

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS AND TROILUS AND CRISEYDE:

A Comparison of the Main Characters
from the Point of View of Courtly Love

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The basic plots of the two works by Geoffrey Chaucer, *the Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, seem to me to be very similar. A Knight, the Black Knight in *the Book of the Duchess* and Troilus in *Troilus and Criseyde*, happens to see a young, gracious and beautiful lady, White in *the Book of the Duchess* and Criseyde in *Troilus and Criseyde*, and falls in love with her. The knight offers to serve her, but she first refuses the offer, though there is some difference in the attitudes of the ladies on that occasion. The knight suffers for his love, but he is finally accepted by the lady. The lovers lead a happy life for a while, but their love ends soon, because of the lady's death in *the Book of the Duchess* and the lady's betrayal in *Troilus and Criseyde*.

This similarity in plot seems to come partly from the idea of love with a set of rules, which is called courtly love. It is controversial that such rules existed in the actual medieval society, but many literary works seem to adhere to them. This idea of courtly love seems to have originated among the troubadours, and it later influenced the narrative works. Let us consider some rules of courtly love to see how *the Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde* adhere to them.

First, courtly love is based on the idea of aristocracy. According to Valency, this idea of aristocracy "was the troubadours' invention."¹ Andreas Capellanus, who wrote *De Arte Honeste Amandi*, in the twelfth century, in which he tried to define courtly love, also insists on this. Though it is often said that he wrote the treatise playfully,

his book is one of the most important texts in studying courtly love. It was pointed out that "the amatory relationship which Andreas purported to interpret was courtly and aristocratic."² *The Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde* fit this definition because the protagonists in both works belong to the aristocratic society.

Second, courtly love is sensual. Andreas insists on this point strongly, and Valency states that it was "an extremely sensual love that the troubadours celebrated."³ We know that the couples in the two works are united, not only spiritually but also physically.

Third, the word "mercy" is very important in courtly love. According to Valency, "If we could digest the entire corpus of courtly love-poetry into a single word, the word would be 'merci'."⁴ "Merci" means the lady's acceptance of the knight's love, and implies the physical reward to the knight's service; "In return for his service, the knight hopes one day to receive 'mercy'."⁵ Chaucer is aware of the importance of the word. The Black Knight, when he confesses his love for the first time, can say "'Mercy!' and no more" (1219),⁶ and Troilus, in the first private meeting with Criseyde, utters the same word: "Lo, the alderfirste word that hym asterte / Was, twyse, 'Mercy, mercy, swete herte!'" (III, 96-7).⁷

Forth, Andreas states that love must not be too easily obtained; the lady must show some coldness by refusing to grant her love. According to Valency, a lady in courtly love has a dual character: "She was cruel and merciless, a she-wolf; she was also wise, kindly, and noble, an angel."⁸ Chaucer obeys this rule. White refuses the Black Knight's first offer mercilessly: ". . . she sayde 'Nay' / Al outerly" (1243-44). Criseyde also refuses, but, being different from White's answer, hers is ambiguous; she says that she will be like a sister to Troilus. She seems to refuse for form's sake. It is true, however, that in both works the ladies' refusal gives pain to the knights and that the knights

cannot obtain love quickly.

Fifth, courtly love is extra-conjugal and must be kept secret. As to this rule, there is a great difference in the two works. *The Book of the Duchess* never adheres to this rule, because the love between the Black Knight and White is aimed at marriage. On the contrary, *Troilus and Criseyde* obeys this rule faithfully. The love between Troilus and Criseyde is concealed to the very end, and the lovers meet secretly lest any other man should notice their relationship. It is strange, however, that they must conceal their love. As Criseyde is a widow and Troilus is a bachelor, there seems to be no good reason for their love to be kept secret.

Sixth, the lady is regarded as being perfect. For the knight, the lady is a goddess, and he identifies himself as her thrall. According to Dodd:

Her perfection is pictured in her physical beauty, her character, and her influence upon others. Her physical beauty, when portrayed, accords with the mediaeval ideal. Her hair is blond or golden; her mouth rosy and smiling; her flesh white, soft, and smooth; her body slender, well formed, and without blemish. In character, she is distinguished for her courtesy, kindness, refinement, and good sense.⁹

The beauty of White and of Criseyde is described minutely. The Black Knight explains how wonderful White is. The following are only a few among many lines in which he praises White:

" . . . as the someres sonne bryght
Ys fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght
Than any other planete in heven
The moone, or the sterres seven
. . . al the world so hadde she
Surmounted hem alle of beaute,
Of maner, and of comlynesse,
Of stature, and of wel set gladnesse,
Of goodlyhede so wel beseye -
Shortly, what shal y more seye?" (821-30)

Criseyde's beauty is described in the first part of the work as follows:

Criseyde was this lady name al right
 As to my doom, in al Troies cite
 Nas non so fair, for passynge every wight
 So aungelik was hir natif beaute,
 That lik a thing inmortal semed she,
 As doth an hevenyssh perfit creature,
 That down were sent in scornynge of nature. (I, 99-105)

But in the end Chaucer informs us of Criseyde's blemish that her eyebrows are joined together. The fact that Criseyde has a blemish is extraordinary for a courtly lady. Though White and Criseyde are beautiful, Criseyde cannot be a perfect courtly lady because of her blemish in her eyebrows, while White, having no blemish, is described as being perfect.

Seventh, we often find an important third person in a courtly love situation. This third person is often called a "gilos", and may well be the lady's husband; "The peculiar joy of True Love depended upon the fact that the husband was in the unhappy position of attracting to himself the sum of aggression normally present in a libidinous relationship."¹⁰ Also, in a type of troubadour lyric called alba, the watchman often warns the lovers of the coming of dawn and thus brings them back to the real world. Both the Dreamer in the *Book of the Duchess* and Pandarus in *Troilus and Criseyde* appear as the important third person. They are, of course, not jealous husbands, but they try to intrude the world of the lovers with some obtrusion and jealousy because both the Dreamer and Pandarus are unsuccessful courtly lovers. In this respect, the Dreamer and Pandarus perform the same function as a "gilos".

Eighth, the knight has to be love-sick. The symptoms of love-sickness are "sleeplessness, loss of appetite, loss of flesh, and the characteristic pallor of the lover, together with love of solitude and a tendency to weep."¹¹ The pains of the knights are described minutely in both works. The Black Knight, before winning his lady's love, suffers greatly: "I was so wo, / Me thoughte myn herte braste atweyne!"

(1192-93). Troilus, too, experiences the pain of love. The fire of love "held hym as his thral lowe in destresse, / And brende him so in soundry wise ay newe, / That sexti tyme a day he loste his hewe" (I, 439-41). Thus Chaucer describes two knights' love-sickness, but he especially exaggerates the woe of Troilus.

Ninth, the knight has to prove his worth in a long and patient service to the lady. This service is called Minnedienst, and "no one could serve properly unless he himself had true love in his heart to sustain him in the rigors of his servitude."¹² White finally accepts the Black Knight's love because she acknowledges the quality of Minnedienst of the Black Knight:

" . . . she wel understod
That I (the Black Knight) ne wilned thyng but god,
And worship, and to kepe hir name
Over alle thyng, and drede hir sname,
And was so besy hyr to serve;
And pitee were I shulde sterue,
Syth that I wilned noon harm, ywis." (1261-67)

Criseyde, too, is aware of Troilus' service: "I felte wel and say / Youre grete trouthe and servise every day, / And that youre herte al myn was" (III, 991-93). Though both the Black Knight and Troilus try to prove their worth by their services, we find a difference between them before they see the lady: before falling in love with Criseyde, Troilus was not ready to serve a lady, while the Black Knight was always a servant of love.

Tenth, the love has an ennobling effect. According to Valency, "It was the high function of the lady, to guide the lover upward in worth and dignity to the utmost reach of his potentiality."¹³ The Black Knight is ennobled after seeing White:

"I was ryght yong, soth to say,
And ful gret nede I hadde to lerne;
Whan my herte wolde yerne
To love, hyt was a gret emprise.
But as my wyt koude best suffice,

After my yonge childly wyt,
Withoute drede, I besette hyt
To love hir in my beste wyse
To do hir worship and the servise
That I koude thoo, be my trouthe,
Withoute feynynge outhur slouthe;
For wonder feyn I woulde hir se."

(1090-101)

The Black Knight makes an effort to be an ideal knight to be worthy of the perfect lady. Troilus, too, is ennobled by love. When he despises love at first, he is a "fierse and proude knyght" (I, 225). He changes after seeing Criseyde: he becomes a worthy knight who is praised by everyone. Thus both the Black Knight and Troilus are ennobled by love.

Our brief review of some of the rules of courtly love has shown that the idea of love in the two works by Chaucer, *the Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, is based on courtly love, though the two narratives do not adhere to all of the rules. It may be said that the characters of the knights and the ladies in the two works are determined to some extent from the beginning by the rules of courtly love, and that any divergence from the rules must carry a deep significance. In this essay, I intend to focus my attention on the main characters in the two works, and to examine how they act or fail to act as the rules demand.

Now I would like to compare the character of the two knights based on such rules of courtly love as was given before. The first point is the word "mercy", which both the Black Knight and Troilus utter to the ladies at the crucial moments. Though the knights' first attempts to have the ladies' mercy fail, they finally succeed. The great difference in the two episodes is found in the way by which the Black Knight and Troilus meet the ladies for the first time to confess their love. While the Black Knight goes to White by himself, Troilus attains his purpose only through the encouragement of Pandarus who makes all plans for Troilus and Criseyde to meet privately. In this, Troilus fails to

be an ideal courtly knight.

The second point is that the knight has to be love-sick. Both knights become love-sick as soon as they see the ladies, and they are powerless in love. The Black Knight's suffering, after seeing White, is described as follows:

"Upon a day
I the Black Knight bethoghte me what woo
And sorwe that I suffred thoo
For hir, and yet she wyste hyt noght,
Ne telle hir durste I nat my thoght.
'Allas!' thoghte I, 'y kan no red;
And but I telle hir, I nam but ded;
And yif I telle hyr, to seye ryght soth,
I am adred she wol be wroth.
Allas! what shal I thanne do?'" (1182-91)

Then how about Troilus? Immediately after he sees Criseyde, he goes to moan alone in his chamber:

And whan that he in chambre was allone,
He doun upon his beddes feet hym sette,
And first he gan to sike, and eft to grone,
And thought ay on hire so, withouten lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hire saugh a-temple, and al the wise
Right of hire look, and gan it newe avise. (I, 358-504)

Compared with the powerlessness of the Black Knight, that of Troilus is described more minutely and is emphasized:

But thanne felte this Troilus swich wo,
That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight hadde loved so,
That nevere of hym she wolde han taken hede,
For which hym thoughte he felte his herte blede;
Ne of his wo ne dorste he nat bygygne
To tellen hir, for al this world to wynne. (I, 498-504)

Troilus never thinks of his position as a prince of Troy; his high status cannot help him in his love.

On the other hand, Troilus' bravery as a warrior is known to all.

This Troilus sat on his baye steede,
Al armed, save his hed, ful richely;
And wondrous was his hors, and gan to blede,

On which he rood a pas ful softly.
 But swich a knyghtly sighte, trewely,
 As was on hym, was nought, withouten faille,
 To luke on Mars, that god is of bataille.
 So lik a man of armes and a knight
 He was to seen, fulfilled of heigh prowessse;
 For bothe he hadde a body and a myght
 To don that thing, as wel as hardynesse;
 And ek to seen hym in his gere hym dresse,
 So fressh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
 It was an heven upon hym for to see.

(II, 624-37)

The two aspects of Troilus, powerless in love and brave in battle, have a clear contrast. The bravery of the Black Knight as a warrior is never mentioned, though he "is a finished gentleman of a perild quite as studied as the Elizabethan in its fashions of conduct and discourse"¹⁴ Because the *Book of the Duchess* was written in commemoration of the death of Blanche, duchess of Lancaster and the first wife of John of Gaunt, the poet had no need to describe the bravery of the Black Knight. As the Black Knight is described only as a powerless lover, and not as a brave warrior, we may say that Chaucer portrays Troilus closer to the picture of an ideal knight than the Black Knight in this point. According to C. S. Lewis, "As an embodiment of the medieval ideal of lover and warrior, he [Troilus] stands second only to Malory's Lancelot: far, I think, above the Lancelot of Chrétien."¹⁵

Third point is the knight's service to the lady. Both the Black Knight and Troilus take the humble attitude as a servant, and their attitude is an ideal one from the point of view of courtly love. But, as I pointed out before, there is a difference between the Black Knight and Troilus before they see the ladies. The Black Knight has already been a servant of Love, and has been seeking a fair lady whom he could devote himself to before he sees White:

"Syr," quod he, "sith first I kouthe
 Have any maner wyt fro youthe,
 Or kyndely understandyng
 To comprehende in any thyng
 What love was, in myn owne wyt,

Dredeles, I have ever yit
Tributarye and yive rente
To love, hooly with good entente,
And throug plesaunce become his thral
With good wille, body, hert, and al. (759-68)

It is very natural for him to fall in love with her, for he "ches love to his firste craft" (791).

On the other hand, Troilus despises love at first. "His entrance is certainly unprepossessing, and can hardly be described as courtly."¹⁶ He laughs at a man who suffers much pain through his love:

"I have herd told, pardieux, of youre lyvyng,
Ye loveres, and youre lewed observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in wynnyng
Of love, and in the keypyng which doutaunces;
And whan youre prey is lost, woo and penaunces.
O very fooles, nyce and blynde be ye!
Ther nys nat oon kan war by other be." (I, 197-203)

At this stage he is described as a "fierse and proude knyght" (I, 225). This first picture of Troilus is unlike that of an ideal courtly knight.

The forth point is love's ennobling power. Both the Black Knight and Troilus are ennobled by the ladies. The Black Knight admits that he was immature at first: "For that tyme youthe, my maistresse, / Governed me in ydelnesse;" (797-98). After seeing White, the Black Knight says, he tried to keep himself "fro ydelnesse" (1155), and did his "besynesse / To make songes" (1156-57). After which White, instead of "ydelnesse", took him "in hir governaunce" (1286). Thus the Black Knight is ennobled.

Troilus, too, is ennobled. First, he is a proud and innocent knight who despises love. This aspect of Troilus is Chaucer's invention. In *Il Filostrato* by Boccaccio, the direct source of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, Troilus is already an expert in love. By changing Troilus from an expert in love to an innocent young man, Chaucer emphasizes that Troilus' love is abrupt and fatal. And what is more important,

the poet traces Troilus' spiritual growth. After seeing Criseyde, he comes to know what love is and is ennobled:

For he bicom the frendlieste wight,
The gentilest, and ek the mooste fre,
The thriftiest and oon the beste knyght,
That in his tyme was or myghte be. (I, 1079-82)

The knowledge of both pain and joy of love improves him to be loved by everyone.

Thus Troilus is ennobled and leads a happy life with Criseyde for a while, but he comes to experience what an ordinary courtly lover is not expected to experience: the betrayal of the lady. This extraordinary experience helps Troilus to attain his final stature. After he is slain by Achilles, his soul goes up to the eighth sphere, and from there he laughs at the wretched world:

And in himself he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste;
And dampned aloure werk that foloweth so
The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste,
And sholden aloure herte on heven caste. (V, 1821-25)

This laughter of Troilus is very different from his first laughter: "The first is the laughter of ignorance, the second, of wisdom."¹⁷

Thus Troilus grows up through love, and finally, becomes so wise that he can transcend earthly joy and woe, and this wisdom makes him laugh.

The Black Knight, after seeing White, is ennobled to become a perfect courtly lover as Troilus does, but he never grows more. After White dies, he only laments, and continues to lament. The growth of the Black Knight is suspended, but that of Troilus continues till he can laugh at the wretched world. This growth of Troilus is hardly found in any other courtly lover. With the first picture of Troilus as a proud and innocent man, this final picture of him show that the development of Troilus' character covers a greater range than is expected of a perfect courtly knight, while the Black Knight remains,

from the first to the last, in the world of courtly love.

The difference in the knight's range of growth is related to that in the range of their perception of Fortune. Basically their idea about fate is the same. They both think that they are ruled by Goddess Fortuna. She turns a wheel by which a man's condition changes from poverty to richness, from unhappiness to happiness and then to reverse.

The Black Knight says:

"She ys th'envyouse charite
That ys ay fals, and semeth wel,
So turneth she hyr false whel
Aboute, for hyt ys nothyng stable . . . " (642-45)

Though they both accept Fortune, Troilus develops a more complicated idea about fate. In Book IV, Troilus argues about fate in a long monologue, in connection with foreknowledge of God and of man's free will:

"Thus . . . out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resonyng of Goddes purveyaunce
And of the thynges that to comen be;
By which resoun men may wel yse
That thilke thynges that in erthe falle,
That by necessite they comen alle.

"For although that, for thyng shal come, ywys,
Therefore is it purveyed, certeynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyde is;
Yet natheles, bihoveth it nedfully,
That thing to come be purveyd, trewely;
Or elles, thynges that purveyed be,
That they bitiden by necessite.

"And this suffiseth right ynough, certeyn,
For to destruye oure fre chois every del.
But now is this abusioun, to seyn
That fallynge of the thynges temporel
Is cause of Goddes prescience eternal.
Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thyng to come sholde cause his prescience" (IV, 1044-64)

Here Chaucer shows the influence of *De Consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius, and Troilus comes to have a more complicated idea of fate than the Black Knight, who simply thinks that Fortune dominates all.

At a glance, one may feel that both the Black Knight and Troilus are

ideal courtly knights, but they are very different. While the Black Knight adheres to almost all rules of courtly love except that he does marry the lady, and his ideas are limited to those of the courtly world, Troilus fails to adhere to many rules, and his ideas are more complicated than what are expected in a courtly knight. This shows that the Black Knight by nature is comfortable to stay in the world of courtly love, and that Troilus does not fit in it.

Then how about the ladies, White and Criseyde? As was pointed out before, both White and Criseyde are beautiful ladies, and the beauty of the lady is a requirement in courtly love. There are, however, certain differences in Chaucer's way of treating the beauty of the two ladies.

The description of White is "one of the most beautiful portraits of a woman that were ever drawn."¹⁸ She is so beautifully described that her figure resembles that of a goddess. The image of a goddess is often used to describe an ideal courtly lady. In Chaucer's another work, the *Knight's Tale* in the *Canterbury Tales*, Palamon, a young knight, exclaims, on seeing a beautiful lady:

"The fairnesse of that lady that I se
Yond in the gardyn romen to and fro
Is cause of al my cryng and my woe.
I noot wner she be womman or goddesse,¹⁹
But Venus is it soothly, as I gesse." (1098-102)

Here Palamon cannot say whether she is a womman or a goddess.

Criseyde, of course, is beautiful, too. In the last part of the work, however, we come to know that she has a blemish: "hire browes joyneden yfere" (V, 813). In spite of her beauty, her figure does not resemble that of a goddess, because of her blemish in her eyebrows. And she is likened to "under cloude black so bright a sterre" (I, 175). This mataphor seems to imply the darkness of her character and of her background. The reason why Criseyde is described chiefly as a "creature" and an actual woman, and not on the level of divinity, seems to

have connection with her character.

Next, I would like to compare their attitudes in the scenes in which they refuse to accept the knight's love. Here we find that a basic difference exists in their characters. White, having listened to the Black Knight's offer, only says, "'nay' / Al outerly" (1243-44). Here she is acting strictly according to the rule of courtly love, being "cruel and merciless, a she-wolf."²⁰ On the contrary, Criseyde, having read Troilus' letter, replies that she "nolde nought, ne make hireselven bonde / In love, but as his suster, hym to please, / She wolde ay fayn, to doon his herte an ese" (II, 1223-25). This ambiguous reply implies that she is actually ready to accept his love, while White's answer implies no encouragement in words or in action. The reader is given to understand that Criseyde wants to give, as soon as possible, an answer which will please Troilus, but she does not do so, only because she wants to appear as an ideal courtly lady before Troilus. She knows about love much more than Troilus does, for she is a widow, and knows much about love and about married life. By refusing for form's sake, she seems to make herself appear as an excellent object of courtly love, and to make Troilus love her much more. Thus, Chaucer describes her rather as a realistic and calculating woman than an ideal lady while White is described as an ideal.

Then how about their attitudes after they accept the knights' love? White becomes his mistress and governs him. Criseyde takes the same attitude: she declares that she will govern Troilus.

"A kynges sone although ye be, ywys,
Ye shal namore han soverignete
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
N'y nyl forbere, if that ye don amys,
To wratthe yow; and whil that ye me serve,
Cherichen yow right after ye disserve." (III, 170-75)

This Criseyde can never be found in Boccaccio's work, in which she is more openly affectionate. Chaucer has created a different Criseyde to

fit a tale of courtly love.

Thus we may say that both White and Criseyde faithfully obey the rule of courtly love which demands a lady to govern her knight. But even here we find a certain difference between White and Criseyde. White makes up her mind to accept the Black Knight's love, because

" . . . she wel understod
That I the Black Knight ne wilned thyng but god,
And worship, and to kepe hir name
Over alle thyng, and drede hir shame,
And was so besy hyr to serve; . . . " (1261-65)

White, knowing his worth, accepts his love without any calculation. On the other hand, Criseyde, though she loves Troilus for his worthiness, calculates before she accepts his love. She is a daughter of the false traitor, Calkas, who ran away to the Greeks. She is left alone in Troy. She has no man in Troy to rely on except her uncle, Pandarus. When she is informed by Pandarus of Troilus' love, she considers her profits in the case that Troilus, a prince of Troy, and she become lovers. She thinks:

"Al were it nat to doone,
To graunte hym love, ye, for his worthynesse,
It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse,
In honestee with swich a lord to deele,
For myn estat, and also for his heele.

"Ek wel woot I my kynges sone is he;
And sith he hath to se me swich delit,
If I wolde outreliche his sighte flee,
Peraunter he myghte nave me in dispit,
Thorough whicch I myghte stonde in worse plit,
Now were I wis, me hate to purchace,
Withouten nede, ther I may stonde in grace?" (II, 703-14)

Thus we may state that while Criseyde is calculating and cunning, White acts out of her pure heart.

When we compare the characters of the two ladies, we realize that White's character is perfect as her beauty is. She is able to keep a perfect spiritual balance: "She nas to sobre ne to glad; / In alle thynges more mesure / Had never, I trowe, creature" (880-82). Accord-

ing to Valency, "The true lover had also his special virtue, the quality called 'mezura', measure, that inner restraint which governs the appetites and keeps them subject to the intellect."²¹ Measure is demanded of a true courtly lover. White has this measure in everything. As for her goodness,

" . . . trewly she
Had as moche debonairte
As ever had Hester in the Bible,
And more, yif more were possyble.

She had a wyt so general,
So hool enclnyed to alle goode,
That al hir wyt was set, by the rode,
Withoute malyce, upon gladnesse; . . . " (985-93)

Moreover, she is faithful and loves her reputation. Her character is perfect and ideal. Her perfect character fits that of an ideal lady in courtly love, and we see her more and more like a goddess. She is so perfect that she does not seem to be a human being any more.

On the contrary, Criseyde is called "a womanliche wif" (III, 107). When Pandarus tells her that Troilus loves her, she thinks as follows:

"Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
For wel woot I myself, so God me spede,
Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought,
I am oon the faireste, out of drede,
And goodlieste, whose taketh hede,
And so men seyn, in al the town of Troie.
What wonder is though he of me have joye?" (II, 743-49)

She makes a boast of her beauty, while White never does so. She not only boasts of her beauty, but thanks God about her position as a widow:

"I am myn owene womman, wel at ese,
I thank it God, as after myn estat,
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty leese,
Withouten jalousie or swich debat:
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me 'chek mat!'
For either they ben ful of jalousie,
Or maisterfull, or loven novelrie. (II, 750-56)

Let us consider the important meeting of Troilus and Criseyde at the rainy night. Pandarus, desiring to bring the lovers together,

invites her to his house. When Criseyde asks him if Troilus is there, he answers that he is out of town. Then the narrator says,

Nought list myn auctour fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of towne yfare,
As if he seyde therof soth or no;
But that, withowten await, with hym to go,
She graunted hym, sith he hire that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte. (III, 575-81)

The narrator says he does not know what she thinks about Pandarus' speech. Chaucer treats the narrator in this case subtly to draw the audience's attention to Criseyde's complicated feelings. One question may occur in our minds: does she suspect Pandarus' lie? Many critics say that she only pretends to expect nothing. She must know that Troilus will come because Criseyde later confesses to Troilus: "Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere, / Ben yold, ywis, I were now nought heere!" (III, 1210-11). This confession may indicate that she was aware of Pandarus' lie. If she knows that Pandarus lies, and yet pretends innocence, she is calculating.

We must not emphasize only the calculating and boastful aspects in Criseyde's character. She is much more complex than that. After she boasts of her beauty and thanks God for her freedom, she begins to fear:

"Allas! syn I am free,
Sholde I now love, and put in jupartie
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
Allas! how dorst I thenken that folie?
May I naught wel in other folk asprie
Hire dredfull joye, hire constreinte, and hire peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

"For love is yet the mooste stormy lyf,
Right of hymself, that evere was bigonne;
For evere som mystrust or nice strif
Ther is in love, som cloude is over that sonne.
Therto we wrecched women nothing konne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Oure wrecche is this,oure owen wo to drynke." (II, 771-84)

Here she recognizes herself as being weak. The same fearful nature is revealed in the scene in which Pandarus tells that he has something

very important (meaning Troilus' love for her) to tell her. She says with fear, "telle it us / For Goddes Love; is than th'assege aweye? / I am of Grekes so fered that I deye" (II, 122-23). As she has no other man than Pandarus to rely on in Troy, it is a great fear for her to see Pandarus say something unusual. She is a weak creature, trembling in fear of what may come to her. She fears when Pandarus says that a man named Poliphetes is going to trouble her. She fears again when Pandarus informs her that Troilus is jealous and suspects that she has another lover called Horastes. As she loves Troilus deeply, it makes her sad and afraid:

Criseyde, wnich that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly about hire herte colde,
And with a sik she sorwfully answerede,
"Allas! I wende, whoso tales tolde,
My deere herte wolde me nought holde
So lightly fals! Allas! conceytes wronge,
What harm they don, for now lyve I to longe!" (III, 799-805)

Criseyde is not only calculating, boastful and weak, but also optimistic. Refusing Troilus' offer to run away before she will be taken to the Greek camp, she promises him to return to Troy within ten days. She is also a woman who can say jokes and, in this, she is different from Troilus. When she is with Pandarus, she sometimes says jokes playfully, but when she is with Troilus, she becomes serious. Thus her character is very complex. Many scholars argue about her character, which proves that she has a complex character. The narrator describes her as follows:

She sobre was, ek aymples, and wys withal,
The best ynorisshed ek that myghte be,
And goodly of hire speche in general,
Charitable, estatlich, lusty, and fre;
Ne nevere mo ne lakked hire pite,
Tendre-nerted, slydyng of corage;
But trewely, I kan nat telle hire age. (V, 820-26)

We may say that Chaucer succeeds in making Criseyde a very human and womanly woman, who can be found in our everyday life.

Now let us consider Criseyde as a courtly lover. She is beautiful and, as far as she is in Troy, she makes efforts to be an ideal courtly lover though, unlike White, she does not resemble a goddess: "In the Criseyde of the first three books Chaucer has painted a touchting and beautiful picture of a woman by nature both virtuous and amorous, but above all affectionate; a woman who in a chaste society would certainly have lived a chaste widow."²² But later one act of Criseyde brands her as an unfaithful woman. It is, of course, her betrayal. But when we imagine Criseyde's feelings in the Greek camp, we feel that we should not condemn her too readily. She knows nobody there except her father. She is lonely. Though she still loves Troilus, she cannot go back to Troy, because she fears that she may be caught:

"And if that I me putte in jupartie,
To stele away by nyght, and it bifalle
That I be kaught, I shal be holde a spie;
Or elles - lo, this drede I moost of alle -
If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
I nam but lost, al be myn herte trewe.
Now, myghty God, thow on my sorwe rewel!" (V, 701-29)

When Diomede asks her to be his love, we find her calculating again:

Retornyng in hire soule ay up and down
The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
His grete estat, and perel of the town,
And that she was allone and hadde nede
Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,
That she took fully purpos for to dwelle. (V, 1023-29)

She is aware of being in a difficult and dangerous situation, and she finally decides to betray Troilus:

Whan thorough the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho wepte she many a teere,
Whan that she saugh his wyde wowndes blede;
And that she took, to kepen hym, good hede;
And for to helen hym of his sorwes smerte,
Men seyn - I not - that she yaf hym hire herte. (V, 1059-64)

However deeply she regrets, her sin cannot be forgiven from the view-

point of courtly love. She is not a courtly lover any more.

On the contrary, White remains an ideal courtly lover to the very end. The love between the Black Knight and White ends because of her death, while the love between Troilus and Criseyde ends because of Criseyde's betrayal. White is faithful to the Black Knight until her death. Criseyde tries to be a perfect courtly lady, when she is with Troilus. White behaves as an ideal courtly lady from the first to the very end, while Criseyde fails to act an ideal courtly lover.

Now let us turn our view to the Dreamer in *the Book of the Duchess* and Pandarus in *Troilus and Criseyde* as important third persons. before comparing their characters, it is necessary for us to think about their roles in the two works.

Firstly, each of them appears as an unsuccessful lover. The Dreamer says: "I have gret wonder, be this lyght, / How that I lyve, for day ne nyght / I may nat slepe wel nygh noght; . . ." (1-3). The Dreamer says that he has suffered woe for eight years, but he never explains the reason why he cannot sleep:

But men myght axe me why soo
I may not sleepe, and what me is.
But natheles, who aske this
Leseth his asking trewely.
Myselfen can not telle why
The sothe; but trewly, as I gesse,
I holde hit be a sicknesse
That I have suffred this eight year,
And yet my boote is never the ner;
For there is phisicien but oon
That may me hele; but that is don.

(30-40)

The Dreamer "does not tell us who this physician is, but everyone familiar with courtly love will know at once that Chaucer is talking about his lady, who, by denying him her favors, keeps him hopelessly love-sick."²³ The Dreamer conceals the true reason for his insomnia, because he "was complying with one of the requirments of courtly love etiquette, the requirment of secret."²⁴ He cannot sleep for his love, as is re-

quired by the rule of courtly love and, by concealing why he cannot sleep, obeys another rule of courtly love, secrecy. These facts prove that he knows about the rules of courtly love. We see that he aspires to become a perfect courtly lover. But he cannot be a perfect courtly lover because he is never successful in love.

Pandarus, too, has been unsuccessful in love. When Pandarus, hearing that Troilus' woe comes from his love, offers to help him, Troilus replies, "This were a wonder thing, / Thow koudest never in love thiselven wisse: / How devel maistow brynge me to blisse?" (I, 621-23). That Pandarus is not successful in love is not mentioned only here. In Book II, Pandarus visits Criseyde's house, where Criseyde and other ladies are listening to a romance of the siege of Thebes. When Pandarus asks Criseyde what kind of story it is, she makes fun of him, saying, "Uncle, youre maistresse is nat here" (II, 98). Thus both the Dreamer and Pandarus are defined as unsuccessful lovers in the beginning. Both of them serve as contrasts or antitheses to the protagonists who are successful lovers.

Secondly, they give comments on the acts of the protagonists in their conversation with them. As antitheses, they are effective commentators. When the Black Knight, allegorizing his lady's death, tells the Dreamer about the chess match, and says that his sorrow comes from it, the Dreamer says to him, "But ther is no man alyve her / Wolde for a fers make this woo!" (741-42). His statement is very comical and realistic. He never understands what the Black Knight really means. The Dreamer gives a foolish comment even while the Black Knight praises the beauty of White: "I leve yow well, that trewely / Yow thoght that she was the beste, / And to beholde the alderfayreste, / Whoso had loked hir with your eyen" (1048-51). He speaks from a realistic viewpoint, not from a viewpoint of courtly love.

Pandarus, too, is a realistic commentator. When he hears that Troi-

lus is love-sick, and has a very pessimistic view - "She nyl to noon swich wrecche as I ben wonne" (I, 777) - Pandarus comments thus:

"Thow mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele,
But love a womman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte it that thow shalt nat fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost, that is unsought. (I, 806-09)

Thanks to this realistic comment, Troilus notices that his suffering has been useless, and that he has been far away from reality. Pandarus sometimes tells Troilus to get up in order to encourage him (I, 748, / II, 1314, / IV, 534). For Troilus, getting up from his bed means his departure from the unrealistic world. And when Criseyde must go to the Greek camp, he tries to comfort Troilus:

"And over al this, as thow wel woost thiselwe,
This town is ful of ladys al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As evere she was, shal I fynde in som route,
Yee, on or two, withouten any doute.
Forthis be glad, myn owen deere brother!
If she be lost, we shal recovere an other." (IV, 400-06)

In Book V, we again find realistic comment of Pandarus. After Criseyde goes to the Greek camp, Troilus takes everyone that comes along for Criseyde. And Pandarus always discourages Troilus with a realistic comment. When Troilus cries hopefully, "Pandarus, now woltow trowen me? / Have here my trouthe, I se hire! yond she is! / Heve up thyn eyen, man! maistow nat se?" (V, 1157-59), Pandarus answers, "Nay, so mote I the! / Al wrong, by God! What saistow, man, where arte? / That I se yond nys but a fare-carte" (V, 1160-62). Thus both the Dreamer and Pandarus have a role as a commentator who presents a realistic view.

Thirdly they act as manipulators. The Dreamer first overhears the Black Knight's lamentation:

"I have of sorwe so gret won
That joye gets I never non,
Now that I see my lady bryght,

Which I have loved with al my myght,
Is fro me ded and ys agoon." (475-80)

Overhearing it, the Dreamer cannot leave the Black Knight alone before finding out what caused him to be so sad. According to Kittredge, "The Dreamer knows that the lady is dead, but he wishes to learn more, not from idle curiosity, but out of sympathetic eagerness to afford the knight the only help in his power - the comfort of pouring his sad story into compassionate ears."²⁵ It is often debated whether the Dreamer is really foolish or he pretends to be foolish, but there is no denying that the Dreamer has the important role as a manipulator, to make the story proceed.

The impression of Pandarus as a manipulator is stronger. He goes to and fro between Troilus and Criseyde. After hearing Troilus' confession that he fell in love with Criseyde, Pandarus thinks up one tactful plan after another to make their love consummated. While, in Boccaccio's work, Troilus and Criseyde can attain their love easily, in Chaucer's, the process is slow, because Pandarus makes complicated plans. Sometimes Pandarus seems to make plans for his own sake. He enjoys his role as a manipulator. First, he goes to Criseyde and asks, or rather threatens, her to love Troilus. He advises Troilus to write a letter to Criseyde. These plans succeed. Then he thinks of a complicated plan. He tells Deiphebus and Helen, who are Troilus' brother and sister-in-law, that Criseyde is troubled by a villain, named Polyphetes, and asks them to help her and to be friends to her. He orders Troilus, in secret, to pretend illness. When he takes Criseyde to Deiphebus' house, Pandarus says to Deiphebus and Helen that Criseyde and he are going to Troilus' chamber where he is ill in bed, to discuss about her trouble. Troilus' chamber is so small that only Pandarus and Criseyde can get into the chamber. Because of Troilus' sickness, which seems to be love-sickness, Criseyde has pity on him, and betrays her

love to Troilus. There Troilus and Criseyde swear eternal love to each other. After this Pandarus prepares another plan. He invites Criseyde to dinner, telling her that Troilus is not there while he keeps his friend in a hiding place. He knows by horoscope that it will rain heavily, and that this rain will prevent her from going back to her house. That night, Troilus and Criseyde consummate their love. Thus Pandarus makes the complicated plans as a manipulator and we see that they end in success.

Now let us discuss the character of the Dreamer and that of Pandarus. One common point is their comicality. The Dreamer is comical from the first to the very end. Before he falls asleep, he says that he has suffered woe for eight years. According to Malone, "There is something ridiculous about an unsuccessful lover, particularly if he has danced attendance on the lady for eight years."²⁶ We also find his comicality and naiveté when he reads the story of Ceyx and Alcyone. Though the story of Ceyx and Alcyone is about a tragic love, the Dreamer is not moved by the story itself. He is only astonished with one fact that there are some gods who can cause men to sleep or awake. It is humorous that what he is interested in is the above fact, not the tragic love between Ceyx and Alcyone, in spite of his suffering pain of love for eight years. Perhaps it is because he is not a perfect courtly lover. Finding out that there are the classical gods of sleep, he prays to them to make him sleep:

"Yif he wol make me slepe a lyte,
Of down of pure dowves white
I wil yive him a fether-bed,
Rayed with gold, and ryght wel cled
In fyn blak satyn doutremer,
And many a pillowe, and every ber
Of cloth of Reynes, to slepe soft;
Hym thar not nede to turnen ofte.

(249-56)

It is funny that he takes pains to choose the things which he thinks will please the gods of sleep. He is so comical that we cannot but

smile at him. Even after ne comes into the dream world, his comicality does not disappear; the Dreamer gives one foolish comment after another to the Black Knight, as I have pointed out.

Now let us examine Pandarus. He, too, has a comical aspect. Pandarus, when he hears the cause of Troilus' woe, has much sympathy with him, because at that time, both Troilus and Pandarus are unsuccessful lovers. Pandarus sees his own picture in Troilus, and identifies himself with the young man. Soon he makes up his mind to go to Criseyde and to ask her to love Troilus. After telling how wonderful Troilus is, he informs her that Troilus loves her. Then immediately he begins to threaten her. He says that he will die with Troilus in case of her refusal:

"But sith it liketh yow that I be ded,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I nevere eten bred
Til I myn owen herte blood may see;
For certeyn I wol deye as soone as he." (II, 442-46)

This is not the figure of a simple go-between.

The more strongly Pandarus identifies himself with Troilus, the more comical he seems to become. In Book III, at Deiphebus' house, thanks to Pandarus, Troilus and Criseyde can meet privately. Here Pandarus is comical again. Hearing Troilus' speech to Criseyde, he is moved very much and "wep as he to water wolde" (III, 115). We know that his tears are not false, because his attitude is too serious. And when Criseyde allows Troilus to serve her, "Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen / To heven threw, and held his hondes highe" (III, 183-84), and thanks gods. Here he becomes "a convinced servant of the god of love."²⁷

When Troilus and Criseyde meet in Pandarus' house, seeing that Troilus is kneeling, Pandarus runs for a cushion and says, "Kneleth now, while that yow leste, / There God youre hertes brynge soone at

reste!" (III, 965-66). This makes us laugh, for he is too practical here. This scene shows his comicality, but at the same time it shows him as a tragic figure, because he is useless now except for a trivial service, while Troilus and Criseyde enjoy themselves in love. We see in him the figure of a miserable man who seeks something to do, where there is nothing that needs be done. And when he must leave the place where the lovers are to consummate their love, he is miserable again. He says, "For aught I kan aspien, / This light, nor I, ne serven here of nought" (III, 1135-36). Thus, the deeper the relationship between Troilus and Criseyde becomes, the narrower the place of Pandarus becomes.

After Criseyde goes to the Greek camp, his comicality disappears completely. His figure becomes more and more tragic, because he cannot do anything for Troilus but to comfort him. When Troilus is waiting for her hopefully, and says, "She comth to-night, my lif that dorste I leye!" (V, 1169), Pandarus knows that Troilus' hope is in vain. He says to himself, "From haselwode, there joly Robyn pleyde, / Shal come al that that thow abidest heere. / Ye, farewell al the snow of ferne yere!" (V, 1174-76). Here he secretly realizes that Criseyde will never return. He clearly sees his failure as a go-between for Troilus and Criseyde.

Thus Pandarus has a dual character, comical and tragic, while the Dreamer is only comical. This difference seems to me to come from the difference of the degree of their involvement in the histories of love. The Dreamer is an unsuccessful lover and never understands fully what the Black Knight means before he hears a factual statement about the lady's death at the very end. He sometimes speaks to the Black Knight, but the Black Knight ignores him by repeating: "I have lost more than thou wenest." This means that the Dreamer cannot intrude into the world of the Black Knight, that is, the world of courtly love. After

all, he is an outsider. He remains an outsider of the world of courtly love to the very end because the moment he understands the truth, he is awaked from sleep.

On the other hand, Pandarus is involved deeply in the history of Troilus and Criseyde. As was stated before, Pandarus identifies himself with Troilus, and is greatly pleased to make complicated plans as a manipulator. But when he finds that Criseyde must go to the Greek camp, he thinks of no more plan for them. As far as he acts as a manipulator he is comical, but once he realizes that their love will fail, he ceases to act. And then he becomes a part of the tragedy. Thus, Pandarus, as the imperfect courtly lover, unlike the Dreamer in *the Book of the Duchess*, does intrude into the world of courtly love, takes initiative to a certain point, and spoils the world of courtly love.

Our examination has revealed that, in *Troilus and Criseyde*, the lovers, Troilus and Criseyde, are not ideal courtly lovers, who allow Pandarus intrude their world of courtly love. Indeed, both the narrative and the characters never seem to fit comfortably the style of courtly love. In *the Book of the Duchess*, on the other hand, the lovers are ideal the Dreamer remains an outsider, never being allowed to spoil the world of courtly love. These differences are partly due to the circumstances in which each work was composed. *The Book of the Duchess* was composed after the death of Blanche, the first wife of John of Gaunt. Chaucer had to idealize the protagonists to please his chief patron, John of Gaunt. Besides, *the Book of the Duchess* was written in 1369, in Chaucer's early literary career, when Chaucer was young enough to follow the literary fashion of courtly love. The death of Blanche offered an excellent topic for Chaucer to write an excellent topic for Chaucer to write an ideal story of courtly love.

Then how about *Troilus and Criseyde*? The source of *Troilus and*

Criseyde had come down from different cultural background of classical antiquity, although it developed during the Middle Ages and was influenced by medieval concepts. And Boccaccio who is essentially a Renaissance author treats the theme in his *Il Filostrato*, which is Chaucer's immediate source. Then Chaucer transplants the Troy romance into the world of courtly love. Moreover, he gives the three main characters the qualities of real people, and they do not fit the idealized world of fiction.

Chaucer must have known that it was impossible to translate the story of Troilus and Criseyde into a conventional narrative of courtly love, but he took pains to do so. What was Chaucer's intention in doing such a thing? We can think of some possibilities. *Troilus and Criseyde* was written in Chaucer's last period. By this time Chaucer might have become critical about the literary fashion of courtly love and, knowing that the story of Troilus and Criseyde would not fit the style, he chose the material in order to show that the artificial rules do not work in reality. Also, by Chaucer's last period, the Middle Ages began to be superseded by the Renaissance period. Chaucer may have wanted to show that the Renaissance period would come soon which would allow human beings to act as individuals, without forcing them to act according to rules and patterns such as those of courtly love. In *Troilus and Criseyde* the characters cannot stay in the world of courtly love.

Thus, though the two works of Chaucer were written in the style of courtly love, they are very different in essence. The former portrays an ideal world of courtly love which no third person is permitted to intrude. The latter, by treating a subject which does not fit courtly love, and by presenting characters realistically, suggests the discrepancy between the idealized concept and reality. From the point of view of courtly love, the *Book of the Duchess* and *Troilus and Criseyde* thus

make a clear contrast.

NOTES

1. Maurice Valency, *In Praise of Love*. (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 35.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
6. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, in *The Works of Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 278. Henceforth all quotations from *the Book of the Duchess* are taken from Robinson's edition.
7. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Works of Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 422. Henceforth all quotations from *Troilus and Criseyde* are taken from Robinson's edition.
8. Valency, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
9. William George Dodd, "The system of Courtly Love", *Chaucer Criticism*, Vol. 2, eds. Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), p. 8.
10. Valency, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
14. George Lyman Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry*, (1913; rpt. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 48.
15. C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, (1936; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 195.
16. Alfred David, "The Hero of the *Troilus*", *Speculum*, Vol. 37 (1962), p. 570.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
19. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Knight's tale*, in *The Works of Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 28.
20. Valency, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
22. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
23. Kemp Malone, *Chapters on Chaucer*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1951), p. 22.
24. *Ibid.*,
25. Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
26. Malone, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
27. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

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