"Lechery eats itself": Troilus and Cressida

LEO ROCKAS

PARALLEL relationships in *Troilus and Cressida* have often been studied and studied well. The three most interesting attempts I know are those by William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), Norman Rabkin, "The Uses of the Double Plot" in *Shakespeare Studies* I (1966), and Richard Levin, *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* (1971). But these seem to me to stop short of discovering all the correspondences and reflections suggested by the apparently disjointed action. My effort, in keeping with the tendency of modern criticism, is to seek unity rather than to complain of disunity in the plays. The correspondence of Gloucester to Lear is an obvious paradigm; it may not be so clear that a lesser character, such as Patroclus in *Troilus and Cressida,* may have a similar correspondence within his play. I will try to show that some characters seem to have similar roles or functions, and that these correspondences serve to dramatize the thematic relationship between love and war. As in the civil state the participants have violated the claims of "degree," so in the moral state they have violated the proper and conventional expressions of love.

When Cressida goes over to the Greek side and becomes disloyal to Troilus she becomes the new Helen, as has often been noted, and renders Troilus the new Menelaus and Diomedes the new Paris. Even in the earliest versions of a Troilus and Cressida story, somewhere in the twelfth century or earlier, there must have been a desire of following Virgil and righting the balance of ethical appeal which had tipped for too long to the Greeks. The story of Troilus and Cressida is Troy's or the Trojan sympathizer's answer

to the Homeric preference for Greece; and the nice matching of the two love-stories must also have appealed to Shakespeare. In his account there are two answers thrown back at the Greeks. Obviously, "If we took your Helen, you took our Cressida." Also, in Troilus' own account, Paris stole Helen "for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive . . . Why keep we her? The Grecians keep our aunt" (II.ii. 77-80).[1] This reference to Hesione makes the Greeks guilty before the Trojans were, and the Cressida story makes them guilty afterwards too. But Shakespeare's object was not simply to glorify the Trojans, as some critics have claimed; if so he might have ennobled Aeneas somewhat, and degraded Ulysses; his object was apparently to utilize some of the comparisons and contrasts between the classical and medieval accounts in order to present an unheroic version of the Trojan war on both sides.

Diomedes and Paris provide two views of the lover or cuckold-maker Diomedes in the state of becoming, Paris still luxuriating in his conquest. Since Paris is loyal if not uxorious and Diomedes is at best an indifferent lover, the point may be that the Trojans treat their stolen mistress better than the Greeks do theirs, or that the Trojan rape of Helen was grandly worth it while the Greek arrangement over Cressida wasn't. In the Trojan council scene, Paris naturally argues for keeping Helen, and Priam upbraids him for selfishness: once comfortable in his love he is not fit for war and strategy. The scene between Paris and Helen (III.i) makes no advance in plot except that Pandarus conveys Troilus' message that he will not sup with his father — busy with Cressida, no doubt, as the older lovers are immediately aware; otherwise the scene confirms Priam's disapproval by passing off some bawdy jokes and comments and Pandarus' thematic song on love — in all a scene that, as it shows the lover and stolen mistress together, may anticipate Diomedes' enjoyment of Cressida. The meeting of Paris and Diomedes in IV.i results in a dialogue of the lover with himself, especially

when Paris asks Diomedes who he thinks deserves Helen, himself or Menelaus. Diomedes answers "Both alike," but manages to insult all three parties as "puling cuckold" — Menelaus, Troilus; "flat tamed piece" — Helen, Cressida; and "lecher" — Paris and himself (54-66). As Diomedes goes on to attack Helen for all the lives she has cost we are certainly to think he will not weigh Cressida so highly as Paris has Helen. And Paris' answer, "Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,/Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy," must refer to both Helen and Cressida; though they have been discussing Helen, Diomedes has come to "buy" Cressida. The scene in which Troilus hands over Cressida to Diomedes seems to endow both men with prophetic insight or implications beyond what they could really know, whether or not these could be called dramatic ironies. Troilus praises the Grecian youths almost as if he intends to make them desirable to Cressida, and modestly minimizes himself, amidst much talk of truth and temptation. Troilus tells Diomedes he will "possess" him what Cressida is (IV.iv.112). Diomedes tells Cressida "to Diomed/You shall by mistress, and command him wholly," and tells Troilus, "When I am hence,/I'll answer to my lust" (119-20, 131-2). And perhaps we are to think, what courtesies transpired when Helen went over to Paris? Paris says to Aeneas of Troilus' loss of Cressida: "There is no help./ The bitter disposition of the time/ Will have it so" (IV.i.47-9) — which might be the crocodile tears of Diomedes. And the voice of Paris calls "Brother Troilus!" (IV.iv.99) to separate him from his love — a role he had earlier played with Menelaus.

Diomedes' attitude toward Cressida may be indicated later when he cuts off the kisses between Cressida and the Greeks, almost in disapproval, with, "Lady, a word. I'll bring you to your father" (IV.v.53). The love-scene between Diomedes and Cressida, overheard by Troilus and Ulysses — and Thersites, who overhears both conversations (V.ii) — must function as a contrast to the earlier scene

between Paris and Helen — the new affair the more jaded. Or perhaps we are to think that Paris and Helen too may originally have engaged in such love-skirmishes. Certainly Diomedes announces with pleasure his later conquest of Troilus' horse and says he is Cressida's "knight by proof" (V.v.4). In the first scene of the play Paris has been hurt by Menelaus in battle, and in V.vii, as Thersites says, "The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it" again; and though he goes on to specify Paris and "my double-horned Spartan," the remark also applies to Troilus and Diomedes, who have been fighting over Troilus' sleeve, which Cressida has given Diomedes, and over Troilus' horse, which Diomedes has taken in battle and sent to Cressida.

Neither Paris nor Diomedes is very distinctly characterized — their characters are their function, which is one; and we have been disliking Diomedes without knowing it since the Prologue, which says, "The ravished Helen, Menelaus' queen,/ With wanton Paris sleeps (1-10); Cressida and Helen are more interestingly characterized, and again the character seems almost one. The at-home scene of Paris and Helen may be accounted for partly so that Helen can be shown bouncing her bawdy wit off Pandarus exactly as Cressida has done. When Pandarus tells Cressida he thinks Helen loves Troilus better than Paris, Cressida, the merry Trojan-to-be, says, "Then she's a merry Greek indeed" (I.ii.112), perhaps in envious anticipation: Shakespeare so early ensures our equating the two. Cressida already has an erotic concern over Troilus, and jokes about it, with opposite implications. Whereas she says "Troilus will stand to the proof if you'll prove it so" (135-6), she also says of him, "Ay, a minced man; and then to be baked with no date in the pie, for then the man's date is out" (266-8); but this is simply to deflate Pandarus' eulogy of him. The following exchange also seems sexually suggestive; Pandarus says of Troilus "he will weep you, an 'twere a man born in April" and she answers, "And I'll spring up in his tears, an 'twere a nettle against May (180-183). Helen,

who is mentioned throughout but appears in only one scene, is capable of this innuendo about Troilus and Cressida: "Falling in, after falling out, may make them three" (III. i.104-5). And after Pandarus' love song she says, "In love, i' faith, to the very tip of the nose" (126) — which may also serve as a hint of Pandarus' syphilis. Matching Cressida's disloyalty to Troilus is a gratuitous insult Hector brings Menelaus from Helen: "She's well, but bade me not commend her to you" (IV.v.179).

The characterization of Cressida develops in III.ii, when Pandarus first brings the lovers together. Cressida tries several scatterbrained strategies: "Where is my wit? I know not what I speak" — so that even Troilus becomes suspicious: "Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely"; and she admits, "Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love,/ And fell so roundly to a large confession/ To angle for your thoughts" (153-6). Empson says this Cressida is "embarrassed by her own tongue,"[2] but her embarrassment seems more craft than ineptitude. The critics who see a major change in Cressida when she goes over to the Greeks forget that in her two love-scenes, with Troilus and Diomedes, she uses the same strategies. She tells Troilus: "Prithee tarry;/ You men will never tarry" (IV.ii.15-16). She tells Diomedes: "You shall not go. One cannot speak a word/ But it straight starts you" (V.ii.97-8). She gives him Troilus' sleeve and tries to take it away; she tells him to come again and then to visit her no more. As Thersites rightly says, "Now she sharpens. Well said, whetstone!" (72). This is the same Cressida who toyed with Troilus, but now she has a more refractory subject in hand. In the celebrated kissing scene with the Greeks she also behaves as we expect. It is the Greeks who initiate the kissing, almost in the spirit of "Now we've got our Helen" — and much of the talk is about Helen, Paris, and Menelaus, just when the roles of mistress, lover, and cuckold are about to be multiplied. Ulysses, who ends up insulting her, first proposes that she be kissed "in general." Cres-

sida's only flirtation is to continue the joke against Menelaus, which he himself has begun, and Patroclus continued. Ulysses' attack upon her, "There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip;/ Nay, her foot speaks" (IV.v.55-6), suggests a body language to the actress beyond anything she says. In all, the character of Cressida, which does double duty in suggesting how Helen has behaved with Menelaus and with Paris and the Trojans, seems to hint at the complexity of Cleopatra.

Helen has a small part in the play, but she does serve as an auxiliary voice to Cressida, another version of the traded mistress of the play. Menelaus has hardly so much status as an auxiliary voice to Troilus; still the two constitute the cuckold of the play. Menelaus has in fact only eleven speeches in the play, most of them transitional to others'; his only significant appearance is in IV.v. where he says before Cressida and the Greeks, "I had good argument for kissing once," which initiates a series of jokes against himself. But his presence in the play is a constant reminder of the fate awaiting Troilus. From the first scene, when Paris is reported to have been hurt by Menelaus in battle, Troilus himself comments on the final battle between himself and Diomedes: "Let Paris bleed; 'tis but a scar to scorn:/ Paris is gored with Menelaus' horn" (I.i. 115-16). The line is ironic in pooh-poohing the mere scar compared to the real shame which Menelaus has suffered and which Troilus himself will suffer. The discovery of this shame is depicted in Troilus with only an occasional plaintive glance at Menelaus. Developing the story of Menelaus and Helen would prove dramatically awkward anyway; it would be necessary either to stress its differences from the story of Troilus and Cressida or to take the chance of altering well-known history to discover further similarities.

The chief fact of Troilus' story, and the chief mark of his character, is that he seeks from Cressida love alone and not love in marriage. Chaucer's account is more secure-

ly in the tradition of courtly love outside marriage; Shakespeare's characterization achieves interest in explaining Troilus' secrecy. It is partly that Pandarus makes this choice so easy, and perhaps partly a juvenile fear of being teased by his family, as Cressida fears Pandarus' teasing — Troilus is the youngest of Priam's sons — but chiefly it is that love makes one an unfit warrior. In the first speech of the play Troilus says he will "unarm again" and has no stomach for war; he is "weaker than a woman's tear" with love. He is shamed and burdened with his love at table lest Hector or his father should perceive his sighs. Presumably Hector (and his father) is an example of a married man and a soldier, but Troilus may be supposed to fear he will luxuriate like Paris, who says, "I would fain have armed today, but my Nell would not have it so" (III.i.135-6). At any rate there is a marked difference between the titillating sonnet-sentiments Troilus expresses privately to Pandarus and Cressida, and his military bearing in the council scene, where he out-Hectors Hector in upholding the glory and valor of the house of Priam — which is the reputation Ulysses has heard from Aeneas, when he says Troilus is "Manly as Hector, but more dangerous" (IV.v.104). This disparity between private pleasure and public profession may explain why Troilus agrees so readily to the exchange of Antenor and Cressida — anything for the royal family. When he is losing Cressida he still wishes to hide their love and tells Aeneas, who has found him at Calchas' house, "We met by chance; you did not find me here" (IV.ii.71). Troilus is a little more open in telling Paris of his loss, and Paris answers: "I know what 'tis to love;/ And would, as I shall pity, I could help" (IV.iv.10-11): just so much pity might Diomedes spare for Menelaus. And when Troilus and Ulysses overhear the love-scene between Cressida and Diomedes, Troilus is able to express his woe to a stranger; but perhaps the immediacy of his recognition prevents him from covering it. Still he does not cry out, as Ulysses fears; accounting

for some of his accumulated contradictions, he explains, "There is between my will and all offenses/ A guard of patience" (V.ii.50-51). The scene occurs in Menelaus' tent, where he finds his Menelaus fate; and in his anger at Diomedes (and later at Achilles for killing Hector) there seems to be a little Trojan (or Grecian) war brewing.[3]

The character of Pandarus figures only in the Troilus-Cressida, not the Menelaus-Helen story — they are known to have come together otherwise. But another reason for Pandarus' visit to Helen and Paris is to attach some of his going-between to Helen as to Cressida, even though Helen is by then with her second, not her first love. Shakespeare's Pandarus, like Chaucer's, is Cressida's uncle, but his preference is for Troilus throughout. When he is with Cressida, in the second scene, he cannot highly enough praise Troilus; and when he is with Troilus, in the first scene, he is stand-offish and uppity — like a lover who has not been made enough of. He complains he is ill thought of by both of them for his efforts (I.i.72-4); as Troilus says of him, he is "tetchy to be wooed to woo" (100). His calling requires him to praise the one to the other, but some of his lines seem beyond the call of duty: "Well, Troilus, well, I would my heart were in her body" (I.ii.80-81); and "I could live and die in the eyes of Troilus" (251-2). Troilus' line to Helen (I.ii.170), that of all the hairs on his chin the forked one stands for Paris, is not delivered by Troilus in the play, but by Pandarus' loving quotation of him.

At the first meeting of Troilus and Cressida, Cressida says she dedicates her folly to Pandarus, and he answers, "If my lord get a boy of you, you'll give him to me" (III. ii.106-7). The sentiment seems a coarsened version of the sonneteer's wish that his love reproduce himself. And when Cressida, in playing off her strategies on Troilus, offers to take her leave, Pandarus begins an unfinished threat, in his concern for Troilus' pleasure, "An you take leave till tomorrow morning —" (143-4). The morning after, Pandarus is reduced to babytalk in his relish over

Troilus' activity: "Would he not, a naughty man, let it sleep? A bugbear take him!" (IV.ii.31-3). And when he learns of the exchange of Cressida for Antenor he is angry at both in his single concern for Troilus: "The devil take Antenor! The young prince will go mad" (74-5); and to Cressida: "Would thou hadst ne'er been born! I knew thou wouldst be his death" (87-8). When Troilus enters to say good-bye to Cressida, Pandarus calls him (in the Folio) "a sweet duck" (11-12); but at the sadness of their separation he seems genuinely moved: "Where are my tears? Rain, to lay this wind, or my heart will be blown up by the root!" (53-4). In V.iii Cressida has apparently sent Troilus a letter to be delivered by her old go-between, and Pandarus' syphilitic complaints almost seem caused by the affair going sour: "A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so troubles me, and the foolish fortunes of this girl; and what one thing, what another, that I shall leave you one o' th'se days" (101-4). At Troilus' final rejection of him, he thinks of a song to salve his wounds, in which the humble-bee is like himself "subdued in armed tail."

If Pandarus is lowest on the moral scale of Trojans, Hector is highest. The scene in which Andromache and Cassandra join Priam (and Hecuba, who is an off-stage force) in their attempt to dissuade Hector from going to certain death indicates where our ethical sympathies should lie, the female suppliants as usual attending the preferred hero (V.iii). Hector tries to dissuade Troilus from battle; the concern of the others is all for him. But Hector's place in Shakespeare's play is more important than his role in the plot of the Trojan war, for he represents the state of married love, and serves as an uncuckolded Menelaus. The whole bent of his challenge to the Greeks, delivered by Aeneas in I.iii, is the worth and truth of his lady-love and his own true love for her. Penelope might have been mentioned as another true wife; and Clytemnestra as another false one; as it is, Andromache's slim role must be contrasted to the major representations of Helen and Cres-

sida. Only Hector of all the characters in the play could make this appeal to the marital tie: "What nearer debt in all humanity/ Than wife is to the husband?" (II.ii.175-7). Hector justifies Troilus' hero-worship of him when he agrees against his better judgment to keep Helen; when he interrupts his combat with Ajax because he is a cousin; when he disregards the misgivings of his sister, wife, mother and father; and when he allows Achilles to rest in battle, shortly before Achilles denies him a similar favor and turns loose the Myrmidons to kill Hector mercilessly.

The warriors equivalent to Hector on the Greek side — those who actually engage him in combat, and those who have a similar reputation among the Greeks — are Achilles and Ajax. Achilles has a son Pyrrhus, once mentioned by Ulysses (III.iii.209), but his mother makes no claim on Achilles in the play. Ulysses also mentions his love for Polyxena, one of Priam's daughters, as his reason for withdrawal from battle, but Achilles is more obscure: "Of this my privacy/ I have strong reasons" (189-90), and he must also mean his love of Patroclus. Achilles' later mention of Polyxena — a letter he has received from Hecuba and a token from her daughter (V.i.40-43) — seems a convenience of plot to explain why Achilles again evades battle and sends Patroclus alone, where his slaying moves Achilles finally to arm for battle. Whatever affection Achilles may be supposed to have for Polyxena pales before his dramatized passion for Patroclus, whom Thersites calls "Achilles' brach" (II.i.119), "male varlet," and "masculine whore" (V.i.15-17). After Ulysses has suggested Polyxena as Achilles' reason for keeping to his tent, Patroclus seems to give the real reason:

> To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you . . .
> They think my little stomach to the war
> And your great love to me restrains you thus.
> Sweet, rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
> Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold
> And, like a dewdrop from the lion's mane,
> Be shook to air. (III.iii.216-24)

The speech is an important one, for it seems to rouse both of them to heterosexuality as well as to battle. Ulysses here, and then Hecuba's letter, serve to remind Achilles of his love for Polyxena. Soon Patroclus becomes the most elaborately flirtatious of the Greeks when he kisses Cressida; and Thersites later says of Cressida, "Patroclus will give me anything for the intelligence of this whore. The parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab" (V.ii.189-92). Achilles does seem to have a leftover longing — as he says, "a woman's longing,/ An appetite that I am sick withal,/ To see great Hector in his weeds of peace,/ To talk with him and to behold his visage,/ Even to my full of view" (III.iii.237-41). And when the two actually meet, Achilles thinks Hector's eyeing him was "too brief. I will the second time,/ As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb," and Hector adds, "O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er" (IV.v.236-8). "Sport" here may be a reference to love-making as well as to athletics. Achilles goes on to speculate publicly on which part of Hector's body he should destroy in battle; even an earlier century than ours might see this as a sublimation of lust.

Achilles is the fullest demonstration of how love incapacitates the warrior: he lies with Patroclus "Upon a lazy bed the livelong day" (I.iii.147). Paris is another instance, and Troilus' secrecy about his love may be related. Aeneas says to Paris, "Had I so good occasion to lie long/ As you, Prince Paris, nothing but heavenly business/ Should rob my bedmate of my company," and Diomedes adds, "That's my mind too" (IV.i.3-6), as if to confirm that his affair with Cressida will lead him that way too. There are two men in the play, Paris and Achilles, who luxuriate in bed; and Patroclus is kept as Helen is. Achilles is a Paris who has ranged even further afield than simple adultery. There is no sign of a former intimacy between Ajax and Patroclus, but Achilles has stolen from Ajax his reputation as the greatest Greek warrior, and stolen Thersites as well, and so Achilles is, like Paris and Diomedes, also a thief. Ajax

for his part behaves as if he has been culkolded and he is afforded the conventional dramatic treatment reserved for cuckolds; as Ajax condemns Achilles, the Greeks turn his own remarks against him:

> *Ajax.* A paltry, insolent fellow!
> *Nestor.* [*Aside*] How he describes himself!
> *Ajax.* Can he not be sociable?
> *Ulysses.* [*Aside*] The raven chides blackness.
> *Ajax.* I'll let his humor's blood.
> *Agamemnon.* [*Aside*] He will be the physician that should be the patient. (II.iii.210-16)

Menelaus has gone to war, and Troilus will go to war, over his loss; in Ajax these impulses are parodied in a contentiousness gone crazy. Troilus, and presumably Menelaus, is angry at his successor, but Ajax has a less exalted attitude — envy — toward Achilles. So Thersites says in their first exchange (II.i), and it is amply demonstrated throughout. He also mimics Achilles, as we learn again from Thersites: "now is the cur Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles and will not arm today" (V.iv.16-17). In the next secene Nestor says, "Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles,/ And bid the snail-paced Ajax arm for shame" (V.v.18-19)— almost as if Patroclus' death would also move Ajax. And Ulysses reports, "Ajax hath lost a friend/ And foams at mouth, and he is armed and at it,/ Roaring for Troilus" (35-7). His friend is either Patroclus himself or a substitute Ajax has found in his aping of Achilles; and Ajax roars for Troilus as Achilles roars for Hector. Perhaps Ajax is simply chasing the wrong "boy-queller" (45). That Ajax, part Trojan and part Greek, should be confused is only what we have been expecting since the first account of him by Cressida's servant: "a man into whom nature hath so crowded humors that his valor is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion. There is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it" (I.ii.24-6).

If Ajax mimics others in envy, Patroclus does so in jest, and according to Ulysses "pageants" all the Greek heroes for Achilles' amusement (I.iii.151). When Cressida arrives in

the Greek camp shortly after Patroclus and Achilles have left their bed, Patroclus and Cressida, the two concubines, seem to have a special affinity for each other; and Patroclus is a theatrically privileged character, like Shakespeare's girls who assume boys' roles, for his chief role in the play is at odds with his sex and so he can on occasion assume an opposite role, as when he flirts with Cressida. His lines offer some witty reverberations:

> *Patroclus.* The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine.
> Patroclus kisses you.
> *Menelaus.* O, this is trim.
> *Patroclus.* Paris and I kiss evermore for him.
> (IV.v.32-4)

Patroclus, who has played the role of Helen toward Achilles, boasts here that he can also play the role of Paris, or steal the role of Diomedes, toward Cressida; and the meeting of the two concubines is like the meeting of the two lovers, Diomedes and Paris — a voice and its echo. Menelaus' line, his attempt to relish the occasion, shows his obtuseness that the joke is going against him — and Troilus, and Ajax.

Both Ajax and Thersites have repressed the sexual urge, but as Ajax is a degraded, comic version of Troilus-Menelaus, so Thersites is of Pandarus. He seems to have no function in the Greek camp but to rail and go between, for whatever reasons. He says, "I will see you hanged like clotpoles, ere I come any more to your tents" (II.ii.122-3). Elsewhere Achilles says Thersites must be his "ambassador" to Ajax (III.iii.267). Achilles also uses a metaphor for Thersites which may suggest he actually serves at table: "Why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not served thyself in to my table so many meals?" (II.iii.43-4), for by this time, as Ulysses says, Achilles has inveigled his fool from Ajax (93). Ajax' taunt, "Mistress Thersites!" (II.i.37) may indicate that his appetite once resembled Pandarus'. He is trying to bring Patroclus news of Cressida, but he seems also to dog Diomedes earlier on his own: "I will rather leave to see Hector than not to dog him" (V.i.99-100).

Pandarus is a voyeur with some hopes of action; Thersites is voyeurism gone adust. A remark he makes to Patroclus seems, for Thersites, almost friendly: "Heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee. Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death. Then, if she that lays thee out says thou art a fair corse, I'll be sworn and sworn upon it she never shrouded any but lazars" (II.iii.30-35). This seems to be a wish for his unbounded lechery, which however is sure to result in syphilis.

Shakespeare presents in Achilles another Paris and in Ajax another Menelaus, but he also seems to have recognized Chapman's Homer's Thersites as a comic-relief version of Pandarus. Together, the two going between carry much of the play's message, which, as has often been noted, is expressed at a higher level by Ulysses. Pandarus' song to Helen and Paris is a genteely naughty statement on the pleasure and pain of love; he says Cupid's dart "confounds not that it wounds./ But tickles still the sore" (III.i.118-19). Thersites puts it more baldly: "Lechery, lechery; still wars and lechery; nothing else holds fashion" (V.ii.192-3). As he overhears Cressida and Diomedes, he says, "How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and potato finger, tickles these together. Fry, lechery, fry!" (V.ii.53-5). Love and war are intimately related: a love gone wrong is the cause of war; and war becomes the cause of more love, and more love gone wrong. Thersites says ironically, "All the argument is a whore and a cuckold, a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon" (III.iii.74-6); there being three whores and three cuckolds in the play, the comment has a general utility. Paris says of Pandarus, "He eats nothing but doves, love, and that breeds hot blood, and hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds is love" (III.i.127-8). His remark is a lesser version of Ulysses' very serious remark on the consequences of disregarding degree:

> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite,

> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey
> And last eat up himself. (I.iii.119-25)

Thersites puts it more bluntly: "What's become of the wenching rogues? I think they have swallowed one another. I would laugh at that miracle — yet, in a sort, lechery eats itself" (V.v.33-6). The result of war over love is that the lovers consume themselves in their loving and warring. Death takes the greatest hero of the play, Hector, and the most expendable concubine, Patroclus. Syphilis, another death of love, is what Pandarus wishes on the audience at the end of the play; and Thersites wishes it on many others throughout. He asks for "vengeance on the whole camp! Or rather, the Neopolitan bone-ache, for that, methinks, is the cause depending on those that war for a placket" (II.iii.19-21). He wishes on Patroclus, among many other diseases, "incurable bone-ache" (V.i.22). Of Patroclus and Diomedes he says, "A burning devil take them" (V.ii.193-4). His comment near the end of the play is a review by the lowest of the Greeks of the famous speech from the highest of the Greeks, on degree: "the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion" (V.iv.17-18). Lechery has broken the great chain of being. Our uneasiness at the end of the play is that the stolen mistresses of the play, Helen and Cressida, remain in the keeping of the lechers Paris and Diomedes. Achilles has had an undeserved revenge against the only hero, though he has lost his lover in the process. But Troilus had told us in the first scene what kind of play to expect: "sorrow, that is couched in seeming gladness./ Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness" (I.i.41-42).

As in many of Shakespeare's plays, then, the apparently disjointed action serves, at times obviously, at times more subtly, to confirm a single dramatic movement. This movement in *Troilus and Cressida* might be designated as a contest over a mistress between one who eventually becomes a cuckold and one who eventually becomes a lover; some-

where in the course of these actions is waged a war motivated by the loss of the mistress. The original movement between Helen, Menelaus, and Paris is offered primarily in expository retrospect; the central movement is between Cressida, Troilus, and Diomedes; and a parody or comic-relief version is suggested in Patroclus, Ajax, and Achilles. Pandarus serves as a go-between for the lady and her first love (Cressida and Troilus) and hints he would serve the lady and her second love (Helen and Paris), while Thersites has first served Ajax (and perhaps his friend, who if he was not Patroclus dies alongside him), then serves Achilles and Patroclus. Those who violate the proper expressions of love and so involve themselves and others in war occupy the centre of this unheroic play; against them Shakespeare poses only the peripheral contrasts of virtue in love and war: Hector, Ulysses, Agamemnon, and the old men Priam and Nestor. Shakespeare has concentrated on the second, less heroic, version of what might be called the myth of the stolen mistress. The third version is even more degraded; and in choosing to give us more of Ajax and Achilles than of Menelaus and Paris he has gone far to coarsen and sour the old Greek and Trojan heroics.

NOTES

[1]Citations are from the Signet edition, edited by Daniel Seltzer (New York and Toronto: New American Library, 1963).

[2]*Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1935), p. 38.

[3]See Albert Gerard, "Meaning and Structure in *Troilus and Cressida*," *English Studies* 40 (1959), 154.