing anarchy, Ulysses appears to be furnishing a concrete, objective target upon which to concentrate their energy.

However, having just publicly professed the import of adhering to hierarchical rule, Ulysses appears to contradict his argument moments later when, alone with Nestor, he proposes his own plan to cure Achilles of his errant pride. By forming his own remedy (which Agamemnon will have only a "taste" of in order to secure his official approval) Ulysses is effectively ruling behind Agamemnon's back (389). But, at the same time one may see the utility or need for this behind-the-scenes rule. Unlike Ulysses and Nestor, who see the challenge aimed at Achilles, who if allowed to fight will only become more proud and harder to tame, Agamemnon apparently does not. Instead, he would have Achilles answer Hector, as he explicitly names Achilles to know of Hector's plan (305).

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[24] Ulysses' theory of degree seems rooted in nature. However, the examples that Ulysses uses as evidence of a natural order maintaining the "unity and married calm of states" are problematic. "Peaceful commerce from dividable shores" often turns to war; "due of birth" has led to bloody usurpation and revolution; "laurels" and fame have been granted to the undeserving. Even his reference to "married" calm highlight's

Moreover, that Agamemnon suggests this immediately following Ulysses' verbal and visual portrayal of Achilles' apparent[25] insolence, only serves to illustrate Agamemnon's lack of good judgement. More importantly, the seeming contradiction between what publicly Ulysses says and then privately does, does not necessarily contradict degree, but actually supports Agamemnon's rightful rule. At council, Ulysses publicly endorses Agamemnon's position; and nothing he subsequently does undermines it. And Agamemnon is more than willing to accept Ulysses' advice: "The nature of the sickness found Ulysses/ What is the remedy?" (140-141). Also, Agamemnon must have liked his "taste" of Ulysses' plan, because the very next scene makes it clear that it has been adopted (2.1.123-128).

Ulysses also seems to demonstrate that he and fortune are friends when Aeneas unexpectedly arrives and announces Hector's challenge. This challenge, had it been left to chance and open to any Greek, most certainly would have been answered by Achilles, who confirms later that he would have fought Hector if not for the lottery (cf. 2.1.130-131). Ulysses' quick thinking, however, works this challenge neatly into his plan, and forms it into a potential cure for Achilles' pride. Also, the use of the rigged lottery suggests that to rule wisely, the ruler must be able and willing to use deception, in this case to deny or temper individual interests for what is politically necessary and best for Greece.

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Helen's career of matrimonial infidelity. But while rendering this teleological-sounding rule questionable, Ulysses himself may demonstrate its superiority: he is the only character who appears a true ruler.

[25] Ulysses credits the slanderous imitation of Agamemnon and Nestor to Patroclus, but at Achilles' instigation; yet we never see this particular pageant that Ulysses acts out. When we do see Achilles on his "lazy bed" awaiting entertainment, it is Thersites who mocks the general and the Grecian commanders, and even his ridicule (in public) appears less insulting than Ulysses' version. Thus, Ulysses' imitation may truly be his own creation, aimed at inciting Agamemnon (his own pride insulted in front of his entire council) to action against Achilles.

Ulysses pride-taming plan in action at 2.3, we observe Ulysses leading the Greeks in expanding Ajax's ego. While each takes turns inflating Ajax with flattery, primarily by complimenting him above Achilles, it is clear from their private asides that they really think him insolent, paltry, witless, and plagued by pride. This action is quite comical, Ajax puffing his chest out like a peacock with every admiring (yet largely empty) compliment. It also illustrates the supremacy of reason over brawn: despite his strength as a warrior Ajax is easily manipulated by Ulysses' superior cunning.

At 3.3, Ulysses turns his attention, and that of the other Greek commanders, to 'yoking' Achilles, seeking to deflate his pride. Having gorged Ajax with compliments and attention, here the Greeks starve Achilles of his accustomed flattery. The plan succeeds, for after his fellows pass by and ignore him, Achilles stops Ulysses and questions him regarding their strange behaviour. Ulysses then lures him into a conversation regarding virtue and honour. And whereas before he used Achilles' name to incite Ajax, here he uses the threat of Ajax to awaken Achilles. Ulysses threatens that Ajax, through fortune not nature, stands to reap the fame and honour that rightly belongs to Achilles, whose virtue and merit is actually deserving of such honours. By his inaction, Achilles stands to lose his former fame to those, who like Ajax, are empty of virtue and merit. To be worthy of virtue, men must be seen to be virtuous. Moreover, they will only know of their own virtue if it is first 'recognized' (or valued) by others as such:

> ...no man is the lord of anything,
> Though in and of him there be much consisting,
> Till he communicate his parts to others;
> Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,
> Till he behold them form'd in the applause
> Where th'are extended; who, like an arch, reverb'rate
> The voice again; or, like a gate of steel

> Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
> His figure and his heat. (115-123)

Great acts of the past are forgotten in favour of new, often less worthy, acts:

> One touch of nature makes the whole world kin--
> That all with one consent praise new-born gauds,
> Though they are made and moulded of things past,
> And give to dust that is a little gilt
> More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.
> The present eye praises the present object. (175-180)

Unless Achilles advances upon his old achievements, he will be forgotten and his great name lost in the oblivion of history. His speech, however, is puzzling in lieu of Ulysses' earlier argument. That one must continually act and refresh good deeds in order to maintain one's reputed place appears to contradict his speech on degree. Instead, the true distinction between this speech and that on degree may be relevant to posing different speeches to such different audiences[26].

Agamemnon's speech at council reflects a more ordinary view: that everything happens for a reason, and that men have little power to effect change or master fortune. Tailoring his speech in a similar fashion, Ulysses makes it much more likely that Agamemnon will listen to what he has to say. Also, Ulysses could not publicly assert what he says privately to Achilles regarding the apparently relative nature of public honour. To do so would undermine Agamemnon's power by openly encouraging individuals to serve their own interests without any concern for the good of the state.

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[26] Despite Bradshaw's claim that this argument is "entirely incompatible" with his speech on degree, the two arguments do not truly contradict (155). On degree Ulysses spoke of a natural hierarchy of rule, while simultaneously providing examples which (as noted earlier) have traditionally caused much disorder and countless wars. His speech on Time still maintains a hierarchy as people are still esteemed and elevated to heroic proportions, yet they do not merit such noble successes. Agamemnon himself seems to exemplify;

Conversely, Achilles must be wooed to war. But, because he will not be won by some concern for the greater good or necessity of degree (or any other permanent 'philosophical' Truths) Ulysses must appeal to Achilles' own good, which here suggests that Achilles is most concerned with receiving honour.[27]

When Achilles suggests that he has pertinent reasons for his absence from battle, Ulysses reveals his knowledge of Achilles' love for Polyxena. Though he does not reveal the source of his information, he infers that he has the means to uncover the deepest and darkest knowledge:

> The providence that's in a watchful state
> Knows almost every grain of Pluto's gold,
> Finds bottom in th'uncomprehensive deep,
> Keeps place with thought, and (almost like the gods)
> Do thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.
> There is a mystery, with whom relation
> Durst never meddle, in the soul of state,
> Which hath an operation more divine
> Than breath or pen can give expressure to.
> All the commerce that you have had with Troy
> As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord; (195-205)

We are left to wonder at Ulysses' surprising knowledge of Achilles' love life. He could have gleaned this information during his earlier embassies to Troy (i.e., perhaps from Aeneas from whom he has already learned much about Troilus' temperament). Or, perhaps he has a spy in either the Trojan camp, or in Achilles' entourage. Thersites would be the most likely candidate for the latter, as he has access to Achilles' correspondence and has spoken as if familiar with Ulysses' policy, and even alludes to being employed

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he is a poor leader, yet is "mighty for his place and sway". He is the conventional ruler (the "dust" glossed with gold), not the ruler by nature.

[27] Once more, Ulysses' own understated actions (though recognized by few) tacitly validates degree. He is taming (or tuning) Achilles to serve Greece.

by Ulysses and Nestor (cf. 5.4.9-16). How ever he knows of the affair, most important is that Ulysses always endeavours (with much success) to maintain a strict watch on the business of both Greece and Troy.

Ulysses' observation further illustrates the problem of the private good interfering with the common good. Achilles' love affair amounts to treason, especially given that this affair is keeping him out of the war. To focus Achilles to war, Ulysses appeals to Achilles' love of honour by suggesting that he will be remembered not for slaying the greatest warrior of Troy, but merely for bedding his sister. Moreover, as Achilles' surprise of Ulysses' knowledge indicates, it is clear that he is trying to keep the liaison a secret. As such, Ulysses' suggestion that Achilles may be forever reputed as 'he who bedded Hector's sister' could perhaps be a subtle threat. If Achilles does not go to war, Ulysses may advertise his traitorous romance throughout the camp, whereupon Achilles may find his large fame transformed into infamy. Instead of being famed among men (including his own son) as the best warrior (which reputation will go to Ajax), he will be the 'hero' of Greek girls who will prettily sing his 'praises':

> 'Great Hector's sister did Achilles win,
> But our great Ajax bravely beat down him.' (3.3.211-212)

When Ulysses departs, his words appear to have had the desired effect as Achilles, now fearing that his honour is waning, begins to hunger for Hector's blood.

Our next encounter with Ulysses is when he and the other Greek commanders meet Cressida. As noted earlier, he holds a far less flattering view of her than do most men. Instead of witty and fair, he regards her a manipulative harlot. More importantly,

this scene provides insight into what Ulysses truly (yet privately) thinks of the war. As Patroclus mocks Menelaus' cuckoldry, in an aside Ulysses sarcastically observes:

> O deadly gall, and theme of all our
> scorns!
> For which we lose our heads to gild his horns. (4.5.29-30)

This uncensored thought appears to represent what Ulysses really believes, rather than what he publicly professes. Echoing Thersites' view, instead of a noble war for the sake of a beautiful woman, men are being slaughtered merely to pamper the bitter and embarrassed pride of a cuckolded husband who has lost his whorish wife. Moreover, Ulysses' words perhaps most strongly depict the harm caused by pride. Instead of endeavouring to rescue the 'ravished' Helen, Menelaus (and Greece with him) has been offended by Troy[28]. Thus, the basis for this war further shows the problem between private interest (Menelaus' damaged pride), and the good of the state.

When the Trojans arrive for the duel, Ulysses again demonstrates his "watchful state". In speaking to Agamemnon, he attributes intimate information about Troilus to a private conversation with Aeneas at Ilium. It seems odd, however, that Aeneas should divulge this information, as certainly it could be of strategic use to Greece. Through Ulysses' "observant toil", the Greeks now know that Troilus is the second most important Trojan prince, and thus a primary target, after Hector (1.3.203). Instead, this example may reflect Ulysses' uncanny ability to uncover important information, and perhaps he cunningly solicited these details without Aeneas even being aware of the import of his disclosures. When introduced to Hector after the duel, Hector provides more insight into

Ulysses' activities when he comments on knowing his face well from his many diplomatic missions to Troy, which began early in the conflict. We learn that on one early embassy, Ulysses issued a prophecy to the Trojans foretelling the fall of Troy (4.5.216-219). Although our knowledge of the contents of the prophecy remain imprecise, Ulysses acknowledges that it has already run half of its course, leaving one to wonder of both its substance and author. Perhaps originating with Calchas, Ulysses sought to take advantage of the daunting image of prophesy as a strategic and politically salutary means to activate the superstitions of the Trojan people and help 'scare Troy out of herself'? Calchas, noting that he did the Greeks "service", could even have been wooed to defect to Greece in order to excite Troy further (3.3.1). Many at Ilium, including Priam who becomes "suddenly enrapt" from the omens of his womenfolk, appear to be firm believers of supernatural communication. Thus, if the Trojan public is anything like many members of their Royal family, surely seeing the city's soothsayer leave due to some foreboding doom would darken their spirits.

Ulysses' attention turns next to Troilus, who has asked for direction to Calchas' tent. Here, one gets a sneaking suspicion that Ulysses may also know of Troilus' feelings for Cressida. Having learned so much from Aeneas of Troilus' character, Aeneas could as easily have told him about Cressida; and we know that Aeneas knows of Troilus' feelings for her (cf. 4.1.47-49). But if Ulysses does know of Troilus' feelings for Cressida, why then does he take him to see her with Diomedes? Believing her to be driven by desire, surely he will have suspected what is going on between the pair. Evidently then, he wanted Troilus to see the truth about Cressida. But why? Perhaps this is Ulysses'

[28] Interestingly, while here (and elsewhere) we see the problem of errant pride, Ulysses' most recent interaction with Achilles showed how pride can be useful (indeed necessary) when properly tamed. Thus,

motivation throughout: to expose the inflated and idealistic ideals founding much of the action of this play, especially those of love and glory[29]. However, if his goal is to excise Troilus' idyllic view of love, his doing so is all the more puzzling, since it turns Troilus into a 'mad and fantastic executioner' against the Greeks and translates his love for Cressida to slaughter in battle. Moreover, it is unlikely that this reaction should surprise Ulysses provided that he already knows that Troilus is merciless and "more vindictive than jealous love" when moved. Throughout, Ulysses has shown himself to be a cunning, prudent and perceptive man who plays a very active, yet hidden, role in conducting actions and events. He also demonstrates that he himself has no time for love, and other affairs of the heart. Apparently the only character equipped to see truth, and perhaps immune to self-deception, Ulysses cannot "conjure" or magically alter reality to suit his heart or some ideal. And, perhaps more disturbing, his antagonism towards love may hint at a conflict between reason and love--a theme which may be further reflected in what Cressida says earlier regarding wisdom and love. Speaking to Troilus, she suggests that "to be wise and love/ Exceeds man's might" (3.2.154-155). Perhaps she is correct, throughout wisdom or reason is at odds (or at war) with love, specifically the various

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pride itself is not the problem, but that of its rule (whether by appetite or reason).

[29] Bloom thinks this scene "most clearly" shows Ulysses' "intention to demystify the romantic ideals" which, along with glory, mostly motivate people (368). Likening him to the Platonic Socrates, Bloom claims that Ulysses is the only character who (in an understated way) triumphs in the play. He relies on wisdom and reason actively to debunk and reveal these two primary human motives, while ultimately restoring peace. In contrast to Bloom, others deny Ulysses the same success and selfless machinations. Bradshaw thinks that Ulysses (like the rest) is opportunistic and interested in self-advancement, that his cunning and manipulation is geared not to the advancement of Greece, but to his own personal power and ego. Adamson too thinks Ulysses' actions reflect his own "braininess" (42). She also uses several derogatory phrases to describe his behaviour (i.e., "worked up", "moral indignation", "classic conservative" arguments) (42, 54). And, Goddard thinks Ulysses is the "villain" of the play, upon whose head rests the "guilt" of Hector's "murder" (12,35). (Yet, one may wonder why Ulysses should be disparaged for helping to quash the Trojan most responsible for depleting the Grecian ranks.)

loves which motivate people. And that Ulysses himself does not appear to be a lover of women[30] further suggests that wisdom and romantic love specifically are contradictory.

During the final battle, Thersites provides another angle of Ulysses' character when he comments on the apparent failings of the policy of Ulysses and Nestor:

> ...the policy of those crafty
> swearing rascals--that stale old mouse-eaten dry
> cheese Nestor, and that same dog-fox Ulysses--is
> not proved 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
> today; whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim
> barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion. (5.4.9-17)

This speech calls into question the success of Ulysses' policy. Ajax, glutted with false worth, has retreated to his tent; and Achilles, although initially inspired by a love of honour, now remains faithful to his Trojan mistress. And upon deflating Troilus' ideals, Troilus turns his wrath towards executing Greek soldiers. These outcomes imply that even the best reason may not always prevail over the lures of individual pleasures, and that "refractory appetites" forever will threaten the common good.

However, our last glimpse of Ulysses during the final battle may suggest that his behind-the-scenes rule is ultimately successful. As the Greek losses threaten to turn the balance of power in favour of Troy, he brings bright news to the downcast army by announcing that Achilles and Ajax are angry and arming in response to friends killed in action. Though Ajax's companion remains nameless, Achilles has lost his tent mate, Patroclus. These losses, however, prove to be very lucky, especially as Achilles has

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[30] As noted in the following chapter on "Manhood and Womanhood", this is in dramatic contrast to Homer's version: his *Odyssey* is an epic depicting Odysseus' undying love for Penelope.

Hector killed in response to Patroclus' death. And, while Agamemnon is uplifted that the gods may have "befriended" them in this action, one may suspect that someone more mortal has engineered this stroke of extremely good fortune. Unlike the *Iliad*, the gods are entirely absent from effecting any actions and outcomes in this play. This does not mean, however, that all has been left in the hands of Fate. Instead, one may speculate that it is Ulysses who somehow engineered this death (perhaps at the hands of Troilus?)[31]--the one and only motive powerful enough to awaken Achilles to war[32]. In lieu of the gods, Ulysses often lurks behind much of the action in the play like some veiled wizard manipulating events. Given that he knows all of Achilles' commerce with Troy, he very likely will have known of Achilles' final refusal to fight. Moreover, Achilles' disinclination could not have come at a more unfortunate time, as the Greeks are on the verge of being destroyed by the incredible execution accomplished by Hector and Troilus. If Greece is to win, the best Greek warriors *must* go to war. Ulysses must again stir him (and quickly) into hungering for Hector's blood. And if love is Achilles' most potent motivation (as the renewal of his love vow suggests), Ulysses must use this to his advantage. The one love of Achilles' more powerful than Polyxena is Patroclus, and what better motive for going to war than the death (or capture) of one's beloved. After all, this is ostensibly the reason for the Trojan war: the abduction of Helen. Although there is no clear indication of Ulysses having any direct involvement in Patroclus' demise, Ulysses has demonstrated throughout his talent for using subtle and secret tactics to manipulate

[31] Though often assumed, there is no indication that Hector killed Patroclus, he is (according to Ulysses) named only by Achilles' "mangled Myrmidons" who 'cry' on Hector, apparently for their wounds. For all we know, Troilus killed him in his vindictive rage--which was, rather conveniently, sparked by Ulysses' actions. And that Achilles believes Hector to be responsible may also have been Ulysses doing--he could simply have told Achilles that Hector killed Patroclus.

characters and events to the best end for Greece. Indeed, Ulysses may have simply convinced Patroclus to fight earlier at 3.3 when warning Achilles not to rest on past glories. There Patroclus spoke of feeling guilty for, in his view, keeping Achilles from the war and damaging his good name because of his own "little stomach" for battle (219). To remedy this guilt, and perhaps draw Achilles into battle, Patroclus may have gone into battle, whereupon someone--perhaps Hector, but maybe Troilus--dispatched him. Or perhaps Ulysses was more directly involved in Patroclus' death. Why should we not suspect that he could be responsible for the single most powerful, and perhaps most rational, act that may finally end this long, cruel, senseless war?

Thus, despite not being the ruler by convention, Ulysses appears to be the natural or true ruler. He uses reason and prudence to determine his actions and, in more cunning fashion, to steer Greek policy and the behaviour of others to what seems to be the best end for Greece.

**7) Terrible Thersites**

Another Greek who merits examination is Thersites, one of the play's most colourful (and caustic) characters. We first hear of him during the Greek council, Agamemnon refers to Thersites as one with "mastic jaws" and lacking "music, wit and oracle." (1.3.73-74) And Nestor describes him as a "slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint" (192-193). Introduced to him shortly there after, Thersites certainly does appear acrid, as we see him verbally assailing Ajax who beats him in response. In addition to hurling insults at Ajax (i.e., "beef-witted mongrel lord" (2.1.112)), Thersites taunts Ajax

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[32] A similar example may be found in Measure for Measure where by, 'heavenly accident', a man's 'timely' death satisfies political needs (Cf. 4.3.68-76). One may also compare this action to the execution of

with the claim that he and Achilles, who arrives on the scene soon after, are being used merely as pawns by the Greek leaders:

> There's Ulysses, and old Nestor, whose wit was
> mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes,
> yoke you like draught-oxen and make you plough
> up the wars. (2.1.106-109)

Thersites seems intent upon "awakening" these two oxen to their apparent servitude. Or, perhaps he is more interested in trying to appear more witty than they. Evidence of this latter view may be reflected in what Thersites says soon after. When fed up with speaking to them he departs with a promise to no longer to visit them, but to keep with more intellectual fare:

> I will see you hanged like clotpolls ere I come
> any more to your tents: I will keep where there is
> wit stirring, and leave the faction of fools. (119-121)

Here, Thersites sounds as if he prides himself on being much more 'wise' than either of the two famed warriors. The timing of this scene is also of interest. Following directly after the Greek council, it validates Ulysses' report of the camp being infected with emulation and faction.

While our first encounter with Thersites was after the Greek war council, the second is directly after the Trojan council. Thersites, in soliloquy, speaks of being hopelessly consumed with rage and "lost in the labyrinth of [his] fury" (2.3.1-2). Some of his ire is directed at Ajax, some at Achilles, and the rest on the entire Greek camp:

> ...the vengeance on

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Remirro de Orco in Chapter 7 of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, who also was slain to achieve political goals.

> the whole camp--or rather, the Neapolitan bone-
> ache; for that methinks is the curse depending on
> those who war for a placket. I have said my
> prayers, and devil Envy say 'Amen'. (18-22)

He continues:

> Here is such patchery, such juggling, and such
> knavery! All the argument is a whore and a
> cuckold: a good quarrel to draw emulous factions,
> and bleed to death upon. Now the dry serpigo on
> the subject, and the war and lechery confound all! (73-77)

In contrast to any glorious or honourable ideal linking love and war, Thersites is clearly without noble and romantic illusions about either. Raising the disease theme again, war is more symptomatic of ill-health than glory.

Despite his apparent insight, however, Thersites is also full of rage and prays not to any heavenly deity, but to the "devil Envy". He appeals not to anything high or heavenly, but is instead motivated or ruled by base and low drives[33]. And, despite acknowledging that he has the ability to "rail" (presumably with wit) at Ajax, he apparently would trade in his 'wit' to be more like Ajax:

> Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus?
> He beats me, and I rail at him. O worthy satis-
> faction! Would it were otherwise--that I could
> beat him, whilst he railed at me. (2.3.2-5)

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[33] Citing the verbal and physical conflict of this scene as evidence of the constant conflict in the play, Adamson notes that Thersites' only weapon against the "brawny oaf", Ajax, is his "punning wit" despite this 'wit' being largely lost on the dim or "sodden-witted" Ajax; 16. Moreover, while Thersites comes across as the harsh "realist" of the play, the one who 'tells it like it is', she further notes that his critical nature presents both a "force and limit" to his outlook (63). He "lacks any capacity for doubt or wonder [and thus] he remains a man of restricted insight and imagination" (64). G. Wilson Knight has a similar impression, noting that Thersites is blind to anything high or noble. Thersites "sees folly everywhere, and finds no

Presumably referring to Ajax having 'won' the lottery to "carry" the honour of fighting Hector, Thersites speech is full of envy. He suggests that he would gladly exchange his brains for Ajax's witless brawn. One reason may be that he would like to enjoy some of the 'great' honours that go to Ajax and Achilles for their status as warriors. After all, he is certainly not highly honoured or regarded well; his 'fame', such as it is, is in his "mastic jaws" and his ability to slander. Instead of gaining renown as a great warrior, which he would prefer, he will settle for the "issue" he can conjure with his "spiteful execrations", such as angering and reducing the heroes to fools (6-7). Moreover, as he is trapped in a "labyrinth", one may wonder if there is any thread which can extract him (and others ruled by envy). Or, is he forever doomed to be an envious, angry and vulgar man?[34]

Despite his earlier vow no longer to visit Ajax or Achilles, but to stay with those of wit, we next observe Thersites joining the 'fool' Achilles in his tent. However, coming back to Achilles despite vowing not to may suggest that Thersites is not his own boss. He may not have the option of doing what he wants because he may be but a servant or "slave" to the Greek commanders (cf. 1.3.194). For example, he was "bade" or commanded by Ajax to find out about the proclamation (2.1.92-93). At 3.3 he may be serving Ulysses when, directly after Ulysses has warned Achilles of Ajax's threat to usurp his honour, Thersites arrives at Achilles' tent and pageants Ajax. As if on cue, Thersites provides Achilles with visual proof of Ajax's folly by imitating Ajax strutting about the field bewitched by "vainglory" and plagued by "opinion" (3.3.250-305). Also, while having criticized Achilles and Ajax for their being "yoked" by Ulysses and Nestor,

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wisdom in mankind's activity. He sees one side of the picture only: man's stupidity. He is blind to man's nobility." (57-58)

he later admits that the same commanders set him upon causing friction between the two warriors (cf. 5.4.9-17). Interestingly, Achilles often employs him as his messenger, and bearer of letters. Thus, if he is a servant or slave to the Greeks, coupled with the consequences of his envy and anger, Thersites appears to be enslaved both within and without himself.

When next we see him, he, like Ulysses and Troilus, is observing the spectacle of Diomedes and Cressida, and Troilus' reaction to it. Predictably, Thersites comments on the wanton nature of the affair, and on Cressida's whorish and manipulative behaviour. His parting comments suggest a very ugly view of humankind:

> Lechery, lechery, still wars and lechery!
> Nothing else holds fashion. A burning devil take
> them! (5.2.193-95)

To Thersites, everything boils down to lechery, it is the end to which all things, and all people, tend. Yet, despite his apparent disgust he cannot get enough lechery, which seems to be why he has watched this exhibition in the first place. Perhaps the product of his own nature being ruled by base and low drives, he may derive the most pleasure by bringing everything and everyone down to his level in true, envious fashion. And in doing so, he can at least make himself *feel* powerful and superior[35].

Another especially puzzling feature in this scene and elsewhere, is the similarity between Ulysses' and Thersites' comments on love and war. Although both see through

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[34] Once more, Adamson suggests that Thersites is closed off from the breadth of human experience. His reduction of everything to lechery prohibits him from feeling "'giddy', 'whirled', 'embraced' by longing or dread" (65). He is a one-dimensional man, devoid of feeling and human relatedness.

[35] Noting that Thersites takes pleasure in mocking everything, Bradshaw's assessment seems accurate suggesting that the play is "unpacking its own unpacker" (142). By finding lechery pleasing, the reader (who may find it rather painful) comes to see Thersites as sub-human. Moreover, our reaction to rejecting

the idealistic veneer of these two primary human preoccupations, Ulysses is not enslaved by envy and anger. His wisdom seems detached from any low motive, and he genuinely seems to be trying to tame human folly for the higher goal of serving Greece and ending the bloody war. By contrast, Thersites, although he does have wit in him, cannot free himself from his lowly trappings.

Turning to his commentary on battle, it is worth noting that Thersites again berates the lecherous nature of the combat while, again, enjoying it. He is excited watching Diomedes and Troilus; one "dissembling abominable varlet" fighting another "scurvy, doting, foolish knave" over a mere "whore" (5.4.2-6). Not surprisingly, although his tongue may do battle, Thersites proves to be anything but a warrior. Confronted successively by Hector and Margarelon, he escapes both due to his own groveling admission that he is not worthy of a warrior's efforts. To Hector he describes himself as "a rascal, a scurvy railing knave: a very filthy rogue." (28-29) To the bastard son, Margarelon, he notes:

> I am a bastard, too: I love bastards. I am
> bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in
> mind, bastard in valour, in everything illegitimate. (5.7.16-18)

Thersites willingly presents himself as the lowest of the low, and on that basis survives, a confessed "bastard" in everything.

Thus, Thersites is hopelessly enslaved by his preoccupation with lechery and envy, and takes special pleasure in reducing every human behaviour to the lowest common denominator. He is a bottom-dweller who desires to replace everything high,

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his reductionism, Bradshaw continues, signals a human need to maintain ideals and moral meaning, and activates a "human need for value and significance" (161).

including his own insight or intelligence, with the low. Yet, in spite of his cutting 'realism' he does not actively examine his own behavior and, consequently remains trapped in his "labyrinth" constituted by the low passions ruling his soul.

**8) Airy Achilles**

The final character requiring investigation is Achilles, traditionally regarded as perhaps the most famous of all the heroes. His name arises early on when Cressida, toying with Pandarus, refers to him as a "better man" than Troilus (1.2.251-252). This seemingly minor reference highlights a theme central to his character: his reputation. Although she likely refers to him only to frustrate Pandarus, using his 'great' name highlights the fact that Achilles' fame is well known in Troy, and that much is invested in his reputation as the "better" man. Indeed, he enjoys a reputation that serves as a standard against which other men are judged better or worse. Thus, one is invited to investigate whether or not he truly lives up to such high praise, and if not, who (if anyone) does.

In the following scene, Ulysses presents a contrasting view of Achilles:

> The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
> The sinew and forehand of our host,
> Having his ear full of his airy fame,
> Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent
> Lies mocking our designs... (1.3.142-146)

Instead of brave warrior, Achilles looks to be an insubordinate man glutted with pride who would rather lie in bed with his male 'friend' and (crowned by opinion) enjoy pageants ridiculing the Greek leaders. Moreover, as the popular hero, his behaviour is even more dangerous politically because if men follow his example, as they are said to be doing (i.e., Ajax), Greece will be so weakened as to lose the war.

When first we meet Achilles, he is with Patroclus where, after intervening in the faction between Thersites and Ajax, he describes a very different version of Hector's challenge than what was earlier announced by Aeneas. Apparently forgetting most of it, Achilles speaks of the challenger fighting for "stomach" and daring and relegates it to "trash" (2.1.127-128). There is no mention of the puffed-up chivalric character of the challenge Aeneas issued; instead Achilles' version suggests that he thinks Hector's true motives emanate not from honour or chivalry, but from his appetite. Moreover, it may signal a very real (and very deadly) difference of perspective between the two men, one which in the end costs Hector his life. Achilles also infers that had the challenge not been put to a lottery, he himself would have answered it. Yet, as he acknowledges no dimension of chivalry in the challenge, one may presume that he would answer Hector not out of chivalric love, but for his own purposes.

Once Ulysses' pride-taming plan is in motion at 3.3, Achilles responds as Ulysses predicted he would upon being disdained and ignored by his comrades. At first he does not appear to take their behaviour as a threat to his fame or fortune, noting to Patroclus that he is "friends" with fortune (88). Ulysses' treatment, however, soon cures him of this comfortable thinking and, by threatening the status of his honour, arouses Achilles' desire for renown and thus wakens a hunger for Hector's blood. His love for Polyxena, who Ulysses mentions as his true reason for not warring, is seemingly replaced by a "woman's longing" and an "appetite that [he is] sick withal" to see Hector in his "weeds of peace" (236, 237, 238). Moreover, having opened his mind to Ulysses' powers of suggestion, Achilles now claims that he is in conflict:

My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd,

And I myself see not the bottom of it. (306-307)

Prior to speaking to Ulysses, Achilles' mind was still, clear, and unbothered. Now, awakened by Ulysses to the threat of his honourable reputation being lost, Achilles seems genuinely disturbed.

When Hector and his Trojan followers arrive for the duel, the subject of Achilles' reputation arises again as Achilles and Aeneas exchange words:

*Aeneas*: If not Achilles, sir,
What is your name?
*Achill*: If not Achilles, nothing. (4.5.75-77)

Once more the reader is invited to distinguish between reputation and merit. What worth does Achilles truly possess, as opposed to that reputed in his great name? Achilles has done nothing so far in our presence to merit the greatness of his heroic name. But, if he is not "Achilles", a name synonymous with glory and honour, what or who is he? It appears to be this fear of nothingness that Ulysses successfully taps into in order to tempt Achilles back to war.

When Achilles is introduced to Hector following the duel, his hunger for honour appears (much as we saw with Hector) more like a lust for blood. Displaying no regard for courtly courtesy, Achilles interrupts the gentle greetings with as much grace as a predator would its prey:

Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body
Shall I destroy him--whether there, or there, or there--
That I may give the local wound a name,
And make distinct the very breach whereout
Hector's great spirit flew? Answer me, heavens! (241-245)

Ironically, the way 'he' finally kills Hector--by ordering his many comrades to attack the unarmed man--doubtless does result in wounds all over Hector's body. However, no sooner is Achilles' longing to destroy Hector awakened, then is his "great purpose" to battle him thwarted when he receives a letter from Queen Hecuba and love token from Polyxena. Achilles again changes his mind, and affirming that he will remain true to this earlier oath, states that he will not battle Hector:

> Fall, Greeks: fail, fame: honour, or go or stay;
> My major vow lies here, this I'll obey. (5.1.42-43)

Despite being initially moved by Ulysses' warning, Achilles is now prepared to suffer anything, including perhaps slavery, to stay true to Polyxena. Nothing, it seems, could be more contrary to the good of Greece. He will sacrifice his own countrymen for the 'sake' of his enemy lover. Thus, once more romantic love proves to be a very powerful (and politically dangerous) force[36].

His "major vow" renewed and his hunger for Hector in remission, Achilles seems prepared to wait out the war. That is, at least, until Patroclus is reported slain by Hector, the "boy-queller" (5.5.45). Patroclus' death proves to be the sole factor in igniting Achilles' wrath. No vow, no token, no woman, no concern for honour or any speech motivates Achilles like the death of young Patroclus. Vowing revenge, Achilles meets Hector in battle. However, the 'battle' is short-lived as Hector quickly and easily betters Achilles. Hector, having spared Achilles' life, and "a great deal misprizing/ The knight

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[36] Goddard notes that his love for Polyxena has put Achilles "out of love with violence", and sees a similarity between his behaviour and Romeo's in *Romeo and Juliet* (16). In love with the enemy's daughter, Romeo initially refuses to fight her cousin Tybalt out of a professed, familial "love" for him (3.1.55-89). He is, however, awoken to bloody revenge by Tybalt's slaying of his dear friend Mercutio, and soon sees that "sweet" Juliet's "beauty hath made [him] effeminate/ And in [his] temper soften'd valour's steel." (114-116)

oppos'd", soon pays for this mercy when Achilles returns with his Myrmidon army (4.5.74). And, having found Hector unarmed and exhausted, Achilles orders his execution. His parting words bode a dark precedent:

> Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set,
> How ugly night comes breathing at his heels;
> Even with the vail and dark'ning of the sun
> To close the day up, Hector's life is done. (5.8.5-8)

With these last rites, Achilles' Myrmidon soldiers slaughter Hector. With the retreat sounding, Achilles disdains the closing day as his "half-supp'd sword" is forced into early retirement (19). He then proceeds to drag Hector's corpse around the field while his army spreads word of 'his' having killed great Hector.

Hector's death presents perhaps one of the most cynical twists of the play: that Achilles wins credit for killing him as if in man-to-man combat. His fame is renewed and eternal honour bestowed upon him, despite not being able to conquer an armed Hector himself. Indeed, this failure to meet his heroic reputation makes one wonder whether Achilles would have fallen just as easily had he been made to answer Hector's earlier challenge, and thus brought shame to himself and Greece. But, any report that he was earlier beaten by Hector in personal combat will surely remain lost to the history books. As such, the theme of reputation and substance or merit culminates here as Achilles reaps glory for a deed that he was ultimately incapable of performing. Indeed, Achilles truly is nothing without the cloak of his famous name. Like most of the characters and actions of this play, the exterior appearance has been stripped to reveal a far less glamorous reality. As well, recalling Ulysses' speech on Time (where he spoke of dullards like Ajax

receiving fame for more recent, yet less deserving deeds) Achilles himself more fulfils this prediction.

Despite the emptiness of his fame and the unchivalrous nature of Hector's death, however, Achilles has ultimately acted the part of the warrior. War is not pleasant; it is the business of killing[37]. Achilles does not glamorize or idolize war, as Hector does (and Troilus once did), but throughout speaks of it in terms of appetite. Unlike Hector, we never saw Achilles senselessly sawing through Trojans to serve his own ambition. Hector was the only target of his hungry sword, which although it could have continued feasting, does not. Moreover, in having Hector killed, Achilles has undoubtedly saved many Greek lives, and if this deed ends the war, he will have indirectly spared many Trojan lives who would have died had the war continued. Hector's death will also give hope to the Greeks, as it does to Agamemnon, and seeing Achilles back in the fight will likely stifle the 'barbarism' spreading through the camp[38]. Thus, rather than be accused as a monstrous villain, does Achilles perhaps deserve to be commended for putting an end to Hector's senseless, appetitive and merciless executions? Or, perhaps it should be Ulysses who gets the credit for this great achievement, especially if ultimately 'his' reason is what truly 'guided' Achilles' "execution" (1.3.210). As with Ajax, Ulysses' wisdom (or the "fineness" of his "soul") has proven stronger than the engine or 'battering ram'.

Thus, this last horrific, yet necessary deed seems to unmask (like Hector's last victim) a far less glamorous reality which lies beneath the surface of the heroic and

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[37] Bradshaw offers that by killing Hector efficiently and effectively, Achilles is one of the few who refuses to treat war as a means of "sport". The "play is effectively over, when somebody [Achilles] at last refuses to treat either war or love as a 'sport'." (139). While much of what Bradshaw says seems correct, that the war is not over by the end of the play (nor is there any indication of it ending soon) suggests that other elements (i.e. revenge) will take the place of the 'sportier' ideals of glory and chivalry.

[38] At least for a time, having put his sword to "bed" we may wonder if it will awaken again to battle, or whether Achilles will proudly 'in-tent' himself, and bask in the fame of Hector's death.

romantic ideals which gloss this war. And, it further concludes this look at the play's central characters.

The aim of this analysis has been to unmask these characters in order to discover what truly motivates each one to act as he or she does, and thereby resolve what is puzzling about them, and consequently about the play as a whole. Most of the heroes, like Achilles and Hector, perplexed us because they failed to live up to their reputations as great warriors and honourable men. And the women, like Cressida and Helen, though famed for their beauty, seemed of little value for anything other than their fair exteriors. Thus, the idea (or ideal) of distinguishing who the best men and women truly are, and what determines male and female excellence remains a primary theme, and will be the focus of the following chapter.

## Chapter Three: Manhood and Womanhood

"Do you know a man if you see him?" (1.2.64-65) "Do you know what a man is?" (256) "A woman impudent and mannish grown/ Is not more loath'd than an effeminate man/ In time of action." (3.3.216-218) "There is amongst the Greeks Achilles, a better man than Troilus." (1.2.251-252) Achilles: the "great", the "picture of what thou seemest, and idol of idiot-worshippers", the "cur", the "murderer" (4.5.151, 5.1.6-7, 5.5.15, 5.10.4). "O brave Hector! Look how he looks, there's a countenance: is't not a brave man?" (1.2.202-204) "Most gentle and most valiant Hector" (4.5.226). Hector is "ungently temper'd", a "worthy warrior", the "boy-queller" (5.3.1, 4.5.199, 5.5.45). "Brave Troilus, the prince of chivalry!" (1.2.231-232) Troilus: "truth's authentic authour", the "coward" (3.2.179, 5.5.42)[39].

In both Troy and Greece, manhood is measured primarily in terms of a man's courage as demonstrated in war. Those men recognized as brave warriors are honoured by most as idols and ideals of male excellence. In Troy, Pandarus' comments on the warriors returning from the battlefield provides an example of this as he boasts of the soldiers' "brave" appearances. Observing them pass by, he marks Aeneas as brave, and as a "flower" or favourite of Troy. Seeing Hector, Pandarus raves: "O brave Hector! Look how he looks, there's a countenance: is't not a brave man?" (1.2.202-204) He then points to the several hacks on his helmet as evidence of his greatness. When Troilus goes by, Pandarus notes him to be braver still, according to his bloodied sword and helmet more bashed than Hector's. The fact that Pandarus is emphasizing Troilus' courage as his

[39] Commenting on the complexity of knowing a character, Vivian Thomas observes that of the four hundred questions in the play (incidentally the most of any Shakespearean play), the majority relate to the "identity

primary means of wooing Cressida at all suggests that courage is considered the main ingredient to manhood, and is the standard for ranking the "better" and 'best' men of Troy. Fighting for women, or (more generally) a display of chivalry, further appears to serve as the most 'noble' cause or excuse for demonstrating male courage in Troy. For example, in addition to being the stated reason behind the war, Hector uses this excuse to legitimize or support his private challenge, and to stir some Greek (almost surely Achilles) to fight him. Prior to the duel, Aeneas claims that the "glory" of Troy rides on Hector's "single chivalry" (4.4.145, 146). Hector later describes himself as being "i' th' vein of chivalry" before setting off for the final battle (5.3.32). And, Pandarus brags to Cressida that Troilus is the "prince of chivalry" (1.2.232).

While to men regarded as courageous are attributed the most honours, those who do not stand out as heroic or brave are seen as less worthy of praise. Continuing Pandarus' descriptions of the soldiers, when Antenor and Helenus pass by, he is far less congratulatory. Antenor, a man marked not by valour, but for his wit and sound judgement, is a man only "good enough" (1.2.193). And Helenus (the priest) fights not valiantly, but only "indifferent well" (226). These men are not recognized as good soldiers, and are deemed to be less courageous, thus less honourable and less valuable than the others. Moreover, as the description of Antenor suggests, reason is not as highly valued in this ideal of masculinity, as good judgement and cunning wit are not recognized to be the stuff of courageous warriors and 'real' men. Troilus expands upon this sentiment at council when he slanders reason as the antithesis of manhood and courage by associating it with rationalizing effeminate fear and cowardice. Hector, although he

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of characters, ranging from the simplest enquiry--who is he?--to the ambiguous--what is he? (About one-third of the questions are rhetorical.) (102)

defends the merit of reason, in doing so he only demonstrates its usefulness in the service of honour.

On the Greek side, manhood is also principally determined according to a man's status as a brave warrior. For example, Achilles' illustrious reputation as the "better man" in battle has elevated him to the position of popular leader in the Greek camp, and has made him the standard by which to rank other Greek (and Trojan) men. Nestor also claims that "valour" is the essential element which distinguishes male excellence or virtue (1.3.46), although he goes on to claim that 'constancy' is proof of valour. And, his own example seems to illustrate that courage is what motivates most Greek men. Although well past his fighting prime, Nestor is acknowledged to have been a competent warrior in his prime, and this reputation seems to be what gives him the power to "knit" men's ears to his "experience'd tongue". He is an experienced soldier, and thus his advice is much more likely to be heeded by other soldiers who trust more in his opinion than that of a man who is not, or never was, a great warrior. Still this overt emphasis on courage is tacitly qualified by the veiled contempt the leading Greeks have for the brave but oafish Ajax.

So, while the Greek soldiers may be most impressed by warrior prowess, reason appears to be more valued among the Greek leadership than among that of Troy. Comparing the Greek and Trojan council meetings, the leading Trojan councilors value reason, but its value is not intrinsic. Reason is important so far as it serves the 'more valuable' Trojan ideals of honour and glory. By contrast, the Greek commanders show more respect for, and use of, reason in determining policy and action. Ulysses considers reason to be the ruling principle which should (and alone can) properly guide the actions

of the Greek forces, and men generally. Moreover, that Ulysses can successfully praise the role of reason in the conduct of Greek affairs (by contrast to Helenus at Troy), and have his advice and remedies actively solicited, tacitly implies that reason is a potent force for action, not merely the stuff of "dreams and slumbers".

Despite the 'manly' ideals of either race, however, it is clear that many men fail to live up to their honoured reputations and appearances. While Pandarus' description of the returning warriors constitutes a eulogy of bravery, this assessment is based solely upon how they look or appear, or (more precisely) how their bodies' armour appears. But, not having seen them in battle, one cannot know if they truly fought with courage and honour. And when we do finally observe them in combat, many fail to live up to their heroic reputations. For example, Troilus at that point is not fighting for Trojan magnanimity, but to vent his hatred and fulfil a private desire for revenge. Also, while Hector claims that honour determines his "fate", the sight of him chopping up young Greeks and butchering cowardly men for their fine armour more reflects bloodlust than honour. The "great" Achilles, famed as the best warrior of all, is easily overcome by Hector in personal combat, only to have him killed (and his own heroic reputation renewed) while Hector is defenseless. Indeed, the heroic reputation and romantic fame attributed to the war itself soon appears as no more than "mad idolatry", rather than anything resembling nobility and glory (2.2.57). One wonders if Thersites might be correct that "[a]ll the argument is a whore and cuckold" (2.3.74-75).

Turning now to women, we are once more invited to explore what marks womanhood. Cressida, says Pandarus, "looked yesternight fairer than ever I saw her look,

or any woman else." (1.2.32-33) Helen is "the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love's visible soul--", whose "youth and freshness/ Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning." (3.1.31-32, 2.2.79-80) Troilus swoons over the beauty of Cressida's various parts "[her] eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice" (1.1.54). Ulysses translates another, much less innocent, "language" in Cressida: "her eye, her cheek, her lip--/ Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out/ At every joint and motive of her body." (4.5.55-57) Helen is a "pearl", a "worthy prize"; but also "a placket", a "flat tamed piece" with "whorish loins" (2.2.82, 87, 2.3.21, 4.1.63, 64). Hector is said to have "a lady wiser, fairer, truer..."; yet she also apparently 'offends' him regularly (1.3.274). "Cassandra's mad: her brain-sick raptures/ Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel..." (2.2.123-125). "Women are angels, wooing:/ Things won are done" (1.2.291-292).

The ideal of womanhood is founded primarily on beauty. Helen, the supposed cause of the quarrel, is reputed to be very beautiful. Much as Achilles is revered as the standard of male excellence, she seems to serve as the standard of female excellence by virtue of her beautiful appearance. Cressida too is presumably very beautiful. Not only does she enchant Troilus, but also she easily charms most of the Greeks commanders. And yet women's beauty is often measured against their constancy or inconstancy. Troilus yearned for Cressida's "constancy in plight and youth...to [outlive] beauty's outward". While true, her every movement was beautiful; but when false she became no more than "revolted fair" (or fare). Similar to Ulysses' view of Cressida, Diomedes speaks scathingly of Helen's falsehood towards not only her husband Menelaus but all of Greece: "She's bitter to her country: hear me, Paris--/For every false drop in her bawdy veins/ A Grecian's life has sunk" (4.1.69-71).

Reflecting upon the behavior of Cressida and Helen, it would appear that their beauty is merely skin deep. Cressida's longing to be desired, along with her hearty sexual appetite and lack of moderation, inhibits her from remaining constant to herself and faithful to one man. And Helen, a 'captive' of Paris for the past seven years, is not an unhappy prisoner yearning to flee back to Greece and Menelaus, but more a "merry Greek" who flirts and teases with other men while living a life of leisure with her self-proclaimed Trojan "husband" (1.2.110, 166). In addition to being inconstant to her lawful husband, Menelaus, Helen appears immature and preoccupied with her appearance. At 3.1, when Pandarus is trying to arrange Troilus' dinner excuse with Paris, she constantly interrupts their conversation, like a child demanding of attention:

> You shall not bob us out of our melody; if you
> do, our melancholy upon your head. (1.3.67-68)

She also appears to take great pride in the supposed worth of her beauty. Responding to Paris' request that she disarm Hector, Helen replies:

> 'Twill make us proud to be his servant, Paris.
> Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty
> Gives us more palm in beauty than we have,
> Yea, overshines ourself. (151-154)

Although she may be trying to sound dutiful, her response instead attests to a great vanity, as she assumes her beauty to be an especially high standard by which all other things shine. As well, while she may be renowned for beauty, her wit does not seem to be as highly praised. According to Diomedes, Helen has never given "good words breath" (4.1.74).

While often idealized as reasons for men to display courage and achieve glory, notable courage is regarded as contrary to women's own nature. For example, Troilus equates 'fear and reasons' with femininity at council, and when we first see him he is berating his own absence from battle and his lack of self-mastery as weak and "womanish". It is worth noting that instead of inspiring him to war, his frustrated longing for Cressida actually distracts him from it. With the exception of Ulysses and Hector, women as often as not appear to distract men from battle. Paris will apparently not fight if Helen does not allow it, and Aeneas (with Diomedes in agreement) contends that if he had "so good occasion to lie long ...[as Paris]...nothing but heavenly business" would take him from the arms of a woman (4.1.4-5). Achilles also refrains from battle because of a woman and (until Patroclus' death) is prepared to sacrifice his fame and the entire safety of Greece for her. Reminiscent of the mythical Circe or the Sirens, notorious for luring men away from their business and even to their deaths, women are often alluded to in terms of enchanting men from their aims. In addition to charming Paris "above thought" itself, Helen's touch is so powerful that she can better disarm Hector than any Greek with her womanly charms (3.1.155). Troilus speaks of being "enchanted" by Cressida, until he is awakened to her infidelity. And Priam, too, upon hearing the portents of his womenfolk is "suddenly enrapt" to believe them, which perhaps suggests that he was influenced by the women themselves, more than by the matter of the omens (5.3.65). Alternatively, one may interpret his 'rapture' as symbolic of the effects of women on men.

Women being valued or ranked according to their physical beauty, they seem to have very little autonomy, and are often used to achieve political ends. Helen's abduction was an act of political reprisal, and has provided both Troy and Greece with an excuse to

make war. Cressida's trade for Antenor was to pay Calchas for his Greek service. And, there is also the old Trojan aunt, whose earlier abduction ostensibly provided the justification for Helen's abduction. Repeatedly, then, women serve as political pawns, whose 'worth' is only as they are 'valued'. In addition, women are also used to satisfy the personal goals of men. Troilus' reference to 'achieving' Cressida suggested that, to some degree, he sought her as a means of personal glory and accomplishment. Pandarus too seemed to be using Cressida for his own ends, without any noticeable regard for what may be best for her. And, when Paris spoke of the capture of Helen, he referred to the Trojan council as having granted "wings to [his] propension", which infers that his personal inclination had much to do with Helen's capture (2.2.134). As well, Helen and Cressida are both referred to as exotic 'pearls' and 'prizes', which suggests that they then are honoured among men simply as esteemed personal adornments.

Similar to men who do not meet the heroic expectations of 'true' manliness, when women conflict with, or fail to meet these public and private goals, they seem to be devalued or demeaned. For example, neither Andromache nor Cassandra ever appear to be taken seriously. Despite the chivalrous tone of Hector's challenge, claiming that his lady is "wiser" than any Grecian dame, we never see him treat Andromache as wise (1.3.274). Instead, he insults her and dismisses her concerns, only to complain that she trains his offences. Cassandra, whose omens prove true with respect to Hector's death, is never thought to be an oracle of truth, but rather is considered "mad" and plagued by "brain-sick raptures" (2.2.123). Thus, women appear to be valued according to how well they fit with the ideals of manhood, rather than what may be best for women or true to female nature.

What truly is best for female nature is difficult to discover in the play, but it seems to have much to do with a woman's ability to remain constant and faithful[40]. And as Cressida alluded to earlier, moderation may be the principal element necessary for women to remain constant, and thereby manifest female excellence (presuming genuine female excellence entails a woman's ability to be constant or true). However, as noted, women are not always given the opportunity or encouragement to develop moderation and demonstrate constancy, something which seems largely due to their lack of autonomy. For example, there is no indication that Helen left Sparta willingly, but rather that she was (as Paris says himself) "ransack'd" (2.2.151) and 'raped' by Paris. Although she appears to love Paris and to be happy in Troy, one may wonder whether her feelings and apparent opportunism have been born of necessity. If she were to return to Menelaus and Greece, would she be welcomed with open arms? Or, would the "soil of her fair rape" (2.2.149) cause Menelaus to despise her as "revolted fair"? (5.2.185) Also, Diomedes' view of her as a worthless "whore" of "contaminated carrion weight", suggests that this is what some Greeks (including most likely Ulysses) already think of her, and that they would likely value her accordingly if she were to rejoin them. As such, perhaps her "merry" behavior is more a reflection of her powerlessness to effect her own will, and the practical necessity that she adapt to whatever situation she is placed into. This perspective also may apply to Cressida. Having resolved to hold off from Troilus, Pandarus does everything he can to break her resolve. While he arranges for Troilus' 'sleepover', for example, there is no evidence that Cressida knew of this ploy; she may

[40] Pointing to Time as the true culprit of *Troilus and Cressida* (thus constituting its "only tragedy"), Traversi argues that constancy is impossible and "meaningless" in this play and, citing Cressida specifically, suggests that she cannot be held responsible for her behaviour, nor accountable to "moral

have been caught off guard, making it that much more difficult for her to maintain her vow (cf. 4.2.25-26). And, had she not been traded to Diomedes, she may very well have remained true to Troilus. Upon being exchanged, if Diomedes was responsible for Antenor's capture, she may also be expected to 'owe' him her 'services' for Antenor's release. Thus, this problem seems paradoxical; men want women who are constant and true, yet to achieve their goals they instead encourage women to be inconstant. (And in the case of Helen's rape, women can be forced into 'infidelity'.)

Having examined some of the challenges to, and distinctions among, better and worse men and women, the sole character who stands out above the rest is Ulysses. Ulysses seems to be the only one whose interests align with the good of Greece. He does not appear to be interested in achieving fame and glory (either for himself or for Greece), as we do not see him in battle endeavoring to tear 'honour' from some Trojan. Instead, he would rather end the war, and do so through diplomacy rather than in a blazing, courageous battle to the last man. Nor does he seek the recognition and honour of command, as he does not publicly challenge Agamemnon's power or try to disturb his tenuous leadership. Instead he tries to legitimize Agamemnon's rule while remaining content to effect his policy behind-the-scenes.

Ulysses also does not seem interested in love, nor is there any indication of his having a wife or love interest. This is especially odd, given that his being a life-long lover of Penelope is the foundation of his Homeric fame in the *Odyssey*. In that epic tale, he was the archetype of the wise, true and constant husband, who courageously overcame frightful trials and erotic temptations in order to return home to his equally loyal, long-

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evaluation" (31). Time "dominates human relationships and where attraction and separation seem necessary and connected aspects of a single situation." (32)

suffering wife. Once home, he bravely dispatched the many insolent suitors trying to win her. Moreover, his wife, Penelope, unlike Helen and Cressida, did not merrily enjoy herself with any other man while Odysseus was at war in Troy, but being a wise and clever woman, she contrived a scheme allowing her to remain true and constant[41]. That Ulysses does not count as a lover is made even more conspicuous by the opportunity of Hector's challenge, where even Agamemnon and ancient Nestor offer to fight if no other Greek will challenge that his lady is "wiser, fairer, [and] truer" than Hector's (1.3.274). Thus, it seems that 'wily' Ulysses, led by reason and wisdom, is very unlike the other characters of this play. He does not strike one as a lover of anything bodily, be it feasting[42] or sexual pleasure.

But as opposed to the popular view of reason as weak or fit merely for servitude to some appetite or pleasure, Ulysses demonstrates that reason is a potent and powerful force, and even more so than courage itself. For example, despite Achilles' reputation as the supreme warrior, he is easily outmaneuvered and mastered by Ulysses when Ulysses stirs up his mind and awakens his dormant appetite for honour in battle. Ulysses also proves to be a man of action and deeds, despite not being recognized as such. As we have observed throughout, he is constantly thinking, watching, planning, manipulating, preventing, and responding to things--and makes a point of somehow being always well-informed. Moreover, as his own personal end aligns with the common good of Greece, his actions primarily consist of directing the actions of others towards also meeting this

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[41] Courted by bold suitors, Penelope promised to wed upon completing a woven shroud. Yet, weaving by day, she undid the threads nightly to maintain her fidelity to Odysseus (Book 19, 123-163). Moreover, she had to be without him twice as long.

[42] Ulysses' not being interested in feasting is suspiciously similar to Socrates' behaviour in the *Republic*. Socrates is invited to feast at Polemarchus' home with some others, but instead of feasting on food, the men are distracted from dining (and from going into town), and instead engage in (or 'feast' on) a lively and lengthy discussion about Justice.

goal. Thus, rather than 'weak' and 'effeminate', reason is the one force strong enough to guide properly the execution of courage and appetite. Thus, Ulysses is truly the "better" man because he can manipulate other men who are best at what they do (or recognized as such), the better to serve Greece. Indeed, he is like a master chef who forms the finest dish by extracting the most out of premium ingredients.

Despite Ulysses' true merit, however, his value goes largely unrecognized. One reason for this seems to be that most of his 'actions' are literally unseen. He works behind closed doors, and engages in private conversations and embassies. As the 'brains behind the brawn', or the man with the "fineness" in his soul who wisely guides the "execution" of the 'great' warriors, Ulysses' subtle actions are largely invisible to most because others physically display his policy (1.3.209, 210). Indeed, he is like the coach behind the great athlete who gets little credit, while the Olympian is crowned with the honour and glory of victory. But another reason for his comparative anonymity may be that, to be effective, some of his actions must not be seen. To accomplish what is politically necessary, Ulysses has had to do several questionable things, such as lying, cheating, and manipulating other individuals to what may not be personally good for them. Doubtless the most alarming example would be the sacrifice of Patroclus to rouse Achilles to war, if in fact Ulysses was somehow instrumental in arranging it. Although this is merest speculation, Achilles must be made to fight or Greece very likely will lose the war. The "sleeping giant", Achilles, must be awoken, because 'stirring dwarfs' (though perhaps more obedient) do not win wars (2.3.140, 139). If engineered by Ulysses, Patroclus' death is cold and cruel, but ultimately necessary. And while unjust for the individual (intentionally sacrificed for the sake of his country), it may be just in relation to the

common good. If Patroclus' death helps to end the war, it will have saved many more lives, lives that thus far have been sacrificed for mere pride and loose women. And apart from his 'value' in Achilles' eyes, Patroclus has no special claim on our sympathy: he's no one's candidate for 'best man'.

Thus, while Ulysses may prove to be the only character who can truly live up to the distinction of being the best 'human', one element that sets him apart from the others is his marked lack of "refractory" appetites. More specifically, he is not ruled by appetites that most pertain to bodies, or which are displayed physically. However, because most characters are ruled more by their bodies than by their minds, a deeper investigation into appetite is necessary. And, because the play ends with a focus on sickness, the relationship between appetite and disease merits further analysis.

## Chapter Four: Food and Disease

"I have a woman's longing,/ An appetite that I am sick withal,/ To see great Hector in his weeds of peace" (3.3.236-238). "Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death." (5.8.4) "Here, there, and everywhere, he leaves and takes,/ Dexterity so obeying appetite..." (5.5.26-27). "Th' imaginary relish is so sweet/ That it enchants my sense" (3.2.17-18). "The fragments, scraps, the bits, and greasy relics/ Of her o'er-eaten faith are given to Diomed." (5.2.157-159) "Why, his masculine whore. Now the rotten diseases of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs, loads o'gravel i'th'back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, whissing lungs, bladders full of impostume, sciaticas, lime-kilns i'th'palm, incurable bone-ache, and the rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take again such preposterous discoveries!" (5.1.16-23) "The general's disdain'd/ By him one step below, he by the next,/ The next by him beneath: so every step,/ Exampled by the first pace that is sick/ Of his superior, grows to an envious fever/ Of pale and bloodless emulation." (1.3.129-134)

There are a multitude of culinary references in this play, ranging in subject from hunger to food preparation, from flavouring to eating. Many terms are used metaphorically to describe a character or an action. Food is an intriguing subject because, as a basic need, it is essential for survival, and one's appetite (i.e., feeling hungry) is usually a precondition of eating. However, some foods and their preparation aim beyond mere subsistence to pleasure. Desserts, for example, are not intrinsic to life but are eaten to gratify one's taste for sweet and/or rich flavours. Moreover, often there is a correlation between how and what one eats and his or her health. Foods eaten for the sake of pleasure are often unhealthy and can lead to disease or even death, especially if one is immoderate

and gluttonous. Too much candy can cause tooth decay and diabetes; deep-fried foods contribute to clogged arteries and heart disease (and over-indulging in either will certainly add inches to one's figure). Conversely, those who maintain a balanced and nutritional diet tend to live longer, have more energy, and are healthier in general. There is an inherent natural order or rank to food, some foods and modes of eating are simply better than others. Thus, there appears to be a natural objective standard for judging food: that which promotes health is good, whereas that which leads to disease is bad. However, there is another naturally appealing 'standard' which often conflicts: that which brings pleasure is good, what is unpleasing is bad. As for determining which is which, this is a task only reason can perform[43]. And there is a further correlation between reason and appetite, as one must use rational means to temper 'refractory' appetites while encouraging healthy ones so as to maintain a high standard of health[44]. As anyone who has ever dieted can attest, one can suffer a 'cruel battle' within trying to control and curb the cravings of one's appetite.

Given this natural or objective order to food and its relationship to health as determined by reason, one may question whether there are similar rational standards for judging *all* bodily appetites. Consider sexual desire, (a prominent bodily appetite presented in this play). Just as one's liver may harden from excess alcohol, it seems that over-indulging or indiscriminately indulging this appetite can have ill consequences. Pandarus' diseased demise, for example, shows the harmful effects that catering to one's

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[43] As an example, imagine being very hungry and about to bite into a delicious-looking apple, but after learning that the apple has been poisoned, you throw it away. It is not one's bodily appetite (hunger) which *judges* not to eat the poisonous fruit, it is one's rational determination that such digestion would harm one's health.

[44] Using the apple example, the tension between one's desire to eat the apple versus one's knowledge that it is deadly, would likely be more or less pronounced depending on how hungry one is. Not having eaten in days would surely cause more conflict than if one had intended it for desert.

sexual appetites can have, as he apparently wastes away from sexual diseases. His indulgence, and its corrosive consequences, seem to demonstrate Thersites' earlier words that "in a sort lechery eats itself" (5.4.35)[45]. Troilus' experience with Cressida also may suggest an objective standard for measuring bodily appetites. His 'subjective valuation' argument at council--that all is "aught" according to one's private estimation--in practice is hazardous to his health. Having argued that Helen's worth is that which is attributed externally, as opposed to some intrinsic merit of her own behaviour or self, applying this theory in practice (when Cressida proves false) sets him on a path of self-destruction. Troilus cannot simply 'edit' her inconstancy and happily inflate her graces to meet his own romantic ideals and the powerful "esperance" of his heart. Although he tries to separate her into two versions--his true Cressida, and Diomedes' whore--in an effort to deny this contradiction, he cannot do so convincingly to himself. As Bloom notes, "the destruction of his ideal makes it impossible for him to live halfway sensibly as he did before" (372). Now only his hate for Diomedes and his thirst for revenge will fuel his sword, and (contrary to good health) his own "ruin" will be all that can stop him.

One particular reference to food may point to an even deeper understanding of the relationship between appetite and reason. As Troilus awaits Cressida in her orchard prior to their encounter, he fantasizes about the "imaginary relish" Cressida promises. A "relish" is used to enhance a plain tasting food in order to make it more flavorful and pleasurable; the end aimed at is pleasure, not the (self) preservation of health. Troilus also fantasizes that the relish will be "sweet", a term which, incidentally, is used 55 times in this play. Sweet foods and flavors again typically reflect the use of food to satisfy

[45] Thomas offers that appetite is "seldom natural in this play: it is excessive and focuses on scraps and dregs ...and the sickness and regurgitation which follows." (129)

pleasure, not nutritional requirements. Troilus does not seek the bread and meat necessary for mere survival; he desires sweet relish and mouth-watering nectar. Described in these terms, Cressida is here viewed as a pleasing indulgence as she, and women like her, are more reflective of a luxury than a basic need. Indeed, the suspicious absence of the subject of marriage in their relationship may further suggest this. Although Troilus and Cressida exchange vows of love and fidelity before Pandarus, they never do so before a priest, and the prospect of marriage is never proposed. Nor is marriage taken seriously by others; while Helen refers to Paris as her "husband", not only are they not married, she is a bigamist, being *already* married to Menelaus. As a human invention used to "curb" disorderly raging sexual appetites, marriage is a rational convention created to control procreation and legitimize children. And, as food is a basic necessity, so is procreation necessary to the survival of the species. But when procreation is discussed, it too is not taken seriously, but is mocked and disparaged--and especially by women like Helen and Cressida, who refer to pregnancy with no maternal affection, but as the negative result of sexual relations. At 3.1 Helen teases about Paris impregnating Cressida: "Falling in after falling out may make them three." (99) Cressida also mocks being pregnant when responding to Pandarus' request that she tell him one of her "watches" or guards[46]:

> Nay, I'll watch you for that, and that's one of
> the chiefest of them too. If I cannot ward what I
> would not have hit, I can watch you for telling
> how I took the blow, unless it swell past hiding,
> and then its past watching. (1.2.271-275)

Her "chiefest" watch is her supposed chastity (cf. also 3.2.103-104). Diomedes too has some derisive words for Paris regarding Helen's maternal side: "You, like a lecher, out of

[46] As Palmer notes, the term "watch" can refer to "times or places of guard or lookout".

whorish loins/ Are pleas'd to breed out your inheritors." (4.1.64-65) Nor does procreation outside of marriage appear to be much of a social hazard, as Margarelon's example may suggest. By his own admission, Margarelon is the "bastard" son of Priam (5.7.15). Not only is he not impeded by his illegitimacy (as he equally fights alongside his brothers and the other 'flowers' of Troy), but he seems actually proud of it. When challenging Thersites to fight, Margarelon proudly introduces himself as Priam's bastard son. Thus, satisfying one's sexual appetite outside of marriage is one "relish" not frowned upon in Troy. However, it may not be looked upon so lightly in the Greek camp. Although Thersites seems proud of his illegitimate heritage (cf.5.7.22), he is slandered and disdained by most, and is likely a slave.

The term "relish" and its associated savouriness is also referred to in another famous and enlightening text, Plato's *Republic*. The central theme of this work concerns the problem of Just rule, in both the polity and in the individual. Most challenging, perhaps, is the effective control of desires or appetites to promote health and prevent 'dis-ease' in both regimes: the political and the personal. In Book 2, Socrates proceeds to create a 'city in speech', wherein to see Justice 'writ large'--a healthy and virtuous state where men live in harmony, each performing necessary tasks. In the first version of such a city, a simple, primitive one, he describes its citizens dining on "noble loaves of barley and wheat" (372b). He is, however, soon interrupted by a young man named Glaucon who accuses him of making his fictional countrymen have their "feast without relishes." (372c) Noting that Glaucon speaks truly, Socrates adds some relishes (i.e., salt, boiled onions and greens). Glaucon again objects to these bland condiments and suggests that such may gratify a "city of pigs", but are not the relishes and 'desserts' that would satiate

him (371d-e). Glaucon, it seems, would like something richer or sweeter, something pointing beyond the sustenance for mere life. Socrates indulges him, turning away from what he terms the "healthy city" to a "feverish" city wherein are added luxury items, such as "cakes" and "relish-makers" until the city becomes gorged (371e, 373a-b). This city will be fatted to suit the various "relishes" or appetites of everyone and, perhaps like indigestion caused by eating a great variety of foods at once, the city becomes sick as everyone serves his or her own appetites, often with no eye towards reasoned or rational control. Eventually Socrates and his comrades 'discover' the proper means for Just rule, both in the individual and the state. Their city in *logos* is purged accordingly. In general, justice in both regimes is when all of the parts are properly ruled and are working together for the good of the whole. In the individual, the soul is composed of three parts--the appetitive, the spirited, and the rational--although desires seem to extend throughout all parts. There are bodily/physical appetites (i.e., sex, hunger), appetites of the spirit (i.e., love of honour and glory), and desires of the rational part (i.e., curiosity, love of, wisdom). A healthy regime in the soul is one where reason rules over the appetites and is aided by the spirited part. Similarly to maintain health in the city, a wise ruler, aided by a strong auxiliary or police force, is necessary to direct the citizenry to do what is best both for them and for the state.

In *Troilus and Cressida*, reason as the health-promoting ruling force is very much the concern from start to finish. Beginning with the prologue, its last verse casts a gloomy shadow across the entire play:

> Like, or find fault: *do as your pleasures are*:
> Now good, or bad, 'tis but the chance of war. (Prologue, 30-31)

Inviting the audience to judge the play, the prologue's response suggests (as if resigned) that no matter what the play aims at, that people will simply base their opinion on whatever they find *pleasing*. Most of the characters certainly do act in service of their various pleasures and, with the exception of Ulysses, they are often in pursuit of untamed appetites of the body and spirit. Lacking proper rational guidance, their fulfillment is harmful both to the individuals themselves and to the state. The problem is, can reason properly rule; or will people be forever enslaved by "raging appetites"? Referring to the *Republic* again, the central paradox of having wise rule was that those most gifted to rule would not necessarily desire to govern, nor would people necessarily recognize them as rulers. In the play, the complications inherent to wise rule are also explored. With Ulysses as the effectual ruler (Agamemnon being more or less his figurehead), his actions serve in the best interests of Greece. It is a position which he neither disparages nor boasts of, he just simply does it. However, one constant impediment to his ability to rule and remedy the camp from faction is that few people see reason and wisdom as especially praiseworthy. Much as the miseducated Glaucon finds the "city of pigs" distasteful and boring, so too do the spirited men of Troy and Greece who prefer honour and glory to the restraints of reason.

Much as Socrates notes the dangers associated with allowing luxuries in the city, Ulysses also refers to a feverish city of sorts in his speech on degree. He warns that by neglecting proper or rational rule, appetites will reign without recourse to any objective standard of right and wrong, of just and unjust. Having no objective order or rank, the strongest and most powerful will tyrannically rule the weaker, "the rude son [striking] his father dead" (1.3.115, cf. *Republic* 562e). Ulysses' speech reflects the danger that

ungoverned appetites can have in political life. Without right rule and strong leadership, founded upon the reason and wisdom of natural standards, the polity becomes sick with an "envious fever" and weak with faction. As rule and order become despised, fertile ground is prepared for tyranny (133). Faction was an element absent in Socrates' simple 'healthy' city; everyone was more or less equal, and men conducted their mutual business in peace. However, it is in the feverish city that Socrates 'discovers' the origin of internal and external war (373e). Internal faction is imitated by Glaucon's dissatisfaction with the original city. He, like many others, will not be fulfilled with mere life but will demand 'the good life', which at this point for him means more 'luxuries' aimed at his own individual gratification. Thus he poses a threat to the simple anarchic state.

The problem of disobedient private interests seems to be what is causing faction in the Greek camp to which Ulysses refers. For example, Achilles' aim is not that of helping his fellow Greeks win the war, as he spends much of his time mocking the Greek leaders and their policy. His love for Polyxena initially restrains him, and when wooed by Ulysses, his desire for honour and high repute leads him. When he does go to battle, although it helps Greece, his intent is not to serve Greece but to avenge Patroclus' death. Neither does Diomedes fight for his country, but does so to dispatch the lover of his Trojan mistress. Ajax also serves his own will. Initially his flattered pride creates in him an eagerness to answer Hector's challenge, and when overfed with pride he retires to his tent and (like Achilles) is roused only to avenge a friend's death. Ironically, in the end it is the sum of these individual interests which unites the Greek force as Nestor comments: "So, so, we draw together."(5.5.44) Although there is less overt faction among men in Troy, there are similar instances where a character's private good conflicts with that of

Troy. Hector is the prime example. By serving his own ideal of honour, he is both indirectly and directly responsible for the deaths of several men, and his own demise stands to enslave his family and all of Troy. Much of Troilus' time has been spent obsessing over Cressida, and when he does fight, it is for "sport" or revenge. Prince Paris is a rare sight, if he is not 'lying long' with Helen, he is concerning himself with other people's love lives.

Although the men of Greece and Troy are most concerned with their own good (or at least their opinion of it), one factor common to all is untamed or impassioned pride; a love of honour better described as a lust for glory. The prologue itself alerts the reader to the problem of disobedient pride when it describes the "orgulous" (or haughty) Greek princes sailing to Troy, with their "high-blood chaf'd" (Prologue, 2). This suggests that at least one reason for warring with Troy was in response to their honour having been offended. Moreover, as over-indulging bodily appetites can adversely effect one's health, so does untamed pride tend towards 'dis-ease'. Although, pride seems a reflection not of the body, but of the spirit, the body is the medium by which men identify and pursue honour: spirited men use their bodies to destroy other men's bodies in battle. This 'ideal' of honour is inherently destructive or self-consuming: spirited men desirous of glory can win honour only by killing other honourable men[47]. One of the more striking examples of this is the exchange between Aeneas and Diomedes at the beginning of 4.1. Both are among the foremost of men in their respective countries; Aeneas is a "flower" of Troy, and Diomedes is reputed for his spiritedness (cf. 4.5.13-16). Meeting briefly prior to Cressida's exchange, the two 'greet' each other with a peculiar mixture of love and hate:

*Aeneas*: In human gentleness,
Welcome to Troy! Now by Anchises' life,
Welcome indeed! By Venus' hand I swear
No man alive can love in such a sort
The thing he means to kill, more excellently.
*Diom*: We sympatize. Jove, let Aeneas live--
If to my sword his fate be not the glory--
A thousand complete courses of the sun!
But in my emulous honour let him die
With every joint a wound, and that tomorrow!
*Aeneas*: We know each other well.
*Diom*: We do, and long to know each other worse. (4.1.21-32)

Paris' comment after their introduction is most fitting:

This is the most despiteful gentle greeting,
The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of. (34-35)

This brief passage poignantly illustrates the irony (or folly) of advancing the highest honours to men in war. These two men, who in peace would seem friends, in war, long to destroy each other for the sake of "emulous honour" and glory.

Thus, it is these refractory appetites of body and spirit that are responsible for the faction and dis-ease in the play. More disturbing perhaps is that that the cure--the rule of reason--is not an appetizing remedy for most, just as foods that best promote health are often not as appealing to the taste-buds as less healthy fare.

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[47] Goddard argues that this "self-annihilation or "cannibalism" reflects the devastation wrought by human passions. They are "like wild animals that tear and eat each other...with the added characteristic that they

## Conclusion: Bequeathed Diseases

Throughout *Troilus and Cressida* the reader is constantly aware of how the body dominates the story. Male excellence in both Troy and Greece is determined primarily upon courage as demonstrated in battle. The battlefield is home to magnanimity, valour, and fame, where men are honoured to the extent that their armour is hacked and their swords bloodied. And very often the war heroes are referred to in light of their large, physical stature. The "great bulk" Achilles is "broad" and of "large and portly size" and, with "blockish" Ajax, is likened to the battering ram. Hector too is "great", and he and Troilus make a "brace of warlike brothers", and even the bastard, Margarelon, "stands colossus-wide". By contrast, those who do not fight sound much less imposing. Both Pandarus and Patroclus are referred to as "sweet", and men of reason and wisdom (i.e., Ulysses) are not grand, but have a "fineness of their souls". Similar to men, female excellence is also determined principally by bodily beauty. Although some mention is made crediting wisdom and intelligence to women, in reality they are rarely treated as wise. Hector never heeds his 'wise' wife, but rather insults her, and Cassandra is "brain-sick", not wise. And while Troilus presumed Cressida to have a "mind" which would outlast her bodily beauty, her wit was of no value once untrue to him. Nor do the women (notably Cressida and Helen) seem interested in pursuing wisdom. Cressida uses her cunning to win beseeching and attention from men, and Helen is so engulfed in her own vanity that it is doubtful she ever saw beyond it to give any worthy matter to speech.

As the body dominates this story, it seems fitting that 'food' and 'disease' are significant themes. For the most spirited men to win the greatest honours, they must kill

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finally devour themselves" (7).

each other in "hot digestion of...cormorant war". Achilles muses aloud (or fantasizes rather) in which part of Hector's body he shall destroy him and rid his "spirit". And who can forget the "mad and fantastic" description of Hector mowing down Greeks in his feeding frenzy for honour. In what looks more like an appetite for bloodlust than anything noble, men (almost literally) feast on each other to win glory and be crowned in high opinion. However, this design is inherently self-destructive, as it necessitates the killing of other spirited men. (Indeed, at this rate spirited men would surely become an endangered species). And it further reminds one of Ulysses description of a world without proper rule and order where "will" has turned into "appetite...an universal wolf" which, in the end, consumes itself (1.3.119-124). As for the love themes, they too smack of appetite and disease, as we observe the discord and corruption produced in the name of love. Helen's abduction 'launched a thousand ships'. Troilus is enslaved to his appetites-- "pleasure and revenge"-- throughout the play. Love is also responsible for madness, enchantment and sexual diseases.

However, while images of bodies and bodily appetites resonate through the play, the real concerns seem to be desires of the soul. Love of honour is not a physical appetite, but one of the spirited part of the soul. Yet here it is miscast as an expression of appetite. Hector lives and breathes honour, but this ideal has no rational basis or reasonable control. Reason or truth has been enslaved to an ideal of honour that can be achieved only through assaulting other men. Reason is not valued for its own sake as a guide or master, but only in so far as it can be used to achieve honour. The same is true for the ideal of constancy or fidelity. Being true and constant is not a bodily appetite, but a desire more reflective of one's rational part. Troilus' affection for Cressida, as an example, reflects his

desire to believe in truth and order, and to have his fidelity mirrored in hers. However, his desire for constancy is aimed not at securing mastery of himself, but is based on her sexual fidelity; he wants exclusive access to her body, as the thought of her with another man makes his blood boil. Indeed, this theme--the possession of women's bodies--is the paramount cause of the war itself[48]. Thus, as the desires of the soul are displayed as bodily appetites, it seems that most of the characters in this play are caught in a labyrinth of sorts, one ruled not by reason, but by appetite.

This enslavement may perhaps best be represented in the image of the rotten corpse that Hector reveals underneath its beautiful, lustrous armour. Below what seems an honourable exterior is merely a putrid core, and it is the presence of this rotten state that seems to lurk under the surface of the play. Throughout there are several references to seeming versus being, to true virtue and value as opposed to that merely reputed or externally ascribed to someone or something. For example, in the Greek council, Agamemnon and Nestor distinguish men of true virtue or "noble bulk" whose matter is "unmingled" and pure, yet the play constantly erodes this romantic and noble image. No man or woman stands out as an ideal hero or noble maiden, despite masked attempts to appear so. The alluring image of the knight in shining armour defending the honour of his virtuous lady is reduced to men slaughtering each other in the service of an untamed ideal of honour and warped ideals. Thus, it seems fitting that the play ends with Pandarus' epilogue bequeathing his diseases which, when added to the prologue's prediction that the

[48] This also is a primary theme in Book 5 of Plato's *Republic* where Socrates (with a strong dose of irony) suggests that the ideal state would be one where women and children were held in common and not possessed by any one man. This 'ideal' would supposedly cure *this* tendency for men to fight, or as Ulysses' described: the "deadly gall, and theme of all...scorns".

audience will judge according to their pleasures, implies that mankind cannot help but be ruled by raging appetites.

"Will this gear ne'er be mended?" Although Ulysses is the sole character who is led by reason, and uses it to guide Greek policy for the good of Greece, he is a rare soul not just in the play but in life in general. He is different from all other characters in that he does not appear to be touched by those appetites most common--he is not a lover of women or of honour. Not being ruled by such popular fare, it appears that regardless of how prudent and calculating he is, people will constantly interfere and obstruct his efforts. Thus, no matter how hard he tries to navigate people and policy towards what truly is best, in the final analysis they will continue to be mastered by disobedient appetites. And, this may be the reason that this play has no beginning or end, and has as its base a tale over 2000 years old--mankind may never be mended.

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