

1977

# The Acceptance and Rejection of Courtly Love by the Lovers in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*

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## Recommended Citation

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THE ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF COURTLY LOVE

BY THE LOVERS IN CHAUCER'S TROILUS AND CRISEYDE  
(TITLE)

BY

MICHAEL JEROME BALDWIN

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1977  
YEAR

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There can be little doubt that Troilus and Criseyde, in spite of the greater popularity of the Canterbury Tales, is Chaucer's narrative masterpiece, a masterpiece that has been the subject of literary controversy from its very composition. Its heroine in particular has offered such baffling problems to readers down through the nearly six centuries since Chaucer created her, that one critic, Charles Muscatine, in looking back over the ambiguous impression she has left generations of readers, has gone so far as to conclude, "Her ambiguity is her meaning."<sup>1</sup> The view is an extreme one, but is not without some merit. The impression of ambiguity, or perhaps ambivalence, does make itself felt in a survey of Troilus criticism and in the poem itself. But the impression Criseyde gives the reader is not necessarily her meaning, nor is it definite proof that the impression cannot be unraveled into an explicable pattern. Charles Muscatine has shown that Criseyde is ambiguous in stylistic terms, and so she is, but thematically she may not be so confusing.

Naturally, Criseyde's meaning is closely related to the meaning

of love in the poem. Troilus is a love story, a fourteenth century, aristocratic love story, which means not only romantic love, but a stylized form of love that flourished from its development in the eleventh century to well beyond the close of the Middle Ages. This form of love plays a vital role in the development of the literature of the western world. C. S. Lewis, in fact, hails its development as an event which renders the Renaissance by contrast, "a mere ripple on the surface of literature."<sup>2</sup> However, a clear definition of courtly love is difficult to formulate, especially in the light of Muscatine's observation that the courtliness of the Troilus "is not that of the twelfth century, merely raised in technical sophistication; it is a fourteenth-century courtliness, seen in a context of a deepened naturalism."<sup>3</sup> In the first place, a distinction must be made between courtliness and love, between the stylized behavior of lovers (most of which has long since fallen out of use) and the passion that courtliness embodied and adorned. Chaucer himself shows some recognition of this distinction in the opening stanzas of Book II:

Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is change  
 withinne a thousand year, and wordes tho  
 That hadden pris, now wondre ayce and etraunge  
 Us thinketh hem, and yet thei spak hem so,  
 And spedde as wel in love as men now do;  
 Ek for to wynnen love in sondry ages,<sup>4</sup>  
 In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.

Love has been with man presumably since before history. It certainly was not invented in medieval Provence. But when love became a courtly pastime, the attitude toward it changed drastically;

in fact, it was reversed. As John Bayley observes, "love was not invented in the Middle Ages so much as granted full recognition and honours, and we continue to honor a phenomenon which was thought of before--when it was thought of at all--as an illness or a divine affliction."<sup>5</sup> The significance of this reversal cannot be overemphasized. Lewis remarks, "Real changes in human sentiment are very rare--there are perhaps three or four on record--but I believe that they occur, and that this is one of them."<sup>6</sup> This reversal of attitude occurred significantly at the same period that witnessed the establishment of the orders of knighthood and the great orders of nuns and friars, evidence of a tendency, according to J. B. Broadbent, "to institutionalize, codify, and publicly honour, motives of dedication--dedication of the self to an ideal being or an ideal mode of behaviour."<sup>7</sup>

Courtly love established, then, as an ideal pattern for relations between the sexes, an emotional state which had previously been regarded as a form of insanity. That it found such spontaneous acceptance throughout the courts of Europe is not surprising when it is remembered that the religious attitude of the time embraced a host of saints that modern and ancient man would rather pity or fear than honor. There were, in addition, numerous practical reasons for its widespread acceptance. Women, aristocratic women in particular, were traded on the marriage market like cattle. Marriage was, as a result, purely an economic arrangement, and specially arranged divorces were not uncommon in politically prominent families. The political system which necessitated the frequent absence of a lord from his property also

left numerous landless aristocratic young men in attendance at his castle during his absences. The lady was the lord in her husband's absence, and she was treated as such, when normally, as a woman, her status would be inferior. In addition, Mariology was flourishing, further exalting the status of ideal femininity. So it was natural for a system which blended these and other factors into a socially graceful and passionate courtly ethic to find enthusiastic acceptance.

For the first time, woman was exalted above the place of man. She was courted. Her knight offered his service to her with a willingness to show his faithfulness to her even to the point of death.<sup>8</sup> The lady could now act imperiously, capriciously imposing ridiculous and even demeaning tasks upon her ardent lover.<sup>9</sup> And the lover, like a wretch, was doomed to a life of lovesickness and constant disappointment, for his love must not be too easy for him to attain.<sup>10</sup> Love was, in Pandarus' terms, a game. Its basic requirements were, according to W. G. Dodd, sensuality, illicitness, secretiveness, and difficulty.<sup>11</sup> C. S. Lewis, in a more interpretive examination, sees courtly love as embodying humility, courtesy, adultery, and the religion of love.<sup>12</sup> Neither seems to remember that it was once seen as madness. While Lewis does recognize the ancient attitude, he treats it wholly as an ideal after its development, when, in Chaucer at any rate, that original madness still lies beneath the shimmering surface of romance.<sup>13</sup> One must turn to a more recent scholar, Denis de Rougemont, for an examination of the spirit underlying this most pervasive theme in secular European literature. In Love in the Western World de

Rougement defines romantic love as chiefly characterized by a sense of fate, suffering, separation, and ultimate death.<sup>14</sup> As a result, he expresses the ancient view: Love is madness. What the medieval world had changed was its attitude toward love, not love itself. The madness, idealized as it had been, still retained the same qualities that had earlier defined it as an affliction. Chaucer, through Criseyde's psychological dilemma in accepting Troilus as a lover, shows the reader his awareness of this tension between the brightness of romantic love as an ideal and its darkness as a reality.



## II

Love has two aspects in Troilus and Criseyde: the light and the dark, or, in Chaucer's words, "joie and sorrow." This double aspect of love is implied from the very opening lines; Troilus' adventures fall, says the poet, "Fro wo to wale, and after out of joy."<sup>1</sup> Both aspects of love find their fullest expression, as well as their complete acceptance, in the character of Troilus. As the poem progresses, the lover refers to his lady by such revealing titles as "swete fo"<sup>2</sup> and the one "That cause is of my torment and my joie."<sup>3</sup> The two opposing aspects of love are perhaps most fully stated in Troilus' songs. His first, a conventional complaint taken from Petrarch, is a song about the darker side of love:

If no love is, O God, what fele I so?  
 And if love is, what thing and which is he?  
 If love be good, from whennes cometh my woo?  
 If it be wikke, a wonder thynketh me,  
 when every torment and adversite  
 That cometh of hym, may to me savory thinke,  
 For ay thurst I, the more that ich it drynke.

And if that at myn owen lust I brenne,  
 Fro whennes cometh my waillynge and my pleynte?  
 If harm agree me, wherto pleyne I thenne?  
 I noot, ne whi unwery that I feynte.  
 O quike deth, O swete harm so queynte,  
 How may of the in me swich quantite,  
 But if that I consente that it be?

And if that I consente, I wrongfully  
 Compleyne, iwis. Thus possessed to and fro,  
 Al sterileles withinne a boot am I

Amydde the se, bitwixen wyndes two,  
 That in contrarie stonden evere mo.  
 Allas! what is this wondre maladie?  
 For hete of cold, for cold of hete I dye.<sup>4</sup>

He concludes his song of sorrow in Book V:

O steere, of which I lost have al the light,  
 With herte soor wel ought I to biwaille,  
 That evere dark in torsent, nyght by nyght,  
 Toward my deth with wynd in steere I saille;  
 For which the tenthe nyght, if that I faille  
 The gydyng of thi beemes bright an houre,  
 My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure.<sup>5</sup>

It would be easy to dismiss this song as unimportant because of its conventionality, as R. G. Cook has done with Troilus' recurring threats of death.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to believe that Troilus could really mean what he is singing here. But he does mean it. Implicit are all the characteristics of romantic love as drawn by de Rougement: fate, suffering, separation, and impending death. Troilus is stricken; he cannot believe that of his own "lust" he burns. That he suffers is all too apparent, and the agonizing realization of his separation from his lady has left him "All steereless withinne a boot," a boat which carries him in Book V toward certain death. It is a song full of questions. Why, Troilus asks, do I long for something that only makes me suffer? His answer is in his other song, in the other face of love.

If love were only suffering, Troilus would not be so confused; but love is not just misery. It is an ideal, holding out to him a hope for undreamed-of joy. Having found that joy briefly in the heart of the tale, Troilus sings of love again, but in entirely different terms:

Love, that of erthe and se hath governaunce,  
 Love, that his hestes hath in hevenes hye,  
 Love, that with an holson alliaunce  
 Halt peples joyned, as hym lest hem gye,  
 Love, that knetteth lawe of compaigne,  
 And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,  
 Bynd this acord, that I have told and telle.

That that the world with feith, which that is stable,  
 Divesteth so his stowndes concordynge,  
 That elementz that ben so discordable  
 Holden a bond perpetuely durynge,  
 That Phebus rote his rosy day forth brynge,  
 And that the mone hath lordshipe over the nyghtes,--  
 Al this doth Love, ay heried be his nyghtes!

That that the se, that gredy is to flowen,  
 Conatreyne to a certeyn ende so  
 His flodes that so fiersly they ne growen  
 To drenchen erthe and al for evere mo;  
 And if that Love aught lete his bridel go,  
 Al that now loveth asondre sholde lepe,  
 And lost were al that Love halt now to-hepe.

So wolde God, that auctor is of kynde,  
 That with his bond Love of his vertu liste  
 To cerclen hertes alle, and faste bynde,  
 That from his bond no wight the way out wiste;  
 And hertes cold, hem wolde I that he twiste  
 To make hem love, and that hem liste ay rewe,<sup>7</sup>  
 On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe!

The starless night of the first song contrasts with the rosy day and the moon-governed night of the second. Confident declarations replace unanswered questions. Boats on stormy seas give way to images of a stable world and fast-bound lovers. The fate that the lover felt in his misery he now prays for. Love is a dual state, one part sinister and dark, one part blissful and light. Troilus as an ideal romantic lover embraces both with intense passion. Criseyde does not.

### III

There can be little doubt--in spite of occasional views to the contrary, such as that of Edmund Reiss<sup>1</sup>--that Troilus is an ideal courtly figure. The bulk of Troilus criticism accepts him at face value. He is noble, properly subservient to his lady, suffers at great length for her, is completely and admirably discreet in his passion, taking elaborate pains to conceal it. Nothing more could really be asked of him in terms of the courtly ethic. He is, in fact, as Muscattine observes, too perfect--an extreme of the ideal:

In his convention has taken on the superior purity,<sup>2</sup>  
that is only possible in nostalgic retrospection.

The lover, as described by Dodd, is courteous, ennobled by love if not by birth. He is servile to his lady to the point of worship, willing to face death itself for her. In his service he suffers miserably from her disdain. In addition, he suffers in sickness; sleeplessness; and confusion, trembling, and pallor in the lady's presence. He also fears to make an avowal of love to his lady and lives in constant dread of detection by others.<sup>3</sup> Troilus fits all the qualifications perfectly. In fact, since Criseyde is not actually disdainful, he makes it up in fantasy when he complains of the cruelty of this lady whom he has not as yet even met.<sup>4</sup> The entire work abounds with pointed references to Troilus' ideal behavior, all summed up in the description of

his actions at the close of Book III:

In alle nedes, for the townes werre,  
 He was, and ay, the first in armes dyght,  
 And certeynly, but if that bokes erre,  
 Save Hector most ydred of any wight;  
 And this encrees of hardynesse and myght  
 Com hym of love, his ladies thank to wynne,  
 That altered his spirit so withinne.

In tyme of trewe, on haukyng wolde he ride,  
 Or elles honte boor, beer, or lyoun;  
 The smale bestes leet he gon biside.  
 And whan that he com ridyng into town,  
 Ful ofte his lady from hire wyndow down,  
 As fressh as faukoun comen out of muwe,  
 Ful redy was hym goodly to saluwe.

And moost of love and vertu was his speche,  
 And in despit hadde alle wrechednesse;  
 And douteles, no nede was hym biseche  
 To honouren hem that hadde worthynesse,  
 And esen hem that weren in destresse.  
 And glad was he if any wyght wel ferde,  
 That love was, whan he it wiste or herde.

For, soth to seyne, he lost held every wyght,  
 But if he were in Loves heigh servise,--  
 I mene folk that oughte it ben of right.  
 And over al this, so wel koude he devyse  
 Of sentement, and in so unkouth wise,  
 Al his array, that every love thoughte  
 That al was wel, what so he seyde or wroughte.

And though that he be com of blood roial,  
 Hym liste of pride at no wight for to chace;  
 Benigne he was to ech in general,  
 For which he gat hym thank in every place.  
 Thus wolde Love, yheried be his grace,  
 That Pride, Envy, and Ire, and Avarice,  
 He gan to fle, and everich other vice.

In addition, the poet makes it clear that Troilus is a model of discretion. When, for example, Pandarus cautions Troilus concerning Criseyde's honor, Troilus retorts:

'But here, with al myn herte, I the biseche  
 That nevere in us thow deme swich folie  
 As I shal seyn; me thoughte by thi speche

That this which thow me dost for compaignie,  
 I sholde wene it were a bauderye.  
 I am nought wood, al if I lewed be!  
 It is nought so, that woot I wel, parde!<sup>6</sup>

In his nobility, his "largese," his impeccable courtly manners and in his devotion to his lady's honor, Troilus offers no problems to the reader as an ideal lover. "We never doubt," says Lewis, "his valour, his constancy, or the 'daily beauty' of his life. His humility, his easy tears, and his unabashed self-pity in adversity will not be admired in our own age. They must, however, be confessed to be true (intolerably true in places) to nature."<sup>7</sup> The valor, constancy and sense of honor which are so admirable are the major characteristics of the idealization of love--the ingredients of its brighter aspect. It is in the lover's suffering--in his "easy tears" and inability to act--that Troilus becomes somewhat distasteful, and even weak, in his appearance to the reader.

For Troilus embarks on his pilgrimage of passion and suffering with the fanaticism of a true believer. It is in this aspect of the courtly lover's life that Troilus becomes the extreme that such critics as Muscatine have found him. "It is difficult," claims Muscatine, "to think of a single hero of French romance who is quite so prostrated by love, so removed from the actual business of courtship, who depends so completely on an intermediary."<sup>8</sup> Muscatine also points out that Chaucer's lover is a much purer one than his Italian counterpart.<sup>9</sup> Dorothy Everett also finds Troilus (and Troilo as well) an extreme lover in his

misery:

Troilus and his prototype Troilo are patterns of the true lover in their abandonment to grief and despair, as well as in their complete absorption in their love and their humility--at times almost servility--towards their lady. What seems to us Troilus's weakness, his inability to act, to do anything for himself, is equally in the tradition; though compared with the Dreamer of the Roman de la Rose he is an extreme example of the dependent lover.<sup>10</sup>

Again, his very conventionality can be misleading in a determination of his function in the poem. Lewis, fascinated by Criseyde, finds Troilus relatively unimportant as a character:

. . . the drawing of Troilus' character is no principal part of Chaucer's purpose; . . . about Troilus there still hangs something of the anonymity of the Dreamer, the mere 'I' of the allegories.<sup>11</sup>

On the contrary, Troilus is important to the poem because he is so conventional. His conventionality, as Muscatine observes, represents an attitude:

Troilus represents the courtly, idealistic view of experience. While there is nothing mechanical or schematic about Chaucer's way with him, it is clear that he is conceived and constructed almost exclusively according to the stylistic conventions of the courtly tradition.<sup>12</sup>

Conventional as it is, stylized as it is, Troilus' suffering is not without meaning--an important meaning, in fact--in the development of the poem. Symbol and stylization often camouflage deeper, darker significance. This is especially true, says de Rougement, of romance:

So dreadful and unutterable is the real meaning of passion that not only are those persons who undergo it unable to grow aware of its end, but

writers wishing to depict it in all its marvellous violence are driven to employ the deceptive language of symbols.<sup>13</sup>

That suffering, even though it is part of the courtly convention, is a part of love that precedes courtliness, an aspect of love that in ancient times prompted men to term it a malady far from desirable. So it is part of the dark side of love, and in the case of Troilus the dark side predominates:

Troilus, throughout the poem, suffers more than he acts. He is the shore upon which all these waves break, and Chaucer has accurately described his theme as being how Troilus' 'adventures fellen Fro wo to wele and after out of joye.'<sup>14</sup>

From the moment that he falls in love--that he is stricken would perhaps be more appropriate--Troilus suffers intensely. The suffering lover that dominates the poem marks a sad contrast to the bantering, princely Troilus of the temple scene. On the battlefield, Troilus is an active and a worthy knight; the reader is reminded of this repeatedly throughout the course of the narrative. But in the bedchamber he is less self-assured, and it is the Troilus of the bedchamber that the reader knows best (all of his battlefield exploits except the last occur offstage). This Troilus, the conventional, prostrate lover, represents a drastic fall from a formerly blissful state, and that fall takes place within four stanzas of his first appearance in the narrative. There is a deep contrast between the self-assured young knight, innocent of the sting of passionate love (a frequently noted departure from the experienced Troilo of Boccaccio), and the stricken lover he becomes moments later. He enters the temple an ideal of



nobility--a confident man, a natural leader, and, most important, a young man free in thought and feeling:

This Troilus, as he was wont to gide  
 His yonge knyghtes, lad hem up and down  
 In thilke large temple on every side,  
 Dyholding ay the ladies of the town,  
 Now here, now there; for no devocioun  
 Hadde he to non, to reven hym his reste,  
 But gan to preise and lakken whom hym leste.<sup>15</sup>

As yet innocent of the confines of passion, he jokes about love to those among his entourage who are "loves servauntz":

I have herd told, pardieux, of youre lyvyng,  
 Ye loveres, and youre lewed observaunces,  
 And which a labour folk han in wynnyng  
 Of love, and in the keypyng which doutaunces;  
 And whan youre prey is lost, woo and penaunces.  
 O veray folles, nyce and blynde be ye!<sup>16</sup>  
 There nys nat oon kan war by other be.

Within moments of this blasphemous speech on love, Troilus himself is stricken. De Rougement has pointed out that it is a pervasive characteristic, almost an inevitability, of romance that the lover is forced into loving, that some force quite beyond his power to control demands his passion.<sup>17</sup> Dodd's description of courtly convention agrees with this view, for two characteristic conceits of love are that love is caused by the beauty of the opposite sex and that through the eyes beauty enters the heart and inflicts a wound only the lady can heal.<sup>18</sup> From this point on, Troilus is transformed; completely obsessed by love, he is a slave, as it were, of his own passion. Chaucer notes the contrast:

And though he erst hadde poured up and down,  
 He was the glad his hornes in to shrinken;  
 Unnethes wiste he how to loke or wynke.<sup>19</sup>

Confusion usurps confidence, and the young knight finds himself suddenly no longer free "to preise and lakken whom hym leste":<sup>20</sup>

Lo, he that leet hymselfen so konnyng,  
 And scorned her that Loves paynes dryen,  
 Was ful unwar that Love hadde his dwellyng  
 Withinne the subtile stremes of hir yen;  
 That soseygly hym thoughte he felte dyen,  
 Right with hire look, the spirit in his herte.<sup>21</sup>

The sense of fate in Troilus has been one of its most frequently discussed themes. The views of its significance range from that of Walter Clyde Curry or that of Morton W. Bloomfield, both of whom find the Troilus a tragedy of fate and predestination,<sup>22</sup> to that of Everett, who feels that fate in the poem merely suggests "a wider background and wider issues behind the love story."<sup>23</sup> It has already been shown that the courtly lover feels that he is fated, and most of Troilus' frequent references to fate are directed at his particular fate of unhappy love. What causes some difficulty is his long digression in Book IV on predestination. Clearly, the discussion is well-placed, for it occurs when the unhappy side of love (with its accompanying sense of doom) has just reasserted itself after the bliss of Book III. It occurs also at the point at which Troilus is rationalizing his failure to abduct Criseyde. The sense of fate, already a part of love, augmented by the poet, serves an artistic function as well. As Muscatino observes:

To dwell at length on the attractiveness of earthly love and then to repudiate it all in a palinode is neither philosophical nor artistic. But to present secular idealism as a beautiful but flawed thing, and to present practical wisdom as an admirable but incomplete thing, to present them, indeed, as antithetical and incongruous to each other, is by implication to present a third view, higher and more complex than either. This philosophical third view

hovers over every important sequence in the Troilus, and is made explicit in the epilogue.<sup>24</sup>

In forecasting the epilogue, the sense of fate, augmented into a discussion on predestination, prepares for the abandonment of the heretical religion of love for true belief.

Courtly love, as Lewis discusses at length, is also a religion of love.<sup>25</sup> Troilus, in fact, provokes the god of love, Cupid in this instance, into taking aim and hitting him "atte fulle." Troilus, fully aware of his blasphemy, leaves the temple:

Repentyng hym that he hadde evere ijaped  
Of Loves folk, lest fully the descente  
Of scorn fille on hymself.<sup>26</sup>

He repairs home to suffer in the solitude of his chamber:

And whan that he in chamber was allone,  
He doun upon his beddes feet hym sette,  
And first he gan to sike, and eft to grone,  
And thought ay on hir so, withouten lette,  
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette  
That he hire saugh a-temple, and al the wise  
Right of hire look, and gan it newe avise.<sup>27</sup>

And so he continues to suffer throughout most of the remainder of the tale.

It has already been noted that much of the behavior of the courtly lover is difficult for modern readers to accept as serious. Troilus, as an extreme of the type, is especially difficult to believe in, for he suffers even beyond the conventional dictates of the code. According to the "rules," the lover suffers because the lady is "daungereuse," that is, because she is disdainful of him, capricious in her treatment of him, and extremely careful of her reputation. But Troilus undergoes some of his bitterest suffering long before he has even met his lady; in fact, before

Criseyde is even aware of him or his feelings, Troilus laments her cruel treatment of him:

'But, O thow woful Troilus, God wolde,  
Sith thow most loven thorough thi destine,  
That thow beset were on swich oon that sholde  
Know al thi wo, al lakked hir pitee!  
But also cold in love towards the  
Thi lady is, as frost in wynter moone,  
And thow fordon, as snow in fire is soone.<sup>28</sup>

De Rougement maintains that the true romantic lover is less in love with his lady than in love with love itself:

Tristan and Iseult [the archetypal lovers] do not love one another. They say they don't and everything goes to prove it. What they love is love and being in love. . . . Their need of one another is in order to be aflame, and they do not need one another as they are. What they need is not one another's presence, but one another's absence. Thus the partings of the lovers are dictated by their passion itself, and by the love they bestow on their passion rather than on its satisfaction or on its living object.<sup>29</sup>

The lover clings to his suffering in order that the experience might be more intense, and Troilus does, to some extent, support this contention, for not once does he carry out any plan of action to alleviate his suffering. Everything must be done by Pandarus, and Pandarus himself does not fail to notice Troilus' lack of aggression:

Quod Pandarus, 'Thow wrecched mouses herte,  
Artow agast so that she wol the bite?<sup>30</sup>

Such a need for separation also would account for Troilus' refusal to abduct Criseyde later in the story, a refusal that is curiously unheroic in spite of the fact that Troilus can supply reasons drawn from the courtly code. Separation, an obstacle to be over-

come, often, according to de Rougement, is self-imposed.<sup>31</sup> And Troilus does indeed impose suffering upon himself. As Wenzel remarks:

The entire Book IV, therefore, presents Troilus as the perfect courtly lover, who, through various tests, adheres to the ethos of his world, even if he thereby falls 'out of joie.'<sup>32</sup>

The temptation to break the courtly rule and deny the separation imposed upon the lovers is held repeatedly before Troilus. Pandarus, after listening to the grief-stricken knight begging for death, proposes abduction as an heroic alternative:

And [he] seyde: 'Frend, syn thou hast swych distresse,  
And syn thee list syn arguements to blame,  
Why nylt thiselven helpen don redresse,  
And with thy manhod letten al this grame?  
Go ravishe here ne kanstow nat for shame!  
And other lat here out of towne fare,  
Or hold here stille, and leve thi nyce fare.

'Artow in Troie, and hast non hardyment  
To take a woman which that loveth the,  
And wolde hireselven ben of thyn assent?  
Now is nat this a nyce vanitee?  
Ris up anon, and lat this wepyng be,  
And kith thou art a man; for in this houre  
I wol ben ded, or she shal bleven ours.'<sup>33</sup>

But Troilus, falling back on the code, refuses. Admitting he has already thought of the possibility, he holds back, not daring to risk a repetition of the very act that began the war. He would, besides, be disobeying a judgment made by his father for the good of the town, and he does not dare to ask his father for permission.<sup>34</sup> But most of all, it is against the ideals contained within the code itself that Troilus fears to act:

'Yet drede I moost hire herte to perturbe  
With violence, if I do swich a game;  
For if I wolde it openly desturbe,

It mooste be disclaundre to hire name.  
 And we were levere ded than hire diffame,  
 As nolde God but if I sholde have  
 Hire honour levere than my lif to save! 35

Pandarus has told Troilus to act like a man and take Criseyde away; but the code, placing the lover in a servile position to his lady and requiring him to defend her good name above all else, denies him this action. Troilus feels fate closing in on him:

'Thus am I lost, for aught that I kan see.  
 For certeyn is, syn that I am hire knyght,  
 I most hire honour levere han than se  
 In every cas, as love ought of right.  
 Thus am I with desir and reson twight:  
 Desir for to destourben hire we redeth,  
 And reson nyl nat, so myn herte dredeth.' 36

Eventually he resolves to make the attempt, but only if Criseyde will agree to it. She, of course, is unable by her very nature to make such a decision, in spite of Troilus' pleading that it is the only practical solution to their plight.

The temptation to act persists, however; and Troilus is once again torn between reason and desire at the moment Criseyde is to depart from the city. Once again he holds back:

For ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,  
 Whan Diomedes on horse gan hym dresse,  
 And seyde to hymself this ilke sawe:  
 'Allas!' quod he, 'thus foul a wrecchednesse,  
 Whi suffre ich it? Whi nyl ich it redresse?  
 Were it nat bet atones for to dye  
 Than evere more in languor thus to drye?

'Whi nyl I make atones riche and pore  
 To have inough to doone, er that she go?  
 Whi nyl I brynge al Troie upon a roore?  
 Whi nyl I slen this Diomedes also?  
 Whi nyl I rather with a man or two  
 Stele hire away? Whi wol I this endure?  
 Whi nyl I helpen to myn owen cure?' 37

The narrator gives us Troilus' excuse that:

He hadde in herte alweyes a manere drede  
 Leste that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,  
 Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.  
 And ellis, certeyn, as I seyde yore,  
 He hadde it don, withouten wordes more. 38

But again he fails to act, and his beloved leaves him, with only the promise of her return keeping him, for the time, from death.

After the ten days have passed and Criseyde has not returned, Troilus again considers rescuing her:

And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete  
 Hymselfen lik a pilgrym to desgise,  
 To seen hire; but he may nat contrefete  
 To ben unknowen of folk that weren wise,  
 He fynde excuse aright that may suffise,  
 If he among the Grekis knowen were;  
 For which he wep ful ofte and many a tere. 39

In spite of his laments that he would prefer death to torment, he hesitates to take the chance of being caught by the Greeks in disguise. Troilus' fear contrasts sadly with Tristan's bravado in using the same disguise in the presence of his uncle (who surely had greater opportunity to recognize Tristan than the Greeks could have to know Troilus) in order to save Isolt from certain death. The excuse might seem cowardly if it were not for something other than love and reunion impelling him to a climactic finish of his passion. He needs separation more than he needs Criseyde. And yet, separation, in itself, is an obstacle which both Troilus and Criseyde, even though they might suffer miserably, can withstand. In itself it is not really enough to explain Criseyde's betrayal. But such a separation is not the end of unhappy love; the dark side of love now indeed proves its blackness, for the

lover ultimately seeks to consummate his passion not in reunion, but in ultimate separation, death.

The death threat is perhaps Troilus' most repeated utterance throughout the entire poem. And in spite of numerous contentions, such as that of Cook, that it is "mistakenly sober" to think that Pandarus or Criseyde feel that Troilus will die, that "between Pandarus and Criseyde 'dying for love' is just another counter in the sophisticated rhetorical game by which Criseyde is 'won,'" <sup>40</sup> Troilus' "dying for love" is, on the contrary, something which must be taken seriously. After all, he does die. "God wold I were aryved in the port/ Of deth, to which my sorwe wol me lede!" he moans in Book I. <sup>41</sup> It is the trump card in Pandarus' campaign to wear down Criseyde's reluctance to accept Troilus as her lover, in a way unparalleled in *Soocaccio*. <sup>42</sup> It is submerged in the bliss of Book III only to reappear in full force as soon as the Trojan parliament unwittingly dictates the lovers' separation:

'O deth, allas! why nyltow do me deye?  
Acorsed be that day which that Nature  
Shop me to ben a lyves creature! <sup>43</sup>

And when, during their last sad meeting, Criseyde faints, Troilus immediately thinks her dead and prepares himself for suicide:

'And thow, Criseyde, o swete herte deere,  
Receyve now my spirit!' wolde he seye, <sup>44</sup>  
With sword at herte, al redy for to deye.

He has seen, immediately, this separation as a fateful one, a separation leading only toward death:

'What shal I don? I shal, while I may dure  
On lyve in torzent and in cruwel peyne,  
This infortune or this disaventure,  
Allone as I was born, iwys, compleyne;



Ne nevere wol I seen it sheyne or reyne,  
 But ende I wol, as Adippe, in darkness,  
 My sorwful lif, and dyen in distresse.<sup>45</sup>

And the threat is by no means insincere. As Wimsatt remarks, "His desire for death, often expressed in the last two books, has an earnestness that demands fulfillment."<sup>46</sup> There is only the thin hope that Criseyde will find some way to return to Troy, a hope that, for all his fervent longing, he never quite believes. While at times he can talk himself into believing it--he tells himself at one point that a distant cart is actually his beloved Criseyde returning to him--his mind is rather on suffering and impending death. He even imagines the romantic impression he feels he must be making:

Another tyme ymaginen he wolde  
 That every wight that wente by the weye  
 Hadde of hym routhe, and that they seyen sholde,  
 'I am right sory Troilus wol deye.'<sup>47</sup>

The lover, more in love with the progress of his emotion than with the actual object of his passion, even reflects on what a good book his plight would make:

Thanne thoughte he thus, 'O blisful lord Cupide,  
 Whan I the proces have in my memorie,  
 How thow me hast wereyed on every syde,  
 Men myght a book make of it, lik a storie.'<sup>48</sup>

The romantic lover, because his concern is with love itself rather than with the love object, is an essentially selfish lover.<sup>49</sup> Nowhere does Troilus exhibit more selfishness, more lack of compassion for his "beloved," than in his inexcusable reaction to the news of their impending separation:

'O my Criseyde, O lady sovereigne  
 Of thilke woful soule that thus crieth,  
 Who shal now yeven comfort to my peyne?

Allas! no wight; but whan myn herte dieth,  
 My spirit, which that so unto yow hieth,  
 Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;  
 Forthi no fore is, though the body sterve.<sup>50</sup>

With little thought for Criseyde's even greater plight, he moves relentlessly toward a death that is inevitable once he has proof of Criseyde's infidelity. So devoted is he to his passion that Criseyde's betrayal does not even matter to him; his love is indestructible, totally idealized:

'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 corses tyme I born was, weilaway,  
 That yow, that doon me al this wo endure,  
 Yet love I best of any creature!<sup>51</sup>

And so Troilus dies, the dark side of love consummated not by a love fulfilled and satisfied, but by a romantic climax that is instead a "fatal apotheosis."<sup>52</sup> Achilles kills him on the battlefield, and the Greek warrior, remarks Hinsatt, "is simply an instrument of Troilus' death wish."<sup>53</sup> Troilus, from the moment that he first falls, embraces fully both the sorrow and the joy of love. Never does he make the attempt to control it or to reject it. He is, in fact, enslaved by it, predestined, as he would have it. His passion, as de Rougement would remark, plays the part "of a purifying ordeal, it might almost be said a penance, in the service of this transfiguring death."<sup>54</sup> And therein lies the difference between Troilus and Criseyde. It supplies not only the answer to her ultimate betrayal but the key to her very ambiguity as well.

#### IV

Ultimately, Criseyde rejects the romantic ideal. However, her denial is not consistent; if it were, Criseyde would be far less interesting and certainly less than fully human, and Troilus, as an ideal romantic figure, would be patently ridiculous. Romantic love, in spite of the darkness concealed within it, is not unattractive; it is an ideal of earthly human fulfillment, and Criseyde is definitely beguiled by its happier aspect. Sin for the medieval mind was far from ugly; it was, on the contrary, rather attractive. As the snake in the Biblical garden, it tempted man by its voluptuousness. Criseyde struggles to resist love, but she is too human, too feminine a creature, to resist for long the temptation to find bliss in Troilus' arms. All the while, however, the darker side of romantic love looms under the surface of ideal courtship. Criseyde sees it, and it troubles her.

Lewis has observed that Criseyde is a radical departure from the conventional medieval courtly lady. All of the elaborate allegory of the Romance of the Rose is gone; the many conflicting psychological traits of the lady have been reintegrated into a single personality.<sup>1</sup> Humanized as she is, she becomes far more as a character than the remote and enigmatic ladies of most courtly poems.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, she has a Renaissance source in Boccaccio's heroine, a lady that is set deliberately outside the code.<sup>3</sup> While

Lewis has pointed out that Chaucer's Criseyde is far less calculating and wanton than Boccaccio's,<sup>4</sup> it cannot be maintained that she is as ideal a courtly character as Troilus. And yet, all the while, she is portrayed by the poet and spoken of by all the characters within the poem as most exemplary. Just before her treachery is made complete, Chaucer paints his tenderest portrait of her:

Criseyde wene was of hire stature,  
 Therto of shap, of face, and ek of cheere,  
 Ther myghte ben no fairer creature.  
 And ofte tyme this was hire manere,  
 To gon yressed with hire heres ciere  
 Doun by hire coler at hire bak byhynde,  
 Which with a thred of gold she wolde bynde.

And save hire browes joyneden yfers,  
 Ther nas no lak, in aught I kan espie.  
 But for to speken of hire eyen clere,  
 Lo, trowely, they writen that hire syen  
 That Paradis stood formed in hire yen.  
 And with hire riche beaute evere more  
 Strof love in hire ay, which of hem was more.

She sobre was, ek symple, and wys withal,  
 The best ynorished ek that myghte be,  
 And goodly of hire speche in general,  
 Charitable, estatlich, lust, and fre;  
 Ne nevere mo ne lakked hire pite;  
 Tendre-herted, slydyng of corage; . . .<sup>5</sup>

The portrait is hardly sarcastic, for it is preceded by the manly sketch of Diomedes and followed by the equally noble portrait of Troilus. Nor is it ironic in the usual sense of irony, for Chaucer interrupts the flow of narrative immediately after her betrayal is completed:

Ne me ne list this sely woman chide  
 Forther than the stoyre wol devyse.  
 Hire name, allas! is punysshed so wide,  
 That for hire gilt it oughte ynough suffise.

And if I myghte excuse hire any wise  
 For she so sory was for hire untrouthe, 6  
 Iwis, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe.

There is, throughout the poem, a deeply-felt tension between ideal and real behavior in the case of Criseyde, a tension that numerous critics have felt to be the key to the meaning, if not the meaning itself, of the poem.<sup>7</sup> There can be little doubt, in spite of the fact that Troilus is a romance, that Chaucer is to a great extent a naturalistic writer. Muscatine attributes this to the bourgeois French tradition of the fabliau, the no-nonsense, naturalistic atmosphere of the "Miller's Tale."<sup>8</sup> It flourished during the latter part of the fourteenth century. Such works as Piers Plowman give ample evidence that the atmosphere of the fabliau extended beyond its genre; it is, in fact, according to Muscatine, juxtaposed to the courtly tradition throughout the Troilus, the real and the ideal consenting upon each other.<sup>9</sup> Certainly the frequent use of commonplace, often incongruous, bourgeois images does give evidence of this tension on a stylistic plane. But it does not entirely explain the poem. This is a tale about romantic love, and any tension noted must be explained in terms of that theme before any comprehensive meaning can be determined for the poem.

To begin with a consideration of Criseyde's character and function in the poem, it is necessary first to examine her as an ideal romantic lady. Criseyde is, except for her brief appearance before Hector, first seen through Troilus' eyes, and Troilus has shown on at least one occasion a marked tendency to "take her for the best."<sup>10</sup> By the time of her actual appearance in Book II, she

has already been firmly established as a conventional courtly lady.

She initially appears to Troilus as perfection itself:

' . . . whether goddesse or womman, iwis  
She be, I not, which that ye do me serve.'<sup>11</sup>

At his first glimpse of her through the press of the crowd he is stunned:

'O mercy, God,' thoughte he, wher hastow woned  
That art so feyr and goodly to devise?'<sup>12</sup>

Troilus' first impression of Criseyde does not abate. In Book III the poet remarks:

And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take  
This Pandarus, and into gardyn lede,  
And swich a feste and swich a proces make  
Nym of Criseyde, and of hire womanhede,  
And of hire beaute, that, withouten drede,  
It was an hevene his wordes for to here; . . .<sup>13</sup>

Even after Criseyde's betrayal is certain, Troilus laments:

'Thorough which I se that clene out of youre mynde  
Ye han me cast; and I ne kan nor way,  
For al this world, withinne myn herþe fynde  
To unloven yow a quarter of a day!'<sup>14</sup>

Troilus, of course, is in the throes of romantic passion. He does to the object of his passion what the Solitary in Wordsworth's Excursion did to his: "He coloured objects to his own desire/ As with a lover's passion."<sup>15</sup> But Troilus is not alone in his opinions.

Criseyde's charm and virtue could perhaps be discounted were it not for the portraits given by the narrator and for the praises of her made by other characters in the tale. Chaucer describes her, in fact, before the story begins:

As to my doom, in al Troies cite

Nas non so fair, for passynge every wight  
 So aungelik was hir natif beaute,  
 That lik a thing inmortal semed she,  
 As doth an hevenyssh perfit creature,  
 That down were sent in scornynge of nature.<sup>16</sup>

Not only is she beautiful, but Criseyde is also wholly feminine and virtuous:

She nas nat with the leste of hire stature,  
 But all hire lymes so wel answerynge  
 Heren to wommanhod, that creature  
 Was nevere lasse mannyssh in semyng.  
 And ek the pure wise of hire mevyng,  
 Shewed wel that men myght in hire gesse  
 Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.<sup>17</sup>

And, of course, his last and most lyrical portrait, already cited, appears in Book V. As if this were not enough, Chaucer takes pains to bring in praise of his heroine from other sources as well.

Hector, at the beginning of the tale, is moved by her natural charms:

Now was this Hector pitous of nature  
 And saugh that she was sorwfully bigon,  
 And that she was so fair a creature.<sup>18</sup>

Deiphebus later tells Pandarus he has often heard Hector "Speke of Criseyde swich honour, that he/ May seyn no bet, swich hap to hym hath she."<sup>19</sup> Pandarus himself expresses profound satisfaction when he learns that his niece is Troilus' beloved:

'For of good name and wisdom and manere  
 She hath ynough, and ek of gentillesse.  
 If she be fayr, thow woost thyself, I gesse.

Ne I nevere saugh a more bountevous  
 Of hire estat, n'a gladder, ne of speche  
 A frendlyer, n'a more gracious  
 Fer to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche  
 What for to don; and al this bet to eche,  
 In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,<sup>20</sup>  
 A kynges herte semeth by hyrs a wrecche.

Finally, these estimations of Criseyde are bolstered by those of

the party at Deiphebus' house after Criseyde has left:

She took hire leve at hem ful thriftily,  
 As she wel koude, and they hire reverence  
 Unto the fulle diden, hardyly,  
 And wonder wel speken, in hire absence,  
 Of hire, in preysing of hire excellence,  
 Hire governaunce, hire wit; and hire manere  
 Comendeden, it joie was to here.<sup>21</sup>

In short, Criseyde exemplifies the ideals of noble courtesy and beauty.

Criseyde is Chaucer's masterpiece of femininity. "Allegory," observes Lewis, "has taught him how to dispense with allegory. . . ." <sup>22</sup> His creation, no longer the confusing array of personality traits of the garden in the Romance of the Rose, is rather a unified personality. <sup>23</sup> And that personality is endearingly feminine:

In the Criseyde of the first three books Chaucer has painted a touching and beautiful picture of a woman by nature both virtuous and amorous, but above all affectionate. . . . <sup>24</sup>

Admittedly, Chaucer's portrayal of his heroine presupposes traits that are now recognized as culturally induced rather than inherently feminine; nevertheless his portrait represents a turn toward naturalism and away from the unrealistic, ideal femininity of courtly romance. Museatine observes that the scenes with her uncle, drawn from the naturalistic, bourgeois tradition rather than from the idealistic courtly convention, "show us Criseyde the woman, pliable and movable. Like Laudine, she is in these scenes so much less the goddess. As Troilus appeals to her highest and most intangible standards of value, Pandarus addresses himself to the widow, the niece, the traitor's daughter, and the lonely female." <sup>25</sup> Throughout the poem, as Mizener observes, <sup>26</sup> Criseyde is true to her



portrait in Book V:

She sobre was, ek symple, and wys withal,  
 The best ynoriashed ek that myghte be,  
 And goodly of hire speche in general,  
 Charitable, estatlich, lusty, and fre;  
 Ne nevere mo ne lakked hire pite;  
 Tendre-herted, slydyng of corage. . . . 27

As a courtly lady, Criseyde must have, according to the tradition, one more attribute--danger. This courtly quality has no full modern equivalent. It includes a collection of reactions to the lover's advances that ranges from a prudent insistence on absolute discretion for the sake of reputation to a capricious cruelty toward the lover reminiscent of the treatment of men by the classical gods. Indeed, it is danger, along with beauty, that exalts the lady and emphasizes the separation between her and her tortured lover. It is at this point that Criseyde begins to depart from the convention. Criseyde's danger is subdued, subordinated to a more important aspect of her personality, her femininity. Troilus, as has been mentioned, sees more danger in Criseyde than she actually exhibits, especially before their first meeting. He is, of course, being purely conventional in his outbursts, but his complaints contrast sharply with actuality; for Criseyde proves herself a woman with a great capacity for pity. When Troilus faints, for example, at their tryst, Criseyde:

. . . to deliveren hym fro bittre bondes  
 She ofte hym kiste; and shortly for to seyne,  
 Hym to revoken she did al hire peyne. 28

Criseyde is self-protective to a degree, but she never matches the cold ideal expressed by Troilus. At their first meeting she makes one attempt to assert her sovereignty:

'But natheles, this warne I yow,' quod she,  
 'A kinges sone although ye be, ywys,  
 Ye shal namore han soverignite  
 Of me in love, than right in that cas is;  
 N'y nyl forbere, if that ye don amys,  
 To wratthe yow; and whil that ye me serve,  
 Chericen yow right after ye disserve.<sup>29</sup>

But the threat has no substance. When Troilus faints at their next meeting, Criseyde abandons the distance she has set between them and receives Troilus in her bed.

This is not to say, however, that Criseyde is not concerned for her reputation. She does show a conventional reluctance for the protection of her good name, even in her uncle's company:

But natheles, yet gan she hym biseche,  
 Although with hym to gon it was no fere,  
 For to ben war of goosesh peoples speche,  
 That dremen thynges whiche that nevere were,  
 And wel avyse hym whom he broughte there.<sup>30</sup>

But Criseyde's reluctance actually goes far deeper than a simple concern for her honor.

While Troilus embraces the romantic spirit of love in both its light and dark aspects, Criseyde shrinks from that love, especially from its darker side. She is, nevertheless, attracted to Troilus at the same time that she is shrinking from the sinister implications of romantic love. Pandarus discovers this with some surprise when he comes to Criseyde to announce Troilus' love. His opening parry is an extravagant praise of Troilus' knightly virtues. Criseyde responds with favorable appreciation, opening Pandarus' way for an announcement of the impending "aventure." He is properly shocked by Criseyde's violent reaction, for Criseyde rejects not Troilus but love itself:

And she began to brest a-wepe anoon,

And seyde, 'Allas, for wo! Why nere I deed?  
 For of this world the feyth is al agoon.  
 Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,  
 Whan he, that for my bests frende I wende,  
 Het me to love, and sholde it me defende?

. . . . .  
 'What! is this al the joye and al the feste?  
 Is this youre reed? Is this my blissful cas?  
 Is this the verray mede of youre byheeste?  
 Is al this paynted process seyde, allas!  
 Right for this fyn? O lady syn, Pallas!  
 Thow in this dredful cas for me purveye,  
 For so astoned am I that I deye.'<sup>51</sup>

As Bayley remarks of her reaction:

She sees herself turned into an instrument of 'casuel  
 pleasaunce,' and though her fears are set at rest, the  
 passage brings home to us the ambiguity of the idea of  
 sexual love, an idea which has to cover the whole range  
 of feeling, from animal desire to louche or elegant  
 social ideas and up to the loftiest aspirations.  
 Chaucer keeps this perspective before us throughout and  
 never lets us lose sight of any part of it.<sup>52</sup>

Criseyde's thoughts, after Pandarus has left, show that she  
 clearly sees the darker side of love:

That thought was this: '~~Allas~~ syn I am free,  
 Sholde I now love, and put in jupartie  
 My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?  
 Allas! how dorst I thenken that folie?  
 May I naught wel in oþer folk aspie  
 Hire dredfull joye, hire constreinte, and hire peyne?  
 Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

'For love is yet, the mooste atorny lyf,  
 Right of hymself, that evere was bigonne;  
 For evere som mystrust or nice strif  
 Ther is in love, som cloude is over that sonne.  
 Therto we wrecched women nothing konne,  
 Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;<sup>53</sup>  
 Oure wrecche is this,oure owen wo to drynke.

As Troilus does in his first song, Criseyde questions the misery of  
 romantic love, but unlike her lover, she remains outside its  
 "constrainte" in her appraisal of it. Love, Criseyde concludes,

can come to nothing:

'That erst was nothing, into nought it torneth.'<sup>34</sup>

Even after she is eventually beguiled by love, this clearly-seen, darker view returns to her several times. Confronted by Troilus' jealous reaction to the rumor that Criseyde has a second lover, Criseyde again sees love as "fals felicitee":

'O God!' quod she, 'so worldly selynesse,  
 which clerkes callen fals felicitee,  
 Imedled is with many a bitternesse!  
 Ful angwissous than is, God woot,' quod she,  
 'Condicoun of veyn prosperitee;  
 For either joles comen nought yfeere,  
 Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.'<sup>35</sup>

And finally, facing her exile from Troy, she reiterates her view of woe as the inevitable result of love:

'Endeth thanne love in wo? Ye, or men lieth!  
 And alle worldly blisse, as thynketh me.'<sup>36</sup>

And yet, in spite of a recurring view of the mutability and misery inherent in romantic love, Criseyde embraces it, accepts it for a time so completely that she can, like Troilus, threaten suicide at the prospect of separation. The elaborate process of fate, chance, and deliberate argument by which Criseyde is won represents the most original segment of Chaucer's treatment of the tale.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of her recognition of the dark side of love and her instinctively negative response to it, Criseyde is won over to love, beguiled by conditions and attractions that make her acceptance of Troilus inevitable in the light of her unfolding characterization. To begin with, although Criseyde may shrink from the passion of romantic love, she nevertheless can be attracted to men. "Who yaf me drynke?" she asks herself when she steals her first glimpse of Troilus through the window.<sup>1</sup> She has already expressed to Pandarus her admiration of manly, knightly virtues:

'For trewelich I holde it gret deynte,  
A kynges sone in armes wel to do,  
And ben of goode condiciouns therto;  
For gret power and moral vertu here  
Is selde yseyn in o persone yfere.'<sup>2</sup>

It is the natural attractiveness of these virtues with which Pandarus opens his campaign:

'And ek his fresshe brother Troilus,  
The wise, worthi Ector the secunde,  
In whom that alle vertu list habounde,  
As alle trouth and alle gentilesse,  
Wisdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.'<sup>3</sup>

And it is to these virtues that Criseyde's thoughts turn after Troilus has passed her window:

And [she] gan to caste and rollen up and down  
Withinne hire thought his excellent prowesse,  
And his estat, and also his renown,  
His wit, his shap, and ek his gentilesse. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Well he might be attractive to her, for he has just returned in triumph from battle, looking like a veritable god of war:

This Troilus sat on his baye steede,  
 Al armed, save his hed, ful richely,  
 And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,  
 On which he rood a pas ful softely.  
 But swich a knyghtly sighte, trowely,  
 As was on hym, was nought, withouten faille,  
 To loke on Mars, that god is of bataille.

So lik a man of armes and a knyght  
 He was to seen, fulfilled of heigh prowesse;  
 For bothe he hadde a body and a myght  
 To don that thing, as wel as hardynesse;  
 And ek to seen hym in his gere hym dresse,  
 So fressh, so yong, so weldy semed he,  
 It was an heven upon hym for to see.

His helm tohewen was in twenty places,  
 That by a tyseew heng his bak byhynde;  
 His sheeld todashed was with swerdes and maces,  
 In which men myght many an arwe fynde  
 That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rynde.<sup>5</sup>

Even more seductive than his ideal manliness, however, is his woe; weakness wins Criseyde's reluctant love. The temptation to pity Troilus, natural as it is for Criseyde, has ironic overtones, because Pandarus arouses her pity by playing up the very aspect of romantic love that Criseyde shrinks from, Troilus' death threat:

'The noble Troilus, so loveth the,  
 That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane be.  
 'Lo, here is al? What sholde I moore seye?  
 Do what yow lest, to make hym lyve or deye.'<sup>6</sup>

But Pandarus does elaborate. Immediately he adds his own death threat to the lover's, increasing her "guilt" if she does not comply with his request. And then he adds one further temptation:

'Now understonde, for I yow nought requere  
 To bynde yow to hym thorough no byheste,  
 But only that ye make hym bettre chiere

Than ye han doon er this, and moore feste,  
 So that his lif be saved atte leeste:  
 This al and som, and pleynty oure entente.  
 God help me so, I nere other mente!<sup>7</sup>

Finally to his protestation that Criseyde certainly may hide behind her danger, Pandarus adds one cruel "clincher" to his argument, the conventional call to the young lady "to make such of time":

'Think ek how elde wasteth every houre  
 In eche of yow a partie of beutes;  
 And therefore, er that age the devoure,  
 Go love; for old, ther wol no wighte of the.

. . . . .

'So longe wote ye lyve, and alle proude,  
 'Til crows feet be growen under youre yē.'<sup>8</sup>

Criseyde's reaction is inevitable. She is being asked to love on the very terms from which she shrinks so fearfully. Her flat rejection of adventure is countered, however, by the repeated threat of suicide by her uncle. She, who "wel neigh starf for feere," reconsiders:

. . . 'Unhappes fallen thikke  
 Alday for love, and in swych manere cas  
 As men ben cruel in himself and wikke;  
 And if this man sle here hyzself, allas!  
 In my presence, it wol be no solas.  
 What men wolde of hit deme I kan nat saye.  
 It nedeth we ful sleightly for to pleie.'<sup>9</sup>

Pandarus has tempted her with this one courtly condition: Criseyde may hide behind her danger. She accepts the "game" solely on this condition:

'Now wel,' quod she, 'and I wol doon my peyne;  
 I shal syn herte ayeins my lust constreyne.

'But that I nyl nat holden bym in honde;  
 Ne love a man ne kan I naught ne may,  
 Ayeins my wyl; but elles wol I fonde,

Wyn honour sauf, please hym fro day to day.  
 Therto nolde I nat ones han seyde nay,  
 But that I drede, as in my fantasye;  
 But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladie.

And here I make a protestacioun,  
 That in this proces if ye depper go,  
 That certeynly, for no salvacioun  
 Of yow, though that ye erterven bothe two,  
 Though al the world on o day be my fo,  
 Ne shal I nevere of hym han other routhe.<sup>10</sup>

And so, when Pandarus leaves, Criseyde has, rather than accepting fully romantic love, chosen to play a dangerous game, taking refuge in the distant, imperious role of the courtly lady, accepting him as a suitor, but still holding him off at arm's length. She feels at this point that she can honorably take the role expected of her and still remain free of love's constraint:

. . . when that she  
 Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought  
 Of peril, why she ought afered be.  
 For man may love, of possibilite,  
 A woman so, his herte may tobreste,  
 And she naught love ayein, but if her leste.<sup>11</sup>

This comforting thought is bolstered by the appealing appearance of Troilus in the street in his victorious splendor. Pandarus' account of Troilus' woe begins to take effect:

But moost hir favour was, for his distresse  
 Was al for hire, and thoughte it was a routhe,<sup>12</sup>  
 To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

The temptation to love has been offered, but Criseyde has not yet succumbed. Chaucer significantly interrupts the narrative at this point to emphasize that Criseyde, unlike Troilus, does not fall into love at the first glance:

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly



Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclayne  
 To like hym first, and I have told yow whi;  
 And after that, his manhod and his pyne  
 Made love withinne hire herte for to myne,  
 For which, by proces and by good servyse,  
 He gat hire love, and in no sodeyn wyse.<sup>13</sup>

After Troilus has left, Criseyde continues her debate. She reflects that a courtly relationship with Troilus would not harm her socially, since he is royal. She also reflects on her own beauty as befitting the role of a courtly lady and realizes that she is free of a jealous husband. If Troilus is honorable, as he promises to be, she has no cause to fear. Immediately, however, the darker side of love enters her thoughts:

'Allas! how sorest I thenken that folie?  
 May I naught wel in other folk asprie  
 Hire dreddfull joye, hire constreints, and hire peynes?<sup>14</sup>

Love is full of pain, Criseyde realizes, and treachery too. But soon, as if to answer her fears, her niece Antigone can be heard singing in the garden:

'And whoso seith that for to love is vice,  
 Or thredde, though he feele in it destresse,  
 He outhur is envious, or right nyce,  
 Or is unmyghty, for his shrewednesse,  
 (To loven; for swich manere folk, I gesse,  
 Defamen love, as nothing of him knowe.  
 Thei spoken, but thei benten nevere his bowe!

'What is the sonne wers, of kynde right,  
 Though that a man, for feeblesse of his yen,  
 May nought endure on it to see for bright?  
 Or love the wers, though wrecches on it crien?  
 No wele is worth, that may no scrwe dryen.

. . . . .  
 'Al drede I first to love hym to bigynne,  
 Now woot I wel, there is no peril inne.<sup>15</sup>

The song is both timely and persuasive. Chaucer observes that Criseyde's conversion to love has finally begun:

But every word which that she of hire herde,  
 She gan to prenten in hire herte faste,  
 And ay gan love hire lasse for t'agaste  
 Than it dide erst, and synken in hire herte,  
 That she wex somewhat able to converte.<sup>16</sup>

Once Criseyde's fear of the dark side of love is allayed, Pandarus finds it relatively simple to wear down her reservations, step-by-step, until she finally receives Troilus in her bed. Criseyde, having accepted the ambiguous role of a courtly lady, finds that she is unable to maintain her distance from Troilus. Under Pandarus' relentless campaign, she finds her time is running out; Pandarus chides her:

'But ye han played the tirant neigh to longe,  
 And hard was it youre herte for to grave.  
 Now stynte, that ye no lenger on it honge,  
 Al wolde ye the forme of daunger save,  
 But hasteth yow to doon hym joye have.'<sup>17</sup>

Point by point, she gives in to Pandarus' encouragements and threats until Troilus is in her bed and she submits fully to love. The scene in the bedchamber is merely the last link in a chain of events leading Criseyde to accept Troilus. And so, she can say, with no reflection on her character:

'Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,<sup>18</sup>  
 Ben yold, ywis, I were now nought heere!'

This passage has aroused a great amount of controversy among critics. It has frequently been used as proof that Criseyde came to Pandarus' house fully intending to meet Troilus and fully intending as well to consummate their relationship. Robert P.

apRoberts effectively refutes this interpretation by pointing out that Chaucer makes it clear that Criseyde not only believes Troilus absent, but that she could only be persuaded to come on the condition that Troilus not be present.<sup>19</sup> "I were now nought here!" does not necessarily refer to her arrival at Pandarus' house. In context, it might more logically refer to Criseyde's symbolic presence at the threshold of love. Criseyde is saying to Troilus, "I would not have allowed myself to be in this situation had I not been prepared to love." She might have added that she has run out of arguments. Her conversion--Chaucer emphasizes the fact--is slow. It has been gradually drawing toward completion in her mind. In spite of the fact that she still resists when Troilus appears, she has retreated to the last step. Giving in, as she must, to this final request, she has completed her conversion. Not is her conversion to love in any way spurred on by wantonness. apRoberts observes:

A lady who is sure of her lover's worthiness and who feels that his service merits reward may arrange and carry out a meeting in Criseyde's way without violating the Courtly code. Natural appetite is an accepted part of Courtly Love, a convention which is not fundamentally spiritual or platonic. But, although firmly based on a natural desire, Courtly Love does place emphasis upon the spiritual qualities of Love: devotion, merit, gentillesse, and a host of other virtues are distinct features of the convention. Hence it follows that the greater the emphasis upon these qualities and the less the emphasis upon sensual desire, the greater the accordance of a story with the principles of the Courtly code. Chaucer's story makes the reader feel the truth of Criseyde's description of why she loves Troilus. . . . It is not sensuality which leads Criseyde to bed at Pandarus' house. It is not sensuality which leads her to receive Troilus.

The point is not, as some critics would have us believe, that Criseyde is a widow experienced in love, but that she is as fearful of her honour as any virgin.<sup>20</sup>

And Bayley observes that "the physical desire which beckons. . .

[Boccaccio's heroine] on is quite absent from the many pros and cons that fill Criseyde's mind when she is confronted with the prospect of love."<sup>21</sup> If she must be criticised at all, remarks Lewis, it could only be on the grounds that she is not wanton enough.<sup>22</sup>

Later, Criseyde announces that her conversion to love is complete.

The dark side of love, she now feels, is only an illusion:

'Lord, trowe ye a covetous or a wrecche,  
That blameth love, and halt of it despit,  
That of tho pens that he kan make and krecche  
Was evere yit yeven hym swich delit  
As is in love, in e poynt, in som plit?  
Nay, douteles, for also God me save,  
So perfit joie may no nygard have.

'They wol seyn 'yis,' but Lord! so that they lye,  
Tho beay wrecches, ful of wo and drede!  
Thei callen love a woodnesse or folie,  
But it shall falle hem as I shal yow rede;  
They shal forgon the white and ek the rede,  
And lyve in wo, ther God yeve hem meschaunce,  
And every lovere in his trouthe avauncel'<sup>23</sup>

So complete is her conversion that she can now see love as eternal, when she saw it before as certain mutability:

. . . 'O herte deere,  
The game, ywys, so ferforth now is gon,  
That first shal Phebus fallen from his spere,  
And everich egle ben the dowves feere,  
And everi roche out of his place sterte  
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte.'<sup>24</sup>

But the blissful aspect of love does not last past the lyrical interlude of Book III. Love's darker aspect quickly reasserts itself and Criseyde is devastated by it. Her initial reaction is

romantic; her grief is genuine:

Therwith the teris from hire eyen two  
 Down fille, as shour in Aperil ful swithe;  
 Hire white brest she bet, and for the wo  
 After the deth she cryed a thousand sithe,  
 Syn he that wont hire wo was for to lithe,  
 She moot forgon; for which disaventure,  
 She held hireself a forlost creature.<sup>25</sup>

She swears that if the sorrow of leaving does not kill her outright,

'Thanne shal no mete or drynke come in me  
 Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;  
 And thus myselfen wol I don to dethe.'<sup>26</sup>

In spite of her romantic outburst, Criseyde does not reflect the selfishness of the more purely romantic Troilus, whose lament is focused entirely on himself:

'O my Criseyde, O lady sovereigne  
 Of thilke woful soule that thus crieth,  
 Who shal now yeven comfort to my peyne?  
 Allas! no wight. . . .'<sup>27</sup>

In contrast, Criseyde's thoughts quickly turn sympathetically toward her lover:

She seyde, 'How shal he don, and ich also?  
 How sholde I lyve, if that I from hym twynne?  
 ● deere herte eke, that I love so,  
 Who shal that sorwe slen that ye ben inne?'<sup>28</sup>

It is compassion rather than the ideal of courtly love that rules Criseyde's heart at this crucial moment. Her conversion to love has not been as complete as she and her lover had believed it to be.

VI

How, exactly, is Criseyde led back out of love and into betrayal? The very courtly code of conduct that has led Criseyde to Troilus now aids in the development of their irrevocable separation. The real comes into direct conflict with the ideal. Criseyde, of course, is not heroic. She is, on the contrary, totally feminine; Lewis finds her more than anything motivated by fear.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, she craves a protective male image. She finds this protection in the early days of courtship:

. . . wel she felte he was to hire a wal  
Of stiel, and sheld from every displeaunce;  
That to ben in his goode governaunce,  
So wis he was, she was namore afered. . . .<sup>2</sup>

But Troilus fails her at the crucial moment, and he fails her precisely because of his courtliness. For Troilus refuses to flee with Criseyde without her consent. Honor transcends happiness in the courtly scheme of life:

'Yet drede I moost hire herte to perturbe  
With violence, if I do swich a game;  
For if I wolde it openly desturbe,  
It mooste be disclaundre to hire name,  
And me were levere ded than hire diffame,  
As nolde God but if I sholde have  
Hire honour levere than my lif to save!'<sup>3</sup>

After Criseyde has promised to attempt to steal away after ten days, Troilus does propose flight. She rejects it, not only because

he shows lack of trust in refusing to believe she will carry out her plan, but also because, as a woman placed in the position of having to make such a decision, she cannot help but shrink from the terror of the unknown:

. . . 'Ywys, my deere herte trewe,  
 We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,  
 And fynden swich unthrifty weyes newe;  
 But afterward, ful soore it wol us rewe.'<sup>4</sup>

while Troilus is obeying the code in asking her to make the decision, the code is, in turn, placing "a burden of moral decision upon the lady which in the case of Criseyde is ironically unfair."<sup>5</sup> So she chooses instead her original plan of returning to Troy on her own within ten days.

At this point Criseyde's very femininity begins to work against her, for the courtly code, by its very nature, demands an aggressive, even masculine role, from the lady. Dorothy Everett has stated:

The very qualities demanded of an ideal courtly lady are the cause of Criseyde's downfall. She could not have returned to Troilus, nor could he. . . have taken action to bring her back.<sup>6</sup>

De Rougement observes that "Arthurian romance, which supplanted the chanson de geste with astonishing swiftness in the middle of the twelfth century, differs from this chanson in that it allots to a woman the part formerly taken by a suzerain."<sup>7</sup> The service owed to the lady is closely modeled on the system of feudal vasselage, remarks Lewis: "The lover is the lady's 'man'. He addresses her as midons, which etymologically represents not 'my lady' but 'my lord'."<sup>8</sup> The men in service at court were also politically inferior to the lady in spite of their haughty superiority over the peasantry.<sup>9</sup>

And Broadbent, in comparing the close relationship of courtly love to Arab and Eastern attitudes, finds that in the Arabian system, which he feels was imported into Provence through commercial ties, "the lover was always abject, as a slave before his master (women were conventionally referred to as male)."<sup>10</sup> And yet, in spite of the advantages gained by women with the development of the courtly tradition, there still were problems. Bayley observes:

Though in some ways the Code makes it easier for men and women to love each other freely, the old troubles remain, and the new ability of women to command in love does not always offset but may merely repeat the trials of male domination. It is in some ways an honourable ending to the pursuit that Troilus should become his lady's servant. . . . But the reversal creates as many problems as it resolves.<sup>11</sup>

Placed once again in complete isolation after the bliss of conjugal love, Criseyde once more shrinks from the unbearable actuality of pain. Just as she cannot command Troilus to take her away, she cannot really face an actual love death. Criseyde faints when Troilus comes to her and revives to find him at the point of suicide. She says at first that she would have followed him into death, but the prospect clears her mind:

'Lo, herte myn, wel woot ye this' quod she,  
 'That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,  
 And seketh nought how holpen for to be,  
 It nys but folie and encrees of peyne; . . .'<sup>12</sup>

And so Criseyde takes her leave of Troilus with a promise to return within ten days. She feels while still within the safety of Troy that her return is indeed inevitable:

'And though so be that pees ther may be non,



Yet hider, though there never pees ne were,  
I moste come; for whider sholde I gon,  
Or how, meschaunce, sholde I dwelle there  
Among the men of armes evere in feere?<sup>13</sup>

Criseyde has not counted on Diomedes.

VII

Diomede is obviously not a courtly lover, at least of the type that Troilus exemplifies. His protestations of courtly servitude scantily hide his aggressive vigor. He is, in fact, something quite different from Troilus. Lewis sees him as cruel and domineering, inspiring a latent masochism in Criseyde.<sup>1</sup> Roger, Sharrock, to the contrary, finds that, for all his brutality, Diomede is important only because he is the next man she meets after leaving Troilus.<sup>2</sup> It must be kept in mind, however, that Diomede falls away from the ideal at precisely the points in which the ideal Troilus fails her. After pledging knightly service and protection, he commands her:

'Yeve me youre hond; I am, and shal ben ay,  
 God helpe me so, while that my lyf may dure,  
 Youre owene aboven every creature.'<sup>3</sup>

Masterful and smooth and direct in his speech as he is, Diomede is capable of inspiring confidence as Troilus never could:

And trusten hym she<sub>4</sub>wolde, and wel she myghte,  
 As seyde she; . . .

It is inevitable that she will succumb to him. Chaucer has arranged everything, according to apRoberts, so that Criseyde must choose between Diomede and life or Troilus and death.<sup>5</sup> While there might be a third choice, that of remaining in the Greek camp without giving herself to Diomede, "it is entirely credible that one of her

temperament should find support where she could."<sup>6</sup> Criseyde already considers herself unfaithful in failing to return.

And all the while that Diomedes is courting Criseyde's confidence, Troilus is paralyzed by his passion. Criseyde finds her resolve failing:

Retornynge in hire soule ay up and down  
 The wordes of this sodeyn Diomedes,  
 His grete estat, and perel of the town,  
 And that she was allone and hadde nede  
 Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede  
 The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,  
 That she took fully purpos for to dwelle.<sup>7</sup>

While Diomedes is thus winning Criseyde in a deliberately obscured time scheme that puts the emphasis rather on Troilus' suffering,<sup>8</sup> Troilus is moving steadily through suffering toward death. The dark side of his love finally nearing consumption, Troilus' thoughts from the moment of separation are centered on death. Heroic as he is, he refuses, as has already been seen, to attempt a rescue. He refused to flee because Criseyde would not agree, which was understandable. He refused to abduct her when she was about to leave the city for fear that she might be killed. That too is understandable. But now he refuses to rescue her for fear of being discovered by the Greeks; and that is inexcusable. Paralyzed by a perverse sense of fulfillment in separation and suffering, Troilus charges Criseyde with the responsibility of comforting him, knowing from the beginning, or at least suspecting it, that she could not possibly return:

'O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fol  
 O lady myn, that I love and na mo!  
 To whom for evermo myn herte I dowe,<sup>10</sup>  
 Se how I dey, ye nyl me nat rescowe!

Because of the exaltation of the lady, and because love came to him involuntarily from her beauty, Troilus has looked upon Criseyde as a goddess, the prime mover of both his sorrow and his bliss. As she gave him bliss in the third book, now she consummates his suffering in the fifth. So intent is Troilus on this course, that he is certain of her betrayal even before she has actually committed it, or at least before he has any reason to believe her false:

Incessen gan the wo fro day to nyght  
 Of Troilus, for taryng of Criseyde;  
 And lessen gan his hope and ek his myght,  
 For which al down he in his bed hym leyde.  
 He ne eet, ne dronk, ne slep, ne no word seyde,  
 Ymagynyng ay that she was unkynde;  
 For which wel neigh he wex out of his mynde. <sup>ll</sup>

When it becomes apparent that she will not return, he seeks his death in battle.

Chaucer does not, however, end the story with Troilus' passionate consummation of the dark side of love; Troilus remains before the reader after his death, in heaven and with a change of heart. Much has been made of the epilogue to this romance. While palinodes, or retractions, are not unusual in accounts of courtly love, it has been noted repeatedly that this epilogue is more closely tied to the tale than a more conventional retraction.

When the epilogue is examined in the light of the two faces of romantic love, and in the light of Criseyde's realistic appraisal of the mutability of such passionate feelings, then the epilogue is an eminently appropriate and satisfying conclusion to the poem. For

Troilus has a revelation after he dies:

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse  
 This litel spot of ertne, that with the se  
 Embraced is, and fully gan despise  
 This wrecched world, and held al vanite  
 To respect of the pleyn felicite  
 That is in hevене above; and at the laste,  
 Ther he was slayn, his lokyng down he caste.

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.<sup>12</sup>

Troilus laughs not so much at love as at suffering, at his very romanticism. He does not, as he had believed, carry a fully consummated passionate love with him into the after-life. "Swich fyn hath, lo this Troilus for love!"<sup>13</sup> comments the narrator. How useless, he might have said. Such a love as Troilus had placed on Criseyde is not to be placed on human beings. Criseyde is not a goddess, as Troilus had seen her, but a frail human being, a woman needing protection and guidance rather than bestowing them. No wonder, Chaucer seems to imply, Troilus suffers so. There is, after all, only one proper God on whom such passionate love can be placed. Romantic love, was, after all, recognized as a heresy, and as a heresy it could lead only to error and grief. While other writers, enamored as they were of the attractiveness of romantic love, merely tacked on their orthodox conclusions as a matter of custom or necessity, Chaucer has made the conclusion inevitable from the very failure of the ideal to give true and lasting happiness. Chaucer does not get involved with love; he clearly maintains a careful and often repeated distance from it. He is an outsider, with a solidly

naturalistic, bourgeois background. He could not have avoided noticing, as observant as he is known to have been, that courtly love, at least in literature, had an element in it that was dark and sinister. As sunny as his view of life was, as fully human as he was, with his clear, sympathetic acceptance of human failings, he could not have done anything but disapprove of the inhumanly cold world of romantic passion.

Troilus, at first, had looked toward human love as a purifier of his passion. But, as Sharrock observes, "in the poem the real world does not purify, it destroys; the hiding place [of Book III] is brutally ransacked."<sup>14</sup> The poem does not end as it does because Troilus places his faith in a bad woman, or even in the wrong woman.<sup>15</sup> In terms of the poem's meaning, Criseyde is neither good nor bad; the very system of values, courtly love, by which she would be judged is ineffective. The meaning hinges, rather, as Muscatine observes, in Troilus' placing his faith "in a thing which can reflect back on him the image of that faith and yet be incapable of sustaining it."<sup>16</sup> Criseyde is ambiguous because she reflects the image of a particular ideal of femininity, an ideal which has become one of the most pervasive elements of European culture; and yet it is an ideal which is alien to her nature. Troilus mistakes her for a goddess when nothing could be further from the truth. Criseyde can never be an extreme of anything, either good or bad. If she is viewed from the prejudice of belief in romantic love (and we are not so far removed from that prejudice to be completely free of it), she appears bad. But Criseyde does not believe in love, and if she is viewed from outside that belief, her actions and her character become understandable.

FOOTNOTES

I

<sup>1</sup>Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup>Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. by F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), 2. 22-28.

<sup>5</sup>John Bayley, The Character of Love. (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 50.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>J. B. Broadbent, Poetic Love (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964), pp. 17-18.

<sup>8</sup>William George Dodd, "The System of Courtly Love," in Chaucer Criticism, ed. by Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor, II (University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), pp. 12-13.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-12.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-8.

<sup>12</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>14</sup>Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, tr. by Montgomery Belgion (New York: Pantheon, 1956), pp. 30-54.

II

<sup>1</sup>Troilus, l. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1. 874.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 5. 427.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 1. 400-420.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 5. 638-644.

<sup>6</sup>Robert G. Cook, "Chaucer's Pandarus and the Medieval Ideal of Friendship," JEGP, LXIX, 417.

<sup>7</sup>Troilus, 3. 1744-1771.

### III

<sup>1</sup>Edmund Reiss, "Troilus and the Failure of Understanding," MLQ, XXIX, 131-144.

<sup>2</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Dodd, "Courtly Love," p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Troilus, 1. 523-525.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 3. 1772-1806.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 3. 393-399.

<sup>7</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 195.

<sup>8</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 137.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Dorothy Everett, "Troilus and Criseyde" in Essays on Middle English Literature (Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 126.

<sup>11</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 195.

<sup>12</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 133.

<sup>13</sup>Rougement, Love in Western World, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, pp. 194-195.

<sup>15</sup>Troilus, 1. 183-189.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 1. 197-203.

<sup>17</sup>Rougement, Love in Western World, pp. 47-48.

<sup>18</sup>Dodd, "Courtly Love," p. 13.



- 19 Troilus, 1. 299-301.
- 20 Ibid., 1. 189.
- 21 Ibid., 1. 302-307.
- 22 Walter Clyde Curry, "Destiny in Troilus and Criseyde," in Chaucer Criticism, II, 34-70. Morton W. Bloomfield, "Distance and Predestination in Troilus and Criseyde," PMLA, LXXII, 14-26.
- 23 Everett, Essays, p. 133.
- 24 Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 132.
- 25 Lewis, Allegory of Love, pp. 18-22. Peter Bronke, in "The Conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde," Medium Aevum, XXXIII, 50-51, notes that "To an extent scarcely paralleled in any medieval poet except Dante, Chaucer sees a divine dimension in human love. To express the height of love of Troilus and Criseyde he uses not Boccaccio's words (Oh dolce notte) but the very words of the Easter-night liturgy: O blisful nyght--O vere beata nox! The language of love in Troilus III has a strong undercurrent of language relating to the Redemption."
- 26 Troilus, 1. 318-320.
- 27 Ibid., 1. 358-364.
- 28 Ibid., 1. 519-525.
- 29 Rougement, Love in Western World, pp. 41-42.
- 30 Troilus, 3. 736-737.
- 31 Rougement, Love in Western World, p. 37.
- 32 Siegfried Wenzel, "Chaucer's Troilus of Book IV," PMLA, LXXIX, 345.
- 33 Troilus, 4. 526-539.
- 34 Ibid., 4. 540-560.
- 35 Ibid., 4. 561-567.
- 36 Ibid., 4. 568-574.
- 37 Ibid., 5. 36-49.
- 38 Ibid., 5. 52-56.
- 39 Ibid., 5. 1576-1582.

- <sup>40</sup>Cook, "Friendship," p. 417.
- <sup>41</sup>Troilus, 1. 926-927.
- <sup>42</sup>Cook, "Friendship," pp. 416-417.
- <sup>43</sup>Troilus, 4. 250-252
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., 4. 1209-1211.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid., 4. 295-301.
- <sup>46</sup>James I. Wimsatt, Allegory and Mirror (New York: Western Publishing Co., 1970), p. 76.
- <sup>47</sup>Troilus, 5. 624-627.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid., 5. 582-585.
- <sup>49</sup>Rougement, Love in Western World, p. 41.
- <sup>50</sup>Troilus, 4. 316-322.
- <sup>51</sup>Ibid., 5. 1695-1701.

## IV

- <sup>1</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, pp. 166-167.
- <sup>2</sup>Dodd, "Courtly Love," pp. 10-12.
- <sup>3</sup>Everett, Essays, p. 125.
- <sup>4</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 122.
- <sup>5</sup>Troilus, 5. 306-325.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., 5. 1093-1099.
- <sup>7</sup>Robert G. Payne, The Key of Remembrance (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 224-225. Broadbent, Poetic Love, p. 42. Wenzel, "Book IV," p. 542. Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 158. Bayley, Character of Love, p. 74.
- <sup>8</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 59.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 128-129.
- <sup>10</sup>Troilus, 2. 1321-1327.
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., 1. 425-426.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 1. 267-277.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 3. 1737-1742.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 5. 1695-1698.

<sup>15</sup>Wordsworth, Excursion, 2. 277-278.

<sup>16</sup>Troilus, 1. 100-105.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 1. 281-287.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 1. 113-115.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 2. 1453-1454.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 1. 880-889.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 3. 211-217.

<sup>22</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 178.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>25</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, pp. 155-156.

<sup>26</sup>Arthur Mizener, "Character and Action in the Case of Criseyde," in Chaucer: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. by Edward Wagenknecht (Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 352.

<sup>27</sup>Troilus, 5. 820-825.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 3. 1116-1118.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 3. 169-175.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 3. 582-586.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 2. 408-427.

<sup>32</sup>Bayley, Character of Love, p. 81.

<sup>33</sup>Troilus, 2. 771-784.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 2. 798.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 3. 813-819.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 4. 834-835.

<sup>37</sup>Mizener, "Character and Action," p. 352.

- <sup>1</sup>Troilus, 2. 651.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2. 164-168.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., 2. 157-161.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 2. 659-662.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., 2. 624-642.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., 2. 319-322.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., 2. 358-364.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., 2. 392-403.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., 2. 449-462.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., 2. 475-489.
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., 2. 604-609.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 2. 663-665.
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., 2. 673-679.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid., 2. 774-776.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., 2. 855-875.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., 2. 899-903.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 2. 1240-1244.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 3. 1210-1211.
- <sup>19</sup>Robert P. Roberts, "The Central Episode in Chaucer's Troilus,"  
MLA, LXXVII, 373.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 382.
- <sup>21</sup>Bayley, Character of Love, p. 95.
- <sup>22</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 183.
- <sup>23</sup>Troilus, 3. 1373-1386.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 3. 1493-1498.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., 4. 750-756.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 4. 775-777.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 4. 316-319.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 4. 757-760.

## VI

<sup>1</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup>Troilus, 3. 479-482.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 4. 561-567.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 4. 1528-1531.

<sup>5</sup>Bayley, Character of Love, pp. 75-76.

<sup>6</sup>Everett, Essays, pp. 136-137.

<sup>7</sup>Rougement, Love in Western World, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 12

<sup>10</sup>Broadbent, Poetic Love, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup>Bayley, Character of Love, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup>Troilus, 4. 1254-1257.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 4. 1359-1363.

## VII

<sup>1</sup>Lewis, Allegory of Love, pp. 186-190.

<sup>2</sup>Roger Sharrock, "Second Thoughts: C. S. Lewis on Chaucer's Troilus," Essays in Criticism, VIII, 130-131.

<sup>3</sup>Troilus, 5. 152-154.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 5. 188-189.

<sup>5</sup>apRoberts, "Criseyde's Infidelity and the Moral of the Troilus," Speculum, XLIV, 387.

<sup>6</sup>Everett, Essays, pp. 136-137.

<sup>7</sup>Troilus, 5. 1023-1029.

<sup>8</sup>Mizener, "Character and Action," pp. 359-360.

<sup>9</sup>Troilus, 5. 53-54.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 5. 228-231.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 5. 1436-1442.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 5. 1814-1825.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 5. 1828.

<sup>14</sup>Sharrock, "Second Thoughts," p. 137.

<sup>15</sup>Muscatine, French Tradition, p. 164.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

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