Boekverslag Engels Troilus and cressida door William Shakespeare

Boekverslag door een scholier
1910 woorden
19 juni 2003

Auteur
William Shakespeare

Genre
Toneelstuk

Eerste uitgave
1602

Vak
Engels

1) William Shakespeare; Tragedy of Troylus and Cressida; Ashgate Publishing, Limited; March 1999

2) I’ve chosen this book because I had to read two English books because of the subject Dutch. My subject was Love in the literature, so I chose Troylus and Cressida. But I used two other books for this essay and I already read Troylus and cressida, so I thought I could use it for English! And so I did.

3) In the seventh year of the Trojan War, a Trojan prince named Troilus falls in love with Cressida, the daughter of a Trojan priest who has defected to the Greek side. Troilus is assisted in his pursuit of her by Pandarus, Cressida’s uncle. Meanwhile, in the Greek camp, the Greek general, Agamemnon, wonders why his commanders seem so downcast and pessimistic. The wise and crafty Ulysses informs him that the army’s troubles spring from a lack of respect for authority, brought about by the behavior of Achilles, the greatest Greek warrior, who refuses to fight and instead spends his time sitting in his tent with his comrade (and lover) Patroclus, mocking his superiors. Shortly thereafter, a challenge to single combat arrives from Prince Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior, and Ulysses decides to have Ajax, a headstrong fool, fight Hector instead of Achilles, in the hopes that this snub will wound Achilles’s pride and bring him back into the war.

In Troy, the sons of King Priamus debate whether it is worthwhile to continue the war or whether they should return Helen to the Greeks and end the struggle. Hector argues for peace, but he is won over by the impassioned Troilus, who wants to continue the struggle. In the Greek camp, Thersites, Ajax’s foul-mouthed slave, abuses everyone who crosses his path. His master, meanwhile, has been honored by the commanders over the sulking Achilles, and is to fight Hector the next day.

That night, Pandarus brings Troilus and Cressida together, and after they pledge to be forever true to one another, he leads them to a bedchamber to consummate their love. Meanwhile, Cressida’s father, the treacherous Trojan priest Calchas, asks the Greek commanders to exchange a Trojan prisoner for his daughter, so that he may be reunited with her. The commanders agree, and the next morning to Troilus and Cressida’s dismay the trade is made, and a Greek lord named Diomedes leads Cressida away from
Troy. That afternoon, Ajax and Hector fight to a draw, and after Hector and Achilles exchange insults, Hector and Troilus feast with the Greeks under a flag of truce. As the camp goes to bed, Ulysses leads Troilus to the tent of Calchas, where the Trojan prince watches from hiding as Cressida agrees to become Diomedes's lover.

The next day, in spite of unhappy premonitions from his wife, sister, and his father, Hector takes the field, and a furious and heartbroken Troilus accompanies him. The Trojans drive the Greeks back, but illus back into the war, finally. Achilles is unable to defeat Hector in single combat, but he later catches him unarmed and, together with a gang of Greek warriors, slaughters him. Achilles then drags Hector’s body around the walls of Troy, and the play ends with the Trojan warriors retreating to the city to mourn their fallen hero.

4) Troilus; A prince of Troy. The younger brother of Hector and Paris, he is a valiant warrior and an honorable man. He is also desperately in love with Cressida.

Cressida; A beautiful young Trojan woman. The daughter of Calchas, a Trojan priest who defected to the Greek camp, she becomes Troilus’s lover. Instead of being virtuous, Cressida is described or depicted as fickle and shallow, willing and eager to be unfaithful, far from any traditional feminine ideal.

5) It sets in the seventh year of the Trojan War, so that will be around 1250 BC. It’s told in chronological order, because of the fact that it is a play. So there are no flashbacks. The story has a period of about a week.

6) It is mostly set in Troy and the fields around Troy where the battles take place. It is also set in the Greek camp where Cressida is a captive.

7) The story is a play so it is told by the actors. Everything that is told is a pronunciation of one of the actors. The feelings and thoughts of the characters are not told, but sometimes they speak their thoughts out loud.

8) The play offers a debased view of human nature in war-time and a stage peopled by generally unsympathetic characters. Like many of the great tragedies, the broad theme is the relationship of, and conflict between, personal life and the interests of the state in this case, the conflict between the romance of the title characters and the war-time politics that send Cressida away from her lover into the Greek camp. But this theme coexists with a general pessimism unmatched even in the darkest tragedies, as classical heroes like Achilles and Ajax are presented as self-absorbed thugs, and the central romance of Troilus and Cressida is rhetorically reduced to lust, so that in the memorable phrase of the Greek slave Thersites, "all the argument is a whore and a cuckold" (II.iii.75).

9) Clearly, this play contains strong tragic elements. It offers a bleak view of the world, in which the forces of love and justice are undone by circumstances and cruelty, and it ends with the death of a major heroic figure (Hector) and the betrayal of another (Troilus). But while these elements give the play strong tragic resonance, it does not fit the mold of classical tragedy followed by Shakespeare's later works, such as King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, and others. First of all, there is no clear tragic hero Hector’s death.
resembles the murder of Julius Caesar, among others, but Hector himself is not the hero of the play. That honor seems like it should belong to the title character, Troilus, but Cressida, the woman who would have become his tragic heroine Cleopatra to his Antony, or Juliet to his Romeo elects not to die, or even to be faithful, choosing to betray him instead. His realization of this betrayal might be considered to constitute a tragic illumination, but this illumination is not followed by death, which would be the expected ending of such a tragedy. Indeed, the unsympathetic nature of the characters and the deliberately anticlimactic style that Shakespeare employs, make the play seem almost like a black comedy or better, a tragicomedy.

10) William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was born to John Shakespeare and mother Mary Arden some time in late April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. There is no record of his birth, but his baptism was recorded by the church, thus his birthday is assumed to be the 23 of April. His father was a prominent and prosperous alderman in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, and was later granted a coat of arms by the College of Heralds. All that is known of Shakespeare’s youth is that he presumably attended the Stratford Grammar School, and did not proceed to Oxford or Cambridge. The next record we have of him is his marriage to Anne Hathaway in 1582. The next year she bore a daughter for him, Susanna, followed by the twins Judith and Hamnet two years later.

Seven years later Shakespeare was recognized as an actor, poet, and playwright, when a rival playwright, Robert Greene, referred to him as "an upstart crow" in "A Groatsworth of Wit." A few years later he joined up with one of the most successful acting troupes in London: "The Lord Chamberlain’s Men." When, in 1599, the troupe lost the lease of the theatre where they performed (appropriately called "The Theatre"), they were wealthy enough to build their own theatre across the Thames, south of London, which they called "The Globe." The new theatre opened in July of 1599, built from the timbers of "The Theatre", with the motto "Totus mundus agit histrionem" (A whole world of players). When James I came to the throne (1603) the troupe was designated by the new king as the "King’s Men" (or "King’s Company"). The Letters Patent of the company specifically charged Shakespeare and eight others "freely to use and exercise the art and faculty of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Interludes, Morals, Pastorals, stage plays ... as well for recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure." Shakespeare entertained the King and the people for another ten years until June 19, 1613, when a canon fired from the roof of the theatre for a gala performance of Henry VIII set fire to the thatch roof and burned the theatre to the ground. The audience ignored the smoke from the roof at first, being too absorbed in the play, until the flames caught the walls and the fabric of the curtains. Amazingly there were no casualties, and the next spring the company had the theatre "new builded in a far fairer manner than before." Although Shakespeare invested in the rebuilding, he retired from the stage to the Great House of New Place in Stratford that he had purchased in 1597, and some considerable land holdings, where he continued to write until his death in 1616 on the day of his 52nd birthday.

11) I really enjoyed reading this play. In my opinion it’s a very fascinating and exciting story. The story of the siege of Troy is one of the foundational works of western civilization, and its figures Achilles, Hector, Ulysses, Ajax, and others are usually portrayed as larger than life. I liked it because, in this play, however, they are ruthlessly stripped of their heroic pretensions. While their rhetoric soars, their behavior reveals them to be a collection of brutes and braggarts. War is no longer a matter of ideals but
of power and lust! And I think war is never about ideals, so this book really appeal to me. The unsympathetic nature of the characters and the deliberately anticlimactic style that Shakespeare employs, make the play seem almost like a black comedy or better, a tragicomedy. I think that is also why I liked this book. During reading the tragedy of Troylus and Cressida I sometimes just had to giggle a little! I also like the way Shakespeare writes, the sentences are of such beauty. He uses a lot of alliteration and he makes use of such nice words that reading the sentences becomes already pleasant. Sometimes because of the use of this nice words it was very difficult for me to understand the true meaning of a sentence. This was also because of the fact I did not know a lot of the words he used. But I always managed to follow the story. Shakespeare also knows how to verbalize the emotions. If you read this book you can really feel the emotions of the characters. I could put myself in Troylus’s shoes. I could understand his actions and I felt his hate and anger, when he found out that Cressida became Diomedes lover. Maybe some people think that the Tragedy Troylus and Cressida is a boring story, because it is based on the Trojan War. But as the matter of fact it isn’t a longwinded story at all. You expect a heroic, classic story but that is not what you get. And that is probably the mean reason why Troylus and Cressida is so fascinating. I recommend the Tragedy of Troylus and Cressida to everybody, also if you are not interested in historical stories at all.