A Socio-Sexual Topography of Desire in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*

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Abstract: *This paper delves into the intricate maze of Shakespearean modes of sociability using* Troilus and Cressida *as a case study to better identify and explore alternative relationships and interactions located at the heart of functionally impossible pairings of characters in the play. The aim of the article is to prove that analogue character doubles built on mutual fallacies do not disengage from the extant social realm, but rather cancel their impossibilities out in an attempt to create and explore novel relational modes and unconventional social realms. Such humane modes of sociability undoubtedly overlap the ones already in place, therefore challenging the structures of the dominant social hierarchies that govern not only Greek and Trojan societies, but also the Elizabethan social norms and regulations. Contrary to the expected outcomes, character doubles such as Troilus and Cressida and Achilles and Hector, to name a few, overcome the social hindrances by means of deliberately converting the ingrained, opposite social components into sexual heterogeneities, asocial patterns without undergoing mutual destruction in the process, thus opening unorthodox paths towards new manners of expression and interaction that subvert the dominant heteronormative discourses of early modern England.*

Keywords: *social world, sexual expression, homosociality, desire, relationships*