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The Book of Criseyde

Charles Kotsonis

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

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Abstract

The Book of Criseyde

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Criseyde's role in the double sorrow of Troilus has become the topic of an increasingly diversified debate in recent years. The figure of Troilus dominates the structure of Chaucer's narrative in accordance with the tradition of the tale. But Chaucer also grants Criseyde a counterpolemical subtext with a different set of concerns and expectations. From her distinct perspective, the use of threats and deception to extract commitments to Troilus directly contravenes her express demand for sovereignty in affairs of the heart (III 171-75). The narrator identifies with Troilus' ideology of love, but he also sympathizes with Criseyde's skepticism toward it. Criseyde expresses an alternative vision of earthly joy based on peace, liberty and the commonweal which approaches Chaucer's own ideal of a charitable universe.

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Introduction

Who peyntede the leon, tel me who?
By God, if wommen hadde writen stories,
As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
Than al the mark of Adam may redresse.

(CT III 692-6)

The Wife of Bath's Aesopic allusion may provide some insight into the operation of vying versions of reality that Chaucer carefully etches into The Book of Troilus. In the fable, a man shows a lion a picture of a man slaying a lion. The beast retorts that the composition is inherently biased. Similarly, the narrator of Troilus often questions the impartiality of his sources with specific reference to Criseyde and her actions.

Chaucer's version of the story is generally understood to be about a prince who suffers as a direct result of his lady's inconstancy: first she reneges on her promise to return to him, and then she yields to his rival. Even when compassionate in spirit toward Criseyde, however, such readings tend to discount the intrinsic issues that inform her decision-making process. Four important elements work strongly against tautological approaches to the text: Pandarus' use of coercion and Troilus' complicity therewith, Criseyde's sovereignty prohibition, the lovers' discordant world views, and Chaucer's deliberate obfuscation of the facts, especially in the arrangement of Book V.

Manipulation and deception lie unsettlingly at the core of the affair. Promises extracted by such unorthodox means are perhaps less binding than honourable contracts. Furthermore,

when Criseyde yields to Troilus' amorous wish, she does so on the express condition that he not seek to master her. But he does claim her, and she reserves the right to dismiss him from her service. This relates to the matter concerning the lovers' conflicting and ultimately divisive ideologies. To Troilus, love is a religion and Criseyde is the object of his worship. Criseyde, conversely, is more of an agnostic who in no way sees Troilus as her divinely ordained man.

In terms of the structure of the narrative, Chaucer adheres to the tradition of a romance that privileges one character's perspective. Criseyde's structural subordination, however, in conjunction with the circumstantial nature of the primary evidence against her, accentuates her disadvantage as a non-royal woman whose own story is never really told. Chaucer seems to suggest, accordingly, that the tables could easily be turned. Had the transmission of "the facts" been in the hands of writers more sensitive to Criseyde's grievances, the same evidence could have been arranged to paint the picture of a knight who loses the trust of his lady. This thesis, however antithetical to mainstream and traditional readings, is consistent with the social emphasis that has characterized new approaches to the subtext in Troilus which I have chosen to call "The Book of Criseyde."

Chapter One. Criseyde and Her Critics

The narrator of Chaucer's adaptation of Boccaccio's Il Filostrato sees fit to intervene on behalf of his heroine in a number of strategic narrative moments. When Criseyde first takes Troilus into her arms, and the consummation of the affair is about to begin, Chaucer turns to the women in his audience and says,

For love of God, take every womman hede
To werken thus, yf it come to the nede.
(III 1224-5)¹

This broad endorsement of Criseyde's mode of operation is followed up in the proem to the Fourth Book. In reiterating one aspect of his overall narrative objective, namely to tell "how that she forsook hym er she deyde" (I 56), Chaucer modifies his sense of Criseyde's role in the structure of the double sorrow of Troilus.

For how Criseyde Troylus forsook,
Or at the leste how that she was unkynde,
Mot hennesforth ben matere of my book.
(IV 15-7)

Toning down the inference of culpability in the operative verb of the first line, Chaucer proceeds to undermine the sincerity of the "folk" (IV 18) who have written about Criseyde, whose works he nonetheless relies upon as sources. Challenging their motives altogether, he laments

Allas, that they shoulde evere cause fynde
To speke hire harm -- and yf they on hire lye,
Ywys, hemself sholde han the vilonye.
(IV 19-21)

Chaucer's assessment of Criseyde's behaviour is expressed most

definitively toward the end of the narrative, shortly before Troilus is killed by Achilles. Once again beseeching the women in his audience, he stipulates

That al be that Criseyde was untrewe,
That for that gylt she be nat wroth with me --
Ye may hire gilte in other bokes se.
(V 1774-6)

Given these vehement statements of authorial support for his heroine, it is remarkable how relentlessly critics throughout the centuries have clung to the notion of Criseyde's moral culpability in Chaucer's text. Critics from all persuasions have joined the chorus of accusation that contradicts Chaucer's own assessment of Criseyde's behaviour. While the more conservative elements have been largely intent on degrading her from start to finish, the majority, comprised of somewhat more open-minded critics, degrade her in the very process of rising in her defense.

One of the more scurrilous assessments of Chaucer's Criseyde is afforded by one William Godwin who undertook four volumes on the Life of Geoffrey Chaucer in the early part of the nineteenth century.² Discussing the defects of the poem, Godwin asserts that "the catastrophe is unsatisfactory and offensive." What is offensive, it turns out, is the way Criseyde slips away without punishment of the sort Robert Henryson saw fit to dole out in his Testament of Cresseid.

The poet who would interest us with a love-tale, should soothe our minds with the fidelity and disinterestedness of the mutual attachment of the parties, and, if he presents us with a tragical conclusion, it should not be one which arises out of the total unworthiness of either. Criseide (as Mr. Urry, in his introduction to Henryson's epilogue to the Troilus, has very truly observed), how-

ever prepossessing may be the manner in which she appears in the early part of the poem, is "a false unconstant whore," and of a class which the mind of the reader almost demands to have exhibited, if not as "terminating in extreme misery," at least as filled with penitence and remorse.³

The perception of Criseyde's "total unworthiness," however, does not arise out of the strict evidence of Chaucer's text; that she is "false" is partially accurate with respect to her unwillingness to return to Troy as she had promised; that she is "unconstant" is a supportable opinion which necessarily privileges certain aspects of her decision-making process over others; and that she is a whore is simply untrue. Godwin's excessive castigation of Chaucer's heroine betrays a defect in his overall comprehension of the narrative structure, a bias which has diminished at best by halflives through subsequent generations of Chaucer criticism.

A century later, for example, R. K. Root sees fit to include a section in his introduction to the text under the heading "Moral Import." This section is sandwiched by -- and thus construed to be as objective as -- those on "The Range of Chaucer's Reading" and "The Text," wherein the extant manuscripts are identified. In the same authoritative voice with which he might judge the relative corruption of, say, the Cambridge manuscript, he tells us what he thinks Chaucer in his wisdom thinks of his heroine.

In the fickleness and falsehood of Criseyde, a woman so lovely, so sweet and gracious, so much to be desired, he sees the type of mutability, of the transitoriness and fallacy of earthly happiness.⁴

The equation between Criseyde's decision to forsake Troilus

and the transitoriness of all happiness is arbitrary. Nowhere does Chaucer say what Root contends. This is his opinion presented as a fact.

The strains of Godwinian bias in Root's criticism are most evident in The Poetry of Chaucer, wherein he imports moral judgement where the author has not only withheld it, but actually cautioned against it.

Her indecision, her irresolute tendency to drift with circumstance, the trait of character which Chaucer sums up in the phrase, 'slydinge of corage,' have brought her to the depths of ignominy. Criseyde's damnation is complete.⁵

The more unequivocally such assertions are made, the more evident the presence of vested interests in promoting a particular point of view. In the case of Root, suffice it to say for the moment that he does not want readers to entertain the possibility that Criseyde's perceived damnation is in any way incomplete, let alone subject to debate.

Perhaps the foremost instance of a scathing defense of Criseyde comes by way of E.T. Donaldson, who self-professedly speaks for "those of us who love Criseyde."⁶ In the course of his essay on "Criseyde and Her Narrator," he invokes the dubious authority of Shakespeare's Thersites no less than four times.⁷ We in no way "should straightway start looking at her" from Thersites' point of view. When questioning an instance of her logic, Donaldson runs "the risk of imitating Thersites and being very unfair to Criseyde." He eventually begins to sound "even more like Thersites." With respect to Criseyde's response to Diomedes, Donaldson continues, "Indeed,

had Thersites been listening, he would have had every right to conclude that her mind had now turned whore." Finally, Donaldson can say without invoking Thersites' wisdom, that "she's either heartless or a whore." Elsewhere, Donaldson argues that Criseyde, on account of her "infidelity," like Helen of Troy on account of her beauty, "exists virtually independently of the many literary imaginations of which she is the composite product."⁸ The introduction of such extra-textual unknown quantities allows for open-ended speculation on authorial motives.

A most unsettling instance of sympathy is extended by Ian Bishop, who like many is so obsessed with her troth to Troilus as to argue that it is more important than her own person. In response to Criseyde's fear of falling "in the hondes of som wreche" (V 705) should she undertake a clandestine return to Troy, Bishop asserts that

this risk of innocent rape might have been worth taking rather than that of remaining in the Greek camp to fall, as she does, into the hands of a nobly born 'wrecche' who will cause her to make her 'herte (un)-trewe".⁹

It is difficult to find anything innocent about Bishop's unfortunate oxymoron.

An outstanding example of damnation by lukewarm apologetics is provided by Constance Saintonge, who "In Defense of Criseyde" sets out from the premise that "Chaucer deplored Criseyde's infidelity. The breaking of her troth is so grievous a crime that he seems hardly able to speak of it."¹⁰ C. S. Lewis, Saintonge contends, "gives a just portrait"¹¹

of her. When we recall Lewis' Godwinian estimation of Criseyde's "further descent from being Diomedes's mistress to being a common prostitute,"¹² we must ask just what the word "defense" means to Saintonge. Her approach is typical of a widespread impulse to contradict the dominant critiques of Criseyde, only to fall back upon the standard platitudes. Thus, "if one forswears or at least postpones condemnation, one is struck by the notion that the same qualities which made her desirable brought about her fall from grace."¹³ Saintonge would sooner "for swear" condemnation, but apparently cannot see beyond the notion of Criseyde's "fall from grace," and consequently leaves us with the impression of Criseyde statically "looking forward with submissive apprehension to the monstrous pile of charges that will be laid before her."¹⁴ However, this is not how Chaucer leaves Criseyde.

Joseph Graydon constructs a more legitimate "Defense of Criseyde," whereby he contends "that her desertion of Troilus is justified and that the comments on her conduct and appraisals of her character are generally unintelligent or unfair."¹⁵ While the premise of Graydon's defense is generally consistent with Chaucer's unambiguous stipulation "That al be that Criseyde was untrewed, / That for that gylt she be nat wroth with me" (V 1774-5), his argument depends entirely on Criseyde's adherence to the "canons of Courtly Love," and thus she is but

. . . a creature of that conventional school and subject to its laws; so was Troilus for that matter, and it was his violation of the obligation to keep the secret that constituted a moving cause of the catastrophe.¹⁶

Troilus likely makes the affair public in even more ways than one,

but Chaucer goes to great lengths to demonstrate how Criseyde is not a creature of the "courtly love" school, and how she does not want to be subject to its laws.¹⁷ The propensity to judge Criseyde according to standards that she flatly rejects is shared by the vast majority of treatments of the poem.

A representative if somewhat tentative exception comes by way of Maureen Fries' "'Slydyng of Corage': Chaucer's Criseyde as Feminist and Victim."¹⁸ Her analysis focuses on Criseyde's early "declaration of independence"¹⁹ at II 750-6, and she sets out to portray Criseyde "as would-be feminist, and as victim of her actually medieval, supposedly classical society."²⁰ Reminding us that feminism is "as ancient as anti-feminism itself,"²¹ she proceeds to identify the systematic erosion of Criseyde's sovereignty. In Fries' scheme, "Criseyde as much as the people of Troy sees herself not as a separate person but as a projection of her nearest male relative."²² She is "completely a creature of the masculine establishment,"²³ such that she is culpable of "feminism of the word rather than feminism of the deed."²⁴ As suggested by the title of her essay, Fries sets up Criseyde as a martyr, and blames the establishment Criseyde must confront for denying her even that status. Thus,

she is betrayed by the tenderness and lack of fortitude which was the almost inevitable result of a culture which . . . continually emphasized the physical and mental weakness of women.²⁵

Yet Criseyde's submission to the powers that be does not

necessarily signify the end of her quest for sovereignty. To resist superior forces -- even love -- would be foolish unless martyrdom were the objective. What is surprising, however, is Fries' suggestion that somehow Criseyde would have asserted her independence by eloping with Troilus. It evidently does not occur to Fries that forsaking Troilus may in fact represent "feminism of the deed." Furthermore, Chaucer doesn't say what Criseyde does do after Troilus dies.

Mark Lambert perhaps comes closer to granting Criseyde the full range of potential motives that may account for Chaucer's own defense of her. In "Troilus, Books I-III: A Criseydan Reading,"²⁶ he takes into account the extent to which "things have been blurry" with respect to the agreement the couple reaches, and "that we don't know, or at least seem unable to recall, just when, just how, with just what understanding of the situation, a central decision was reached."²⁷ In her final letter to Troilus, Lambert suggests, she is "trying to descend from love in the easy, ambiguously marked stages by which she ascended to it."²⁸ The "deep Criseydan counter-current in the poem"²⁹ Lambert identifies and explores, culminates in a likening of Criseyde's reversal to the manner in which "Chaucer's two greatest works conclude with reversals."³⁰ Although in the case of the present poem we are more likely confronted with a clarification than a reversal, it is arguable that both Criseyde and Chaucer ultimately discredit Troilus' absolutist ideal. Unfortunately Lambert's analysis,

which he calls a "Criseydan reading of the sorrow of Troilus,"³¹ denies Criseyde any autonomy beyond her significance to Troilus. The Criseydan countercurrent "allows us to experience a complex situation in more than one way but does not cloud the central moral truth."³² Thus while Criseyde's perspective "enriches" the whole, it is held firmly in check and effectively defused with respect to any subversive potentiality. It would be interesting to see what Lambert may have conjured had he begun where he concludes, with his astute correlation of reversals. If indeed Criseyde and not Troilus is "the more profoundly autobiographical creation,"³³ as Lambert surmises, it would be apt to gauge the text accordingly.

One of the more powerful and illuminating treatments of Criseyde's decision-making process is David Aers' "Criseyde: Woman in Medieval Society."³⁴ He explores

the contradiction between the aristocratic love conventions in which woman was an exalted and powerful figure, and the social reality in which she was a totally subordinate being to be used, manipulated, and taught obedience.³⁵

In this context, he is able to show just how legitimate Criseyde's concerns for her welfare are, and the way her actions are shaped by the social forces at work. But while Aers insists that "Her movement away from commitment to Troilus must always be discussed in these contexts,"³⁶ and while he follows Chaucer in eschewing "the abstract inquisitorial moralism favoured by certain groups in many ages and countries,"³⁷ he nonetheless balks before the windmill of infidelity. In Aers' scheme, Chaucer has created a "vision of a social individual

whose bad faith was almost impossible to avoid."³⁸ Yet his penetration of Chaucer's "understanding of interrelations between individual and society, between individual responsibility and given social circumstances and ideologies"³⁹ has cleared the way for further excavation of the emotional foundation of Criseyde's decision to dismiss Troilus from her service.

Aers himself goes further in his most recent Community, Gender, and Individual Identity, which deals, in a phrase, with "structures of feeling"⁴⁰ past and present. Stepping behind the stereotypical notion of "bad faith," Aers suggests that Criseyde, as a woman, "has resources lacking in the male lover," such that

the poem makes Criseyde a figure who breaks through received anti-feminist modes in her representation and helps us grasp some of the determinant features, not to say limitations, of masculine identity.⁴¹

Recognizing the extent to which our understanding of her predicament is tempered by our sympathies toward Troilus, Aers argues:

Whereas the poet has evoked Criseyde's agonizing and complicated feelings in the military camp, Troilus, in his own misery, does not begin to grasp them. . . . She herself is assumed to be invulnerable, without needs of human solidarity or friendship; she is the endless fountain of male life. Or, as Troilus complains, she should be.⁴²

However, walking the finest of critical lines, Aers rightly cautions that "the poem does not ask us to substitute an abstract set of individualizing moral judgements against Troilus for those traditionally thrown at Criseyde."⁴³

Five years prior to Aers' landmark essay in Chaucer Review,

Stephen Knight's Rymyng Craftily appeared, scrutinizing Chaucer's poetry via classical figures of style. While no part of his treatment of Troilus focuses exclusively on Criseyde, Knight sees fit to exemplify the uses of his methodology by way of the following extrapolation in his introduction. Citing the use of repetitio in Criseyde's diction, he suggests:

It is a small but important part of the characterisation of Criseyde as a person who is manipulated by others because of her lack of a firm personality and a clear set of values.⁴⁴

With respect to this statement, his revised view of the text, and especially of Criseyde, becomes all the more forceful. In Geoffrey Chaucer, Knight observes that "it is only recently that a fully social and historical treatment of the texts has been developed, in a period when the old apparent verities of literary criticism have come under widespread attack."⁴⁵ Designating the text "a thoroughly sociohistorical work,"⁴⁶ he argues:

The dialectical relations of public and private life and values are the central topic of Troilus and Criseyde, and the poem is a most potent realization of a structure of feeling in a period when, in a mobile socioeconomic environment, the private sphere was beginning to be constructed as a possible self-concept for human beings.⁴⁷

As for Criseyde in particular, Chaucer gives her

so much of a speaking part and viewpoint and explains so fully the environment of her actions that she and they are fully comprehended and, as a result, much harder to judge in harsh and simplistically traditional terms.⁴⁸

Thus rehabilitated as "a credible, capable and admirable woman,"⁴⁹ Criseyde is seen to "symbolise," as Terry Eagleton summarizes in his preface to Knight's text, "the powerful inwardness of that private sphere,"⁵⁰ which brings us as close as we have come to an understanding of why Chaucer will not "this sely womman chyde/

Ferther than this story wol devyse" (V 1093-4).

Arlyn Diamond similarly approaches "Chaucer's great epic of courtly love as a response to a period of social chaos and violence brought on by the disintegration of feudalism and exacerbated by war." Constructing her argument around Troilus' contradictory utopian and feudal attitudes toward love, Diamond encapsulates the central polemic of gender-based approaches to the text.

In patriarchy, women's strength appears a challenge to men's; women's assigned role is a projection of men's needs; women's desire for independence appears as an intolerable threat to social stability and to natural and divine law. The lover celebrated in much of the medieval literature we read is masculine, and it is masculine experiences which shape the tradition Chaucer is using.

Diamond nonetheless defines Criseyde as "the perfect courtly mistress," whose "failure saves [Troilus]."51

Yet Chaucer casts his Criseyde in the role of skeptic. "To what fyn is swych love," she wonders when Pandarus has come and gone with word of Troilus' passion, "I kan nat se" (II 794). Within the context of today's expanding critical parameters, it is necessary to step back and differentiate between the lovers' vying versions of reality in Chaucer's scheme.

Chapter Two. Criseyde and The Book of Troilus

William Empson interrupts his explication of Pandarus' first dialogue with Criseyde (II 78 ff.) to say that he hopes "the reader will not object that I have been making up a poem of my own," but, he explains, "the process of getting to understand a poet is precisely that of constructing his poems in one's own mind."¹ The sine qua non of textual debate is the establishment of the essential elements of a given work, which in the case of this story, is where the "game" begins.

Alice Kaminsky, in her valuable work on Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and the Critics posits a most provocative summary of the plot.

No one writing about Troilus has ever suggested that it is difficult to understand the plot of the poem. A handsome young man falls in love with a beautiful woman; they have an affair which makes them blissfully happy. Forced to separate by events beyond their control, the woman betrays her lover by becoming the mistress of another man. The lover then dies in battle, assuring us after he has died that love on earth is a vain pursuit while love of God is eternally rewarding.²

Does the beautiful woman fall in love with the handsome young man, too? If they are "blissfully happy" (as opposed to blissfully what?), what does Chaucer mean when he says "there [was] som dishese among" (III 1816)? To what extent are events really "beyond their control"? The sentence "Forced to separate . . ." is grammatically and semantically flawed. The participial phrase at the beginning does not agree in number with "the woman" who is the subject.³ The sense comes close to "the woman is forced to betray," which Kaminsky likely does not intend. The shift

from plural to singular signifies a leap of logic, whereby the non-culpability of the absent "he" is implied, even before the operative "betrays" is introduced. That Criseyde becomes the "mistress of another man" is at best circumstantially evidenced. That "the lover" (as opposed to the non-lover?), thus absolved by default, assures us of much anything, except that he "fully gan despise/ This wrecched world" (V 1816-7), is speculative. Finally, the only god we hear of with respect to Troilus' view from above is Mercury, who escorts him to an unnamed place of presumed rest. This story is decidedly not, as Kaminsky contends, "relatively simple."⁴

Ian Bishop's synopsis pays somewhat more attention to Criseyde's perspective in the story, but manages nonetheless to import some highly speculative elements that operate against her.

A beautiful young widow, left in Troy by her father when he deserted to the besieging Greeks, is wooed in secret by a Trojan prince who eventually wins her with the help of her uncle, Pandare. Later she exchanges Troilus for an inferior lover; but only after she has herself been exchanged, as a political pawn, from one belligerent power to the other.⁵

While Bishop is free to agree with the narrator and Troilus that she is beautiful, such evaluations remain subjective. As for her youth, "trewely, I kan nat telle hire age" (V 826). That the prince "wins her" is consistent with Chaucer's verbal usage, but now sounds "wonder nyce and straunge" (II 24), making the poem out to be a sort of fairy tale. Is Criseyde a prize, or a possession? Does she "win" him, too? That "she exchanges Troilus for an inferior lover" is twice dubious, for we don't know what arrangement she makes with Diomedes; and to call him

inferior is to judge him further than the story will devise. Once again, this is a supposition which is as easily refuted -- albeit less frequently -- as upheld.

By way of contrast, here now is a tentative sketch of what we might call the structure of the double sorrow of Criseyde.

In besieged Troy, Criseyde is coerced into a secret liaison with Troilus. She yields to him, only on condition of her right to self-determination in affairs of the heart. Troilus delivers her to the Greek forces in exchange for Trojan prisoners. Criseyde is reluctant to return. Troilus dies on the battlefield.

Such contrasting plot summaries are possible because the characters themselves present such vying versions of reality. Loving, which is the theme of the tale, is understood differently by each protagonist in this pilgrimage of love, a phenomenon which necessarily occasions debate. While the structure of the narrative is built on the double sorrow of Troilus, the content can be understood as a composite of interwoven though largely autonomous -- and highly discordant -- tales.

The noun "tale" appears no fewer than thirty-four times in the course of the text,⁶ much of the character interaction being defined specifically in terms of telling tales. When Calkas, for example, petitions the Greeks, he asks that they "yeve hym audyence" (1V 70). "Tellyng his tale alwey" (127), he demonstrates the importance of the structure of his presentation. The subplot of his tale, which he presents as the main plot, is the siege of Troy, and his authority rests on his ability to persuasively supply the appropriate ending to his audience.

And in what forme or in what manere wyse,
This town to shende and al youre lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse.

(IV 78-80)

Calkas proceeds to develop his actual plot -- the plight of his daughter -- asking them to supply the happy ending in kind. They oblige, in part by way of recompense, in part "to hele hym of his sorwes sore" (132), but also because they have evidently had enough of his lengthy performance, "So longe he gan of so-cour hem byseke" (131). Calkas effectively adapts his delivery to his audience's sense of literary decorum, for how is the "main" plot -- the siege -- to be favourably resolved when the subplot -- their soothsayer's grief -- is not?

Pandarus is acutely aware of the importance of scenario construction on the decision-making process. When he first pays a visit to Criseyde, he frames Troilus' woe in an intricate tale. Finding his niece engaged in a historical tale about war (II 84), he has her put it aside, and they exchange "frendly tales" (149) and "many an unkouth, glad, and dep matere" (151). They deal with the "tale . . . Of hire estat and of hire governaunce" (218-9), and eventually Pandarus tells a tale about tale telling.

And Pandarus to koghe gan a lyte,
And seyde, "Nece, alwey, lo, to the laste,
How so it be that som men hem delite
With subtil art hire tales for to endite,
Yet for al that in hire entencioun
Hire tale is al for som conclusioun."

(II 254-9)

Asserting that "the ende is every tales strengthe" (260), he suddenly takes stock of the intention of his narrative.

Thanne thought he thus: "Yf I my tale endite
Ought hard, or make a proces ony while,

She shal no savour han theryn but lite,
And trowe I wold hire in my wyl bygile.
(II 267-70)

When he finally gets to the point, which itself consists of the three words "Troilus . . . loveth the" (319), he continues uninterruptedly for ten more stanzas, anticipating Criseyde's possible reactions. Having run the gamut of positive and negative scenarios, Pandarus compulsively thrusts his desired happy ending upon her, one which does not sit well with her at all.

"There were nevere two so wel imet,
Whanne ye ben his al hool as he is youre --
Ther myghty God yet graunte us se that houre!"

"Nay, therof spak I not, ha, ha!" quod she.
"As helpe me God, ye shenden every deel."
(II 586-90)

Pandarus apologizes, Criseyde forgives, and the meeting ends without the two having agreed upon a working scenario.

As Pandarus conveys the good news to Troilus, that Criseyde will "love the best" (II 958), Chaucer cuts the account short.

What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd byfore, al he hym tolde.
(II 965-6)

We may choose at this narrative moment to accept the simple sense of the statement and rush on with the action, or we may pause and construct in our minds what the author leaves out. Even with a video recorder on hand, Pandarus could not possibly tell "al." Does he describe his coercive tactics? Does he see fit to recount Criseyde's prophetic "protestacioun" to Pandarus,

That yn this proces yf ye depper go,
That certaynly for no salvacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I nevere on hym han other routhe
(II 484-9),

even as he engineers the window scene and advises Troilus to compose a letter? More likely, "As ye han herd byfore" qualifies "al he hym tolde," meaning that Pandarus proceeds in the same fashion to enact his scenario. By arresting his account, therefore, Chaucer quietly tests our reading comprehension. At this narrative moment, we must balance the urgency of Troilus' condition against Criseyde's equally compelling apprehension. The implications of Pandarus' contradictory behests to Criseyde (II 490) and to Troilus (II 1329) are never overtly resolved.

When Pandarus finally smuggles Troilus into Criseyde's bed and the affair is about to be consummated, Troilus says:

God wot, the text ful hard is, soth, to fynde.
How koude ye withouten bond me bynde?
(III 1357-8)

What we have at this narrative moment is three very different conceptions of what "the text" actually is. Pandarus has just scored a major diplomatic victory, having become

Bytwixen game and ernest swych a mene
As maken wommen unto men to comen.
(III 254-5)

As his plurals would have it, there is nothing necessarily sacred about this particular pairing off. When Criseyde is ordered to the Greek camp, Pandarus tells Troilus, "If she be lost, we shul recovere another" (IV 406). Troilus, however, tells himself he is "beset" on Criseyde "thurgh [his] destene" (I 520-1). The fulfillment of his ideal scenario is totally contingent upon Criseyde's willingness to have perpetual mercy on him, "Syn God hath wrought me for I shal yow serve" (III 1290). His only alternative scenario is death, which Achilles enacts.

Criseyde, conversely, is reluctant to pursue this absolutist rhetoric, preferring to "fall away fro this matere,/ For it suffisith this that seyð is here" (III 1306-7). She does not construe the attachment as unconditional or predestined. Rather, her acquiescence constitutes a decision.

For a man may love of possibilite
A womman so his herte may tobreste,
And she nought love ayen but yf hire leste.
(II 607-9)

Her concerns regarding mercy are more likely of the sort she must elicit from Ector when we first meet her, begging on her knees for her survival (I 106 ff.). In her first letter, she explicitly asserts her right to determine her own destiny.

She wolde nought ne make hireselven bonde
In love, but as his suster, hym to plese,
She wolde ay fayn to don his herte an ese.
(II 1223-5)

Troilus never addresses this aspect of her acquiescence, holding instead to "the more worthi part" (II 1328) of her commitment, that part, presumably, which best advances his preferred scenario.

Ironically, Troilus' attitude before he falls in love is closer to Criseyde's relatively consistent view of the stormy life of lovers.

I have herd told, pardieux, of youre lyvyng,
Ye loveres, and youre lewede observaunces,
And swich labour as folk han yn wynnyng
Of love, and yn the keypyng which doutaunces;
And whan youre prey is lost, woo and penaunces.
(I 197-201)

For love is yet the mooste stormy lyf,
Right to hymself, that evere was bygonne;
For evere som mystrust or nyce stryf
Ther is in love, som cloud is over that sonne.
(II 778-81)

But where Troilus is neurotic about cuckoldry, Criseyde is afraid of being trapped.

With the exception of his overt castigation of Troilus' initial disparagement of lovers (I 232), Chaucer's treatment of his characters' attitude toward love is largely circumspect.⁷ Insofar as each character is the author of a unique tale, Chaucer is intent on upholding the integrity of their respective scenarios. At the same time, however, he is committed to the received structure of the story he is recounting. Consequently, the narrative can be seen as a composite of vying fictions arranged in accordance with the frame of the double sorrow of Troilus. The opening line of the poem itself attests to the structural preponderance of the hero of the tale.

In the case of Chaucer's immediate source, the masculine narrator of Il Filostrato peruses "old stories in my mind to find one which I could fitly use as a cloak for the secret grief of my love."⁸ Addressing his story to his absent paramour, he explains that it is "an enduring memorial, for those who will look upon it in time to come, both of your worth . . . and of my sadness." It is difficult to imagine how she might be flattered by her association with Boccaccio's Criseide, but he urges,

Now I know not if these rhymes will so prevail as to touch
your chaste mind with compassion as you read them, but I pray
Love to give them this power. And, if this comes to pass, I
beg you as humbly as I can that you take thought touching
your return . . .⁹

The story therefore operates in an exemplary manner, its narrator demonstrating his ability and readiness to wield the forces of literary tradition against her, in the event that she be-

tray him. The perspective of Il Filostrato thus automatically privileges Troilo.¹⁰

In Chaucer's adaptation, whereas the hero's name adorns line one, the heroine's name does not appear until the end of line fifty-five, and following the fourth mention of Troilus.

Now herkneth with a good entencioun,
For now wol I gon streyght to my matere,
In which ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in lovyng of Criseyde,
And how that she forsok hym er she deyde.
(I 52-6)

Her first appearance, thus in a subordinate clause, suggests her subordinate status within the overall structure of the narrative. The conjunction immediately following her name divides the "matere" into primary plot -- Troilus' double sorrow -- and secondary plot -- how Criseyde forsook him. Chaucer often treats the development of the secondary plot as digression. When, for instance, Troilus first rides by Criseyde's window, Chaucer somewhat apologetically says,

Now lat us stynte of Troylus a throwe,
That rideth forth, and lat us tourne faste
Unto Criseyde.
(II 687-9)

He has in fact been dealing at length with Criseyde at this point, and a lengthy "throwe" later, he finally assures us the digression is over. "Now lat hire slepe, and we oure tales holde/ Of Troylus" (II 932-3). Again, when commenting on Criseyde's reaction to the fuss being made over Troilus at Deiphebus' place, he apologizes for the digression.

But al passe I, lyst ye to longe dwelle,
For for o fyn is al that evere I telle.
(II 1595-6)

In the proem to book IV, Chaucer qualifies his sense of Criseyde's role in the structure of the narrative. His objective is to show "the losse of lyf and love yfere/ Of Troylus" (IV 27-8), but in the process he undermines the causal relationship between primary and secondary plots.

For how Criseyde Troylus forsook,
Or at the leste how that she was unkynde,
Mot hennesforth ben matere of my book,
As writen folk thorough which it is in mynde.
Allas, that they shulde evere cause fynde
To speke hire harm -- and yf they on hire lye,
Ywys, hemself sholde han the vilonye.
(IV 15-21)

While Criseyde's decision to forsake Troilus remains crucial to the depiction of the hero's woe, Chaucer continues to treat her motivation as digression, this time one which questions the very credibility of his sources. The key to the apparent disjunction between Troilus' woe and Criseyde's behaviour may be found in the meaning of "forsook." When Ida Gordon explicates the ambiguities in Chaucer's qualification of Criseyde's culpability, she passes over the provocative ambiguity of the first line of the stanza (Who forsook whom?), and goes out of her way to argue that here Chaucer "means not so much . . . unkind in the modern sense as . . . 'untrue' or . . . 'disloyal.'"¹¹ However, a brief etymology of "forsake" may take us in quite the opposite direction. Merriam Webster's traces the term to "ME forsakan . . . fr. for-+ sacan to dispute; akin to OE sacu action at law."¹² Elsewhere Chaucer employs the term in the Romaunt of the Rose. Just before the dreamer is pierced by Love's arrow, he says, "I myght his power not forsake" (1876). Here "forsake" means "over-

come" or "dispute," whereby Criseyde can be understood to renounce Troilus and his manner of loving. Chaucer thus invites his audience to assess Criseyde's actions as either immoral or as simply unkind but not contemptible.

By toning down the damning implications of forsaking, and by going on to question the reliability and intentions of his sources, Chaucer suggests that he is dissatisfied with the correlation between her unkindness and the severity of Troilus' condition. The suggestion that the sources may "on hire lye," and are consequently deserving of the selfsame "vilonye," marks the peak of a crescendo of implied dissatisfaction with the tradition of the story of Troilus and Criseyde. Beginning with a tone of respect when he first mentions the mysterious Lollius, Chaucer claims he will transmit "nought only the sentence," but "lo every word" of Troilus' song (I 393-420). By book II, he is somewhat less bold with respect to his commitment, asserting rather that "syn I have bigonne,/ Myn auctour shal I folwe if I konne" (II 48-9). At the height of the action in book III, he flatly admits that he is not adhering to the strict word of his sources, but that if he has "ony word in eched for the beste,/ Doth therwithal right as youreselven leste" (III 1329-30). Later in book III, he says Ector was the most dreaded warrior, casually interjecting "but if that bokes erre" (III 1774). By book IV, as we have seen, Chaucer goes so far as to imply that the sources are maliciously designed against Criseyde.

Chaucer seems to express further dissatisfaction with his sources by citing numerous gaps pertaining specifically to Cri-

seyde, such as whether or not she had children (I 132-3) and how old she might be (V 826). In contrast to these gaps in our knowledge of Criseyde, it appears we have an overabundance of information on Troilus. Chaucer imparts a sense of exasperation with the tedium of detail afforded to Troilus by his chroniclers. He abruptly interrupts his list of the contents of Troilus' first letter.

He gan hym recomaunde unto hire grace --
To telle al how, it axeth mucche space.
(II 1070-1)

Similarly, Chaucer advises anyone who may wish to know more of Troilus' military exploits, "Red Dares, he kan telle hem alle yfere"(V 1771). What remains most unsettling about Criseyde, however, is the way she suddenly slips out of Chaucer's and our own purview, her last utterances arriving, as it were, by courier (V 1422-8; V 1590- 1631). Her final spoken word is uttered some nine-hundred lines before the ending, at which point the narrator emphasizes that "noon auctour telleth" (V 1088) just when she forsook Troilus. Thus dismissing her person from the narrative, he encourages us to assess her conduct in strict accordance with the parameters of the story as he has told it.

Ne me ne lyst this sely womman chyde
Ferther than this story wol devyse.
Hire name, allas, is punysshed so wyde
That for hire gilt it oughte ynow suffise.
And yf I myghte excuse hire ony wyse,
For she so sory was for hire untrouthe,
Iwys, I wolde excuse hire yet for routhe.
(V 1093-9)

At this point in the narrative we return chronologically to "that ilke nynthe nyght" (V 1103) to participate in Troilus' disgruntlement.

Monica McAlpine observes that "Our estimation of Criseyde's performance . . . is likely to be inappropriately absolutist because of the built-in assumption that she has no other story and thus, by implication, no other significant experience."¹³ Criseyde's status as at best second among equals in the narrative structure is borne out inadvertently by R. K. Root's disconcerting display of generosity toward Criseyde, when he offers that "Book II may be called the book of Criseyde," because, he explains, "An overwhelming proportion of its lines is directly dedicated to the unfolding of her character."¹⁴ Even here our exposure to her is hemmed in by Pandarus "Remembryng hym his erand was to done/ From Troylus" (72-3), and Troilus "in a kankedort" (1752). Furthermore, what would Root have us call the other four Books?

While it is difficult to ascribe even one book to Criseyde, there is no problem in attributing all five to Troilus. The manner in which she is introduced to us, the absence of particular information concerning her actions and her biography, the unsettling dismissal of her person from the narrative, the compensatory fashion with which Chaucer regularly rises in her defense, and Troilus' curious utterance "Men myght a book mak of it lyk a storie" (V 585),¹⁵ all these elements suggest that what we have is in fact The Book of Troilus and not "Troilus and Criseyde." Root appropriately introduces his edition of the text under the heading "Authorship and Title."¹⁶ Yet he proceeds the other way around, inadvertently prejudging the issue. "That Troilus and Criseyde is the work of Geoffrey Chaucer is certain beyond dispute."¹⁷ What remains indeterminate, Root resumes, is the

correctness of the designation "Troilus and Criseyde." The act of selecting a title is itself an act of interpretation, as the 1517 edition of Wynkyn de Worde demonstrates. Its title and colophon read, respectively, "The noble and amerous auntyent hystory of Troylus and Cresyde in the tyme of the syege of Troye" and "Thus endeth the treatyse of Troylus the hevvy."¹⁸

In the absence of the author's holograph, we are totally dependent upon two centuries of scribes -- and later printers -- who have transmitted the letter of the text with varying degrees of inaccuracy. Root's own diligent effort to establish an authorial version has been largely discredited. In the words of one editor, "One disappointment is that textual criticism has not been able to discern a controlling purpose or consistent improvement in the variations in the manuscripts."¹⁹ With regard to the title, another editor explains,

Those manuscripts that name the poem divide evenly between simply "Troilus" and "Troilus and Criseyde" (in various spellings, in Latin and English). . . Thomas Usk (d. 1388) makes the earliest known reference to the poem, calling it "the boke of Troilus" (Testament of Love, 3.4.258-59). . . [E]ditors since the sixteenth century have named both principal characters in the title, as have early critics.²⁰

Thomas Usk, being Chaucer's contemporary, likely had access to a manuscript overseen by the poet.

Further insight into the intended title comes by way of three references to the text made by Chaucer in his other works, one in his "Retraction" to The Tales of Canterbury, another in the short poem "To Adam Scryven," and the third in the so-called Legend of Good Women. The "Retraction" cites "the Book of Troylus," and none of the variants incorporates Criseyde's name.²¹

Its prose form imposes no metrical constraints, and the context, whereby the author solemnly identifies one of his major works for the sole purpose of retracting it, arguably establishes this citation as the highest authority in determining the work's complete intended title.²²

The occasion for "To Adam Scryven" also works strongly against any argument in favour of the inclusion of Criseyde's name to the title.

Adam scryveyn, if ever it thee byfalle
Boece or Troilus for to wryten newe,
Under thy long lokkes thow most have the scalle
But after my makyng thow wryte more trewe!
So ofte a daye I mot thy werk renewe
It to corecte and eke to rubbe and scrape;
And al is thorough thy neglygence and rape!

Given Chaucer's preoccupation with accurate textual transmission, especially in Troilus where, addressing his work, he prays "that noon mysywryte the" (V 1795), it is difficult to imagine him miswriting his own title in the very process of chastising his scribe for negligence.

The third authorial citation, whence in part this thesis derives its title, appears in the speech of Alceste in the Legend. In the process of arguing to the god of Love that the poet "hath served yow of his kunnyng" (Pro1. 412), she jarringly repeats Criseyde's name as the ostensible title of The Book of Troilus. The poet, she explains, will redeem whatever "he mysseyde/ Or in the Rose or elles in Creseyde" (440-1). With an eye to how the poet's characterization of Criseyde may advance the cause of all lovers, let us now turn to the text, and, without undue reference to the double sorrows of Troilus, construct Criseyde's autonomous love story.

Chapter Three. The Sovereignty Defense.

Criseyde doesn't betray Troilus so much as she rejects him and his manner of loving. In her final letter to him (V 1590- 1631), she explains how and why she is forsaking him. Given that we are reading her final word over Troilus' shoulder, we must try a little harder to see things from her perspective. Her letter is characteristically brief and somewhat enigmatic, but her logic is sound, her allusions are pointed, and her heart, though no longer with Troilus, seems ultimately in the right place. She faults him for being concerned with naught "but only youre plesaunce" (V 1608); she wonders with what right "ye requeren me/ To com ayen" (1600-1); and she insinuates that he has resorted to open doing "Towchyng us two" (1612). These are supportable accusations that explain her decision to reaffirm her sovereignty and dissolve the relationship.

Chaucer goes to great lengths to establish the conditional basis of Criseyde's acquiescence to Troilus. She is made to compromise every step of the way, but she stands firm on one count: her right to determine her own destiny in love. Just before consummating the affair, Troilus protests "Ne I wol nat, certeyn, breken youre defence" (III 1299). "Gramercy," Criseyde replies, "for on that is al my trist" (1305). She spells out her defense -- or prohibition -- in no uncertain terms at Deiphebus' house during their first meeting. There, as Troilus sets down "the fyn of his entente" (III 125) at Criseyde's request, he places himself devoutly

Under yowre yerde egal to myn offence,

As deth, if that I breke youre defence.
(III 137-8)

Criseyde accepts his terms "in swych forme as he gan now devyse" (160), but is quick to establish one condition under which all subsequent interaction is to be conducted.

"But nathelees, this warne I yow," quod she,
"A kynges sone although ye be, iwys,
Ye shul no more have soveraynete
Of me in love than right in that cas is."
(III 169-72)

Whatever this arrangement is, it is clearly not the marriage of true minds. Criseyde's employment of the term "cas" is indicative of a fundamental difference in her kind of loving. Whereas Troilus would like "alwey to don yow my servyse" (III 133), Criseyde reserves the right to invoke her sovereignty clause in the event she remain dissatisfied with her lover's conduct.

Ne I nyl forbere, yf that ye don amys,
To wrathen yow; and whil that ye me serve,
Cherycen yow right after ye deserve.
(III 173-5) [emph.]

Free choice is as important to Criseyde's philosophy of love as destiny is to Troilus'.

When Pandarus first visits her to present "the newe cas" (II 604), she asserts that she cannot love "Ayens my wil" (II 479). She later reenforces her belief in private.

For a man may love of possibilite
A womman so his herte may tobreste,
And she naught love ayen but yf hire leste.
(II 607-9)

Perusing the pros and cons of yielding, she resolves on action, for "He which that nothyng undertaketh,/ Nothyng n' acheveth" (II 807-8). Much later, when Troilus somewhat presumptuously

contends she has no choice but to yield to him sexually, she retorts:

Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere,
Ben yold, ywys, I were now not here!
(III 1210-1)

But Pandarus, not destiny, is the "cause causyng" (IV 829) in Criseyde's view, for it is he "That alderferst me brought into servise/ Of love" (IV 832-3).

Criseyde's attitude toward love is perhaps best understood in apposition to her niece Antigone's. Shortly after Criseyde privately runs through the litany of "the mooste stormy lyf" (II 778) of love, which is ever full of "som mystrust or nyce stryf" (780), she goes into the garden where her niece sings her song, which begins:

O Love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe yn myn entente,
As I best kan, to yow, lord, yeve ych al,
For everemore [etc.].
(II 827-30)

Criseyde never subjects herself to Cupid or Venus, nor does she ever address an entity called love in the vocative. Nor, however, does she ever disparage others for upholding such a system of values. Antigone attributes her song to "the goodlyeste mayde/ Of gret estat" (II 880-1), a reference which cannot but remind us of Eleyne on whose account the city is under siege. When Criseyde further queries her niece on the nature of bliss, Antigone responds by distinguishing between true and false manifestations of the "parfite blysse of love" (II 891), but "Criseyde unto that purpos nought answerde,/ But seyde, 'Ywys, it wol be nyght as faste'" (897-8). As a result of the song, nevertheless, "she

wax somewhat able to converte" (903), an effect which serves to accentuate the variance at which she finds herself with Antigone's ideal of love.

Chaucer seems intent on underscoring Criseyde's reluctance to endorse the popular discourse of love from the start. During her first meeting with Pandarus, she agrees simply to "maken" Troilus "good chere" (II 471). Her uncle presses her to promise she will not give him cause "to pleyne, or ofter yow to preche" (II 496). "Why no, parde," she reassures him, "what nedeth more speche?" (497) When Pandarus looks forward to the day "Whanne ye ben his al hool as he is youre" (II 587), she explicitly states "Nay, therof spak I not" (589). Later, when pressured to respond in writing to Troilus' first letter, she tells Pandarus "I not what I sholde to hym seye" (II 1206). At Deiphebus' house, in response to Troilus' "Mercy, mercy" plea, whereby he protests to have "As ferforthly as I have had konnyng, / Ben yowres al" (III 101-2), Criseyde prefers to conduct her first interview in the more straightforward colloquial. Pandarus, who "wep as he to water wolde, / And poked evere his nece" (III 115-6), moderates between the two levels of discourse.

"I, what?" quod she, "By God and by my trowthe,
I not nought what ye wille that I shol seye."
"I, what?" quod he. "That ye han on hym routhe,
For Goddes love, and doth hym nought to deye."
"Now thanne thus," quod she, "I wolde hym preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente.
Yet wyst I nevere wel what that he mente."
(III 120-6)

Troilus reveals his intent, Pandarus interjects, asking how she could possibly "ben so loth to suffren hym yow serve" (154),

and Criseyde concedes, but only conditionally, and still referring to Troilus in the third person:

yf I may don hym gladnesse,
From hennesforth, iwys, I nyl not feyne.
(III 166-7)

Having appeased her uncle, she abruptly turns to address Troilus in the imperative, in the line immediately preceding her sovereignty defense.

Now beth al hol; no lenger ye ne pleyne.
(III 168)

Two stanzas later, she reaffirms the conditional nature of her acquiescence.

If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
For every wo ye shal recovere a blysse.
(III 180-1)

The extent to which Criseyde withholds endorsement from the prevalent, absolutist love-rhetoric is most apparent in the last words spoken before they make love. Troilus invokes "Benygne Love, thow holy bond of thynges" (III 1261), assures her he will not, "certeyn, breken youre defence" (1299), and Criseyde congenially wraps up the verbal intercourse, without comment on his religious inclinations -- at least not explicit comment.

But lat us falle away fro this matere,
For it suffisith this that seyde is here,
And at o word, withouten repentaunce,
Welcome, my knyght, my pes, my suffisaunce.
(III 1306-9)

Criseyde's uneasiness with the lofty, declamatory rhetoric is matched by her non-adherence to the concomitant courtly manners. When Troilus wants to kneel before her, she says "do ye not so/ To me" (III 73-4), and when he actually does kneel, Chaucer draws

attention to her ignorance of, or perhaps non-compliance with the expected mode of behaviour.

Kan I not seyn, for she bad hym not ryse,
If sorwe it put out of hire remembraunce,
Or elles if she tok it in the wyse
Of deuete, as for his observaunce.
(III 967-70)

Criseyde roundly undermines courtly etiquette during the Horaste episode (III 797 ff.), by proposing a mode of behaviour hardly suited to Troilus' station, but appropriate nonetheless to his attitude. "As he that nedes most a cause fysshe" (III 1162), Troilus prefers to accuse Criseyde of unfaithfulness, rather than be honest with her and admit to the fabrication of the charge. She suggests "this was don of malys, hire to fonde" (III 1155), and concludes,

Wol ye the chyldyssh jalous contrefete?
Now were it worthy that ye were ybete.
(III 1168-9)

The Horaste crisis reenforces Criseyde's overall apprehensions, even as it occasions the consummation of the affair. While Troilus is not her husband, he begins to act like one. Earlier, when Criseyde considers the prospects of romance, she resolves:

Shal non housbonde seyn to me "Checkmat."
For either they ben ful of jalousye,
Or maisterful, or loven novelrie.
(II 754-6)

She cannot accuse Troilus of "novelrie," but he certainly brings out her worst fears of being mastered by a jealous mate. She is not endowed with the benefit of foreknowledge as to whether her lover is to be any different from the rest of the "frape" (III

410), and the case of Horaste prevents her from automatically exempting him from her concerns over "The treson that to women hath ben do" (II 793). She must continue to bear in mind, especially considering Troilus' extreme condition, that

For though these men for love hem ferst torende,
Ful sharp bygynnyng breketh ofte at ende.
(II 790-1)

Most importantly, with reference to the culmination of events in Troilus, we must acknowledge her point concerning the eventual subsidence of such intense passion.

To what fyn is swych love I kan nat se,
Or wher bycomth it whenne it is ago.
Ther is no wyght that wot, I trowe so,
Where it bycometh. Lo, no wyght on it sporneth!
That erst was nothyng, into nought it torneth.
(II 794-8)

Once sudden Troilus -- "So sodeynly, for his sodeyn comynge" (III 959) -- has found his way into her heart, her life and her bed, she agrees to enter into a compact of mutual fidelity which is ultimately based on a sense of mutual distrust. Taking stock of the progression of events from her earliest resolve "ful sleyghly for to pleye" (II 462), she concedes:

The game, ywys, so ferforth now is gon
That first shal Phebus falle fro his spere,
And everich egle ben the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troylus out of Criseydes herte.
(III 1494-8)

Her endorsement of the absolutist love rhetoric at this stage represents not so much an ideological initiation, as a recognition of her stake in the harmonious progression of the affair. Now she must play. In effect, her rhetoric here is designed to hold Troilus to his own steadfast ideals.

The conditionality of Criseyde's acquiescence, however, remains constant. Chaucer is at pains to emphasize the process that "Made love withinne hire herte for to myne" (II 677).

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclyne
To lyke hym first.

(II 673-5)

"He gat hire love," in short, "in no sodeyn wyse" (679). Chaucer shows how her fears gradually subside, but in the process he reminds us of the extent to which she is operating in the dark. During the early stages, Pandarus arranges short trysts that seem barely long enough to arrange the next. Chaucer assures us that "She with hym spak whan that she dorst and leste" (III 452), but then backtracks and qualifies.

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swych awayt alwey, and in swych fere,
Lest ony wyght dyvynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two.

(III 456-9)

Despite the uncertainty of the situation, perhaps even on account of it, Criseyde waxes somewhat more able to convert.

It semed hire he wyste what she thoughte
Withouten word, so that it was no nede
To bidde hym ought to don, or ought forhede;
For which she thoughte that love, al coom it late,
Of alle joye hadde opned hire the yate.

(III 465-9)

It seems to her that Troilus will live up to her ideal, but even after the affair is consummated, perhaps especially then, she remains sceptical of his commitment. "Beth trewe," she urges, "or elles were it routhe" (III 1511).

We see, therefore, how the spark of distrust is present even during their finest moments. As Chaucer puts it in the last stan-

za of the Third Book, Troilus is finally happy with Criseyde, "Al be that there were som dishese among" (III 1816). The spark is fanned when the lovers resolve to adhere to the parliament's decree. Troilus accurately predicts how social forces will ultimately prove stronger than her resolve to return to Troy (IV 1450-98), and Criseyde reiterates her point on the stormy life of lovers, imploring

That whil that I am absent, no plesaunce
Of other do me fro youre remembraunce.
For I am evere agast, forwhi men rede
That love is thing ay ful of bysy drede.
(IV 1642-5)

The flame flares up and ultimately consumes their love in the final flurry of allegations and circumstantial charges. Criseyde writes "I have eke understonde/ How ye ne don but holden me in honde"(V 1614-5), and Troilus wishes in turn "That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde" (V 1680). Whereas Troilus cannot find it in his heart "To unloven yow a quarter of a day" (V 1698), Criseyde no longer loves him, preferring that "As for a frend ye may in me assure" (V 1624). Her decision, far from constituting a spontaneous reversal, or as Troilus suggests, "a kalendes of change" (V 1634), is actually an informed reaffirmation of her right to determine her own destiny in love.

If "sobre" (V 820) Criseyde begins to fall in love with Troilus when she says to herself "Who yaf me drynke?" (II 651), the process of unloving, in Troilus' good term, likely begins when her lover hands her over to Diomedes. Right before releasing her to enemy custody, he takes her by the hand, draws her near, and as she starts to cry, he says "Now holde yowre day, and doth

me not to deye" (V 84). His parting words are sobering, indeed. Shortly thereafter, Diomedes takes her hand, and the anatomy of the original seduction process is underway.

Through the agency of Diomedes, Criseyde is afforded the opportunity of unraveling the elements of the tale of Troilus' woe. Her new suitor is theory and practice wrapped in one. Criseyde knows exactly who and what she is dealing with. As Diomedes escorts her to her father's tent, she is so upset, Chaucer says,

That in effect she nought his tales herde
But her and there, now here a word or two.
(V 178-9)

These words might be "O God of Love in soth we serven bothe" (V 143); "ther kan no wyght yow serve/ That half so loth yowre wraththe wold deserve" (146-7); "and mercy I yow preye" (168). What is different about his suit is his request "that ye me wolde as youre brother trete" (134), suggesting that his concern for her welfare will take precedence over his lust. He courts her openly, without proxy, and speaks of marriage (V 863). What is perhaps most ironic about this replay of courtship is the circumstance under which Criseyde must endure it. One of the reasons she yielded to Troilus to begin with was so that he might protect her. Clearly this has not come to pass. There "Upon the tother side" (V 687), she looks back on Troy and thinks fondly of Troilus' words "Syn first that day hire love bygan to sprynge" (V 719), and inadvertently realizes that Troilus has effectively checkmated her (cf. II 754) by demanding she return.

The portraits of Diomedes, Criseyde and Troilus (V 799- 840)

eerily suspend the temporal momentum of the double sorrow of Troilus, and allow us to view Criseyde's predicament from a fresh perspective. Suddenly she seems like Emily in "The Knight's Tale," poised between two rivals, each of whom is equally convinced of the superiority of his claim. But Criseyde, unlike Emily, is determined to maintain control over her own love-life. She deals effectively with Diomedes by affirming her right to choose a course of action at her own pace, resolving "I sey not therefore that I wol yow love,/ Ne sey not nay" (V 1002-3). Chaucer is careful to point out that she does not necessarily give up her sovereignty to him; "Men seyn -- I not -- that she yaf hym hire herte" (V 1050). If she has made mistakes, she will likely not repeat them, in this case by not allowing her new suitor to assume rights over her.

With respect to Troilus, Criseyde must decide either to break her promise to return within ten days, or totally give up on her sovereignty and her better judgement, "And gon with Troilus where as hym lest" (V 753). The prospects of returning are perilous. Her father will not hear of her returning to Troy (V 694-5),

And yf that I me put in jupartie
To stele away by nyght, and it byfalle
That I be caught, I shal be hold a spie.
Or elles -- lo, this drede I most of alle --
Yf in the hondes of som wreche I falle,
I am but lost.

(V 701-6)

Criseyde has compromised herself every step of the way, and now the onus is on her to jeopardize her very person for the sake of the knight who is supposed to be protecting her. Her promise to

return to Troy is itself the culmination of Pandarus' coercive tactics, whereby she must forever rescue Troilus if she knows what's good for her. At her height of despair over the news of her exchange, Pandarus warns her "So lef this sorwe or platly he wol deye./ And shappeth yow his sorwe for to abregge" (IV 924-5). She consents.

I shal don al my myght me to restreyne
From wepyng in his sighte, and bysily
Hym for to glade I shal don al my peyne.
(IV 940-2)

Later, if she were not to have awoken from her swoon to avert Troilus' suicide in her own living room, she would have had to suffer the consequences of his rash behaviour. Only then does she grasp at "an hep of weyes" (IV 1281) out of the crisis. Once Criseyde is out of town, she is no longer subject to the abusive crisis mentality that causes her to yield to Troilus in the first place. When Troilus laments "whom yeve ye audience?/ Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?" (V 235-6), he admits, in effect, that in the absence of a sustained narration of his woe, with its concomitant threats and emotional abuse, Criseyde will likely lose interest in him altogether. Indeed, why shouldn't she? Her return, the prerequisite to the happy ending of Troilus' tale of loving, would have an altogether opposite effect on her life. It's either his ideal, according to his set of rules, or her own ideal of sovereignty.

Criseyde has only one thing left in Troy: Troilus. She has no status there, nor any remaining wealth, having forfeited it for the sake of returning to Troilus (IV 1380). But he has not produced a shred of evidence that he will stick his neck out for her

in time of real crisis. Criseyde adapts as best she can to Troilus' ideal and to Pandarus' methods such that she even offers to use similar tactics to preserve the affair. But she lacks both the crassness and the means to carry out her plan to "enchaunten" Calkas and "plukke hym by the sleve" (IV 1395, 1403). Perhaps once there "Upon the tother side" (V 687) she comes to appreciate being rescued both from a lover who proves "ful of jalousye" (II 755), which the narrator names "the wykked spyrit -- God us blesse --/ Which that men clepeth the wode jalousye" (V 1212-3), and from Troy's impending doom.

Criseyde reproaches Troilus for being so cavalier about her predicament. In her last letter to him she writes:

Nor other thyng nys in youre remembraunce,
As thenketh me, but oonly youre plesaunce.
(V 1607-8)

The audience reads these words, as it were, over Troilus' shoulder and may readily dismiss them as he himself chooses to do. But Criseyde is expressing legitimate grievances, to which we are privy, that cause her to reject Troilus's love and to grace him henceforth only with "frendship" (V 1622). From her point of view, it is not surprising that her farewell letter reiterates the sentiment she spells out to him in her first epistle. "She wolde nought ne make hireselven bonde/ In love" (II 1223-4) to any man.

Chapter Four. The Narrator and the Gods.

The single most contested issue surrounding The Book of Troilus concerns the role of the narrator. Literary critics of the left, centre and right are, generally speaking, united in distinguishing between the voice of the narrator and that of Chaucer himself. Pulpit critics like D. W. Robertson, who argues that Troilus' "external submission to Criseyde recalls . . . Adam's submission to Eve,"¹ necessarily interpret all authorial "sympathy" toward Troilus' amorous plight as "tempered by a consistent irony."² Similarly, Chauncey Wood argues that Chaucer "varies direct and ironic statement," according to whether or not a given statement suits Wood's "'Gowerian' reading of the Troilus."³ From George Lyman Kittredge's humanist perspective, Troilus "was to be a tragedy of love, and the fall of the hero was to be from happy union with his lady to the woe and ruin of her unfaithfulness."⁴ Consequently, at the end of the poem, "the great sympathetic ironist drops his mask . . . [having] no solution except to repudiate the unmoral and un-social system which he has pretended to uphold."⁵ Walter Clyde Curry, also troubled by the ending, argues that Chaucer obliterated any semblance of free will in the text largely for "dramatic purposes." Encouraging us, however, to exercise our own, he concludes that the "entirely contradictory Epilog" is not "part of the whole and is detachable at will, and one need not of necessity consider it at all in an interpretation of the drama."⁶ This questionable impulse may have led one of Curry's ideological precursors way back when to "detach" the last seven stanzas of MS. Additional 12,044.⁷

Monica McAlpine argues that "the concept of a narrator-persona . . . offers the only adequate account of the complexity with which the poem confronts us."⁸

Critics on the left are less inclined to incur an outright split between narrator and author, with the unfortunate result, however, that the narrative itself is to be seen as somewhat defective. Hence, David Aers designates the last sixty-two lines as "diversionary,"⁹ and Stephen Knight agrees with Aers that "Chaucer makes the blame laid on Fortune rather peremptory and indeed seem something of an inauthentic mystification."¹⁰ Elsewhere, Knight argues that in "the notorious palinode . . . Chaucer strives semiotically to naturalize his closure and obscure the fissure," but that it is impossible to "turn this dramatically fissured poem into a simple, consoling organic development."¹¹

B. H. Bronson perhaps stands alone in disparagement of what he calls the "schizoid notion of two Chaucers."¹² Proponents of the "separable fiction," he explains, see Chaucer entering "in his own person only at the end, correcting the wrong ideas gradually imbibed by us from the overemphatic teller of the tale."¹³ The patterns of interpretation whereby a fictive narrator is superimposed to accommodate a critic's particular bent, have the unfortunate consequence of misshaping the text. Not surprisingly, it is Chaucer's attitude toward Criseyde that has occasioned some of the most unwieldy theories.

Morton Bloomfield may have inspired Bronson's approach, by suggesting the operation of Chaucerian self-fashioning, whereby "the author creates a character -- himself -- to guide us through" the

narrative.¹⁴ Bloomfield's method, however, works against Chaucer's support for Criseyde, such that the narrator "struggles against the predestined climax,"¹⁵ and only through contemplation of the Trinity does the poet finally accept and "leave behind forever . . . the unbearable grief of Criseyde's betrayal."¹⁶

R. M. Jordan was clearly troubled that "Bloomfield leaves unclarified -- or insufficiently stressed -- the distinction between the narrator's point of view and that of Chaucer the poet."¹⁷ It is the narrator's treatment of Criseyde that compels Jordan to impose a separable narrator, "a dupe of time, a mortal of little, brief authority."¹⁸ Jordan's "raconteur-historian hovers persistently over . . . the presentation of Criseyde's infidelity,"¹⁹ and finally arrives at "a manifestly irrelevant conclusion; he takes leave of his audience by warning [women] to beware of men,"²⁰ from which expedient moment on, "we find ourselves for the first time in the presence of the creator of this speaker."²¹

E. T. Donaldson takes an even more dramatic view of this narrator-clown.

At some of the moments when his narrator is striving most laboriously to palliate Criseyde's behavior, Chaucer, standing behind him, jogs his elbow, causing him to fall into verbal imprecision, or into anticlimax, or making his rhetoric deficient, or making it redundant.²²

As for Chaucer's warning to women concerning men "That with hire grete wit and subtilte/ Bytrayse yow" (V 1782-3), it is no more than "a joke against himself," whereby the narrator tries to turn "upside down the anti-feminist moral of the story."²³ It is an "excursion into farce," an "outrageous inversion of morals."²⁴ This suspect sense of humour is shared by A. C. Spearing, who -- in

his section on "Feminism" in Troilus, no less -- says "Chaucer's sympathy for women is not solemn, and at the end he can jokingly urge 'wommen that bitraised be'" to beware of men.²⁵

With reference to Chaucer's "joke," and critical responses to it, Bronson rightly asks:

can we honestly assure ourselves that we understand Chaucer's mind and art if we lack adequate understanding of his procedure in crucial and climactic moments of his best work?²⁶

I propose that from "The double sorwe of Troilus" to "moder thyn benigne," a single consistent authorial voice is in control of each event and sentiment, especially the warning to women about men. In the second stanza of the poem, Chaucer confesses that the nature of his matter requires that he assume a particular pose.

For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery feere,
And to a sorwful tale, a sory cheere.
(I 12-4)

This demeanour is an essential component in the mediacy of the "instrument/ That helpeth loveres" (I 10-1). The author/ poet/ narrator thus announces that he will observe the decorum of lovers so as to hold their attention when the lovers -- in the fiction and in the audience -- become adversaries.

The stanza on evolution "in forme of speche" in the proem to Book II serves as the centrepiece of the entire system of perspectives governing The Book. It is a stanza that the modern reader can most intimately experience:

Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is chaunge
Withinne a thousand yer, and wordes tho
That hadden prys now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thenketh hem, and yet they spake hem so,
And sped as wel in love as men now do.
Eke for to wynnen love in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.
(II 22-8)

Chaucer does not ask his audience to subscribe to the particular usages, literary or religious, that he employs to recount the tale, even though they are largely those of the day. By anachronistically attributing fourteenth century usages to the Trojan context, he suggests both that they are themselves dated, and that he recognizes and appreciates their enduring impact on his contemporaries and on their conception of history. With or without Cupid, people win and lose love; if Troilus did not have the Olympians to address, he would have had to invent them. Yet without the agency of Venus et al, we would have a very different Troilus, perhaps something closer to Criseyde.

Right after raising the possibility of peace to Troilus (IV 1345-58), Criseyde tells him: "Eke drede fond first goddes, I suppose --" (IV 1408). Kittredge lambasts Criseyde here for "the trait of religious skepticism," resolving that "A woman's wit is to be wiser than the powers that govern the world."²⁷ But her scepticism anticipates Chaucer's own attempt in the antepenultimate stanza of the poem to put the ancient deities definitively to rest.

Lo here of payens corsed olde rytes;
Lo here what alle hire goddes may avayle;
Lo here these wrecched worldes appetites;
Lo here the fyn and guerdon for travayle
Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascayle!
(V 1849-53)

By collapsing the artifice, Chaucer compels us to reevaluate the action that has transpired. What Chaucer and Criseyde both seem to be saying is that the gods have little -- in fact nothing -- to do with what human beings are doing. Nonetheless, the complexity with which the poet has woven them into the fabric of the tale

would seem to enmesh the text into a Gordian knot of sorts. Critics of all persuasions have been hacking away at it, but Asia remains somehow invulnerable. Perhaps we all-too-eagerly cast up "the visage" (V 1838) just when Chaucer is about to give up the Olympian ghost in a swift manoeuvre that untangles the text with the tantalizing grace of a Tom Fool's knot.

Clifford Ashley's two-thousand-five-hundred-thirty-fourth entry to his catalogue of knots (the first under chapter-heading "Tricks and Puzzles") begins as follows:

The TOM FOOL'S KNOT is the sailor's favorite "parlor trick." It is tied quickly but not hurriedly and for some reason is very difficult to follow. The eye, of course, is intentionally misled. The success of the performance depends in almost equal parts on the dexterity of the left hand and a distracting twiddling that is maintained by the fingers of the right hand, and which has nothing at all to do with tying the knot.²⁸

Parallels are immediately apparent, as when we encounter E. Reiss' analogy of "the pleasure offered by Chaucer the court entertainer" in the form of a "challenge which is basically that of the puzzle."²⁹ Our eye (or ear, as the case may be) is easily misled, in this case by means of the false authority vested in the Olympian hierarchy, which ultimately has "nothing at all to do with tying the knot" of love. Having described the operation of the trick, Ashley concludes:

Once the hypnotic influence of the twiddling fingers has been felt, no one is going to solve the problem unless he has been "tipped off" beforehand. The performer should talk incessantly as he demonstrates and be as sympathetic and helpful as possible . . . This endears him to the audience and does not hurt his trick in the least.³⁰

Chaucer's elaborations upon the authority and power of the pagan gods may similarly hypnotize the audience. But the left hand al-

ways knows what the right hand is up to. The more enchantingly mellifluous the digression, the more we are endeared, unless we heed the corresponding authorial tipoff.

In the proem to Book III, the tipoff comes in the line, "And this knowe I by hem that loveres be" (37), which qualifies the entire invocation of Venus. As Alan Gaylord aptly puts it, Chaucer often makes clear that "he is speaking not his natural language but [the lovers']."³¹ The preliminary tipoffs are all eventually resolved into the antepenultimate stanza of the poem. In the final analysis, it appears Venus and Mars don't make good bedfellows, at least insofar as the common good is concerned. Troilus loses life and love, and Troy loses the war. The Trojans' gods are not only useless to them, they are not to be trusted. They are even dangerous constructs that misguide and betray them. When Troilus blurts, "God wot, the text ful hard is, soth, to fynde./ How koude ye withouten bond me bynde?" (III 1357-8) we are left without an answer. The bond comes loose because it was never really tied. It is consequently no surprise that "bothe Troylus and Troye toun/ Shal knotteles thoroughout hire herte slyde (V 768-9), given the extent to which actual social forces conspire against their mutual happiness.

Once the knot comes loose and the props are removed, or as Knight puts it, "the Trojan furniture" is dismissed,³² the process of assessment becomes much more straightforward. The God of Love does not exist, and therefore shoots no arrow at Troilus. As we reexamine the relevant passage, the sparseness of the metaphor becomes readily apparent, and the god recedes into mythological

rigidity.

... the God of Love gan loken rowe
 Right for despit, and shop for to ben wroken,
 And kyd anoon his bowe nas not broken,
 For sodeynly he hit hym at the fulle --
 (I 206-9)

Cupid is only vaguely invoked, remaining spatially aethereal and unsituated. There isn't even mention of his arrow; we are told, rather, that "his bowe nas not broken" -- not yet, anyway. What rushes in to replace the "he" who "hit hym" is Troilus' own Surquidrie (I 213), clonking him over the head.

The most important casualty of the antepenultimate stanza is Fortune herself, who is explicitly placed under Jove's jurisdiction.³³

Fortune, whiche that permutacioun
 Of thinges hath, as it is hire commytted
 Thorough purveyaunce and disposicioun
 Of heyghe Jove, as regnes shal ben flytted
 Fro folk yn folk, or when they shal ben smytted,
 Gan pulle away the fetheres brighte of Troye
 Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joye.
 (V 1541-7)

In the absence of Jove and Fortune, it is simply the disposition of the "folk" themselves that accounts for the devastation "day to day." Similarly, "Fortune,/ That semeth trewest whanne she wol bygyle" (IV 2-3), is incapable of influencing human affairs unless she is believed in. Thus, Criseyde attempts to divest the goddess of her authority by saying, "and thenk that lord is he/ Of Fortune ay, that nought wole of hire recche;/ And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche" (IV 1587-9). Troilus, however, remains unwilling to dispense with the concept and make "vertu of necessite" (1586).

It is therefore true that "Chaucer makes the blame laid on Fortune rather peremptory and indeed seem something of an inauthen-

tic mystification."³⁴ We are invited, however, to demystify her role if we are so disposed. If we seek out instances of supernatural or unnatural agencies directly effecting human affairs, their absence becomes conspicuous. While the "usages" decorously abound, their real influence is confined to the conceptual level. When Criseyde offers Pandarus her ring for Troilus as a gesture of good will, her uncle retorts:

A ryng? . . . Ye, haselwodes shaken!
 Ye, nece myn, that ryng moste han a ston
 That myhte a dede man alyve maken,
 And swych a ryng I trowe that ye have non.
 (III 890-3)

In portraying Troilus, Chaucer writes:

Al myghte a geaunt passen hym of myght,
 His herte ay with the ferste and with the beste
 Stod paregal, to dorre don that hym leste.
 (V 838-40)

The realism of the story, however, precludes such action. As for the soothsaying of Calkas, who

Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
 By answeere of his god that highte thus
 Daun Phebus or Appollo Delphicus
 (I 68- 70),

his calculations are along the lines of "One, two, three . . . one thousand ships." Thus, he "knew by calkulynge,/ And [prestidigitation:] ek by answer of this Appollo,/ That Grekes sholden swych a peple brynge" (I 71-3), that his city didn't stand a chance. And as for Cassandre, she likely needed no mysterious power of augury to figure out her brother's sorry plight.

What we have, then, is human beings making decisions and rationalizing them in accordance with the mythology of the day. Curry dismisses the epilogue, in part because it is important to him that Venus

be "largely responsible for the consummation of Troilus's love."³⁵ She is not, though, in Chaucer's ultimate scheme, because she did not ever exist. What Chaucer makes equally clear is that Uncle Pandarus engineers the affair, especially the consummation of "Troilus's love."

Criseyde has a unique perspective on the society she inhabits. Troilus is depicted as the paragon of convention, authority, and the status quo. Criseyde, conversely, is granted an enlightened voice in a polytheistic world that attributes the actions of men to the will of the gods. Criseyde's comment that the "goddes speken in amphibologies/ And for o soth they tellen twenty lies" (IV 1406-7) challenges both her father's profession and her kingdom's religion. "Eke drede fond first goddes" (1408) she goes on to suppose. In the final analysis, when the narrator condemns the "payens corsed olde rytes" (V 1849) in the antepenultimate stanza of the poem, Chaucer implicitly backs Criseyde in her rejection of Troilus' religious ideology. Whereas Troilus finds it in his heart to blame Criseyde and even seek revenge, she does the more charitable thing in granting him the benefit of her carefully delineated doubts. Her final words to him are, significantly, "God have yow in his grace" (V 1631).

Chapter Five. "The Nature of the Peace."

The Book of Troilus is as preoccupied with the pursuit of the common profit as it is with the realization of personal passion. The more Chaucer asks us to forget about the war, the more he compels us to recognize its centrality to his "matere." Troilus champions an ideal of individual loving, he enacts it, and -- for reasons we shall address -- it fails. Criseyde, conversely, posits an alternative, all-encompassing ideal which remains untested in terms of collective human history, and largely unexplored by critics of The Book even today. R.F. Yeager, in his honourable essay "Pax Poetica: On the Pacifism of Chaucer and Gower," argues that "Chaucer's primary services for king and country appear to have been diplomatic and perhaps attest to a preference, as well as an aptitude for the bargaining table over the battleground."¹ In The Book of Troilus, the emotional clamour about supernatural agencies of love and war is ultimately drowned out by a single voice of reason postulating peace; only Criseyde develops the all-too-obvious option of human solutions to man-made problems.

Ye sen that every day ek, more and more,
Men trete of pees, and it supposid is
That men the queene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restoren that is mys.
So, though there nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pes on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

For yf that it be pes, myn herte dere,
The nature of the pes mot nedes dryve
That men most entrecomunen yfere,
And to and fro ek ryde and gon as blyve
Alday as thikke as ben flen from an hyve,
And every wight han liberte to bleve
Where as hym lyste the bet, withouten leve.

(IV 1345-58)

Criseyde expresses this pacifist sentiment, aptly, at a juncture in the text where the double helix of love and war is most readily apparent. We will return to this passage, its context and its implications later in this chapter, following a treatment of the poet's attitude toward the Trojan war in Troilus.

In answer to the question, "Can we, in fact, isolate the poet's honest voice?" Yeager writes: "Disappointingly, the answer is . . . no, that is, if we want evidence of a kind that would stand up in court."² Yeager's essay pauses only briefly on Troilus, and without mention of Criseyde's peace speech. He observes how

Chaucer seems far more impressed by the knights as lovers (good and bad) than as soldiers -- as if it is their moral choices he wants to test, not their courage or their strength of arm. At the conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde he in fact says as much when he directs those interested in battles to "Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle ifeere," and not his own poem, which speaks only "of [Troilus's] love" (TC 5.1771, 1769).³

The notion that Troilus treats war cursorily remains widespread among the progressive critics. Knight, first among Chaucerian historicists, recognizes that by book IV, "the margins of the story have suddenly swarmed across the page." Yet he contends that

the narrator dismisses the topic of war (I. 141-2) . . . Before the hero makes his appearance in the poem that is ostensibly about himself, two crucial thematic issues are established: the marginality of the war and the danger of solitary existence.⁴

While Chaucer is indeed preoccupied with individuality, his strategy ultimately compels a recognition of the extent to which the individual personalities collectively determine the outcome of events. That Chaucer directs the reader to the appropriate authorities for the Trojan context does not constitute disinterest

in the war. Rather, Chaucer suggests that we should familiarize ourselves with it. In short, "how this town com to destruccion" (I 141) is assumed, not disregarded; understood, not dismissed.

Knight convincingly argues that "In genre . . . the poem is polemical, rejecting the classical and socially conscious form of [war] epic," and that "For the Trojans the story of Thebes, for the medieval audience the Trojan war, these are marginal and ultimately disturbing presences."⁵ Yet for Trojan audiences, the Trojan war is hardly marginal, witness Criseyde's response when Pandarus distracts her from the Thebes book she is reading.

"Yet kowde I telle a thyng to doon yow pleye."
"Now, uncle deere," quod she, "tel it us,
For Goddes love. Is than the assege aweye?
I am of Grekes so fered that I deye.
(II 121-4)

Chaucer, in his capacity as narrator, doesn't need to discuss the war at length not because it is secondary, but because the characters themselves will fill us in. Pandarus, in narrating his tale to Criseyde, warms her to Troilus as follows:

Now here, now ther, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood, and Troylus.
Now hym he hurte, and hym al down he caste;
Ay wher he wente, it was arayed thus:
He was hire deth, and lyf and sheld for us;
That al that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whil that he held his blody swerd in honde.
(II 197- 203)

Curiously, Pandarus goes on to say that "Thereto he is the frendlyeste man" (II 204), which is at best a non sequitur, more likely a latent and intended contradiction, one which is rehearsed in a number of strategic narrative moments.

The pattern whereby Chaucer emphasizes the centrality of the war by "marginalizing" it is apparent in the overall structure

of the action-proper, which begins:

Yt is wel wylt how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troyewardes, and the cite longe
Assegeden, neigh ten yer er they stente
(I 57- 60),

and ends with Mercury carting off Troilus' spirit which has voided its warlike torso. Whereas his spirit "lough right at the wo/ Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste" (V 1821-2), the mourners themselves regard his premature death as no laughing matter. His lack of compassion for the survivors' woe contrasts starkly with his own reaction to the slaughter of his big brother, Ector,

For whom, as olde bokes tellen us,
Was mad swych wo that tonge may it not telle,
And namely the sorwe of Troylus,
That next hym was of worthinesse welle.
(V 1562-5)

The relationship between Criseyde and Troilus lasts three years (V 8 ff.), and likely spans the third trimester of the war. Troilus' private and public sorrows are compounded, such that "what for sorwe, and love, and for unreste,/ Ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste" (V 1567-8). Even syntactically, love is besieged.

When Chaucer tells us early on that Troilus, during a period of high expectation, "dide ek such travayle/ In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle" (I 475-6), it is not the "travayle" itself, but the contemplation of it that "was mervayle." Chaucer proceeds:

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the town,
Ne made hym thus yn armes for to madde,
But oonly, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken hire the bet for his renoun.
Fro day to day yn armes so he spedde
That the Grekes as the deth hym dredde.
(I 477-83)

Despite the decorous phraseology, Chaucer nonetheless spells out

Troilus' propensity to waste lives in strict pursuit of amorous ends. Troilus' somewhat bizarre behaviour is accentuated at the end of Book III, following sexual gratification:

In alle nedes for the townes werre
He was and ay the firste in armes dight,
And certaynly, but if that bokes erre,
Save Ector most ydrad of ony wight.
And this encres of hardinesse and myght
Cam hym of love.

(III 1772-7)

Haldeen Braddy is one of the few critics to directly correlate sex and violence in the text he unflinchingly designates

a wartime narrative set in a doomed city under siege. In this setting the uncertainties of war and the threat of death constitute psychological incentives to unbridled erotic indulgences. The heightened procreative urge arises to compensate for the abnormal casualties of warfare.⁶

Braddy does not pursue the sex/violence link, but his analysis of "deth" as coition affords a splendid foray into Chaucer's thematic conflation; the erogenous zones and the battle zones are, in effect, mutually referential.⁷

Chaucer pushes the war-love connection during the very scene in which Pandarus unites the lovers-to-be on the pretext of the alleged Polyphete threat to Criseyde's estate. When the powerful personages, including Eleyne, assemble in support of Criseyde, Paris' conspicuous absence goes neither unnoticed nor unmentioned. Deiphebus, in his capacity as host, obligingly proposes to Pandarus:

What wiltow seyn yf I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trowe it be the beste,
For she may ledyn Parys as hire leste.

(II 1447-9)

How thoughtful this seems, especially when we realise Deiphebus and Eleyne are having an affair. What is most unsettling is the manner in which Chaucer points up this twice-dubious liaison.

Troilus, feigning illness and abed,

. . . fond, as hap was, at his beddes hed
The copye of a tretes and a lettre
That Ector hade hym sent to axen red
If swych a man was worthi to ben ded --
Woot I nought who.

(II 1696- 1700)

The individual whose "tretes" Troilus passes to Deiphebus and Eleyne may be introduced as a quiet reminder of Boethius himself, a prisoner condemned to death for furthering "the comune profit" (Boece I pr. IV 86-7), at least according to his autobiographical account. The fate of this anonymous convict hangs in the balance, not of some whimsical divine force, but of the favourable outcome of two -- actually three -- princely affairs.

Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde
In earnest gret; so did Eleyne the queene;
And romyng outward, faste it gone byholde,
Downward a steyre, into an herber grene.
This ilke thing thei redder hem bytwene,
And largely the mountance of an owre,
Thei gon on it to reden and to powre.

(II 1702- 8)

However much we may sympathize with Troilus' emotional plight, from the perspective of the life of the prisoner, it is hard to ignore Troilus' casual perusal of these documents. As Deiphebus and Eleyne return from their semi-pastoral retreat, we must consider the possibility that the princes might have ruled against the accused if the love-trysts had gone awry.

And torne we to Troylus ayen,
That gan ful lyghtly of the lettre pace
That Deiphebus hadde yn the gardeyn seyn;
And of Eleyne and hym he wolde feyn
Delyvered ben.

(III 219-23)

It would be nice to know that princes took their subjects' lives more seriously; it would be even nicer to think this particular

war was being waged in the name of true love. While the "poet's honest voice" (cf. Yeager) remains loudly ambiguous, in this scene we can say with relative confidence that Chaucer undermines the causes of the war as well as the ennobling effect of love on the princes of the realm.

With respect to the physical and emotional belligerence that pervades the text, Troilus' statement concerning Criseyde's expulsion from her city is most unsettling. When Pandarus incites his friend to take action on behalf of Criseyde, Troilus collects himself and despondently responds:

Fyrst, syn thow wost this town hath al this werre
For ravysshynge of womman so by myght,
It sholde not be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne don so gret unright.
(IV 547-50)

In conclusion to his first explanation for inaction, Troilus stipulates that his beloved "is chaunged for the townes goode" (IV 553). Monica McAlpine's popular disquisition on Troilus' "career" as "a Boethian comedy"⁸ hinges on her straightforward reading of this stanza. Stephen Knight agrees that Criseyde's "going is, undoubtedly, a public good."⁹ Troilus, as it happens, nonetheless resolves not simply to do nothing on Criseyde's behalf, but to officially represent the state at her exchange. It should be recalled, in particular, that Ector, consistently pegged a notch higher than his younger brother on the scale of "gret power and moral vertu" (II 167), denies that she "is chaunged for the townes goode" (IV 553). Troilus' stated priorities are:

First how to save hire honour, and what weye
He myghte best th' eschaunge of hire withstonde.
(IV 159-60)

Ector's public defense of Criseyde in parliament affords Troilus the perfect opportunity to defend Criseyde's honour; withstand her exchange (or at least attempt to); keep up his reputation as "Ector the secounde" (although he apparently prefers to emulate Deiphebus, cf. II 1398); stick up for his own brother; silence the opposition (what if Ector, Troilus and Pryam all insisted?); all at once. But he -- and Pandarus -- stay silent while Ector rails:

Sires, she nys no presoner. . .
I not on yow who that this charge leyde,
But on my part ye may eftsome hym telle
We usen here no wommen for to selle.
(IV 179-82)

Ector is unfortunately proven wrong, as Troilus' second justification for inaction demonstrates.

I have ek thought, so it were hire assent,
To axe hire at my fader, of his grace;
Than thenke I this were hire accusement,
Syn wel I wot I may hire nought purchase.
(IV 554-7)

While this may constitute Troilus' soundest and most honest reason, it also unequivocally establishes his true priorities, first the preservation of the authority structure, and second the perpetuation of his love affair. Troilus' third justification is his most troublesome, bringing us right back to his own prior connection between loving and warring.

Yet drede I moost hire herte to pertourbe
With violence, yf I do swych a game.
For yf I wolde it openly distourbe,
It moste ben disclaundre to hire name.
(IV 561-4)

Since when should violence perturb Criseyde's heart? And what are we to make, then, of Troilus' explicit collusion with Pandarus' "most manipulative and unsettling plots against Criseyde,"¹⁰

in Aers' phrase? Where are all the machinations that brought Criseyde to her "wittes ende" (III 931) but have in no way assured her "pes" or "suffisaunce" (III 1309)? Having engrossed us in the process of coercion, Chaucer now suspends all amorous intrigue, thereby accentuating the centrality of the war.

Troilus reiterates his policy of inaction when he sees Diomedé during the exchange. According to the narrator:

But why he nolde don so fel a dede,
That shal I seyn, and why hym lyst it spare:
He hadde in herte always a manere drede
Lest that Cryseyde, yn rumour of this fare,
Sholde han ben slayn.

(V 50-4)

Rumour of this fare is precisely what does slay Criseyde's character in the long run. But what is it exactly that would constitute "so fel a dede" -- murder, subversion, or reverting to open doing and thus allowing others to "espie" his affection (IV 153)? Here Troilus can be seen as a hero or a jerk. Either way, the case can be made that the warrior overrides the lover in him, and at Criseyde's expense.

Whether Troilus' decision to forgo Criseyde -- if only as a temporary measure -- constitutes an act of free will, or manifests some complex consequence of internalization of social norms, whereby he becomes "a victim of the system as much as [Criseyde] has always been, or more so, because of his lack of previous experience of its oppressive character,"¹¹ the evidence suggests that Troilus, in a pinch, privileges the state over Criseyde. Contrary to Knight's compassionate assertion, Troilus has experienced the "oppressive character" of the system; he is the system.

By refusing to exert his influence, he passively sanctions the injustice perpetrated against Criseyde. He proceeds to blame her for the consequences, while denying his own complicity.

It is odd how today's sociohistoricist critics are eager to identify Troilus' failure, but resort to blaming the catastrophe on "the system." This is perhaps attributable to their reluctance to undermine the integrity of Chaucer's apparent celebration of one-on-one passion, lest the Christian allegorists score a lap-sarian point. David Aers inadvertently neutralizes Troilus politically and neuters him sexually when he distinguishes between the prince and "the males who govern Troy." Rather than make Troilus the subject of his pivotal assessment, Aers resorts to a passive, impersonal construction:

Yet it cannot be avoided, for the males who govern in Troy
decide that Criseyde is an object which can be traded. . .
[T]he consequences of this decision for Troilus are ruinous.¹²

Even Arlyn Diamond would sooner fault the system than the man; in her powerful sociosexual fusion, she employs a passive construction which relegates the King Pryamus' son to a malleable social construct, at the precise moment that individual accountability is most called for.

When the world intervenes as it does in war, which is after all the chief justification for a knightly class, then the lover's dual allegiances cannot be sustained. Confined to the personal realm or abstracted in the "natural," love is a source of inspiration for the knight. In a world of social reality, however, love becomes a dangerous rival to the ideology of feudal patriarchy.¹³

Why not say, "Troilus cannot sustain his dual allegiances"? Feminists of both genders emphasize Criseyde's conditioning, as well. Aers identifies a "fundamental social conservatism"¹⁴ in her way.

"Criseyde's liberation," Maureen Fries contends, "is impeded by her own inculturation."¹⁵ But the demise of the affair needn't spell either the end of Criseyde's struggle for independence, or that of Chaucer's celebration of human love. Rather, when Troilus hands Criseyde over to Diomedes, the lovers become de facto adversaries, and their relationship becomes a measure of the destructiveness of war. Both lovers, however, are aware of the implications of their decision. Criseyde, finally, is not the most important thing in Troilus' life, and vice versa. Then again, she never pretended, as we have seen in Chapter Three, that he was.

When Criseyde says,

Men trete of pees, and it supposid is
That men the queene Eleyne shal restore
(IV 1346-7),

she sends an important message to her lover. Aers quotes these lines to say "she has now become syntactically absolutely deleted," and that "Her socialisation as woman has been so successful that she has internalised the values and norms of her male governors."¹⁶ What Chaucer actually has her do is remind her prince that he is in a position -- is in fact duty-bound -- to save their relationship and their city by suing for peace. But instead of finding some way to expel Eleyne, he consents to and even presides over Criseyde's extradition. Upon returning from the exchange, "To chambre he wente"(V 202),

And in his throwes frenetyk and madde
He curssed Jove, Appollo, and ek Cupide,
He curssed Ceres, Pacus, and Cipryde,
His burthe, hymself, his fate, and ek nature,
And, save his lady, every creature.
(V 206-10)

Mars, god of war, goes conspicuously unnamed here. During this

day of truce, when actions toward peace are most in order, Troilus chooses, instead, to absent himself from the world of responsibility. Spending the balance of the day and the ensuing night in bed, he dreams, appropriately, "that he was amonges alle/ His enemys, and in hire hondes falle" (V 251-2). If love once occupied center-stage of Troilus' consciousness, now war has subversively elbowed its way in through his subconscious mind. Chaucer sees fit to point out that Pandarus, master of machination, was "with the kyng Pryam alday" (284). Instead of putting their minds together and pursuing means of ending the siege, Troilus and Pandarus go off on holiday for "a wowke" (492) to the palace of Sarpedon, who "coincidentally" had been captured and released along with Antenor (IV 52). Upon their return to Troy, the two protagonists wait idly at the wall, for, as Troilus says, "We han not ellys for to don, ywys" (1156). Under the circumstances, such princely pronouncements cannot be taken too lightly.

In depicting Ector's death, Chaucer lays responsibility for the salvation of Troy on the shoulders of Troilus, "That next hym was of worthinesse welle" (V 1565). While Fortune is busy pulling Troy's bright feathers "day to day" (1547), Troilus "day by day" (1538) busies himself spying on Criseyde and jealously pursuing Diomedes in battle. Earlier on in the narrative, Criseyde responded to Pandarus' tale of "The wyse, worthi Ector the secounde" (II 158) in terms of the obvious difficulty of reconciling violence with virtue:¹⁷

For trewely I holde it gret deynte,
A kynges sone in armes wel to do,
And ben of goode condicions therto.

For gret power and moral vertu here
Is seelde yseye in o persone yfere.
(II 164-8)

The simultaneous unfolding of violence and passion in Troilus' behaviour is suggested by the temporal phrase "day by day."

So muche day by day his owene thought
For lust to hire gan quyken and encrease,
That every other charge he sett at nought.
(I 442-4)

In order to make a favourable impression on Criseyde,

Fro day to day yn armes so he spedde
That the Grekes as the deth hym dredde.
(482-3)

By Book V, the virtue of institutionalized violence -- at least for Criseyde -- is spent. She tells Diomedes:

Myn herte is now in tribulacion,
And ye in armes bisy day by day.
(V 988-9)

The pervasive usage of the phrase, whether in reference to the battlefield or to feasting at Sarpedon's (V 439), suggests that individuals are not passive victims of destinal forces, but rather are active participants in the shaping of events. Troilus himself employs the phrase twice in his final recounted letter. Surely he could be doing something other than waiting around "Fro day to day" (V 1329, 1356) and simply releasing his aggression on the Greeks. He chooses to further the fundamental cause of his emotional and physical undoing, and to this extent is the author of his own misadventures. While it may be his inalienable right to seek his own "deth in armes" (V.1718), it says little for his martial virtue.

For all the apparent foolishness of the women who visit Criseyde upon learning of her exchange, their presence in The Book is important. The scene compassionately depicts the world of women

-- the noncombatants -- waiting day by day in the hope that their husbands, fathers and lovers will return unscathed. "I hope, ywys," says one, that Criseyde "Shal bryngen us the pes on every syde" (IV 691-3). Criseyde picks up the theme in a speech that rarely figures in critical assessments, perhaps because it is shrouded in her protracted effort to manage the crisis in Book IV. "Men trete of peas," she tells Troilus, as if hinting at his potential role of negotiator. Suggesting that Eleyne ought to be restored, Criseyde goes on to posit a social ideal that adds a new dimension to the pervasive theme of universal love.

The nature of the pes mot nedes dryve
That men most entrecomunen yfere,
And to and fro ek ryde and gon as blyve
Alday as thikke as ben flen from an hyve,
And every wight han liberte to bleve
Where as hym lyste the bet, withouten leve.
(IV 1353-8)

Troilus' response to this is "I not if pes shal evere mo bytyde" (1464). Two scenes later, in an act of gross heartlessness, he himself, whether by chance, by his own request, by protocol, or by Ector's honourable default, delivers his sweetheart into the hands of an enemy knight. "Now holde yowre day" (V 84), Troilus selfishly warns her. To Troilus the lover she means the world; to the warrior, however, she is a prisoner. It is difficult to imagine a greater insult to her ideal of liberty and peace.

Conclusion.

In his Testament of Cresseid, Robert Henryson saw fit to bring Troilus back to life and to reassemble the pagan gods to sit in moral judgement of the accused. Tall again in his saddle, Troilus takes pity on some leprous whore in the street and tosses her some alms. This manoeuvre would appear to seek to redress the less noble image of Troilus handing Criseyde's reins to Diomedes. Less creative acts of verbal abuse and humiliation are frequent even today in critical assessments of Chaucer's Criseyde. But as Adrienne Munich observes in a different context, "Critical discourse has tended to be more misogynist than the texts it examines."¹ Many critics of Troilus take their interpretive lead from Pandarus, whose final utterance reveals his hatred toward Criseyde (V 1732). She does not bow to his will or conform to his expectations, and he despises her in his powerlessness. Yet the elements of Chaucer's Troilus add up to much more than a simple tale of betrayal in loving.

Criseyde is not the perfect courtly mistress who drifts wantonly into the arms of some sudden suitor. Like Emelye in The Knight's Tale and the female eagle in The Parliament of Fowls, Criseyde is the object of competing emotional, sexual and social interests. But she is also portrayed as a mature woman with a mind of her own. As a widow and perhaps even a parent who has had to manage independently, she is not the sort of individual we should expect to see sitting back uneasily as

others run her private life. Criseyde's character is perhaps more like the Wife of Bath's. Like Alison, Criseyde seeks sovereignty in love. But unlike her, she does not act to reverse the dominant social order and rule her man. When Troilus tries to dominate her, though, she rejects his authority. What good, then, could come from her returning to the man who seeks to possess her and to the city that has expelled her? Troilus and Pandarus find her "betrayal" reprehensible. The narrator does not, and there is but minimal evidence to suggest that Chaucer himself did. The Book of Troilus invites us to see things from Troilus' traditionally privileged point of view. It also invites us to turn the tables on tradition and imagine what form the hypothetical "Book of Criseyde" might take.

The moral of Criseyde's subtext might be "Beth war of men, and herkneth what I seye" (V 1785). It is in this spirit, I believe, that Paul Strohm observes how

In recent years critics have moved to embrace more fully the concept of Chaucer's polyphony, as defined both by medieval practice and modern theory, and his poetry is now characterized by such terms as "contrastive," "exploratory," a repository of "partial truths," "pluralistic," "inconclusive," "plurivalent," and "disjunctive."⁹

In this context, proponents of the courtly love school have sought to broaden the models of behaviour to accommodate such challenging characters as Chaucer's Criseyde. Thus, John M. Bowers puts a chisel to the wall of monologic approaches to modes of perception and experience in the text, and opens up a debate on love as unresolved as those on marriage are in Chaucer's

other works.

While most men fall in love the way Troilus does, in real life as well as in literature, this is not the way all people were known to have fallen in love. An alternate paradigm is at work.³

With such a wedge in the door of one-sided approaches to The Book of Troilus, the prospects are good for intensified debate on the ambiguous moral code of Chaucer's world.

Endnotes

Chapter One. Criseyde and Her Critics

¹ John H. Fisher, ed., The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer (7th print., New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977). All textual citations from Chaucer's works proceed from Fisher, except where otherwise noted.

² William Godwin, Life of Geoffrey Chaucer (2d ed., London: T. Davidson, 1804), vol. I.

³ Godwin, pp. 472-73.

⁴ Root, The Book of Troilus and Criseyde (1926; rpt. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1954), p. xlviii.

⁵ Root, The Poetry of Chaucer (rev. ed., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1957), p. 114.

⁶ Donaldson, Speaking of Chaucer (1970; London: Athlone, 1977), p. 71.

⁷ Donaldson, pp. 71, 75, 77, 78. For Thersites' remark, see Troilus and Cressida, Act V, Sc. ii, l. 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.81; and see Donaldson, "Briseis (etc.): Progress of a Heroine," in Vasta and Thundy, p.3.

⁹ Bishop, Chaucer's Troilus (Univ. of Bristol, 1981), p.90.

¹⁰ Saintonge, "In Defense of Criseyde," MLQ, 15 (1954), 312.

¹¹ Saintonge, p. 312.

¹² Lewis, The Allegory of Love (London, 1936; rpt. New York: Oxford U.P., 1981), p. 189.

- 13 Saintonge, p. 313.
- 14 Saintonge, p. 320.
- 15 Graydon, "Defense of Criseyde," PMLA, 44 (1929), p. 145.
- 16 Graydon, p. 154.
- 17 Criseyde's autonomous perspective on events is the topic of Chapter Three.
- 18 Fries, "'Slydyng of Corage,'" in The Authority of Experience, eds. A. Diamond and L. Edwards, (Univ. of Mass., 1977), pp. 45- 59.
- 19 Fries, p. 46.
- 20 Fries, p. 45.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Fries, p. 53.
- 23 Fries, p. 55.
- 24 Fries, p. 56.
- 25 Fries, p. 58.
- 26 Lambert, in Essays on Troilus and Criseyde, ed. M. Salu, (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979), pp. 105-25.
- 27 Lambert, p. 119.
- 28 Lambert, p. 122.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Lambert, p. 125.
- 31 Lambert, p. 105.
- 32 Lambert, p. 122.
- 33 Lambert, p. 125.
- 34 Aers, "Criseyde," Chaucer Review, 13 (1979), 177- 200.
- 35 Aers, "Criseyde," p. 184.

- 36 Aers, "Criseyde," p. 194.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Aers, "Criseyde," p. 178.
- 40 Aers, Community, Gender, and Individual Identity
(London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 13, 15.
- 41 Aers, Community, p. 134.
- 42 Aers, Community, p. 135.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Knight, Rymyng Craftily (London, 1973; rpt. Atlantic
Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1976), p. xviii.
- 45 Knight, Geoffrey Chaucer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986),
p. 2.
- 46 Knight, Chaucer, p. 32.
- 47 Knight, Chaucer, p. 33.
- 48 Knight, Chaucer, p. 45.
- 49 Knight, Chaucer, p. 57.
- 50 Knight, Chaucer, p. x.
- 51 Diamond, "Troilus and Criseyde: The Politics of Love,"
in Chaucer in the Eighties, eds., J.N. Wasserman, and R.J. Blanch,
(Syracuse U.P., 1986), pp. 101-02.

Chapter Two. Criseyde in The Book of Troilus

¹ Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930; London: Chatto
and Windus, 1947), p. 62.

² Kaminsky, Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and the Critics
(Ohio Univ. Press, 1980), p. 41.

3 See W. Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, The Elements of Style (3d ed., Macmillan, 1979), Elementary Rule #11.

4 Kaminsky, p. 41.

5 Bishop, p. 10.

6 J. S. P. Tatlock, and G. Kennedy, A Concordance to the Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), p. 910.

7 I summarize my impression of Chaucer's attitude toward Troilus' ideal in my concluding remarks.

8 Giovanni Boccaccio, Il Filostrato, in The Story of Troilus, ed. R. K. Gordon, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), p. 28.

9 Filostrato, pp. 29- 30.

10 This observation is derived largely from a fortuitous misapprehension of Chauncey Wood's analysis of "The Tone of Boccaccio's Filostrato," in The Elements of Chaucer's Troilus (Durham, N. C.: Duke U. P., 1984), pp. 3- 37.

11 Gordon, The Double Sorrow of Troilus (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), p. 149.

12 New Collegiate Dictionary, 1981 ed.

13 McAlpine, The Genre of Troilus and Criseyde (Cornell U. P.: 1978), p. 227.

14 Root, The Poetry of Chaucer, p. 106.

15 Chaucer here seems to imply that Troilus has a vested interest in publicizing his version of events.

16 Root, The Book of Troilus and Criseyde, p. xi.

17 Ibid.

18 Root, Book of Troilus, p. xi n.3.

¹⁹ Fisher, p. 968.

²⁰ Larry Benson, ed., The Riverside Chaucer (3d ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 1020.

²¹ See John Manly, and Edith Rickert, The Text of the Canterbury Tales (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), vol. VIII, part iv, 546-47.

²² Knight, in Chaucer (p.39) arrives at the opposite conclusion on the basis of the same essential information. He argues that the "emergent force of Criseyde as a figure seems to demand" the inclusion of her name to the title of the text. Note, however, that his persuasive case for the redesignation of The Book of Fame (p. 16) relies in part on Chaucer's reference in the "Retraction." Clearly there is "a double viewpoint on love and tragedy," in Troilus, but insofar as the two protagonists represent the respective viewpoints, Criseyde's is the more subversive and covert.

Chapter Four. The Narrator and the Gods.

¹ Robertson, "Chaucerian Tragedy," in eds. Schoeck and Taylor, Chaucer Criticism II (Notre Dame, Ind., Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1961), p. 99.

² Robertson, p. 96.

³ Wood, The Elements, pp. 75, 169.

⁴ Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (1915; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), p. 110.

⁵ Kittredge, p. 143.

6 Curry, "Destiny in Troilus and Criseyde," in Schoeck and Taylor, pp. 58, 68, 69.

7 See Root, The Textual Tradition of Chaucer's Troilus (London, 1912; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967), p. 4.

"5.1821 -- end missing, leaf lost."

8 McAlpine, Genre, p. 40.

9 Aers, Community, pp. 148-51.

10 Knight, Chaucer, p. 55.

11 Knight, "Chaucer and the Sociology of Literature," Studies in the Age of Chaucer, 2 (1980), 32.

12 Bronson, In Search of Chaucer (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 28.

13 Bronson, p. 29.

14 Bloomfield, "Distance and Predestination in Troilus," in Schoeck and Taylor, p. 206.

15 Bloomfield, p. 201.

16 Bloomfield, p. 209.

17 Jordan, "The Narrator in Chaucer's Troilus," ELH, XXV (1958), 237-38.

18 Jordan, p. 249.

19 Jordan, p. 251.

20 Jordan, p. 253.

21 Ibid.

22 Donaldson, pp. 68-9.

23 Donaldson, p. 95.

24 Ibid.

25 Spearing, Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde (Southampton: Camelot, 1976), p. 53.

26 Bronson, p. 22.

27 Kittredge, pp. 135, 136.

28 C. W. Ashley, The Ashley Book of Knots (New York: Doubleday, 1944), p. 406.

29 Reiss, "Chaucer and His Audience," Chaucer Review, 14 (1980), 401.

30 Ashley, p. 406.

31 Gaylord, "Chaucer's Tender Trap," English Miscellany, 15 (1964), 41. Gaylord sees the narrator as a vehicle for the author's own "pardonable double-dealing" (p. 32). "[O]ne does not," he argues, "assign equal weight . . . to each part" of the poem (p. 30). His basis of discrimination, however, remains somewhat arbitrary.

32 Knight, Chaucer, p. 63.

33 While it is tempting to associate Jove with the Biblical god, such a direct substitution is effectively precluded by many authorial characterizations of Jove, eg.: "Ye [Venus] Joves first to thilke effectes glade . . ./ Comeveden, and amorous hym made/ On mortal thyng" (III 15-8).

34 Knight, Chaucer, p. 55. (See above p. 58 n.10)

35 Curry, p. 46.

Chapter Five. "The Nature of the Peace."

¹ Yeager, "Pax Poetica," Studies in the Age of Chaucer, 9, (1987), 110.

2 Yeager, p. 109.

3 Yeager, p. 110.

4 Knight, Chaucer, pp. 55, 41.

6 Braddy, pp. 71-2.

7 cf. Pandarus' "Have here a swerd and smytheth of myn hed!" (III 1573) Braddy's treatment of III 59-60, and III 1574-82, pointedly challenges the profundity of critiques which pass over "al that which chargeth nought to seye" (III 1576).

8 McAlpine, p. 33.

9 Knight, Chaucer, p. 55.

10 Aers, Community, p. 128.

11 Knight, Chaucer, p. 56.

12 Aers, Community, p. 147.

13 Diamond, "Politics," p. 10.

14 Aers, "Criseyde," p. 191.

15 Fries, p. 52.

16 Aers, "Criseyde," p. 192.

17 For an enlightened treatment of "Medieval Justification of War," see Margaret A. Gist, Love and War in the Middle Ages.

Conclusions.

1 Munich, "Notorious Signs, Feminist Criticism and Literary Tradition," in eds, Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, Making A Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism (New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 251.

² Strohm, Social Chaucer (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 168-69.

³ Bowers, "How Criseyde Falls in Love," in eds., Nathaniel B. Smith and Joseph Snow, The Expansion and Transformation of Courtly Literature (Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1980), p. 142.

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