THE USE OF DEBATE IN *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*

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In *Troilus and Cressida*, which has been called Shakespeare's most intellectual and theoretical play, debate is not only the staple of the famous debate scene in the Trojan camp, but also affects, though indirectly, the structure and meaning of the whole play. The purpose of this paper is to see how an element of the traditional technique of debate works in the dramatic context of this play.

I

Hector's volte-face in the course of the debate held in the palace of Troy in 11. ii. has puzzled critics. In that scene, the leading Trojan people discuss the problem whether they should continue the war or not.

Hector argues that Helen should be sent back because she is not worth keeping, and that the war should cease, referring bitterly to the tremendous loss caused by her presence:

... Let Helen go.

Since the first sword was drawn about this question,
Every tithe-soult’mongst, many thousand dismes
Hath been as dear as Helen—I mean, of ours.
If we have lost so many tenths of ours
To gurd a thing not ours, nor worth to us—
Had it our name—the value of one ten,
What merit’s in that reason which denies
The yielding of her up? (II. ii. 17-25)\(^1\)

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Troilus promptly objects, arguing that Helen should not be returned because the honour of Prium, their father and the great king, is at stake. Hector, again, tries to persuade Troilus that Helen is not worth fighting for. It is just at this moment that the metaphysical problem of value which has already been introduced in the Greek council meeting (I. iii.) and which, in fact, is the play's central concern is fully presented. Hector and Troilus argues:

Hector. Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost
The keeping.

Troilus. What's aught, but as 'tis valued?

Hector. But value dwells not in particular will:
It holds his estimate and dignity
As well wherein 'tis precious of itself
As in the prizer. 'Tis mad idolatry
To make the service greater than the god;
And the will dotes that is attributive
To what infectiously itself affects,
Without some image of th'attected merit. (II. ii. 51-60)

Hector, in this way, states that the value of the object does not in the subjective will of the valuer but resides with the object itself. But Troilus hotly protests:

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 chose? There can be no evasion
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To blench from this and to stand firm by honour.
We turn not back the silks upon the merchant
When we have soiled them; nor the remainder viands
We do not throw in unrespective sieve
Because we now are full. It was thought meet
Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks;
Your breath of full consent bellied his sails...
He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth
and freshness
Wrinkles Apollo's and makes pale the morning.
Why keep we her?—the Grecians keep our aunt;
Is she worth keeping?—why, she is a pearl
Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships
And turned crowned kings to merchants.
If you'll avouch 'twas wisdom Paris went—
As you must needs, for you all cried 'Go, go' ;
If you'll confess he brought home worthy prize—
As you must needs, for you all clapped your hands
And cried 'Inestimable!' ; why do you now
The issue of your proper wisdoms rate,
And do a deed that Fortune never did,
Beggar the estimation which you prized
Richer than sea and land? O, theft most base,
That we have stolen what we do fear to keep!
But thieves unworthy of a thing so stolen,
That in their country did them that disgrace
We fear to warrant in our native place!

(II. ii. 61–96)

He denies the objective valuation, which Hector upholds. His logic is as follows: the act of keeping the thing which one has once chosen is
important because one's honour is involved, and in fact, the act itself creates the worth of the thing. The disputation is interrupted by the appearance of Cassandra, the prophetess and mad sister to Hector and Troilus. Her direful prophecy is that Troy will fall unless they let Helen go. Troilus dismisses her prophecy as lunatic nonsenses and Paris sides with Troilus. Then, Hector delivers a long speech on "the moral law of nature and nation":

Paris and Troilus, you have both said well,
And on the cause and question now in hand
Have glozed—but superficially; not much
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.
The reasons you allege do more conduce
To the hot passion of distempered blood
Than to make up a free determination
'Twixt right and wrong: for pleasure and revenge
Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice
Of any true decision. Nature craves
All dues be rendered to their owners: now,
What nearer debt in all humanity
Than wife is to the husband? If this law
Of nature be corrupted through affection,
And that great minds, of partial indulgence
To their benumbèd wills, resist the same,
There is a law in each well-ordered nation
To curb those raging appetites that are
Most disobedient and refractory.
If Helen then be wife to Sparta's king,
As it is known she is, these moral laws
Of nature and of nations speak aloud
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To have her back returned. Thus to persist
In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,
But makes it much more heavy.  

(II.iii. 163-188)

His view is orthodox and the argument sounds convincing. Curiously enough, however, Hector concludes his speech in this way:

Hector's opinion

Is this in way of truth. Yet, ne'ertheless,
My sprightly brethren, I propend to you
In resolution to keep Helen still;
For 'tis a cause that hath no mean dependence
Upon our joint and several dignities.

(II.iii. 188-193)

It cannot be denied that this conclusion is anticlimactic.

Critics have tried to explain the apostasy from many a point of view and mulled over its effect on the audience's understanding of Hector's character as well as on the total meaning of the play.² Madeleine Doran's comment, which is made from another angle than that of character study, leads us, it seems to me, to a new understanding not only of this particular scene, but also of the characteristic quality underlying the whole play.

About the volte-face in question, Doran remarks that "Shakespeare lets

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² For example, Philip Edwards has explained that Hector contends himself with the second best way since he cannot persuade his brothers to hear to reason. Philip Edwards, *Shakespeare and the Confines of Art* (London: Methuen, 1968), p. 103. Derick R. C. Marsh has found in Hector's character a flaw, which extremely impairs his image as a dignified and authentic hero, and pointed out the ironical manner in which Shakespeare handles the legendary warrior. Derick R. C. Marsh, *Passion Lends Them Power* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), p. 36.
interest in the debate momentarily run away with the necessities of his plot. Though Hector appears to have the best of the argument ... he gives way anticlimactically to Troilus' argument for honor: . . . Of course, the story demands that Hector go on with the war and be slain by Achilles. Shakespeare has let the debate go forward on its own and lose its dramatic function as exhibition of the genuine complicating motives of the play." 

Doran also states: "The debate is dramatically familiar, of course, in the morality play, but was actually of so much older and wider use as to be thoroughly engrained as a habit of thought. The method of formal disputation did not end with the Middle Ages—it was still in the sixteenth century the chief method of intellectual discipline in the universities. And although the heyday of the débat as a form of literary composition was over by then, its influence survived in various ways." She describes one type of application of the traditional technique of debate to Elizabethan dramas: "... only too often on the Elizabethan stage, these stated motives are not the real determinants of the action, which proceeds as the story demands, with motives only obscurely indicated, if at all. The effect of a debate that does not really motivate the subsequent action is mere forensic display and the dilemma created by it is a cheat. The dilemma is shown to be false when it must be broken arbitrarily so that the story can continue of its own lines of logical or conventional development." A feature of débat is to attach more importance to the dispute itself than to the decision.

It is highly probable that Shakespeare inherited this convention and made

4) *Débat* is a poem written in Latin or French in which two opposing parts, for example, summer and winter, or water and wine dispute with each other on their relative merits. The zenith of this literary form is the twelfth or the thirteenth century. The masterpiece of ME with the use of this traditional form is *The Owl and the Nightingale* (1200?) by John of Guildford.
use of it in his drama. Doran's view as to the dramatic function of the debate in this scene is simply critical. However, this element, the feature pointed out above, is not necessarily devoid of dramatic function, once it is considered in relation to the similar anticlimactic quality strongly sensed in some other aspects of the play.

This feature of debate as an element of the technique of debate is observed not only in the Trojan debate scene but also in its counterpart, the council meeting scene in the Greek camp in I. iii.

Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek army, contends that the failure so far in their attempt to conquer Troy is not due to their own deficiency but due to the "trials of great Jove":

Princes,
What grief hath set this jaundice on your cheeks?
The ample proposition that hope makes
In all designs begun on earth below
Fails in the promised largeness: checks
and disasters
Grow in the veins of actions highest reared,
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,
Infest the sound pine and divert his grain
Tortive and errant from his course of growth
Nor, princes, is it matter new to us
That we come short of our suppose so far
That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand:
Sith every action that hath gone before
Whereof we have record, trial did draw
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim
And that unbodied figure of the thought
That gave't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,
Do you with cheeks abashed behold our works,
And call them shames, which are indeed nought else
But the protractive trials of great Jove
To find persistive constancy in men?
The fineness of which metal is not found
In fortune's love: for then the bold and coward,
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,
The hard and soft, seem all affined and kin;
But, in the wind and tempest of her frown,
Distinction with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away,
And what hath mass or matter, by itself
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.           (I. iii. 1-30)

Nestor at once agrees with him and supports the opinion with many metaphors:

With due observance of thy godlike seat,
Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply
Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men: the sea being smooth,
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail
Upon her patient breast, making their way
With those of nobler bulk!
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold
The strong-ribbed bark through liquid mountains cut,
Bounding between the two moist elements
Like Perseus' horse; where's then the saucy boat
Whose weak untimbered sides but even now
Co-rivalled greatness?—either to harbour fled,
Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so
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Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide
In storms of fortune: for in her ray and brightness
The herd hath more annoyance by the breese
Than by the tiger: but when the splitting wind
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks
And flies flee under shade, why then the thing of courage,
As roused with rage, with rage doth sympathize,
And with an accent tuned in selfsame key
Retorts to chiding fortune. (I. iii. 31-54)

The third orator Ulysses's opinion, however, is completely different from that of the former two. He attributes their failure to the "neglect of degree" (I. iii. 127) on the Greeks's part which is, in other words, disobedience and contempt for leadership:

Troy, yet upon his basis had been down,
And the great Hector's sword had lacked a master,
But for these instances:
The specialty of rule hath been neglected:
And look how many Grecian tents do stand
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions....

... Degree being vizarded,
Th'unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order...

... 0, when degree is shaked,
Which is the ladder of all high designs,
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in-schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows!...
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead;
Force should be right...
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....
And this neglection of degree it is
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose
It hath to climb. The general’s disdained
By him one step below, he by the next,
That next by him beneath; so every step,
Exam pled by the first pace that is sick
Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
Of pale and bloodless emulation—
And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,
Not her own sinews: to end a tale of length,
Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength. (I.iii.75-137)

Thus, he analyzes that the cause of their troubles lies in the political anarchy, which is produced by the “universal wolf” of “appetite”. He points out that the renowned Achilles is the source of the abuse:

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns
The sinew and the forehand of our host,
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Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
Lies mocking our designs. With him, Patroclus,  
Upon a lazy bed, the livelong day  
Breaks scurril jests,  
And with ridiculous and awkward action,  
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls,  
He pageants us. . .  
And in this fashion,  
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,  
Severals and generals of grace exact,  
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,  
Excitements to the field or speech for truce,  
Success or loss, what is or is not, serves  
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes. (I.iii.142-184)

Strangely enough, neither Agamemnon nor Nestor contradicts Ulysses's assertion. It seems that they are not even aware of the difference and have given themselves away to Ulysses's point of view. Nestor praises Ulysses's diagnosis as follows:

Most wisely hath Ulysses here discovered  
The fever whereof all our power is sick. (I.iii.138-139)

As for Agamemnon, he asks impatiently Ulysses about the cure for the abuse which Ulysses points out is prevalent in the camp:

The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses,  
what is the remedy? (I.iii.140-141)

A bathos is sensed here that strikingly resembles the one in the Trojan debate. Moreover, "the remedy" which Ulysses is to propose afterwards
(I. iii. 373–385) is a petty trick, somewhat out of proportion to his doctrinally magnificent oration on degree and order. He plans to humble Achilles's pride by devising Ajax to draw the lot for fighting with Hector. And furthermore, in III. iii., he proposes that the commanders walk past Achilles's tent scornfully so that the arrogant, sulky warrior may be cured of his excessive pride. This elaborate scheme, though it awakens disturbance in Achilles's mind, eventuates in failure. Thus the Greek debate over the cause of their failure in subduing the enemy ends, after all those doctrinally magnificent speeches, as anticlimactically as the Trojan debate.

In both the debate scenes, the antitheses brought up are not reconciled, but are followed by unconvincing conclusions.

II

Such an element of debate—the pattern of development of events in which antitheses are introduced but not reconciled in a persuasive way—appears not merely in those debate scenes. It also is perceived within the consciousness of such major characters as Troilus and Achilles.

A conflict in Troilus's mind pronounced in V. ii, a climax scene in the love plot, though it cannot strictly be called a debate, shares the above-mentioned element. There he and Ulysses in their lurking place watch Cressida flirt with Diomedes. The lamentation set forth by Troilus vividly describes the sharp division in his mind. His eyes and ears tell him her infidelity, but his heart believes in her constancy. He confesses to Ulysses:

But if I tell these two did co-act,
Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?
Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,
That doth invert th'attest of eyes and ears;
As if those organs had deceptive function,
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Created only to calumniate.
Was Cressid here? 

(V. ii. 118-125)

He expresses the fluctuation between the claim and the counter-claim made within his consciousness:

This she? No; this is Diomed's Gressida. 
If beauty have a soul, this is not she; 
If souls guide vows, if vows ve sanctimonies, 
If sanctimony be the god's delight, 
If there be rule in unity itself, 
This is not she. O madness of discourse, 
That cause sets up with and against itself! 
Bifold authority! where reason can revolt 
Without perdition, and loss assume all reason 
Without revolt. This is; and is not, Cressid! 
Within my soul there doth conduce a fight 
Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate 
Divides more wider than the sky and earth ... 

(V. ii. 135-149)

This speech appeals to the audience because of the utter incompatibility of the two views and the accompanying psychological, even philosophical anguish. The outcome of the conflict, the conclusion which Troilus reaches, however, sounds much more tenuous. His decision is as follows:

Hark, Greek: as much as I do Cressid love, 
So much by weight hate I her Diomed. 
That sleeve is mine that he'll bear on his helm. 
Were it a casque composed by Vulcan's skill, 
My sword should bite it. Not the dreadful spout
Which shipmen do the hurricano call,
Constringed in mass by the almighty sun,
Shall dizzy with more clamour Neptune's ear
In his descent, than shall my prompted sword
Falling on Diomed. (V. ii.167-176)

In spite of the hyperbolic words such as "Vulcan", "Neptune", "hurricano", "clamour", etc., this oath lacks strength and persuasion. This might be because the act of killing Diomedes is totally irrelevant to the cause of his anguish, that is, Cressida's unfaithfulness. Here we recognize a similarity to the volte-face of Hector; namely, to the incongruous conclusion of the Trojan impassioned debate. Shakespeare must have noticed the irrelevance, but he let it as it is. The reason will be considered in relation to the ultimate meaning of the play, i.e., the total experience which the audience of the play is to undergo.

Achilles suffers from a dilemma between his desire for fame as a warrior and his duty to Polyxena the Trojan princess as a courtly lover. The conflict is gradually revealed through his discussion with Ulysses in III. iii. Urging Achilles to realize the necessity of the world's applause, Ulysses argues:

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-sized monster of ingratitude.
Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devoured
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon
As done. Perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honour travels in a strait so narrow
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Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path:
For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue. If you give way...

Then what they do

in present,

Though less than yours in past, must o’ertop yours;
For Time is like a fashionable host
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th’hand
And, with his arms outstretched as he would fly,
Grasps in the corner: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was:
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subject all
To envious and calumniating Time....

The present eye praises the present object:
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax,
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye
Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,
And still it might, and yet it may again,
If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive
And case thy reputation in thy tent,
Whose glorious deeds but in these fields of late
Made emulous missions ’mongst the gods themselves,
And drave great Mars to faction. (III. iii. 145-189)

Then Achilles roughly and briefly clarifies the reason of his retirement from
the war: it is his love for one of Priam’s daughters. After Ulysses slightly
ridicules him and leaves, Achilles discloses his inner agitation:
I see my reputation is at stake;  
My fame is shrewdly gored.  (III. iii. 227-228)

Troubled by the threat to his fame, and also in the later scene stimulated by the commanding appearance of Hector, his great rival, Achilles is resolved to join the battle: "Dost thou entreat me, Hector? /Tomorrow do I meet thee, fell as death..." (IV. v. 268-269). Nevertheless, he reverses the resolution in V. i. on account of a letter from within the walls of Troy:

My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite  
From my great purpose in tomorrow's battle.  
Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,  
A token from her daughter, my fair love,  
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep  
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:  
Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay  
My major vow lies here: this I'll obey.  (V. i. 36-43)

He wavers thus between the desire for warlike actions and the obligation to his lover. At last, in the end of the play, however, he shows himself in the battlefield. But this ultimate action is not motivated by Ulysses's elaborate speech on Time nor by Achilles's own concerns with his reputation. The sheer course of events, Patroclus's death by Hector's sword, brings Achilles back into the fighting.

We have seen a few examples of the irrelevance of the action to the laborious argumentation as well as to the profound reflection. Those are not isolated instances, but the irrelevance exactly accords with the general tendency in this play.

From the beginning of the play, the stubborn refusal of Achilles to join the battle has been presented as the central interest among the Greek commanders. In I. iii, in which they first appear on the stage, the reason
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has sharply and emphatically been pointed out by Ulysses; that is, the warrior's excessive pride. In III. iii, however, the reason has abruptly changed into another one; the warrior's love for a Trojan princess. There is no explanation for this shift, nor a hint at their relative importance. And further, in V. i, a brief reference to a letter from the palace of Troy is simply made to serve as the counter-claim against his disturbance and anxiety as well as against his solemn promise to Hector to see him tomorrow in the field.

An anticlimactic incongruity is perceived between the energy of speeches and thoughts spent on a theme and the ensuing action—in this case, his non-participation in the battle. Moreover, what not only emphasizes this incongruity but also decisively and ironically nullifies any of the claims put forward so far—those of pride, courtly love and reputation—is, as we have seen, Achilles's final return to the battle only because of his desire for personal revenge.

It may be no coincidence that the quality of anticlimax characterizes another episode; the single combat fought between Hector and Ajax. The combat has been so long and carefully prepared for. The actual combat is ended in a disappointingly short term and with no settlement. This kind of handling of incidents, that is, to leave conflicts unresolved, is the fundamental attitude which Shakespeare adopts throughout this piece. This effectively serves to make the audience anticipate that, sometime in the course of the play, maybe in the end, the conflicts raised so far will be satisfactorily settled. In this case, the single combat is naturally taken as an introductory performance to the final confrontation between Hector and Achilles and its definite resolution. We will see whether this expectation is defeated.

III

Two debate scenes and conflicts concerning the two characters, Troilus
and Achilles, have been examined, but the peculiar quality found on the examination is not restricted to those varieties.

G. Wilson Knight was right when he pointed out the striking contrast between the two armies, although he valued the Trojan part more highly than Shakespeare presented it actually. He uses the terms "intuition" and "intellect" to describe the Trojan party and the Greek party respectively. The terms point "the peculiar dualism that persists in the thought of this play." According to Knight's view, "the Trojan party stands for human beauty and worth, the Greek party for the bestial and stupid elements of man, the barren stagnancy of intellect divorced from action, and the criticism which exposes these things with jeers." 8)

It is true that the Greek heroes are portrayed in a most unflattering way. Achilles and Ajax are stupid and bloody. Agamemnon and Nestor are completely ineffective in action for all their elaborate speeches. So is Ulysses. His long speech on Time as well as his deep schemes for bringing Achilles into action comes to nothing. He is, after all, an expedient manipulator.

Shakespeare does not exempt the Trojan heroes from degradation, either. Hector's heroism is attacked by Cassandra, the prophetess: "Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive" (V. iii. 90). He is not presented as a flawless noble hero but as a hungry pursuer of some kind of honour which, one suspects, exists only in his imagination.

An episode concerning Hector in V. vi. and viii. provides a hostile, if tacit, comment on the nature of his "honour". He chases a Greek who wears a gorgeous armour, because he is anxious to have the "hide" (V. vi. 31). He dispatches the Greek and states, disarming himself:

Most putrefiéd core, so fair without,
Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life.

8) Ibid., p. 47.
Now is my day's work done. I'll take good breath. 
Rest, sword, thou hast thy fill of blood and death. 

( V.viii.1–4)

It is just at this moment that Achilles with his Myrmidons enters and murders Hector. The likely sources of this play, Lydgate's *The Hystorye Sege and Dystruccion of Troye* and Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Hystoryes of Troye* both contain this episode, but they do not put such lines into the mouth of Hector. Obviously, there is diminution of stature of the chivalric hero towards the end of this play. Hector pursues "honour" despite those pleas of the Trojan people including his king and father. Suspicion is awakened here that Hector pursues something "fair without" but "putrefied" within, which can be named "honour", that his pursuit is another example of "mad idolatry" which he reproved in II. ii. Cassandra already suggested the folly of being bound by rash vows:

Hector Be gone, I say. The gods have heard me swear.

Cassandra The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows:
They are polluted offerings, more abhorred Than spotted livers in the sacrifice. (V. iii. 15–18)

Cassandra 'It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;
But vows to every purpose must not hold.
Unarm, sweet Hector.

Hector Hold you still, I say;
Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate.
Life every man holds dear; but the dear man
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life. (V. iii. 23–28)
Hector’s “honour” may be as arbitrary as Achilles’s pride or revenge: they are both “appetite”.

Troilus also fails to win the audience’s sympathy. His subjective valuation sometimes gives the audience the impression of ridiculousness. His argument advanced in the speech: — “I take today a wife...” (II. ii. 61–72) — is, to sum up, that the value of a thing is equal to the prize which the prizer arbitrarily places on it and that the prizer should not change the prize once he fixed it; all worth is relative and subjective. So he maintains that the Trojans should not cast Helen away once they took her. Clearly his attitude towards Cressida is based on this argument. Yet the course of events proves this way of valuation to be utterly disconnected with reality; his evaluation of Cressida is patently an exaggerated one. Both Hector and Troilus are presented ironically by Shakespeare and they do not appear to represent so much human beauty and worth as G. Wilson Knight argues.

Despite the ironical presentation of both parties, however, the major qualities in them are directly opposed. The Trojans, represented by Hector and Troilus, value honour and love most of all. To be more exact, they believe in and value the old codes of chivalry and courtly love. They set a high value on keeping promises and they themselves try to be faithful to their words both in war and love. In contrast, the Greeks are opportunistic and practical. Agamemnon, Nestor and Ulysses play a rather mean trick on Achilles to goad him into fighting. Achilles is presented in no more favorable way. He is utterly devoid of chivalry and kills Hector in a most brutal way.

At the climax of the war plot (V. iii) the greatest heroes of each army, Achilles and Hector confront each other in the battlefield. It seems as if it were the final settlement of the antagonism between the belief in the old codes of chivalry and that in practicality which are represented by each champion. The audience is even impatient to see the opposition—whose intensity has gradually been heightened through the clear and coherent contrast of the two armies—brought to a definite settlement. The quality
of anticlimax, however, again underlies this final confrontation. Achilles, with his Myrmidons, assassinates Hector not allowing him to defend himself. Achilles's brutality is so detestable that none of the audience could accept the victory of practicality as the final judgment passed by Shakespeare. On the other hand, Shakespeare prevents their sympathy with Hector in a subtle and ingenious way, as has been noted, by the episode of the gorgeous armour as well as by the sharp criticism from Cassandra that he, "the heart, sinews, and bone" (V. viii. 12), neglects his duty to his country and king on account of the fixed and mistaken idea of "honour".

On the surface, Achilles is triumphant. However, the audience is left with the sense of anticlimax and ambiguity. Shakespeare dispenses with the decisiveness of his moral vision as far as the war story is concerned.

Like the confrontation between Hector and Achilles in terms of the ideal of chivalry, the confrontation in terms of the ideal of courtly love ends inconclusively. Cressida is not punished as she is in Henryson's poem, at the end of which she suffers from a loathsome disease and is pitied by Troilus. Troilus is not killed in the battle as he is in Chaucer's poem where he attains at last to a state of transcendence while he is ascendent to heaven.

In Shakespeare's version, the audience does not feel that Cressida's unfaithfulness is to blame. For, in the course of the play's action, that is, as time passes in the performance, her inconstancy makes itself felt as a part of natural process of oblivion. It is felt as an "alm" or a prey to Time. On the other hand, the audience is not led to accept Troilus's idealism without criticism, because it is obviously impaired by his rash subjectivism. At the end of the love story, moral impartiality is maintained as well.

Thus, Troilus and Cressida, and Hector and Achilles, present two distinct attitudes as far as moral action in love and in war is concerned. It is as if throughout the play they dramatically hold a debate through their action.

It is suggested that in the medieval literary débat, "decision is often
evaded either by being left to reader or by some adventitious device."9) This is exactly what happens in *Troilus and Cressida* in a far more dramatic manner as we have seen. Shakespeare's final vision of the problem of value is withheld; he only presents on the stage the characters and the ideas conflicting with each other.

As for the structure of the play, therefore, it is clear that the element of the traditional debate plays an important role, just as the double plot of this play does. The ingenuity of the structure of the play derives partly from the constant undertone unifying the various antagonisms in the play; the antagonisms between Troilus and Cressida, between Hector and Achilles in terms of moral attitude as noted above, and the general antagonism between the philosophies of the Trojan party and the Greek party as pointed out by G. Wilson knight which again in themselves contain smaller antagonisms such as the ones between Hector and Troilus and between Achilles and the other Greek commanders. The undertone is the image of contraries which are never reconciled. On the other hand, the structure of the play is, obviously, characterized by the use of the double plot. The two plots of this play do not give such a strong sense of parallelism and complementarity as the double plot of *King Lear*; the famous example of Shakespearean double plot. The two plots whose lines appear separate, however, are in fact inextricably intertwined around the theme of value and its closely related theme of time. The result is a structural sophistication and unity which is achieved by the symmetrical, even diagrammatic investigation of those themes in both the plots as well as by the single element underlying all those antagonisms whether in the love plot or in the war plot.

At this point, it seems to me, the initial question about the dramatic function performed by the element of the traditional technique of debate is ready to be answered.

There is a hypothesis about the audience for whom the play was written.

9) Doran, *op. cit.*, p. 311.
According to some critics' conviction, the audience were the law-students from the Inns of Cours. If this is true, the play must have been very entertaining to those people who studied to excel in the art of debate. Moreover, they must have understood and accepted with less difficulty the strange gap between speech and action, and have been even less curious about the indecisive ending. Even if the hypothesis is not true, the audience in those days who were more familiar with the debate than the modern audience are could have enjoyed the play, since they would not have been so much troubled by the gap and the ending.

With all this difference between the Elizabethan audience and the modern audience, however, the audience of the play ultimately must have one sense in common: the sense of mutability.

As long as the drama is not a pure form of debate but a synthesis which consists of plot, situation, action and character; as long as it pretends to present a world more or less furnished with a sequence of cause and effect, the discrepancy between speech and action noted above leads the audience to sense futility of human activity. This impression is closely related with Shakespeare's presentation of time, the particular references to the notion of Time as well as the time sensed through the whole action of the play. The relation cannot be neglected in considering the meaning of the whole play.


I have once considered in another paper\textsuperscript{12}) the effect of the references made to the working of time in this drama, from the viewpoint of the audience's involvement in the performance. Now in this chapter, interest shall be centered on the meaning which the repeated references to time conveys, organically supported by the element of the technique of debate considered above.

It is easily found that references to time (Time) as well as to fate or fortune abound in this play. Let us note some examples of the references casually made by characters in the course of development of the play.

In I. i, Troilus speaks as if he foresaw the painful course of his love affair, venting his grief over the unsuccessful love:

Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,  
I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,  
Buried this igh in wrinkle of a smile:  
But sorrow that is couched in seeming gladness  
Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness.

(I. i. 38-42).

The lines 41-42 serve to revive the audience's memory of the sorrow of Troilus after the delightful term of successful love, for most of the audience were very familiar with the story of Troilus and Cressida. Obviously Shakespeare aims for some effect which depends on their familiarity with the legend. This is made clearer in III. ii, when the lovers ritualistically vow fidelity:

Troilus. ... True swains in love shall in the world to come

Approve their truths by Troilus. When their rhymes, Full of protest, of oath, and big compare, Want similes, truth tired with iteration— ‘As true as steel, as plantation to the moon, As sun to day, as turtle to her mate, As iron to adamant, as earth to th’centre’— Yet, after all comparisons of truth, As truth’s authentic author to be cited, ‘As true as Troilus’ shall crown up the verse And sanctify the numbers.

Cressida.

Prophet may you be!

If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth, When time is old and hath forgot itself, When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy, And blind oblivion swallowed cities up, And mighty states characterless are grated To dusty nothing, yet let memory, From false to false, among false maids in love, Upbraid my falsehood! When they’ve said ‘as false As air, as water, wind or sandy earth, As fox to lamb, or wolf to heifer’s calf, Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son’, Yea let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood, ‘As false as Cressid’. (III. ii. 172–195)

Both of them mention the future by the words: “the world to come” or “when time is old . . .” The irony is unmistakable when Cressida vows her constancy in the distant future because the audience are sure to see her betrayal in the coming scenes.
When Cressida learns that she must part from Troilus, she refers again to time:

O you gods divine!
Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood,
If ever she leave Troilus! Time, force, and death,
Do to this body what extremes you can;
But the strong base and building of my love
Is as the very cnetre of the earth ...

(IV. ii. 99–104)

Later, when she leaves Troy for the Greek camp, Troilus makes a pathetic speech on "injurious Time":

...injury of chance
Puts buck leave-taking, jostles roughly by
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents
Our locked embraces, strangles our dear vows
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath.
We two, that with so many thousand sighs
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.
Injurious Time now with a robber's haste,
Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how:
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
With distinct breath and consigned kisses to them,
He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
And scants us with a single famished kiss,
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

(IV. iv. 33–48)
Then Troilus repeatedly begs Cressida to "be true". The repetition, certainly, deepens the sense of irony.

In the war plot, too, time as well as fortune often draws the audience's attention. Agamemnon and Nestor speak about "storms of Fortune" in the Greek council meeting (I.iii). In III.iii, Achilles asks, being puzzled by his fellow commanders' snubbing gesture at him, "What, am I poor of late? / 'Tis certain, greatness, once fallen out with fortune,/Must fall out with men too..." (III.iii.74-76). Ulysses's eloquent lecture on Time made for Achilles in the same scene—which has been quoted in pp. 14-15 of this paper—is too famous.

In the Trojan debate scene (II.ii), Cassandra the distraught prophetess exclaims, reminding the audience of the fate of Troy:

Cry, Trojans, cry! Lend me ten thousand eyes,
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

Virgins and boys, mid-aged wrinkled eld,
Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,
Add to my clamours! Let us pay betimes
A moiety of that mass of moan to come.
Cry, Trojans, cry! Practise your eyes with tears!
Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;
Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.
Cry, Trojans, cry! a Helen and a woe:
Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go.

In V.iii, she gloomily forebodes, after vainly imploring Hector to stay:

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!'

(V. iii. 90-97)

In IV. v., Hector himself refers to Time. He and the Greek commanders exchange compliments peacefully after his single combat with Ajax ends with no harm on either part. Ulysses repeats his prophecy which he had made when he came to Ilium as an emissary and Hector answers:

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

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

Ulysses. So to him we leave it....

(IV. v. 217-226)

Fortune smiles and storms and men try to cope with her but Time, the "old common arbitrator", rules over all human activities. In this play, from the beginning, all the actions seem predetermined; Cressida will betray Troilus and Hector will be slain in a disgraceful way. There is no way out,
The Use of Debate in *Troilus and Cressida*

no freedom for the characters to change that too well-known development of the story. They have to play out their roles.

The result is that the audience will sense mutability, the inefficacy of human efforts in the sublunary world governed by time. In their age, all the figures on the stage, even Achilles who is triumphant at the end of the play, had died long before, and the city of Troy itself was destroyed "characterless" "to dusty nothing" (III. ii. 187, 188). Time destroys indiscriminately all the enemies. The argumentations and the reflections in those debates and the debate-like conflicts, as we have seen in chapter I and II, have been nullified by the ensuing incongruous actions. But those actions themselves appear insignificant when set against the background of gigantic stature of Time in this way. Towards the end of the play, diminution of the stature of characters is prevalent. Besides Achilles and Hector, whose cases we have already considered, Ulysses who encourages the soldiers with the news of Achilles's reappearance, and Troilus who is calling for divine vengeance for Hector's death are no exceptions. At the end, the true hero of the play turns out to be Time, whose great, inhuman image now haunts more than any other character the stage of the audience's memories.

Shakespeare does not simply follow the tradition of debate, but positively utilizes that particular element. The audience's sense of the gulf between the characters' speeches or thoughts and their actions, in the long run, serves to emphasize the total impression of the play; the impression of mutability in the human world ruled by Time. This effect may be called dramatic function, though it is different from Doran's concept of the words.

Some of Tudor interludes, written a few decades earlier than *Troilus and Cressida*, more apparently inherit the element of the technique of debate.

Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrece*, in the first half of the play, sets the problem—the nature of true nobility, and in the second, presents the claims of the two suitors for Lucrece, and resolves the conflict by her choice of Gaius, one of the rivals. "Indeed the plot itself is very thin, and the action
of the play is almost entirely a debate in which the two suitors present their claims”, comments Peter Happé in his introduction to *Tudor Interludes.* He also points out that in the ultimate source of the play, an Italian humanist tract by Buonaccorso called *De Vera Nobilitate*, “the debate is referred to the Senate for further consideration, and in the end it is left unresolved.”

In John Heywood’s *The Play of the Wether*, “all the suitors come to present their claims for the kind of weather most suited to their particular avocations” and “the upshot of the play is that Jupiter decides to persevere with the mixture which is already being provided.” It is pointed out that Heywood’s plays “approximate to debates” and that this play is a typical one.

In comparison with these earlier plays, Shakespeare’s way of incorporating the element of debate into his drama is far more complex and sophisticated. He uses the tradition of debate not merely for the enjoyment of rhetoric of argument, but from the nature of the problem about which the play centers. It is the problem of value: Where does value lie, in the object itself or in the estimation which the subject makes about the object?

At Shakespeare’s age, when the old traditional view of the world—as depicted in Tillyard’s *The Elizabethan World Picture*—began to fail to convince people, this problem must have been serious. But at the same it must have been too difficult to solve definitely. Shakespeare is not trying to solve the problem: his interest centers on the very contraries and their dialectic tension themselves. It is quite reasonable, therefore, that the

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14) *Loc. cit.*
16) *Loc. cit.*
18) G. R. Hibbard makes sensible and suggestive comments on Shakespeare’s
The Use of Debate in *Troilus and Cressida*.

The play's structure markedly resembles the form of debate. Introducing the concept of Time, "the old common arbitrator", Shakespeare leaves the problem to the audience's own solution, or, he provides the third answer; that is, the audience's aesthetic experience in the theater. The play does not give the definite answer to the question of value; it does not give the sententious moral, nor the simplistic statement about human situation, but it shows through the entire dramatic action the complex problems of value and moral action which time creates in the human society. The very impartial presentation of conflicts, which are left unresolved at the end, is highly effective in giving the audience the profound sense of futility of human action—ideal or practical—and of mutability in the human world under the rule of the old "injurious" Time.

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profound sense of the interdependence of contraries. He argues that the sense is one of the most important of the unifying factors underlying Shakespeare's whole work. G. R. Hibbard, *The Making of Shakespeare's Dramatic Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 133.