

**T.C.**  
**ATILIM ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
**İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI**

**THE IRONY OF IDEALISM IN SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM**  
**COMEDIES**

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

**HAZIRLAYAN**

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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

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## I. INTRODUCTION

William Shakespeare's plays are categorized as comedies, histories, tragedies and romances in the First Folio published in 1623. Among his plays, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* are later labeled as problem comedies.

The problem play as a different category surfaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of the realist and naturalist movements. These plays are grouped together because they show some peculiarities that do not coincide with the classical notion of dramatic genres or Renaissance understanding of comedy and tragedy. Moreover, they are problematic in terms of the questions they raise on morality and social problems.

Literary scholars have always had difficulty in categorizing these plays. One of the first scholars who separated *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well* from other comedies is Edward Dowden. He states in his book *Shakespeare: His Mind and Art* that

*All's Well That Ends Well* is grave and earnest; *Measure for Measure* is dark and bitter. In the first edition I did not venture to attempt an interpretation of *Troilus and Cressida*. I now believe this strange and difficult play was a last attempt to continue comedy made when Shakespeare had ceased to be able to smile genially, and when he must be either ironical, or else take a deep, passionate and tragical view of life. (Dowden 6)

It is certain that these three comedies had a separate position when compared to his other comedies for Dowden. This is the reason why he called them serious, dark and bitter comedies.

Although Dowden was the first scholar who distinguished these comedies from the other ones, the first person who used the term "problem play" was F. S. Boas. Besides these

three comedies, he added *Hamlet* under this category. In his book *Shakespeare and his Predecessors* (1896), Boas suggests that

[a]ll these dramas introduce us into highly artificial societies, whose civilization is ripe unto rottenness. Amidst such media abnormal conditions of brain and of emotion are generated, and intricate cases of conscience demand a solution by unprecedented methods. Thus throughout these plays we move along dim untrodden paths and at the close our feeling is neither of simple joy nor pain we are excited, fascinated, perplexed, for the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome, even when, as in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, the complications are outwardly adjusted in the fifth act. In *Troilus and Cressida* and *Hamlet* no such partial settlement of difficulties takes place, and we are left to interpret their enigmas as best we may. Dramas so singular in theme and temper cannot be strictly called comedies or tragedies. We may therefore borrow a convenient phrase from the theatre of to-day and class them together as Shakespeare's problem-plays. (Boas 345)

Boas finds different problems in the plays since there is not a certain problem common in all plays. While he sees moral problems in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, the problem he finds in *Troilus and Cressida* is the relation of the war-plot to the love-story. Boas's grouping and labeling have been generally accepted by other scholars in the following years.

In his preface to *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898), Bernard Shaw refers to these plays and favors them among others:

Shakespeare...has left us no intellectually coherent drama, and could not afford to pursue a genuinely scientific method in his studies of character and society, though in such unpopular plays as *All's Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, we find him ready and willing to start at the twentieth century if the seventeenth would only let him . (21)

E. K. Chambers evaluated these plays in his article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1910. He called them “the three bitter and cynical pseudo-comedies”. Also, he puts forward that “*All's Well* drags the honor of womanhood in the dust; *Troilus and Cressida* confounds the ideals of heroism and romance; and in *Measure for Measure*, the searchlight of irony is thrown upon the ways of Providence itself” (qtd in Rossiter 265).

Another important literary figure, W.W. Lawrence published *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* in 1931. He excluded *Hamlet* from his book and limited his scope of analysis to the other three plays. According to Lawrence,

[t]he essential characteristic of a problem play, I take it, is that a perplexing and distressing complication in human life is presented in a spirit of high seriousness. This special treatment distinguishes such a play from other kinds of drama in that the theme is handled so as to arouse not merely interest or excitement, or pity or amusement, but to probe the complicated interrelations of character and action, in a situation admitting of different ethical interpretations. (21)

According to Lawrence, there are no specific solutions to the problems presented in the plays. He asserts that “[t]he problem play is not like mathematics, to which there is a

single true solution, but is one of conduct, as to which there are no fixed and immutable laws” (4).

Twenty years later, E.M.W. Tillyard published his work, *Shakespeare's problem plays* in 1951. Like Boas did before, he added *Hamlet* in this group and used the term “plays” rather than “comedies”. Actually, he did not like the term such as dark comedies or problem comedies which previous critics had used for these plays. However, he decided to use them reluctantly and he added:” [i]t is anything but a satisfactory term, and I wish I knew a better. All I can do now is to warn the reader that I use it vaguely and equivocally; as a matter of convenience” (Tillyard 9). Tillyard brings a different classification. He groups *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* on the one hand and *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* on the other. According to Tillyard, the definition of the problem plays is as follows:

There are at least two kinds of problem child: first the genuinely abnormal child, whom no efforts will ever bring back to normality; and second the child who is interesting and complex rather than abnormal: apt indeed to be a problem for parents and teachers but destined to fulfillment in the larger scope of adult life. Now *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* are like the first problem child: there is something radically schizophrenic about them. *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* are like the second problem child, full of interest and complexity but divided within themselves only within the eyes of those that have misjudged them. To put the difference another way, *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* are problem plays because they deal with and display interesting problems; *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* because they are problems (Tillyard 10).

Tillyard also discusses the nature of these plays. He entitled these plays as a classifiable group according to a chronological order. He considers that Shakespeare developed himself in terms of ideas, themes and style whenever he wrote a play.

In 1961, A.P. Rossiter published *Angel with Horns* which is a collection of lectures on problem plays. He excludes *Hamlet* and claims that the rest of the plays are tragi-comedies which can be called as an art of inversion, deflation and paradox. Rossiter clarifies four features which are common in these plays:

They share a common evaluation of conventionally accepted nobilities, all figures are placed in the pattern in such a way that cynicism is checked, these plays involve us in discoveries, always of a bad reality beneath the fair appearance of things and finally they are all profoundly concerned with seeming and being: and this can cover both sex and human worth. (Rossiter 279)

Rossiter puts forward that *Troilus and Cressida* is a tragedy of love, *All's Well That Ends Well* has a happy ending which makes the audience neither happy nor upset, and *Measure for Measure* has a conclusion which does not satisfy the audience (8). Briefly, the problem plays confuse the readers and they do not have clear-cut endings. Contrary to Tillyard, Rossiter does not make an explicit distinction between the natures of the problems among the three comedies.

Another critic, Ernest Schanzer, does not accept the traditional way of grouping these plays according to their genres and takes *Measure for Measure*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* into consideration. He rejects the other critics and tries to make a clear definition and argues that

[i]t is scarcely a very satisfactory state of affairs: on the one hand we have a descriptive label that is consciously equivocal (Tillyard)

or that is misty and protean, changing its meaning with each of the plays to which it is applied (Boas); on the other a label which is clearly defined and usefully limited but does not accord with critic's own interpretation of the plays to which it is fitted (Lawrence). (Schanzer 4)

Schanzer is against the definitions that Boas, Lawrence and Tillyard made as he attempted to redefine the term "problem play". He restricted the plays in terms of morality and claimed that any play which raises moral questions in someone's mind can be called a "problem play". According to Schanzer, the definition of problem plays is "[a] play in which we find a concern with a moral problem which is central to it, presented in such a manner that we are unsure of our moral bearings, so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible or even probable" (Schanzer 6). Schanzer supports that if a play presents a moral question regardless of its genre, it can be accepted as a problem play. Among the problem comedies, he does not see *All's Well* as a problem play since he thinks that "Helen's problem of fulfilling Bertram's task is not presented by Shakespeare as a moral problem" (7).

While categorizing these plays, critics dwelled on the problems of genre, the problem of the protagonist and the problems of morality. The basic problem that critics cannot agree upon is which plays fall into the group of problem plays, to which genre they belong, and which characters are the protagonists. Another common point of the "problem plays" is

[a] concern with the relationship of sexual desire and social order, which is manifested chiefly in four ways: first, a debased presentation of intimate relationships and sexual values, revealed through both action and language second, an exaggerated polarization of constructions of femininity, whereby women are

pathologically divided into virgins and whores; third, a questioning of the psychological and social integrity of the institution of marriage; and finally, a corresponding interrogation of the limitations of comedy as a medium for expressing the complexities of human relationships. (Fagan 16)

Therefore, *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* are against the tradition of comedy not only in terms of style and technique but also in terms of content. Shakespeare used a wide range of irony while writing these plays. He succeeded in creating an atmosphere of obscurity through these ironies. He criticized values such as love, honor, and justice despite the fact that he praises these values in his other plays. That is, “[t]here appears an appreciation of the contrast between appearance and reality, between being and seeming” (Nicoll 68). According to Stanley Wells, Shakespeare’s works act out the opposite, the reality of disorder while they assert the “great chain of being” or hierarchy of disorder (17).

There is a clash between idealism and reality in these three problem comedies. At this point, it is essential to define idealism. In *Macmillan English Dictionary*, idealism is defined as “a style of art that shows things in a perfect state”. McDonald clarifies this clash by referring to the plays:

*All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, although their endings are technically “happy” deal with problematic subjects: in the first case a young woman insists on marrying an immature, unworthy man who does not want her, and in the second a novice must defend herself against the sexual harassment of a corrupt civic official as she seeks to save her brother from being executed for fornication. These plays exhibit tonal ironies so bitter and representations of human activity so unflattering that at times it is

difficult to remember that they are comedies. Another problematic play, *Troilus and Cressida*, is even more difficult to classify. In its dark assessment of human experience and achievement it more nearly resembles *Othello* or *King Lear*. And yet it is not clearly a tragedy either. (McDonald 19)

Although *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* were listed among the comedies, *Troilus and Cressida* was listed in histories in the quarto edition and among the tragedies in the First Folio. Still, these three plays show different characteristics when compared to the classical notions of comedy and Shakespearean comedy. Conflict in marriage is *sine qua non* of classical comedy; however, this conflict is solved through the end of the play. In Shakespeare's comedies, there is more confusion in the end. Moreover, the mutual point of Shakespeare's and classical comedies\* is that they end with marriages and these marriages stand for the regeneration of humans and thus immortality. Even if there are marriages in Shakespeare's comedies, these are obligatory ones and they may include adultery. Danson clarifies that

Shakespeare is a great comic playwright not because he uses comic conventions but because he extraordinarily varies and extends their possibilities. One way of describing the problem with the so-called "problem plays" is to say that in them Shakespeare has dealt so unconventionally with his comic conventions that we are left more than usually unsure how to respond. (237)

Besides, they cannot be accepted as tragedies as nothing is resolved at the end of the plays unlike other Shakespeare's tragedies. Shakespearean tragedies make the issue more complicated. He sets opposites and complementarities together and refuses to let the audience

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\* Shakespeare's source in terms of classical comedy is always the Roman comedies. Therefore, the conventions of Greek comedy are not within the scope of this thesis.

know who is right or who is wrong (Hunter 128). Shakespeare's tragic heroes make fatal mistakes and they bring about their ruin just like the tragic heroes in classical tragedies. A. C. Bradley states that "[t]his is always so with Shakespeare. As we have seen, the idea of the tragic hero as a being destroyed simply and solely by external forces is quite alien to him; and not less so is the idea of the hero as contributing to his destruction only by acts in which we see no flaw. But the fatal imperfection or error, which is never absent, is of different kinds and degrees" (Bradley 21). Shakespeare's characters cause their own ends. For example, *Troilus and Cressida* does not take place in a heroic world despite the fact that Hector behaves as if he were there. It is not possible to talk about virtuous behaviors in such a war as Hector does in the play. In these problem comedies, ideals and reality are juxtaposed. In his article, Paul Yachnin clarifies that

*All's Well* and *Measure for Measure* end with marriages reaffirmed or impending, so they look like comedies, but they are bereft of celebration and their endings resolve none of the tensions that are aroused by the dramatic action. *Troilus* is the Bilbao Guggenheim of Renaissance plays: it should be a tragedy about the destruction of young love by war and the earth-shattering murder of Hector, but it in fact a *tour de force* form-making that looks like nothing on earth. (46)

Vivian Thomas suggests that these problem plays show some contextual similarities. There are links that combine these plays like a chain. First of all, these plays leave lots of question marks in readers' brains. They cannot exactly understand whether these plays are comedies or tragedies especially in the case of *Troilus and Cressida*. According to Thomas, "[i]n *Troilus and Cressida* the issue is one of value, worth and honor; in *All's Well* the critical

question is related to human valuation... and the debate in *Measure for Measure* centers on law and justice” (15).

According to Thomas, there is a degree of detachment between the audience and the characters. Although the characters are used to create intensity, actions always remain in the first place (16). In addition to this, honor is the major theme in these plays. In *All's Well*, Bertram inherits honor, in *Measure for Measure*, Angelo behaves in a dishonorable way and lastly in *Troilus and Cressida*, Hector considers that honor is beyond everything contrary to what Achilles does. That is, honor is among the central themes in each play.

Shakespeare was deeply affected by “courtly love” which was practiced during the Middle Ages. This love affair used to be between the members of the court. It was secret since courtly love was not between married wife and husband in chivalric times. Shakespeare reflected this kind of medieval love relation in his plays. For example, love and sex are the concerns of his problem comedies. In *Troilus and Cressida*, while the war stems from Helen’s elopement with Paris, Cressida betrays Troilus. In *All's Well* Bertram wants to have sexual relationship with Isabella and in *Measure for Measure*, Angelo punishes Claudio for having an illegal relationship with Juliet while he wants to commit the same “crime” with Isabella. This shows that there is a juxtaposition of sexual desire and “real” love.

It is not surprising that Shakespeare used irony in order to present ideal values in early modern era. According to W. R. Elton, Shakespeare’s works act out the opposite, the reality of disorder while they assert the “great chain of being” or hierarchy of disorder (17). Shakespeare’s works were formed in relation to the changing thought of his age.

Early Modern Age is a transition period from the medieval to a modern world. In its broadest sense, this transition period can be labeled as the age of discovery of man, the individual, revival of classic culture and secularization of life (Howard 21). According to Irving Ribner,

[i]t was an age of rapid expansion in commerce, of new scientific discovery, of intense political nationalism and religious controversy. Perhaps the most salient characteristics of its intellectual life was a quality of uncertainty-the breaking down of ancient convictions, the groping for new conceptions, and a strong defence of the old against the new. (3)

According to some historians, feudalism was already in decline earlier than the sixteenth century. McDonald puts forward that “[t]he old feudal that dominated England until the end of the fifteenth century was gradually being supplanted by an early capitalist system that heavily depended more heavily on individual ownership” (272). M. H. Abrams adds that

England which had always been a sheep-raising country began to manufacture and export significant amounts of cloth. As lands were enclosed to permit grazing on a larger scale, people were driven off the land to the cities, London grew into a metropolitan market, and business in the modern sense began to develop. (380)

Economics, commerce and industry expanded and thus capitalism emerged. Moreover, the desire for benefit in terms of monetary point of view aroused nationalistic feelings together with religious unrest. Hattaway states that money became the root of all evil but of all power in Renaissance England(106). When money came into use, the peasant family was drawn into a market economy. With the rise of money economy, modern individualistic ownership and the decline of peasantry occurred (Macfarlane 42). According to McDonald, the expansion of commerce parallel to the rise in population produced cash that the merchants wanted to secure by investing in land (261). The situations in the late sixteenth century were not good for the poor.

Population was divided into different groups such as aristocrats who owned large estates in the country, gentles whose estates were relatively smaller than that of aristocrats, citizens who were generally tradesmen, yeomen who possessed agricultural or grazing lands, servants who worked for others and lastly indigents who survived by begging (Mc Donald 270-1). There were constant threats and potential rebellions against Elizabeth due to the division among people. Margot Heinemann puts forward that:

The 1590s was a decade of extreme hardship for the poor, with bad harvests and famine years, and an outcry against corn-hoarders and price-raisers. In the south-east, notably in Essex and Oxford shire, there were grain riots, and in London itself riots for cheaper bread and against aliens, who were thought to be taking trade away from local people (170).

The structure of family and society was shaped by some factors such as economy, culture and class in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Marriages were not only a social relationship but also a contract between individuals. They were generally loveless and generally arranged. McDonald clarifies that

[t]he Church of England recognized the validity of several kinds of “irregular” marriages. A couple who promised before witnesses to marry each other in the future and who then consummated the agreement sexually were considered legally wed, whether or not a church ceremony ever took place. (268)

Early Modern England was a male dominated society, that is, it was patriarchal. Although the country was governed by Elizabeth in the second half of the sixteenth century, women were just responsible for the housework. In other words, women used to have secondary role in the society that Shakespeare lived. McDonald states that “ Shakespeare’s

comedies can be seen as instruments of social stability in their representation of the unshakable power of husbands, aristocrats and other dominant cultural voices”( 155).

Humanist way of thinking pervaded much European and English Renaissance writing. Abrams states that “Humanism was to have profound effect upon English intellectual life, education, and writing all through the 16<sup>th</sup> century” (381). Literature used to offer ideal patterns for living which were determined by the church, however, search for individual expression began after the Reformation. Rather than religion, reason started to be important for people. Ronald Carter clarifies this situation as:

Institutions were questioned and re-evaluated, often while being praised at the same time. But where there had been conventional modes of expression, reflecting ideal modes of behavior – religious, heroic, or social –Renaissance writing explored the geography of the human soul, redefining its relationship with authority, history, science, and the future. This involved experimentation with form and genre, and enormous variety of linguistic and literary innovations in a short period of time. (60)

The Elizabethan era was a period of this transition, and literature was given utmost importance. Abrams remarks that “[t]he dramatic literature of the age of Elizabeth is the greatest cultural achievement of the period” (381). The writing of the era was the exploration of human freedom and this led English literature to a new religious, social and moral identity which lasted till the mid-nineteenth century. The writers attempted to reflect the disintegration of former certainties and theatres became the forum for debate, spectacle and entertainment which Shakespeare also contributed (Carter 62). Ribner asserts that “Shakespeare’s plays may be the finest mirror that we possess of the conflicting visions of the Renaissance world” (4). Shakespeare witnessed the changing values in the society in which he lived and used the

theatre to present this transformation in the culture since old values and cultures were substituted with the new ones during his time in England.

The primary purpose of this thesis is therefore to explore in which ways Shakespeare used his dramatic art to show this combination and the degraded values of the society critically by juxtaposing the “real” with the “ideal”. Also, this thesis will attempt to evaluate “Shakespeare’s Problem Comedies” which are called as such due to problems critics had in pinpointing their genre together with their content. While analyzing these plays, it is clear that Shakespeare reflected the social, historical and political realities of his time by focusing on some values such as love, honesty, law and justice.

The first chapter of this thesis is on *Troilus and Cressida* which is based on the Trojan War. The play causes a complete disappointment in terms of its approach to ideal values. Contrary to what Shakespeare did in his other plays, he degraded his characters instead of ennobling them in order to criticize the corrupted values of the society that he lived in.

In the second chapter, *All’s Well That Ends Well* will be dealt with. It is about an orphan girl who wants to marry a Prince and she does her best to achieve her aim in the play. The play raises questions on the nature of “love” and “honor” by approaching these values ironically.

*Measure for Measure* will be the main subject of the third chapter. This is one of the most problematic plays of Shakespeare in terms of its depiction of law and justice. It reflects the immoralities of the society via Angelo who is the temporary governor of the city. When he is in power, he misuses the law and attempts to be with Isabella in spite of the fact that he punishes her brother who had an “illegal” love affair with Juliet. In this play power and authority, religious devotion and freedom are juxtaposed.

In the last chapter, a conclusion will be provided for this study based on the analysis of the plays.

GCRLS

## II. *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*

Shakespeare's main source for *Troilus and Cressida* is Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* which is based on the story of the siege of Troy. E. Talbot Donaldson claims that "Shakespeare understood Chaucer's poem for what it is, a marvelous celebration of romantic love containing a sad recognition of its fragility, a work full of ironic contradictions" (qtd. in Thomas 47). Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* which belongs to romance tradition provided not only a story but also ready-made characters (48). Shakespeare's other source for Troilus and Cressida is Chapman's *Seven Books of the Iliades*. This is related to Shakespeare's story no matter how Troilus is a minor character and Cressida does not exist at all. Thomas acknowledges that

Ulysess's speech on order; the description of Thersites and his accurate denunciation of Agamemnon; Hector's challenge and duel with Ajax; the Trojan debate over the continuation of the war and the disillusionment of the messengers; the appeal to Achilles to rejoin the fight. (32)

However, Shakespeare evidently changes and manipulates his sources skillfully. *Troilus and Cressida* begins with the Trojan War going on its seventh year. Troilus, a young son of Priam, falls in love with Cressida and Cressida's uncle acts as go-between between two lovers. Immediately after they spend a night together, Cressida is exchanged with Antenor and the Trojans including Troilus accept this willingly. In spite of her vows, Cressida betrays Troilus with Diomedes as soon as she leaves Troy. In the meantime, Achilles is thought to damage the Greek side for his indifferent attitudes towards the war. He does not fight as he does not respect the commanders. The only reason that turns him back to the war is the death of Patroclus. When he turns back to the war, he kills Hector cowardly and the war ends with the destruction of Troy.

*Troilus and Cressida* is one of the most difficult plays in terms of genre since it is neither history nor comedy or tragedy in spite of having elements of all three. In the First Folio, the play is listed among the tragedies. Dickson acknowledges that “this story of a futile love affair trapped in the middle of an apparently endless conflict is a scathing satire on the glory and chivalry of the Trojan War” (382).

Even though it is clear that death awaits both Troilus and Cressida and that a comic reconciliation and marriage is highly unlikely to occur, the absence of either of these events within the dramatic action makes it difficult to categorize *Troilus and Cressida* as anything but a peculiar generic hybrid of comedy, tragedy and history (Fagan 29).

It is evident that Shakespeare was conscious of the social and economic changes which occurred in his society. These changes and developments are reflected in the play. The irony in the play is so subtle that an appreciation of the play continues to increase. There is not only the disorder of war but also the disorder within the lovers themselves. (Harmon 55)

Love and war are the most important themes in terms of honor, bravery, honesty. The play is especially about the examination of the relations among people. The war occurred as a result of one man’s desire for another man’s woman. Throughout the play, there is a debate about the necessity of a war for the possession of a woman. Although the title of the play is *Troilus and Cressida*, Paris and Helen’s love affair is not the reason of the larger conflict that pushes the Greeks and Trojans into war.

*Troilus and Cressida* is one of the most marginal plays of Shakespeare among his thirty-eight plays. For this reason, it has been evaluated differently since it was written. It has been criticized and appreciated time to time. Critics put forward various ideas about it as its genre is not clear. For example, divine features such as reason, love, and power are replaced with trick, passion and cruelty when people are beaten by their inferior sides (Yüksel 59).

Whenever the problem comedies are discussed, the first one to be dealt with is *Troilus and Cressida* as it is generally dated as the earliest of the plays. This play is constantly considered to be difficult to interpret. One of the common issues that critics agree upon is the character of Cressida as a faithless woman. She is a character who opposes the absolute value of love against the powers of war.

Shakespeare presents the audience two different worlds with the Trojans and the Greeks. While the first one represents honor and idealism, the latter stands for reason and realism.

Shakespeare starts the play by introducing Troilus who is a son of King Priam. Troilus talks about the futility of the war at the very beginning of the play. He does not want to go to the battle-field due to his love for Cressida. He calls his servant to remove his armor and weapons stating that

Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again.

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. (I.i.1-6)

Troilus does not want to fight for someone who is not from Troy. Thomas remarks that “Shakespeare’s interest in this subject arose out of a probing of the question of why the participants, especially the Trojans, fought a destructive and long drawn-out conflict for such an apparently trivial reason as a faithless woman” (Thomas 92). He is a victim of an internal battle which keeps him from the severe external battle. He is not only locked up within the walls of the city, but also locked up within himself and that’s the reason why he does not want to go on with the war. He claims that Greeks are more powerful than Trojans and this is one of the ironies that Shakespeare employed since it is not appropriate for honorable combatants

to accept the power of their enemies easily before they fight on the battle-field. However, this is not the case for Troilus

The Greeks are strong, and skilful to their strength,  
 Fierce to their skill, and to their fierceness valiant;  
 But I am weaker than a woman's tear,  
 Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,  
 Less valiant than the virgin in the night,  
 And skillless as unpractis'd infancy. (I.i.7-12)

According to Troilus, it is not possible for the Trojans to defeat the Greeks. He even doubts his courage; however, courage is an ideal that is the most important value of a hero. Troilus stays at home while other Trojans fight in the battle-field.

In addition to his lack of encouragement, Troilus does not fight because of his love towards Cressida. What disturbs him is not the progress of war but his lack of progress in his love affair. Again, this attitude of Troilus does not match the characteristics of a hero. He supports his claim that there is no need to fight and states:

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. (I.i.88-93)

He is so pessimistic about the war that he calls both sides “fools” which again reflects that he is not an ideal war hero. He argues that the beauty of Helen does not come from her own features but because so much blood is spilled for the sake of her beauty and so many sacrifices is made for her. For this reason, he considers that the war should end as soon as possible.

When Aeneas comes and asks Troilus why he is not at the battle field, he answers indifferently by saying that “[b]ecause not there” (I.i.106). This is not a satisfactory reply for a brave soldier. Actually, he is aware of his duty, but he is not happy as he does not wish to sacrifice himself for such a cause. Troilus, especially after falling in love with Cressida, no longer wants to fight since he does not want to sacrifice himself for such a meaningless reason.

Despite the fact that he is not at the battle-field, he wants to be informed what is happening there. When he learns that Paris has been wounded by Menelaus, he does not worry about him in spite of their brotherhood: “Let Paris bleed: 'tis but a scar to scorn; / Paris is gor'd with Menelaus' horn” (I.i.112-3).

Moreover, the war is regarded as a kind of sports activity and Troilus thinks that better exercises can be done within the walls of Troy rather than on the battlefield. He prefers sexual conquest to martial conquest in the first scene. Later on, he completely changes his ideas and supports the war due to his love for Cressida. After Cressida leaves, he does not regard war as something worthless any longer.

Hector is the great leader of the Trojans. In a combat, he is beaten by Ajax and turns back angrily. He is so ashamed that he waits for the next day impatiently to regain his honor. He spends the night neither eating nor sleeping as he cannot bear to be defeated. In fact; great warriors such as Hector are not beaten easily. However, this is not the case in this play. Ajax humiliates him and such kinds of humiliations are quite ironic because it is against the heroic tradition. Another ironic perspective of the play is that Helen still sleeps in her bed when Hector leaves for the battle field to take his revenge. It is clear that Helen gets pleasure while people are killed and dishonored outside the walls of Troy. She just enjoys her life by stating that “Let thy song be love. This love will undo us all. O Cupid, Cupid, Cupid!” (III.i.110-1). She is not interested in war which occurs because of her infidelity.

When the army turns back, Pandarus talks about the warriors and praises all of Priam's sons except Helenus. He does not praise him at all and upon Cressida's question, he answers that "Helenus! No. Yes, he'll fight indifferent well. I marvel where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the people cry 'Troilus'? Helenus is a priest" (I.ii.223-5). Therefore, the people of Troy value warriors more than the priest. Beside Heleneus, Pandarus stops his praises when common soldiers arrive. According to him, only nobles defending Troy are praiseworthy and calls the rest "asses, fools or dolts" (I.ii.241). Actually, these ones deserve the best compliment in a war as they do their best to defend their city ideally.

The Greek council and the Trojan council are different from each other, in that, the Greek council consists of generals while the Trojan council consists of family members. In the Greek council, Agamemnon expresses that they keep their hopes up as he thinks that Gods deliberately put obstacles on their way to test them. That's why; they should go on with the war. Similarly, the Trojan council decides to continue the war for their honor, glory and reputation rather than their survival although seven years have already passed. While the Trojan council is concerned with moral order with the speeches of Hector, the Greek council is concerned with political order.

Authority and discipline are necessary for victory; however, this is not the case for the Greek side. Agamemnon loses the control over the council since Nestor and Ulysses criticize his authority in their speeches and associate the failure of the army to the failure of his leadership. According to Ulysses, they could have won the war quite earlier if there had been strong authority over the army. In his speech, he suggests that the order in a society is based on the laws of the universe:

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; And therefore is the

glorious planet Sol In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd  
 Amidst the other, whose med'cinable eye Corrects the ill aspects of  
 planets evil, And posts, like the commandment of a king, Sans  
 check, to good and bad. (I.iii.85-94)

He also relates the order of the army to the order of the universe. Agamemnon could not rule the army properly. Like the ill aspects of the planet, the ill aspect of Agamemnon's authority must be corrected.

The Greeks have doubts about their futures and think about ending the war honorably since Agamemnon cannot even command Achilles\*. His lack of control over Achilles is one of the ironies that Shakespeare has applied since Achilles does not care about Agamemnon's authority.

After criticizing the authority of Agamemnon, he also presents the solution of the problem. Ulysses says that they should benefit from Achilles and they should do something to make Achilles return to the war

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
 The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
 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. (I.iii.143-9)

Achilles is celebrated as the greatest warrior of the Greeks. However, he has withdrawn from the war and has refused to fight. Instead, he humiliates the Greek leaders with Patroclus in his tent and lies idle. Thomas considers that "[n]ot only does Patroclus

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\* There is also such conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad*.

reduce them to ludicrous figures, pompous, bombastic but also he robs them of their attributes and functions” (Thomas 105). In addition to Thomas, Harmon reports that “Achilles is caught in his own image of self-worth, and so prideful that he would rather bask in his tent than serve the Greek cause” (Harmon 76). Achilles remains only in name. His indifferent behavior affects the whole army. For example, another Greek warrior, Ajax, spends his time mocking the generals with Thersites and Thersites always talks about the “truth” during the play despite the fact that he seems to humiliate the people in authority.

In order to deal with this problem, Ulysses makes a plan. Hector challenges the Greek leaders and wants to fight with the strongest combatant in a single combat. Aeneas gives this message to the Greeks by acting as if he does not recognize Agamemnon:

Agamemnon: What would you fore our tent?

Aeneas: Is this great Agamemnon's tent, I pray you?

Agamemnon: Even this.

Aeneas: May one that is a herald and a prince

Do a fair message to his kingly eyes? (I.iii.215-9)

That Aeneas does not recognize Agamemnon suggests that the Greek leader does not have the specialties of grandeur. Also, Aeneas does not care about the power and authority of the Greeks. At this point, theme of being and seeming is revealed as most of the Greeks do not care the authority of Agamemnon a lot and actually humiliate him although he seems to be a great leader. He delivers Hector’s message and informs that

If there be one among the fair'st of Greece

That holds his honour higher than his ease,

That seeks 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-to him this challenge. (I.iii.265-72)

The problem of the solution is discussed with Ulysses and Nestor after Aeneas leaves. Both agree that they should attempt to disappoint Achilles and encourage Ajax to duel with Hector:

Ulysses: This 'tis: Blunt wedges rive hard knots.  
 The seeded pride That hath to this maturity blown up  
 In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd  
 Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil  
 To overbulk us all. (I.iii.316-9)

Shakespeare presents Ulysses as the political leader of the Greek camp. Although Hector's challenge is for all the Greeks, Ulysses knows that the offer is only for Achilles. By encouraging Ajax to fight with Hector, he plans to crop Achilles' honor. At the same time; they will not lose their fame as the best Greek combatant will not have been still defeated by Hector. However, Achilles does not give importance to Hector's challenge and remains indifferent to his environment unlike a legendary warrior.

Greeks flatter Ajax claiming that he is actually better than Achilles. By this way, they want Achilles to think that he is not an indispensable warrior. To achieve this, they pass in front of his tent ignoring him. He reacts to this situation immediately. He realizes that he is about to lose his fame, honor and states that

What, am I poor of late?  
 'Tis certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,  
 Must fall out with men too. What the declin'd is,  
 He shall as soon read in the eyes of others

As feel in his own fall; for men, like butterflies,  
 Show not their mealy wings but to the summer;  
 And not a man for being simply man  
 Hath any honour, but honour for those honours  
 That are without him, as place, riches, and favour,  
 Prizes of accident, as oft as merit;  
 Which when they fall, as being slippery standers,  
 The love that lean'd on them as slippery too,  
 Doth one pluck down another, and together  
 Die in the fall. (III.iii.74-87)

Interestingly, warriors at opposite parties are relatives of each other. For example, Ajax and Hector are cousins and Ajax says "I came to kill thee, cousin" (IV.v.140) despite their affinity. Ajax is not only half Trojan and half Greek but also he is the second most powerful warrior on the Greek side (Thomas 84). Hector and Ajax stop fighting when they understand their kinship. Achilles is aware that the maintenance of honor depends on the appreciation of others, but, he still supposes that he is still the most honorable warrior in the war. Unlike other Greeks, Ulysses stops and explains the source of honor to Achilles by reminding him that his previous successes are going to be forgotten gradually:

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,  
 Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,  
 A great-siz'd monster of ingratitude.  
 Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd  
 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 mock'ry. Take the instant way;  
 For honour travels in a strait so narrow--  
 Where one but goes abreast. (III.iii.145-55)

His explanations lead Achilles to think about why he stops fighting if the honor is related to other people. Ulysses's plan works well to some extent. The Greeks would like to use the most important virtue of Achilles, that is, his military power. To persuade him to fight, Ulysses claims that time erases past successes: "The present eye praises the present object" (III.iii.180). He clearly states that he should not withdraw from the war if he is in love with honor. Furthermore, he warns Achilles that

All the commerce that you have had with Troy  
 As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord;  
 And better would it fit Achilles much  
 To throw down Hector than Polyxena. (III.iii.205-8)

Thus, Ulysses reminds Achilles of his position and warns him that time will erase his fame. Besides, he reveals that his love to Polyxena is not a secret and tells him that the greatest honor for a Greek warrior will be the defeat of Hector rather than possessing his sister. Achilles gives up fighting as he is in love with his enemy's sister by putting his honor aside.

Patroclus blames himself of Achilles's withdrawal from the war. Achilles realizes that his fame is in danger as the Greek leaders sent Ajax to fight with Hector instead of him; however, he does nothing to get it strengthened again. Instead, he tells Patroclus to call Thersites:

Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus.  
 I'll send the fool to Ajax, and desire him  
 T' invite the Trojan lords, after the combat,

To see us here unarmed. I have 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.234-41)

In spite of Achilles' fame as a fighting machine, there are no descriptions of his actions on the battle-field contrary to Hector's. Instead of behaving as a hero, he plans to take advantage of Hector by giving him excessive wine (Thomas 123): "I'll heat his blood with Greekish wine tonight/Which with my scimitar I'll cool to-morrow/Patroclus, let us feast him to the height"(V.i.1-3). This is an immoral idea for an "honorable" warrior like Achilles, because ideally, a hero like Achilles is expected to fight on the battle-field rather than beating his enemy by trickery.

The war is so corrupted that the enemy parties visit each other as guests and have feasts together when they are not fighting. To illustrate, everybody on the Greek side welcomes Hector when he visits the Greek camp. While Aeneas welcomes Diomedes in Troy, Agamemnon welcomes Hector in the same way. Thomas clarifies that "[a]part from Achilles, the Greeks behave with respect towards Hector because of his achievements on the battlefield and because he is a generous and courteous human being" (Thomas 122). While Nestor and Ulysses appreciate him, Agamemnon welcomes him candidly:

Worthy of arms! as welcome as to one  
 That would be rid of such an enemy.  
 But that's no welcome. Understand more clear,  
 What's past and what's to come is strew'd with husks  
 And formless ruin of oblivion;  
 But in this extant moment, faith and troth,

Strain'd purely from all hollow bias-drawing,  
 Bids thee with most divine integrity,  
 From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome. (IV.iv.163-71)

Achilles wants to see Hector face-to-face. When Achilles sees Hector, he examines him carefully and thinks about which part of his body he should cut:” Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body/Shall I destroy him-whether there, or there, or there?” (IV.v.242–4). Achilles attempts to humiliate Hector, however, Hector still keeps his dignity and he simply answers:

It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,  
 To answer such a question. Stand again.  
 Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly  
 As to prenominate in nice conjecture  
 Where thou wilt hit me dead? (IV.v.248-53)

Despite Hector’s challenge, Achilles still does not want to fight like a warrior with high quality since he is in love just like Troilus. While Troilus fell in love with Cressida, Achilles fell in love with his enemies’ sister, that is, Polyxena. Besides, the real reason of Achilles’s reluctance is that he does not stand to be commanded by an inadequate general and that’s why he does not act out like a great warrior.

The plan for pulling Achilles back to the war does not work. According to Thomas “Ulysses’ ploy fails to drag Achilles back into the fighting” (Thomas 32). Achilles takes part in the war only after the death of Patroclus who is Achilles’s love interest.

The Trojans discuss the demand of the Greeks in their council which is formed by family members only. Although the Trojans regard Helen as their most honorable possession, Hector is not in favor of keeping her. Hector claims that she is not worth the years of war and death she has cost (Harmon 60). He puts forward that the Trojans should not have died for

someone who is not from Troy. Hector's offer raises some question marks about the moralities of Trojans as it is not sensible to give her back after seven years. Interestingly, the Greeks accept to end the war on condition that the Trojans give Helen back and compensate the damages. Neither side wishes to prolong the war after so many losses.

Although Troilus has not favored the war since the beginning of the play, he rejects Hector's ideas harshly and supports the thought that honor is beyond everything. He is clearly against Hector and even humiliates him in the council:

Fie, fie, my brother!  
 Weigh you the worth and honour of a king,  
 So great as our dread father's, in a scale  
 Of common ounces? Will you with counters sum  
 The past-proportion of his infinite,  
 And buckle in a waist most fathomless  
 With spans and inches so diminutive  
 As fears and reasons? Fie, for godly shame! (II.ii.25-32)

On the other hand, Helenus accuses Troilus of humiliating Hector since Hector thinks that honor is more important than the welfare of the city. Besides Hector, Troilus also ridicules Helenus as he is a priest and names him as a coward who does not want to be a part of this war. He tells Helenus that “[y]ou are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest” (II.ii.37-8). It is not reasonable to risk life in a war so long as some internal forces such as honor forces ones to fight. After Cressida leaves, Troilus seems to have changed since now he is willing to risk his life for the sake of honor.

The problem is that the fate of a country rests on the honor-seeking man. Although Hector tries to persuade Troilus by stating the value of Helen in exchange to Priam's honor,

Troilus again opposes everything and keeps talking about honor without thinking the results of the war:

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. (II.ii.46-9)

Furthermore, Troilus reminds the reason of the war and provokes the council by playing with their pride. He claims that Helen is so valuable for the Greeks that they will attempt to take her back by bargaining. He also reminds that everyone has supported Paris when he has brought Helen to Troy:

Why, she is a pearl  
 Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,  
 And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants.  
 If you'll avouch 'twas wisdom Paris went--  
 As you must needs, for you all cried 'Go, go'(II.ii.81-5)

Troilus and Paris accuse their council for being weak as they are no longer loyal to their decision. However, Priam says to Paris that “You have the honey still, but these the gall; /So to be valiant is no praise at all” (II.ii.144-5). Priam claims that Paris takes pleasure of the war while others face with the bitter side of it. However, they succeed in reaching their aims by persuading Hector to go on with the war. Hector continues the war for the purposes he does not believe in (Yüksel 62). They ignore the other people living in Troy and direct the city for their own pleasures which is highly against “traditional war”. Although Helen is the reason of the war in the beginning, she is no longer the reason for its continuation (Thomas 107). Both sides decide to continue the war not for Helen but for the honor principle:

The Trojan heroes not only hold their honors dearer than their lives but dearer also than the lives of thousands of defenseless countrymen. Because there is no “cause” for battle, their dedication to honor is in fact a dedication to personal vanity.  
(Onstein 31)

According to Dickson, the only common point for the Greeks and the Trojans, ironically enough, is the disgust for Helen and the war they are forced to fight in her name (Dickson 385). This disgust is voiced by Diomedes in the fourth act. He says that “[s]he is bitter to her country” (IV.i.69). What makes Helen valuable is the fight she has caused rather than physical beauty:

The Greeks want Helen back because the Trojans want to keep her.  
The Trojans want to keep her because the Greeks want her back.  
Similarly, the war is fought for Helen, not because she is worthy, but because she is honor’s theme; she is honor’s theme, not because she is worthy, but because the war is being fought for her.  
(Harmon 60)

One of the most distinctive absurdities of the war is manifested when Troilus dares to lose his arm in order to take his sleeve from Diomedes which Cressida gave. Upon Troilus’ desire, Thomas asks “[w]hat could be more foolish than to venture an arm for a besmirched love token?” (Thomas 98).

Moreover, Troilus criticizes Hector for allowing the Greeks to go when he beats them in the battle-field. According to Yüksel, this is thought to be Hector’s fatal mistake. This is ironically reflected in the play as Hector thinks that his chivalric ideals are more important than being a savage. He even does not kill Achilles when he finds him defenseless (Yüksel 64). When Achilles is tired, Hector allows him to respite “[p]ause if thou wilt” (V.vi.14). In

the world depicted in *Troilus and Cressida*, the purpose of the warriors is to kill each other; however, Hector does not do it contrary to expectations. Hector represents the ideal, therefore he is doomed to be beaten by the exterior forces. This is again the juxtaposition of the real and the ideal.

Although Cressida is exchanged with Antenor who is thought to be the wisest Trojan in the case of a war, he does not speak at all. This shows that “[t]he implication of Antenor being allocated the quality of wisdom and silence is that good sense would be ignored in circumstances where the key decision-makers are determined to perpetuate the war” (Thomas 42). Shakespeare implies that seeming honor and pride overcome reason in this war.

Achilles turns back to war when Patroclus is killed by Hector. Achilles’s love for Patroclus arouses his warrior feelings and he decides to attend the war in order to take Patroclus’s revenge from Hector. Thomas asserts that “Shakespeare searched deeper for the soul of a Grecian hero and found a cowardly gang leader rather than a magnificent warrior” (Thomas 34). His only superiority is to forget all principles of “fair play” to murder the pillar of Troy (112). In spite of the fact that Hector treats his enemies fairly, he is killed unfairly and undeservingly. Achilles orders his Myrmidons to surround Hector when he is unarmed and kills him brutally. After slaying Hector, Achilles continues his savagery and shameful act by trailing his corpse around the battlefield.

During the war, Hector constantly talks about reason, but, he rests by removing his armour in the middle of the battle-field which is highly illogical in spite of his families’ warnings. He knows that the fate of the city is in his hand, however, he does not think to be slain when is unarmed. Hector is the most powerful warrior on the Trojan side, however, he is too naïve on the battlefield to live long. He has gambled with the survival of Troy because of his excessive honor (Thomas 123). This means that you cannot win any war if you behave

honorably. After seven years of fighting, the war ends with the death of one character. After the death of Hector and the fall of Troy, Troilus swears to take the revenge of Hector:

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. (V.v.5-8)

At the end of the play, Troilus still speaks of revenge although he is the main figure that leads to the fall of Troy through his speeches. One of the conflicts in the play is that ambition of a warrior for honor risks the lives of the citizens. It is unreasonable to lead people to death just for their honor in a war. Their values such as honor and bravery overcome their reasons, that is, Shakespeare provokes the real rather than the ideal.

Another theme of the play is love. According to Nordlund, “Shakespeare paints a very dismal picture of the tendency of individual desire to collapse into social appraisal, so that love becomes a fleeting assessment of a person’s relative value in the sexual marketplace” (Nordlund 128). Therefore, ultimate love is reduced to sexuality in *Troilus and Cressida*.

In the beginning, Troilus reveals that he wants to withdraw from the war. The disturbing factor for him is not the progress of the war, but lack of progress in his romantic life. Troilus’s ambition is simply to get Cressida which is the evident love-theme of the play despite the fact that he begins to ignore her after a night sexual gratification.

One of the most crucial characters in the play is Pandarus who acts a pimp to bring Cressida and Troilus together. Troilus calls Pandarus as a merchant who can help him go to Cressida’s bed. According to Hillman, he promotes a version of the conventional comic resolution (Hillman 22). He does everything to unite his niece and Troilus. In the play, Pandarus claims that Cressida is as beautiful as Helen and constantly praises her in order to affect Troilus. He says that

And her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's, well, go to, there were no more comparison between the women. But, for my part, she is my kinswoman; I would not, as they term it, praise her, but I would somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did.  
(I.i.41-6)

Similarly, he compares Troilus to Hector in order to attract the attention of Cressida in spite of the fact that he knows Troilus is not as good as Hector. The dialogue between them proves his real intention:

Pandarus: Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

Cressida: O Jupiter! There's no comparison.

Pandarus: What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?

Cressida: Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

Pandarus: Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

Cressida: Then you say as I say, for I am sure he is not Hector.

Pandarus: No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees. (I.ii.60-70)

Pandarus constantly praises Troilus; however, Cressida is not affected by his compliments. Instead, she humiliates his exaggerations. When Cressida objects him, Pandarus states that Troilus is going to be better when he reaches his maturity. Besides, Pandarus claims that Helen loves Troilus more than Paris in order to make her jealous. Their conversation ends when the army comes back. As the soldiers pass, Pandarus praises the soldiers. Although his main purpose is to praise Troilus, he cannot stop himself praising Hector rather than Troilus:

That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man, niece. O brave Hector! Look how he looks. There's a countenance! Is't not a brave man?  
(I.ii.199-202)

However, Pandarus changes his ideas when Troilus passes by and he certainly loses his objectivity and he exclaims in favor of Troilus to tempt Cressida:

Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece; look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hack'd than Hector's; and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he never saw three and twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way. Had I a sister were a grace or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris? Paris is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to change, would give an eye to boot. (I.ii.231-9)

After the soldiers leave, Pandarus still goes on his appraisal of Troilus. However, Cressida does not care for his appraisal and humiliates his words instead of approving. When Cressida asks if there is a man better than Troilus on the Greek side, Pandarus immediately rebukes her and call Achilles who is the greatest warrior of the Greeks as “A drayman, a porter, a very camel!”(I.ii.248) in order to prevent his niece’s feelings towards Achilles. After that, he blames Cressida for not knowing what a man is:

Well, well! Why, have you any discretion? Have you any eyes? Do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality, and such like, the spice and salt that season a man? (I.ii.251-5)

After Pandarus’s comment on Troilus, Cressida reveals in a soliloquy that she is attracted to Troilus. However, she is sure that there is no relation between the appraisal of her

uncle and her love. She states that:” But more in Troilus thousand fold I see/Than in the glass of Pandar’s praise may be” (I.ii.284-5). Cressida is also aware of the hazards of yielding to a man and tells that she is playing a game depending on male desire (Hillman 23). After Pandarus leaves, Cressida delivers her famous soliloquy about womanhood despite the fact that she will not be true to her words in the following scenes

Women are angels, wooing:  
 Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.  
 That she belov'd knows nought 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 that shall from mine eyes appear (I.ii.286-295)

It is evident that Troilus is far better than Pandarus describes for Cressida. However, she keeps away from Troilus thinking that she will lose her power if she accepts him. According to Cressida, women are angels for men till their desires are satisfied. That is to say, the ultimate love is reduced to sexuality in the man’s world.

Cressida fears that Troilus will lose his interest if he gets her and this will cause her to feel powerless. Cressida considers that Troilus may become indifferent when he gets her as this will make her vulnerable. Nordlund states that “[f]or Cressida, allowing herself to be “won” means relinquishing the more specific power afforded her by female choice” (Nordlund 132). For this reason, she wants to prolong this process.

When Pandarus reaches his aim, he makes a speech before Cressida and Troilus have an affair and wants all pimps to be named Pandar if they are not faithful to each other for the rest of their lives although Cressida is afraid of losing the interest of Troilus later on. Pandarus states that

If ever you prove false one to another, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be call'd to the world's end after my name--call them all Pandars; let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers between Pandars. (III.ii.199-204)

The next day, it is proved that Cressida is completely right as Troilus behaves indifferently. Cressida speaks the language of love contrary to Troilus. He leaves Cressida after the first night of lovemaking in spite of the fact that she begs him to stay more (Nordlund 136). In other words, his desire for Cressida is completely dead. Janet Adelman points out that:

This scene is in the normal pattern of Shakespeare's morning-after scenes in which the woman typically wishes to hold the man with her, while the man asserts the necessities of the outside world. But both Romeo and Antony have more pressing reasons for leaving than Troilus; and neither Juliet nor Cleopatra responds to the parting with the sense of betrayal, and with the analysis of betrayal, that Cressida expresses here. Immediately after the consummation, that is, the lovers seem already separate, as Cressida had feared. (qtd. in Nordlund 141)

Troilus has definitely changed and he no longer speaks like a man in love. He wants to leave the room as soon as possible. His only desire is to send Cressida back to the bed and get rid of her. He tries to hide his feelings, however, Cressida is not a fool and asks "[a]re you

awearry of me?" (IV.ii.9). Troilus insists her to turn back to her bed rather than giving an answer. When Cressida understands that he is in a hurry to leave, she exclaims:

Prithee tarry.

You men will never tarry.

O foolish Cressid! I might have still held off,

And then you would have tarried. Hark! There's one up. (IV.ii.15-8)

Actually, Cressida's purity is in question and her promises later prove untrue. She knows that private vows are not always followed by honorable actions. At his meeting with Troilus, she states that lovers' deeds often fail to match with their words (Harmon 57):

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. (III.ii.84-87)

While they are leaving, Troilus expresses his fears that Cressida will not be able to withstand the temptations of the Greeks. According to Thomas, her question suggests a hint of excitement about the possibility of being tempted (Thomas 109): "Do you think I will?" (IV.iv.92). His answer is that he does not consider she will betray him willingly and everything happens as Troilus has guessed in the play. Cressida betrays Troilus when she went to another world. She commits herself to Diomedes only one day after she has stayed with Troilus. It can be claimed that Cressida's immediate betrayal is due to Troilus's indifference on her leaving from Troy. Cressida changes characteristically.

During the exchange with Antenor, Troilus talks about buying, selling, temptations or separation. He does not think of his love to Cressida. The only thing he is concerned is that she should be true to him. Throughout the play, he never confesses her love and says "I love you". Maguire states that

Troilus does not talk of love although he talks much of passion and desire, of truth and faith, nor does he talk of marriage to Cressida. He talks, as he thinks, of self and the senses. Even as he and Cressida exchange confession of love, he turns the conversation to himself. (Maguire 70)

Interestingly, Troilus does nothing to change the decision on Cressida's exchange since he regards his relationship with Cressida as a personal achievement rather than the ultimate love. When he is told that Cressida must leave, his initial reaction is that "How my achievements mock me" (IV.ii.69). He does not think about Cressida's feelings and situations and accepts her exchange with Antenor simply as the truths of the war. He knows that nobody can blame him for the impending separation as it is the decision of old leaders. Cressida can stand against his father and her uncle; however, she cannot stand against Troilus who regards their separation inevitable. Although he loves her, he does not rebel against the decision of his father. The only thing he does is to let her go, that is, he leaves Cressida alone. On the contrary, Cressida even tells her uncle that she has forgotten her father in order not to leave Troilus and promises to be faithful to him while leaving:

I will not, uncle. I have forgotten my father;  
 I know no touch of consanguinity,  
 No kin, no love, no blood, no soul so near me  
 As the sweet 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 centre of the earth,  
 Drawing all things to it. I'll go in and weep. (IV.ii.97-106)

When she asks whether she will leave Troy or not, Troilus just says “[n]o remedy” (4.4.55). He reduces love to a personal pleasure and he takes Cressida to Diomedes without any objection which is highly against the tradition of ideal lovers:

Walk into her house.

I'll bring her to the Grecian presently;

And to his hand when I deliver her,

Think it an altar, and thy brother Troilus

A priest, there off'ring to it his own heart. (IV.iii.5-9)

Troilus accepts their separation unhesitatingly and delivers Cressida to the Greek camp like a purchased goods and leave her alone. Although Cressida promises to be truthful to Troilus, she cannot achieve this since her circumstances change gradually, that is, she has stepped from the ideal world to a real one. She betrays Troilus as soon as she goes to the Greek side by letting commanders to kiss her without any hesitation

Ulysses: May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

Cressida: You may.

Ulysses: I do desire it.

Cressida: Why, beg then. (IV.v.48-51)

About her immediate betrayal, Nordlund utters that “[t]he curious thing about Cressida’s betrayal of Troilus is that it happens so quickly, which violate out intuitive expectation that deep love should involve commitment” (Nordlund 144). As Troilus hurries to leave the room after lovemaking, Cressida hurries to betray him since she is reduced to a merchandise in the capitalist world.

While standing outside Diomedes’ tent, Troilus understands that Cressida flirts with Diomedes. When Troilus witnesses Cressida’s betrayal, he can hardly believe his eyes. He even thinks that there are two different Cressidas and “this is Diomedes’ Cressida” (V.ii.137)

for him. Her present position forces her to choose Diomedes and thus Troilus decides that she is untrue to her: “O Cressid! O false Cressid! False, false, false! /Let untruths stand by thy stained name/and they’ll seem glorious” (V.ii.177-9). This experience stimulates “his movement from the sentimental love-sick boy in the first scene of the play to the hardened soldier in the last scene of the play” (Loggins 14). Initially, Troilus turns into revenger:

For th' love of all the gods,  
 Let's leave the hermit Pity with our mothers;  
 And when we have our armours buckled on,  
 The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,  
 Spur them to ruthless work, rein them from truth! (V.iii.47-51)

Although Troilus is against fighting for Helen in the first scene, he changes his mind when he loses Cressida and he wants to prove himself in a war to attract Cressida. It is not clearly known whether Troilus would have defended his country or not if Cressida was not taken away.

Besides Troilus and Cressida, there are also other lovers in the play. Although the Trojan War occurred due to Paris and Helen’s elopement, they are not major characters. Paris enjoys his life and does not actively take part in the war although his love causes the war. Paris is interested in pleasure rather than love:

Sir, I propose not merely to myself  
 The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;  
 But I would have the soil of her fair rape  
 Wip'd off in honourable keeping her. (II.ii.146-50)

Another love is between Achilles and Polyxena who is the sister of Hector. Patroclus and Ulysses agree that it is his love that holds Achilles back from the war. The balance shifts with the death of Patroclus (Hillman 24). Besides Polyxena; Patroclus is the male whore of

Achilles. According to Hillman, there is a homosexual love between these characters and also Achilles fulfills his desires and makes Hector's body the object of his devouring gaze when he examines his body to decide where he will choose for the fatal wound (25). Hillman states that "[c]ertainly, such an erotic dimension is insistently present in Achilles' love for Patroclus" (25) since the death of Patroclus leads him to fight again in the war. This is one of the most obvious ironies that has been employed in the play. Achilles who is the best warrior of the Greek side decides to turn back to the war not for his honor or fame but for his homosexual lover's revenge. He goes back to fighting when he loses his commodity.

Throughout the play, the characters are reflected differently and they are devalued based upon their attitudes in the war. There are lots of contradictions together with the ironies of war and love. For example,

The greatest Grecian warrior is a coward and a fraud: but the Greeks win. The Trojans, for all their achievements, are decadent. Troilus knows the passion of the heart but is a headstrong fool who never learns. He can become disillusioned but not enlightened. Hector is intelligent man with admirable human qualities to support his material prowess, but he refuses to see life as it is. Ultimately he is a noble fool, responsible for his own death and the destruction of Troy. (Thomas 47)

According to Yüksel, Helen is the pinnacle of beauty and love, Achilles and Hector are named with bravery, Ulysess is the symbol of politic wit. Moreover, Pandarus is called as pimp, Troilus as fidelity in love and Cressida as a whore in the legendary Trojan war (Yüksel 60). That is to say; pleasure and revenge are disguised as love and war in the play.

As a consequence, ideal values such as bravery, honor or passionate love are reflected ironically in the play. Shakespeare shows the audience that the world is in the process of

change and certain values cannot exist in this corrupted world. This is the reason why he juxtaposes real with the ideal. That is, he approaches the play ironically as he is aware that feudal world gives its place to a new world. Love and war are so wisely manipulated in *Troilus and Cressida* that it is not possible to understand whether this play is a tragedy or a comedy. In other words, *Troilus and Cressida* is put under the category of problem comedies since it does not have a great tragic hero that exists in Shakespeare's other plays. All in all, Shakespeare shows the audience that the world is changing and people cannot stand in this new world if they live up to the "ideal".

### III. *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL*

*All's Well That Ends Well* shows similarities with *Troilus and Cressida* in terms of their themes. Love is one of these themes which is handled with irony. The affair between Helena and Bertram is different from the one between Troilus and Cressida, in that, in *All's Well*, the heroine, Helena is in pursuit of Bertram. Another important theme in the play is morality as the play highly deals with the question of honesty and this is reflected in relation to seeming and being. It is possible to witness the dishonesty of some characters in the play.

Shakespeare took its source from Boccaccio's *Decameron*. In *Decameron*, the play starts with the explanations that the Count of Rossiglione had a physician in his household due to his poor health. However, Shakespeare's *All's Well* begins with the departure of Bertram from Rossillion to join the King. Helena is the daughter of a famous physician and has been brought up by the old Countess of Rossillion. When she reveals her love to Bertram to the Countess, she lets Helena go to the King to cure him who is terminally ill. After a successful treatment process, the King gives her an opportunity to choose a suitable husband for herself among the noblest young lords of France. She chooses Bertram who in return protests the situation revealing that Helena is a "common person". Despite his full rejection, the King enforces him to marry Helena. However, Bertram leaves her immediately after the marriage ceremony at court to join the war as he does not want to spend the night with her. Before leaving, he tells Helena that he will never accept her as his wife till she can show him his ring on her finger and she has a child fathered by him. Later on, he goes to the Tuscan War and sends Helena back to Rossillion.

Upon learning that he will never come back unless she leaves, she decides to follow him secretly in disguise and learns that he is flirting with Diana who does not want any relationship with him. Helena plans a trick by persuading Diana to engage in a bed trick with her also obtaining his ring and thus she fulfills all the tasks Bertram has wanted her to do.

When Bertram takes a letter informing him that Helena is dead, he goes back to Rossillion. He apologizes the King for his faults and wishes to marry Lafeu's daughter. At that point, Diana enters claiming that he cannot marry her since he has had relationship with her and Parolles approves it. When the King orders Bertram to be punished for the murder of Helena, she appears and reveals everything. She also tells that she is ready to marry Bertram as she has completed all the tasks. Thus, everything is resolved at the end of the play.

There are some key points such as the healing of the King and the fulfillment of the task in the play. The characters are generally admirable except for Bertram and Parolles, who are weak characters who try to deceive the others in the play. Parolles, Bertram's friend, is just a braggart. The King, the Countess, and Helena are highly admirable ones since they have moral standpoints.

The first ideal concept to be taken into consideration is "love". In the opening of the play, the Countess voices the sorrow for the immediate departure of Bertram and she even compares this situation with the death of his husband by stating that "[i]n delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband" (I.i.1-2). Another person who suffers from his departure is Helena who fell in love with him secretly. She even cries for him for the sake of his love and ignores the sorrow of her father's death. Throughout the first scene, Bertram does not notice Helena since she is socially inferior. Bertram's departure affected her more than the death of her father and she changes the love of the father with the love of the lover like Cressida:

O, were that all!--I think not on my father;  
 And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
 Than those I shed for him. What was he like?  
 I have forgot him; my imagination  
 Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.  
 I am undone: there is no living, none,

If Bertram be away. (I.i.79-85)

It is interesting that Helena does not cry for her father since she has already forgotten him. This statement arouses immediate surprise. Bertram actually does not care for her and asks her to look after his mother:” Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her” (I.i.76-7). This shows that Bertram is not aware of her as a young woman who can be his love interest.

Although Bertram does not have lots of admirable specialties to be loved, Helena loves him just because he is a handsome man. It can be claimed that Helena is affected by his only physical characteristics. Tillyard clarifies that:

[t]he irony and the truth of Helena’s situation are that with so much intelligence and so firm a mind she can be possessed by so enslaving a passion for an unformed, rather stupid, morally timid, and very self-centered youth: for by the standards of real life there is nothing surprising in Helena’s having fallen for Bertram’s handsome outside, his high rank, and her unconscious knowledge that she could dominate him and give him moral backbone, granted the chance. (Tillyard 113)

Helena thinks that Bertram is a “bright particular star” (I.i.86) and finds him inaccessible. For this reason, she cannot express her feelings to anybody for a while. Later on, she talks about her love to the Countess when she asks questions about Bertram. Actually, Helena seems helpless at the beginning of the play. But she changes her fatalistic attitude and decides to fight for her love:

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,  
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky  
Gives us free scope; only doth backward pull

Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.

What power is it which mounts my love so high,--

That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?

The mightiest space in fortune nature brings

To join like likes, and kiss like native things. (I.i.216-23)

The first thing she does is to go to the King in order to heal him with his father's magical medicine. Initially, the King does not want to see her. He accepts her only when she consents to be killed if she cannot cure him. She is so in love with Bertram that she risks her life for this insolent man:

Tax of impudence,--

A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame,--

Traduced by odious ballads; my maiden's name

Sear'd otherwise; ne worse of worst extended,

With vilest torture let my life be ended. (II.i.170-3)

When Helena heals the King, he lets her choose a man in his court to marry. Upon this, Helena decides to choose Bertram however much he expressed that he is against this idea and answers the King's question insolently:

King: Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she's thy wife.

Bertram: My wife, my liege! I shall beseech your highness,

In such a business give me leave to use

The help of mine own eyes.

King: Know'st thou not, Bertram,

What she has done for me?

Bertram: Yes, my good lord;

But never hope to know why I should marry her. (II.iii.104-11)

Upon his words, the King repeats that she has saved his life and therefore he should keep his promise. However, Bertram is too immature to try to know her and understand her values and even humiliates her due to her low status. Bertram thinks that marrying someone like Helena with low social standing regardless of her personal qualities may give harm to his honor:

But follows it, my lord, to bring me down  
 Must answer for your raising? I know her well;  
 She had her breeding at my father's charge:  
 A poor physician's daughter my wife!--Disdain  
 Rather corrupt me ever! (II.iii.113-6)

It is clear that social status is more important than anything else for Bertram. He is against the wish of the King who thinks that human worth should be assessed by someone's characteristics rather than the family origin. The King also adds that he can fill the gap between them if he wants by stating that "Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which I can build up" (II.iii.116-8).

Bertram still insists that he can neither love her nor try to do so. By this way, he shows faithfulness to his King by simply agreeing to get married to Helena. Still, he can do nothing but obey the King after he has been warned that he will not have a significant place in the court life. He accepts to marry Helena obligatorily.

Later on, Parolles informs Helena that Bertram has to leave her as he has an urgent business elsewhere. Helena responds simply by stating that "In everything, I wait upon his will"(II.iv.54). Although Bertram attends the war to escape from her, Helena does not react and tells that she will do whatever he wants till he comes back.

Bertram's attitude towards his wife is quite insolent. He even addresses Helena as his clog. He constantly lies to her and when she wants him to kiss her before leaving, he rejects

her demand. In a dialogue between Bertram and Helena, it is clear that he is impatient to leave her and rejects her wish harshly:

Bertram: Let that go:

My haste is very great. Farewell; hie home.

Helena: Pray, sir, your pardon.

Bertram: Well, what would you say?

Helena: I am not worthy of the wealth I owe;

Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is;

But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal

What law does vouch mine own.

Bertram: What would you have?

Helena: Something; and scarce so much:--nothing, indeed.--

I would not tell you what I would, my lord:--Faith, yes;--

Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.

Bertram: I pray you; stay not, but in haste to horse. (II.v.77-87)

He is so reluctant to kiss her that he tries to escape as soon as possible even if it is their first day as a married couple. Instead, he sends her back home immediately and in a letter tells her mother that,

'I have sent you a daughter-in-law; she hath recovered the king and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her; and sworn to make the "not" eternal. You shall hear I am run away: know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you.

Your unfortunate son, BERTRAM.' (III.ii.19-26)

It is interesting that Helena still treats Bertram passionately despite the fact that he disappoints her deeply. Beside this, she does not feel pessimistic even after taking a letter informing her that Bertram will not accept her as his wife until she gets his ring and a child fathered by him. Instead, she feels guilty thinking that she has endangered him:

'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'

Nothing in France until he has no wife!

Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France;

Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't I

That chase thee from thy country, and expose

Those tender limbs of thine to the event

Of the none-sparing war? and is it I

That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou

Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark

Of smoky muskets? (III.ii.99-107)

Vivian Thomas puts forward that Helena is “still in love with what sounds like an ideal or idealized young man rather than the insensitive character that has treated her with contempt” (151). Helena sacrifices herself and leaves her house to encourage Bertram to turn back. In a letter that she sends to the Countess, she acknowledges that “He is too good and fair for death and me; / Whom I myself embrace to set him free” (III.iv.16-7). Upon her behavior, the Countess nearly curses her son as he treated Helena cruelly:

What angel shall

Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive,

Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear

And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath

Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,

To this unworthy husband of his wife:  
 Let every word weigh heavy of her worth,  
 That he does weigh too light: my greatest grief,  
 Though little he do feel it, set down sharply. (III.iv.25-33)

Bertram would like to have sexual relationship with a woman named Diana although he does not love her and he has no intention to marry her. His intention is clearly a kind of betrayal to his wife. When Helena learns this, she plans a bed-trick in order to get Bertram's ring and have a child fathered by him. She knows that he will give his ring for the virginity of Diana and substitutes herself with Diana in the dark:

Now his important blood will naught deny  
 That she'll demand: a ring the county wears,  
 That downward hath succeeded in his house  
 From son to son, some four or five descents  
 Since the first father wore it: this ring he holds  
 In most rich choice; yet, in his idle fire,  
 To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,  
 Howe'er repented after. (III.vii.21-8)

About Bertram's wish to have sexual relationship with Diana, Thomas states that "[i]t is ironic that a man who stood first against marriage on the principle of high birth should be willing to part with a symbol of his family's honor for an hour of sexual gratification with a woman whom he disdains as a human being" (152). It is unusual for a man like Bertram who is keen on his honor to leave his most precious possession, his ring, just for an hour physical pleasure rather than an idealized love.

Bertram's affair with Diana is humiliating since he begs her to have sexual relationship with her claiming that he has dismissed his ties with Helena. He says that "I was

compell'd to her; but I love thee" (IV.ii.15) although his real intention is to persuade her. When Diana accepts his offer on condition that he gives his ring to her, he obeys despite his first hesitation stating that "Here, take my ring: / My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine,/ And I'll be bid by thee" (IV.ii.51-3).

Through the end of the play, Bertram turns back to Rossillion and accepts to marry Lafew's daughter. What is interesting is that the King approves this marriage by summing up Helena's worth and Bertram's actions:

We lost a jewel of her; and our esteem  
Was made much poorer by it: but your son,  
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know  
Her estimation home. (IV.iii.1-4)

Bertram plans to marry Maudlin in spite of the fact that he does not know her at all. When the King asks him whether he remembers Lafew's daughter or not, he gives an elaborate answer even if he does not and accepts to marry her without the existence of real love:

Admiringly, my liege: at first  
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart  
Durst make too bold herald of my tongue:  
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,  
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,  
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;  
Scorned a fair colour, or express'd it stolen;  
Extended or contracted all proportions  
To a most hideous object: thence it came  
That she whom all men prais'd, and whom myself,

Since I have lost, have lov'd, was in mine eye

The dust that did offend it. (V.iii.44-55)

Although Bertram appreciates Maudlin, there is no evidence throughout the play that he has been attracted to her. For this reason, it is not possible to claim that he is telling the truth about his feelings towards her. He is not sincere while uttering these words for Maudlin.

When Diana arrives, she states that Bertram has deceived her. Upon the King's question whether Bertram has loved Diana or not, Parolles replies that "[h]e did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman/He loved her, sir, and loved her not"(V.iii.243-5). This means that he seems to love her in order to have sexual pleasure with her. Helena appears to reveal all the facts and asserts that she has fulfilled all the tasks:

O, my good lord, when I was like this maid;

I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring,

And, look you, here's your letter. This it says,

'When from my finger you can get this ring,

And are by me with child, -- This is done:

Will you be mine now you are doubly won? (V.iii.309-14)

Upon Helena's words, Bertram remarks that "[i]f she, my liege, can make me know this clearly, / I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly" (V.iii.309-10). This is a contradictory answer since it is not clear whether he accepts her willingly or not. About this dilemma, Thomas puts forward that

[h]ence the blending of fairy tale with an intense sense of realism.

In real life, Helena could be mistaken about Bertram. But rather than present an outright denial of romantic comedy, Shakespeare does something much more disconcerting; the audience is left

pondering the possible scenarios beyond the end of the play.

(Thomas 166)

Bertram does not love any women during the play although he has relationship with three different women one way or another. For this reason, it is hard to accept Bertram as a man worthy of Helena's love. However, Helena gets what she wants at the end of the play by her intelligence.

Love for Helena is above everything, however, love does not easily "conquer all". She suffers because in the real world, relationships are constructed on social rank and situations rather than feelings. Thus, Shakespeare by juxtaposing ideal love with the real world brings an ironical approach to the comedy.

Honesty is the other ideal concept handled in the play. At the very beginning of *All's Well*, the Countess describes Helena's father as one "whose skill was almost as great as honesty" (I.i.17-8). It means that honesty is above all skills. This expression foreshadows that honesty is ideally one of the most important values. However, it is possible to witness the devaluation of this ideal concept as the play goes on.

Bertram's father was an honest man in life and the Countess expects him to be as honest as his father while he was leaving for France. Because this is the first time he will be away from home and that's why his mother wishes him to be honest in real life despite the fact that he cannot achieve this:

Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father  
 In manners, as in shape! Thy blood and virtue  
 Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness  
 Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,  
 Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy  
 Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend

Under thy own life's key: be check'd for silence,  
 But never tax'd for speech. (I.i.61-8)

Besides the Countess, the King also adds that his father could get on well with people from all classes of the society although Bertram does not want to marry Helena as she is inferior to him. On the contrary, the Countess approves this marriage willingly and treats Helena equally:

He us'd as creatures of another place;  
 And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,  
 Making them proud of his humility,  
 In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man  
 Might be a copy to these younger times;  
 Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now  
 But goes backward. (I.ii.42-8)

However, Bertram is quite different from his father in terms of honesty. He lacks of all the good sides of his father. He rejects Helena as her father has worked in their service. Thomas asserts that

[s]tarting at the fundamental psychological level the King makes a statement of fact that blood cannot be distinguished in terms of social status. Hence when the term “blood” is being used as a means of making social distinctions it is operation as a metaphor not as a description of psychological reality. The King argues that the comparison must be between actions regardless of the status of actors. (Thomas 147)

After Bertram leaves Rossillion, Helena thinks that she can marry him if she can cure the King. The problem of immorality at this point is that Helena's concern is not the King's

illness. She has not made anything for the health of her King till she loses Bertram although she knows that she has the medicine that can cure the King. Her reason for curing the King is to win Bertram. Helena has inherited medical skills from her father and so the King is cured.

As Helena could heal the King, he forces Bertram to marry Helena and states that:

My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,  
 I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,  
 Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift;  
 That dost in vile misprision shackle up  
 My love and her desert; that canst not dream  
 We, poisoning us in her defective scale,  
 Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know  
 It is in us to plant thine honour where  
 We please to have it grow. (II.iii.149-57)

The King forces Bertram to marry Helena as he thinks that his honor is in danger. Bertram totally disagrees with the King's ideas and he insists that he will not marry Helena in spite of the fact that the King ordered him to do so. His reluctance nearly turns out to be a rebellion against the Authority. He consents to marry after the King warns him that he will not have status in court life unless he marries Helena, that is to say, he accepts this situation by force:

Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit  
 My fancy to your eyes: when I consider  
 What great creation, and what dole of honour  
 Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late  
 Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now  
 The praised of the king; who, so ennobled,

Is as 'twere born so. (II.iii.167-73)

It is a marriage only in name. He is not obliged to marry Helena; however, the King has no obligation to provide for Bertram any longer in the same way if he does not do what the King wishes. It is clear that Bertram does not dare to lose the King's support, that is to say, he accepts this marriage just for his own benefits.

After the marriage, Bertram attempts to escape from Helena. He wants to attend the war in order to keep himself away from her. In a dialogue with Parolles, he explains his plan that he will not sleep with her:

Bertram: Although before the solemn priest I have sworn, I will not bed her.

Parolles: What, what, sweet heart?

Bertram: My Parolles, they have married me!--

I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her. (II.iii.268-73)

For this reason, he forces her to talk to the King as he cannot leave without his permission. He tricks Helena one more time and even risks his life in order not to have a relationship with her at their wedding night. Instead of marital union, he prefers to go to the war by leaving a letter which includes some tasks seeming impossible to fulfill for Helena,

When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a "then" I write a "never". (III.ii.57-60)

Helena interprets this letter not as a rejection but as a challenge. When Bertram is in the war, he struggles to seduce Diana and does his best to achieve his goal. He tries to satisfy himself by ruining a young woman's honor. His behaviors are even criticized by his friends. Because he has left Helena and attempts to seduce another woman who is inferior to her like Helena.

People around Bertram do not approve his actions. They think that Bertram loses his honor although he gains success in the war. While we begin to feel sympathy for Helena, Bertram is no longer appreciated. For example, one of the Lords states that “And how mightily, some other times, we drown our gain in tears! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample” (IV.iii.67-70).

As soon as Helena learns his intention, she plans the bed trick. Although Helena is a moral woman, she behaves dishonestly to gain her man back in this scene. The only thing she has to do is to persuade Diana’s mother that this is not an immoral action. Helena even offers some money for their help to get the ring:

Take this purse of gold,  
 And let me buy your friendly help thus far,  
 Which I will over-pay, and pay again  
 When I have found it. The count he woos your daughter  
 Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,  
 Resolv'd to carry her. let her in fine, consent,  
 As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it,  
 Now his important blood will naught deny  
 That she'll demand: a ring the county wears,  
 That downward hath succeeded in his house  
 From son to son, some four or five descents  
 Since the first father wore it. (III.vii.14-25)

Although Helena is a virtuous woman, she persuades Mariana, Diana’s mother, by promising to give money which is a kind of bribery. Harmon says that “[t]he purpose of the bed-trick is to help Helena gain access to Bertram’s bed, secure his ring, and conceive his son, a purpose that will, under Bertram’s conditions, validate their marriage contract”(Harmon

139). This is completely true for Helena's case. Although this seems to be a dishonest act, it was validated in the eyes of the Renaissance audience.

After having supposed relationship with Diana, Bertram boasts himself which is an inappropriate action for an "honorable" man like Bertram. In fact, he does not realize that she has been tricked by Helena. By this way, Helena could get Bertram's ring which actually symbolizes the key of her marriage. Again, reality and idealism are juxtaposed since Bertram is proud of his seeming "success" although he is actually tricked by Helena. Bertram does not realize the fact that he boasts in vain.

Parolles is one of the most dishonest characters in the play. Although Helena knows that he is a liar, a fool, and a coward, she seems to appreciate him as Bertram has chosen him as an ideal friend. Parolles betrays his friends when he is captured and accepts to reveal everything on condition that they release him:

O, let me live,  
 And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,  
 Their force, their purposes: nay, I'll speak that  
 Which you will wonder at. (IV.i.83-6)

Upon hearing that Parolles has made confessions, Bertram fears that he may have said something unpleasant about him. His fear stems from the fact that Parolles knows his immoral actions. Although Parolles seems to appreciate Bertram's behaviours and seems to be his real friend, he reveals everything about Bertram when he is in a difficult situation. Parolles cannot keep his secrets even if he behaves like Bertram's close friend. By Parolles, Shakespeare shows that friendship is spoiled in the real world.

When Bertram gets the information that Helena is dead, he does not react at all. Actually, we as readers expect Bertram to feel sorrow for her death. Instead, he talks about the

pleasure that he has got from his last actions. He makes up his mind to set his way to Rossillion by summarizing his enjoyable busy night:

I have to-night despatch'd sixteen businesses, a month's length  
apiece; by an abstract of success: I have conge'd with the duke,  
done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourned for her;  
writ to my lady mother I am returning; entertained my convoy; and  
between these main parcels of despatch effected many nicer needs:  
the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet. (IV.iii.85-  
92)

It can even be claimed that he is happy for his wife's death. At the end of the play, Bertram could not explain how he has got the ring in his finger and he is found guilty. The King thinks that he has killed Helena and obtained the ring that the King has given away and Bertram lies as he is in a difficult situation "You are deceiv'd, my lord; she never saw it:/In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,/Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name/Of her that threw it" (V.iii.92-5). He even blames Diana for taking his ring "[s]he got the ring;/And I had that which any inferior might/At market-price have bought" (V.iii.217-9). About this situation, Thomas puts forward that "[t]wo elements stand out in this part of the scene: first Bertram's plausibility: he lies with such facility and spontaneity; second, how quickly the King thinks the worst of him, even suspecting Bertram of murder (160).

After the King has taken Diana's letter, he doubts that Bertram can be guilty without any hesitation and the Countess immediately exclaims that "[n]ow justice on doers" (V.iii.153). Nobody in the play claims that Bertram cannot have murdered Helena. Even Lafew forsakes to let her daughter marry him. While Helena is supported by the King, Lafew, the Countess, Diana and her mother, there is no evidence of sympathy for Bertram. Because, he even slanders Diana in order to get rid of the situation he is in. Nordlund states that "moral division

becomes even more salient when Bertram, who finds himself unfairly suspected of conjugal murder as well as fornication, tries to save his own hide by slandering Diana” (Nordlund 157). Moreover, he is such a corrupted character that, he gives his father’s family ring in exchange for a “one night stand”. The Countess describes the importance of the ring by stating that

He blushes, and 'tis it:  
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem,  
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,  
Hath it been ow'd and worn. This is his wife;  
That ring's a thousand proofs. (V.iii.195-9)

Her words prove that the ring is the symbol of the family; however, Bertram gives it to someone else just for one night of sexual gratification. This is quite interesting for a man who did not want to marry a person who is below his family rank although the King ordered him to do so.

All of the contradictions are resolved with the arrival of Helena and Bertram is saved. Helena’s situation is neither tragic nor comic. Her situation is completely realistic as it is possible to experience her situation. Bertram has made lots of mistakes during the play and Tillyard summarizes what Bertram has done so far in the play as,

[h]e has defied his mother in refusing to acknowledge his wife, he has defied the French King in stealing away from Paris to the wars, he has defied conventional morality by succeeding, as he thinks, in seducing Diana. Further he has risked being proved wrong by allowing Parolles to be tested, and he has violated his sense of family loyalty by surrendering his ancestral ring to Diana. (115)

These actions prove that Bertram’s morality and honesty are always in question throughout the play. Based upon what he has done, nobody in the play trusts upon him and thus

Shakespeare raises questions on the value of honesty especially via Bertram together with Helena and Parolles. It can be stated that *All's Well That Ends Well* is one of Shakespeare's problem plays which implicitly criticize society's mutual values such as love and honesty.

There is a clash between reality and idealism, in that, Bertram joins the war to escape Helena while the war seemingly occurs due to a woman in *Troilus and Cressida*. Furthermore, Bertram wants to have sex with Diana who is socially inferior to him despite the fact that he refuses Helena because of her inferiority. Shakespeare again implies that the world is changing and shows this rapid change by approaching some ideal values such as love and honesty ironically in *All's Well That Ends Well*. He reflects Bertram as a dishonest person to show that the world is corrupted. In the same way, ideal love is degraded to adultery since Helena substitutes herself with Diana to get Bertram via bed-trick. Shakespeare shows that old feudal values lose their importance by juxtaposing real and ideal in the changing world.

*All's Well* is categorized under comedies in spite of the fact that there are tragic inclinations because of Helena's and Bertram's situations. Although they seem to be true to themselves, they are not so in reality. As a result, *All's Well* is one of Shakespeare's Problem Comedies as we cannot get the satisfaction of happiness since there is an enforced marriage at the end of the play.

#### IV. *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*

*Measure for Measure* is one of the most ambivalent plays of Shakespeare because of its themes on justice and the law. Despite the fact that it is identified as a comedy in the First Folio, it is later labeled as one of Shakespeare's problem comedies. Shakespeare's main source for the play is the play entitled as *Promos and Cassandra* by George Whetstone. This one shows some similarities with Shakespeare's play in terms of its content. According to Thomas Vivian "[t]he convicted young man is being presented in a much more sympathetic light" (71). The main difference between these plays is that "Promos has a deputy Phallax who is totally corrupt and who operates with the sanction of his superior" (72). *Measure for Measure* deals with the juxtapositions of justice and law. It reflects the corruption of these values.

The play starts with the sudden departure of the Duke Vincentio. Before leaving the city, he hands the authority over to his deputy, Angelo. While the Duke is away, Angelo decides to impose the strict laws of Vienna.

First of all, he makes Claudio arrest because of the fact that he has sex with Juliet before marriage. Also, he orders the brothels to be closed down. Although Claudio intends to marry his lover, Angelo does not accept and sentences him to capital punishment although they are already married on a "true contract." Claudio states that:

Thus stands it with me:--Upon a true contract

I got possession of Julietta's bed:

You know the lady; she is fast my wife,

Save that we do the denunciation lack

Of outward order;: this we came not to

Only for propagation of a dower

Remaining in the coffer of her friends;

From whom we thought it meet to hide our love

Till time had made them for us. (1.2.143-51)

Upon this punishment, Claudio asks his friend Lucio to go to his sister and tells her to beg for his life. When Isabella goes to Angelo, the deputy tells him that he would save Claudio on condition that she has sex with her. Isabella refuses this “sinful” purpose and Angelo threatens to torture Claudio if she does not consent.

The Duke returns disguised as a friar. When he goes to prison to check whether Angelo meets his expectations or not, he meets with Claudio and acts as an advisor after learning his guilt. As soon as he finds out Angelo’s disagreeable intention, he decides to help them and tells Isabella that Mariana, Angelo’s fiancée, whom Angelo refuses to marry, will substitute her. After the bed trick, the Duke thinks that Angelo would release Claudio. However, Angelo does not keep his promise and orders Claudio to be executed. Although Friar / Duke saves Claudio with a secret plan, he does not mention this to Isabella and tells her to meet the Duke to complain about Angelo publicly.

Vincentio comes back to the city as a ruler without disguise and hears the complaints. Initially, he listens to Isabella and Mariana as planned before. In the last act, in the court scene, with the help of his disguise, it is revealed that Angelo was guilty. Thus, the Duke orders him to be killed. As Mariana begs him not to kill his new-found husband and with the consent of Isabella, Angelo is saved. When it is revealed that Angelo is guilty, he orders him to be killed although he does not put his order into practice as the women beg him. At the end of the play, he gets all couples married and forgives everybody.

In fact, both the Duke and Angelo symbolize authority. However, they do not use this authority in the same way. While the Duke attempts to dispense justice, Angelo tries to enforce the laws even though they become unsuccessful at the end of the play. In the early

modern England, Common Law Punishment and Shakespearean Punishment were different from each other as William Hawley suggests:

| <u>Common Law Punishment</u> | <u>Shakespearean Punishment</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Retribution                  | Retribution                     |
| Restitution                  | Emancipation                    |
| Reform                       | Redemption                      |
| Deterrence                   | Aesthetics (Hawley 3)           |

According to W. Hawley, Shakespeare's understanding of justice and law is different from that of his time, in that, Common Law Punishment had strict rules and severe punishments such as hanging, execution or whipping in Elizabethan England. Shakespeare criticized unfair applications of such punishments in *Measure for Measure*. To begin with, one of the issues that Shakespeare dealt with in this play is the juxtaposition of justice and the law and he did this through Duke Vincentio. The Duke decides to turn his authority over to Angelo who is thought to be a strict, "precise" man. At the beginning of the first scene, the Duke praises Escalus claiming that he is an experienced Lord in terms of government administration:

Of government the properties to unfold,  
 Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse;  
 Since I am put to know that your own science  
 Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice  
 My strength can give you: then no more remains  
 But that to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,  
 And let them work. (I.i.4-9)

Although the Duke appreciates Escalus, he appoints Angelo as his deputy instead of him. The reason why the Duke does this is Angelo's strict character. Escalus becomes the second

important authority in his absence. At this point, it is possible to put forward that the Duke acts unfairly to Escalus as he prefers Angelo to him.

The Duke has doubts in his mind about the authority of Angelo and he would like to test him. He asks “What figures of us think you he will bear?”(I.i.16). This question shows that he does not completely trust Angelo but still he appoints him as his deputy. Before getting the answer to this question, he explains why he has chosen Angelo:

For you must know we have with special soul  
 Elected him our absence to supply;  
 Lent him our terror, drest him with our love,  
 And given his deputation all the organs  
 Of our own power: what think you of it? (I.i.17-21)

Escalus answers this question by stating that “If any in Vienna be of worth / To undergo such ample grace and honor / It is Lord Angelo” (I.i.22-23). He seems to approve the Duke’s decision thinking that Angelo is one of the strictest man in Vienna. The Duke still does not feel restless as he has not chosen Escalus despite the fact that he is still concerned with Angelo’s character and this situation is a kind of injustice to Escalus,

Angelo,  
 There is a kind of character in thy life  
 That to th' observer doth thy history  
 Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings  
 Are not thine own so proper as to waste  
 Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee. (I.i.27-31)

The Duke has a plot in his mind. Angelo recalls that of a Puritan stereo-type. The Duke would like to test him by giving his authority to him. This raises suspicion about Angelo’s current “honorable” character. Although the Duke seems to trust Angelo, he tests his

character, that is, it is once more revealed that seeming and being are different from each other.

When the Duke leaves Vienna, he informs the readers about his reason why he transfers his management to someone else in his speech with the Friar. He knows that the city is in need of control:

We have strict statutes and most biting laws,--  
 The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,--  
 Which for this fourteen years we have let sleep,  
 Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,  
 That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,  
 Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,  
 Only to stick it in their children's sight  
 For terror, not to use, in time the rod  
 Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,  
 Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;  
 And liberty plucks justice by the nose;  
 The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart  
 Goes all decorum. (I.iii.19-31)

Actually, the Duke is responsible for the lack of morality and corruption in Vienna; however, he leaves the city instead of enforcing the law. Besides, he does not tell anything to Angelo and Escalus about his expectations in terms of administration. The Duke wants to be informed about the executions and does not tell them what they should do explicitly:

In our remove be thou at full ourself:  
 Mortality and mercy in Vienna  
 Live in thy tongue and heart! Old Escalus,

Though first in question, is thy secondary:

Take thy commission. (I.i.43-7)

The Duke has refrained from enforcing the strict laws of Vienna during his rule. Instead of suddenly changing his approach to governing, he selects Angelo as a scapegoat even if he knows that he has caused laxity in the city. He is sure that laws have to be enforced for the welfare of the city and he deliberately leaves the authority as he does not want his people to think unfavorably about himself. This is unjust for Angelo as people will not respect him when he enforces the laws that the Duke wants him to do. The Duke explains his reason for his actions explicitly to Friar:

I do fear, too dreadful:

Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,

'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them

For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done

When evil deeds have their permissive pass

And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my father,

I have on Angelo impos'd the office;

Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home,

And yet my nature never in the fight

To do in slander. (I.iii.34-43)

The Duke does not wish to be remembered with his strictness. He did not punish anybody during his office for fourteen years as he does not want to have a bad reputation, however, he orders Angelo to apply the laws instead of him. In this way, he will reach his aim and Angelo is going to be remembered with strictness instead of him.

In order to control Angelo's behavior as a governor, the Duke disguises and wants the Friar to teach him how to act like a Friar. In this way, he can control the city easily. He asks

the Friar, “Supply me with the habit, and instruct me / How I may formally in person bear me / Like a true friar” (I.iii.46-8). Later on, he clarifies why he wants to control Angelo:

Lord Angelo is precise;  
 Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses  
 That his blood flows, or that his appetite  
 Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,  
 If power change purpose, what our seemers be. (I.iii.50-5)

The reason why the Duke leaves the city by leaving his authority to Angelo is to check whether power changes one’s personality or not. Thus, the Duke would like to reveal seeming and being in the society. This shows he is critical about Angelo’s strictness as it is not possible to stop one’s blood flow.

Angelo shows his strictness and immediately punishes Claudio for his “illegal” relationship. The Duke has not only access to the public and private lives of people but also access to all levels of the society from the prison to the court with the help of his disguise. He goes to prison to check whether everything runs its course or not. When the Duke Friar learns the situation of Claudio and Juliet, he asks the Provost what their crime is:

Bound by my charity and my bless'd order,  
 I come to visit the afflicted spirits  
 Here in the prison: do me the common right  
 To let me see them, and to make me know  
 The nature of their crimes, that I may minister  
 To them accordingly. (II.iii.5-8)

Upon his question, Provost tells their crime when Juliet enters. He states that “She is with child; And he that got it, sentenc'd: a young man / More fit to do another such offence / Than die for this.” (II.iii.11-4). The Duke does not react upon this and just asks when Claudio is

going to be executed. He asks Juliet whether she is regretful or not for her misdeed. Juliet says that “I do; and bear the shame most patiently” (II.iii.20). After that, the Duke would like to learn if this crime has been mutually committed or not:

Duke: Love you the man that wrong'd you?

Juliet: Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

Duke: So then, it seems, your most offenceful act

Was mutually committed.

Juliet: Mutually.

Duke: Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

Juliet: I do confess it, and repent it, father. (II.iii.24-8)

The marriage was mutually committed and Claudio and Juliet were contracted to each other, which, according to Elizabethan traditions was a legal marriage. Although it was a legal marriage, Angelo wanted Claudio to be punished claiming that laws have to be enforced.

The Duke witnesses the moral corruption in Vienna when he is visiting the prison in Vienna. For example, he meets Pompey, the pimp, who is taken to the prison by Elbow. He claims that everything is going to be worse unless the laws are enforced in the society and talks about morality; “Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the world drink brown and white bastard”(III.ii.1-3). When the Duke asks “O heavens! what stuff is here?”(III.ii.4), Pompey talks about injustice that he has encountered between lechery and usury:

'Twas never merry world since, of two usuries, the merriest was put down, and the worser allowed by order of law a furred gown to keep him warm; and furred with fox on lamb-skins too, to signify that craft, being richer than innocency, stands for the facing.  
(III.ii.5-10)

Pompey's claim is that lechery is punished while usury is tolerated. Actually, he is right as both crimes are punishable. However, the Duke has ignored all Vienna's strict laws against such crimes during his term of office. The Duke is not satisfied with Elbow's explanations and scolds him severely:

Fie, sirrah, a bawd, a wicked bawd;  
 The evil that thou causest to be done,  
 That is thy means to live. Do thou but think  
 What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back  
 From such a filthy vice: say to thyself--  
 From their abominable and beastly touches  
 I drink; I eat, array myself, and live.  
 Canst thou believe thy living is a life,  
 So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend. (III.ii.19-26)

When the Duke hears that Angelo accepts to forgive Claudio on condition that Isabella has sex with him, he feels obliged to prove his guilt in public before he charges Angelo. It is certain that the Duke is not pleased with his deputy's actions. However, he knows that he cannot explicitly attack his deputy since this means that it will be an attack to his own authority. Also he cannot blame Angelo publicly without having evidence as he has chosen Angelo as his deputy. For this reason, he has to make a plan to reveal Angelo's guilt and he achieves this through bed-trick. He contemplates to deceive the man that he has appointed in order to bring "justice".

The Duke knows beforehand that Angelo has abandoned his lover, Mariana, due to his financial benefits. While talking about his plan to Isabella, he mentions Angelo's former relationship with Mariana:

She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity her brother Frederick was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combinate husband, this well-seeming Angelo. (III.ii.213-23)

He thinks that this trickery is not going to be unjust as Angelo was once contracted to marriage just like the contract between Claudio and Juliet. Angelo did the same contract with Mariana and left her since Mariana's brother lost his possessions in the ship wreck. For this reason, the Duke considers that Angelo has already deserved to be deceived. The Duke assures both Isabella and Mariana that this will not be sin as Angelo has already been her prospective husband. He reports that:

Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all;  
 He is your husband on a pre-contract:  
 To bring you thus together 'tis no sin,  
 Sith that the justice of your title to him  
 Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go;  
 Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithes to sow. (IV.i.70-5)

A religious woman like Isabella consents to this trick to save her brother and her honorable life. Besides, she especially wishes the happiness of Mariana. Since this trick will reveal Angelo's guilt and thus she can take her revenge, Isabella accepts this without hesitation thinking that "The image of it gives me content already; and I trust it will grow to a

most prosperous perfection” (III.i.259-60). Actually, both Isabella and Angelo were extremely strict at the beginning of the play although they behave vice versa as they are divorced from their circumstances and are placed in a different environment. According to Vivian Thomas,

[t]he paradox is that both Angelo and Isabella insist on purity in the world: he must be free to impose the harshest penalties without let or hindrance; she must be free from any threat of physical violation or moral contamination. They are both idealists to sorts, but their idealism cannot encompass social reality. (177)

At first, the Duke seems to agree with Claudio’s sentence. When Angelo’s corruption is revealed, the Duke consults this trickery to make Angelo commit the same crime with Claudio. The Duke reveals that it is not possible to live ideally as Isabella and Angelo attempted to do in the real world.

When the Duke learns the letter ordering the Provost to execute Claudio even after Angelo thinks Isabella has yielded to him, he finds another plot to save Claudio. Angelo wants Claudio’s head to be sent to him after the execution. The Duke learns the existence of another victim Bernardine who has been in prison nearly for nine years and asks the Provost why the former Duke has not behaved him fairly. He questions that “How came it that the absent duke had not either delivered him to his liberty or executed him? I have heard it was ever his manner to do so” (IV.ii.132-34). The Provost explains that the Duke could not enforce the laws and he clarifies that: “A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless, of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality and desperately mortal” (IV.ii.142-5). He adds that Bernardine does not care about the authority of the government. He is not afraid of being executed even though he accepts that he has murdered someone. Although the Duke has not executed him for nine years, he is now willing to put execution into practice as he needs a dead head to save

Claudio. He tries to get justice after so many years. However, he cannot persuade Bernardine to be executed this time as he claims that his soul will be cursed if he dies when he is drunk:

Duke: Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you.

Barnardine: Friar, not I; I have been drinking hard all night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or they shall beat out my brains with billets: I will not consent to die this day, that's certain.

Duke: O, Sir, you must; and therefore I beseech you, Look forward on the journey you shall go.

Barnardine: I swear I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

Duke: But hear you,--

Barnardine: Not a word; if you have anything to say to me, come to my ward; for thence will not I to-day. (IV.iii.48-63)

After waiting for justice to be brought nearly for a decade, Bernardine refuses to be executed on the day the authority demands. He is the only character who will not play the Duke's game. The Duke understands that he should have been more careful in terms of justice when he is in power. He knew about the situation before, which is why he orchestrated the whole plot.

Fortunately, a convict in the prison dies due to illness and the Duke finds a head to send to Angelo instead of Claudio's head. Everybody including Angelo and Isabella believes that Claudio has been executed. He deliberately does not inform Isabella that Claudio has not died as he wants Isabella's complaint to be more convincing:

The tongue of Isabel.--She's come to know

If yet her brother's pardon be come hither:

But I will keep her ignorant of her good,  
 To make her heavenly comforts of despair  
 When it is least expected. (IV.iii.107-11)

It can be said that the Duke lets Isabella suffer from his brother's death since he wants his plan to be perfect. Even if Isabella does not deserve this suffering, the Duke causes Isabella to burst into tears and does not tell her the facts about her brother.

The Duke regrets as he has not enforced the laws and blames himself for the disintegration of the society. He is aware of his negligence through the end of the play and then he tries to bring "justice" to Vienna:

Be not so hot; the duke  
 Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he  
 Dare rack his own; his subject am I not,  
 Nor here provincial. My business in this state  
 Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,  
 Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble  
 Till it o'errun the stew: laws for all faults,  
 But faults so countenanc'd that the strong statutes  
 Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,  
 As much in mock as mark. (V.i.313-22)

In his dialogue with Lucio, he finds out that Lucio is slandering the Duke. Furthermore, he also slanders Isabella in his speeches. His claim is that "Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would sooner confess: perchance, publicly, she'll be ashamed"(V.i.275-76). He even compares Mariana with the girls of whore Mistress Overdone suggesting that "My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them are neither maid, widow, nor

wife” (V.i.179-80). Although the Duke is abused and slandered, he does not show his real identity and goes on the conversation:

Lucio: O did you so? And do you remember what you said of the duke?

Duke: Most notably, sir.

Lucio: Do you so, sir? And was the duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?

Duke: You must, sir, change persons with me ere you make that my report: you, indeed, spoke so of him; and much more, much worse.

Lucio: O thou damnable fellow! Did not I pluck thee by the nose for thy speeches?

Duke: I protest I love the duke as I love myself. (V.i.330-41)

The Friar/Duke decides to come back to the stage as a real Duke and tells Isabella and Mariana to complain about the administration of Angelo in front of the people before leaving. Mariana and Isabella meet him at the entrance of the city and voice their complaints. Isabella reports her complaint about Angelo to the Duke as planned before:

In brief,--to set the needless process by,  
 How I persuaded, how I pray'd, and kneel'd,  
 How he refell'd me, and how I replied,--  
 For this was of much length,--the vile conclusion  
 I now begin with grief and shame to utter:  
 He would not, but by gift of my chaste body  
 To his concupiscible intemperate lust,  
 Release my brother; and, after much debatement,

My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour,  
 And I did yield to him. But the next morn betimes,  
 His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant  
 For my poor brother's head. (V.i.92-103)

Mariana complains of Angelo just as Isabella does and when everything is revealed finally, Vincentio initially punishes Angelo with capital punishment as he has caused the supposed death of Claudio. He orders that “An Angelo for Claudio, death for death./ Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure; / Like doth quit like, and measure still for measure” (V.i.408-11) and this is highly feudal. He starts to impose laws on Angelo as he has committed the same crime with Claudio.

Mariana begs for the forgiveness of Angelo, however, she cannot persuade the Duke and wants the assistance of Isabella even though Angelo attempts to kill Isabella’s brother. Mariana asks that “O my good lord!--Sweet Isabel, take my part; /Lend me your knees, and all my life to come / I'll lend you all my life to do you service” (V.i.429-31). Isabella supports that the laws have killed his brother rather than Angelo and explains:

Most bounteous sir,  
 Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,  
 As if my brother liv'd: I partly think  
 A due sincerity govern'd his deeds  
 Till he did look on me; since it is so,  
 Let him not die. My brother had but justice,  
 In that he did the thing for which he died:  
 For Angelo,  
 His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,  
 And must be buried but as an intent

That perish'd by the way. Thoughts are no subjects;

Intents but merely thoughts. (V.i.443-53)

At first, the Duke is not convinced and releases Bernardine instead of Angelo. He later forgives Angelo's life even though Angelo insists on the execution since Claudio is still alive. Also, he releases him for the sake of Isabella. Besides, he tells Isabella to marry him without asking her own consent. He states that:

If he be like your brother [to ISABELLA], for his sake

Is he pardon'd; and for your lovely sake,

Give me your hand and say you will be mine;

He is my brother too: but fitter time for that.

By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe;

Me thinks I see a quick'ning in his eye. (V.i.489-95)

The Duke orders Angelo and Mariana, Lucio and Kate Keepdown to marry by force. Even though the men reject these marriages, he does not listen to them and thus he thinks that he brings "justice" to the society by forgiving everybody including Bernardine without any hesitation. Vincentio realizes that excessive mercy and freedom of a ruler caused injustice in Vienna but he is still unable to enforce the law.

Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* brings an ironical approach to "the law".. As it is stated before, the Duke leaves his authority to Angelo who seems to have a morally strict character. Since Angelo is in power instead of Vincentio, he shows his strictness without mercy in applying the "biting laws" of Vienna. There is no reason for Angelo to hesitate to enforce the laws as the Duke reminds him of the power he has before leaving:

Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do

With any scruple: your scope is as mine own:

So to enforce or qualify the laws

As to your soul seems good. (I.i.64-6)

As soon as the Duke leaves, Angelo decides to apply the laws which have “slept”. Unlike the Duke, he is not interested in being merciful. His only concern is his reputation. He considers that laws are an indispensable part of the regulation of the society and they prevent the disintegration of the society. For this reason, he exclaims that:

We must not make a scarecrow of the law,  
 Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,  
 And let it keep one shape till custom make it  
 Their perch, and not their terror. (II.i.1-4)

He asserts that the laws have to be enforced for everyone. The first thing he does is to punish Claudio as he has an illegal relationship without marriage with Juliet although they are contracted. Claudio is sent to prison and his execution will be realized next day. Even if Escalus informs him that Claudio’s father is a noble man, he does not want to change his decision and tells Escalus not to be soft-hearted:

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,  
 Another thing to fall. I not deny  
 The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,  
 May, in the sworn twelve, have a thief or two  
 Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,  
 That justice seizes. (II.i.17-21)

Escalus’s attempts to make him forsake, however, proves to be in vain. Angelo is so sure of himself that he does not act against the laws and he even declares that “When I, that censure him, do so offend, / Let mine own judgment pattern out my death, / And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die”(II.i.29-31). Furthermore, Angelo rebukes the Provost when he wishes Claudio to be forgiven. He not only shouts at him but also threatens him since he is

an extremely strict man in terms of the application of the laws: “Do your office, or give up your place / And you shall well be spared” (II.ii.14-5). Angelo seems to be a dispassionate and lawful man. However, he acts unlawfully when he orders Escalus to find a good reason to whip the bawd Pompey without judging him.

When Claudio is informed that he is going to be executed, he asks Lucio to call his sister Isabella who wants to have a religious life. Claudio requests Isabella to plead Angelo for his life. Because he knows that “When she will play with reason and discourse, / And well she can persuade” (I.ii.185-6). Lucio gives information about the personality of Angelo and the situation Claudio is in before Isabella goes to him:

Governs Lord Angelo: a man whose blood  
Is very snow-broth; one who never feels  
The wanton stings and motions of the sense.  
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge  
With profits of the mind, study, and fast.  
He,--to give fear to use and liberty,  
Which have for long run by the hideous law,  
As mice by lions,--hath pick'd out an act,  
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life  
Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it;  
And follows close the rigour of the statute  
To make him an example; all hope is gone. (I.iv.57-68)

Besides, Lucio teaches her what she should do and he tells her to kneel in front him. Actually, Isabella is hesitant to plead for Claudio as she is about to become a nun. Despite this, she goes to Angelo and starts the conversation by introducing herself. When Angelo asks her what she

wants, she answers that “I have a brother is condemn'd to die; / I do beseech you, let it be his fault, / And not my brother” (II.ii.34-6). Angelo rejects her:

Condemn the fault and not the actor of it!  
 Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done;  
 Mine were the very cipher of a function,  
 To find the faults whose fine stands in record,  
 And let go by the actor. (II.ii.38-41)

Angelo does not change his decision at all even though Isabella claims that the law is severe. According to Angelo, Claudio has to be punished in order to prevent following crimes. He says “He's sentenc'd; 'tis too late” (II.ii.55) instead of persuading not to execute Claudio. However, Isabella does not give in:

Too late? Why, no; I, that do speak a word,  
 May call it back again. Well, believe this,  
 No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,  
 Not the king's crown nor the deputed sword,  
 The marshal's truncheon nor the judge's robe,  
 Become them with one half so good a grace  
 As mercy does.  
 If he had been as you, and you as he,  
 You would have slipp'd like him; but he, like you,  
 Would not have been so stern. (II.ii.57-66)

No matter what Isabella does, Angelo insists on the application of this execution claiming that “It is the law, not I, condemns your brother: / Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son, / It should be thus with him;--he must die to-morrow” (II.ii.80-2). Despite Isabella’s pleading for mercy, Angelo is not persuaded and the sleeping laws are going to be imposed:

The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept:  
 Those many had not dared to do that evil  
 If the first that did the edict infringe  
 Had answer'd for his deed: now 'tis awake;  
 Takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet,  
 Looks in a glass that shows what future evils,--  
 Either now, or by remissness new conceiv'd,  
 And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,--  
 Are now to have no successive degrees,  
 But, where they live, to end. (II.ii.89-99)

As Angelo is obsessed with his good name, he cannot change his decision and insist on the execution of Claudio despite Isabella's pleadings. He claims that laws are necessary to treat everyone equally. Isabella points out that a lot of people have committed this crime; however, nobody has been punished so far. For this reason, Isabella wants Angelo to show mercy as this is Claudio's first crime. Angelo gives her a harsh answer as he is in favor of strict laws:

I show it most of all when I show justice;  
 For then I pity those I do not know,  
 Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall,  
 And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,  
 Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;  
 Your brother dies to-morrow; be content. (II.ii.100-5)

However, Isabella provokes his feelings by complimenting him. She tells that "Than the soft myrtle; but man, proud man! / Dress'd in a little brief authority" (II.ii.117-8). She reminds

Angelo that people sometimes cannot resist upon their passionate desires and to err is for human beings. She attempts to soften his heart:

Because authority, though it err like others,  
 Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself  
 That skins the vice o' the top. Go to your bosom;  
 Knock there; and ask your heart what it doth know  
 That's like my brother's fault: if it confess  
 A natural guiltiness such as is his,  
 Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue  
 Against my brother's life. (II.ii.134-41)

Isabella could reach her aim. When Angelo is alone in his room, he realizes that his virtue is not enough to protect him against the temptation that Isabella causes:

When I would pray and think, I think and pray  
 To several subjects. Heaven hath my empty words;  
 Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,  
 Anchors on Isabel: Heaven in my mouth,  
 As if I did but only chew his name;  
 And in my heart the strong and swelling evil  
 Of my conception. The state whereon I studied  
 Is, like a good thing, being often read,  
 Grown sear'd and tedious; yea, my gravity,  
 Wherein--let no man hear me--I take pride,  
 Could I with boot change for an idle plume,  
 Which the air beats for vain. (II.iv.1-12)

Angelo is really affected by Isabella's pleading. In their second meeting, he tries to use his position to get Isabella stating that he forgives Claudio on condition that she has sex with him.

Angelo presents his offer to Isabella and asks her answer:

Admit no other way to save his life,--  
 As I subscribe not that, nor any other,  
 But, in the loss of question,--that you, his sister,  
 Finding yourself desir'd of such a person,  
 Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,  
 Could fetch your brother from the manacles  
 Of the all-binding law; and that there were  
 No earthly mean to save him but that either  
 You must lay down the treasures of your body  
 To this suppos'd, or else to let him suffer;  
 What would you do? (II.iv.88-98)

Upon his question, Isabella declares "And 'twere the cheaper way: / Better it were a brother died at once / Than that a sister, by redeeming him,/Should die for ever" (II.iv.105-8). She does not consent to give her body to Angelo in order to save his brother even though Claudio thinks vice versa later on. At this point, Ernest Schanzer asks "What are we to make of this young man, who feels deeply sinful because he has cohabited with his wife, and at the same time sees himself as the only nominally guilty victim of a tyrannical ruler?" (75). Of course, it is against for a strict ruler to punish someone who has committed the same crime like him. Isabella says that she is going to reveal his immoral offer to everybody, however, Angelo does not care as he thinks that he has a good reputation among people:

Who will believe thee, Isabel?  
 My unsoil'd name, th' austereness of my life,

My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,  
 Will so your accusation overweigh  
 That you shall stifle in your own report,  
 And smell of calumny. (II.iv.154-9)

Angelo thinks that nobody would believe her as he has a good name in the society and he abuses the power he has in this way. When Isabella refuses his immoral offer, Angelo threatens her that Claudio is going to be tortured before he is executed:

That banish what they sue for: redeem thy brother  
 By yielding up thy body to my will;  
 Or else he must not only die the death,  
 But thy unkindness shall his death draw out  
 To lingering sufferance: answer me to-morrow,  
 Or, by the affection that now guides me most,  
 I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,  
 Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.(II.iv.163-170)

Isabella turns back to prison to explain Angelo's shameful offer to her brother while the Duke is there. The Duke overhears his deputy's sinful offer which is against the laws of Vienna and learns about Isabella's rejection:

I'll to my brother:  
 Though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood,  
 Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour  
 That, had he twenty heads to tender down  
 On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up  
 Before his sister should her body stop  
 To such abhorr'd pollution.

Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:  
 More than our brother is our chastity.  
 I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,  
 And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest. (II.iv.177-87)

Isabella is one of the most innocent characters in the play. She believes in divine authority and wants to be a nun. According to Isabella, Catholic rules are more important than Vienna's rules. Isabella is sure that her brother would prefer to die rather than losing his honor. When Claudio asks "Now, sister, what's the comfort?"(III.i.54):

Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,  
 Intends you for his swift ambassador,  
 Where you shall be an everlasting leiger:  
 Therefore, your best appointment make with speed;  
 To-morrow you set on. (III.i.56-9)

When Claudio asks whether there are any remedies or not, Isabella does not directly tell him the only way to save his life for fear that Claudio may also agree with this idea. Once Claudio insists on learning, Isabella states that this offer may dishonor him:

There spake my brother; there my father's grave  
 Did utter forth a voice! Yes, thou must die:  
 Thou art too noble to conserve a life  
 In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy,--  
 Whose settled visage and deliberate word  
 Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth emmew  
 As falcon doth the fowl,--is yet a devil;  
 His filth within being cast, he would appear  
 A pond as deep as hell. (III.i.84-93)

As soon as Claudio hears this, he seemingly gets angry and accepts to die next day. In the same way, Isabella prefers death to fornication. However, Claudio changes his mind after a while saying that fornication is the least deadly sins. He is afraid of dying and Isabella immediately understands his intention. Upon Isabella's question "What says my brother" (III.i.114), Claudio explains his fear of death:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
 To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;  
 This sensible warm motion to become  
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
 To bathe in fiery floods or to reside  
 In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
 To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
 And blown with restless violence round about  
 The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
 Of those that lawless and incertain thought  
 Imagine howling!--'tis too horrible!  
 The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
 That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment  
 Can lay on nature is a paradise  
 To what we fear of death. (III.i.117-31)

Claudio wishes Isabella to save his life begging that "Sweet sister, let me live: / What sin you do to save a brother's life / Nature dispenses with the deed so far / That it becomes a virtue" (III.i.132-5). Their conversation turns out to be an argument. It is about the matter of morality and death. While Isabella supports virtue, Claudio strives to live and this argument stems from the offer of "strict" Angelo. He is a selfish man as he sacrifices her sister's

virginity for his own benefit which is against the nature of human beings. Isabella is deeply disappointed with his brother's thought and wants him to die as soon as possible. She even insults him before leaving the prison:

O you beast!

O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!

Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?

Is't not a kind of incest to take life

From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?

Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!

For such a warped slip of wilderness

Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance:

Die; perish! might but my bending down

Relieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed:

I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,--

No word to save thee. (III.i.135-46)

She is so disappointed with the idea of Claudio that she condemns him. Furthermore, she states that she prays for his death as he accepts her to live dishonorably for the rest of her life. It is interesting for a woman who wants to be a nun to swear this way. In fact, nuns are expected to be careful with their words, however, this is not the case for Isabella. Claudio regrets and he would like to apologize Isabella:” Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life that I will sue to be rid of it” (III.i.171-2).

As the Duke overhears their dialogue, he decides to save both Claudio and Isabella from the situations they are in. Thus, the Duke considers that everything will be resolved and Angelo would set Claudio free after getting what he desires. However, Angelo does not keep

his promise and orders Claudio to be executed as he fears that he will attempt to take his revenge if he is released. Angelo again misuses the laws of Vienna:

For my authority bears a so credent bulk,  
 That no particular scandal once can touch  
 But it confounds the breather. He should have liv'd,  
 Save that his riotous youth, with dangerous sense,  
 Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge,  
 By so receiving a dishonour'd life  
 With ransom of such shame. (IV.iv.26-32)

However, the Duke prevents this illegal action since he witnesses everything while he is in disguise. When he turns back, he orders Angelo to be executed as he has used the laws for his own benefit and punished someone who has committed the same sin. This is not acceptable for someone who is in power.

Both Mariana and Isabella ask the Duke to forgive Angelo, however, Angelo wants to be executed according to the laws which he misused even after the pleadings of Isabella and Mariana. He prefers to die rather than leading a dishonorable life in the society. He pleads the laws to be imposed. This shows that he is still in favor of the strict laws of Vienna even if he is punished since he wants to be sentenced immediately.

I am sorry that such sorrow I procure:  
 And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart  
 That I crave death more willingly than mercy;  
 'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it. (V.i.474-7)

Angelo behaves immorally throughout the play as he has ordered Claudio to be executed for the crime that he also committed. If the authority is not consistent with the laws,

it is not possible to talk about the applications of the laws properly. To clarify, it is certain that laws are useless when the judge is as guilty as the convict and this is the case in this play.

At the end of the play, Angelo who is supposedly a moral character and the Duke turn out to be completely different from their initial position. Angelo behaves immorally during the play and the Duke who cannot govern the city strictly comes back to enforce the strict laws. Witnessing the manipulations of the law as a friar, he decides to bring justice even though he cannot do it fairly. While the Duke uses his power to save Claudio, Mariana, Isabella, Angelo condemns Claudio claiming that he enforces the laws. The Duke saves Claudio, marries Isabella without waiting for the answer of his proposal, and preserves her chastity. Thus, he understands that applications of the laws are very important for the welfare of the city, however, the Duke shows mercy instead of justice. In brief, Angelo breaks the law for his own satisfaction; however, the Duke behaves against the law in order to bring “justice”. Shakespeare criticizes the term “justice” claiming that it may be exposed to changes according to the situations, that is, he juxtaposes real with the ideal.

Despite the fact that law and justice are the most important ideal values for the welfare of a city, Shakespeare criticizes the people in authority as they cannot apply them appropriately. To clarify, the Duke is unlawful while he is just and Angelo is lawful while he is unjust. These two characters play an important role in terms of showing the juxtaposition of “being” and “seeming”. Shakespeare would like to give a message to the Duke who actually represents James I. He implies that it is not possible to govern properly if you become too flexible or too strict when you are in power.

There are marriages between Angelo and Mariana, Lucio and Kate Keepdown, Claudio and Juliet, the Duke and Isabella in the play, however, the characters do not marry each other willingly except Claudio and Juliet which is against the tradition of comedy. As a conclusion, *Measure for Measure* is put under the category of Shakespeare’s Problem

Comedies in spite of its tragic inclinations since we are not pleased with the satisfaction we get at the end of a comedy.

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## V. CONCLUSION

This thesis deals with *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Measure for Measure* in terms of their genre and content. Although the plays are open to lots of interpretations, they are getting more popular in recent years as critics realize that there is something interesting in the plays, especially after the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are called Problem Comedies as they do not fit their traditional genres and they present different problems the answers of which are left to the audience. To clarify, problem comedy is an exclusive category which is different from tragedies, histories, romances and comedies.

William Shakespeare used these plays to criticize the degraded values of his society and in this respect, they share some common points. Conflicts among social institutions are common in the plays. They reflect complex relationships among people. Shakespeare juxtaposed war, love, honesty, law and justice respectively to reflect the bitter realities of the society by using his characters to achieve his goal.

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare focuses on the theme of war and love. His characters are crucial in his attempt to criticize the society. Troy does not accept to give Helen back despite the fact that they have a great deal of losses during the war. The problem here is that whether Helen is worth keeping or not even if her existence endangers the future of the city. Actually, she is not as valuable as any person in Troy. However, the Trojans' commanders regard her as the symbol of their honor and this leads the city to the destruction. This proves that if people resist upon the changing values of the world, they are exposed to disaster.

Hector, the great leader of the Trojans, is a sensible man and he thinks that Helen should be given back for the welfare of the city. However, Troilus does not agree with him and asserts that they lose their honor if they withdraw. In spite of the fact that Hector is a logical man, he cannot resist upon the idea of honor and risks the city. Hector's honor

overcomes his logic. He prefers death rather than losing his fame. This shows that Hector cannot keep up with the changing world, that is, he still lives in an ideal world which does not actually exist anymore. Achilles kills Hector brutally. Hector does not kill Achilles in the battlefield even if he has the opportunity since he thinks that it is not moral to kill someone who is unarmed. He shows pity and dares to sleep unarmed as he is still obsessed with ideal. He does not realize that the world is changing. Achilles is no more than a coward as he murders Hector when he is defenseless. It can be easily put forward that Hector is not aware of the realities of the world since he is obsessed with ideal values while Achilles behaves according to the rules of the changing world.

Furthermore, ideal love is reduced to sexuality and Cressida betrays Troilus as soon as she goes to the Greek side which actually symbolizes the real world. Shakespeare points that there is no place for ideal love in this changing society. Briefly, love and war are shown ironically and Shakespeare reflects this irony with the juxtaposition of reality and idealism in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Another theme of the play is love. Ideal love is reduced to sexuality and Cressida, betrays Troilus as soon as she goes to the Greek side which actually symbolizes the real world. Shakespeare points that there is no place for ideal love in this changing society. Briefly, love and war are shown ironically in the play. Shakespeare reflects this irony with the juxtaposition of reality and idealism and *Troilus and Cressida* is accepted Problem Comedy in terms of genre since it cannot satisfy us despite its tragic inclinations.

*All's Well That Ends Well* is the second play analyzed in this thesis. It is similar to *Troilus and Cressida*, in that, it emphasizes the decaying part of the society. In this play, love and honesty have been taken into consideration and they are handled in an ironic way.

Helen's love for Bertram is the most important part of the play since Bertram treats her as an inferior. He does not accept her love. Helen does her best to get Bertram and when

he finally gets Bertram, he escapes to the war in order not to go to bed with her to consummate their marriage. Ironically, Helena does not give up and follows Bertram to get him back. This is an unusual situation for a female character in the early modern age.

Honesty is ironically represented by Bertram who is morally corrupted. Unlike his father, Bertram is a dishonest person as he attempts to deceive nearly all of the characters throughout the play. In reality, it is not appropriate for a man like Bertram who is from high class to trick everybody including his own mother. Bertram gives more importance to social superiority than personal characteristics contrary to his parents. He seemingly behaves like a noble person. Although noble birth is beyond everything for him, he falls in love with Diana who is also socially inferior like Helena. His actions and words are not consistent with each other. Even if he feels like an “honorable” man, he gives his family ring to Diana just for a sexual gratification. There is also inconsistency between real and ideal. When everything is revealed at the end of the play, he lies without any hesitation, however, nobody believes him although he seems to be an honest person. Shakespeare shows that the world is in the process of changing through the dishonest characteristics of Bertram.

It is interesting that Bertram goes to the war in order not to bed with his wife while the war stems from an unfaithful woman in *Troilus and Cressida*. This proves that there is a clash between real and ideal love and Shakespeare puts forward that it is not possible to find the real love in this world. Furthermore, he shows that old feudal values lose their importance in the changing society. In *All's Well*, Shakespeare approaches to the comedy ironically and that's why, we cannot evidently separate it in terms of its genre and call it his problem comedy.

The last play handled in this thesis is *Measure for Measure* which criticizes the authority in terms of the law and the justice. While the corruption of justice is reflected via

the Duke, law is misused by the deputy Angelo. Both Angelo and the Duke are the major characters as they represent the clash between “seeming” and “being”.

When Angelo gets the power, he would like to govern the city according to his strict principles. The first thing he does is to punish Claudio since he had sex with Juliet before marriage. The applications of the law are beyond everything for him. Even though he is quite strict with the laws, he commits the same crime with Claudio. Angelo becomes lawless in the absence of the Duke. He misuses the temporary authority. In spite of the fact that he attempts to apply the sleeping laws of Vienna, Angelo behaves unfairly unlike the Duke. It is revealed that he is seemingly strict and that’s why the Duke would like to test Angelo by giving his authority over him.

The Duke leaves Vienna by giving authority to Angelo as he considers that he cannot apply the laws properly. Actually, there are some reasons why he takes his authority over Angelo. First of all, he would not slander his name while the laws are enforced again and he would like to test Angelo’s character. Beside these, he wants to teach the importance of Christian mercy to his citizens as the power to show mercy is more powerful than simply enforcing the law.

During his absence in authority, the Duke realizes that laws are used for individual benefits. For this reason, he intervenes in the play as a Friar in disguise. When he turns back as the real Duke, he attempts to treat everybody fairly even if he cannot do it. First of all, he orders Angelo to be sentenced; however, he forgives him upon the pleadings of Isabella and Mariana. Besides Angelo, he forgives Bernardine, Claudio, and Juliet. He even forgives Lucio despite the fact that he has slandered him for the sake of mercy. That is, the Duke behaves unlawfully in order to be just.

William Shakespeare criticizes the applications of justice and the law throughout the play. He implies that it is not possible to administer appropriately when you are too strict or

vice versa. It is not easy to identify to which genre *Measure for Measure* belongs to since Shakespeare approached the play ironically and there are enforced marriages. That's why, *Measure for Measure* is called one of Shakespeare's problem comedy.

These problem comedies are open to various interpretations. Shakespeare deals with the corrupted values of the society in these three comedies. They cause question marks in minds, however, it is impossible for the audience to solve these problems as there are no explicit answers given in the plays and we are not pleased with each play despite tragic inclinations. In addition to this, the clash between reality and idealism leads us to put them into the category of problem comedies.

As a consequence, Shakespeare presents a new world and the ideal values do not have a place in this changing society. In these plays, he suggests that if people try to live up to the "ideal", they risk a lot just like Hector and other characters in the plays. While Shakespeare criticizes ideal love and changing realities of a war in *Troilus and Cressida*, he deals with honesty and love in *All's Well That Ends Well*. Besides, he handles with the themes of justice and law in *Measure for Measure*. Briefly, it can be said that he uses irony by juxtaposing ideal love, bravery, honesty and justice with the real ones in *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. That is, he brings an ironical approach to comedy in order to criticize the changing values of his society implicitly.

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**ÖZET****THE IRONY OF IDEALISM IN SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM COMEDIES****Güven, Samet****Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı****Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Evrim Doğan Adanur****Ankara, 2012**

Bu tezin amacı, Shakespeare'ın *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* oyunlarındaki aşk, adalet, savaş, hukuk ve dürüstlük gibi kavramların çarpıtılmasının, ince alay unsuru göz önünde bulundurularak incelenmesidir. Bu incelemelerden yola çıkarak, tezin konusu olan oyunlar vasıtasıyla Shakespeare'ın yaşadığı toplumun değerlerini ince alay vasıtasıyla eleştirdiği öne sürülmüştür.

Eleştirmenlerin görüşlerinden yola çıkılarak, çalışmanın giriş bölümünde “problem oyunlar” hakkında bilgiler verilmiştir. Birinci oyun olan *Troilus and Cressida*'da savaş ve aşk konusunun çarpıtılarak farklı bir şekilde yansıtıldığı açıklanmıştır. *All's Well That Ends Well*, bu çalışmada ele alınan ikinci oyundur ve bu oyunda aşk ve dürüstlük kavramlarının ironik bir şekilde nasıl yansıtıldığı konusunda fikirler öne sürülmüştür. Tezde ele alınan son oyun ise *Measure for Measure*'dir. Bu oyunda ise hukuk ve adalet kavramlarının uygun bir şekilde uygulanmadığında toplumda çıkabilecek huzursuzluklar üzerinde durulmuştur.

Sonuç olarak, çalışmanın temelinde Shakespeare'ın sözü edilen kavramları, oyunlarına konu olarak nasıl aldığı ve idealizm kavramının yazarın ilgili eserlerinde ince alay unsuru göz önünde bulundurularak ne şekilde işlendiği yatmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Shakespeare, Problem Oyunlar, İnce Alay, Idealizm

**ABSTRACT****THE IRONY OF IDEALISM IN SHAKESPEARE'S PROBLEM COMEDIES****Güven, Samet****M.A., Department of English Language and Literature****Advisor: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Evrim Doğan Adanur****Ankara, 2012**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze some ideal concepts such as love, justice, war, law and honesty by taking the term “irony” into consideration in Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*, *All’s Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. Based upon these analyses, it has been asserted that Shakespeare criticized the values that his society has ironically through these plays.

Based upon the views of critics, some information about “problem plays” has been given in the introduction part. In *Troilus and Cressida*, it has been explained how the themes of war and love are juxtaposed. *All’s Well That Ends Well* is the second play of the thesis and it has been asserted that themes of love and honesty have been reflected ironically. The last play to be dealt with is *Measure for Measure*. In this play, it has been emphasized that there may occur disorders in the society if the laws are not applied properly.

As a consequence, Shakespeare’s manipulations of the related values and his way of employing “idealism” ironically in the plays lies in the basis of this study.

**Key Words:** Shakespeare, Problem Play, Irony, Idealism

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