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# Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus: A Comparison of Their Declines

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Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus:

A Comparison of Their Declines

(TITLE)

BY

Laura Devon Flesor

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1989

YEAR

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## Thesis Abstract

Only in the last ten years have critics worked to establish a more than superficial link between Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. Part of the problem in this area of study was that scholars had ignored textual evidence proving that Shakespeare's main source was Chaucer's great poem. Current source-studies, outlined in the opening pages of this thesis, validate comparative treatments of the two texts.

This thesis steps beyond the issue of indebtedness into the realm of characterization, particularly the elements of Chaucer's characterization of Troilus that Shakespeare chose to present to his Elizabethan audience and to incorporate into his own developing conception of tragedy.

This thesis examines the downfalls of Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus, both of which result not from a single weakness of character but from a series of interrelated flaws. Comparing the characters as they develop, the thesis focuses first on the consuming sensuality coupled with pride which causes them to neglect their responsibility to the kingdom. Next their faith in worldly goods is explored, a faith which tears at the Troiluses' nobility, honor, judgment and sense of value. This exploration leads to a discussion of their attempt to find spiritual happiness and order by adhering to a religion based on sensual love. Both Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus allow their higher reason, sapientia, to be dominated by their lower reason, scientia. Blindly they surrender

their wills to Fortune, an act which leaves them powerless to retaliate when she turns her wheel. We see that the Troiluses lose their identities. The object of their desire is taken away, their religion crumbles, they are betrayed, and ultimately, nothing is left for them to embrace except death.

Only recently have critics attempted to establish a more than superficial link between Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. But a look at comparative analyses of the two works reveals that only in the last ten years has comprehensive source-study of Shakespeare's Troilus been done, source-study which supports the supposition that Shakespeare read Chaucer's poem and delighted in its intricacies.

Kenneth Muir writes, "The main source of Troilus and Cressida, as we might expect, was Chaucer's great poem, Troilus and Criseyde" (Sources 141). Scholars agree with this now, but support for the hypothesis has wavered in the twentieth century. Ann Thompson explains that several examples from Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida were cited for comparison by R. A. Small as early as 1899 to prove Chaucer's profound influence on the dramatist (Thompson 112). In 1906 Deighton argued that Chaucer's influence on Shakespeare was likely but had yet to be proven; however, in 1909 J. J. Jusserand heartily disagreed about Shakespeare's debt and proposed that Shakespeare seemed completely ignorant of Chaucer's great poem.

W. W. Lawrence wrote in 1916 and reiterated in 1931 that "there is of course no doubt that Shakespeare made use of Chaucer's poem," attributing the change in "form and interpretation" to sixteenth century social conditions (144-45). Like Lawrence, Hyder Rollins did not like Shakespeare's interpretation of the Troilus-Cressida story, and, even though he admitted that Chaucer's love plot was a source of Shakespeare's, he also noted that "it is almost certain that Shakespeare thought the Testament (Henryson) to be Chaucer's own work" (426).

Enhancing her own detailed source-study and analysis of the two works, Ann Thompson explains the mid-twentieth century discussion about Shakespeare's sources for Troilus and Cressida generally tended "to accept Chaucer's influence" without much new evidence (113). In 1958, for instance, M. C. Bradbrook contributed a rather short article, "What Shakespeare did to Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde" and later in 1966, Geoffrey Bullough, the editor of the New Cambridge text, contended that Shakespeare used Chaucer. As early as 1957, Muir offered his aforementioned argument, but his comparison of structure and characterization was brief. Of course Presson in 1953 analyzed the play's sources, yet he focused on "The Siege Plot" more than on "The Love Story."

Ann Thompson acknowledges that "although there has been a considerable amount of comment on Troilus and Cressida and its sources, no one has really attempted a critical comparison between Shakespeare's play and Chaucer's poem in a detailed way" (114). E. T. Donaldson refers to Thompson's impressive source-study in his Acknowledgments as an impetus for his own scholarship and includes his reservations about her work, one being that most of the critics Thompson cites are Shakespeareans.

Donaldson devotes two weighty chapters of The Swan at the Well (1935) to Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida. In a greater part of his treatment, Donaldson defends the critically mistreated Criseyde and Cressida. His slant is curious in itself, considering that Thompson pointedly chooses not to "start with an abstraction from the drama, such as the character of Cressida" (116). Of course,



Donaldson does not simply regard Chaucer's influence on Shakespeare as a given. Indeed, he stirs up the "school of red herrings" swimming around the indebtedness issue (75). Perhaps Donaldson's most delightful lambasting is directed at Hyder Rollins' aforementioned comment on Shakespeare's reading of Henryson's Testament. Donaldson writes, "It seems to me that to suppose that Shakespeare thought Chaucer wrote The Testament is to attribute to him not only little Latin and less Greek, but minimal English and no sense" (76).

Critics have yet to focus an entire discussion on the Troiluses, but, as was mentioned above, this particular avenue of literary study is fairly new. Now that critics agree that Shakespeare read Chaucer, a comparison of the Troiluses can stand on firmer ground. However, before their characterizations can be considered and the argument of this paper defined, it is best to fortify the comparison by attending to some concerns about genre which arise in discussions of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida.

Critics tend to agree that Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde contains more of the tragic dimension than Shakespeare's drama. Monica McAlpine argues that it is not Troilus', but Criseyde's "career" that "is the authentic Boethian and Chaucerian tragedy," but McAlpine readily admits that most critics follow D. W. Robertson's lead (McAlpine 33).

Chaucer's Troilus, as Robertson sees it, should be considered a typical Chaucerian tragedy following the definition that Chaucer outlined in the Monk's Tale, a definition which Chaucer lifted from a discussion of Fortune found in De consolatione ("Chaucerian" 86).

Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, on the other hand, fails to



adhere to the pattern of Shakespearean tragedy. A. C. Bradley explains that "no play at the end of which the hero remains alive is, in the full Shakespearean sense, a tragedy" (7). Instead Shakespeare's dramatization of the famous Trojan story is today considered a "problem comedy," a problem because there has never been a consensus about what to call it. Coleridge, for instance, observed that "Indeed, there is none of Shakespeare's plays harder to characterize" (1). In her introduction to the play, Anne Barton notes "its unconventional form, neither comedy, tragedy, history, nor satire" (443). Kenneth Muir's studies prove that since its publication Troilus and Cressida has been described as each dramatic type, but, perhaps, calling it a "puzzle" as Muir does is most befitting (Aspects 96).

One reason that Troilus and Cressida is a puzzling yet wonderfully interesting play is that no particular character is magnified. Sophocles and Aristotle in hand, readers believe that a drama, no matter how much pity and fear it contains, cannot rightfully be called a tragedy if the rise and fall of one great man is not accented. Yet Muir finds in Troilus and Cressida "a power which Shakespeare on the threshold of the tragic period amply demonstrated" (106), and Robert Presson calls the play "the gateway to the later tragedies." Presson, furthermore, sees three "principal tragic heroes" where, perhaps, others had been searching for one (142).

Achilles, Hector and Troilus are, according to Presson, the three tragic heroes in Troilus and Cressida, each having a weakness in his personality which causes his decline. The downfall of Troilus, for one, occurs because his "judgment is not so distinguished as his ardor"

(Presson 142). D. A. Traversi also notes Troilus' propensity "to annihilate, or at least confuse, the distinction between 'will' and judgement" (13).

What Presson and Traversi seem to be leading readers towards is a fresh, more focused way to examine Shakespeare's Troilus, that is, as a tragic figure. This study will undertake that task in light of Chaucer's Troilus, for, since Shakespeare's main source for his love story was Chaucer's poem, it is purposeful to examine the elements of Chaucer's characterization that Shakespeare chose to present to his Elizabethan audience and to incorporate into his own developing conception of tragedy. Furthermore, comparing the two characterizations allows a reader to appreciate Chaucer's Troilus outside the context of the sympathetic narrator, a place he rarely dwells in modern criticism.

This study will examine the downfalls of Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus, both of which result not from a single weakness of character but from a series of interrelated flaws. Comparing the characters as they develop, the thesis focuses first on the consuming sensuality coupled with pride which causes them to neglect their responsibility to the kingdom. Next their faith in worldly goods is explored, a faith which tears at the Troiluses' nobility, honor, judgment and sense of value. This exploration leads to a discussion of their attempt to find spiritual happiness and order by adhering to a religion based on sensual love. Both Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus allow their higher reason, sapientia, to be dominated by their lower reason, scientia. Blindly they surrender their wills to Fortune, an act which leaves them powerless to retaliate when

she turns her wheel. We shall see that the Troiluses lose their identities. The object of their desire is taken away, their religion crumbles, they are betrayed, and ultimately, nothing is left for them to embrace except death.

Standing as far back from the sympathetic intrusions of Chaucer's narrator as possible, we may see the marked similarity of Chaucer's to Shakespeare's Troilus. The contexts are different, but the characters, as defined by the essential patterns of their downfalls, are the same.

The first trait exhibited by the Troiluses is brash, youthful self-centeredness rooted in pride, pride which discloses itself in condescending behavior. Because both Troiluses are kings' sons still practicing manly postures in a war-torn kingdom, their lack of humility does not at first overly concern the reader. Soon, however, that bit of arrogance coupled with an awakened and instantly dominating sensuality grows into a cancer which impedes the Troiluses from performing their first duty as warriors, that being, to protect the kingdom.

The first words Chaucer's Troilus speaks are used to mock his comrades who cast loving glances at the ladies assembled in the temple for the feast of Palladium. Pallas Athena is, of course, the goddess of war and wisdom, but certainly Troilus, the naive, boisterous adolescent, does her no honor when he uses unskillful, impromptu and even impudent words. Troilus addresses the courageous warriors: "O veray folles, nyce and blynde be ye!" (1.202). His words are unsympathetic; puerile Troilus feels superior because his life is not filled by the "doutaunces" of love. Robertson notes that "the lovers are not the only blind ones, however, for as Chaucer observes, blind pride and

presumption often precede a fall, and in the same way Troilus will have to descend from his height" (Preface 476).

Quickly, and all the more humorous because of the speed, Troilus descends from his high perch to join the ranks of the lovers. His tongue is stilled by his roving eye, which spots the beautiful Criseyde, for "sodeynly he wax therwith astoned" (1.274). The beauty of Criseyde astonishes, bewilders, surprises and paralyzes Troilus. He drinks in Criseyde's physical beauty, "hire mevyng and hire chere" (1.289) and then retires to his private chamber, without having even spoken to her. This speechlessness, this inability to act upon what he sees before him, foreshadows instances of paralysis which emerge later in Troilus' career. Lying in his chamber, Troilus evokes a picture in his mind, "his fixe and depe impressioun" (1.298) of Criseyde's countenance. Robertson notes that "Troilus has fixed a phantasy of Criseyde in his memory and has begun to meditate on it; he has proceeded from 'suggestion' to 'delightful thought,' or from 'sight' to the beginnings of 'immoderate thought.' These are the initial steps which lead to an inner repetition of the Fall, to passio, or to mania and death" (477).

The decline of Shakespeare's Troilus can also be traced from brash beginnings. Shakespeare omits the temple scene, which initially makes his Troilus seem less naive and impressionable than Chaucer's, but Shakespeare's Troilus is no less prideful despite the condensation of action which the drama offers. His first line, a surly demand to Pandarus, exposes Troilus' self-centeredness:

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.1-5)

With this speech, Shakespeare introduces the love story in medias res; Troilus is already in love with fair Cressida. His love, moreover, is the same paralyzing, sensual love which benumbs Chaucer's Troilus. Shakespeare's Troilus calls himself "weaker than a woman's tear" because of love and, showing his impatience with Pandarus' tardiness in obtaining Cressida's love asks, "Have I not tarried?" (I.i.16). Presson observes that Troilus' "impulsiveness, his desire for immediate fulfillment of what he desires, is manifest in several situations in the play: in council, in the field, and in his love" (109).

Lust gnaws at both Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus and strikes them blind to their responsibilities as Trojan warriors. Unrequited love is agony for them; both become emotionally and physically prostrated by their self-absorbing passion. Ann Thompson notes a conventional metaphor used by both authors to describe this shared character flaw: "One particular detail, the image of love as a sickness and a wound is common to both" (118).

Dodd argues that in Troilus and Criseyde Chaucer employs many conventions of courtly love. Of course Dodd fails to notice that Chaucer is a Christian writer using courtly elements to expose the "worldly vanyte" (5.1837) of earthly love. Nevertheless, Dodd describes the conventions clearly. One convention, among others which will be



mentioned, is that love causes visible, physical afflictions: sleeplessness, loss of appetite and paleness, sickness, fear to tell his lady of woe, confusion and forgetfulness in his lady's presence (Dodd 138). Though more of these physical afflictions are described in Chaucer's poem, it is evident that Shakespeare finds the overall metaphor of love as physical aberration suitable to describe an element of Troilus' downfall.

Shakespeare's Troilus tells Pandarus that the go-between's laudatory words about Cressida's fairness "pourest in the open ulcer of (his) heart" (I.i.53). Troilus also speaks of "every gash that love hath given me" (I.i.62). Troilus complains about the painful laceration caused by his own blind passion, yet, when he hears that his brother has actually been hurt in battle by Menelaus, Troilus remarks: "Let Paris bleed, 'tis but a scar to scorn; / Paris is gor'd with Menelaus' horn (I.i.112-13).

Troilus does not speak like an honorable fighter whose brother and comrade has been injured performing noble deeds. He is too conceited to feel compassion for others who have been dealt a low card by Fortune and too blind to imagine himself wearing the horns which Menelaus sports. Nor can Troilus see an urgent need for his help in the battle. When Aeneas asks Troilus why he is not in the field, Troilus replies, "Because not there" (I.i.106). We see "Troilus' love drive out his warriorship" (Knight 77).

Book I of Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde is permeated with Troilus' bouts of love sickness which lead to his loss of warriorship. He lies in his bed and laments his condition. He sings in his chamber a song

which Robertson calls "a foreshading of the course of his love, typical of those who abandon reason for Fortune" (Preface 477). Troilus is sick, wounded, and ready, he wails, to die if Criseyde will not take pity on him:

"O mercy, dere herte, and help me from  
 The deth, for I, whil that my lyf may laste,  
 More than myself wol love yow to my laste;  
 And with som frendly lok gladeth me, swete,  
 Though nevere more thing ye me byheete."

These wordes, and ful many an other to,  
 He spak, and called evere in his compleynte  
 Hire name, for to tellen hire his wo,  
 Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynte.  
 Al was for nought; she herde nat his pleynte;  
 And whan that he bythought on that folie,  
 A thousand fold his wo gan multiplie.

(1.535-46)

Melvin Storm sees that a theme of physical illness and weakness infects the poem. He asserts that "we are subjected one after the other to such spectacles as Troilus's sickness after falling in love, his sickness of losing his love. . . . The accumulation of such episodes gives the love affair an aura of unhealthiness" (52). Ann Thompson notes, too, that Shakespeare's Troilus "takes on the worst aspects of Chaucer's character, his helplessness and his tendency to dramatize his pathos" (118). Shakespeare's Troilus and Chaucer's Troilus are sick men



in a sick kingdom.

Both Troiluses want to be immediately alleviated from pain, pain which provokes Shakespeare's Troilus to skulk about the Trojan camp and Chaucer's Troilus to mewl from his chamber. John Fisher, in his edition of Chaucer's works, remarks that "Troilus is reduced in Chaucer's poem to such impotent passivity that he threatens to become a laughing stock to the modern reader" (401). Indeed, the reader chuckles at and sometimes sympathizes with the self-centeredness of the heroes, but underneath their exhibitions lies a fundamental malady. Neither Troilus has virtuous intentions. They are willing to give up Criseyde's honor, their lives, and the security of the kingdom for sensual pleasure, for personal satisfaction. In both works, this overriding sensuality is exposed as the beginning of their darkening paths. Sensuality is also the principle underlying the medieval courtly system. Dodd explains that "courtly love is sensual. Andreas makes this clear at the outset by defining love as a passion arising from the contemplation of beauty in the opposite sex, and culminating in the gratification of the physical desires thus awakened" (4). Though this type of love seems beautiful on the surface, both Chaucer and Shakespeare expose its ugliness through their characterizations of Troilus.

As we continue reading the poem and the play, Chaucer and Shakespeare cleverly show that the worldly wisdom to which the Troiluses subscribe is like fool's gold. The idea that a man can be ennobled by lust is torn asunder. The notion that honor lies in dying for an ill-conceived act of kidnapping and adultery is held up to ridicule. The activities of the go-between in the courtly framework are labeled

"whoremongering." The view that people, especially women, have no intrinsic value is scorned. Finally, a religion in which the order of the universe is based on the corporeal is exposed as counterfeit. Shakespeare's *Troilus* and Chaucer's *Troilus*, as we will discover, share a myopic vision. Worldly things glitter in their hands and then break into dust.

C. S. Lewis observes that Chaucer medievalized Il Filostrato, his source, and that a great part of this process included heightening courtly love elements (25). In Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde the reader is told that men are made nobler by serving Love. Father Denomy reminds the reader that according to the code of love. . . . It is the sole source of worldly worth and excellence" (148). The "ennobling nature of love" is a common sentiment found, Dodd writes, "in the love-poetry of the troubadours, in that of Chretien, and in the book of Andreas" (129). Troilus himself exemplifies its elevating power:

For he bicom the frendlieste wight,  
 The gentilest, and ek the mooste fre,  
 The thriftiest, and oon the beste knyght  
 That in his tyme was or myghte be;  
 Dede were his japes and his cruelte,  
 His heighe port and his manere estraunge,  
 And ecch of tho gan for a vertu change.

(1.1079-85)

Chaucer calls much attention to Troilus' improvement, but the reader understands the falsity of his manners or "curteisie." Troilus' charming acts and speeches are not genuine. Robertson explains that

Troilus' improved, admirable bearing is "the activity of the unguided lower reason operating with its worldly wisdom in a sophisticated society. . . . The book furnishes us with a vivid picture of 'manner,' but they are the manners of the less noble of Chaucer's noble contemporaries, and are by no means intended as a model to be followed" (Preface 482).

To clarify for further discussion, reason, in both works, means more than just "good sense." Using an interpretation of the Fall, with which Chaucer and Shakespeare, as educated men, were familiar, Robertson notes that Eve's lower reason, scientia, is "the knowledge of things seen." Lower reason can also be called "sensuality" since it is connected to the senses. Adam's higher reason sapientia, is wisdom which perceives God's laws, not just Nature's. "If the higher part of the reason either accepts the 'fruit' or allows the lower part of the reason to indulge too long in pleasurable thought, the sin is mortal, the 'marriage' between the two parts of the reason is corrupted, and the result is 'adultery'" (Preface 74).

Shakespeare's Troilus also exhibits his "unguided lower reason operating with its worldly wisdom in a sophisticated society" when he madly urges Hector and the rest of the council to fight for Helen because the Trojans should keep the things they value. This idea comes out of the same mouth which earlier speaks these words: "Fools on both sides, Helen must needs be fair, / When with your blood you daily paint her thus" (I.i.90-1). Troilus is as inconsistent as the worldly wisdom he avows.

Donaldson perceives that "every man in the play, except Pandarus

and Thersites, who are unburdened by ideals, is inconsistent" (79). Certainly Hector allows his higher reason to be overthrown easily. In council, Hector suggests that they stop the war by giving Helen back to the Greeks:

'Tis mad idolatry  
 To make the service greater than the god,  
 And the will dotes that is attributive  
 To what infectiously itself affects,  
 Without some image of th' affected merit.

(II.ii.56-60)

Troilus refuses to see the merit of Hector's argument. Troilus believes that by giving Helen up, the Trojans will be disgraced. They must never admit, or even secretly believe, that the prize, Helen, is not as valuable as they first thought. Troilus listens to neither Hector's plausible proposal nor Cassandra's sinister, but ultimately true, ravings (II.ii.104-11). Like Chaucer's Troilus, Shakespeare's Troilus is overly concerned with public appearances. He thirsts for personal honor and glory, not the kingdom's health, and his heroic speech about fame and respect is eloquent enough to tear even Hector away from his higher reason. Troilus' speech sounds splendid, but the real theme, man's delight with worldly pleasures, lurks beneath:

She is a theme of honor and renown,  
 A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,  
 Whose present courage may beat down our foes,  
 And fame in time to come canonize us,  
 For I presume brave Hector would not lose

So rich advantage of a promis'd glory  
 As smiles upon the forehead of this action  
 For the wide world's revenue.

(II.iii.199-206)

G. Wilson Knight describes and interprets the way Shakespeare's Trojans look at their world: "Honor is their creed, they hold beauty as a prize, and behave and speak like men dedicate [sic] to high purposes. . . . Their cause is worthy, if only because they believe it is" (67). A less sympathetic reader, however, sees that Shakespeare is really proposing that previous deaths for a cause do not validate that cause.

M. M. Burns asks, "And how long would she (Helen) continue to be 'worth' fighting for? until the first ten thousand men had died? the second ten thousand? No, the real question in this scene, and in this play, is why these men are fighting for something they so clearly do not want, and the dramatist shows us that they are blind to their own responsibility" (116).

Perhaps the most fitting example of "a blind leader of the blind" is Pandarus. In both works, he performs the commonplace role of the go-between, lighting the Troiluses' paths, away from higher reason and their responsibilities to the kingdom, toward a disordered, carnal world. Both Pandaruses are the spokesmen for initially delightful, and consequently fatal, unbridled passion. F. H. Langman writes the following about Shakespeare's Pandarus, but his observation is accurate for Chaucer's Pandarus as well: "He exemplifies at once the generosity and the decadence, the civilising ritual and the coarse underlying



desires, of the code of love he serves" (63). In other words, both Pandaruses are ironic characters because, in the guise of friendship, they push both Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus to their tragic falls. Both Troiluses, of course, err by choosing foolish helpers.

Chaucer's Pandarus appears, at first, to be genuinely concerned about healing Troilus' malady: "For whoso list have helyng of his leche, / To hym byhoveth first unwre his wownde" (1.857-8). However, as Robertson points out, Pandarus is not a good choice for a go-between, for "his wisdom is not the kind that Lady Philosophy would approve, and his generosity is of the type which supplies gold to the avaricious and dainties to the glutton" (Preface 479). Pandarus' lack of sapientia can be seen in the following piece of advice he gives early in the poem when Troilus complains about Fortune:

Quod Pandarus, "Than blamestow Fortune  
 For thow art wroth; ye, now at erst I see.  
 Woost thow nat wel that Fortune is comune  
 To everi manere wight in som degree?  
 And yet thow hast this comfort, lo, parde,  
 That, as hire joies moten overgon,  
 So mote hire sorwes passen everechon.

(1.841-47)

Pandarus simply tells Troilus, presumedly to sooth him, that Fortune is fickle and, for consolation, that everyone is subject to her whims. Never does Pandarus suggest that "it is possible to rise above Fortune" (Preface 479). Pandarus blindly leads blind Troilus into the

spiritual void of worldly excess.

Donald Howard writes that "until recent times Pandarus was regarded as a figure of dignity and goodwill," and Howard explains that both William Godwin and C. S. Lewis saw Pandarus as a true, compassionate friend (Howard 355). A closer look at the man to whom Chaucer's Troilus delivers his "governaunce" reveals that Pandarus knows his deed is "wikked" (3.291), that Pandarus is a liar (2.1416-21), that Pandarus enjoys vicarious sexual satisfaction as an intermediary (3.1562-82), and, more extraordinarily, that Pandarus sees man as the measure of all things (5.384-5).

When these shortcomings of Chaucer's Pandarus are extracted from the narrator's sympathetic arms, it is easier to see him as a whoremonger. But still, there are some critics who continue to argue that Shakespeare's Pandarus is a lower creature than Chaucer's. Ann Thompson, for one, asserts that "in general, Shakespeare's Pandarus is much more remote from his Chaucerian prototype than is his Troilus, but the hero is proportionately the more lowered by his dependence on the despicable figure" (120). As a reader, Thompson probably finds it feasible to classify Shakespeare's Pandarus as he classifies himself: ". . . let all piti- / ful goers-between be call'd to the world's end after my / name; call them all Pandars" (III.ii.200-2).

But is Shakespeare's Pandarus lower and is Shakespeare's Troilus "lowered" via their association? We must not forget that Shakespeare's drama does not include a sympathetic narrator; no omnipotent voice describes a Pandarus "that neigh malt for wo and routhe" (1.582). Nor is Shakespeare's audience asked to "preieth for hem that ben in the



cas / Of Troilus (1.29-30). Nevertheless, W. W. Lawrence writes that one of the "ugly features" in Shakespeare's play is that "character and action are portrayed in a curiously disillusioned and unsympathetic fashion" (122). Finally, it is Donaldson who takes some of the "curiousness" out of Pandarus' characterization by arguing that Shakespeare could not stop the development of the English language:

Pandarus, who brought them together, must now be known as a pimp. The transformation of his proper name to an occupational name took place in English as a result of his part in Chaucer's poem -- despite the narrator's refusal to recognize him for what he is -- so that in Shakespeare's play he already is what he predicts he may become.

(Donaldson 103)

Chaucer's Pandarus and Shakespeare's Pandarus are bawds of equal stature, and their Troiluses, shirking the responsibilities of their lust, equally employ them. Both warriors participate in the "daunce" to gain, without public incident, worldly wisdom and pleasure. Paralyzed by pride and passion, neither is able to act without a go-between. Shakespeare's Troilus speaks what Chaucer's Troilus believes: "I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar, / And he's as teachy to be woo'd to woo, / As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit" (I.i.95-7).

In Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, Troilus and Pandarus woo each other and reveal their true estimations of women. When they talk after Criseyde has left Troilus' bedside and her first meaningful kiss, Pandarus seriously remarks that what he has done for Troilus is a deed

he would never do for another:

"That is to seye, for the am I bicomen,  
 Bitwixen game and earnest, swich a meene  
 As maken wommen unto men to comen;. . ."

(3.253-55)

Pandarus, of course, also asks Troilus, his "alderlevest lord, and brother deere," to respect Criseyde's reputation, to avoid being a "labbe." Troilus assures Pandarus and tells him that a man who has undertaken such duties in the names of "gentillesse," "compassioun," "felawship," and "trist" (3.401-2) is not a bawd. Besides, Troilus offhandedly announces, he would gladly do the same for Pandarus:

I have my faire sister Polixene,  
 Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape --  
 Be she nevere so fair or wel yshape,  
 Tel me which thow wilt of everychone,  
 To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

(3.409-13)

Robertson remarks that "whether any of the 'frape' are suitable or not, Troilus is anxious to have Pandarus finish his business. He is thirstier than ever: 'Parforme it out; for now is most nede.' Morally, Troilus has descended to the level of Pandarus, who, at the outset, offered to get his own sister for Troilus" ("Chaucerian" 108).

It is also important to note another idea implied in the last excerpt from Chaucer's Book III. Troilus shows, during this intimate conversation with Pandarus, that his concern for Criseyde's honor, or any conception of her as an individual separate from her sexuality, is

simply an affected step in the "daunce." Women, to him, including Criseyde, his sisters, and Helen, are merely objects to be traded for worldly pleasure. They have no value apart from what they fetch in the courtly marketplace, and their potential for quenching the thirsts of those who lust for them.

Before the consummation, Shakespeare also portrays his Troilus as "thirstier than ever," clearly showing what Cressida means to him. E. T. Donaldson looks at the sensuous, self-centered Troilus who wishes to ". . . wallow in the lily-beds / Propos'd for the deserver . . ." (III.ii.12-13), noting that Troilus is "of course, capable of marvelous poetry . . . but it's generally spoken to as well as about himself" (97). Throughout the scene where Shakespeare compresses the first meeting of the lovers and the consummation, "Troilus never does speak a speech of lyric love, in prose or poetry; the profession is all Cressida's to him, not his to her" (Donaldson 98). Troilus' animal hunger is strongest when he is about to bed her:

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round;  
Th' imaginary relish is so sweet  
That it enchants my sense; what will it be,  
When that wat'ry palates taste indeed  
Love's thrice-repured nectar?

(III.ii.18-22)

Shakespeare's Troilus considers his Cressida as valuable property ripe for utility. She is a worldly good whose honor is a second consideration, at best. For Shakespeare's Troilus, and Chaucer's Troilus before him, the object of desire lacks intrinsic value.

Ellis-Fermor argues that Troilus "believes that the object of faith or worship (a woman, an ideal, a code, an institution) is invested with value precisely to the degree to which it is valued" (21). Troilus calls himself a sailor, Cressida a natural gem to be snatched as deserved, precious bounty after a dangerous but exciting voyage. Shakespeare's Troilus is a mere merchant in search of fortune:

Tell me, Appollo, for thy Daphne's love,  
 What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we:  
 Her bed is India, there she lies, a pearl;  
 Between our Ilium and where she [resides],  
 Let it be call'd the wild and wand'ring flood,  
 Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar  
 Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

(I.i.98-104)

Norman Rabkin argues that Shakespeare emphasizes in Troilus and Cressida a world where no person possesses intrinsic value, and Rabkin notes that Troilus "shows himself in precise agreement with Cressida's initial reason for withholding herself from love . . ." (315). Cressida's following, little speech reveals that she accurately assesses her worth in Troy:

But more in Troilus thousandfold I see  
 Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be;  
 Yet hold I off. 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.

(I.ii.284-89)

Unfortunately, Cressida does not listen to her own speech, which, Donaldson argues "could be taken as memorized advice from her mother, recited by a girl of no experience -- straightforward self-preservative advice based on the not wholly misguided assumption (in Troy, at last) that what is to be found in man is lust in action" (91). Cressida's speech, it seems, mirrors a convention of courtly love found in Chaucer's poem, a convention which relates to the value issue. Dodd explains that "another familiar principle of the courtly system was that love obtained too easily is not prized" (131). Chaucer's *Criseyde* is, of course, famous for holding back her love from Troilus. Her initial modesty, coupled with the "beauties introduced by Chaucer, such as the song of Antigone, or the riding past of Troilus . . . to explain and mitigate and delay the surrender of the heroine . . ." (Lewis 32), heightens the reader's awareness of *Criseyde*'s position in Troy when it comes time for her to be traded to the Greeks. *Criseyde* and Cressida are both commodities.

The standards of the market place are especially apparent in the rhetoric that Shakespeare's Troilus uses just before Cressida is to be exchanged for Antenor. C. C. Barfoot, in a recent article, looks at the language of the marketplace found in Troilus and Cressida as it is linked with the conception of value. The writer sees that Troilus' parting lines -- "We two, that with so many thousand sighs/Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves. . ." (IV.iv.39-40) -- "not only imply a sudden emotional deflation in economic terms (for it appears



that either the goods have lost value of the purchasing power of sighs has increased), but reflect the suspicion that in love relationships the use of the language of trade is bound to cast a venal shadow on the heart and passions" (Barfoot 47).

A shadow is bound to be cast over a relationship in which one lover views the other as just an object of pleasure. The significance of the shadow is more philosophical, however, in the case of the Troiluses. The darkness cast over Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus is their desire to find spiritual meaning and happiness in sensuality, and, in undertaking this quest, they allow their lower reason to dominate their higher reason. Shakespeare's Troilus, for instance, can be seen searching when Hector tells him that Helen "is not worth what she doth cost / The keeping" (II.ii.52). Troilus replies, "What's aught but as 'tis valued?" (II.ii.53).

Una Ellis-Fermor explains that many characters in the play are looking, in different ways, for an "'image' -- an absolute value by which to test the evidence of their experience" (22). Shakespeare's Troilus, as we have seen, tries to make Cressida fit an image ("Her bed is India . . ."), but, once she is won and the exchange announced, the image crumbles. Traversi writes that Troilus' passion "is strong only in anticipation" and that "corruption" of his passion "is the logical consequence of an effort to extract from the refinement of the sensual a substitute for spiritual experience" (11).

The same shadow hangs over Chaucer's Troilus as he replaces his last shred of honor with sensuality. He allows Pandarus to proceed with a plot (which includes lying to Helen, Hector, Deiphebus, Paris, and

Criseyde) to speed the consummation. The reader is especially surprised, however, that when Troilus emerges from his "secre trappe-dore" (3.759) he must be "bought in by the lappe" (3.742).

Robertson looks at the symbolism of this act:

Troilus has no desire to love Criseyde for her virtue, her potential virtue, or her reason -- no desire to take her as a wife. Instead, he wishes to submit to her, to turn the order of things "up-so-down," the external submission to Criseyde recalls not only Adam's submission to Eve, but also the submission of the reason to the "sensualitee," the wit to the will.

("Chaucerian" 99)

Chaucer's Troilus has sacrificed his reason and devoted himself to the religion of sensuality when he, after the first night with his "lady swete," proclaims to Pandarus: "Thow hast in hevne ybrought my soule at reste" (3.1599). Chaucer amplifies this crucial part of his character's downfall in Troilus' hymn to Love:

That, that the world with feith which that is  
                   stable  
 Diverseth so his stowndes concordynge,  
 That elementz that ben so discordable  
 Holden a bond perpetuely durynge,  
 That Phebus mote his rosy day forth brynge,  
 And that the mone hath lordshipe over the  
                   nyghtes:



Al this doth Love, ay heried by his myghtes! --

(3.1751-57)

Robert O. Payne explains that "the song Chaucer has put in Troilus' mouth is based on a famous passage in Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy, in which Lady Philosophy tries to explain to Boethius how divine love governs the universe" (96). Payne suggests that the Boethian language is used to accent the contrast between divine love and order, and Troilus' exaggerated expression "of the worth and importance of his passion for Criseyde" (97). Chaucer ironically shows, through Troilus' seemingly beautiful song, that the hero's conception of love is wrong since Troilus believes that sensual love, rather than Christian love, is the universal love that binds.

Shakespeare's Troilus also tries to believe that sensuality and worldly wisdom can provide spiritual satisfaction and make order out of chaos. Troilus shows his doubt about worldly things when he speaks to Cressida about "the monstuousness in love, lady, that / the will is infinite and the execution confin'd, that the / desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit" (III.ii.81-83). His fear, like that of Chaucer's Troilus, is that he will lose his love which is his life. However, Shakespeare's Troilus rationalizes away his own philosophical shortcomings with self-congratulatory maxims: "I am as true as truth's simplicity," he says to defensive Cressida, "And simpler than the infancy of truth" (III.ii.169-70). Ultimately, Shakespeare's Troilus surrenders his reason to the fleeting security sensuality provides. He is blind to a grander scheme.

Shakespeare provides a similar concept of order as unattainable as

the sensual spirituality Troilus finds in Cressida's bed. Ulysses presents a "world picture" "of immense and varied activity, constantly threatened with dissolution, and yet preserved from it by a superior unifying power. The picture, however, though so rich, is not complete. there is nothing about God . . ." (Tillyard 10-11).

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. But when the planets  
 In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
 What plagues and what portents, what mutiny!

(I.iii.85-96)

Ann Thompson argues that Shakespeare's presentation of order comes directly from Chaucer's, and she sees in the play that the "order and disorder" which Ulysses envisions "is set against another kind of order, that created by love" (154). It is the last type, the spiritual which Troilus tries to glean from the earthly, that, Thompson writes, "is given more serious treatment, and whose breakdown is more deeply felt" (154). The critic adds that Shakespeare reproduces Chaucer's "vision of chaos" by excluding the "higher level of values that would provide an

alternative to the cynical materialism of Ulysses and the misplaced idealism of Troilus" (155).

Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus fall a long way, and the reader traces their descent from pride, to sensuality, to irresponsibility, to a courtship with worldliness. The dominance of sensuality or lower reason tears at their nobility, their honor, judgment, sense of value and order. The only path left to follow leads into more chaos, for, once the Troiluses relinquish control over their lives, the heroes are done.

Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus, as we shall next observe, cease to act when doing so could influence the plummeting course of their careers. It is this surrender of will, or of the power to choose their own actions, that sparks a more philosophical reading of the works. Boethian philosophy serves as a background for Chaucer's tale of sensual love, and it is echoed in Shakespeare's play.

Henceforth the reader will observe the Troiluses submitting their wills to blind Fortune and abandoning reason. The climb on Fortune's wheel is, for them, as enjoyable as the climb into their lovers' beds, but, when the wheel turns, the ride becomes horrible. The Troiluses are separated by force from their lovers, are next betrayed, and eventually killed, and all of these horrors are their fault for having focused their lives on changeable, worldly goods. Fortune is amused by showing her power: "Ne sche neither heereth ne rekketh of wrecchide wepynges; and she is so hard that sche leygheth and scorneth the wepynges of hem, the whiche sche hath maked wepe with hir free wille" (Chaucer's Boece, Book II, Poem 1).

Both heroes soon and painfully realize that their fantasy worlds are fleeting when Calkas asks for his daughter. Of course, in the play, Troilus is not present to hear the exchange discussion since he is busy with Cressida (III.iii). Nor does Troilus hear even one of Ulysses' foreshadowing lines, such as "Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all / To envious and calumniating Time" (III.iii.173-74). Presson suggests that Shakespeare probably decided not to dramatize the council because he saw a chance to "heighten the drama by keeping Troilus in ignorance until Aeneas suddenly appears . . . in order to gain strong emotional contrasts" (126).

Chaucer's Troilus, on the other hand, is present when the Trojan parliament discusses and decides to go along with the Antenor/Criseyde exchange. Feeling wretched, Troilus is mute when the fate of his lover is discussed:

This Troilus was present in the place  
 Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,  
 For which ful soone chaungen gan his face,  
 As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.  
 But natheles he no word to it seyde,  
 Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye;  
 With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

(4.148-54)

Troilus' silence has been explained in various ways which focus on symptoms rather than on the disease itself. Donald Howard reports that Troilus silences his feelings because "he must not act without her consent" (366), and Dodd explains that, according to the code of love,

sensual, illicit love must be kept secret because love that becomes public usually ends quickly. This secrecy is considered to be the most important principle of courtly love since, without it, the lady will be dishonored. A lover who voices his lady's name is considered a reprobate, mocking the god he supposedly serves (Dodd 6). As was discussed earlier, however, Chaucer employs the courtly conventions in order to expose their vices.

In their recent article, Kearney and Schraer write that the flaw of Chaucer's *Troilus* is "his failure to speak up for Criseyde when his doing so might have prevented her banishment from her hometown and the final tragedy" (185). Though the narrator is extremely sympathetic, we know that Chaucer does not advocate the tenets of courtly love, for he sends *Troilus* from death to the eighth sphere from whence the lover sees the condition of man after the Fall. Referring to John Lawlor, who contends that "marriage and courtly love were considered compatible," Kearney and Schraer reason, first, that "the poem makes evident no barrier to the legal union of *Troilus* and *Criseyde*" (185). Furthermore, even if secrecy were necessary, *Troilus* still could have publicly opposed the exchange since his brother, Hector, "defends her stubbornly with no such suspicion" (186). Even though the majority of the assembly wants to be rid of *Criseyde*, the daughter of the traitor, Kearney and Schraer argue that "had *Troilus* seconded his brother's argument, together they might have swayed the assembly to their side" (186).

Kearney and Schraer perceive *Troilus* as a "weak," socially "cowardly" character who is completely unable to "argue persuasively" when it becomes necessary for him to do so -- in council and when



Criseyde disposes of his idea that together they run away from Troy (190). To call this Troilus' only flaw, however, seems a bit hasty since the writers do not discuss why Troilus is unable to argue effectively. Would one say, for instance, that Lear's "flaw" is his failure to give Cordelia any land? Troilus' inability to speak or act is a part of his flaw, a symptom of the disease.

The central reason Chaucer's Troilus is unable to implore the council to keep Criseyde in the Trojan fold is because he has surrendered his will to Fortune. He is unable to act because he is blinded by the illusion that all events are out of his control and in the hands of a more powerful one. His apparent cowardliness and subservience to the courtly love code of secrecy are the results of his surrender. Because he has tied himself to her wheel, he must submit to its turning. He has no higher reason, no sapientia, no sight of a providential order. Rather, Troilus believes that his life is horribly predestined, and, after silently hearing the decision of the parliament, he returns to his chamber and wishes for death:

"O deth, allas, why nyltow do me deye?

Acorsed by that day which that Nature

Shop me to ben a lyves creature!"

(4.250-52)

Payne notes that "as the mood of the poem darkens through Books IV and V, references to Fortune occur increasingly frequently . . . Pandarus and Troilus, particularly, repeatedly blame Fortune for the catastrophe as a way of unloading their own moral responsibility for the actions they had so joyfully participated in earlier" (97). We

especially see this "unloading" in what is called Troilus' predestination soliloquy (4.958-1082). Because a last meeting needs to be arranged before Criseyde is trucked off to the Greeks, Pandarus looks for Troilus and finds him in a temple. Troilus, in the depths of sorrow, asks himself if there is free will and decides there is not:

"For al that comth, comth by necessitee:

Thus to ben lorn, it is my destinee.

For certeynly, this wot I wel," he seyde,

"That foresight of divine purveyaunce

Hath seyne alwey me to forgon Criseyde,

Syn God seeth every thyng out of doutaunce,

And hem disponyth, through his ordinaunce,

In hire merites sothly for to be,

As they shul comen by predestyne.

(4.958-66)

This passage clearly shows that Troilus has little free will left. The reader, from this point, must not expect him to perform any act which would require the faculties of higher reason since Troilus' senses rule his pitiful spirit. Payne observes that Troilus, at the end of the soliloquy, is still self-absorbed: "In the end, the best Troilus can do to reconcile his great love, its loss, the arbitrariness of Fortune, and the will of God is to despair of further action on his own and indirectly absolve himself of responsibility for what has happened" (98).

When news of the exchange meets the ear of Shakespeare's Troilus,



one foreboding line flies from his mouth: "Is it so concluded?" (IV.ii.66). What appears, at first, to be the grand stoicism of a warrior admitting that the needs of the kingdom are his first concern, soon reveals itself as the fractured utterance of a man who has given up the fight before beginning it. Troilus cannot object because he is incapable, paralyzed like Chaucer's Troilus. Shakespeare's Troilus has also relinquished his will to Fortune. His pride is hurt, and, dragging one leg, he follows the path that Chaucer's Troilus clears, reason left behind.

"How my achievement mocks me!" Troilus cries, reminding the reader of his self-centeredness. The reader also observes that Aeneas knows where to find Troilus. Apparently, "under the pretense of arranging excuses for Troilus, Pandarus has dropt some broad hints" (Bradbrook 316). Shakespeare emphasizes, right after the news of the exchange, that Troilus has hardly thought of Cressida's precarious position in Troy. Donaldson notes that Troilus casually asks Aeneas not to share the fact that Troilus and Cressida are lovers, but the request seems "like an afterthought" (106). Because Troilus has spent the night "wallowing" in sensuality, Aeneas' morning message provides a sharp, dramatic contrast. Night and day are likewise found in Fortune's cornucopia, but Shakespeare's Troilus does not see that. Instead he blindly rails against the gods:

Tro. Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity  
 That the blest gods, as angry with my fancy,  
 More bright in zeal than the devotion which  
 Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me.

Cres. Have the gods envy?

Pan. Ay, ay, ay, ay, 'tis too plain a case.

(IV.iv.24-29).

Like Chaucer's Troilus, Shakespeare's Troilus tries to unload the moral responsibility of his lustfulness. As he complains against the gods, Troilus discloses that "he sees his love as an alternative to religious devotion" (Thompson 138). Troilus' religion is sensuality. He has abandoned higher reason for the lowliness of worldly excess, and he is incensed that Cressida, the foundation of his faith, is being taken away from him. Yet, he does not try to intervene, for he believes that outside forces control his destiny. Troilus' speech echoes the predestination soliloquy of Chaucer's hero:

And suddenly, where injury of chance  
 Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by  
 All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips  
 Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents  
 Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows  
 Even in the birth of our own laboring breath.  
 We two, that with so many thousand sighs  
 Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
 With the rude brevity and discharge of one.  
 Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
 Grams his rich thiev'ry up, he knows not how.

(IV.iv.33-43)

About the matter of time in this, Troilus' leave-taking passage, Traversi writes that "'rudely,' 'roughly,' 'forcibly,' time and hostile

circumstances undermine the tragic brevity of love, so that the 'lock'd embrasures' which would normally convey the intensity of physical union are felt to be only an effort to snatch a moment's identity in the face of events which are forcibly drawing the lovers apart" (9). Given this, it is possible here to make a connection between Shakespeare's "injurious time" and Chaucer's wheel of Fortune. In the prologue to Book IV, the narrator bluntly states: "But al to litel, weylaway the whyle, / Lasteth swich joie, ythonked be Fortune." Time, coupled with chance, and Fortune perform the same function in the play and poem. As Traversi suggests, Fortune and time seem to be destructive, outside forces rallying against the Troiluses, but this reading only skims the surface. Neither Chaucer's hero nor Shakespeare's is a tragic victim. The pain they experience upon being parted from their lovers is self-imposed, for it is they who relinquish their wills and who try to find spiritual order in idolatry. Like Chaucer's Troilus, Shakespeare's Troilus, once time or chance or Fortune has turned against him, can see no happy return. Shakespeare's lover wishes for death. Aeneas calls for Cressida, to whom Troilus half-consciously addresses the following: "Hark, you are call'd. Some say that Genius [so] / Cries ['come'] to him that instantly must die" (IV.iv.49-51).

Once both Troiluses are convinced that destiny dictates their futures and that death is the only escape, the overall tone of both the poem and play grows darker. This darkness is, of course, appropriate considering how clouded the vision of the heroes becomes. The abandonment of reason also robs them of their humanity, for, in the end, they are able to act, but only as beasts.

Robertson describes Book V of Troilus and Criseyde as "a picture of Hell on earth, the Hell which results from trying to make earth a heaven in its own right . . . In this last Book, as the Parcae dominate the unreasoning creature that Troilus has become, Chaucer's ironic humor becomes bitter and the pathos of the tragedy profound" (Preface 496-97).

Diomede, the experienced lover and rogue, amplifies Troilus' disillusionment, for, as Diomede takes the "reyne" of Criseyde's horse, he quickly and accurately assesses the Trojan love affair and just as swiftly devises a plan to win her favor: "All my labour shall nat ben on ydel," Diomede decides (V.94).

Kittredge writes that "there are no happy lovers in the story" (21). And how can there be, the reader wonders, when women like Criseyde swear their sincerity by the inconstant moon (IV.1608)? Howard notices, also, that Criseyde says "she first loved him not for rank or riches or worldly things but for his 'moral virtue, grounded upon trouthe' (line 1673), for his gentle heart and manhood, and because his reason controlled his desires (his emphasis)" (367). As Shakespeare says through Troilus' mouth, "Fools on both sides" (I.i.90).

Though Criseyde's oppressive sorrow inhibits her from hearing all of Diomede's lines, e.g. "I loved never woman here-biforn / As paramours, ne nevere shal no mo" (5.157-58), she still manages to accept "his frendshipe" before she reaches her father's outstretched arms. Soon, of course, she accepts even more from Diomede and betrays the man who waits in Troy for her speedy return.

Donald Howard muses about Troilus' situation: "He knows what will happen without knowing he knows it" (397). After Criseyde leaves,

Troilus dreams again and again that her love is taken by a boar, and Troilus must ask Cassandra to interpret the dream for him since he is unable to see or, more accurately, refuses to see that Diomedes is the boar. J. P. McCall observes that "the immediate effect of the introduction of Cassandra from the framework of the Trojan scene is to have her provide, in panoramic fashion, some concrete analogies to the condition of Troilus as a tragic victim of Fortune" (108). Troilus, hanging on to his fantasy, closes his ears and calls his sister a "sorceresse" (5.1520).

Making a connection with the tragic heroes in modern literature, Robertson compares Chaucer's Troilus to a "maladjusted hero of modern fiction, an existentialist for whom Being itself, which he has concentrated in his own person, becomes dubious" (497). This comparison is validated by Troilus as he roams about the places he has shared with Criseyde. When Troilus enters her deserted palace, Chaucer ironically emphasizes his point through Troilus' black pun: "O thow lanterne of which queynt is the light" (5.543).

Troilus sits on the wall of Troy and mistakes a "farecarte" for his beloved. He reads lines of Criseyde's cruel letter -- "For trewely, while that my lif may dure, / As for a frend ye may in me assure" (5.1623-24) -- that any rational man would see through, but still Troilus wishes for the impossible. Finally, he spots the brooch in Diomedes's cloak, and we, as Howard puts it, "see him accept the truth in anguish" (369). As one listens to the poem, the pain which Troilus experiences when he realizes he has been betrayed seems overwhelming. And yet, he still loves Criseyde, his inconstant religion:



Thorough which I se that clene out of youre  
 mynde

Ye han me cast -- and I ne kan nor may,  
 For al this world, withinne myn herte fynde  
 To unloven yow a quarter of a day!  
 In corsed tyme I born was weilaway,  
 That yow, that doon me al this wo endure,  
 Yet love I best of any creature!

(5.1694-1701)

Father Denomy writes that the tradition of courtly love exhorts all people "to unite themselves to love as to their final end" (150). Troilus surely grasps for that bit of glory, but, as John Lawlor explains, by this point in Chaucer's poem "we know that there has been a slow and steady growth of the real: the balance has shifted unobtrusively but firmly against inexperience fortified by doctrine. Chaucer at the end can do nothing for Troilus in his unrelieved misery, but suddenly dispatch him" (86).

In Troilus and Cressida dramatic effect is gained by compressing Chaucer's ten-day trial into one quick scene of betrayal witnessed by Troilus. Donaldson writes that "Shakespeare's cruelty is quick, Chaucer's long drawn out" (115). With Ulysses, always a meddler, Troilus watches outside Calchas' tent; Diomedes and Cressida exchange loving words, and she gives Diomedes Troilus' sleeve.

Troilus' voyeurism is certainly an original touch which heightens the drama of the play, and, at the same time, weaves in Chaucer's symbolism. Impotence, caused by worshipping sensuality and giving free



will to Fortune, allows Shakespeare's Troilus to just watch, just as Pandarus before him watched. Thompson argues that Chaucer's poem is Shakespeare's major source for the betrayal scene (142), and surely the equally clouded vision of the heroes alone supports her conclusion. When Cressida gives Diomedes Troilus' token, Troilus also refuses to believe what he sees:

To make a recordation to my soul  
 Of every syllable that here was spoke.  
 But if I tell how these two did [co-act],  
 Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?  
 Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,  
 An esperance so obstinately strong,  
 That doth invert th' attest of eyes and ears,  
 As if those organs [had deceptious] functions,  
 Created only to calumniate.  
 Was Cressid here?

(V.ii.116-24)

Shakespeare's Troilus finally realizes that Cressida has betrayed him, and, like Chaucer's Troilus, he says that he still loves her (V.ii.167). He will not let go of his illusion. Ornstein comments that "as he watches her submit too easily and coyly to Diomedes, his ego is more deeply wounded than his heart; he suffers without illumination" (33). Just as he did when Aeneas brought news of the exchange, Troilus rants:

Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven;  
 Instance, O instance, strong as heaven itself,

The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolv'd, and loos'd,

(V.ii.154-56)

Shakespeare's Troilus, the man who once said that "sweet love is food for fortune's tooth" (IV.v.293), seeths because a possession he values is not as valuable as he thought and blames his foolishness on the disordered universe. Of course, the universe which Troilus assaults is the very one he has forged for himself. Troilus, without higher reason, is unable to grasp reality, a trait which Chaucer's Troilus shares. Muir explains that Shakespeare's Troilus would rather concentrate on "what might be" rather than reality ("Troilus" 124):

If beauty have a soul, this is not she;  
 If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,  
 If sanctimony be the gods' delight,  
 If there be rule in unity itself,  
 This was not she.

(V.ii.138-42)

Chaucer's Troilus is also reluctant to believe the words of Criseyde's hurtful letter. It is so hard to awaken from a pleasant dream:

This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge  
 Whan he it saugh, and sorwfullich he sighte;  
 Hym thoughte it lik a kalendes of change.  
 But fynaly, he ful ne trowen myghte  
 That she ne wolde hym holden that she hyghte;  
 For with ful yvel wille list hym to leve

That loveth wel, in swich cas, though hym  
greve.

(5.1632-38)

Once the Troiluses have been betrayed by Cressida and Criseyde, they have nothing left but the bodies they were given. Their lovers are gone, their sensual religion is gone, their higher reason, gone. All that remains is animal rage. In the play, "disillusionment paralyzes Troilus only for a moment, and then he begins to swell with hate; he steadies himself with what is most natural and accessible to him, the role of a faithful knight whose 'so eternal and so fixed a soul' swears to avenge its honor" (Muir, "Troilus" 124):

Not the dreadful spout  
Which shipmen do the hurricano call,  
Constring'd in mass by the almighty sun,  
Shall dizzy with more clamor Neptune's ear,  
In his descent, than shall my prompted sword  
Falling on Diomed.

(V.ii.171-76)

Chaucer's Troilus also desires to take revenge on Diomede and to meet his own death "honorably":

"Now God," quod he, "me sende yet the grace  
That I may meten with this Diomede!  
And trewely, if I have myght and space,  
Yet shal I make, I hope, his sydes blede.

(5.1702-05)

W. C. Curry observes that "Fortune has determined, however, that

neither of these enemies shall die by the other's hand (V.1763-4). For in the last great battle Troilus is slain by the fierce Achilles. And this eventuality, the poet is careful to state, is brought about by the wills of the gods (V.1805-6)" (62).

In Shakespeare's play, we do not watch Troilus die, but we know he will along with the rest of Troy. Troilus announces, "Hector is dead;] there is no more to say" (V.x.22). Geoffrey Bullough calls this "the true tragedy, in nobility and heroism wasted" (111). Several critics -- Traversi, Ornstein, Donaldson -- suggest that a final picture of a diseased world made up of Thersites and Pandarus is what the audience is left to ponder at the end of Troilus and Cressida. Others -- Ellis-Fermor, Bullough, Muir, Tillyard, Presson -- interpret the ending less pessimistically. Generally, they see Troilus and Cressida as a play that shows men to possess flaws which ruin their reason, causing them to make poor decisions which adversely affect them and others. All of these critics, in one way or another, propose that the play is proof of Shakespeare's beginnings as a writer of tragedies.

Though the ending to the play leaves a reader guessing, Chaucer's ending to Troilus and Criseyde can be appreciated for its satisfying closure alone. Troilus is slain by Achilles (5.1806) and immediately his "lighte goost ful blisfully" ascends to the "holughnesse of the eighthe spere" (5.1808-9) from whence he is able, at last, to see more clearly and to laugh.

And in hymself he lough right at the wo  
 Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste,  
 And dampned al oure werk that foloweth so

The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste,  
 And sholden al oure herte on heven caste.

(5.1821-25)

Troilus laughs at the foolishness of his life on earth where he was encumbered by desires of the flesh, and the narrator speaks of a new kind of love provided by him who died "upon a crois, oure soules for to beye" (5.1843).

Go, Litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye

(5.1786)

Chaucer, addressing his poem, reminds the audience that Troilus' end is tragic because he is a "payen." Though he ascends to the eighth sphere and laughs ironically, Troilus does not see heaven. Instead, Mercury leads him away to some indeterminate place. Howard explains that "the end of the poem looks to the Christian world order, but Troilus's end is only a dark voyage" (371).

Concluding this reading, we see that the lives of Chaucer's Troilus and Shakespeare's Troilus end tragically, but Troilus and Criseyde and Troilus and Cressida are by no means depressing works. This study has traced the spiraling downward course of the heroes' careers, but we must not forget that both the poem and the play are full of lovely poetry and countless witticisms. Even though pride, sensuality, self-absorption, and blind, ill-conceived devotion bring the Troiluses to harm, neither Chaucer nor Shakespeare suggests that Troilus' flaws are shared by all men. Chaucer points to the love of him who died "upon a Crois, oure soules for to beye" (5.1843), and Shakespeare leaves the reader to decide whether or not a more hopeful vision than that offered by

Thersites and Pandarus is attainable. But regardless of the endings of the poem and play, we see in both works two characters who, when standing as far away as possible from their usual contexts, become one.



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